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# Conversion of the Baduy: Patterns, Consequences and Identities

In chapters 4 and 5 we have seen how Muslims and Christians did missionary activities among the Baduy. This chapter presents the result of their mission: conversion. If the Baduy's conversion may be simplified it was their response to the teaching of Sunda Wiwitan which does not allow changes as it appears in the saying "*buyut teu meunang dirobah*" or "the teaching of the ancestors may not be changed". This teaching was challenged by the population growth on the one hand and the limited land on the other. Consequently, not every Baduy had access to the *adat* land and many of them moved out of the land to seek a livelihood. When they were far from the *adat* leaders who controlled their obedience to Sunda Wiwitan, they adapted and integrated themselves to the larger environment which was modern and taboo. At the same time the government, the Muslim preachers and Christian missionaries were interested in developing, modernizing and converting the Baduy. This chapter will describe the conversion of the Baduy as a process of distancing themselves from the restrictions and Sunda Wiwitan and of juxtaposing modernity and development. Special attention will be paid to the patterns and consequences of conversion and the identities of the Muslim and Christian Baduy.

## A. Patterns and Narratives of the Baduy's Conversion

There are various patterns of conversion experienced by the Baduy. They include

conversions (1) from Sunda Wiwitan to Islam, (2) from Sunda Wiwitan to Christianity, (3) from Sunda Wiwitan to Christianity and then to Islam, (4) from Sunda Wiwitan to Islam and then to Christianity, (5) from Sunda Wiwitan to Islam and then to revert to Sunda Wiwitan, (6) from Sunda Wiwitan to Islam and then to revert Sunda Wiwitan and to reconvert to Islam<sup>1</sup>. The background of their conversion narratives is the same: the population growth and the limited size of the *adat* land. At the same time, they were not allowed by the *adat* to develop their fields with modern techniques and tools. Eventually, they decided to manage fields of the non-Baduy and live there for years. This decision made them far from the surveillance of their *adat* leaders and closer to the non-Baduy society and government. Furthermore, this situation made their identity blurred. As Baduy they should have lived in the *adat* land, but in reality, they did not. To make it clear, they chose to convert.

### 1. *Conversion from Sunda Wiwitan to Islam*

We do not know the exact number of converts from Sunda Wiwitan to Islam. Many informants believed that the number could be more than 1,000. This number emerges from the following calculation. There were more than 450 Baduy families relocated to the resettlement villages. If each family consisted of four people, then the number could be 1,800. Because some of them returned to the *adat* land, moved to other fields, or converted to Christianity, the number of 1,000 people is not exaggerated. Kyai Zainuddin Amir claimed to have converted more than 500 Baduy to Islam, Abah Sarmin more than 200, Abah Ewong more 100, and Ustad Syahroni more than 200 hundred.<sup>2</sup> Ustad Kasja from Muhammadiyah who has the *Yayasan Baduy Muslim* (Foundation of Muslim Baduy) has a list of more than 700 Muslim Baduy families.<sup>3</sup> They mostly lived in Kompol, Margaluyu, Palopat, Sekilo, Cikapek, and Cikanyere. He believed that there were more converts because many Muslim Baduy did not announce their conversion. Many Muslim Baduy in the resettlement villages said that their conversion was not recorded in a

<sup>1</sup> In the 1950-60s some Muslims escaped to the Baduy land from the persecution of the Darul Islam soldiers. They decided to live in the Baduy land and converted to Sunda Wiwitan. Because their conversion happened before the time frame of the research, this type of conversion is not discussed here.

<sup>2</sup> Interviews with Kyai Zainuddin Amir on 28 March, 1 and 6 June 2017, Abah Sarmin on 5 June 2017, Abah Ewong on 5 June 2017 and with Ustad Syahroni on 21 July 2017. It is not easy to get an exact number of converts, but their claims can be accepted since the number of Muslim Baduy was more than 1,000. Kyai Zainuddin Amir himself gave me 224 religious conversion certificates of the Baduy from Sunda Wiwitan to Islam. In fact, many more Muslim Baduy do not have a conversion certificate.

<sup>3</sup> Interviews with Ustad Kasja on 20-21 May and 20 June 2017.

certificate. As an example here we will look at the conversion narratives of Haji Kasmin and Haji Sarmedi.<sup>4</sup>

a. *The Conversion of the Most Successful Baduy Businessman Haji Kasmin*

Mass conversion of the Baduy to Islam and Christianity happened in the 1980s. Among the Baduy who converted to Islam were the businessman Kasmin and Sarmedi. Kasmin was born in 1958 in Cisaban to the mother Kaice and

4 Actually, in many respects, the best example of a Baduy convert to Islam is Jaro Samin. Because he died in 1994 and data on his conversion is very limited, I chose Haji Sarmedi and Haji Kasmin. Moreover, as individuals, some Baduy converted to Islam before 1977. It was experienced, for example, by Wirasuta, Ayah Yarman and Dascin. Wirasuta (or Budak Buncireung) was a Baduy man who left the adat land to know the outer world where his father pointed him to the Sultanate of Banten. He went and worked there. When he would return to the Baduy land, the adat leaders did not allow him. Wirasuta decided to continue his life in the sultanate and is said to have married a daughter of the Sultan. In return, the Baduy visited (Sundanese: seba) him every year which is now known as the Seba. The Baduy believe that Wirasuta has descended noble people, including Agus Rendra, Aki Candra, Aria Martadipa, Mas Ateng, Apun Daryah, Patih Derus, Mas Lia, Murawan, Den Bagus Jayawinata and Den Ujang or Achmad Djajadiningrat (1877-1943) (Saputra 1959: viii-29-31).

In his autobiography *Memoar Pangeran Achmad Djajadiningrat* (1996) Djajadiningrat narrates that the story of Wirasuta (old spelling: Wirasoeta) happened in the period of Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa. For Wirasoeta who was a son of the puun Cibeo the Baduy land was too small. He asked his father to let him work in the sultanate of Banten. His father let him go. With the kris of Kebo Gandar as a gift from his father he went to the sultanate of Banten. He was appointed by the sultan as a servant and then as a soldier, and was married with his daughter. In 1663 he joint an effort to stop a rebellion in Lampung where his hand was hurt. Afterwards, Wirasuta was known as Pangeran Astapati (the prince whose hand died). Achmad Djajadiningrat claims that his ancestor was from this man (Djajadiningrat 1996: 1-5, 440).

The Christian Baduy Kokom accounted a story from Jaro Samin that Wirasuta served in the Sultanate of Banten. When he would return to the Baduy land the adat leaders did not permit him because he had followed the customs of the Muslims. Kokom explained further that the names of Wirasuta (Budak Buncireung) and other ancestors were commonly mentioned by the adat leaders when they prayed. He said: "To pray to God, the Baduy mention the names of their ancestors (guriyang wangatua) and among the ancestors was Budak Buncireung" (interview with Kokom on 20 December 2018).

Another Baduy man who is known to become a Muslim was Ayah Yarmin. He was from Cikeusik and became one of Nyi Gamparan's soldiers. If this information is correct, then he lived in the 19th century because Nyi Gamparan led her soldiers against the Dutch in 1832-1835 (Laora Arkeman 2013: xvi). When Nyi Gamparan's soldiers were defeated by the Dutch, Ayah Yarmin was captured and sent to prison. He then escaped to Baduy villages, but the people did not accept him. He had to become a non-Baduy. He left for Batavia (Jakarta). There he learnt to read and write. Later on, he moved to Sumedang and converted to Islam. He studied the Qur'an and Islamic teaching. Afterwards, he moved to Garut and is said to have performed a pilgrimage to Mecca (Saputra 1959: viii-35 - viii-37).

The last example of the initial converts is Dascin from Cikeusik. When he was seven years old, his father brought him to Sobang to meet a shaman (dukun). The shaman foresaw that he would become a non-Baduy. When 15 years old he quarrelled with his father about overseeing a huma. Dascin left his father's house and stayed at the puun's house. He moved again to his brother's. Because his brother urged him to go back to his father, he went to Sobang. There he started to study Islam and changed his name to Jafar. It made the puun of Cikeusik angry and he cursed him. Arpan the jaro of Kamancing suggested Jafar to meet the regent (bupati) of Serang, Achmad Djajadiningrat, who once told Arpan that any Baduy man who wanted to become a Muslim was advised to meet him. Subsequently, he met the regent and lived with him. Next, he studied at a school in Serang, obtained a diploma and worked as a teacher. When C.M. Pleyte and B. van Tricht came to Baduy land in the 1920s, he became their assistant. And when Achmad Djajadiningrat retired as a regent and moved to Cikampek, Jafar followed him. 'Now he is a devout Muslim, but his Baduy-ness still exists: frank, honest, modest, friendly and bounteous' (Saputra 1959: vi-5 – vi-6).

Photo 6.1: A Conversion certificate from Sunda Wiwitan to Islam. Printed with permission.

**إِنَّ الدِّينَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الْإِسْلَامُ**  
 „Seungguhnya agama yang diakui di sisi Allah adalah agama Islam“  
 (QUR'AN SURAT ALI - IMRON AYAT 19)

**SURAT PERNYATAAN MEMELUK AGAMA ISLAM**

Dengan ini saya (Nama) : Salikin  
 Tempat dan tanggal lahir : 1998  
 Alamat sekarang : Jalayang Mulya  
 Pekerjaan : Tani  
 Nama orang tua : \_\_\_\_\_  
 Agama terdahulu : Sunda Wiwitan

Dengan kesadaran dan keikhlasan sendiri menyatakan memeluk Agama Islam dengan membaca DUA KALIMAT SYAHADAT

**أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ**  
 " AKU BERSAKSI TIDAK ADA TUHAN SELAIN ALLAH DAN AKU BERSAKSI BAHWA NABI MUHAMMAD ADALAH UTUSAN ALLAH "

Setelah memeluk agama Islam nama resmi saya menjadi :  
SALIKIN ABUL KARIIM

Ditandatangani di : Rangkasbitung  
 Pada tanggal : 16 JULI 1998  
 Yang menyatakan,

Penunjang : SAJUDJIN ANIR  
 Saksi I : SAJUDJIN ANIR  
 Saksi II : SALIKIN  
 Saksi III : HASSANI ALYPRUS

Kepala Kantor Departemen Agama Kabupaten Lebak  
**H. M. H. H. H. H.**  
 NIP : 199 011 4007

the father Saila. His parents had eight children: Sarwati, Iyah, Haji Kasmin, Sarkati, Haji Dayat, Haji Jahadi, Sawi, and Muhammad Endi. Four of them remained as the followers of Sunda Wiwitan. In 1973 he began doing business by becoming a producer of palm sugar. From 1976-1979 he became a seller of Baduy products such as palm sugar and handicrafts. He sold the products in the market of Ciminyak. From 1979 onwards he expanded his business by selling the products to a larger market in Rangkasbitung. Then in 1984 he followed an informal education *Paket A* (equivalent to elementary school) and in 1995 *Paket B* (equivalent to junior high school). Afterwards, he and his family moved to Ciboleger where his house was close to the houses of elementary school teachers Pak Pito and Pak Asep. They suggested him to pursue *Paket C* (equivalent to senior high school).

