



Political Communication Activities in the Kapuunan Institution of Baduy Indigenous Community

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Abstract

Since ancient times, the Sundanese people have had their government system called Tri Tangtu Di Buana, consisting of Prebu, Rama, and Resi. The three institutions have power in their respective fields. Tri Tangtu Di Buana is still manifesting in a kapuunan (government) institution for the Baduy indigenous people called Tangtu Telu. Tangtu Telu represents the three kapuunan that govern the life of the Baduy indigenous community, which are Puun Ponggawa (Prebu) in Cibeo, Puun Rama in Cikeusik, and Puun Resi in Cikartawana. Under these three institutions, several positions function as assistants and mouthpieces to the Baduy community or to deal with outside parties (government), namely puun, jaro tangtu, pangiwa, and jaro pamaréntah; and the leader of each village, which is the kokolot lembur. The inherent power in each of these institutions and positions certainly opens up opportunities for political communication activities. This study aimed to determine the activities of political communication in the kapuunan (government) institution of Baduy. This study uses qualitative research, precisely the phenomenological method, with data collection methods in interviews and observations. The results show that the political communication activities that occur in appointing/electing puun, jaro tangtu, jaro pamaréntah and kokolot lembur are implemented to grant power and positions in various communication contexts, which are interpersonal and group communication with top-down and bottom-up communication styles.

Keywords

political communication; power; kapuunan institution; Tangtu Telu; Baduy indigenous community

Introduction

Since ancient times, the Sundanese people have had three institutions, each of which has a different task. The three institutions have power in their respective fields. The traditional Sundanese power division/separation model and other rules are clearly described in the text *Fragmen Carita Parahyangan (FCP)* (16th century AD); a Prebu does not solely determine this is carried out by agreement with Rama and Resi's side. Prebu-Rama-Resi is called the *Tri Tangtu Di Buana* (the three groups that determine the wheel of power in the world) (Permana, 2015).

The power system in Sundanese society at that time had to be divided so that one was separated from the other so that royal power was not concentrated in one hand (the king). It can prevent arbitrary actions of the ruler, and political freedom in the kingdom will be guaranteed. In *Tri Tangtu Di Buana*, many political activities contain aspects of political communication between power holders. Aspects of political communication are manifested in political communication activities that occur in the division/separation of power and the division of power in the Sunda Kingdom. *Tri Tangtu Di Buana* is still manifesting in a kapuunan (government) institution for the Baduy indigenous people called *Tangtu Telu* (Sumarlina, 2016).

Dan Nimmo formulates political communication as an activity that is politically based on actual and potential consequences, which regulates behaviour in conditions of conflict (Ardial, 2010). Meanwhile, Mark Roelofs and Barn Lund stated that "Politics is talk or to put the matter, more exactly the activity of politics (politicking) is talking". This expression implies that political communication focuses more on the weight of the content material that contains political messages (Harun & AP., 2006). Political communication is also "not value-free", closely related to historical and cultural factors (Nurussaadah & Sumartias, 2017).

Dan Nimmo divides political communicators into three types, namely politicians, professionals, and activists. Political communication messages relate to the state's role in protecting all the interests of the community (citizens). The message can be in the form of decisions, policies and regulations concerning the interests of the whole society, nation and state. This message can, of course, be spread through various channels, mainly through mass, interpersonal, and organizational channels (Nimmo, 2005).

It can be said, who initiates communication is an indicator of power. Communication that puts humans in a lower position is a form of exercising power. Power is positive in the sense that it can achieve its goals and solve its problems. Foucault states that the exercise of power creates new knowledge and a collection of information. Power is a positive force when it is shared, developed in others, and

used wisely. Power is closely related to communication because communication can determine outcomes: knowledge, beliefs, and actions. Communication is a mechanism for exercising influence (power) (Pace & Faules, 2006).

