



Existence of *Bali Aga* Community Religion (Pedawa Village in Buleleng)



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Abstract



Keywords

Bali Aga;
culture;
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religion;
tradition;

The research is aimed at exploring how the belief system of Bali Aga community? how the strategy for retention the identity of the Bali Aga community? and (3) how the implications of preserving the identity of the Balinese Aga community?. The grand theories used in the present study included structural functionalism, phenomenology, and religious. Data were collected through observation techniques, in-depth interviews, and document studies. Having analyzed data is conducted interpretive description techniques. Based on the results of the research conducted in Pedawa Village, it was found that the people currently still preserve their ancestral cultural heritage in the sense that the traditions and religious systems. They inherit are still functional in managing their socio-religious life. The adjustments are indeed conducted in order to preserve the continuity of the traditions that they do. The concept of AGIL namely *Adaptation, Goal, Integration, and Latency* shows its existence in the field. The study also found that there was an exciting kind of awakening to strengthen the religious system and traditions. They inherited unlike reviving the sacred dances they had, and the tradition of planting of *gaga rice* had been increasingly difficult to find. It is one of the important facilities in the Bali Aga ritual system.

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1. Introduction

Discussing the issue of religion as a belief system essentially involving a value system inherent in human civilization. A belief system develops in accordance with the cultural development of its adherents. The experts concluded that the population occupying the Bali island had confidence in the mountains and the sea as a spirit realm; trust in the real and unreal nature; the existence of trust in another life after death; and trust in ancestral spirits that can be asked for help (Sutaba, 1980; Ardana; 1986).

The fundamentals of faith then color the local belief system, is acculturated with religious teachings that came later to generally Indonesia and particularly Bali. The inclusion of religious elements, therefore, from India must be considered as fertilizing substances from the development of local religion (Bosch, 1983: 7). This then develops a local belief system based on the strong and/or weak influence of religion that is received, or depends on the level of adaptation that each of these local religions has. The local belief system or local religiosity in its development experiences a period of ups and downs. Since, Independence Day until the reign of the *Orde Baru*, local religion seems to have been marginalized from academic discourse.

Baswedan (2007: x), stated that since the early 1950s, there in Indonesia has been a tendency to view local aspirations as an idea that contradicts national aspirations. Thinking about the area is often considered equivalent to fighting the center. Local aspirations then are pushed aside, due to they are often labeled as not nationalist and contrary to the idea of unity. Local traditions and culture are often excluded due to the uniformity of national cultural and traditional symbols, usually conducted under the name of unity in diversity. After the Reformation began in 1998, the dynamics of politics in the region entered a new era as well. The actors, institutions, local culture are emerging again and are starting to play a role in local politics.

Baswedan (2007), the statement becomes very interesting, if it is related to the dynamics of Bali Aga community religion of Pedawa Village in Buleleng. As it is known that the people of Bali Aga are a sub-ethnic group. Balinese people who inhabit the mountainous region. The term of Bali Aga is a term for native Balinese who generally occupy the mountainous regions in Bali (Basic Education Agency, Bali Province, 1991: 6). They have local traditions both in social life and unique religious system compared to the society in *Bali Dataran*. The uniqueness of the people of Bali Aga is probably due to the lack of influence of Javanese Hinduism brought to Bali by the Majapahit people (Dharmayuda, 1995: 33).

One of the uniqueness in Bali Aga community religion is for the mountainous region of Bali is the lack of influence of Hindu Majapahit. If it is compared to Balinese people. It is encouraged the desire to explore more about the existence of the religious system of the Balinese Aga community Pedawa Village in Buleleng, therefore, the studies need to be conducted. The three problems are discussed in the current study included (1) how the belief system of Bali Aga community? (2) how the strategy for retention the identity of the Bali Aga community? (3) how the implications of preserving the identity of the Balinese Aga community?

2. Materials and Methods

In order to obtain good results, the grand theories used in the present study included structural functionalism, phenomenology, and religious. Data were collected through observation techniques, in-depth interviews, and document studies. Having analyzed data is conducted interpretive description techniques.

