

# BALINESE SOCIAL INVESTMENT IN DEATH: SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION PERSPECTIVE ON GRAVE CONFLICT IN BALI

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## Abstract

This study aims to raise the phenomenon of traditional village conflicts based on conflicts over graves. Graves become meaningful for the Balinese people. Balinese people have to be buried in the traditional village of the community because it is recorded as the village manner where they are and wherever they migrate. This study uses a qualitative method that took place in Gianyar Regency. This research produces several significant results. First, the social investment model of the Balinese community in its existence as an indigenous community consists of two forms: the investment model for village institutions, in this case, the *Pakraman* or traditional village, and the investment model. *Second*, death has a profound meaning for the Balinese people, not only seen as the loss of one of the families in this world but also interpreted as the emergence of a new obligation in the form of an ancestral obligation that must be paid when someone dies. The person concerned is considered an ancestor, and when someone dies, he/she is considered an ancestor. Thus the obligation of the ancestors (*Pitra Rna*) shall be carried out by the relatives left behind. *Third*, in the context of Balinese society, graves are not only seen as a place to bury corpses but are also interpreted as a religious cosmic related to a series of ceremonies at one of the temples, which in the context of Balinese society is called *Kayangan Tiga*. This research finds new investment concepts and conflict-based social constructions that differ from the concepts of investment and social construction issued by Peter Berger.

**Keywords:** Social Investment; Death; Social Construction; Graves

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## INTRODUCTION

Bali is unique, Bali is beautiful, Bali is harmonious and we have heard a lot of other good names or predicates, even in foreign countries. The acknowledgment also includes the peculiarities and uniqueness of its customs which are preserved through an institution called *Desa Pakraman* (Traditional Village), which is now known as *Desa Pakraman*. *Desa Pakraman* as a religious social organization has a strong social organization system to realize the harmony of its citizens through its organizational structure and the rules contained therein called *awig-awig desa pakraman*, both written and unwritten (Windia, 2008).

Besides that, *desa pakraman* also has a number of local wisdom or in the Welsh's phrase (in Windia, 2008) referred to as local genius who can cool the atmosphere, such as *paras-paros* (together in joy and sorrow), *jеле melah gelahang bareng* (good or bad, it is all one of ours), *matilesang dewek* (know yourself), etc.

In addition to the local wisdom above, in the community of *Desa Pakraman* in Bali there is also a hegemonic cultural construction, namely *Suryak Siu* which means the majority shall prevail. What is the truth according to the majority must be followed by all components of society. This cultural construction is often used by the *Pakraman* village as an instrument to isolate residents who have opposite or different opinions with the *Pakraman* village. This instrument is very effectively used by the *Pakraman* village to oblige its citizens to submit to the *Pakraman* village and at the same time take an active role in all *Pakraman* village's activities.

Through this instrument, the *Pakraman* village can also oblige all indigenous people to participate in all routine activities, even though it is concurrent with the individual activities of the *Pakraman* villagers. *Kesepekang* (ex-communication) in the *Pakraman* village is a sanction given by the *Pakraman* village if the villagers do not follow or contradict the wishes of the

*Pakraman* village. Thus, the community is required to obey and submit to the *Pakraman* village, including in terms of the routine activities carried out.

The strengthening of the power of the *Pakraman* village is currently triggered by the loss of state power (loss legitimate) which began with the collapse of the New Order power in 1998. With the strengthening of the *Pakraman* village, the *Pakraman* village has become idolized and at the same time has become the spearhead of the Balinese people in determining the bargaining position with the central government and the local government. The power of the *Pakraman* village which is large and tends to exceed the power of the state at the local level is often a scourge that frightens the people themselves, so they do not dare to cross the *Pakraman* village.

Various cases of *kesepe kang* (ex-communication) by the *Pakraman* Village against the residents who violated the rules of the *Pakraman* Village in Bali have further implications for the Balinese people to invest socially in the *adat* community. Indigenous people (*krama adat*) will feel obligated even though by doing so they have to ignore other activities, for the sake of their social investment in *Pakraman* village. Balinese people view that fulfilling obligations as *krama* is not only limited to carrying out their obligations but is also expected as an investment or savings that when needed can be withdrawn and used. Without social investment in the form of fulfilling obligations as *krama*, it is not possible *krama* to get service rights from the *Pakraman* village, both in terms of *kahyangan desa*, *palemahan*, and up to the use of *setra* (graves).