Power is embodied in leadership, and the concept of leadership of the Sundanese society is contained in the *parigeuing* concept (Sumarlina & Permana, 2019); (Permana et al., 2020). Political communication and power are also implemented in the order of indigenous peoples, one of which is the Baduy indigenous people. The Urang Baduy are a group of Sundanese people who live in one village within the administrative area of Lebak Regency, Banten Province. His village of residence, Kanekes Village, is located approximately 60 km south of Rangkasbitung Town, the capital of Lebak Regency. Baduy people only inhabit Kanekes village, so the Baduy community in the village is a relatively homogeneous society. The Baduy people divide themselves into two major groups, which are the Tangtu or Baduy Dalam (Inner Baduy) groups (three villages) and the Panamping or Baduy Luar (Outer Baduy) groups. There are approximately 26 villages in Kanekes Village, which now number more. The village area is 5 hectares with a population of 4,574 people, or 1,165 heads of families living in 1,075 houses (Garna, 2009).

The three tangtu villages above are representations of Tangtu Telu, where three kapuunan regulate the life of the Baduy indigenous community. The three are Puun Ponggawa (Prebu) in Cibeo, Puun Rama in Cikeusik, and Puun Resi in Cikartawana. The three puun are often called the trinity, meaning that the three people hold one decision (Arif et al., 2021). Puun Cikeusik is the oldest puun and is located in the deepest (southernmost) of the three tangtu villages in Baduy. The youngest puun is Puun Cibeo and is located at the outermost of the three tangtu villages. Meanwhile, the intercessor was Puun Cikartawana. Therefore, the centre of worldly activities is centred in Cibeo and vice versa; Puun Cikeusik tends to be very little influenced by worldly things.

The Baduy community is an indigenous people who always obey and firmly adhere to the customs of their ancestors. They still adhere to the "pikukuh" tradition inherited by their ancestors from generation to generation (AS et al., 2020). In the cultural dynamics of the Baduy community, pikukuh is relatively strong in the Inner Baduy community (tangtu) but loosens up in the Outer Baduy community (panamping) (Amaliyah, 2018). Along with the times, now the Baduy people must be more vital to fortify themselves from outside influences, especially those bordering Ciboleger, which are increasingly crowded and filled with various cultural customs from outside.

As an ethnic group, the Baduy are known for their resistance to modernity, maintaining a secluded life without resorting to any form of modern technology (Heriyanto et al., 2019). In fact, in Inner Baduy (tangtu), eating and drinking utensils made of glass, plastic and other household items originating from outside are prohibited (Syarbini, 2015). They are also not allowed to ride in vehicles and are not allowed to wear sandals, and they must travel by foot (Ahidin et al., 2018).

The Baduy community, as indigenous people, does have an attraction, both in terms of culture and nature (Sobarna & Afsari, 2020).

Based on this explanation, the purpose of this study is to determine the activities of political communication in the Kapuunan (government) institution of Baduy. This research focuses on the discussion of the process of appointing/electing puun, jaro tangtu (kokolotan), jaro pamaréntah and kokolot lembur.

Method

This research uses qualitative research, precisely the phenomenological method. Phenomenology connects scientific knowledge with everyday experience and from the activities where experience and influence originate—in other words, basing social action on experience, meaning, and consciousness (Kuswarno, 2009). Observation and interviews were used as data collection methods in this research.

Authors make passive participation observations, meaning that they only act as an observer. The reason is that authors themselves are outsiders who are not a member of the Baduy indigenous community; so authors observe as naturally as possible what the subject of observation does and says. The authors observe the actions and words related to the phenomena that highlight the political communication activities of the leaders in the kapuunan institutions of Baduy.

The authors use two interview methods, which are informal conversation interviews and in-depth interviews. Informal conversation interviews were conducted unstructured to Baduy people to obtain information about political communication activities carried out by leaders in Baduy. According to the flow of the conversation, the authors naturally asked several Baduy people questions so that the interviewee would not realize that he was being interviewed. In the interview process, the authors capture keywords related to the research as much as possible. After the discussion is over, then the interview recording process is carried out.

The informants in this study were Baduy residents who knew the ins and outs of Tangtu Telu. They are Ayah Cudih and Asmin from Cijengkol Village and Ayah Sarjaya and Aki Jahadi from Cikartawana Village. Interviews were conducted using a flowing and unstructured, informal conversation method. An exception was made to Ayah Cudih as the primary informant of the authors because he was one of the conservatives in Baduy and was willing to be formally interviewed using the in-depth interview method.