Since the 1980s, because of being exposed to the outer world, Kasmin has begun to think to abandon his Baduyness and convert to Islam. His intention was getting stronger when he observed that the *adat* land was limited while the

number of population increased. He explained that his grandfather had eight children and his father also had eight children. “At that time I thought: ‘If I have eight children and each of my children will have eight children, and the size of the *adat* land is stuck, what will happen to my life?’” Kasmin concluded that by becoming a non-Baduy he would still be able to live his life even he did not manage fields. In addition to that, he wanted to send his children to school. He believed with the education his children could live anywhere. Then he asked the *adat* leaders to permit him to send his children to school, but the request was rejected. The leaders said that if Kasmin’s children wanted to study at school, they had to leave the *adat* land. Finally, in 1990 Kasmin, his wife Salinah (a daughter of Jaro Samin) and their four children decided to convert to Islam. They proclaimed the *shahāda* in front of many religious leaders and this event was witnessed by many people. Among the prominent religious leaders were Kiyai Ato, Haji Hasan, Kiyai Syamsudin, and Kiyai Sukiman.

Before he converted to Islam Kasmin had bought a piece of land which belonged to Jaro Tibil. Then he met the leader of Muhammadiyah of Lebak, Hasan Alaydrus, who was looking for land for a mosque. Hasan Alaydrus said that the organisation had had money to build the mosque, but it did not have land on which the mosque would be built. The villagers of Ciboleger said that they already had a mosque and did not have land for the new mosque. Kasmin who heard the conversation between Hasan Alaydrus and the villagers thought to donate a part of his land to hope there would be many people there. If there were many people he would run a business. Then Kasmin said to Hasan Alaydrus and the villagers that he would donate his 1,150 square metres of land in Pelemcondong, close to Ciboleger, to Muhammadiyah for the foundation of the mosque. When the mosque Masjid Maulana Yusuf was inaugurated by the Minister of Religious Affairs Munawir Sjadzali, the master of ceremony explained that the land of the mosque was from the donation of Kasmin. Kasmin who just converted to Islam and registered himself to perform the *haj* was funded by the minister to do the *haj*. Kasmin’s wife also did the *haj*, but funded by herself.<sup>5</sup>

When Kasmin converted to Islam, the regent of Lebak was Endang Suwarna (1988-1993) who was a member of Muhammadiyah. The conversion of Kasmin made the regent proud. Because a regent did not manage person per person, the regent asked Muhammadiyah of Lebak to take care of Kasmin. Muhammadiyah of Lebak itself was being led by Hasan Alaydrus who was active in propagating Islam to the Baduy community. Kasmin himself was in tension with the *adat* leaders because when he was still a Baduy he broke the taboo by having cars

<sup>5</sup> Interview with Haji Kasmin on 19 December 2018.

and a building. The care of Muhammadiyah to him made him feel supported and wanted to Islamise the Baduy community. Even Kasmin gave his land in Kaduketug and Cisaban, both in the *adat* land, for the foundation of mosques. The *adat* leaders directly refused the idea. Even though the land in Kaduketug and Cisaban belonged to Kasmin, but they were in the *adat* land where only Sunda Wiwitan was allowed to be practised. The plan of the foundation of the mosque was cancelled.<sup>6</sup>

*b. The Conversion of the Future Jaro Pamarentah Haji Sarmedi<sup>7</sup>*

Like Haji Kasmin, Haji Sarmedi also thought that education was important for him and his children. Resisting the taboo of formal education pushed him to leave Sunda Wiwitan and convert to Islam. Born in 1974 to Marsinun (d. 1989)<sup>8</sup> and Sanirah in Kaduketug, Haji Sarmedi had seven brothers and sisters: Arkinah, Rami, Runi, Sarmedi himself, Sadiman, and Misnah. Sarmedi married Rubiah (b. 1978) in 1994. From the marriage, they have three children Rano Pratama, Aiman Ramadan, and Riza Amalia Putri. In 1992 Sarmedi became a vice *jaro* managing the external affairs. Both as an individual and as an official he often visited various cities in Indonesia, especially Jakarta and Bandung. He admitted that the visits influenced him. The visits taught him that the world, including the Baduy, was changing. If his children did not have a formal education they would be left behind. He came to the decision that he had to send his children to school, although he knew that it was taboo for the Baduy. He asked permission from the leaders, but they did not give it. They said that Sarmedi had experience in the government and would be appointed to become the *jaro pamarentah*, replacing his father's position. Sending his children to school would be a bad precedent for the Baduy.

From visits to many cities Sarmedi became interested in Islam and the decisive moment was in 2000 when he and his Muslim friends went to Bandung. On the way their friends had to stop because it was Friday and they had to do the Friday prayer. The car was parked in front of the mosque and he waited for them in the car. When his friends came out of the mosque, they shook hands and kissed cheeks each other. "I thought: they are the same as me. They are respectful, but I am not. They respect each other because of Islam." In the following night he was unable to sleep. On Tuesday he still led an *adat* ceremony, in the Thursday night he decided to abandon the *adat*, and on Friday he went to the pesantren of Kyai Syamsudin (d.2015) to declare the

<sup>6</sup> Interviews with Haji Sarmedi on 24 November 2018 and with Haji Kasmin on 19 December 2018.

<sup>7</sup> Information on the conversion of Haji Sarmedi was based on various interviews with him in January – June 2017 and November 2018 – February 2019.

<sup>8</sup> Marsinun was the *jaro pamarentah* in the 1970s. He was a son of Dulkasan, a *seurat* or vice *puun* of Cibeo.



*shahāda*. Actually, Kyai Zainuddin Amir had previously invited him to Islam, but Sarmedi was not interested yet. Afterwards, Sarmedi asked his wife to follow him, but she did not want to. She even asked him to divorce her. His mother Sanirah even said that she would not call him his son. She said, “If I die, don’t visit me and if you die we will not visit you.” The news of Sarmedi’s conversion spread and caused a commotion. He was among the officials who judged people who broke the *adat*, but now he abandoned it himself. After his conversion he went to a family in the housing complex of the Depag officials, whom he called his foster father, in Rangkasbitung. He lived there for a year.

To study Islam he went to the pesantren Al Amin of Kyai Syamsudin in Bunikasih. Besides to Kyai Syamsudin he also learned Islam to the *amil* of Ciboleger, Salika (whom he considered as his father), to Hajah Imu and Ustad Hamim. In a speech (*khutbah*) Kyai Syamsudin said that a Muslim would not be forgiven by Allah before his/her parents forgive him. Listening to this Sarmaedi cried. The *kyai* asked him why. Sarmedi explained that he might have been insubordinate to his mother. Kyai Syamsudin asked Sarmedi to meet his mother and Sarmedi did it. At that time her mother was so kind. Even she asked her grandchildren to collect water for Sarmedi to do ablution. “My mother said, ‘You are a Muslim. A Muslim has to do prayer. Before doing prayer you have to take ablution.’” The statements were understood by Sarmedi as a mark that she had accepted his decision to embrace Islam.

One day his foster father told Sarmedi that his ex-wife was in the pesantren of Kyai Zainuddin Amir in Palopat. She had left the Baduy land because she was unable to bear up living in her parents’ house. If Sarmedi was willing to remarry her, the foster father would take her. Sarmedi himself then went to the pesantren to meet her, but she was in the house of her brother, Haji Sapin, in the same village. To Haji Sapin, Rabiah (the ex-wife of Sarmedi) said that she wanted to become a Muslim. Sarmedi’s foster father, Haji Sarpin, and Kyai Zainuddin suggested Sarmedi and Rabiah remarry. Sarmedi came to Rabiah’s grandfather Hasan to ask his permission and to witness their marriage. Instead, Hasan took his machete and spoke to Sarmedi that he would cut Rabiah’s body in two halves, one was for him and another one was for Sarmedi. Later the Depag leader came to mediate. Hasan was not willing to meet him. Hasan’s wife said that Sarmedi and Rabiah may remarry but without their blessing. They remarried as a Muslim couple. One day they came to Hasan’s house to pick up their children. Hasan told Sarmedi, “It was because of you my daughter converted to Islam. I should kill you.”

Hasan, the father-in-law<sup>9</sup> of Sarmedi, was an influential religious leader of the village and a wealthy man. Whenever the villagers needed help they could come to him. Hasan once told the villagers that anyone who left the Baduy land was not a good man and would become their enemy. In fact, Sarmedi and followed by his granddaughter Rabiah (Aisah) converted to Islam. Starting from this occurrence Hasan could not say again that leaving the *adat* land was bad. Nowadays, Hasan and the villagers never forbid a Baduy to leave the *adat* land and convert to Islam. Even Hasan often told the families of the future converts that converting to Islam would be fine. He exemplified Sarmedi and Aisah who were still close and good with them after their conversion.

In 2003 Sarmedi asked a *kyai* about how his prayer could be accepted by Allah. Sarmedi wanted to do a pilgrimage. The *kyai* said that Sarmedi had to do the *tahadjudjud* prayer, a prayer which is done in the night after sleeping. He started his prayer in a Friday night. On Sunday when he slept the secretary of the *desa* of Kanekes came. He asked Sarmedi to become an officer to welcome the regent of Lebak Yas'a Mulyadi in the *desa* office. Before he went to the office he wore a cap (*peci*). It is a national symbol of clothing but a cap is often associated with that of Muslims. In the office the regent asked, "Do you wear a cap?" In other words, the regent asked whether Sarmedi had converted to Islam. Sarmedi confirmed that he already became a Muslim and that he wanted to do a pilgrimage to Mecca. Yas'a Mulyadi said that there was a land acquisition in Maja. If the programme happened, Yas'a Mulyadi would have money and he would give some of it to Sarmedi for the pilgrimage. Next Friday an official from the sub-district came to meet Sarmedi saying that he had to come to the office of the regent. The regent gave him Rp30 million. He soon went to the Depag office to register himself and then to the bank of BNI to deposit the money. Initially, he was unable to register because the time of registration was already running out. But a man came to the bank to withdraw the pilgrimage registration of his wife because she died in a traffic collision. The chance to do the pilgrimage was given to Sarmedi. In 2004 Sarmedi flew to Mecca for a pilgrimage. A year later his wife did the pilgrimage as well.

After converting to Islam what Sarmedi did next was to approach his family. Her ex-wife who was very fanatic to Sunda Wiwitan converted to Islam four years later and they reunited not long after. His younger brother Sadiman who often mocked him by saying that prayer was to kiss soil also followed him. "Many

<sup>9</sup> Hasan is actually a grandfather of Rabiah. Because she was taken cared of by Hasan since her childhood she called him father. Sarmedi also mentioned him as his father-in-law.

people from my family and my wife's family have converted to Islam," Sarmedi said. His mother who in the past resisted his decision has accepted his decision. She also told him several times that she wanted to convert to Islam, but she was worried because she did not know how to do the prayer. The attitude of the Baduy to conversion also has changed. Sarmedi explained:

"In the past, when a girl was falling in love with a non-Baduy, her parents thought that it was better to kill her.<sup>10</sup> Now the attitude has changed. 'It is fine to leave the *adat*. A child is still a child. Haji Sarmedi also left the *adat* but he is still good with the family.'

