

## IDENTITY WEAKENING OF BALI AGA IN CEMPAGA VILLAGE

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### **Abstract:**

Bali Aga village communities of Cempaga, Buleleng, in the beginning is that very few under the influence of Hindu Java. They live in mountainous areas of Buleleng and their religious tradition is different with the Hindu community in Bali plains. Rituals that they did initially led by a woman who called *Bali Desa*. Changes that lead to further erosion of the identity of the Bali Aga occurred since the early 1970s when the process of Hindunisation through political activity and religious broadcasting activities carried out by adopting the teachings of the Balinese Hindu plains. This is reinforced by socio-economic conditions of society that began to rise, and the active role of elite / local actors in the Cempaga village in the process of cultural adaptation. Increasing socio-economic status of the people in the village of Cempaga encourage them to do the movement "*ngalih soroh*" (clan mobility) so that identity as a people of "*kesamen*" (equal) become extinct.

**Keywords:** Bali Aga, Identity, soroh, Cempaga Village, Kesamen, Ulu-apad

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## 1. Introduction

The influence of Hinduism in Bali does not occur within a certain time and did not impact evenly on the people of Bali. So, it appears classification of society based on the strength of the influence of Hindu. In the opinion of some experts said that the difference influences of Hindu Javanese culture in various regions of Bali in the Majapahit era, led to the existence of two forms of community in Bali, the Bali Aga and Balinese people of Majapahit (*wong Majapahit*). The people of Bali Aga little under the influence of the Majapahit Hindu Javanese culture and has its own structure. Bali Aga people generally inhabit villages in mountainous areas such as Sembiran, Sidatapa, Cempaga, Tigawasa, and Pedawa (in Buleleng Regency) and in Tenganan Pegringsingan (in Karangasem Regency) (Good, 2004: 286; Triguna, 1986: 2).

The entry of Hindu influence to Bali through the priest of Java in cooperation with the authorities in Bali, has led to a conflict between Bali Aga local religions and Religion which came later. By taking the Cempaga Village of Buleleng, this paper focuses on the cultural action carried out by the elite in the village of Cempaga in maintaining its presence.

Bali Aga society has a system of trust and community structures that are different from the people of Bali who are in the plateau region. Bali Aga village of Cempaga, Buleleng Regency has a social system of *kesamen* (equality) in personal relationships with each other. In Bali Aga, there is no social structure based on caste system. They are considered to have the same status with each other or called *kesamen*. It means that anyone residing in the area is equal (*kesamen*), they do not know the system like hierarchy system. Leadership in the public system based on seniority, according to marital of Cempaga people known as *uluapad* system, as well as a variety of other specific characteristics that are different from other Balinese Hindu community. *Uluapad* system puts hierarchy of leadership and their social structure based on seniority according to the record of marriage. They are based on the marriage of the oldest plays as *Tugun Desa* or the oldest person in the village with all the rights and obligations attached to them.

## 2. Framework

Come in and out of Cempaga people has caused the properties of the Bali Aga changes and no longer original, although it may be significant changes to an advance in the field of culture. In line with the communication flows, cultural elements of the Bali Aga were then adjusted. In the process of integration into a global order, then culture is no longer tied to the physical limits

caused by the rigid bond of deterministic. Therefore, the symbolic expression of the Bali Aga's culture is not always an expression of a cosmology or the same value as the center began to take shape as a polycentric orientation, no longer concentrated at one point. These symptoms indicate that there has been a deconstruction of the traditional power in society.

The meaning of a symbol as a result of melted of the limits is determined by structure changing power relations. Symbol with meaning becomes an object whose presence is produced by a process of negotiation that involves a number of contestants with their own interests. Culture formed must then be seen as a differential culture that grew as a result of the continuous interaction between people, groups and the environment that are constantly changing. Thus, it can be said that the establishment of cultural significance is a shape that is loaded with a value that accommodates the interests of the parties involved. The interests of the parties in the process of forming not only be a debate and conflict but also become an important point for fundamental change in society. Always there will be a conflict of interest in it, and it is difficult to imagine to be born an awareness of the systematic changes that lead to a growing social system (Abdullah, 2006).

## 2. The Cause of Identity Weakening of Bali Aga

Cempaga village is a village in Buleleng Mountains that has a unique identity as a society that is very little influence from the Hindu Majapahit (Kingdom in Java Island). They are known as a people of "*kesamen*" which means people who do not divided on social structures or on the basis of caste. All people have the same position, a condition which is somewhat different from the people of Bali plains that are divided into social classes in the form of caste. When the religious leaders or *Pamangku* in Bali Plains is a male, then the religious leaders of Cempaga Village is a woman. Religious rituals performed much simpler when compared with the Hindu community in Bali Plain.