Result and discussion

Tri Tangtu Di Buana is reflected in the three kapuunan in Baduy, which are Puun Cibeo, Cikartawana, and Cikeusik. The three kapuunan are collectively called Tangtu Telu, which is a representation of Tri Tangtu Di Buana of Baduy. Currently, in Baduy, there are also several internal official elections involving Tri Tangtu Di Buana there. This activity also contains aspects of political communication. Under

the three kapuunan institutions, several positions function as assistants and mouthpieces to the Baduy community or deal with outside parties (the government). The following are some positions in kapuunan institutions that play an essential role in the government in Baduy.

Puun

Puun is the highest position in the tangtu area (Cibeo, Cikartawana, Cikeusik). They not only lead in their tangtu village but also lead the Baduy people as a whole. According to the prevailing customs and regulations (pikukuh), the position of this puun is inherited from generation to generation (genealogically), unless other things do not allow this genealogical inheritance of positions. If this happens, the position of puun can be passed on to close relatives. The honorific call for the puun is "girang".

Jaro Tangtu (Kokolotan)

Each puun has a jaro tangtu who is his right hand and deputy in the daily execution of the kapuunan government affairs. Their duties include all kinds of affairs related to puun, and they have the most challenging tasks compared to other officials. It could be said that they are the spearheads of puun communication because their main task is as spokespersons and couriers in conveying messages that have been given to the Baduy community at large. They are the ones who go here and there to convey the message and be the mouthpiece of the Baduy community to the puun. They also coordinate with the jaro pamaréntah for external affairs (central government) and kokolot lembur as leaders in Outer Baduy (panamping) villages.

Jaro Pamaréntah

The formal leadership of Kanekes Village is called jaro pamaréntah. The person who holds this position handles dealing with outside parties, especially with the regional/provincial government. Hierarchically, he is under the sub-district head, but in routine matters, he is subject to three puuns. This candidate for jaro of the Kanekes Village must get the blessing of the three puuns before being submitted to the Lebak Regent (through the sub-district head) to be confirmed as village head. Because jaro pamaréntah must come from the original Baduy community, it is taboo to write. Writing activities are carried out by scribes (carik) taken from non-Baduy people (outsiders).

Kokolot Lembur

Kokolot lembur is the head/in charge of the government in each panamping village. The person holding this position must be able to be elder or must be able to act like an older person by the citizens. Kokolot lembur is also tasked with

marrying off two lovebirds who are about to marry (acting as a headman). He also keeps the tools for routine ceremonies.

Puun, jaro tangtu, jaro pamaréntah and kokolot lembur are institutions that exist within the kapuunan Baduy institution. The following is the process of selecting and appointing several officials in kapuunan institutions in Baduy.

Puun Appointment Process

The process of appointing puun in Baduy can be said to have a unique and mystical way. Based on the results of the author's interviews, which were summarized from informants, namely Ayah Cudih (62) and Asmin (38), who are both residents of Cijengkol Village, and Aki Jasih (65) and Ayah Sarjaya (60) elders in Cikartawana, this process occurs through several stages, as stated in the interview excerpt below:

"The process of appointing the puun in Baduy was initiated by the incident of "possession of the spirit of karuhun" which was experienced by one of the residents of tangtu village. People who are possessed are not necessarily gender and age, it can be anyone, be it male or female, children or adults. Incidents of this trance can happen at any time, even though the duration of his previous tenure was not too long. After experiencing this trance incident, usually the residents gather at the trance place, then take this person to the puun's house and call people who are related by blood to the puun, for example brother and sister and their children. After everyone is gathered, this possessed person then appoints who will be the next puun."

It has been mentioned above that the position of puun is passed down genealogically (and is male), so it is certain that the next puun will be the child of the previous puun. However, the eldest child of a puun does not necessarily become a puun immediately because the middle child and the youngest child can also be appointed as a puun if the puun has more than one son. There are also interesting cases in this puun selection process. If the puun previously did not have a son, then the next puun will be the son of the puun's brother or sister (in other words, his nephew). Because in Baduy, a man who has not had children is not allowed to hold a position in a puun institution, be it jaro tangtu, jaro pamaréntah or kokolot lembur.

After the process of appointing the puun is complete, this possessed person faints and regains consciousness a few moments later. This decision is absolute and cannot be contested because the Baduy people believe that the appointment of this puun comes directly from karuhun. Therefore, they must accept it with joy. The person appointed as puun has always succeeded in carrying out his duties well; because of that, there has never been any discontent from the Baduy community, so there has never been a coup or demand for resignation from the Baduy community puun in office.