Moreover, Sarmedi and his friend Amin built the pesantren Al Amin, some metres away from his house in Ciboleger. Some of the *santri* were from Muncang, Sobang, and Leuwidamar. Sarmedi thought that it was instrumental in facilitating his relatives who would convert to Islam. "In a year there were some Baduy families converted to Islam. If there was no pesantren, where would the future converts study Islam?" So far, the Muslim Baduy families in Ciboleger such as the families of Sarmedi, Lili, Sadiman, Ardi and Petok studied Islam in this pesantren. Besides, Sarmedi maintained a good relationship with the Baduy, especially with his family. When his father-in-law Hasan was sick and hospitalised, Sarmedi took care of him and paid the treatment. Realising that Sarmedi and Aisah were still good with him, Hasan told the villagers that he would not hinder anyone who wanted to convert to Islam.

Sarmedi said that he never invited his Sunda Wiwitan relatives to convert to Islam. Even when there was a father who told him that his son wanted to convert to Islam, Sarmedi always asked to hold him by saying that Islam was prescriptive. He believed that maintaining a good relationship with them was much more effective than inviting them to Islam orally. When his relatives needed some help, he and other Baduy Muslims would come to help. This has given them a good impression and made them not to hinder the Baduy to convert. As a result, more and more Baduy converted to Islam. For example, two children of Jaro Asrap and a relative of Hasan converted to Islam following Sarmedi and Aisah. Sarmedi said:

"This is a quality method and joyful, but it takes a long time. If after

<sup>10</sup> Like what we have seen in chapter 5 footnote number 86, the word "to kill (Sundanese: *maehan*)" or something alike is only an expression. It never happens in the Baduy land that parents kill their children because they converted.



Photograph 6.2:  
Haji Sarmedi in an  
interview session. The  
photograph was taken  
by Junaedi in 2017.

leaving the *adat* land I was not good with my family, the next converts such as Acih and Iwat would probably have not been permitted. The most successful of *da'wa* activity is through the familial relation. I became the example (that converting would be fine). This method does not give a direct result, but the result is gradually visible. This method is what we do to the Baduy. We the Muslim Baduy remind each other to be kind to the Baduy relatives. When our relative dies or conduct a ceremony, we have to come to help. Although we have a different religion we have to care about them.”<sup>11</sup>

As Sarmedi has experienced, leaving the *adat* land has initially put a convert in a burden because he has to have a place to live and a job from which he can get his livelihood. According to Sarmedi, in the *da'wa* activity to the Baduy attention has to be paid to two things: the Islamic creed and the transition period which lasts around two years. In these years, the convert would experience burdens with housing and job. These two are very closely related to land. The house is built on land and the job, which is farming, is also related to it. His experience shows that before he converted to Islam, many Muslims told him that after he became a Muslim and planned to build a house they would contribute 1,000 bricks and 100 bags of cement. In fact, the promise was never fulfilled. Before he could build a house he had to sleep in a warehouse for three years. His relatives frequently visited him saying if living outside the Baduy land was too difficult, it would be better for Sarmedi to return to the Baduy land. For two years he collected money

<sup>11</sup> Interview with Haji Sarmedi on 1 June 2017.

to buy land and build a house. To make it happen he ate as little as possible. About his and other Baduy's conversion, Sarmedi concluded, "So the keyword is land."

## 2. *Conversion from Sunda Wiwitan to Christianity*

The effort to convert the Baduy to Christianity dates back to the 1870s when F.L. Anthing (d.1883) sent his cadres Stepanus, Sondjat and Petrus to the Baduy land (see Jan S. Aritonang 2005: 86, 90-2, 97). Stepanus succeeded in converting a Baduy family consisting of "Kamat, his wife and their four children". Four years later Stepanus left the Baduy land and his position as a missionary for the Baduy was occupied by Sondjat. A few years later Sondjat left the Baduy and delivered the missionary duty to Arjan who worked there until 1882. The death of F.L. Anthing who was the sponsor and the mastermind of the mission in 1883 made the mission stopped. Afterwards, another Dutch missionary A.A. Pennings came to Leuwidamar in 1894 to convert the Baduy, but he failed to get permission from the Resident of Banten. With the permit of scientific research, Pennings could visit the Baduy land but the permit was soon withdrawn (Mufti Ali 2009: 131-133; Pennings 1902: 370-386). In 1961 the effort to Christianize the Baduy was done by the Indonesian Bible Institute. Headed by Detmar Scheunemann, the mission, however, did not succeed (Sikitari 1997: 9).

Afterwards, an effort to convert the Baduy to Christianity happened again in the 1980s when the Baduy joined the resettlement programme. Around 1984 the *adat* leaders reminded the Baduy in the resettlement villages that the leaders could not accept the Baduy to live there. They offered two choices: to return to the *adat* land or to leave it. Around 1985-87 the regent of Lebak Oman Sachroni reminded the Baduy in the resettlement villages that they were no longer recognised by the *adat* leaders as Baduy. They had to choose one of the religions recognised by the state. About 12-20 Baduy families chose to convert to Christianity (Anggraeni 2000: 18).<sup>12</sup> The very instrumental person in the process of the Baduy's conversion to Christianity was Ismail Amaloh (d.2015) from Kupang, East Nusa Tenggara. He came there with Haji Adang Efendi, a Baduy enthusiast from Bandung. Ismail Amaloh and his friend Yudistira<sup>13</sup> were members of Youth With a Mission (YWAM), an evangelical interdenominational organization which was founded in 1960 in the US (*Christianity Today*, December 2010: 42; Fer, 2012: 1396).<sup>14</sup> Ismail Amaloh lived in the resettlement

<sup>12</sup> Interviews with Sapei on 22 November 2018 and with Narja on 20 December 2018.

<sup>13</sup> When Ismail Amaloh and Yudistira came there, they were in their 20s and 40s respectively. Interviews with Narja, Windu and Tatang on 24 November 2018.

<sup>14</sup> More information about this organization can be read on its website <https://www.ywam.org/>.

village of Gunung Tunggal for about two years, but some informants mentioned that he lived there for only six months. Later other missionaries or pastors came to Gunung Tunggal.<sup>15</sup>

The children and grandchildren of Jaro Samin said that every guest coming to resettlement village of Cipangembar, including Ismail Amaloh, used to stay in the house of the *jaro*. In one morning Ismail read the Bible. Narja who was a son of the *jaro* asked him what the book was. Ismail answered that it was the Bible without which his life would be meaningless. Because Narja did not know what the Bible was, Ismail explained that it was the Quran of the Christians. When Ismail returned to Bandung, Narja borrowed the Bible to progress his reading skill. Because the Bible was written in Indonesian Narja thought that Christianity was easier than Islam whose sacred book the Qur'an is written in Arabic. This comprehension arose because Narja had been exposed to the Qur'an through Islamic teachers like Abah Sarmin.

Realising that Sunda Wiwitan was not recognised by the state as a religion and Christianity was thought to be easier than Islam, Narja decided to choose Christianity. "I came from a non-religious background, then it was free for me to choose any religion," he said.<sup>16</sup> Here it is clear that Narja's concept of religion is very much influenced by the state where he used the word "non-religion" to refer to Sunda Wiwitan. Afterwards, Narja's sisters Tati and Ratna followed him to convert to Christianity. Their children would automatically follow the religion of their parents such as the children of Narja and Rabiah: Nani, Rahmat, and Nia; and those of Tati: Tatang, Windu, Agus, Wawan, and Sari. This pattern also applies to their grandchildren. Other Baduy families, including the families of Sawari, Jawas, Sarip, Ahsan, Sargawi, and Armuda, also converted to Christianity. In the peak period of conversion, the total number was more than 30 families. The Muslims even believed that it was much higher than 30.<sup>17</sup> Because each family consisted of around four members, this means there were more than 120 Baduy who converted to Christianity. Because of the pressure from the Muslim groups and the government, their number decreased. In 2018 they numbered around 70. Before they converted from Protestantism to Adventism, the Christian Baduy were affiliated with *Gereja Kristen Pasundan* (the Pasundan Christian Church) which was located on Sunan Kalijaga Street No.5, Rangkasbitung.

Like Narja, some Christian Baduy had been exposed to Islam before to

<sup>15</sup> Interviews with Windu on 24 November and 15 December 2018 and with Narja on 20 December 2018.

<sup>16</sup> Interview with Narja on 20 December 2018

<sup>17</sup> Interviews with Narja on 20 December 2018, with Windu on 24 November 2018, and with Haji Sarmedi in May 2017 and November 2018.

Christianity. One of Jaro Samin's grandchildren Windu, who was also a pastor, for instance, knew and encountered Islam first and then Christianity. His grandfather Jaro Samin once gave him a copy of the Qur'an. Windu even learned how to read the Qur'an to Ustad Ading and Ustad Yusuf.<sup>18</sup> The Christian Baduy Sapei also had encountered Islam first. He learned Islam to Abah Sarmin. Sapei said that he wanted to read the Indonesian or Sundanese translation of the Qur'an, but the *ustad* said that it was not permitted to translate the Qur'an. Being unhappy with the answer he did not learn Islam again. Later Narja converted to Christianity. His brother Haji Sapin once gave him a copy of the Qur'an, probably to attract Sapei to Islam, but it made Sapei's belief in Christianity even stronger.<sup>19</sup>

Windu who claimed to have known Jesus since he was at the grade four of the elementary school explained that the Biblical verses were miraculous. He gave two examples. First, when Ismail Amaloh and the Baduy were playing football it rained. Ismail prayed and the rain stopped in the football field, but not outside. Also when Windu's grandmother was bitten by snakes, Ismail gave her water to which he had read some verses of the Bible. "The grandmother was bitten by snakes more than seven times, she was cured. Conversely, other Baduy who did not believe in Jesus died after being bitten by snakes. Their hands rotted," Windu said.<sup>20</sup>

The teaching of Christianity has also attracted the Baduy Kokom. Even now he works as a missionary. He explained why he was interested in Christianity.

"I am interested in Christianity because [first] its teaching is clear. Second, Christianity teaches me to pray for all of us. When God guides us, our lives are joyful. Even not only friends, we also have to love our enemies. If someone throws us with stones, we have to reciprocate him with cotton. It means we may not reciprocate. If there is someone who hates us, we pray for him. It means that the teaching of Christianity is great."<sup>21</sup>

The conversion of the Baduy to Christianity in the mid-1980s was soon known by the local Muslims. Let alone some Muslims like Abah Sarmin and Abah Ewong lived in the resettlement village of Gunung Tunggul. The pressure started to appear. Windu experienced his bad days when he was a pupil at the elementary school. His religious teacher, who was a Muslim, often asked the religions of his students. When he was teaching he often asked: 'who is a Christian?' Windu who was the only Christian pupil raised his hand and followed

<sup>18</sup> Interview with Windu Nurgojali 1 on 24 November 2018.