With this understanding, the harmony of the *krama* in the *Pakraman* village should be guaranteed. But in the last few decades, cases regarding *Pakraman* village that occurred in Bali tend to increase. Conflicts that occurred in *Pakraman* villages, according to Windia (2008) within 1999-2009, are mostly cases between *Pakraman* village with *krama* with the highest number of 57 cases (50.9%). This was followed by 22 cases of conflict between *Pakraman* villages (19.6%), *Pakraman* village with other institutions (11.6%), *Pakraman* village with the government (7.1%), and *Pakraman* village with *krama tamiu* (people who come from outside the village) with only 2 cases (1.8%).

If the *Pakraman* village with *krama* (DKKD) cases that have occurred is

associated with districts and cities in Bali, it appears that Gianyar Regency ranks in the first place (18 conflicts) and is followed by Karangasem Regency (10 cases), while the in the last place is Jemberana Regency and Denpasar City with only one case each.

Prominent and protracted conflict cases such as the conflict between the Banjar Adat Ambengan and the Banjar Adat Semana. As in Purnomo and Kusuma, (Witari et al., 2013) the case of a land dispute that occurred in Banjar Adat Ambengan, Desa Pakraman Sayan and Banjar Adat Semana, Desa Pakraman Damayu emerged on May 31, 2007 which began with the decline of three coconut trees and one blalu tree. by residents of Banjar Adat Semana at the *setra* location which according to residents of Banjar Adat Semana, the wood will be used for the construction of the local Prajapati Temple which is used together, but this action is prohibited by residents of Banjar Adat Ambengan. Another case is what happened in Pakudui Village, Tegallalang District. In Antara Bali (2010) that in Desa Pakudui, Tegallalang District, there was a conflict over the use of *setra*. Where on September 16, 2010 there was an obstruction of the burial of residents of Banjar Pakudui Kangin by residents of Banjar Pakudui Kauh.

These conflict cases greatly impact on people's lives, especially those who are in conflict, one of which is the lack of harmony in people's lives which interferes with the implementation of development in the village. Even in the case of a conflict between Desa Adat Kemoning and Desa Adat Budaga in Semarapura, Klungkung Regency, there were casualties because 1 (one) resident died from being hit by a bullet. In addition, in each case the conflict will be difficult to resolve and will likely repeat itself as happened in Pakudui and the Semana-Ambengan conflict which will drag on until 2020.

Based on the phenomena described above in this study, the researchers took a different angle from previous similar studies. In the conflict theories presented by Karl Max, conflict is based on the existence of struggles or control over production resources. Likewise, Weber and Koser state that conflict is basically caused by a struggle for sources of power. In addition, on average, many studies on conflict take political, economic, and cultural *angles* or perspectives. In this study, the conflict that occurred was based on the seizure of graves based on the Balinese construction of

graves which were interpreted as social investments. Based on this explanation, this research produces novelty because it has produced new concepts in conflict theory that are different from previous conflict theories. The location of this novelty resulted from unique conflict phenomena in traditional entities (customary villages) based on the struggle for graves. In accordance with the thoughts contained in the background of the problems above, the objectives of this study include: 1). To understand and analyze the Balinese social investment model in interacting as villagers (*krama desa pakraman*). 2). To understand and interpret the Balinese social construction of death. 3). To analyze and interpret the meaning of death by the Balinese in relation to social interaction and kinship as villagers (*krama desa pakraman*).

## METHODS

This research was conducted in the province of Bali using secondary data both from the results of previous studies and documents from government agencies. For field research as secondary data reinforcement, the researchers chose the location of several cases in Gianyar Regency because the most customary village conflicts occurred in the Gianyar Regency, especially in the 1999-2008 period (Winda, 2008).

This study uses a qualitative design by combining document review with field research. Specifically, the qualitative approach used in this research is a case study, namely cases of conflict over graves in Bali, especially in Gianyar Regency. Likewise, in drawing conclusions, it is inductive in nature, namely from case studies in the field and then conclusions are drawn to general things, namely the concepts of conflict theory. In field research, researchers collect data by means of observation, interviews, and also *focus group discussions* (FGD). Checking the validity of the data using observational persistence techniques, detailed descriptions, source triangulation, and peer debriefing. Through interviews and focus group discussions (FGD), the research informants and research sources were determined as follows: (a) Head and staff of the Office of Kesbang Linmas, Gianyar Regency. (b) Madya Council and *Bendesa Pakraman* in Gianyar Regency. (c) Community Leaders (d) *Krama banjar/ desa pakraman* (village residents), (e) Customary Experts and Researchers. After the data is

