How Indigenous are the Balinese? From National Marginalisation to Provincial Domination

Brigitta Hauser-Schäublin

DOI: 10.4000/books.gup.178
Publisher: Göttingen University Press
Place of publication: Göttingen University Press
Year of publication: 2013
Published on OpenEdition Books: 12 April 2017
Serie: Göttingen Studies in Cultural Property
Electronic ISBN: 9782821875487

http://books.openedition.org

Electronic reference
How Indigenous are the Balinese?  
From National Marginalisation to Provincial Domination

Brigitta Hauser-Schänblin

Introduction

Bali is an untypical case of indigeneity and the indigenous movement in Indonesia. The “autochthonous” (asli) Balinese, who understand themselves as Hindu Balinese, are not a minority but a dominant majority within their province. This dominant majority has decisively shaped the inter-cultural and -religious co-habitation of the inhabitants – among them an increasing number of non-Hindu – on the island. Only a handful of villages are members of the Alliance of Indigenous Peoples of the Archipelago or AMAN, and many of the communities seem to be only half-hearted members. Membership obviously depends more on single, highly motivated actors, most of them well-educated and interested in economic and partly social modernisation according to their own visions; none of them belongs to a title-holding stratum of society. Actually, the majority of the Hindu Balinese do not feel “indigenous” in the internationalist sense of the word, but strongly support Balinese adat (“customs and traditions”) and, in this respect, understand themselves as masyarakat adat (literally “people whose life is governed by traditions”). In Bali, adat is intrinsically linked to agama (religion), an issue AMAN carefully circumnavigates. It is, therefore, the aim of this chapter to explore
why Bali, as a stronghold of *adat*, does not apparently need AMAN to attain self-determination and national as well as international recognition, as most other member communities outside of Bali hope to gain through the support of this organisation.

After the fall of the Suharto regime in 1998, the politics of decentralisation and regionalisation – the latter conferred power especially to the district level (*kabupaten*) (and less to the provinces) – constituted a turning point in the significance of *adat* and *masyarakat adat* within society and the nation as a whole (Henley and Davidson 2007). While one of the main goals of decentralisation and regionalisation was the promotion of democratisation by delegating responsibility and power to institutions and bodies in the provinces, the social, political and economic conditions of many *masyarakat adat* started to change considerably (Schulte Nordholt and Klinken 2007; Holtzappel 2009).

This chapter, therefore, examines the special case of Bali, the significance of Balinese *adat* in the political social and context of the province and its relation to *dinas*, the administrative governmental organisation of village life. I will investigate why some communities have at least formally joined AMAN and with what expectations. I will start by briefly outlining the provincial regulation Peraturan Daerah Provinsi Bali nomor 2001 (Perda 03/2001) and the way in which regional autonomy was implemented by taking Hindu Balinese *adat* as a basis of its constitution (see Janamijaya et al. 2003). I will then show how people view the relationship between “being Balinese” and “being Indonesian” and try to establish a kind of division of labour and with what consequences between their own *adat* organisation and AMAN, each of them with its particular goals.

**Adat as the Regulatory Principle**

The post-Suharto Balinese Provincial Regulation, Perda 03/2001, contains a couple of crucial elements that reflect the Hindu Balinese’s attempt to establish a province regulation that takes their particular *adat* as a starting point (Ramstedt 2009).

As the Perda introduction shows, the *desa adat* was renamed *desa pakraman*. Thus, a Sanskrit word (*kraman*), which had already been used in old-Balinese inscriptions, replaced the more recent expression of Arabic origin, *adat* (Ramstedt 2009:350-351; Picard 2011:120-121). The *desa pakraman* is described as the unity of *masyarakat bukum adat*, that is, a customary legal community. According to Perda 03/2001, the *desa pakraman* has developed over centuries and possesses an original autonomy (*otonomi asli*) that has provided the basis for the living and the prosperity of its inhabitants. By calling the Balinese villagers “*umat Hindu*” (congregation of *agama* Hindu or the Hindu people), the *desa pakraman* – the only type of village mentioned in the regulation – is defined as a community sharing the same religion. The characteristics of the Balinese village are: the Three Village Temple system (*kabupaten tiga* or *kabupaten desa*) and a village territory (*palemahan*). The villagers (*warga desa pakraman*) are also seen as those who have an inner and outer attachment to the temples and the ceremonies carried out
How Indigenous are the Balinese? There. Furthermore, *awig-awig* or village regulations, are based on the Hindu Balinese concept of *Tri Hita Karana* (“Three Causes of Wellbeing”) and are part of the village properties. The village assembly, *paruman desa*, is a further constituent. This is the legislative body that takes decisions based on discussion and consultations; it is orchestrated by the *pengurus* or (a number of) *prajuru*, village officials with different tasks. The latter are elected or appointed by the village community according to its *awig-awig*. Such a village assembly is complemented – in a bottom-up way – by the *paruman alit* on the sub-district level (*kecamatan*), by the *paruman madya* on the district level and, finally, by the *paruman agung* on the provincial level. The *paruman agung* or the Majelis Utama Desa Pakraman consists of the council of village *prajuru* and is the highest *adat* body of the province.