<sup>19</sup> Interview with Sapei on 22 November 2018.

<sup>20</sup> Interviews with Windu on 24 November and 15 December 2018.

<sup>21</sup> Interview with Kokom on 20 December 2018.

by the laughter of his friends. “The question was continuously asked from grade four to grade six. It was a pressure,” Windu said. But a powerful pressure happened when the Muslims knew that a cross was drawn on the Qur’an. Narja as the oldest Christian was called by the officials of the police, the military, the KUA, and the Depag. Narja said that he did not know who did it. Later he knew that it was done by his nephew who later converted to Islam.<sup>22</sup>

The pressure was also strong when the journalist Don Hasman from a major newspaper from Bandung *Suara Pembaharuan* reported the Christmas celebration held by the Christian Baduy around 1996. Jaro Samin who was the leader of the Baduy and also a father and grandfather of some Christian Baduy was not free from the pressure. Jaro Samin himself let his children choose any religion they believed. Because of the pressure, Jaro Samin once asked Narja to leave Christianity and convert to Islam, but Narja refused. Narja also felt hurtful to hear that he and his Baduy relatives converted to Christianity because someone guaranteed their livelihood. In fact, he said, he worked in Bandung by renting a piece of land of Universitas Advent Indonesia.<sup>23</sup> Tatang and Windu argued that the roots of this tension were the joint regulation between the ministries of religious affairs and home affairs on worship places. Narja explained that after the cases happening at the end 1980s and at the beginning 1990s the relationship between the Christian and Muslim Baduy became better. For example, the Christian Baduy families were often invited by the Muslim Baduy Haji Kasmin. When Haji Kasmin was jailed in Bandung because of the corruption case (see chapter 7) his family often stayed in the house of Narja in Bandung. During holidays, they, the Muslim and Christian Baduy, often visited each other.<sup>24</sup>

Moreover, in August 1991 Narja was called by Yosef a worker in the BUMN (*Badan Usaha Milik Negara* state-owned company) of Perhutani, saying that there was a man named Bambang Sigit Waluyo in Rongkasbitung who wanted to meet him. Then Yosef brought Narja to Rongkasbitung to meet Bambang. He was from Solo, then moved to Jakarta (probably to Taman Mini Indonesia Indah), and Rongkasbitung. Bambang was a bookseller and a voluntary evangelist from the programme of *Tenaga Sukarela Pengembangan Masyarakat* (the Community Development Volunteers) of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church. In Rongkasbitung he lived in the village of Rumbut. During the meeting, Bambang proposed some questions such as: “is it true that Narja converted to Christianity?” and “is it true that the service, according to the Bible, should be

<sup>22</sup> Interviews with Windu on 24 November and 15 December 2018, with Sapei on 22 November 2018, with Narja on 20 December 2018 and with Ustad Syahroni on 22 July 2017.

<sup>23</sup> Interview with Narja on 20 December 2018.

<sup>24</sup> Interview with Tatang on 24 November 2018.



conducted on Sundays?” By citing Daniel 7:25 Bambang told Narja that the service should be on Saturdays, not on Sundays.<sup>25</sup> Understanding the explanation of Bambang, Narja converted from Protestantism to the Seventh-Day Adventism. Afterwards, he often came to Rangkasbitung to hear more about the teaching of this denomination. Some Baduy also often came there. If they were unable to come, Narja explained what he heard from the pastors, including from Pastor Joni Maromon who came from Salemba, Jakarta.<sup>26</sup>

Windu who was a protestant Christian followed his uncle Narja to convert to Adventism in 1993. Six months later more Christian Baduy also converted to this denomination. Narja, Windu, and Kokom argued that Adventism, like what was told by Bambang Sigit Waluyo to them, was the true teaching of Christianity as it is taught by the Bible. The most apparent is the day of service which should be on Saturdays. They also cited some verses of the Bible on dietary rules which were not followed by many Christians.<sup>27</sup> Afterwards, Windu was brought by Bambang Sigit Waluyo to Purwodadi to study at Sekolah Lanjutan Advent Purwodadi (the Senior High School of Adventism), Central Java, and graduated from the school in 1997.<sup>28</sup> He, and also Bambang, continued their study at Universitas Advent Indonesia in Bandung. Windu got his bachelor degree in 2001 and his master from the same university in 2014. Furthermore, Windu was appointed as a pastor and he gave services in many churches in Jakarta. Since the last few years he, his wife Elin Maringka, and their three children have been living in Rangkasbitung. Every Saturday Windu went to Cipangembar to give a service for his Christian Baduy families.<sup>29</sup>

It seems that Bambang was the man who also brought the Christian Baduy Satra, his wife and his first baby Tika in 1994 to move to Bandung when Satra's parents did not agree with Satra's conversion to Christianity. In Bandung Satra worked at Universitas Advent Indonesia as a gardener. From the work Satra, in

<sup>25</sup> Daniel 7:25 states that “And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.” Here Bambang interpreted “to change times” as there would be people who changed the time of service from Saturdays to Sundays. Because of this understanding the Adventist Christians, like the Christian Baduy, perform the service on Saturdays. <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Daniel+7%3A25&version=KJV>, accessed on 2 March 2019.

<sup>26</sup> Interview with Narja on 20 December 2018.

<sup>27</sup> The Christian Baduy Narja, by referring to the verses of Leviticus 11, explained animals which may and may not be eaten by Christians. For example, four-legged animals may be eaten if they have split hoofs and chew their cud. Leviticus 11:7 mentions that pigs have split hoofs but they do not chew the cud. Narja said that many Christians ate pork which is actually forbidden.

<sup>28</sup> Previously, Windu graduated from the elementary school (SD) of Gunungtunggal in 1990 and from the Junior High School (SMP) of Leuwidamar in 1993.

<sup>29</sup> Interview with Windu on 24 November 2018.

the end, could buy a field and changed his residency from Lebak to Bandung. He lives there with his wife and their three children. Besides Satra, another Christian Baduy named Nalim was said to have moved to Bandung. In 2003 Narja and his family moved to Parongpong, Bandung, because his children had to study at the university. He built a house not far from the campus. His relative Tatang followed Narja to stay in the same village in Bandung. They moved there because the university required its students to live with their families or to stay in the dormitory. Narja's son Rahmat once studied at the university but he finished his study at a college in Rangkasbitung. While accompanying their children, Narja and Tatang, including probably Satra, worked as farmers by renting some pieces of land of Universitas Advent Indonesia.<sup>30</sup>

Like Windu, the son-in-law of Narja, Kokom, also met Bambang Sigit Waluyo in 1993. In 1995 Bambang and Kokom went to Cepu and Ngawi, East Java, to give service. Kokom remained there until 1997. Afterwards, Kokom went to Lampung as a missionary. Bambang himself moved in 1998 to Parongpong, Bandung, to study at Universitas Advent Indonesia. He also invited Windu to study at the same university. During his study from 1998-2001 Bambang lived on Jalan Kayu Ambon, Lembang, and gave service in the surrounding areas. In 2001 Bambang was assigned to give service in Kupang, East Nusa Tenggara. From there he moved to Pangalengan, Bandung. Moreover, he was sick because of the kidney disease and brought to Advent Hospital in Cihampelas, Bandung. Later he was brought to Cikini Hospital in Jakarta and died there. Buried in Cibubur, he left his wife and three children Lina, Teti and Dona.<sup>31</sup>

Now the Christian Baduy are spread mainly in Cipangembar, Rangkasbitung, Tangerang, and Bandung. In Cipangembar there were around 5-7 families; in Rangkasbitung there are Windu and his family, in Tangerang there is Ratna who works as a midwife in the Hospital of Harapan Kita, and in Bandung there are Narja, Kokom, Tatang, Satra, and Nalim and their families. Narja and his wife have three children Nani, Rahmat, and Natalia. Nani is married to Kokom, live in Parongpong and have a daughter Sabrina. As a missionary Kokom often went to transmigration villages in Sulawesi, Lampung, and Bangka. He and his colleagues brought food and medicine. Previously, he lived in Ngawi, East Java. Rahmat once studied at Universitas Advent Indonesia, but finished his study in Rangkasbitung. Natalia was studying nursery at Universitas Advent Indonesia. Tatang spends most of his time in Cipangembar, but sometimes he stays in Bandung to look after his children who are studying in the city. Nalim has four

<sup>30</sup> Interviews with Tatang on 24 November 2018 and with Narja and his daughter Nani on 20 December 2018.

<sup>31</sup> Interview with Kokom on 20 December 2018.

daughters Nanih, Jasih, Lilis, and Lina. Nanih is married to a Papuan Adventist Edo Kaperbak who works as a missionary in Papua. Besides, there was also a Christian Baduy boy who was studying and living in Serang. His parents are Baduy who converted to Christianity and later converted to Islam.<sup>32</sup>

### 3. *Conversion from Sunda Wiwitan to Protestant Christianity to Islam*

When some Baduy converted to Islam and some others to Christianity the relation between them became bad. The Muslim Baduy Eman who once lived in the resettlement village of Gunung Tunggal said that the situation was hostile.<sup>33</sup> This bad relation was followed by the move of the Baduy from Gunung Tunggal to Margaluyu and Cihaur. The move was related to the fact that they occupied a wrong place, on the land which belonged to other people. But it was then understood by some Muslim Baduy as a simultaneous way to keep a distance with their Christian neighbours. This tension drove some Christian Baduy to convert to Islam to maintain their relationships with other Baduy. Among the Christian Baduy who converted to Islam were the families of Sapri, Salman, Sarun, Dayat, Jawas and Hasan. We will look at more details the conversion narratives of Jawas and Hasan.

Jawas<sup>34</sup> came from Gajeboh. He did not know when he was born, but he thought he was 83 years old in 2018. In the period of *gerombolan* (horde) or the Darul Islam<sup>35</sup> he was 20 years old. People told him that the Darul Islam soldiers existed in Leuwidamar and its surroundings at the end of the 1950s.<sup>36</sup> Bakels (1989: 362) mentions that Citorek, which is located around 30 km away from the Baduy land, was a place of the Darul Islam movement in 1957. So we can conclude that in 2018 Jawas was 81 years old. Jawas was born to Haljinim and Jaisah. They had eleven children. Jawas married Aswi and had seven children: two died and the five are still alive. Jawas joined the resettlement programme in 1977 because his economic life was not good and “didn’t have land (fields), while I had many brothers.” Before joining the programme he had moved from one field to another in Bojongmanik, outside the *adat* land, for twelve years. His brother who managed a non-Baduy’s field in Kopo invited Jawas to join the resettlement programme of the Depsos.

<sup>32</sup> Interviews with Narja and Kokom on 20 December 2018 and with Hasan on 22 November 2018.