Changes began to occur around 1970 when Party Politic of Golkar develops its political wing to the village of Cempaga, Buleleng. Arising of Cempaga elites through politics and religion has led to the modernization of the village community. Modernization occurring covers the entire scope of the general public and institutions in society, as also happens in each individual. Progress in the field of education significantly reduces the number of illiterates; This led to reduced illiteracy tendency to increase the openness of the media; openness to mass media are also coupled with broader economic participation (individual income) and political participation.

Population mobility is becoming increasingly intense with the increasing availability of transport facilities and infrastructure. Experienced physical mobility also affects social mobility and eventually will grow institutions corresponding to it.

Mobility that is experienced by generations gradually forming the participation system of life that feels normal today, when, in fact, it is the result of a process of adaptation or negation to change. Private car is characterized by a high ability to identify themselves with the new aspects of the environment (Lerner, 1983: 33). That is, more people believe that their social construction process itself is more meaningful than the eternal social conditions, without going through negotiations of their daily experiences.

With exposure to the above, circumstances in the village of Cempaga, Buleleng show a significant changes in the field of religion since the early of seventies. It cannot be separated from the context of the changes in the political system of religion at the time. After the outbreak of the G 30 S / PKI marked by the case of political violence in Bali in 1965, so in Mahasabha II in 1968, Parisada Hindu Dharma Indonesia (the Hindu Association of Indonesia) apply to become members of the Joint Secretariat of *Golongan Karya* through letter No. 54/VII/um/PhDP/68 dated 6 July 1968. This request is answered by the Joint Secretariat of *Golongan Karya* through letter number Kpas-13/SBK/VII/1968 dated 23 July 1968. Understanding between religious institutions and political parties was apparently very effective to make changes and uniformity of religious Hindu teachings in accordance with the guidelines outlined by the Hindu Association (Sudharta and Surpha, 2006: 72). This is evident from the appearance of the *Golongan Karya* elites as well as the elite of religion and culture in the village of Cempaga, like I Putu Mustika, I Putu Mertha, and I Made Cuda, which is very vigorously reforms in the field of religion in the village of Cempaga. Of course the source of reference is the teachings of Hindu in accordance with Parisada Hindu Dharma Indonesia (Hindu Association of Indonesia). This raises a variety of responses in the communities of Cempaga as described previously.

Changes in the agricultural dimension, in the direction of industrial life and services, in the broad sense, are relatively more rational, indirectly giving objectivation climate to the Bali Aga people in Cempaga Village overall. Their view of the world and the cosmos that is based on the importance of water and soil began to change. The inclusion of IR rice varieties with harvest approximately three (3) months have brought villagers of Cempaga in a more prosperous

condition. Even more so after the cloves begin to produce, the village of Cempaga has moved from subsistence farming towards the production of agricultural era. This indicates that the entry of a market economy to the region is more intensive, so unwittingly they have changed their world-view. From the original oriented collective becomes faulty and industry, and individual, although not occur in all areas of life, for example, in their diversity still accentuate the collectivity.

Population mobility is also higher so that it is more extensive cross-cultural interaction. For example, younger generations are educated in the big cities and the employees work at offices is in cities, even entrepreneurs who conduct business activities is outside of Bali. In fact, many people who become trader (*pengalu*) is daily commute to the city to sell their wares. This of course brings a large effect for villagers of Cempaga, among others, changes in the social structure. It is logically would happen because people do not just consist of social structure, but simultaneously also a social process that goes on. Meaning, relationship value and purpose of society is only relatively stable at any particular moment; in it always moving slow change, but cumulative. Some other changes may take place more quickly, so fast, that interfere the structure that has been established. The destruction of forms of well-established social and cultural and the appearance of new forms is a continuous process. It is thus clear that there are different groups in society influenced by a variety of social changes. Always appear certain groups that perform functions more meaningful and more appreciated than other groups, then there will be another group who actually oppose the change, and there are also other groups that support the change. In the current system there will be groups that derive substantial benefits, both material and psychological well being of other groups ignored; or there are other groups that feel the need to challenge the status quo and intends to launch a radical change. This condition will cause sensitivity among different religions.

According to O'Dea (1985) as exposed above conditions can lead to conditions in terms of Durkheim called "*anomie*". Durkheim's *anomie* is social disorganization in which the various forms of social and culture that has been established into collapsed characterized by; (1) loss of solidarity, ie when the old groups in which individuals gain a sense of security and response are likely to collapse; (2) the loss of consensus; namely the collapse of approval to the values and norms that give direction and meaning to the life of the group. Durkheim saw this as two sides of a process of social disorganization, and he stated that the two sides can have disorganization at



different speeds. Due to the condition for the individual is a condition that is relatively isolated and "without norms".

