

THE STRUGGLE OF IDENTITY IN RELIGION PLURALITY IN VILLAGE OF EKASARI JEMBRANA, BALI

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ABSTRACT

The three religious communities in Ekasari Village come from a number of regencies in Bali. Only a small proportion of its members come from outside the island. They came in different time periods at the beginning of the 20th century (1930) and then formed their own communities based on religion in accordance with their respective histories. Even though they are separated in religion, administratively they are an area in the village office. The existence of these three communities is colored by identity struggles so it is interesting to be further investigated in cultural studies. The purpose of this study is (1) to understand the form of identity struggles that occur in Ekasari village, (2) understanding the ideology that works behind the identity struggle and (3) analyzing the implications of this identity struggle. This research approach uses qualitative analysis methods. Data collection techniques carried out by in-depth interviews, observation, and document analysis. Based on this research method it is found that there are certain ideologies that cause identity struggles found in the dynamics of religious, cultural, political and economic life of the people. The implication is that each religious community strives to fight for and maintain its identity while still trying to build communication through existing means.

Keywords: community, identity struggle, ideology, communication

INTRODUCTION

There are three social facts that become the identity of Ekasari village community in Melaya District, Jembrana Regency, Bali. First, the plurality or diversity of people representing three religions in Indonesia, namely Islam, Christianity and Hinduism. Second, the polarization of the religious community in the *banjars* or hamlet which makes it difficult to

assimilate the community and third, the ideology behind the struggle for identity between the three religious communities.

Ekasari is known as an engineering village that was born in modern times, nearing independence precisely in the middle of the 20th century (1930-1950). Compared to the existence of villages in Bali, Ekasari is one of the villages built in the era of independence ([http:// desawisataekasaribali. Blogspot.com](http://desawisataekasaribali.blogspot.com)). This area can be classified as a local transmigration area except Banjar Palerejo which was visited by Javanese, especially from the Jember and Banyuwangi areas.

The presence of each community could not be separated from the political, economic and cultural situation that developed at that time. The Dutch government at that time began to control its power in the Badung (Mengwi) and surrounding areas so as to enable the dynamics of people's lives because of the new policies implemented. The Christian community, especially under the leadership of a Dutch missionary, Father Simon Buis, SVD invited a group of people to move towards western Bali, precisely on 15 September 1940 (Steenbrink, 2006: 694).

Economically, population density in the eastern part of Bali, especially Mengwi with narrow land makes people hampered to progress and develop. New steps need to be taken to open opportunities for changes in community welfare with wider land and calmer situations to start a new life. Politically they also want to stay away from conflicts between castles in Mengwi (Nordholt, 2006: 410-425). Culturally this transfer did not make them leave culture and tradition. Instead they build a new community with the spirit as a migrant population who must adjust to the situation and the existing environment.

Time travel has shaped these communities into a village that is known for its religious and ethnic diversity. The Hindu community remains a community with a majority member, followed by Christian and Muslim communities. These three communities occupy the areas that are part of them with territorial boundaries passed down for generations. In the course of time, these three religious communities consisting of 10 *banjars* then formed an official village under the leadership of a village head. The current head of the village is named I Gede Puja (2014 - 2024)

RESEARCH METHODS

The method used in this research is a qualitative method that emphasizes the ethical, emic and holistic dimensions through the approach of cultural studies. The location of this research was conducted in Ekasari Village, Melaya District, Jembrana Regency, Bali. The chosen location is based on the uniqueness of the banjar / hamlet due to religious differences. In it there are dynamics between *banjar* in various fields of life. Types and sources of data used in this study are qualitative data as primary data and quantitative data as supporting data. Both of these data were obtained directly from informants. While quantitative data were obtained from village documents and monographs.

The technique for determining informants was chosen based on their competence, experience and also the status or position being held by the informant. The research instruments were equipped with notebooks, stationery, recorders and cameras. Data collection techniques in this study use the method of observation, interview and documentation. Data analysis was carried out in a qualitative and interpretive way. The theory used as the basis of analysis is the theory of social identity from Henri Tajfel which provides an overview of the identity that exists in each religious community. Meanwhile, to capture the factors that cause identity struggle, the use of the relation theory of power and knowledge from Michel Foucault and the theory of communicative action from Jurgen Habermas to capture the existence of ideologies that work in each religious community with all its implications.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Forms and ideological factors in the struggle for identity

This study found 4 forms of identity struggle experienced by Ekasari village people: divinity, religious practices, means of worship and interfaith marriages. Each religious community has a different concept or understanding about all of them so that it has the potential to cause conflict between the three existing religious communities. Different concepts will certainly greatly affect the practice of daily life. Each religious community will try to maintain its identity. This struggle for identity after a deeper search did not just happen. There is an ideology that motivates each religious community to maintain their identity.