<sup>33</sup> Interviews with Eman on 6 June 2017, 28 March 2017 and 8 December 2018.

<sup>34</sup> Interview with Jawas on 21 November 2018.

<sup>35</sup> Founded in 1949 by Sekarmadji Maridjan Kartosoewirjo and friends, the *Darul Islam* intended to form the Islamic State of Indonesia which was solely on the sharia. They rebelled against the government of Indonesia in some parts of the country, especially in West Java, Sulawesi and Aceh. For an extensive study of the *Darul Islam* read C. Van Dijk. 1981. *Rebellion under the Banner of Islam: the Darul Islam in Indonesia*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff.

<sup>36</sup> In this period some Muslims, to avoid the threat of the Darul Islam, hid in the Baduy land and converted to Sunda Wiwitan.

In the resettlement village Jawas was invited by the Christian Usman to convert to Protestantism. He and his wife converted to this religion. Usman, according to Jawas, told him that after abandoning Sunda Wiwitan it would be better for Jawas to choose Christianity because this religion, compared to Islam, was easier. Unlike Muslims, a Christian did not need to do the prayers five times a day and to fast for the whole month of Ramadan. “Because I didn’t know I converted” and he was baptised in a church in Rangkasbitung. Because the Christian Baduy were affiliated with the Pasundan Christian Church, he must have been baptised there. In his spare time on Sundays he followed other Christian Baduy to attend services in Rangkasbitung. His Christian Baduy friends whom he still remembered were Sapri, Sarip, Sargawi, Sarmuda, Dayat (Sarmuda’s son) and Hasan. He could not remember the exact number of the Baduy who converted to Christianity. But Usman and Narja, both were the children of Jaro Samin, were among the first Baduy who converted to Christianity. In addition, Jawas mentioned that Ismail Amaloh was as one of the missionaries who introduced Christianity to the Baduy.

Jawas lived his Christian life unhappily because his neighbours often told him that Christianity was not good. He felt uncomfortable with their comments and ashamed of himself to his neighbours who converted to Islam. Also, because he was Christian, he was unable to join socio-religious activities organised by his Muslim neighbours. His children Basri, Suhawi, and Arikisan who were close to the religious teacher Abah Ewong also encouraged him to convert to Islam. Jawas explained:

“When I was in the Baduy land, because I knew nothing, my life was restful. When I converted to Christianity my life was no longer restful because I didn’t know what Christianity was. Let alone my neighbours told me that it was not a good religion. The information from my neighbours made my life not calm.”

Afterwards, he converted to Islam by proclaiming the *shahāda* in front of Kyai Mursyidi in Margaluyu. The *kyai* who was from Lebak Masigit often came to the village to teach the villagers Islam. Afterwards, he learned Islam to Abang Sarmin and Ali in Margaluyu. His Christian friends never asked him why he left the religion. Now Jawas and his wife were spending the rest of their life in Cihaur, not far from the house of Abang Ewong. Three of their children also lived there. Another child, Ahmad, had been studying for seven years in the pesantren Wasilatul Falah (Wasfal) in Rangkasbitung.

The second example of the conversion of the Baduy from Sunda Wiwitan to Christianity and then to Islam is Hasan and his wife Siti. Hasan came from

Cisagu, whereas his wife Siti originated from Kadujangkung. In 2011 they moved to Cipangembar and converted to Christianity. Their conversion to Christianity began when Siti was ill. During her sickness Windu, her cousin<sup>37</sup>, often visited her and brought her to the hospital. To make the medication easy, Hasan and Siti stayed in the house of the Christian Usman in Cipangembar for one year and then they built their own house in the village. For seven years Siti and Hasan became Christians. They learned Christianity through the services that were delivered every Saturday by Windu. Sometimes they attended the service in a church in Rangkasbitung.

In 2017 Siti, followed by Hasan, converted to Islam. Her conversion to Islam happened without a previous consideration. When she went to her field he felt “someone” guided her not to go to the field, but Margalyu. Suddenly, her heart trembled and she was eager to convert to Islam. In Margalyu she met her brother and kept crying in front of him. Her brother met the Muslim Baduy Sapri (who was previously a Christian Baduy). Sapri went to meet and invite the religious teacher Abah Ewong. Then the latter guided her to declare the *shahāda*. Because his wife converted to Islam, Hasan followed her. Their son Arhan remains as an Adventist Christian. Siti and Hasan’s relation with Windu is still fine.<sup>38</sup>

#### 4. *Conversion from Sunda Wiwitan to Islam and then to Christianity*

This type of conversion was probably experienced only by one person, Narisah (b.1938) the widow of Jaro Sarmin. Not much information could be gathered about her conversion from Sunda Wiwitan to Islam and then to Christianity, except from her son Haji Nalim and her grandson Pastor Windu. Like many other Baduy women who converted to Islam, Narisah must have converted to Islam in the mid-1980s following her husband Jaro Samin. After Jaro Samin died, Narisah was taken care of by Ratna in Tangerang and has been with her for around ten years. When his first son Haji Nalim asked Narisah about her religion, she replied: “*Aing mah teu ka mana-mana*” which means “I don’t go anywhere” or “I don’t follow anyone.” This statement is unclear whether it means that she was still a follower of Sunda Wiwitan. But Haji Nalim was sure that she had left Sunda Wiwitan and converted to Islam. When she followed Ratna, some Muslim Baduy asked the daughter of Jaro Samin Salinah to take care of Narisah because they were worried she would convert to Christianity. Windu confirmed that his grandmother had converted to Seventh-day Adventist Christianity.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Windu’s father is the older brother of Siti’s mother.

<sup>38</sup> Interviews with Siti and Hasan on 22 November 2018.

<sup>39</sup> Interviews with Haji Nalim on 24 June 2017, with Edi on 24 May 2018 and with Windu on 24 November and 15 December 2018.

### 5. *Conversion from Sunda Wiwitan to Islam and Reverted to Sunda Wiwitan*<sup>40</sup>

We do not know exactly whether the Baduy who left the resettlement villages and returned to the Baduy land, such as Juni (from Kaduketug), Arwa (Kaduketug), and Ayah Rabiun (Karahral), in the mid-1980s had converted to Islam or not. But Salia a Muslim Baduy who lived in the resettlement village in Palopat had a story. When he and his family worked in the fields of the former Regent of Lebak Jayabaya, other five Baduy families were working there. Salia and his friends were Muslim Baduy. When he had a problem with them he decided to stop working in the family of the regent and moved to live in Palopat. Later he knew that his friends also stopped working and returned to the *adat* land.<sup>41</sup> Because the *adat* land is the land of Sunda Wiwitan where no believers of other religions are permitted to live there, we could ensure that they reverted to Sunda Wiwitan. Besides, Haji Sarmedi knew that there were no less than ten Muslim Baduy families who reverted to Sunda Wiwitan. Therefore, there were at least 15 Muslim Baduy families who reverted to the religion. Some examples of Muslim Baduy who reverted to Sunda Wiwitan are Widi, Radi, Karia and Sangsang.

Widi lived in Kaduketug with her aunt and uncle. When she was younger she was taken care of by them. Later she worked in a restaurant in Sepatan, Tangerang, had a relationship with a Muslim named Kusnadi. He asked Widi to convert to Islam because he wanted to marry her. Like what we have seen in chapter 1, in Indonesia it is like a legal obligation to marry a woman or a man from the same religion. Then Widi converted to Islam and married Kusnadi. They lived in Tangerang for around six years. During the years she often visited her families in the *adat* land. The couple then faced a conflict. It was said that her husband often gambled, came home late and fumed at her. Being unhappy with the situation Widi returned to her family in Kaduketug, in the *adat* land. Her uncle who acted as her father told her that as a Muslim she should not have lived in the *adat* land.

Widi contacted Haji Sarmedi to help her to divorce her husband. Widi, Haji Sarmedi and her family went to Tangerang to meet her husband and to discuss the continuation of their marriage. Her husband said that he still loved her, but Widi wanted to divorce. She asked him to divorce her and he did. In early 2018 she returned to the *adat* land. Her mother asked her to live with her as a Muslim, but Widi refused because her mother's village was isolated. It would be difficult for her even just to buy foodstuffs. In September 2018 Haji Sarmedi heard that Widi had reverted to Sunda Wiwitan and some Baduy confirmed the news. Haji

<sup>40</sup> Except mentioned differently, this section is based on my interviews with Haji Sarmedi on 21 December 2018.

<sup>41</sup> Interview with Salia on 10 April 2017.

Sarmedi was very sure that her decision to return to the Baduy land and reverted to Sunda Wiwitan because she did not have a place to live. Joining her mother in an isolated village would not be comfortable for people who had socialised with a lot of people. Haji Sarmede once offered her to live in his house, but he said that there were already three Muslim Baduy families living in his house.

Widi lives in Kaduketug with her aunt and uncle whom she considers her mother and father. At present Widi manages a kiosk where she sells drinks and foodstuffs. In addition, like many other Baduy women she weaves shawls and sarongs. Her mother was angry at Widi's decision to revert to Sunda Wiwitan. "I am also angry. But if I were her, probably I would have taken the same decision," Haji Sarmede said. He added, "People, in general, don't care. When they were told that there were Baduy who converted to Christianity or Muslim Baduy who reverted to Sunda Wiwitan, they only expressed their remorse."

Besides Widi, Adi, Karia and Sangsang also reverted to Sunda Wiwitan. The reason was the same: access to land and livelihood. Adi and his family converted to Islam. After some years living in Cibengkung, living difficult lives, and having no house, he often visited his family in the Baduy land. In the land he became a coolie and got enough food. Eventually, in 2010 or 2011 Adi, his wife and their two children decided to return to the *adat* land and reverted to Sunda Wiwitan. In the same period, around 2010, Karia from Cikopek reverted to Sunda Wiwitan. Before converting to Islam he bought palm sugar from the Baduy and sold it in the market. He converted to Islam and lived in the resettlement of Cigumeneng. In the village he did not have a job and returned to the Baduy land and reverted to Sunda Wiwitan. Also, Sangsang converted to Islam around 2002 and lived in Sukatani. When he was there he often became a *muadzin*, a man who calls Muslims to do prayer. Sangsang finally chose to revert to Sunda Wiwitan.

The Muslim Baduy Haji Sarmede, Asman, Herman, and Ustad Kasja had the same view that Widi and friends' reversion to Sunda Wiwitan was because they did not have a place to live and a field to manage. Haji Sarmede stated that their reversion was "because they didn't have a place to live and a job. The main thing was a place to live in."<sup>42</sup> Kasja stated that many Baduy converted to Islam and reverted to Sunda Wiwitan because they had no field and no house.<sup>43</sup> The Muslim Baduy from Cisaban Asman argued that the Muslim Baduy reverted to Sunda Wiwitan because they had "less religious education". He agreed with Haji Sarmede that poverty had driven them to the choice, but, according to him, enough religious education would have helped them in preventing them from the

<sup>42</sup> Interview with Haji Sarmede on 21 December 2018.