Meanwhile, in line with O'Dea, Berger (1982) described that the modern man is experiencing *anomie*, a condition in which each of human individual loses a bond that gives the feeling of safety and stability with other human beings. It is causing loss of understanding that provides clues about the purpose and the meaning of life in this world. The more lax of social practices, the more weak of social control in society. In such circumstances the social conflict in its various forms is unavoidable because different structure takes place so quickly in a short time. It seems that society is not prepared to accept all the changes so that they completely lose social protection. Modern lifestyle with a global orientation is controlling every aspect of human life. A variety of ethical, cultural tradition that binds the group before becoming shaky urged by the new lifestyle of modern times. Modern lifestyle often associated with rationalization, consumerism, and commercialization of local culture.

When culture is more dominant than of economy and ideology for the separation of humans, cognitive aspects is more effective in human life. Knowledge becomes the foundation for the entire social action to legitimize the real social life which is not solely based on social knowledge. Given the social sciences may not be controlled by humans relating to all aspects of social life. Even if there is the possibility, but the social life of modern close it because specialization areas of life force it so tight. However, human remains more concerned with the domain of mind and rationality in the realization of social actions (Giddens, 2006).

On the other side of the Saxon postmodern found that cultural contact cannot be avoided in the global era that will happen reciprocal influences in a deep way, causing a phenomenon called *glocalization* (globalization and localization) of culture. Elements of the local and global exchange and can live mixed into one. Here it appears that postmodernism reject any global projects that bring nature of universalism, but wanted to see, appreciate diversity, uniqueness, history of parts of the world (Parimatha, 2003: 34). That is, the intense communication between global culture and local culture will not eliminate the historical aspects of local culture. Therefore, less likely to be understood universalism were accepted and implemented by all mankind so that local culture has the power to conduct a dialogue with the new global culture. In practice can take place in two models, namely globalization and localization. Instead, absorption of global cultural into local culture can take place through *glocalization*.

Noteworthy of the two ideologies, both modern and postmodern understanding is, there will always be the dialectical process of culture in society (including the Bali Aga people). Therefore, the problem now is how the people of Bali Aga of Cempaga have cultural resistance in response to the influx of foreign culture. So that they have sufficient bargaining position so as not to uprooted from their cultural roots because elude global cultural association was impossible. Therefore, it will depend on the responses of local culture to global cultural influences that have so strong influence in the world. Civilizations are not able to adapt will sink. Bali Aga of Cempaga may have not experienced the catastrophe of modern life as it is experienced by people in developed countries because the modernity Bali Aga of Cempaga Village is in early growth. However, people who are in transition from traditional to modern, often raises issues that are not less complex. Physically the people of Bali Aga in Cempaga Village appear modern, but in their mental and mind is still traditional. Old tradition has not been abandoned while modern mindset has not mastered.

If borrowing Comte thought who was quoted by Hardiman (2009: 27; Aiken, 2009: 138-139), community is like standing in the condition of one foot on the stage of theology, while the other foot is on stage of positivistic. It is clear that more and more people today are aware that the entire crisis on earth is not only due to the material reasons, but more on the causes of the transcendental. Today's modern world no longer has a spiritual horizon. Modern humans see everything just from the standpoint of the periphery of existence, not the "center of their spirituality". Attention that is more focused on the material world has progressed very significant, but qualitatively, and the whole purpose of their life is very shallow. Decadence or fall of man today has lost the knowledge of themselves, and become heavily dependent on external knowledge, which is not directly related to them (Hidayat, 2003: 2).

This trend occurs because the process of rationalization that accompanies modernity has created secularization of consciousness and weaken the canopy function of life sacred religion that causing meaninglessness in modern human beings. Sacred things that serves as a factor sublimation and strengthening of human existence, replaced by things that are completely rational and become involved in the deconstruction of the transcendence of human cognition or with the term secularization of inner nature (Nasir, 1999: 11). That is, the development of rationality go hand in hand with the process of secularization based on the level of knowledge and community needs. In it religion that is positioned at the value of chastity increasingly

marginalized and forgotten because rationality has defeated faith. It affects people's worldviews on cosmological conceptions that are used to create and view their social world.

The interpretation of the concept of cosmology as a one-dimensional symbol of constructive is change toward a more universal meaning in context. In contrast, in the expressive dimension is marked by the rise of various religious activities, customs, and arts in the broad sense. Sociological implications of physical changes as described above is the loss of world charm. External environment with its magical powers were no longer influence and shape the human mind. Environment is faced and given meaning as a purely material world or object, even in the modern social world, land can be seen as a commodity. The consequences of that event is creating an autonomy and freedom in interpreting the objective reality. Experience anomie is a painful experience that encourages people to seek refuge provided by the situation. People who experience relative deprivation, that is, people who are not satisfied by the group and those who are experiencing anomie, shows the responsiveness to the religion that offers the safety message, which indicates that this world is a place of suffering and offer some means to escape from suffering. So, there are internal transfers or conversions of the people of Bali Aga in Cempaga Village toward the Hindu religion that are more universal and more structured.