3. Results and Discussions

The community of Bali Aga is one of the ethnic groups among 101 ethnic groups in Indonesia (Jamil, 2008: 43). The lexicon of *Aga* defines *mountain*. Bali Aga is a term for native Balinese. The ancestors of Bali Aga society thought to be Austronesian people, also called Proto Melayu. The term Bali Aga is to identify groups of people who are thought to be the initial inhabitants who inhabit the Bali island and relatively a bit affected by Hinduism. They are generally in mountainous areas. The existence of this designation is to distinguish from people whose ancestors came later to Bali. They generally came from Java (Dharmayuda, 1995: 33; Sudharta, 2006: 1). Bagus (2004: 286), called it Bali-Majapahit generally live in the Dataran area.

The Bali Aga identity is carried by the community in Pedawa Village does have an ambivalent impact. The label refers to the characteristics of the local community; different identity with the Majapahit society. Bali Aga identity is also a pride due to it has own characteristics. Therein Pedawa Village, several kinds of traditions and ritual ceremonies that are different from those in Bali Dataran, unlike Mebase Tegoh tradition, Ngangkid, even Nyepi momentum is determined by Pawisik (whispering) received by Balian Desa.

The worship tradition of Pedawa Village is also different from the community of Hindus in Dataran, Sanggah (small temple in the household) in Pedawa is in a traditional house called Pacekan Base. Pedawa people although accept the change coming from outside, they still preserve Bali Aga identity. This theoretically is indeed a common symptom, when the term regarded the tradition and identity begin to strengthen. In this context, it can be stated that the religious existence of the Bali Aga community in Pedawa persists amid the changing times. It is due to the strengthening of the Bali Aga identity.

They keep preserving their traditions consistently. The emotion of being proud of the Bali Aga has also recognized not only the elders but also the younger generation. This is due to Pedawa Village has its own religious characteristics. They are very different from other regions. The local wisdom is also reflected through the social interaction of the community in carrying out daily activities. Although there are not a few young people who have gotten higher education when they return to their villages they still use the typical language of Pedawa. It shows that the young generation really loves their traditions and identity. If they go to school outside the village or district, it does not make them lose their Pedawa identity. It means that Pedawa people are classified as active subjects who cannot just accept a change if it is not in accordance with the atmosphere of their local traditions and culture. They are always selective about new patterns and traditions that come from outside.

The technological developments are increasingly rapid. They are not necessarily carried away the current era and abandoned the tradition. Precisely the era of modernization and globalization made them even more convinced their identity as a Bali Aga community. It shows that local identity always gets justification amid the onslaught of modern life. The globalization has a cultural impact, *i.e.*, the stronger movement back to living tradition is considered more authentic and real. The religion here as cultural identities are able to make people believe and preserve it.

Having considered adapted environment is always changing, in adapting efforts, humans continue to follow, observe, and interpret various symptoms and changes occurred in their environment. Thus, it can be stated that the cultural adaptation is conducted not only solely determined by the desires, needs, and objectives originating from culture as a knowledge system, but also determined by the local environmental situation. The mechanism of adaptation is not to get rid of their religious system and local culture. However, it is used to justify and even affirm the traditions they have been doing for generations.

Regarding the causes of the existence of religious existence is the presence of amazement and fear of the community towards something that is supernatural, cannot be tolerated, but trusted by the community. This point is indeed very relevant to be used to explain theoretically the cause of the persistence of religious existence in *Desa Pakraman Pedawa*. At least, through data interviews with several figures in the village, data was obtained that was one reason that the Pedawa Village people did not dare to change their religious existence. Due to they were based on fear of being cursed by their ancestors.

The *phobia* originating from the belief in the *bhisama* ancestor is almost owned by all the people of Pedawa Village, they even though had gotten higher education. It is the *sense* culture that they get in higher education cannot necessarily be used to change various kinds of traditions and religious systems that they consider to be final. The strong belief in local traditions makes Pedawa Village have the awareness to preserve it.

The community has the concepts offered, both by *Parisada* and other parties regarding the belief system are received in a variety of ways in the Bali Aga community. However, of course, there are some things accommodated and adapted to local conditions, some are even rejected. For things are accommodated and adapted to local culture produce new cultural models as a result of acculturation of culture.