Furthermore, Perda 03/2001 officially acknowledges the function of a village *adat* police or security force (*pecalang*) that had formerly performed only in the context of temple festivals and ceremonies. *Pecalang*, as the Balinese *adat* police, complements (or sometimes even challenges) the *dinas* police or the official state police. The 2001 regulation also spells out that the *desa pakraman* is seen as the fundamental actor for the protection (*pengayoman*), empowerment (*pemberdayaan*) and preservation (*pelestarian*) of Balinese *adat* and culture (*budaya*) and the values associated with them, especially for the sake of Bali’s identity (*jati diri*).

I would like to briefly comment on the way in which *adat* has been used in this regulation. Bali and Balinese culture had been the most important tourist destination of Indonesia for decades and, therefore, a major source of income for the central government. The Balinese struggled with the New Order government in order to regain control over their island, their culture and their lives. Perda 03/2001 also mirrors the fact that the Hindu Balinese had perceived themselves (and, in fact, had been) a powerless religious and cultural minority within the centralised state. Additionally, they had been exposed to almost unrestricted external cultural influence through international tourism which also resulted in a touristification of society (Picard 1996; Schulte Nordholt 2007). Simultaneously, distinctiveness and cultural identity (*kebalian*) became more and more important issues which finally resulted in the *ajeg*

---

1 Perda 03/2001 states that the *awig-awig* may not contradict religion (*agama*), the five national principles as formulated in the Pancasila, the National Constitution, and the basic rights it grants (*Undang-Undang Dasar 1945*), or human rights. It would need further discussion to discover whether individual *awig-awig* contain discriminations in one form or another (for example, due to religion or cultural origin).

2 *Tri Hita Karana* outlines the balance of three different relationships people should follow: the relationship between the village and God (*parhyangan*), the relationship between the members of the *desa pakraman* (*pawongan*) and the relationship of the villagers with their natural environment (*palemahan*) (for more details, see Ramstedt 2009:344-350). This concept has become more influential since the 1980s, not least in political matters, such as the Balinese’s protest against huge tourism projects promoted by the central government and carried out without consulting the provincial authorities in the 1990s (see Warren 2007).

3 The individual village assemblies are institutionalised and merged under the umbrella of *majelis* (forum, council), *majelis utama* on the province level, *majelis madya* on the district level and *majelis alit* on the sub-district level.
Bali, the political and cultural conservative movement which arose after the Bali bombings in the 2000s (Schulte Nordholt 2007).

Compared with the situation during the New Order era, Perda 03/2001 steers in the opposite direction: It apparently aims at creating a province based on one single form of *adat*, the *adat* of the Hindu Balinese. Thus, the regulation creates a new form of cultural citizenship – being Hindu Balinese, being guided by Hindu Balinese principles and living under Hindu Balinese conditions – that seems to be more important than national citizenship (see Hauser-Schäublin and Harnish in press). Cultural citizenship – in Bali equalled with provincial citizenship by being a member first and foremost of a particular village – privileges one segment of society (the Hindu Balinese). Perda 03/2001 turned a national minority (the Hindu Balinese) into the dominant majority of the province and endowed it with special rights – at the expense of other minorities (Christian, Buddhist, Chinese, and Muslim Balinese, as well as labour migrants, mostly in the service of Bali’s tourist industry, from other parts of Indonesia). In contrast to cultural citizenship, national citizenship postulates equality and equal rights for all its citizens (whether equality and equal rights are really granted in practice is another question). Therefore, Perda 03/2001 has created an inequality among Indonesian citizens living in Bali province.

A closer look at the way in which “the Balinese village” is described in Perda 03/2001 reveals particularities that do not necessarily fit with what is historically documented. The regulation mirrors a vision of “the Balinese village” that resonates some of Dutch colonial fantasies, such as an egalitarian and democratic “village republic” (Korn 1984). This image, in fact, neglects that – though in changing combinations and in varying degrees – most of the villages had been at some time bound in religious, economic and political networks culminating in principalities and kingdoms. There were large areas of land owned by kings and also by royal temples which had been worked by villagers in corvée. Although most of the disputes which arose in a village were solved by the villagers themselves, many cases – especially in conflicts over land and water between villages – were brought to the attention of regional lords or even kings, who, as a rule, had the institution of a *kerta*, a tribunal, at their palaces. In this jurisdiction, Brahmana priests played an important role. Conversely, offenders of royal regulations were brought directly to this court and sentenced. Apart from the integration of villages into such overarching polities, Balinese society was a stratified society, ranking from the nobility down to slaves. Furthermore, in many villages, even if they were not (or no longer) part of a principality, the village organisation (*krama desa*) was (and still is) based on the principle of seniority and open only to married men who were born in that village. In some places, the most important offices were inherited within particular families who were in a definitely more powerful position than others.