<sup>43</sup> Interviews with Ustad Kasja on 9 April, 10 May and 24 May 2017.

reversion.<sup>44</sup> Like Asman, the Muslim Baduy Herman believed that faith (*iman*) could prevent a Muslim Baduy from reversion. He exemplified himself who lived in poverty. Until he had grandchildren he did not have a house. He lived in a house provided by Pesantren Sultan Hasanuddin and Muhammadiyah.<sup>45</sup>

## 6. *Conversion from Sunda Wiwitan to Islam to Sunda Wiwitan and Back to Islam*<sup>46</sup>

One example of a Baduy who converted to Islam, reverted to Sunda Wiwitan and reconverted to Islam is Surya. He was born in 1965 to Arji (d.1983) and Suwanah. Surya and his brother Suta are two among twelve children of Arji and Suwanah, but ten of them have died. Surya is the only of the family who converted to Islam, whereas Suta and their mother live in Kaduketug as the followers of Sunda Wiwitan. For Surya, his conversion was to search for freedom.

“I converted to Islam because I wanted to be free. By converting to Islam I would be free even though in reality probably I would have nothing. In the Baduy land everything is forbidden. We are not allowed to have motorcycles, cars and rice fields. I experienced it. Conversely, in Islam we are permitted. So I converted to Islam to achieve this freedom.”

Surya declared the *shahāda* in 1995 in front of Kyai Zainuddin Amir in Palopat. Afterwards, he lived in Bedenglima and then moved to Cipinang, Jakarta. From Jakarta he moved to Kompol. In this village he reverted to Sunda Wiwitan because his mother asked him to do so. He explained:

“I lived with my mother. When I converted to Islam, none of my extended family members was already adult. My mother told me, ‘How if you stop being a Muslim until the grandchildren become adult? Return first to the Baduy (religion and land)?’ I thought about it: ‘I become like this because my mother was pregnant with me for nine months. She took care of me. Now she is becoming older and no one who takes care of her.’ Because I loved my mother I reverted to Sunda Wiwitan. I told to my mother that I would reconvert to Islam.”<sup>47</sup>

At present, Surya lives with his wife, who is his cousin, in Cicanir as Muslim

<sup>44</sup> Interview with Asman on 15 April 2018.

<sup>45</sup> Interview with Herman on 10 March 2018.

<sup>46</sup> Interview with Surya on 22 November 2018.

<sup>47</sup> Interview with Surya on 22 November 2018.



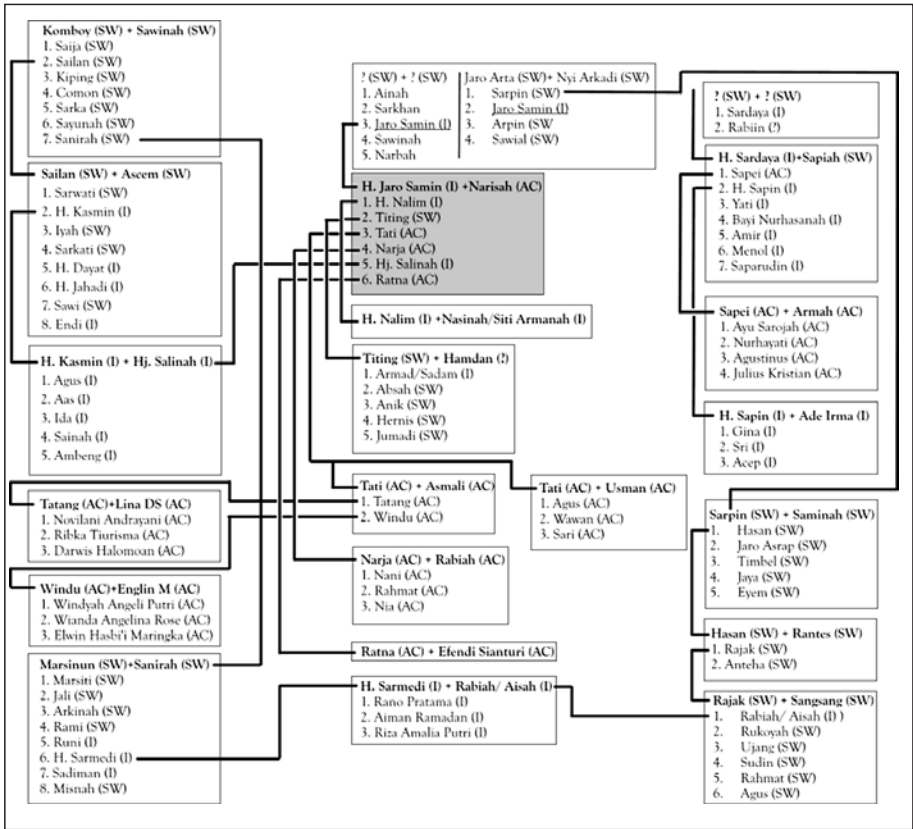


Figure 6.1: Muslim and Christian Baduy and their familial relationship. Note: I=Islam, SW=Sunda Wiwitan, and AC=Adventist Christian.

converts.<sup>48</sup> They converted to Islam in front of Haji Roni, a man who built a resettlement village in Cibengkung, in August 2018. They did so to find freedom.

“My wife said, ‘Father, you have experienced to become a Muslim. Let’s convert to Islam.’ I replied, ‘Why converting to Islam? I don’t want to convert to Islam.’ It was only a joke. I asked her why. She replied that she wanted freedom. In Islam she may wear whatever clothes she likes, whereas in the Baduy religion it is limited. When a Baduy has a good sandal it cannot be worn. Even it would be cut into pieces.”<sup>49</sup>

<sup>48</sup> His first wife had died and with her Surya has two children. With the second Surya has a son who lives in the Baduy land as the follower of Sunda Wiwitan.

<sup>49</sup> Interview with Surya on 22 November 2018.

As just stated by Surya and his wife, conversion is to find freedom. And they already got it. But freedom does not guarantee that they can overcome the problem they experienced as Baduy. Like what was experienced by Sarmedi, Widi, Adi, Karia, and many other converts, Surya and his wife did not have a place to live in or land to manage. After their conversion they moved from one place to another. In 2018 they lived in Cicanir in the house of Pak Otoy. He told the couples that it was better to live together with him rather than living in a field. Surya hoped he would have a house there. Surya said:

“Becoming a Muslim is not arduous. Doing the prayer is not tiring. The heaviest burden is to live the economic life. But I believe that God will give me His sustenance. The essence is from Allah, the method is from humans.”<sup>50</sup>

## B. Rituals of Conversion to Islam or Christianity and Reversion to Sunda Wiwitan

One of many reasons why the Baduy converted to Islam is that they can revert to Sunda Wiwitan if in the future they find Islam does not suit them. In other words, the *adat* leaders will accept the Muslim Baduy who decide to become Baduy again, as practised for example by Widi and Adi. The *adat* leaders deem that there is a connection between Muslims and the Baduy in the *shahāda*. The Muslim Baduy Salman explains that this possibility exists because the *adat* has a ritual of reversion for the Muslim Baduy. On the other hand, he added, the *adat* does not have such a ritual for the Christian Baduy.<sup>51</sup> The *jaro pamarentah* Saija, however, explained that everything happening in the *adat* land, not exclusively to conversion and reversion, had to be informed to the *puun*. “When he [a Baduy] wants to leave (the *adat* land), he has to report to the parents and the *puun*. He has to bring a *bokor* and a *kris*. Births and deaths also have to be reported to the *puun*.”<sup>52</sup>

Related to the conversion of the Baduy to Islam, there are two processes that the future converts will undergo: the process of leaving Sunda Wiwitan and that of coming into Islam. What commonly happened was that the future converts converted to Islam first and afterwards he reported his conversion to the *adat* leaders. Technically, conversion to Islam is very simple, just to proclaim the *shahāda* in front of two witnesses. The *shahāda*, therefore, is like a theological

<sup>50</sup> Interview with Surya on 22 November 2018.

<sup>51</sup> Interview with Salman on 24 May 2018.

<sup>52</sup> Interview with the *jaro pamarentah* Saija on 3 May 2018.

wall separating a Muslim from a non-Muslim. By declaring it the convert moves from one side into another. Apart from this formal way of becoming Muslims, the Baduy who converted to Islam were often demanded by the guides or the *ustad* to take a bath first. They were worried that the bodies of the converts were probably impure because of having contacted with impure substance (*najis*) such as faeces, urine, and carrion.<sup>53</sup> Afterwards, witnessed by at least two witnesses, they proclaimed the *shahāda*.

The *adat* recommends a Baduy who converts to Islam to perform a ritual called *ngabokor* or *pangrungkup* through which he says a farewell to and asks the *puun* to release him. This means that the convert leaves the Baduy land and culture respectfully. If not, the Baduy believe the convert would fall sick. Kyai Zainuddin Amir accounted a conversion story of 78 Baduy. Two of them performed the ritual of *ngabokor* and the 76 people did not. The two were fine, but the 76 people became sick. After they asked for forgiveness to the *puun* and did the ritual they became healthy again. Kyai Zainuddin said:

“*Ngabokor* is a cultural process of saying goodbye that they will abandon their culture. The *puun* releases them. In our language it is to ask for blessing and in their language the blessing is called *rahayu*.”<sup>54</sup>

Like conversion to Islam, the Christian Baduy Windu explained that the Baduy who convert to Christianity are also recommended to report to the *puun*. But if they do not do it, it would be still fine. Furthermore, Windu explained how to convert to the Seventh-day Adventist Christianity.

“One has to have a will to learn the Bible until he understands that Jesus is God and his personal Saviour, then he writes a request to be baptised, the council makes a decision, and in front of the congregation he has to proclaim 13 vows of the Seventh-Adventist Church, and then he will be baptised.”<sup>56</sup>

When a Muslim Baduy wants to revert from Islam to Sunda Wiwitan he has to follow another ceremony which is called *talibokta*. In this ritual he meets and

<sup>53</sup> About how to counteract the impurity in Islam, read “ablution” by Ze’ev Maghen in: Encyclopaedia of Islam, Three, Edited by: Kate Fleet, Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, Everett Rowson. Consulted online on 15 April 2019 [http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912\\_ei3\\_COM\\_0150](http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_0150).

<sup>54</sup> According to the standard Indonesia dictionary (Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia) the word *rahayu* means safe and peace. <https://kbbi.web.id/rahayu>, accessed on 12 April 2019.

<sup>55</sup> Interviews with Kyai Zainuddin Amir on 28 March and 6 June 2017.