The reinterpretation of religious values is necessary, however, it must be done carefully. The rituals are space and time for human beings to sublimate. Therefore, their lives become more meaningful, due to the life challenges will always emerge at any time. There is a time to stop the movement of desire that always moves wildly *like a big truck released from the top of the hill without being equipped with brakes*. They are reminders or a kind of brakes so that humans are not trapped in the bustle of the lust that moves uncontrollably. Humans have the opportunity to re-realize the meaning of life.

It is undeniable to go to Pedawa Village meeting with some residents, religion, and religious beliefs became an interesting phenomenon. The entry of capital through the market system into this region brought such drastic changes. The opening of the asphalt road to the Pedawa area opens wider access to the community to interact with other communities. The access is to the outside of the village also provides opportunities for increased income and the emergence of job diversification. There is a movement from an agrarian society to a service society, from traditional patterns to modern directions.

According to [Giddens \(1992: 5\)](#), the way of life brought about modernity has cleansed society from all traditional social settings, in ways that never existed before. However, in this situation, there is actually a continuity between traditional and modern life, and not everything is completely cut off. If it refers to the [Giddens \(1930\)](#), viewed it will be clear that modernization must be recognized as driving changes in the community of Bali Aga. The changes referred to are not only in a physical sense but also touch their belief system. However, it is not all of them have undergone fundamental changes due to the existence of state regulations in the field of religion. There are also some who have persisted in their belief systems.

The past in traditional culture is respected and symbols are valued. Due to they are responsible for the experiences of various generations. A tradition is a way to integrate monitoring actions in a reflexive manner with a spatial-time arrangement in the community. This is a means to deal with space and time. It includes all specific activities or experiences in the past, present, and future sustainability, in turn, are structured ongoing social practices. It is not entirely static, it must be rediscovered every new generation when it takes over the cultural heritage of its predecessor. The tradition does not overturn change, it occurs in a context wherein, there are several separate temporal and spatial signs, provided that change can have a meaningful form ([Giddens, 1930: 49](#)).

The preserve in some traditional aspects is actually a form of resistance from the Pedawa Village community in responding to changes in the religious order from the outside. Something that was observed as a form of community confidence in Pedawa was the existence of a culture called *lelintih nemugelang*. It consists of the word *lintih* which gets the insertion *le so lelintih* means *regular* (Dictionary of Bali Indonesia, p. 426) *nemu gelang* means the circulation of time until it returns again at the beginning (Dictionary of Bali Indonesia, p. 218). It is a series of activities of *Desa Adat Pedawa* from the beginning until back at the beginning of the activity included *sabha*, *sangkep*, and *muga*.

In performing the ceremony of *Dewa Yadnya/sabha*, a sacred dance is also performed included *rejang baris*, *local kidung-kidung* and certain *tabuh* (Balinese instruments). The dances that are often performed *i.e.*, *rejang* dance unlike *rejang lilit*, *rejang beneh*, *rejang sirig bantas*, *rejang ririg kuri*, *rejang embat-embatan penjalin*, *rejang depan*, *rejang galuh*, *rejang renteng*, *rejang kirig kesamping*, *rejang embung kelor*, *rejang langkaran*, *rejang puser gantung*, *rejang dendeng goreng*, *rejang legong*, *rejang kepet*, *rejang tali gayung*, and *rejang abuang-abuangan*. This *rejang* is carried out by the members of the community, but nowadays few know/can dance. The reason is fewer clothes and less attention from the dancer itself.

The *baris* dance also has *baris gede*, *baris bulan kepangan*, *baris pendet*, *baris dadap*. This dance is conducted by the youngman. There are also *makeba-kebaan* and *meblawangan*. *Jejumputan* dance is usually carried out by children under the six years old. The *tetabuhan* for each dance *e.g.*, *tabuh taksu*, *tabuh udang-udangan*, *tabuh glagah puun*, *tabuh ngecisin*, *tabuh nguliang saa*, *tabuh aris-arian*, *tabuh simbang kirang*, *tabuh klelemesan*, *tabuh gegambuhan*, *tabuh teruna mentik*, *tabuh unda*, and *tabuh buncing*. Whereas, the special songs are like those for the youngman: *kidung warga saeri pedawa*, *kidung ratu dalem*, and *kidung angklung samara*.