The success of the people in the village of Cempaga in the economic field has led to the class mobility or movement known as "*ngalih soroh*". This is consistent with Barth's observations, stated as follows.

"...Balinese always want to improve their level. First, they want more money, so as to become rich. Second, they want to better their position in their office, so they can become chief of department. Third, they want to better their education, so they can become graduate from secondary school, Mr., M.A., Drs. If they have all this, then also they want to become triwangsa!" (Barth, 1993: 233).

If it rests on the view of Barth as the quote above, it looks like there will always happen when there is a vertical social mobility of society's success in the field of education and the economy. This success is expected to give them their social rewards in the form of social respect from other citizens. But the desire is apparently never materialized. Failure to obtain social honor is due to their foundation are different. An elite group of intermediate moves from the foundation of modern society stratification that leads to secular interests, while *kewangsaan* (caste system in



Bali) based on stratification of religion which is based on religious texts (O'Dea, 1985: 149, Nottingham, 1992: 126). In other words, the enforceability of the caste system associated with ascribed-status that bases itself on "religious doctrine" and has been institutionalized in the Hindu community in Bali, it is not easy sliding with achieved-status. In addition, both the status has different criteria in acquiring it, ie the one on the basis of education, while others based on birth (Atmadja, 2001: 55).

This means that social status, whether acquired through education and by birth is an encouragement to establish the identity of individuals and groups in Cempaga Village. Although the search for identity is also closely related to equality in principle incompatible with the social system of Cempaga. Given their hierarchical been building and managing their social life based on *ulu-apad* system that puts the pattern of seniority and juniority as social stratification. Likewise, the system of religious ceremonies they practices is more of a unity than social stratification. This is in contrast to the social system in modern society that distinguish social strata based on the role and social functioning in accordance with the level of intellectual and expertise, even based on economics.

#### 4. Closing

Religious contiguity between Bali Aga and Hindu, at least two implications on public record in Bali Aga of Cempaga Village, are as follows.

First, in traditional societies, goals of individual and group, and even the purpose of the community itself has defined and recognized long ago. If, due to mixing with other cultures or other internal developments in society, it will display a new destination and a new value, then the leadership of the community is in a state that requires an ideology to explain and rationalize the purpose and new values that support it. This process often involves the birth of a new ruling class, the new value system (Hinduism), a new social system (*soroh*). Thus, these events further indicates the weakening of cultural identity of the people of Bali Aga. Cultural identity is a hallmark that indicated a person because that person is a member of a particular ethnic group. This includes learning and acceptance of tradition, traits, language, religion, and the offspring of a culture (Liliweri, 2005: 43). As previously noted that the emergence of the Hindu religion has brought a change in leadership in the public system in the village of Bali Aga in Cempaga

Village, namely the emergence of *Pamangku* men as substitute of *Balian Desa* that had been occupied by a woman named Dadong Kajeng.



*Balian Desa* that was a woman, has replaced her position by *Pamangku* of men after the influence of Hinduism

Second, the emergence of a new elite that came to power in a period of crisis, which is done in part through their ability to steer the desire of society toward a new goals. Through expertise, they reveal a new value system that can be accepted by the majority of members of the public. System and the idea of this goal provides framework in which the new elite organize the structure and power controls. As explained previously that the emergence of new elites in Cempaga Village with background of politics and religion in the era of the late sixties and early era of the seventies has brought new value system that is more oriented to the Hindu religion which is seen better for the wishes and needs of the spiritual community system of Cempaga Village.

This condition in view of Nordholt (2007: 515) as a gradual shift from ritual religion to the religion of scriptural. The same thing also delivered by Howe (2001: 148) as the following quote: "In little more than thirty years, Balinese religion was transformed, at least theoretically, from locally variable ritual practices Bali to an agama with transnational potential". What was delivered by Nordholt and Howe was to describe the condition of Bali in general, but also the condition is evident in society of Bali Aga in Cempaga Village. There are things that are extinct in their religious tradition, but accompanied by the emergence of a new tradition as a

manifestation of the process of construction, deconstruction and reconstruction, people's cognitive maps that occur cyclically. So, the last traditions of villagers in Cempaga is a blend of Bali Aga tradition and mainstream Hindu tradition brought by the political and religious elite of the village.

Thirdly, the increased economic capacity of communities has led to the mobility of class mobility of Cempaga Village. They were originally known as "kesamen" society (without caste) now have been polarized in the system of "soroh" (lineage / caste) even though in practice their religious keep using the system of "ulu-apad" (based on seniority).

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