---

4 It has to be noted that the regulation, though in general emphasising the more or less unchanged nature of *adat*, also suggests that Balinese culture should not close itself to “the influence of other positive cultural values”.

5 Perda 03/2001 mentions in one paragraph that the national culture (*kebudayaan nasional*) should be cultivated, preserved and developed as well.
With regard to their location, many villages were not fixed entities but quite a lot of fluctuations took place in the course of centuries. Families or whole settlements moved in and out due to changing political, social, economic, and ecological conditions. Battles between principalities, invading newcomers (“pirates”) and conflicts between and within villages contributed to in and out fluxes. Village boundaries often changed, according to the (power) relationships within and between the villages and the outcome of disputes.

The question of village boundaries is one of the most sensitive subjects in the Provincial Regulation since it raises the distinction between desa dinas (the official administrative village) and desa adat (the customary village), a differentiation the Dutch had introduced as part of the restructuring of their colony. The goal was to keep the domain of Balinese religion and customs, which they wanted to preserve in its original condition, separate from the domain of politics and administration of the colonial government. Thus, two types of villages were created, sometimes even with different territorial boundaries. This division was taken over by the Indonesian state after Independence (Warren 2007). Characteristically, Perda 03/2001 does not even mention the administrative village. Today, disputes over boundaries are one of the reasons why some villages want to abolish the distinction by giving priority to desa adat/pakraman. In many other cases, the incongruence of the dinas and adat boundaries lead to the splitting up of villages (pemekaran).6

This brief review of some results of historical research in comparison to desa pakraman as described in Perda 03/2001 shows that the latter operates with an idealised picture of “the Balinese village”, an image that emphasises continuity, immutability and stability. Moreover, it also suggests that Balinese society was based on equality and was a fundamentally democratic social organisation.

Adat between Self-Determination and National Loyalty

Apart from the cultural, social and political privileges the desa pakraman, but even more the districts enjoy, there is also an economic advantage from which these units benefit: They receive a substantial share of the redistribution of taxes (see Review Regulasi n.d.). According to the Surat Keputusan Gubernur no. 65/2001, the percentage the eight kabupaten and the province capital, Denpasar, receive together is higher (60%) than the share of the province (40%; Review Regulasi n.d.). Moreover, every desa pakraman receives an annual contribution from the provincial government. In sum: The position of the adat villages within the province and the economic and political empowerment they have reached since the end of the New Order regime has increased remarkably. There is probably not much left on the agenda of promotion, participation and autonomy the desa pakraman could wish to get. The postulates AMAN set up in its first congress all seem to be fulfilled. So what kind of support does Bali – or rather the

6 In the interviews I had with AMAN representatives in Bali in 2012, the number of desa pakraman in Bali was given as 1,458. In an official announcement issued in November 2012, the number was given as 1,480. In 2003, 1,399 desa pakraman were listed (Janamijaya et al. 2003); thus, 81 new desa pakraman came into being within ten years.
villages and representatives who are members of AMAN – expect from this well-established nationwide organisation?

As the records of the first congress of AMAN illustrate – and many informants also told me – one of the influential founding members was I Nyoman Sueta from Catur (Bangli) (AMAN 1999).7 Under the New Order, the Balinese had already gained experience in formulating and using adat as a means to position and defend themselves against the national government (see Ramstedt 2012:10). One of the key contests of power between the Balinese and the central government, which also gained worldwide attention, was fought over the Bali Nirvana Resort project near the temple of Tanah Lot in the 1990s (Warren 1998, 2007). The Balinese representative, therefore, was probably an important actor in the constitution of AMAN in 1999.

The Hindu Balinese inhabitants of the province could be considered as a single masyarakat adat in the way they are described in Perda 03/2001. The AMAN definition is almost congruent with it: The Hindu Balinese share a genealogical origin, they live in a defined geographical area, have a joint system of (Hindu) values and ideology, as well as a similar economic, social and political organisation; in sum, a shared culture. Yet, Bali, or rather the collective of the desa pakraman (the Majelis Utama Desa Pakraman as an overarching body), is not a member of AMAN but individual settlements are. Seven registered members from Bali were on the AMAN list in 2012 (AMAN 2012d). These are: desa adat/pakraman Antap Dlod Sema (Tabanan); Catur (Bangli); Mayungan Let/desa Antapan (Tabanan); dusun/banjar Pengubengan Kauh–Kerobokan, Kuta (Badung); desa adat Les (Buleleng); banjar Bendesa, desa adat/pakraman Penarukan (Buleleng); banjar adat Banjar Jawa, desa pakraman Kota Singaraja. The list reveals that the Balinese communities are heterogeneous in several respects. First of all, these member units are not all desa pakraman but some are only neighbourhoods, banjar. The choice of the villages seems to be random, as well as the size of the settlements, their location in the province, and the districts. Not all kabupaten are even represented: Gianyar, Jembrana, Karangasem, and Klungkung are missing.