This ideology was born from a large narrative developed by each religious community in the concept of God. Although in the eternal level there is an acknowledgment of one God

(Hidayat & Nafis, 2003: 39), but in the description, understanding and also in the practice of daily life there are sharp differences and even the potential to cause conflict in mutual humiliation or look down on one another.

God's ideology or understanding of God is wrapped in religious wraps which seize enormous attention in the course of human history. Religion is a very interesting phenomenon but at the same time it also shows a very frightening face. Religion appears in "two faces", namely inclusive and exclusive (Effendy, 2001: 7). Every individual or group of people is bound by their religion, whether accepted from generation to generation or born from the search process. Inside are layers that are very rich but also complex: rituals, doctrines, ethics, and experiences (Lubis, 2015: 1). Hinduism which is identical with Balinese culture that is in harmony must deal with religions that come up with a very controversial ideology.

Religion as a tradition that is accepted for generations and is collective must deal with a religion that is very individualistic but at the same time also expansive, especially Islam and Christianity. This, of course, causes a shock to the establishment of people who are used to practicing religion in cultural adaptation. The encounter with Islam gave birth to separate community groups because culturally and religiously could not be united. Likewise the encounter with Christianity creates alienation in concepts that are difficult to understand. That distance will be further away with religious practices that are contrary to Balinese culture. Each religious community does have the same days and months of religious practice (ceremony), but the quantity is very different.

The most striking difference is the center of religion, where each religious community has a place of worship with a different designation. Hindus refer to their place of worship as a temple, with all the variants that can be found in various places and spread. Christians call it a church, a chapel with a variety of forms but united. Muslims also have a place of worship which he calls a mosque, mosque with various styles. All kinds of variants of this synagogue can be seen in all regions of Jembrana Regency. In Ekasari Village, there are places of worship owned by each religious community. They compete to show the best face of the synagogue building as a sanctified place. Hinduism appears in openness, while two other religions (Christianity and Islam) appear in closed places of worship.

This struggle is more real and leads to conflict when dealing with things that are considered crucial, concerning religious identity. Social facts show that interests become one of the triggers of conflict in people's lives (Wirawan, 2012: 61). In this case the interest to

maintain identity in religious representation is the most compelling reason. Religious conversion is considered a taboo in people's lives which translates religion as a social reality (Lubis, 2015: 7). Therefore, marriages involving religious communities are strived to be avoided so as to keep the community away from conflicts that can affect communication between different religious communities.

Facts on the ground show that conflicts involving two religious communities cannot be avoided (Aryadharma, 2011: 143). In this case, the Hindu and Christian communities have a significant portion and at the same time an opportunity to present an identity struggle. Apart from marriage, the problem of religious and cultural symbols is a source of conflict. Even at the concrete level also involves boundaries. Everything is related to the identity held by each religious community. According to Ignas Kleden, the source of this conflict is closely related to the ideology of the religious community (in Sinaga, 2000: 23). This ideology is carried by each religious community and also by actors who work behind the scenes, especially in religious leaders.

Religious symbols are an essential part of the religious community in strengthening the religious identity carried out by each religious community (Atmadja, 2010: 62). Both the Muslim, Christian and Hindu communities are in the same position in the effort to instill religious values. The symbol of religion serves to increase understanding of religion, especially for people in rural areas who are very far from information regarding the knowledge of religion. The efforts carried out by each religious community in religious symbols are internal and exclusive. The Islamic community does more in the mosque every Friday. But sometimes also in homes when the situation allows. The Christian community, utilizing the pulpit Sunday, in addition to the deepening of the teachings in the months that have been determined. Hindu community, more use open spaces, like the banjar hall to do pesantian.

Beyond religion, there are still ideologies that have also developed and developed among Balinese people, and in Ekasari Village in particular. This can be found in awig-awig, how the concept or ideology of *tri hita karana* is lived (Gunawan, 2014: 180). Whereas on a practical level, *tri hita karana* is developed in good relations with others. This ideology becomes very important, especially if placed in communities that differ in their beliefs. Good relations with others actually have long been developed through the togetherness that has been built by the Ekasari village community, both in the cultural and economic fields. Ngejotan

is a tradition that has long existed in a diverse religious community, but eventually faded by the development of the era.

