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BALINESE ACTIONS AND SOLIDARITY REGARDING OGOH-OGOHO IN BANJAR UNTAL-UNTAL: A SOCIOLOGY OF RELIGION PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

Ogoh-ogoh is a typical Balinese activity that can be found once a year. Ogoh-ogoh is characterized as a sculptural artwork resembling a creepy creature's image as it symbolizes bhuta kala as an evil entity. Balinese people celebrate the ogoh-ogoh parade, burn them to avoid negative influences and continue life with silence and positivity in the Saka New Year (Nyepi). Ogoh-ogoh is also a tradition that attracts attention because it is displayed with the splendor and beauty of stunning artwork. Of course, it reflects the behavior of Balinese people, whom residents of Banjar Untal-Untal also celebrate. The purpose of this research was to analyze the actions and solidarity of Balinese people regarding ogoh-ogoh in Banjar Untal-Untal from the perspective of the sociology of religion. This research method was qualitative with a case study design. The researcher collected data through interviews and observation. This research showed that the preparation, making, and implementation of ogoh-ogoh exists because of the involvement of people who act in solidarity. Max Weber's theory of social action and Emile Durkheim's theory of social solidarity had relevance to the ogoh-ogoh parade. In social action and solidarity, religious adherents, specifically Christians and Hindus, synergized and supported each other.

Keywords: Actions, Balinese, Banjar Untal-Untal, Ogoh-ogoh, Solidarity

I. INTRODUCTION

As one of the sub-districts in Badung, North Kuta is adjacent to the Kuta sub-district in the South, Denpasar city in the East, and Mengwi sub-district in the North as well as the West side. Geographically, North Kuta has three villages and three sub-districts, namely Canggu, Tibubeneng, and Dalung villages, as well as Kerobokan, Kerobokan Kelod, and Kerobokan Kaja sub-districts (Pemkab Badung, 2024). In this case, Dalung is a unique village in Bali.

Dalung is a beautiful and harmonious village where religious believers live harmoniously (Ludji, Samiyono, & Lattu, 2020). The village still depicts a rural atmosphere; for example, there are rice fields and plantations, but the village also creates a modern atmosphere. Then, the buildings reflect typical Balinese architecture. This village has a diverse level of religion and culture. Of course, this village is dominated by Balinese culture and Hinduism, but other ethnicities and religions exist in it.



Picture 1. An accessory
Source: Researcher
Documentation

What is unique about Balinese life, including in this village, is that the community has strong social ties; this is evident in the existence of the *Banjar*. The term *Banjar* is common in Bali. *Banjar* signifies the existence of social unity between communities in Bali. The form of social unity based on a unified territory is called *Banjar* (Widiastuti, 2019). In

other words, people who live in harmony, settle, and join in social ties in the same area will form a '*Banjar*' and have a hall (Mashita, 2019). One of the *banjars* in Dalung village is Untal-Untal.

Banjar Untal-Untal has a tradition that is thick with Balinese values. In this area, daily life uses the Balinese language, accents, and Indonesian. In addition, typical clothing will also be worn during the coming of the feast day. Then, there are traditional Balinese buildings. Banjar Untal-Untal has a hall to hold particular meetings, as seen in the preparation of making *ogoh-ogoh* ahead of *Nyepi*.

Ogoh-ogoh is a tradition and parade commonly practiced by Balinese, including in Banjar Untal-Untal. Previous studies have shown that the *ogoh-ogoh* tradition is a parade of Hindus held every year precisely in a series before *Nyepi* (Sukaesih, Sukardi, & Sholeh, 2020) and supports the development of cultural tourism (Aristrawati, 2015). *Ogoh-ogoh* is also observed with a review of cultural philosophy (Siswadi, 2022). Previous research has also conveyed the social aspects of the tradition. The preparation, making, and implementation of *ogoh-ogoh* also involve people of other religions, such as Banjar Untal-Untal, even though it is a Hindu tradition. However, the problem is: why does the *ogoh-ogoh* tradition persist as a cultural identity of Balinese society with diversity?

The researcher argues that Balinese social behavior animates action and solidarity as consistent characteristics that have implications for the *ogoh-ogoh* tradition. *Ogoh-ogoh* also holds meanings related to showing actions and solidarity in community behavior. Therefore, this research aims to analyze the actions and solidarity of Balinese people regarding *ogoh-ogoh* in Banjar Untal-Untal from the perspective of the sociology of religion. The urgency of this research was to show the behavior of Balinese people who have actions and solidarity with high social values in appreciating interactions, traditions, and local wisdom despite different faiths.