collected, it is continued with data analysis using descriptive qualitative analysis with steps of *data display*, data reduction, and drawing conclusions. The conclusion that the researcher draws is using inductive logic, namely from specific things or field findings, conclusions are drawn to general things (*theoretical building*). This is in line with the opinion of Burhan Bungin (2008:143) which says that qualitative analyzes tend to use inductive logic, where syllogisms are built based on specific things or data in the field and lead to general conclusions.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Although Bali is known for its natural beauty and the friendliness of its people, the Balinese people actually have a long history of conflict. In relation to the history of this conflict, Robinson (2010: 24) states that although the development of a multicultural society in Bali has adhered to and is based on the awareness of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (Unity in Diversity), in social reality there is social differentiation that leads to polarization so that conflict is difficult to avoid. With the qualitative research method, this research produces various findings that strengthen the argument presented by Robinson above. In summary, this research produces several findings, namely:

*First*, the social investment model of the Balinese people in their interactions as residents of the *Pekraman* Village (Adat) is manifested in two forms, namely investment in social institutions or institutions of traditional villages or *Pekraman* villages and investment in fellow villagers (*Krama desa*). Community social investment in traditional village institutions is carried out so that the community concerned can be accepted as village residents and can carry out their rights and obligations as residents of the *Pekraman* village in accordance with existing rules or *awig-awig* applicable in the *Pekraman* village concerned.

In addition to being oriented towards equality of rights and obligations, investment is also carried out in order to avoid very strict customary sanctions which can be manifested in the form of social isolation which in local terms is called *kesepekan*. Various forms of investment are made in the context of social investment in *Pekraman* village institutions as follows: (1) carrying out physical activities in the form of participation in various traditional or *Pekraman* village activities. This physical activity in local terms is called *ngayahan banjar*. (2) participating in

various village meetings or *paruman* both at the *banjar* level and at the village level which in local terms is called *sangkep banjar*. (3) paying various obligatory and voluntary fees charged by *Pekraman* villages, especially those related to various financing activities for traditional village ceremonies or village *pekraman*. This obligation to pay in local terms is called *peturunan* which if not paid can be subject to customary sanctions based on levels. (4) in addition to mandatory and voluntary contributions, other forms of social investment can also be in the form of paying *patus* which in customary activities is usually used for tentative activities due to additional activities carried out by traditional villages. (5) if the activities of mutual assistance and village meetings cannot be attended by villagers, the villagers concerned can make social investments by replacing these activities by paying a certain amount of money or materials which in local terms is called *ngampel*. (6) Villagers who live outside the village concerned can replace attendance in various social activities and village meetings by paying a certain amount of money in local terms, known as paying *ayahan*. The Balinese social investment towards fellow villagers is oriented towards being accepted by the concerned community as fellow villagers. This investment is in order to find convenience, comfort and security for villagers in carrying out social interactions as a part of the village.

Forms of investment that are usually carried out with several manifestations of activity as follows: (1) assisting village residents in carrying out traditional ceremonial activities and religious ceremonies (*nguwopin*). (2) carrying out gatherings or visiting villagers who have a celebration or those who just experienced a disaster, including a death event so that the residents concerned get a positive response from other villagers. This activity in local terms is called *mejengukan*. Providing assistance to residents who are affected by disaster or who are in need of assistance in the form of advice, material assistance and participating in discussing the struggle at the village level. This activity in local terms is called *metulungan*.

*Second*, in the social construction of Balinese society, death does not only mean the cessation of vital functions of the human body or the loss of the relationship between the human body and soul. But death is understood as a broader relationship, namely between humans who are still alive

and the *atman* or souls of humans who have died. This means that the Balinese people interpret the death of one of their relatives as the emergence of a new obligation, namely to harmonize the relationship between humans who are still alive and the *atman*/soul/spirit of the deceased. In the construction of Balinese society, a cultural construction called *Tri Rna* develops, namely three human debts that must be paid, including one owed to ancestors. With the death of one of the families, the living family has an obligation to carry out various ceremonies related to devotion or respect for ancestors, such as the remembrance ceremony and also followed by other rituals that mean respect to ancestors. Another construction of Balinese society also appears in the construction of the *Panca Yadnya* namely five sacred sacrifices that must be made by humans, one of which is a sacred sacrifice to ancestors or spirits who have died. Sacred sacrifices to ancestors or family spirits who have died in this cultural construction are called *Pitra Yadnya*.