If it is seen the cultural elements in Pedawa Village, not all of them have experienced transformation. The strategic efforts carried out by the community actually made certain elements of the local culture preserved. If it is adopting an idea of cultural transformation above, the situation is more directed towards cultural origination, *i.e.*, acculturation that allows the growth of new elements to meet new needs due to changing times. Therefore, the local culture and traditions grow at standing on the foundation of the local culture. The preservation of Bali Aga traditions and identity continues to be carried out by the community through their cultural activities.

Based on the results of interviews and observations, the strength of Pedawa Village lies precisely in its local identity. This awareness is built through exploration that continues to the local traditions and culture in Pedawa. They realize that the community already has an established cultural, religious, and social system. They have a view of life that is very integrated with nature. These principles are considered not to conflict with the spirit and values of the philosophy of the Hinduism teachings. Thus, the intellectual figure in Pedawa did not change the traditions and culture of the Pedawa community but rather strengthened it with the values of religious teachings. Despite the dynamics when there are parties who want to incorporate religious texts into the religious and cultural systems of the Pedawa community. They are wisely addressed by localizing values that come from outside. For example, the community still learned about the songs, but also preserved the *kidung Pedawa* (song).

The cultural origination of the Pedawa community can be seen from the persistence of local beliefs about carrying out religious ceremonies, especially, the myths about *Balian Desa* and the fear of a *sulinggih* who fills ritual ceremonies. During this time, when a religious ritual was held in Pedawa, it did not lead *sulinggih* as a person who has equal and nondisciplinary authority in completing religious ceremonies through his *holy mantra*. Non *sulinggih* in the implementation of rituals are based on the myths about the danger of *sulinggih* which fills rituals. It will even have a direct impact on the life of the *sulinggih*.

The one expression of the active attitude of agrarian societies in preserving identity and culture is the community in Pedawa Village. No doubt, the progress of the era has made the marginalization of an agrarian culture increasingly. The working pattern of the community also changes from an agrarian pattern to an industrial pattern. However, the change emotion pattern, Pedawa community still preserves the Bali Aga identity. The form of preserving Bali Aga identity carried out by Pedawa Village community can be seen in the *ngaga tradition*. A tradition is a form of Pedawa agrarian culture that is directly related to religious ritual activities. Here, the defense of *ngaga tradition* has a direct impact on the community's belief system that is oriented towards nature.

The *Ngaga tradition* (planting *Gogo Rice*) in the upland area by Pengempon Pura Puncak Sari, Dusun Insakan, Pedawa Village, Banjar Subdistrict, Buleleng Regency has held again on Wednesday, December 19th, 2018. This tradition actually was previously lost, after it was last held in 1971. Again, this tradition was held to protect the supply of *gaga rice* used during the ceremony at Pucak Sari Temple.

The Pedawa people actually really hope that this tradition is protected specifically, not only by the Village Pedawa community but also the government. Moreover, this tradition is directly related to the outlook of the Pedawa community and religious rites. The culture grows in Pedawa also comes from an ecocentric worldview. This tradition continues to be preserved by the Pedawa community to fulfill the needs of the *gaga rice*, no longer having to search until Pedawa comes out. For this reason, according to the plan, Pengempon temple called *Sekeha Juragan (farmer)* will routinely hold this *ngaga tradition*.

The data above shows that there are intrinsic values that make the Pedawa Village community must preserve the Balinese identity of their religion and ancestral traditions. As it is explained that one of the causes of the Pedawa community did not dare to lose their traditional identity. Due to they respected the message and ancestral heritage. The Pedawa community already has a cultural system that is mature enough to be used as a reference in managing their social life. The Pedawa people currently have pride in the uniqueness of their traditions without feeling like a backward society.