What actually develops in people's lives is to strengthen the identity of each religious community which makes the social life of the people more distant. The use of religious symbols as religious identities is increasingly prominent in each religious community. The Hindu community is getting stronger in using traditional clothing which is always used in religious ceremonies. The Christian community is getting stronger in establishing new sites that are considered to have historical and economic value. While Muslims are getting stronger in the use of headscarves and other Islamic symbols that can be found in everyday life. This symbolic identity is further strengthened by the community's struggle in the economic field and also in the election of village heads.

In the economic field, society strives to achieve a better standard of living. For this reason, there is a system and ideology that is used as a starting point for composing power. For the people of Ekasari Village, the Cooperative is the most appropriate choice to develop the community's economy. The ideology behind this is the power of capital that can move the community to develop various business units. There are three ideological forces that work behind financial institutions namely: the Office, Customs and the Church. Service is a government tool that develops Village Business Entity (Bumdes). Adat through credit makes it easy for the Hindu community to help with the needs in the religious field. As for the Christian Community, cooperatives are used as a means to assist people in developing businesses or borrowing funds for various purposes.

All of these businesses certainly require strategies so that the goals of community welfare can be met. In this case community leaders play a very important role, especially to provide motivation to influence changes in society. Both village leaders, custom and religion are considered as people who are able to bring people towards a better direction. Among the existing figures, the Village Head is considered the most important and strategic figure. He held a position in this reformation era for 5 years and afterwards could be re-elected. The position that was originally only held for one term and alternated between religious communities, eventually became an arena for power struggles. The Hindu community as a majority is certainly very aware of the important role of the position of village head so that this opportunity is utilized as well as possible to not move to other communities.

2. Implications of the Identity Struggle

Specific identity struggles in religious plurality certainly have implications both for each community and for the overall dynamics of community life in Ekasari Village. The implication occurs both at the level of the superstructure, structure and infrastructure.

2.1. Strengthening Ideology

The only thing that can be expected from the survival of a community is its ideology which must be nurtured, nurtured and preserved. Especially in the context of religion, the ideology is very clear, namely as a view of life in a relationship with God and manifested in relations to others and responsibility for the environment (Kahmad, 2000: 15). An ideology does not stop at ideas or theologies that are developed, but must have a social dimension.

The ideology of each religious community can be seen or traced through the history of each religious community. Within the Muslim Community there is a monotheistic ideology which is the oneness of God which must be strengthened by faithfulness in carrying out worship. Through preaching or *tausiah* an Islamic religious leader has a very important role in maintaining the integrity of the teachings; do not let it be penetrated by outside interests which can actually threaten the preservation and the conquest of the community itself.

The Christian community through theologies developed especially the doctrine of the trinity must be manifested in celebrations centered on the Eucharist as the heart of life. The Eucharist as a source of soul strength must be carried out diligently and faithfully. The celebration of the Eucharist cannot be obscured by cultural biases that cause conflicts both inside and outside.

The Hindu community with the teachings on trine confirms more practical teachings in the ceremonies held in each temple. The implementation of the ceremony as a form of devotion to God cannot be contested because of the differences that exist, let alone infiltrated by political interests. In this way the purity of the teachings can still be maintained.

2.2 Strengthening Education

Education is the basis of a civilization and cultural dimension (Widja, 2000: 11). The more advanced the education the higher the level of human civilization. Through the education of the human horizon the wider in knowing and understanding everything related to the universe with all its mysteries. Education is the gateway to human welfare. Without a

good education the opportunity or opportunity to progress and develop is getting smaller. Human well-being is very dependent on the education achieved.

Each religious community is well aware of the role of education, both in the formal and informal sense. Education by the religious community is not only understood as intellectual progress but education includes reason and intelligence. The purpose of education itself is to humanize humans so that they become more humane in seeing things.

The Christian community took the first step in Ekasari Village in developing formal education, starting from the kindergarten, elementary, junior high and vocational level. By the presence of schools, the continuity of the community can be maintained and increasingly strengthened. In addition, thanks to the presence of schools the economic life of the community was also improved. Aware of this situation, through the hegemony (power) the education center was transferred to the Hindu Community and the Christian Community began to be abandoned. The presence of private schools is not strategic in the current situation so that the remaining two school units namely kindergarten and elementary school will soon be closed if they no longer have students.