With these two cultural constructions, Balinese people interpret death differently from other communities anywhere, especially those outside of Hinduism. Based on this cultural construction, there are three important meanings captured from this concept of death. These three meanings are as follows:

- (1) Death is an opportunity to carry out obligations to ancestors. Balinese people believe that they have a debt (obligation) to their ancestors (*pitra rnam*). This obligation arises because of the kindness of our parents (ancestors) so that we can grow well as whole human beings. This belief is internalized in Balinese society from Hindu religious teachings, from parental upbringing, *sima* and *dresta* which have been passed down from generation to generation in the *Pakraman* village.
- (2) The procession of death can be used as a measure of the level of acceptance of social interaction of families who have died with other *banjar*/village *krama*. The closeness of social interaction is determined by the attachment of *manyama braya* (sense of belonging to the community) that is built from the help carried out by the villagers. This attachment will grow based on mutual trust between *krama* because of the sincerity that has been done by a *krama*

in his/her life. The more a *krama* establishes *payamabrayaan* (social relationship) with other *krama*, the more other *krama* sincerely give help when he/she needs it. Based on this belief, the presence of *krama* in the death procession will show how much social investment he/she has made. The more people who help sincerely indicate the better and the greater the social investment that the family has made in the life of the *Pakraman*.

- (3) The death procession for other *krama* is an opportunity to make the most valuable social investment in social life in *Pakraman* village. *Krama banjar* / village *pakraman* in Bali will usually always try to come when the death of one of the *krama* in the *banjar* / village. Even though they are not present and fully assist, just attending the preparation of the ceremony would already mean a lot. Parents will always remind their children who are far away, to always try to return to the *banjar/Pakraman* when death occurs. This behavior is based on the belief that coming and helping when people are experiencing grief is an infinite kindness and proves goodwill in maintaining the bond of togetherness in traditional Balinese life. Therefore, the level of attendance at the funeral procession is the main measuring tool in assessing the amount of social investment made by the Balinese people. The more often a *krama* can attend the death procession in the *banjar*, the more positive the assessment of the *krama* will be. A more positive assessment means that the greater the social investment they have so the it will be easier to access the resources needed in their traditional life.

*Third*, the meanings of death and graves for Balinese people. According to Balinese belief, humans consist of a gross body (*stula sarira*) and a spirit body (*sukma sarira*). Death is believed to be the death of the gross body so that the spirit body is separated from the gross body. Balinese people believe that the gross body and spirit body must be returned immediately to their origin, namely the gross body (corpse) is returned to the Panca Maha Bhuta element and the spirit body (*atman*) is purified in order to be able to reunite with Brahman (God Almighty) in accordance with *subha* and *asubha karma* (good, bad deeds).

The procession of returning to its origin is carried out in the procession of the cremation ceremony. Balinese people believe that the ritual must be carried out as soon as possible so that the ancestors do not become *bhuta cuwil* (evil) who can spread the misery of life. Cremation is carried out in *setra* which has more meaning than just a burial place. *Setra* as part of the *nista mandala*, has the function of returning and purifying the gross body and spirit. Through the cremation procession, it is believed that the return of the original rough body can be carried out perfectly and more quickly.

In the present context, the dependence of the Balinese people on the use of *setra* is used by the *Pakraman* village as a control tool in conducting surveillance to strengthen the compliance of the villagers of the *Pakraman* village. Modern life, which tends to build individualistic attitudes, has eroded the collectivity of *krama* in the *banjar*. In Balinese society, there has been a differentiation of interests that can threaten the sustainability of the life of the *Pakraman* village. *Pakraman* village, which is late in carrying out dialectic of control, sees the urgency of the meaning of *setra* in Balinese life, so they are forced to use *setra* as a means of controlling their *krama* behavior. Disobedience is threatened with sanctions related to the use of *setra*. When this is not accepted by *krama*, especially *krama* who feel that they have made a social investment in the accessibility of the use of resources owned by *Pakraman* Village, a conflict arises between *Pakraman* Village and its *krama*. Thus, the problem of social investment in Balinese society can be a source of conflict in addition to power, prestige, or the distribution of economic factors as described by previous conflict theorists.

### Theoretical Implications

Based on data analysis and manifested in research conclusions, this research produces several theoretical implications. The theoretical implications referred to in this research are the development of new concepts taken from field data and are strengthening or updating existing theoretical concepts. Several theoretical implications that can be built from this research are related to conflict theory and social construction theory.