The term of office of these puuns is also uncertain. According to interviews, the shortest duration of office for a puun was eight years, which happened in

Cikeusik. While the most prolonged duration was 25 years, it also happened in Cikeusik. In terms of age, 35 years old is the youngest age a person has ever been appointed to be a puun, while the oldest was 50 years old when he or she was appointed a puun, and both occurred in Cibeo. The age range of the person appointed to be a puun is 35-50 years.

The aspect of political communication that is manifested in political communication activities that occur in appointing a puun occurs when a person possessed by a karuhun spirit appoints a new puun. This possessed person also often gives advice and reasons for choosing someone to be a puun. Because it involves political events, namely the appointment of people who will occupy the power, this process is included in one of the political communication activities.

Jaro Tangtu Appointment Process

Jaro tangtu is also commonly referred to as "kokolotan" by the Baduy. Unlike the appointment of the puun, which is carried out directly by the karuhun through a trance event, the jaro tangtu is chosen by the puun directly. Jaro Tangtu Cibeo was chosen by Puun Cibeo, as were the other two tangtu villages. According to the results of the author's interviews with informants, several critical must be possessed by candidates for jaro tangtu. As in the following excerpt from the interview with Ayah Cudih:

"A jaro tangtu must possess several criteria: physically and mentally healthy, have good physical condition and stamina, dedicated, trusted, and able to communicate well with all groups."

Because of the vital function of the jaro tangtu in the governance of the puun institution, the puun was never careless in choosing the jaro tangtu. The jaro tangtu would later become puun's right hand, tongue-in-cheek, carrying out the function of public relations and his media in conveying his messages. A jaro tangtu mainly has to have strong physical and stamina because he can go around all villages in Baduy if there is an important message from the puun that must be conveyed to the Baduy community at large. On the other hand, the distance between villages in Baduy is far. He must also have intelligence in digesting the messages he receives because a jaro tangtu also acts as a medium of communication for puun, jaro pamaréntah, and kokolot lembur. In addition to having intelligence in interpreting messages, he must also have good communication skills so that the interlocutor quickly understands the message.

If the puun changes, the jaro tangtu can also be replaced because a jaro tangtu is usually a confidant of the puun. In other words, the selection is based on the subjective feelings of the puun. However, if the new puun feels comfortable and believes in the jaro tangtu of the previous puun, the new puun will not replace him. A jaro tangtu can also submit his resignation from his position to the puun if he can no longer hold that position. According to interviews, the reason for the resignation of a jaro tangtu was because he was no longer physically strong. After all, every time he received a message from the puun, he had to walk tens of

kilometres to convey it to the Baduy community in each village, be it the panamping village or the tangtu village.

The aspect of political communication in appointing jaro tangtu is manifested in political communication activities when puun gives positions to people who are finally lined up to become jaro tangtu. The political communication that took place was face-to-face and was attended by influential citizens in the tangtu village. Because it involves government and the granting of power, this process is included in political communication.

Jaro Pamaréntah Appointment Process

Candidates for jaro pamaréntah (candidates for Kanekes Village Head) must obtain the blessing of the three puuns. After obtaining approval, it can be submitted to the regent (through the sub-district head) to be confirmed as village head. In other words, if the puun consider his work satisfactory, then the jaro pamaréntah can continue to serve. Like today's jaro pamaréntah, the puun in Baduy have trusted so much for almost a quarter of a century. As stated in the following excerpt from the interview with Asmin:

“Jaro Dainah, who has been the village head for five terms, or approximately 25 years, can hold office for a long time because the puun are satisfied with his work as a bridge between Baduy and the government, and trust him wholeheartedly.”

Before Jaro Dainah took office, other jaro pamaréntah who served in the previous period included Jaro Pulung, Jaro Asrap, and Jaro Nakiwin. Except for Jaro Asrap, who was disliked by the puun when he served as jaro pamaréntah, so he was replaced halfway, Jaro Pulung and Jaro Nakiwin were replaced because they died while in office. Until now, Jaro Dainah is the longest jaro pamaréntah who has served in Baduy.