II. METHOD

This research used a qualitative method with a case study design. The researcher collected data with unstructured interviews with Balinese people in Banjar Untal-Untal. The researcher also directly observed the preparation and making of *ogoh-ogoh* at Banjar Untal-Untal Hall and its implementation in Dalung village, specifically in 2023, and then took documentation.

The researcher utilized a literature review study. In this study, the researcher selected, collected, analyzed, and discussed various references relevant to the research variables (Popenoe, Langius-Eklöf, Stenwall, & Jervaeus, 2021; Snyder, 2019). The researcher analyzed the data and then discussed it with a literature review study. The researcher reviewed the research objectives through the lens of the sociology of religion.

In the following article content flow, the researcher explained *ogoh-ogoh* first. Next, it explained the significance of the action, then the solidarity of the Balinese in preparing, making, and implementing the *ogoh-ogoh* tradition. Then, the researcher described religious relations, specifically regarding the Christian response to the parade and the *Nyepi* celebration in Banjar Untal-Untal. Finally, the researcher expressed an affirmation in the form of a conclusion to this article.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Ogoh-ogoh is a large sculpture and art product in welcoming *Nyepi*, representing local people's creativity in each *Banjar*, and has developed into a tourism object and commodity (Ramadhansyah & Damajanti, 2022). *Ogoh-ogoh* is an art product that symbolizes *bhuta kala*, so it is generally a scary creature (Karsana, 2023). With the *ogoh-ogoh* parade, Balinese people parade or accompany the giant statue, which is carried out from afternoon to night during *Pengerupukan*, which is the day before *Nyepi* Day, then burn it because of beliefs that include the aim of eliminating negative influences (Prabandari & Sonder, 2021).

The community in each *Banjar* takes several months of preparation to make *ogoh-ogoh* (Sukaesih et al., 2020). Each *Banjar* has its own uniquely designed *ogoh-ogoh*. The *ogoh-ogoh* goes around the village to become a spectacle for residents at night as a form of parade regarding cultural arts creativity, and the next day, the community focuses on living *Nyepi* day (Diatmika, 2019). *Ogoh-ogoh* signifies the creativity and local wisdom of Hindus that has survived until now, even becoming a favorite parade for indigenous people and migrants (Saphira et al., 2022). However, over time, the *ogoh-ogoh* parade has evolved in the eyes of the community. In this case, people in each *Banjar* 'compete' to make the *ogoh-ogoh* physically the best they can, to showcase the splendor and beauty of their rich art (Suda & Indiani, 2018).



Picture 2. Other *ogoh-ogoh* in Dalung Village

Source: Researcher Documentation

3.1. Actions in the *Ogoh-ogoh* Tradition

Every action has social value. In actions, people engage to connect, have conversations, and conduct behaviors (Hua, 2020). Sociologists have been thinking about that, specifically Max Weber. In Weber's thinking, every religious believer had specific social actions that were goal-oriented and meaningful (Furseth & Repstad, 2006). Even modern people busy with their world must seek and find meaning in every action (Symonds, 2023). The action indicates that humans are subjective beings who work based on purpose and meaning

(Yuhastina, Nurcahyono, & Kholtsun, 2021). They act in unique and distinctive ways but with rational and irrational foundations (Zulham, Hapsaridewi, Arthatani, & Mira, 2019). In this case, every human being moves with action. All actions are influenced by rational and irrational elements (Budiyanti, Siahaan, & Nugroho, 2020). Weber did not mean to say that irrational actions would affect empty actions.

Weber classified social action based on its context (Weber, 2019): (1) Instrumental rational action (purposive rationality) refers to goals and benefits based on rational thinking to achieve them. Actions to achieve results are considered rationally (Penta, Wachtendorf, & Nelan, 2020); (2) Value-rational action (value rationality), which sees value as rational, becomes a guide to act with commitment. People have the same beliefs about values so that they contribute to action (Jain, Hazenberg, Seddon, & Denny, 2020); (3) Emotional actions (affect), which involve affective aspects to act and rely on feelings to decide; (4) Traditional actions (tradition) refer to community habits that have existed due to ancestral heritage, then become a culture that persists until now. The four types of social action can describe the behavior of Balinese people regarding *ogoh-ogoh*.

