

Biculturalism Badui people's identity: a case study on Seba Badui 2023

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Abstract This research discusses how an indigenous community assimilates two divergent cultures in the wake of Globalisation, specifically focusing on the influence of technology. The subject of this study is the Baduis people of Banten. Drawing upon McLuhan's media ecology theory, this qualitative research adopts a case study approach. The research centres on the Badui people, focusing on the Baduy Seba activities that transpired in April 2023. The primary aim is to examine how this Indigenous society, which initially resisted technology, eventually engages in the process of cultural acculturation. The findings of this study reveal that the Banten Baduis people demonstrate a reserved demeanour in the face of Globalisation's influence, choosing to embrace change cautiously while still preserving their core values. This cautious and adaptive attitude of the Baduis people towards the swift influence of technology reflects their biculturalism, where they successfully blend their traditional customs with aspects of the modern world.

Keywords: badui people, biculturalism, cultural studies

INTRODUCTION

Globalisation, as a consequence of modernisation, has brought about numerous transformations in the meaning of life. One notable impact is the blending and clash of cultures, wherein certain cultures gain prominence and influence over others. In this context, a common perception emerges that endorses the adoption of foreign cultures, deemed superior and desirable by individuals and communities (Jandt, 2013a). Consequently, native cultural identities in specific regions may be gradually abandoned and forgotten during this process of cultural expansion (Laksono, 2021; Yasir et al., 2019).

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Globalisation, when observed through a historical lens, encompasses various aspects, including economics, politics, military, and technological innovations (Sukmono & Junaedi, 2020). This phenomenon has its roots in the 17th and 18th centuries, during the colonisation era, which continued into the 19th century with the introduction of newspapers, telegraphs, and cable systems, enabling the establishment of a global communication network. The 20th century witnessed further growth in media and communication industries, such as radio and television, and culminated with the development of the internet initiated by the Pentagon around 1969 (Richard West, 2017).

The impact of Globalisation is multifaceted, generating both positive and negative effects. On the positive side, it facilitates easy access to information and enhances interactivity among media and technology users fostering media convergence (Luik, 2020). This results in swift two-way communication, even across great distances (Karolina et al., 2021; Winarti, 2018). However, Globalisation also creates a system where certain developed nations wield significant influence over developing countries, politically and economically, through institutions like the United Nations, World Trade Organization, and World Bank (Mulyana, 2019). This can lead to the exploitation of developing nations, often leaving them burdened with foreign debt traps or subject to the veto rights of the United Nations.

The negative aspects of Globalisation encompass issues such as hate speech and the spread of fake news (hoaxes), which have become pressing concerns in the realm of communication. Moreover, a deeper exploration of Globalisation's negative facets reveals a tendency toward individualism in societies. The extensive influence of Western campaigns via films and technology has led to a growing Westernisation of individuals. Additionally, the easy accessibility of online virtual games can erode empathy and social cohesion within communities. This, in turn, accentuates social disparities, as evident in the presence of slum settlements juxtaposed with extravagant mega-buildings in metropolitan areas (Freeman & David, 2022; Gessese, 2020; Guilleminot, 2023).

Furthermore, Globalisation contributes to the erosion of local cultures as foreign cultures expand their influence. This aspect has been discussed earlier, with media channels like movies and virtual games playing a significant role in disseminating foreign cultural elements. The rise of consumerism is another consequence of Globalisation (Cannon-Brookes, 2012; Hori et al., 2020; You & Hon, 2022). The prevalence of online transportation services further facilitates and reinforces this consumptive lifestyle. Regrettably, the growth of media culture has also given rise to hate speech and the potential for one culture to overshadow and dominate others.

Culture, as an intricate way of life shared by distinct groups and passed down through generations, is formed by a variety of complex

elements, including religious and political systems, customs, tools, languages, architecture, attire, and art (Larry A. Samovar, Richard E. Porter, Edwin R. McDaniel, 2016). In the context of Globalisation, some groups are seen adopting foreign cultural elements, be it in language or clothing, particularly the millennial generation, who often exhibit a greater preference for foreign languages, such as English, over their native tongues. Similarly, dressing in trendy foreign brands is perceived as "cool" and instils a sense of confidence in them.