The spirit of preserving this cultural identity received a very good response from the government. Already several times, Pedawa Village was visited by the state officials, one of which was Buleleng Regent, Putu Agus Suradnyana. Even Suradnyana requested that Pedawa Village make a special *perarem* (regulation) about the sustainability of the *ngaga tradition*. The aim is to leave an area of 5 to 10 acres, so that, it can still grow upland rice. This tradition will also preserve the existing ecosystem. Balinese people have been taught to

preserve their ecosystem by ancestors. Therefore, the preserving carried out by the Pedawa community does indeed have an impact on the emergence of the awareness of nature.

The other implication of efforts to preserve Bali Aga identity by the community can be seen from the effort to interpret tradition in the context of the value integration. For example, in the tradition of *mabase tegeh*. It is full of integrative values because in terms of the implementation of *mabase tegeh* tradition. It is able to unite citizens both parties from the groom's family. In matters of marriage will always involve the community, family, and individuals. The groom's family will always follow the procedures and rules that apply to the bride.

Based on observations made on the implementation of *Mabase Tegeh* tradition activities, it seems clear that the bond of unity between the two brides is close and full of kinship. It was evident when the family of the bridegroom in the initial procession participated in and provided assistance in terms of material assistance, energy, and moral encouragement to strengthen its implementation.

The next implication of efforts to preserve Bali Aga identity by the community in Pedawa Village is strengthening the community norm system. The norms are rules of behavior in a particular group, wherein, each member of the community knows the rights and obligations in the society. It has a function as a guideline and basic regulator of one's life in society to realize life between people who are safe, peaceful, and prosperous. Preserving of Bali Aga identity through the preservation of traditions, customs, culture, and religion by the Pedawa community (such as *mabase tegeh*, *ngangkid ritual*, *ngaga tradition*, etc.) has many meanings and functions in strengthening the norm. The norm system is aimed at 1) norms of decency, 2) norms of religious, and 3) norms of customs.

Findings

Based on the results of the research conducted in Pedawa Village, it was found that the people to currently still preserve their ancestral cultural heritage in the sense that the traditions and religious systems. They inherit are still functional in managing their socio-religious life. The adjustments are indeed conducted in order to preserve the continuity of the traditions that they do. The concept of AGIL namely *Adaptation, Goal, Integration, and Latency* shows its existence in the field. The study also found that there was an exciting kind of awakening to strengthen the religious system and traditions. They inherited unlike reviving the sacred dances they had, and the tradition of planting of *gaga rice* had been increasingly difficult to find. It is one of the important facilities in the Bali Aga ritual system.

4. Conclusion

Based on the results and discussions, it can be concluded as follows.

- (1) The existence of the religious system of the Balinese community. Therein Pedawa Village can survive in the midst of changing times presumed following things: justification of Bali Aga identity, the character of adaptive society, fear of leaving ancestral traditions, and tourism influence. The justification of Bali Aga identity can be seen from the internal desire in Pedawa Village community to justify Bali Aga identity that has been conducted so far. They have the desire to be the active subject in filtering out the culture flow that comes from outside. Not all traditions that come from outside; both brought Pedawa people themselves or the country, in this case, PHDI is received Pedawa Village community. They continue to preserve their traditions consistently. The feeling of being proud of the Bali Aga is also recognized not only by the elders but also the younger generation. This is due to Pedawa Village has its own religious characteristics. It is very different from other regions. The adaptive character of Balinese Aga community in Pedawa Village can be seen from the systematic efforts made the Balinese Aga community in Pedawa Village, Buleleng Regency to adapt their cultural system to the cultural system that came later in order to preserve its cultural existence. The mechanism of adaptation that the Pedawa people do not to get rid of their religious system and local culture but it is used to justify and even affirm the traditions they have been doing for generations. Furthermore, the people of Bali Aga is also afraid to leave the traditions of their ancestors. The last is tourism influence. This also greatly affects the existence of the Pedawa community religious system, moreover, the uniqueness of the religious system in Pedawa Village is a tourism object that is relied upon.