Weber's theory is relevant to the behavior of Balinese people regarding the *ogoh-ogoh* tradition. Instrumental rational action refers to the behavior of citizens who aim to eliminate negative influences while providing benefits in art and entertainment for the community. Value-rational actions refer to religious values that prioritize goodness and positively transform life while entering the Saka New Year with healthy energy. Emotional actions refer to behaviors that bring feelings of pride from the Balinese who have introduced their culture and feelings of love from migrants and tourists towards Balinese culture. Culture is a sociocultural identity in the life of Indonesian society (Nole, 2023b), especially for Balinese people. They act based on a high sense of togetherness and kinship (Kembarawan, 2020). Furthermore, traditional actions are the

efforts of the Balinese, who maintain and preserve their culture by holding the *ogoh-ogoh* parade tradition once a year.

3.2. Solidarity in the *Ogoh-ogoh* Tradition

If Weber sees that every individual has social action, then Emile Durkheim sees that a group of individuals is a community that gathers collectively or is called a society. Durkheim saw social phenomena in a society undergoing historical transformation from primitive (mechanical form) to modern (organic form) (Ritzer & Stepnisky, 2022). So, in Durkheim's thinking, every behavior of society is an active community. He identified social solidarity as having two types, namely mechanical and organic. Mechanical solidarity is social cohesion that arises because of the awareness of similarities among community members. In contrast, organic solidarity is social cohesion arising from awareness of the division of labor. There are differences as each organic product has its social function and is interdependent (Durkheim, 2013).

Mechanical solidarity can occur in situations and environments of traditional communities, such as villages, with similar thoughts and feelings. Mechanical solidarity shows a less visible division of labor because of the same feeling of degree (Manu & Tampake, 2023). Meanwhile, organic solidarity characterizes modern societies that work together because everyone is interdependent due to the need to help each other by seeing the role of others. Unlike traditional societies, modern societies have a sense of dependence based on specialization, not a sense of 'unity' based on similarities (Appelrouth & Edles, 2021).

In preparation, making, and implementation, Durkheim's solidarity theory is relevant to the *ogoh-ogoh* tradition. Although Banjar Untal-Untal is located in Dalung village, the Balinese have traditional and modern characteristics. The *ogoh-ogoh* parade represents mechanical and organic solidarity. First (mechanical solidarity), everyone

involved in the *ogoh-ogoh* parade has the same sense of ‘oneness’ regarding the same meaning. They both recognize that *ogoh-ogoh* is a work of art in the form of a statue that symbolizes negative influences, accompanies it, and strives to eliminate the influence of these sinister powers. During the preparation, making, and implementation, they share a sense of working together to make *ogoh-ogoh* in the *Banjar* Hall, which will later be shown as an attraction to the broader community. They also feel the same about wearing unique clothes and uniforms, including traditional Balinese clothes.



Picture 3. Balinese at Banjar Untal-Untal Hall
Source: Researcher Documentation

Second (organic solidarity) is seen in each participating community with their respective roles and contributions that are interdependent for the common good. Each community has a specialty in preparation, such as being a donor, preparing tools and materials (natural and artificial), designing, making the frame, painting, and installing the foundation until it is completed in the final stage. Some youths are involved in lifting or parading the *ogoh-ogoh* with additional equipment, such as bamboo sticks tied together to form hollow spaces so they are easy to hold and control, and some hold torches.

Other *Banjar* communities, men, women, young women, and children, help to accompany, enliven, and guard the *ogoh-ogoh* as it travels around the village. The *ogoh-ogoh* parade celebration also involves interaction in solidarity between religious

adherents, such as Hinduism and Islam (Kembarawan, 2020). In Banjar Untal-Untal, people with certain religions, such as Hinduism and Christianity, work together (in solidarity) to make the *ogoh-ogoh* parade a success. When people come together communally, they demonstrate collective power in religion (Hamilton, 2001). Religious values encourage them to adopt practices of solidarity (Furseth & Repstad, 2006).

3.3. Religious Responses

In addition to Hinduism, there are many Christian residents of Banjar Untal-Untal, and these residents have united to form a congregation called *Gereja Kristen Protestan di Bali* (GKPB) ‘Betlehem’ Untal-Untal congregation, as is one of the congregations in the GKPB synod. This congregation is at Anom Street, Banjar Untal-Untal, Dalung Village, North Kuta District, Badung Regency, Bali. The life background of this congregation is recognized as the place of early Christians or the location of early Christianity on the island of Bali. Where Christianity came from in Bali cannot be separated from the introduction of Christianity in Banjar Untal-Untal because that is where Christianity first originated, grew, developed, and spread to other places on the island of Bali. That is also marked by the first baptism at Tukad Yeh Poh, located close to Banjar Untal-Untal.