Culture, as viewed by experts, is a comprehensive entity that encompasses knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, laws, customs, and various capabilities acquired by individuals as members of a society (Jandt, 2013b). Through the process of Globalisation, the culture of one group can easily diffuse into other cultures without significant barriers. Globalisation knows no bounds, extending its influence over culture, political dynamics, and economic systems (Jandt, 2013b). Scholars have provided three distinct definitions of Globalisation. Laurence E. Rothenberg defines it as accelerating and intensifying interaction and integration among people, businesses, and governments across different countries (Jandt, 2013b). Steger emphasises the social condition of Globalisation, characterised by global economic, political, cultural, and environmental interconnections that render many traditional boundaries obsolete and irrelevant. Emanuel Ritzer elucidates Globalisation as a global network that unites previously isolated societies into a world of interdependence and unity (Larry A. Samovar, Richard E. Porter, Edwin R. McDaniel, 2016).

Several factors contribute to the phenomenon of Globalisation. Firstly, progress in information and communication technology facilitates smooth economic transactions between countries. Secondly, advancements in transportation technology enhance the transfer of goods and services across nations. Thirdly, increasing international economic cooperation fosters agreements between countries. Lastly, exchanging students and scholars among different nations and visa systems further facilitates Globalisation (Larry A. Samovar, Richard E. Porter, Edwin R. McDaniel, 2016). A prominent example illustrating the impact of Globalisation on culture is evident in Indonesia, a maritime nation rich in regional cultures. Consequently, the process through which Globalisation imparts its influence on Indonesian indigenous culture and the nation's identity and its effects on local wisdom in various regions becomes a pertinent subject of investigation.

Global culture refers to the concept encompassing the "globalisation" of diverse cultural aspects, often characterised by processes of unification, homogenisation, and cultural uniformity (Jandt, 2013b). It can be seen as the dissemination of culture from one influential group to another, thereby influencing the lesser-known culture. In its various manifestations, culture now serves as a primary vehicle for propagating Globalisation and modern values. It simultaneously becomes a significant battleground for asserting

national, religious, and ethnic identities (Larry A. Samovar, Richard E. Porter, Edwin R. McDaniel, 2016b). One influential medium through which culture spreads is the entertainment industry, particularly through films. Films not only entertain but also embody products of modern culture, explicitly and implicitly showcasing cultural values through narrative portrayals that may resonate with or contradict local cultural norms. For example, the Rambo film produced by Hollywood attempted to demonstrate the United States prowess during the Vietnam War, although the actual events differed from the portrayal. This has raised concerns about films potentially transforming existing cultural values within a society, especially in light of Globalisation, which acts as a conduit for cultural products to penetrate different geographical and cultural domains (Mulyana, 2019).

The media industry has also been greatly influenced by Globalisation, with the transition from conventional to digital media introducing its own set of challenges. These examples illustrate only a fraction of the effects of Globalisation on nations and media, and further exploration of relevant cases will be undertaken in subsequent sections to elaborate on the topic at hand.

Globalisation has had a gradual impact on local wisdom, leading to the displacement of traditional elements. Once prominent in Indonesian culture, traditional games have become scarce as digital games, like PUBG and Dota 2, have taken centre stage, captivating the millennial generation. In remote villages, traces of traditional games may persist, but their prevalence has significantly diminished due to the influence of Globalisation. However, it is important to note that Globalisation is not entirely detrimental; it also brings positive aspects. One notable advantage is the development of a fast-paced lifestyle, where the desire for instant results is facilitated by technological advancements (Helmayuni et al., 2022). The rapid progress in technology has significantly eased human tasks, enabling the swift dissemination of these beneficial inventions through Globalisation.

Moreover, the widespread adoption of technological advancements through Globalisation has significantly improved human living standards. The symbiotic relationship between progress in various aspects of life and an increase in living standards is evident. As life advances across different domains, it naturally elevates the overall standard of living. Additionally, Globalisation has accelerated the progress of information and technology, making communication processes faster and more accessible, even across long distances. The development of digital media stands as a prominent example of the impact of Globalisation on the media industry. The digital era has revolutionised various facets of human existence, including how news is disseminated. Digital media, with its remarkable speed of news delivery, has transformed the media landscape, gradually diverting public reliance from conventional media like newspapers to online

platforms (Prayogi et al., 2020). Currently, online media has become the most frequently utilised form of digital media among the public.