- (2) The strategy of Bali Aga community in preserving its religious system can be explained as follows: *first*, an acculturation strategy, Balinese Aga community in Pedawa Village, the concepts offered, both by Parisada and other parties regarding the belief system are received in a variety of ways in the Balinese Aga community. However, of course, there are some things that are accommodated and adapted to local conditions, some are even rejected. For the things are accommodated and adapted to local culture produce new cultural models as a result of culture acculturation, such as the receipt of Nyepi (festival day called silent day in Bali every 420 days) nationally and Nyepi in village, the implementation of Galungan and Kuningan (festival day in Bali every 210 days). *Second*, it is resistivity. Defense in some traditional aspects is actually a form of resistance from the Pedawa Village community in responding to change in the religious order from the outside. Some things that were observed as a form of community confidence in Pedawa were the existence of a culture called *lelintih nemugelang*. *Lelintih nemugelang* is a series of activities of Pedawa Village customary from the beginning until back at the beginning of the activities included *sabha*, *sangkep*, and *muga*. The worship/ritual ceremony in Kahyangan at Pedawa is called *Sabha*. *Sabha* is the same as Pujawali (ceremony). Pujawali/Sabha in Pedawa Village is not timed like in other villages based on calculations of *wuku* and authority or *sasih* but is determined based on *lelintih/eedan* ceremony which is usually chosen as an adult *sabha* is Purnama or Balinese date.
- (3) The implications of preserving the religious system of Bali Aga community in Pedawa Village can be seen as follows: *first*, it is cultural origination. If having seen the cultural elements in Pedawa Village, not all of them have experienced transformation. The strategic efforts conducted Pedawa Village community actually made certain elements of the local culture preserved. If it adopts the idea of cultural transformation above, the situation in Pedawa is more directed towards cultural origination, namely acculturation that allows the growth of new elements to meet new needs due to changing times. Thus, the local culture and traditions of Pedawa Village grow at standing on the foundation of the local culture. The retention of traditions and Bali Aga identity continues to be carried out Pedawa Village community through its cultural activities, unlike preserving the native Pedawa society, Pedawa typical dances are displayed during the *yadnya* ceremonies, and not use *sulinggih* (priest) during the ceremony at Pedawa based on local beliefs. *Second*, it is the preservation of agrarian traditions related to religion, one is Ngaga tradition. Ngaga tradition is a form of Pedawa agrarian culture that is directly related to religious ritual activities. Here, the defense of Ngaga tradition has a direct impact on the community's belief system is oriented towards nature. Ngaga tradition is intended to fulfill ritual facilities in the form of *Padi Gogo* in Pedawa Village. The community reactivated this tradition for independence in the provision of facilities for religious rituals such as *Padi Gogo*. *Third*, it is defining of local traditions in the context of integration. One of the rituals preserved Pedawa people who have social integration values is Mebase Tegeh. It is full of integrative values because in terms of the implementation of the tradition of Mabase Tegeh. It is able to unite citizens of both parties from both the bridegroom's and women's families. The matters of marriage will always involve the community, family, and individuals. The groom's family will always follow the procedures and rules that apply to the bride. The last is strengthening the norm system which includes decency norms, religious norms, and customs norms. These three norms play an important role in efforts to preserve the religious system in Pedawa Village, due to each religious ceremony cannot be separated from these three norms.

Suggestions

The community, especially, Pedawa Village karma (society), is advised to continue to strengthen their cultural identity and religious system. The cultural identity of the Balin Aga community in Pedawa is an asset and inheritance owned by Pedawa and particularly Bali. Therefore, public awareness to preserve cultural identity and religious system inspired by Hinduism needs to be improved. Pedawa people must be at the forefront; there are efforts both internally and externally to eliminate and even replace the local traditions and culture in Pedawa Village.

In order to the government, both the executive and the legislature, it is suggested that they participate in preserving the existence of the religious system in Pedawa Village. It is needed supporting all types of religious activities carried out in Pedawa Village. Moreover, the government has the duty to preserve and preserve traditional culture or knowledge in accordance with the cultural progress law. The village has many

traditions and religious systems that are different from other regions. This is a tremendous cultural wealth, and/if necessary this potential continues to be managed and preserved properly to support cultural tourism in Bali.




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