<sup>56</sup> Interview with Windu via Whatsapp on 18 March 2019.

expresses his intention to a *juru basa* (message conveyor) who is generally the village leader. By bringing a *bokor* (copper bowl) filled in with the leaves of betel, incense, and a kris, the *juru basa* brings the message to the *jaro pamarentah* by saying “if he is wrong, please advise him; if he is crooked, please straighten”. The *jaro* replies, “If he wants to be righteous, I will convey the message to the *puun*.” The *jaro pamarentah* then brings the bowl to the *jaro* of Cihulu and then to the *puun*. The *puun* will read a spell for the revert. Moreover, the process of leaving or re-entering the Baduy land is the same, except for the message sent to the *puun* which is different.<sup>57</sup>

Surya explained that converting to Islam was easy, by just proclaiming the *shahāda*, but reverting to Sunda Wiwitan was very difficult. One has to do a cleansing ritual and perform a ceremony which is called *talibokta*. To perform the ceremony the revert has to have money around Rp15-18 million (around €2,200). The money will be used to make, among others, 40 *congco*<sup>58</sup>. Because Surya did not have money, until the day I interviewed him he had not been cleansed yet. He asked the *adat* leaders to accept the money he already had, around Rp3 million, but they refused and suggested him to wait for other Muslim Baduy who probably would revert to Sunda Wiwitan. If there are more reverts, the fees can be divided among them.<sup>59</sup> So far, Muslims, in general, do not consider the reversion of the Baduy to Sunda Wiwitan as a problem. Some Muslim preachers expressed that they were sad with the decision of the Muslim Baduy to return to the *adat* land, but they could not help.<sup>60</sup>

## C. Consequences of Conversion: Obtaining Freedom and Moving from the *Adat* Land

When asking about the Baduy’s post-conversion, the converts often quoted the Sundanese proverb saying “*pindah cai pindah tampian*” (literally: the move of water/river, the move of the place of taking a bath)<sup>61</sup>. This proverb means that when they move to a certain place, they have to change the place of bathing

<sup>57</sup> Interviews with Haji Sarmedi on 24 November 2018, with Surya on 22 November 2018, with Kyai Zainuddin Amir on 21 Juli 2017, with Windu on 24 November and 15 December 2018, and with the *jaro pamarentah* Saija on 3 May 2018.

<sup>58</sup> *Congcot* is a pyramid of rice added with fish, vegetables, meat, etc. A *congco*, depending on its size, would be enough for around ten people.

<sup>59</sup> Interview with Surya on 22 November 2018.

<sup>60</sup> Interviews with Haji Sarmedi on 21 December 2018 and with Ustad Kasja on 24 May 2017.

<sup>61</sup> In rural areas people often go to a river to take water, wash clothes and dishes, and bath. When they move to another village, they will go to a different river which automatically they will change the place to take water.

and washing. In other words, every choice, including conversion to Islam or Christianity, has consequences. Two major consequences that would certainly be experienced by every convert are to get freedom and to move from the *adat* land. To a lesser degree, which depends on the individuals, the converts also changed their names and experienced pressure from families.

The first consequence of conversion from Sunda Wiwitan to any religion is to get freedom. This is understandable because the Baduy believe that they are hermits and because of it they have to distance from development and modernity. In living their life as hermits the Baduy have a lot of taboos. Conversion, therefore, was chosen to free themselves from the restriction of these taboos. The strictness of the teaching of Sunda Wiwitan can be seen in the following passage:

*larangan teu meunang dirempak* (prohibitions may not be broken)  
*buyut teu meunang dirobah* ([the teaching of] the ancestors may not be changed)  
*lojor teu meunang dipotong* (length may not be shortened)  
*pondok teu meunang disambung* ([something] short may not be lengthened)<sup>62</sup>

This teaching expresses the characteristics of the Baduy as hermits where they avoid changes. As hermits they must detach themselves from modernity which is synonymous to changes. They are not allowed, for example, to develop their farms with a modern tool, including with a hoe which is traditional. Problems emerge when the population increases and the *adat* land does not. In fact, many of them, especially those who live in the bordering villages, have adopted modern life by possessing smartphones and vehicles. To free themselves from the strictness of Sunda Wiwitan and to enable them to use modern products, they chose to convert. The Muslim Baduy Haji Nalim stated that:

“In the Baduy land there are many taboos which cannot be understood, such as the Baduy are not allowed to have a glass and their dress has to be in black. Many young Baduy violate these taboos. In the Baduy land the people are forbidden to do something, but they are not given the reason why they are forbidden. In the Baduy land there are only ‘no’ and ‘taboo’. After becoming a Muslim I become free.”<sup>63</sup>

Born in 1981 and raised in Kompol, the Muslim Baduy Samin (not Jaro Samin) asserted that his will to have freedom had encouraged him to convert. He met his

<sup>62</sup> Asep Kurnia and Ahmad Sihabudin, *Saatnya Baduy Bicara*, (Jakarta: Bumi Aksara and Untirta, 2010), vi.

<sup>63</sup> Interview with Haji Nalim on 24 Juni 2017.

mother and Baduy leaders and told them that he would convert to Islam. They said that if his intention had been strong, he may convert to the religion. In 2005, he and his wife proclaimed the *shahāda* in front of the Muhammadiyah leader Hasan Alaydrus. When he was still a follower of Sunda Wiwitan, Samin “imagined to convert to Islam to seek for freedom” and after the conversion “I felt free.”

“According to the custom, but many don’t follow it, the Baduy may not wear pants and sandals. (Because breaking the custom) I felt I was like to throw rubbish carelessly. I was a Baduy but I was unlike the Baduy and at the same time I was also not a non-Baduy. A Baduy has to observe the religion of the Baduy, but I didn’t. I often broke it. Rather than making it dirty, I would be better to be free.”<sup>64</sup>

Like what was said by Samin, many Baduy in Kompol and other villages that share their borders with the non-Baduy villages have broken the customs. In Kompol some houses were electrified. It means that they had bulb lamps and some even had televisions. The Baduy in Pajaroan and Kaduketug, for instance, used solar lamps to illuminate their houses. It was also common knowledge that many Baduy had smartphones and motorcycles. Many even believed that most of the Baduy youths and some *adat* leaders had smartphones as well. Every afternoon in Ciboleger we could easily see the Baduy youths were charging their mobile phones in the shops. Some of them even had a power bank which they could use whenever the batteries of their phone were running out. Besides, it was also not rare that they wore non-Baduy clothing and some of their houses have toilets. Such conditions are called by Samin as “to throw rubbish carelessly” and “making it dirty”.

Rather than breaking the taboos, the Muslim Baduy and Al Washliyah preacher Suparta asked such Baduy to convert to Islam. “I never invited the Baduy to Islam. What I did was only to tell the Baduy to abandon Sunda Wiwitan if they want to be free. If they still live in the Baduy land but they break the taboos, they destroy the *adat*,” he said.<sup>65</sup> As we have seen in the conversion narratives of the Baduy, especially those of Surya and his wife, above, they converted to look for freedom.

Freedom is also manifested in education. The children of the Muslim Baduy were educated at schools and *pesantren* and were supported to continue their studies to universities. Ustad Kasja, Ustad Suparta, and their friends were among

<sup>64</sup> Interview with Samin on 24 Juni 2017.

<sup>65</sup> Interview with Suparta on 10 May 2017.

the first generation from the resettlement villages who obtained higher education from universities in West Java. Ustad Suparta who had a connection with Al Washliyah sent Muslim Baduy youths to Al Washliyah colleges in Medan. The youngest brother of Ustad Kasja, Toha, graduated from SDN Jalupang Mulya and SMPN Wanti. Afterwards, he continued his study to Pesantren Sultan Hasanuddin. Around 2018 he dropped out. Besides him, Sarinah, Riris Riawati, Arti Amelia, and Fitri Sofiwati were the children of the Muslim converts who were studying at the pesantren of Sultan Hasanuddin. Muslim Baduy youths in Kompol studied at another school outside the village.<sup>66</sup>

Education was also pursued by the Christian Baduy youths. The Christian Baduy, like the Muslim ones, attended formal education in the resettlement villages. Sapei studied at the Elementary School (SDN) of Gunungtunggal from 1985-1991. Windu and Ratna were the first Christian Baduy who obtained higher education. Windu graduated from SDN Gunung Tunggal in 1990, the Junior High School (SMP) of Leuwidamar in 1993, and Adventist Senior High School of Purwadadi in 1997. He continued his study to Universitas Advent Indonesia to obtain his bachelor in 2001 and master in 2014. Afterwards, he worked as a pastor in Jakarta and Lebak. Ratna who was Windu's aunt also got formal education because of which he could work as a nurse in the Harapan Kita Hospital in Jakarta. The children of the Christian Baduy were studying at universities. Some even have finished their studies. The children of Sapei Ayu Sarojah graduated from Universitas Advent Indonesia, Nurhayati graduated from Universitas Serang Raya, Agustinus was studying at SMAN Parongpong, Bandung, and Julius Kristian at SMP Makarios Jakarta. The children of Tatang were also students. The oldest was studying at Universitas Advent Indonesia. Nani, a daughter of Narja, has obtained her bachelor in Management from Universitas Advent Indonesia. Likewise, the other children of Narja, Rahmat and Nia, studied at the university.<sup>67</sup>

The second consequence of conversion from Sunda Wiwitan to any religion is that the converts have to leave the *adat* land. This consequence will be experienced by every convert because the Baduy land is the land of Sunda Wiwitan. In practice, many Baduy chose to leave the *adat* land first and then to convert, rather than the reverse. As has been mentioned several times, the Baduy have a problem of land where the available land and the number of the population are unbalanced. To cope with it they have been searching for and

<sup>66</sup> Interviews with Kasja and Samin on 10 May 2017.

<sup>67</sup> Interviews with Sapei on 22 November 2018, Windu on 24 November and 15 December 2018, and with Narja and Nani on 20 December 2018.

managing farms of the non-Baduy since at least the 1950s. During the process they adapted to social and cultural life, which is synonymous with modernity, of the villages in which they lived. Attaching to modernity means detaching from the tradition of the Baduy. When this process was happening, the *adat* leaders pressured them to return to or to leave the *adat* land. Those who thought that returning to the Baduy land meant that they would face the same problem chose conversion.<sup>68</sup> After conversion, the converts do not have the right to live in the *adat* land. Consequently, besides leaving the *adat* land the converts must sell their houses and farms to the Baduy.

Furthermore, facts show that conversion does not always guarantee that after conversion the converts would own a field. Many Muslim Baduy do not have fields and houses. They are scattered in the sub-districts of Sobang, Muncang, Cimarga, Leuwidamar, Bojongmanik, Cirintun, and Gunungkencana, managing the fields of other people. Haji Adung said, “I am also not a wealthy man, but many Muslim Baduy live in poor houses sized 3x3 square metres.”<sup>69</sup> Because they did not have a house some of them lived in the houses of other Muslims. Surya and his wife, for example, lived in Cicanir in the house of Pak Otoy. Also, about three Muslim families lived together in the house of Haji Sarmedi in Ciboleger. Muslim Baduy who were living in the resettlement village of the BUMNs (state-owned corporations) in Palopat also did not possess the houses. They, however, were permitted to live there as long as they wanted. The reversion of the Baduy is believed by many Muslim Baduy to be related to the fact that they could not afford land and a house. And the competition among the Muslims and Christians to buy land was driven, among others, by this condition.