Table 1. McLuhan Media History (West & Turner, 2019)

Historical Term	Wantu	Developing Tools Used	Technology/Sense	McLuhan's comments
Primitive Era		Face to Face/listen		Primitive or oral society has a higher stabilisation than other human civilisations.
The Era of Literacy (literacy)		Phonetic letters/saw		Western societies have learned how to understand the effects of phonetic letters when they form certain patterns in their culture.
Print Media Age		Print media/viewing		"Perhaps the greatest contribution of topography to humans is the ability to voice opinions without using physical violence."
Electronic Age		Computer/see, hear, touch		The computer is the only extraordinary technology among other technologies ever invented because it is an extension of our central nervous system.

Source: (West & Turner, 2019)

Nearly six decades ago, Marshal McLuhan (Table 1) made predictions about the development of media, and today, those predictions have entered a new realm with the emergence of online media. In the era following electronic media, the internet has continued to advance, significantly shaping the landscape of mass media and becoming a primary source of information for social needs (Little John, 2016). Online media offers several advantages, including accessibility from anywhere and at any time. Additionally, it possesses audio-visual streaming capabilities and can facilitate live broadcasts or live streaming similar to traditional television or radio. Despite being a novel concept, new media often draws inspiration from old media and uses them as benchmarks for content application (West & Turner, 2019).

In Indonesia, online media initially mirrored the news content found in newspapers or magazines, with little difference between the printed and online versions in terms of design (Little John, 2016). News sites, commonly utilised in online media, serve as gateways that provide access to information and various technological facilities (Firdausi et al., 2022). The usage of digital media, such as online media, allows for the swift delivery of information, enabling audiences to access it rapidly through internet-connected gadgets and communication devices.

This shift towards digital media usage has resulted in media convergence, where conventional forms like newspapers, television, and radio are gradually being abandoned and replaced by digital alternatives (Prayogi et al., 2020). The convenience and portability of digital media make it highly appealing to a broader audience, particularly in the fast-paced era of digitalisation (Firdausi et al., 2022). As long as there is an internet connection, digital media can be accessed anytime and anywhere, eliminating the need to carry newspapers or be tied to television sets. This adaptability has allowed digital media to seamlessly integrate into people's busy lives, becoming an essential part of their daily routines (Luik, 2020).

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Moreover, the influence of Globalisation, particularly through technological advancements, has profoundly impacted identity formation within society, often resulting from the interaction between

diverse cultures (Jandt, 2013b). Identity formation involves four key elements: Religion, Language, Ethnicity, and Culture (Mulyana, 2019). Religion shapes systems of faith and worship, along with the rules governing human interactions and their environment. Language is a symbolic system derived from human speech, facilitating individual communication. Ethnicity defines social groups with inherent characteristics, often present from birth and linked to age and gender. Lastly, culture acts as a benchmark for ethical and moral values, encompassing both ideal beliefs (worldview) and practical, everyday customs (ethos) (Mulyana, 2019).

In this article, we aim to explore how Globalisation, eventually leading to acculturation, affects the identity of indigenous peoples and the status of their local wisdom. The dynamics of Globalisation, in terms of cultural exchange and impact, are of particular interest in understanding the changing identities and cultural heritage of indigenous communities.

METHODOLOGY

The research methodology employed in this article utilises a case study, which is a qualitative research approach. Case studies involve an in-depth examination of a particular "case" within the context of real-life situations (Prayogi & Yulianti, 2023). The choice of a case study approach is deliberate as it allows for selecting purposive samples, focusing on significant cases. Subsequently, a comprehensive analysis of the selected case is conducted, encompassing a detailed description of the context, patterns, and settings surrounding the occurrence (Firdausi et al., 2022).

In this study, the researcher conducted direct interviews with two informants. The primary aim of these interviews was to gain insights into the acculturation process concerning the utilisation of gadget technology, particularly smartphones, among the Badui Indigenous people of Banten. Through these interviews, the researcher aimed to understand how this cultural process of adopting gadget technology unfolded within the Badui Indigenous community.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Before delving into the research results, it is crucial to comprehend the concept of national identity. Identity, in essence, refers to the distinctive features that differentiate individuals or groups from others. It encompasses understanding one's self, social groups, communities, or nations (Mulyana, 2019). National identity pertains to an individual's identification with their nation, where the nation becomes a representation of their identity and that of the people within it, distinguishing them from other nations.

Reflecting on the nation's historical journey on the global stage, particularly regarding its identity, is encouraging. Overcoming colonialism and navigating various challenges exemplify the nation's

efforts to shape its national identity. Such accomplishments deserve pride and satisfaction, and while acknowledging this pride, it should not become excessive. Instead, this sense of pride is a driving force and catalyst for the nation's growing confidence to assert that Indonesian society is cultured, embodying Eastern characteristics. By highlighting the cultural diversity and richness, it is natural to assert that Indonesian culture surpasses Western culture (Mulyana, 2019).