Because of this struggle and the awareness of the importance of education, each community has taken another way to strengthen the education of its members. The Christian community sees the importance of the church as a means and infrastructure for involving members in education starting from the elementary level. The Islamic community, due to the lack of space (infrastructure), makes the family the first and foremost place of education. While the Hindu Community, in addition to a very reliable public school, also makes the *banjar* hall a school that helps children understand about education, especially those related to religious practices.

2.3 Religious Social Exclusivity

Religious life is always overshadowed by an exclusive, closed attitude and very selfish in understanding the truth which is always followed by the attitude of looking at the wrong religion of others. All religions have such attitudes that very little space is given to accept or acknowledge the truth that exists in other religions. This exclusive attitude breeds religious fanaticism and even leads to acts of violence (Schedina in Ali Noer Zaman, 2000: 1-2).

The three religious communities in Ekasari Village have a huge opportunity to develop an exclusive attitude that is reinforced by different origins, history, places and expectations.

But what is most striking is the lack of assimilation and all this is accepted as inheritance (given). There are clear boundaries between the three religious communities, although there are still slices of equality in place.

Signs of this exclusive direction have occurred along with the disappearance of the culture that was once lived, namely the culture of *ngejot* (sharing). Each religious community carries out its religious celebrations without involving others, except accidentally through the visit of the regent as an official who must carry out his obligations to greet all religious people.

This situation is further exacerbated by the discourses that develop in society through social media. Even greeting friends of different faiths is strictly prohibited because it is against religious norms. This exclusivity is also marked by the slow pace of the community in solving problems involving different religious communities.

2.4 Public area

Public space is both a symbol and a marker of the existence of a community group. Every community group has a public space that aims to build and strengthen togetherness. Public space is also used as a means to strengthen ideology in each community (Habermas, 2012: 127). So it becomes very important mastery of public space in Balinese society better known as a meeting hall, meeting place or meeting room. Government facilities such as markets, fields and buildings are actually public spaces that are open to the public. Anyone can use public space for various purposes.

In Ekasari Village, public space exists in the form of village halls, schools, polyclinics, fields, markets and roads as a means of connecting one community to another. The reality is that public space is dominated by the interests of certain groups or communities. Conversely, public spaces that become private spaces belonging to certain groups or communities become much closed because they are always associated with adat and religion. This public space becomes a secret space for each community to strengthen its identity.

2.5 Community Polarization

People are geographically divided into communities with clear boundaries. This polarization is even stronger when fighting for the interests of certain groups that involve people with certain religious identities. Sympathy and empathy are built up and not even on the basis of rationality but emotional in nature ([https:// joehudijana](https://joehudijana).

Wordpress.com/2016/12/28/ why-happened-polarization). This polarization becomes stronger when it offends religious interests.

This is very much felt by the people of Desa Ekasari when dealing with land issues, namely territorial boundaries. In it there are territorial claims and attempts to exclude other groups. By a sense of solidarity and feelings of empathy finally patterned community groups who fight for a belief or ideology. Community polarization becomes increasingly sharpened if it cannot be resolved by deliberation and consensus.

Community polarization is becoming more complete, not only geographically or in separate territorial boundaries but also involves the feelings or emotions of people who feel hurt and treated unfairly. The court is not a solution to overcome the polarization of society that has been formed. The only way is not to make the identity difference. Leadership becomes important to build relationships between communities that deliver society to consensus or collective agreement.

CONCLUSION

The identity struggle that occurred in Ekasari Village in the context of plurality and religion actually involved the three religious communities (Hinduism, Christianity and Islam) in an effort to strengthen each other's identity. This struggle is super structurally motivated by an ideology or understanding held by or believed by each religious community. All efforts to strengthen this identity are intended to be able to survive and at the same time also to fight for the interests of each community, both in the fields of religion, culture, economy and power. This identity struggle raises various kinds of difficulties, challenges but at the same time hopes to organize life together in one area better. The role of religious leaders, community leaders in structural or leadership contexts is very important in efforts to build dialogue and tolerance based on principles that are mutually agreed upon, especially Tri Hita Karana's local wisdom. The three communities involved in identity struggle should use infrastructure as a means and infrastructure that provides opportunities and opportunities for each community to build mutual prosperity and peace, both in the physical and spiritual fields.

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