#### Theoretical Implications in Conflict Theory

In this study, a conflict theory that differs from existing conflict theories is

developed. Karl Mark's conflict theory states that conflict is based on the struggle for production resources and Weber's conflict theory which states that conflict is based on the struggle for power sources does not apply to the phenomenon of the conflict over the graves in Bali. Likewise, research on conflict in Bali conducted by previous researchers such as Carol Warren, Clifford Geert, Widja, and Bawa Atmaja is not identical with the sources of conflict and manifestations of conflict that occur in this research phenomenon.

In this study, it was found that the conflict arose because of the struggle over the graves. This proposition can be explained starting from the weakening of the power of traditional villages to carry out surveillance of their members due to the inability of traditional villages to follow the dynamics that occur in villagers or village communities. There have been various orientations of the villagers, such as modernity orientation, *soroh* or ethnic orientation, religious orientation, and also ideological orientation which cannot be dammed by traditional villages and is also difficult to control.

On the one hand, traditional villages lack the instruments to be able to maintain authority and power over their villagers, so traditional villages finally use the most powerful instrument, namely the prohibition of burial. The prohibition of burial becomes an ace or a kind of instrument that is the most powerful for traditional villages to ask for the submission of their villagers because graves have a very important meaning and principle for the Balinese people who are Hindus.

The dialectic between the various orientations of residents on the one hand and on the other hand the powerlessness of the traditional village to restrain its members, finally, the traditional village took the most effective way of surveillance namely the prohibition of burial. Graves for Balinese people, especially Hindus, are very important and meaningful because they are not only interpreted as a place to bury corpses but are understood as a religious cosmic related to beliefs, especially three places of worship for Hindus which are often called *Tri Khayangan*. Graves for the Balinese people cannot be separated from the *Tri Khayangan* because it involves history, belief, and self-esteem so it cannot be replaced. Based on the argument above, graves will be very effectively used by traditional villages to carry out surveillance

over their members, where it is impossible for villagers to carry out dialectic of control or escape the surveillance.

These important concepts and propositions are new concepts that emerge from field phenomena that are seen as different from existing conflict theories. This field finding also adds to the vocabulary of conflict theory concepts that have been found by previous researchers related to the phenomenon of conflict in Bali.

#### Theoretical Implications in Social Construction Theory

Talking about social construction, three basic concepts that must be understood are internalization, objectivation, and externalization. Social investment and the models that have been carried out which have been described in the concluding chapter which is routinely carried out by the Balinese, especially those related to the phenomenon of death, are a result of social construction that continues to this day.

The process of internalization, objectivation, and externalization that occurs does not seem to have changed the existing social construction of death. While on the other hand, the influence of villagers orientation such as modernity, *soroh* or ethnic orientation, religious orientation, ideological orientation, and others are becoming the trends.

This fact has a very significant effect on changing the mindset of the villagers and at the same time is a driving factor for the weakening of bonds as villagers (*krama*). The social processes that occur as mentioned above strengthen Berger and Luckman's theory of social construction which basically says that dialectics takes place simultaneously. In this case, externalization is manifested in the adjustment of the villagers to the development of the era of modernity.

The concept of objectivation is reflected in social interactions in the world of intersubjectivity which are institutionalized or undergo an institutionalization process through *Pakraman* village rules called *awig-awig*. The orientation of villagers who adapt to modernity, mindset, and also the influences of ethnicity, religion, and ideology is a form of internalization that occurs in the village, namely the villagers have identified themselves with social institutions or social organizations that enter the *Pakraman village*.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of the analysis and theoretical discourse, there are three conclusions formulated in this study, including: The Balinese construction of death seems to be very important and urgent because it is not only interpreted as the loss of a physical body but is also interpreted as a debt to ancestors by living descendants. In addition, burying the bodies in the graves of the traditional village where they are located is also a must and perhaps even self-respect so that they on average fight for that goal which can be interpreted as a social investment. The social investment made by the Balinese in this regard is by investing in traditional village institutions as well as individual indigenous peoples. Thus, this social investment becomes a must to do. In the construction of Balinese society, death, burial, and socializing with villagers (krama desa) are very important, in contrast to the construction of communities outside Bali. This concept does not only involve constraints in traditional activities, but is also related to the obligations of the community to their ancestors and also the debt of gratitude called Pitra Rna and Pitra Yadnya. Based on these conclusions, this study recommends that various stakeholders starting from the central government, supralocal, and local governments should map out potential conflicts and social vulnerabilities so that conflicts do not manifest in the form of violence. In addition, law enforcement is carried out consistently and fairly.

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