Indonesian culture goes beyond practical or pragmatic values; it draws from noble and transcendent values, even bearing sacred connotations in Durkheim's and Berger's terms (Peter L. Berger, 2012). The cultural superiority of Indonesia lies in its foundation of various cultures and sub-cultures, rooted in beliefs in God Almighty (theism), respect for fellow human beings, and an orientation towards maintaining harmony and order with the natural environment. This cultural orientation can be depicted through a triangular relationship: at the apex is God as the highest value, norm, and morality, while humans and nature occupy the base. This positioning underscores that Indonesian culture is not solely focused on the present worldly life but extends to encompass the pursuit of a meaningful afterlife. This highlights how religious values or beliefs serve as the primary reference and guiding principle for the Indonesian people's mindset, behavior, and life orientation.

According to Geertz, religion, as a cultural system, serves several essential roles: it operates as a symbol system, evokes strong emotions and motivations, constructs conceptions of a general order of life, and presents these conceptions as undeniable facts, resulting in a unique sense of reality (Peter L. Berger, 2012). In this context, the concept of culture, as understood within Geertz's framework, embodies the distinctiveness and complexity of a comprehensive value system (Peter L. Berger, 2012). It is not an exaggeration to assert that Indonesian culture was predominantly oriented towards religious and noble moral values, shaping attitudes and behaviours in the past.

The essence of Indonesian culture lies in its reverence for harmony and balance with the universe, symbolising respect towards nature as a vital source of life that necessitates organisation, preservation, and development (Suandi, 2021). This environmental morality emphasises the notion of humans coexisting as partners with nature rather than predators. It underscores the understanding that the abundance of nature is a divine gift for humanity while also acknowledging the responsibility to ensure that human consumption does not surpass the universe's capacity for renewal.

However, Globalisation has brought about a tendency for individuals to forsake their national identity and take pride in the culture of other nations. Oftentimes, people emulate the lifestyle and customs of cultures they admire, sometimes losing sight of their own identity and national heritage in the process (Jandt, 2013b). Such behaviour serves as an expression of admiration, a way of socialising,

and a means of showcasing their admiration to others (Jandt, 2013b). Nonetheless, not all societies completely abandon their traditional culture and wholeheartedly adopt the new culture they encounter. Instead, there is a gradual process through which a culture migrates, is embraced, and ultimately undergoes acculturation. This research endeavours to examine this acculturation process within the Banten Badui community.

Culture Shock

Firstly, when an individual enters a new culture, whether as an immigrant or a visitor, culture shock is the common initial response, marking the beginning of the "culture shock" process (Jandt, 2013b). In the case of the Indigenous Badui community, their customary rules have previously discouraged the use of technology. For example, using public transportation with different systems poses challenges. However, with a willingness to adapt to the new culture, the situation gradually becomes less stressful. For instance, the Badui community has started to overcome their anti-technology habits, such as participating in "Seba Badui" activities and becoming more comfortable using public transportation. "Seba Badui" refers to routine activities conducted annually by the Badui people, aiming to promote Badui commodities and enhance their economy (Asmin, 2018).

Secondly, the initial contact phase, often referred to as the "honeymoon stage" or initial euphoria, involves encountering everything new and exciting (Jandt, 2013b). During this phase, individuals maintain their fundamental identity rooted in their original culture, akin to tourists exploring a foreign place. For instance, based on an interview with Deden Rahmat, who has provided open trip services to the Badui community since 2016, some Badui people initially expressed discomfort. However, witnessing outsiders using devices intrigued them, leading them to ask, "*iyeu teh naon?*" (what is this?). This brief interaction highlights the Badui people's curiosity and openness to technology, despite their adherence to traditional customs.

Thirdly, although curiosity exists, rejection is still quite prevalent due to the strong influence of lineage or cultural rules, especially in places where exposure to new cultures remains limited. Initial resistance to new technology can be significant. This stage involves the process of reintegration and acquiring increased abilities to function in the new culture (Jandt, 2013b). Surprisingly, emotions experienced during this phase often involve anger and aversion towards the new culture for its differences. Our observations indicate that technology introduced from the outside into the Badui community is met with rejection, particularly among the Inner Badui, who adhere more strictly to customary rules.