The missionaries’ influence and persistence in evangelizing in Badung Regency made the local people convert to Christianity (Nole, 2023a; Surpi, 2012). Previously, the altar in the church building had images and carvings about the meaning of the Balinese Christians’ faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and the first baptism. The first Christians came from Banjar Untal-Untal and then spread to other parts of Bali (Praditya, 2022). However, This congregation of Balinese Christians continues to live with the traditions of the context in which they are located; even the architecture of the previous church buildings followed the Balinese style

and characteristics (Praditya, Maryati, & Purnawati, 2022).

Generally, Hindus are the majority in many other Bali areas; however, Hindus are the minority, Christians are the majority in Banjar Untal-Untal, and other religions are less numerous than these two (Jayadi, Saputra, Brata, Dewi, & Putri, 2022). Nevertheless, religious relations in Banjar Untal-Untal remain respectful. Despite different beliefs, they live in harmony, high cooperation, and mutual tolerance, not creating problems and intimidation (Jayadi et al., 2022). Apart from loving their traditions, Balinese people are famous for their friendliness and like to make friends with newcomers and tourists.

In particular, Christians and Hindus show high respect and togetherness, and even their places of worship (Church and Temple) face each other. All activities will be closed if there is a big holiday from a particular religion, and all respect each other. Both support each other, such as Hindus who appreciate Christmas and Easter celebrations. Likewise, Christians respect Hindu celebrations, such as *Nyepi*. Banjar Untal-Untal Hall is a meeting place for interreligious relations. People of different faiths show a harmonious nature and attitude to respect and support each other, especially during an *ogoh-ogoh* parade celebration. *Ogoh-ogoh* is a work of art that is shaken and a statue-shaped tradition. One day before *Nyepi*, on *Pengerupukan* day, *ogoh-ogoh* is typical for parades and processions from afternoon to night. The *ogoh-ogoh* symbolizes the negativity, evil, and vices around and is burned at the end of the session so that all the bad things can be destroyed, giving rise to a clean and pure life.



Picture 4. Balinese people paraded *ogoh-ogoh*

Source: Researcher Documentation

The existence of *ogoh-ogoh* also attracts the general public, who are eager to see the creativity and handicrafts of young people. Although the Balinese Hindu community makes *ogoh-ogoh* and is generally done by young people, preparing, making, and implementing *ogoh-ogoh* also involves the Christian community (including youth), specifically those from Banjar Untal-Untal. In this case, *ogoh-ogoh* is also made by the extended family in Banjar Untal-Untal Hall. Because the making of *ogoh-ogoh* is quite long, they work together to finish it on time. All this is based on the grip of religious values that teach tolerance and solidarity for survival in harmony and peace. That was the meaning of life that brings security and comfort.

Every religious community lives in harmony, in the traditional way of *gotong royong* and cooperation. While religious believers have experiences with the transcendent, they also have experiences with the immanent (Nole, 2023c). Religious believers with high awareness are directly involved in collaborating to prepare, make, and celebrate the *ogoh-ogoh* parade (Huda, Akhya, & Hardiyanti, 2024). There were Hindus who were experts in designing the *ogoh-ogoh*, and there were Christians who helped them. Christian and Hindu youths worked together to lift and accompany the

ogoh-ogoh. Residents of Banjar Untal-Untal participated in celebrating the *ogoh-ogoh* parade and welcoming the Saka New Year. For them, the parade made them try to keep away from evil and keep living, radiating light and goodness.

IV. CONCLUSION

Ogoh-ogoh is a parade in the form of sculptures made by Balinese people to eliminate negative effects, then focus on continuing life in the Saka New Year with a positive atmosphere. It is a tradition held once a year and an attraction for tourists and citizens in general. The *ogoh-ogoh* parade demonstrates action and social solidarity in preparation, making, and implementation. Although this is a Hindu culture, people of other religions also participate in the parade. In particular, the involvement of Christians and Hindus is based on their actions and social solidarity in Banjar Untal-Untal. Thus, religious dialog and relations also occur in the cultural tradition.

This research certainly has limitations, including investigating their experiences regarding sociocultural phenomena. Therefore, the researcher recommends further research demonstrating substantive and methodological novelty.

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