The third consequence of conversion which is worth mentioning is pressure. The strength of pressure experienced by the converts is different from one to another convert. Great pressure was experienced by Haji Sarmedi who converted to Islam in August 2000. When he informed his mother that he had converted, his mother said that she was no longer his mother. Besides, she stated that she would not come if Sarmedi dies and asked him not to come to her house if she dies. His father-in-law even pressed him harder. He threatened to kill him and to cut the body of Sarmedi’s wife into two halves. These threats arose probably because his father-in-law was a reputable figure in his village. And he once spoke to the villagers that conversion was a bad choice and the convert would be his enemy. On the other hand, Sarmedi himself was a son of the *jaro pamarentah*

<sup>68</sup> Interviews with Haji Sarmedi on 20 May 2017, and 18 and 20 November 2018.

<sup>69</sup> Interviews with Haji Adung on 8 July 2017 and 22 November 2018.



where he would be chosen to replace the position of his father.<sup>70</sup> Unlike Haji Sarmedi, some converts said that their conversion was supported by their families. Sardaya and Saman, for example, came to Puun Ajal in Cibeo telling him that they and other 66 Baduy would convert to Islam. The *puun* permitted and prayed for the people.<sup>71</sup>

The fourth consequence of conversion is to change their names. The name change was mainly offered by the guide of the conversion to mark that the converts had changed. It was optional, but many did it especially those who converted to Islam. And what commonly happened, the name change was not radical. The guide only gave an extra name which was more Arabic-Islamic or he changed the old one with a new one but still similar. I suppose that this name change is influenced by the conversion form issued by the Ministry of Religious Affairs where there is the phrase “Islamic name” on it. From all conversion certificates I have, almost all converts changed their names, for example, Arsid becomes Arsid Darussamin, Tope becomes Tope Taufik, and Saiman becomes Saiman Ramdani. In the Christian circle, the name change rarely happened.

For the first generation of the prominent Baduy converts, conversion to Islam could also mean to be funded to do the pilgrimage (*the haj*). They were financially supported by either the local office of Depag or Muslim individuals. The Muslim Baduy who have made the pilgrimage include Jaro Samin (Cipangembar), Haji Nalim (Margaluyu), Haji Jani (Palopat), Haji Jahar (Cilangir), Haji Ecin (Nagara), Haji Dulhamid (Talaga), Haji Jali and his wife, Haji Sarmedi and his wife (Ciboleger), Haji Isa, Haji Nurdin (Cihandam), Haji Ruyani, and Haji Kosasih. Haji Nalim and Abah Ewong explained that Haji Samin went to Mecca in 1983 funded by the head of Depag of Lebak, whereas Haji Kosasih was funded by the regent of Langkat, North Sumatra. The pilgrimage of Haji Nalim and his wife, Haji Sarja and Haji Sardaya was funded by other individuals. The grandfather of Kasja’s wife, Dulhamid, was sent to Mecca by Muhammadiyah of Lebak. Haji Kasmin’s pilgrimage in 1992 was funded by the regent of Lebak Endang Suwarna. His wife also performed the pilgrimage but funded by herself. The Muslim preachers who did the *da’wa* activities for the Baduy have also been sent to Mecca for the *haj* or *umrah* like Ustad Syahroni (Al Washliyah) and Ustad Kasja (Muhammadiyah) (see also Persoon 1994: 361).<sup>72</sup>

<sup>70</sup> Interviews with Haji Sarmedi in May 2017 and November 2018.

<sup>71</sup> Interview with Sardaya on 4 June 2018.

<sup>72</sup> Interviews with Abah Sarmin on 4 June 2017, with Sapei 22 November 2018, with Haji Sarmedi on 24 November and with Ustad Kasja on 9 April, 10 May and 24 May 2017.

## D. The Identities of the Baduy Converts to Islam and Christianity

Whether a Baduy convert still deserves a Baduy identity or not, the Baduy leaders and the converts have a different view. The first thought that conversion which was marked by leaving the Baduy land made the Baduy non-Baduy. They termed it “rice which has become porridge can no longer be called rice”. The Muslim and Christian Baduy, however, stated that they were still Baduy, except the fact that they had a different religion. They based their argument about the Baduy identity on the birthplace. In other words, converts who were born in the Baduy land may claim to be Baduy. Some of them, like the Muslim Baduy Haji Sarmedi and the Christian Baduy Sapei, even promoted themselves as Baduy. The children of the Baduy converts who were born in the Baduy land but raised outside felt a half Baduy. And the children of the converts who were born outside the Baduy land, and born after their parents converted, refused to be called Baduy. Eman said, “My children don’t feel as Baduy because they were born as Muslims and were not born in the Baduy land.”<sup>73</sup>

The identities of the Muslim and Christian Baduy, who labelled themselves or were labelled by the society as “the Muslim and Christian Baduy”, are too weak to last. First, the Baduy community does not recognise the Baduy who have converted as Baduy, they are no longer Baduy. Second, those who stated that they were Baduy are mainly those who were born in the *adat* land. Their children who were born outside the *adat* land were reluctant to be called Baduy. This means when the Muslim and Christian Baduy die, there will be no what we call “the Muslim and Christian Baduy” anymore. Even it is rare for people to use the terms “the Muslim Baduy” and “the Christian Baduy”. People seem to already forget that the Muslim Baduy in Nagari and the Muslim and Christian Baduy in Cipangembar were Baduy. Except that they were born in the *adat* land, the converts have adapted and integrated themselves into the larger society in terms of language, clothing, religion and social life. In terms of language, the Baduy converts do not speak Sundanese like it is spoken by the Baduy. Their Baduy’s accent is already gone. They prefer to speak in Sundanese of the majority which is deemed more polite and soft (*halus*). The disappearance of this identity is the consequence of conversion which is a process of moving away from the Baduy land and culture.

Among the Muslim and Christian Baduy who were proud of being Baduy and promoted their Baduyness are Narja, Kokom, Haji Sarmedi, and Ustad Kasja. Narja explained:

<sup>73</sup> Interviews with Haji Sarmedi on 24 November 2018, with Eman on 6 June 2017 and 20 November 2018, with Sapei on 22 November 2018, and with the *jaro pamarentah* Saija on 3 May 2018.

“I feel I am still a Baduy. I am proud of being called a Baduy. My last child Natalia was born in Cipangembar. In the campus she often said that she was a Baduy. I am still a Baduy even though I don’t live in the Baduy land and my religion is different (no longer the follower of Sunda Wiwitan). I myself am not allowed by the *adat* leaders to claim that I am a Baduy because I have left the Baduy land; and I am no longer the follower of Sunda Wiwitan.”<sup>74</sup>

A son-in-law of Narja, Kokom, was also proud of being a Christian Baduy. When someone asked his name, he always added to his name ‘Baduy’: Kokom Baduy. He knew that he was not allowed by the *adat* to claim to be a Baduy because he had converted to Christianity. This prohibition exists “because their belief is territorial” which means that the Baduy who live outside the territory may not call themselves Baduy.<sup>75</sup>

Although not popular, Cipangembar is sometimes called “the Christian Baduy village”. This village is inhabited by around ten families. Most of them are Christians. But in mid-2018 a Jamaah Tabligh family bought some squares of land in the village. Afterwards, the family founded a pesantren there. The existence of the pesantren probably would make the designation of the village as the Christian Baduy village disappearing.

Similarly, the designation of “the Muslim Baduy villages” has almost disappeared. People do not call the villages of the Muslim Baduy, such as Cihaur, Margaluyu, Palopat, and Nagara, as the villages of the Muslim Baduy. They simply mention the names of the villages, without associating them to the Muslim Baduy. Haji Nalim and Kyai Zainuddin Amir stated that it was not easy to distinguish the Baduy and the non-Baduy in Margaluyu, Cipangembar, and Cihaur. In terms of religiosity, they saw that the Baduy were even more religious.<sup>76</sup> The Muhammadiyah preacher in Nagara, Ustad Ujeng, did not use the term “Muslim Baduy” for a very long time.<sup>77</sup> Different from Haji Nalim, Kyai Zainuddin Amir, Ustad Ujeng Suheli, and Ustad Kasja, maintained the term “Muslim Baduy” by deploying it as the name of his foundation Yayasan Baduy Muslim (Muslim Baduy Foundation).<sup>78</sup>

<sup>74</sup> Interview with Narja on 20 December 2018.

<sup>75</sup> Interview with Kokom on 20 December 2018.

<sup>76</sup> Interviews with Kyai Zainuddin Amir on 6 June and 21 July 2017.

<sup>77</sup> Interview with Ustad Ujeng Suheli on 6 June 2017.

<sup>78</sup> Interviews with Ustad Kasja on 9 April and 10 May 2017.

## E. Conclusion

The conversion of the Baduy to either Islam or Christianity was their response to two opposite poles: the teaching of Sunda Wiwitan on the one hand and the larger society, including the government, on the other. Sunda Wiwitan teaches the Baduy that they are hermits who have to detach themselves from modernity and development. Problems began to happen when their land is limited, but the number of the population keeps increasing. At the same time as hermits they are prohibited by their religion to manage their land with modern tools and techniques. Conversion was eventually chosen by some Baduy to cope with these problems of access to land and the population growth, but this choice was not always successful for everyone.

When the Baduy decided to convert, the state offered only five religions (now six). The choices which were available through missionaries were only two: Islam and Christianity. Islam which was supported by the larger society and the local government obtained more converts indeed. But conversion itself was fluid where a convert could change from one religion to another as we can see from their conversion patterns: (1) from Sunda Wiwitan to Islam, (2) from Sunda Wiwitan to Christianity, (3) from Sunda Wiwitan to Christianity to Islam, (4) from Sunda Wiwitan to Islam to Christianity, (5) from Sunda Wiwitan to Islam and reverted to Sunda Wiwitan, and (6) from Sunda Wiwitan to Islam, reverted to Sunda Wiwitan and reconverted to Islam. The Muslim majority seemed not to care of the Baduy who reverted to Sunda Wiwitan. The Muslim preachers themselves just regretted their choice, but they could not help.

Conversion, which was meant to look for freedom and from which they hoped to be able to have land or fields, was not always a guarantee for the converts to possess land and a house. Because of the failure some Baduy chose to revert to Sunda Wiwitan. Most of the converts, however, remain as Muslims or Christians because conversion is synonymous with freedom, development, and modernity. For the prominent figures of the first converts in the 1980s and 1990s, conversion could also mean that they were funded by the government and Muslim individuals to carry out a pilgrimage to Mecca. Moreover, the Muslim and Christian Baduy, as a new group, seems too weak to be recognised as “the Muslim Baduy” and “the Christian Baduy” since the Baduy community does not recognise the term “the Baduy” to be attached to the converts. They base their argument on the concept that Baduyness and Sunda Wiwitan are territorial. The children of the converts are also reluctant to be associated with the Baduy.