Fourthly, the gradual adjustment phase entails studying and evaluating both the "good" and "bad" elements of the original

environment (old culture) and the new culture. The Badui people become more at ease in the new culture as they find things more predictable. For instance, when attending events as a Badui, they can rely on well-planned schedules and activities. The role of gadgets becomes evident as the Badui gradually ventures outside their home environment. Feelings of isolation diminish, and the Badui community gains more control and comfort when operating beyond their familiar surroundings.

Finally, the fifth stage is characterised by interdependence and reciprocity, where the Indigenous Badui people achieve biculturalism, demonstrating the ability to adapt comfortably to both their original and new cultures. Full adjustment to the new culture may take several years.

Biculturalism

In April 2023, we photographed several Badui individuals who have experienced biculturalism while participating in "Seba Badui" activities. It is essential to emphasise that these photos were not taken to discredit any specific person, group, or culture. Instead, they serve as visual evidence supporting our premise that the indigenous Badui people of Banten have indeed embraced technological advancements and possess the knowledge to use them. However, it is noteworthy that their acceptance of technology appears to be accompanied by a sense of reservation, as they uphold their tradition of being cautious about the current impacts of technological Globalisation.



Figure 1. Badui People Using Mobile Phones
Taken by: Liza Diniarizky Putri (2023)

Figure 1 presents images of Badui individuals participating in the "Seba Badui" event in April 2023. It is evident from their attire that the claims of being Anti-technology according to their customary rules do not apply outside their native environment. This illustrates how an

admired culture can be adopted as a form of self-representation, even becoming a lifestyle, which gradually diminishes local culture and erodes self-identity and traditional identity over time. After the "Seba Badui" activities, numerous indigenous Badui people endeavour to adapt to their new surroundings. Following a meeting of the Badui community at the state (governor) building on 29 April, some chose to stay in the city of Serang until Sunday, 30 April 2023, mingling with the people around the State Building in Serang city square and its vicinity.

Upon questioning them about their presence in Serang city square, we attempted to converse in Sundanese, the daily language of the Badui people. However, their responses appeared indifferent as they quickly engaged with their gadgets. This led us to investigate whether the use of gadgets among the Badui had commenced in 2023 or even earlier. Fajri Ilham, who has been involved in open trip services since 2015, catering to various tourist attractions in Banten, including the Badui region, informed us that since 2018, on every open trip to Badui, several Badui individuals have been using gadgets. He mentioned, "To my knowledge, when we go on an open trip to Badui, it is rare to see Badui people using gadgets within the Badui environment, particularly in the deep Badui areas. However, they are proficient in utilising gadgets to sell processed products like honey and other items when they venture out of the Badui region." It is important to note that the use of gadgets during that period was primarily observed when Badui individuals were outside their native environment. However, the prevalence might not have been as significant as now. Nevertheless, since the outbreak of Covid-19 in early 2020, it is uncertain how the current Badui community's familiarity with gadgets has evolved.

The common thread connecting the original culture of the Badui people with the culture of modern society, which has embraced new technology, emerges as one of the crucial factors contributing to the success of the cultural acculturation process. The Badui Indigenous People exhibit distinct attitudes when in their home environment compared to amidst urban communities. They portray a demeanour characterised by innocence, friendliness, and an overall welcoming disposition, particularly when urban individuals visit Cibeo Village in Lebak Regency.

CONCLUSION

The Badui Banten Indigenous People have chosen to maintain a sense of reservation and retain their cultural identity amid the pervasive influence of Globalisation, particularly regarding technology adoption. This research shows that the Badui indigenous people exhibit an environmentally conscious approach in their use of technology, particularly gadgets. They steadfastly adhere to their customary rules when residing in their original place of origin (internal Badui). This

adaptation and balance between their traditional culture and the impacts of Globalisation is referred to as cultural acculturation.

The acculturation process also manifests in the attitudes displayed by the Badui people depending on their surroundings. Within their traditional environment, especially among the Baduis, they tend to present themselves with innocence, smoothness, and a friendly demeanour. However, when they venture beyond their customary environment, they are seen to adjust their behaviour and even limit the use of their native Sundanese language. Additionally, they may suppress their innocent and smooth attributes to better assimilate into the new setting, sometimes even convincing non-Baduis around them that they are not as innocent as perceived. This adaptive behaviour highlights their ability to navigate between their distinct cultural identity and the external world's influences.

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