Almost the same as in appointing the jaro tangtu, the aspect of political communication that is manifested in the political communication activities contained in this process occurs when the puun give their blessing to the candidate for jaro pamaréntah to serve as the village head of Kanekes. Jaro pamaréntah was given the authority and power to bridge the Baduy with outsiders, in this case, the government. So, the puun gave him sovereignty as a formal leader of the Baduy region, serving as the Head of Kanekes Village.

Kokolot Lembur Selection Process

In the selection of the kokolot lembur, the puun are not directly involved. The selection of the kokolot lembur was left to the panamping villagers, who had the right to determine their leader. The selection of the kokolot lembur was not made by voting but through deliberation conducted by the elders in the panamping village who wanted to choose the kokolot lembur. The elders gathered in one place (it could be anyone's house, depending on the agreement). They gathered and

communicated with each other to determine the candidate for the kokolot lembur who would be assigned the position. So, just like the puuns, in the process of selecting the kokolot lembur, the elders conducted a focus group discussion (FGD) in the context of group communication.

This is where political communication activities take place. There are almost no disagreements between the eldest in this election process. Even if there is a difference of opinion, usually the opinion of the oldest and most respected elder will be taken; the term is "milu ka nu kolot". In addition, one of the forms of influence of the customary structure on the way the Baduy community engages in politics is the existence of traditional values in the form of "lunang" or "milu ka nu meunang" (follow the winner) (Mahpudin, 2020). After the kokolot lembur is elected, he will report to the puun through jaro tangtu. So, the political communication activities that occur are bottom-up.

The description of the above political communication activities can be seen in the following table.

Table 1 Political Communication Activities in the Kapuunan Institution of Baduy Indigenous Community

Activity	Political Communication Event	Context
The Appointment of Puun	Appointment of people who will occupy the reins of power	Face-to-face interpersonal communication
The Appointment of Jaro Tangtu		Face-to-face interpersonal communication
The Appointment of Jaro Pamaréntah		Face-to-face interpersonal and group communication
The Election of Kokolot Lembur	Election of people who will occupy the power	Face-to-face interpersonal and group communication
Source: Authors' Result		

Conclusion

Aspects of political communication manifested in political communication activities that occur in appointing a puun to occur when a person possessed by a karuhun spirit appoints a new puun. This possessed person also often gives advice and reasons for choosing someone to be a puun. Because it involves political events, which is the appointment of people who will occupy the power, this process is included in one of the political communication activities.

Furthermore, the aspects of political communication contained in appointing jaro tangtu are manifested in political communication activities when puun assigns positions to people who are finally lined up to become jaro tangtu. The political communication that took place was face-to-face and was attended by influential citizens in the tangtu village. Because it involves government and the granting of power, this process is included in political communication.

Almost the same as in the process of appointing the jaro tangtu, the aspect of political communication that is manifested in the political communication activities contained in the process of appointing the jaro pamaréntah occurs when the puun give their blessing to the candidate for jaro pamaréntah to serve as the Head of Kanekes Village. Jaro pamaréntah was given the authority and power to bridge the Baduy with outsiders, in this case, the government. So, the puun gave him sovereignty as a formal leader of the Baduy region, serving as the Head of Kanekes Village.

Meanwhile, in selecting the kokolot lembur, the elders conducted focus group discussions (FGD) in the context of group communication. This is where political communication activities take place. There is almost no disagreement between the elders in this election process. Even if there is a difference of opinion, usually the opinion of the oldest and most respected elder will be taken; the term is "milu ka nu kolot". After the kokolot lembur is elected, he will report to the puun through jaro tangtu. So, the political communication activities that occur are bottom-up.

Political communication activities that occur in the four events above can certainly provide knowledge to readers about political communication that occurs in the midst of one of the indigenous peoples who still exist today. The authors recommends maintaining a familial communication style, whatever the context, as manifested in the Baduy indigenous people. With communication based on kinship, surely harmony in society will be formed and maintained.

Limitation and study forward

This study focuses on political communication activities in the institution of the kapuunan of Baduy. It highlights how these activities occur in the appointment/election of puun, jaro tangtu, jaro pamaréntah and kokolot lembur. Further research in other scientific fields is highly recommended because the life of the Baduy people still has much potential to be explored, studied and researched.

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