Almost without exception, these banjar and villages have become AMAN members because of the individual actors who were already engaged in other social networks and, therefore, took the initiative.8 All of these actors, local representatives of AMAN, had an academic education. Several of them have been members of AMAN since its inception and are experienced in the politics of “culture” or adat and in dealing with NGOs. In almost all cases, these individuals – all male and most of them below 50 – raised the issue of AMAN membership in the banjar or village assembly and convinced their fellow villagers to agree to a corporate AMAN membership. Many of the activities the local AMAN representatives have taken up reflect their personal ideas and goals. There are no special forums in the villages where AMAN issues are discussed and decisions made, thus, leaving quite a large range of action to the

7 Together with I Nyoman Resiyasa, (the late) I Nyoman Sueta became one of the first two representatives of Bali in the National Council of AMAN.
8 For reasons of protection, I will keep the identity and the local origin of my interlocutors anonymous in cases where their statements may create conflicts.
individual AMAN members. These activists are well interlinked and frequently communicate with each other.

When AMAN came into being, there had been many more Balinese villages or neighbourhoods, about 40, which became members of AMAN, as one of my interlocutors pointed out. Since everyone had had their own ideas about what and how things should be done, he said, it had been difficult to reach any agreement or conclusion. As a consequence, many villages quit AMAN. With seven left, the discussion of core issues is apparently easier than before.9

I Made Suarmata from banjar Pengubengan Kauh, Kerobokan (Kuta), referred to the fact that Balinese villages are not uniform and, therefore, have different issues on the agenda. The structure and the size of villages are in some cases so complex and unwieldy that they can be considered neither as a single unit, nor are they able to act as such. Desa adat Kerobokan, for example, consists of 50 banjar. How can the assemblies of 50 neighbourhoods be convinced that they should join a voluntary association such as AMAN? Their interests may be too divergent. Moreover, this desa pakraman is not linked to a desa dinas with an elected village head. Since Kerobokan is part of Bali’s most important tourist strip, Kuta, Kerobokan has the status of a kelurahan (a higher administrative unit that is part of the district of Kuta). The lurah, the leader of a kelurahan, is not elected by the people but is a civil servant, that is, an office holder appointed by the administration. He, therefore, carries out national or provincial policies and not, first and foremost, the wishes of the villagers.

Another example is Banjar Jawa in the city of Singaraja, the home of another of AMAN’s representatives. Banjar Jawa is a banjar pakraman (that is, not an administrative neighbourhood) that belongs to the kecamatan of Buleleng.10 The kecamatan Buleleng consists of 30 desa dinas or kelurabans; from the perspective of adat, it comprises 21 desa pakraman. Desa pakraman Buleleng is part of the town of Singaraja (the administrative capital of Buleleng) and Banjar Jawa is one of the desa pakraman’s 14 banjars.11 However, at the same time Banjar Jawa is administratively a kelurahan. Thus, the pattern or structure of the kecamatan, and even more the kabupaten, is intricate with cross-cutting units and structures of desa dinas/kelurahan and desa pakraman. Furthermore, some villages and banjar or dusun have either a Hindu Balinese or Muslim majority, which creates a further element of heterogeneity. Viewed together from the perspective of adat and dinas, a complicated picture emerges that turns Banjar Jawa into a multilayered entity with corresponding structures and authorities. These

9 These seven AMAN officials are also networking with many actors in other villages. Therefore, many other places are indirectly involved in AMAN discussions.
10 Together with eight further sub-districts, the kecamatan of Buleleng constitutes the district (kabupaten) Buleleng.
11 The name of Banjar Jawa might suggest a settlement of Muslim from Java. In fact, there is a small Muslim community living there which has its own cemetery. Yet, the majority are Hindu-Balinese. According to oral histories, Banjar Jawa was founded when a king of Majapahit sent an elephant as a present to the Balinese king. Those Javanese who had brought the elephant to Bali, remained there and founded a settlement, Banjar Jawa. Many of the original inhabitants later moved to a Muslim settlement, kampung Mumbul.
multiple classifications create cross-cutting units, each with particular boundaries. Apart from adat communities, there are also those of religion, agama (see below).

It is evident that the divergence between adat and dinas, on the one hand, and the different administrative level (desa dinas and kecamatan) with either elected or appointed office holders, on the other hand, does not promote the consolidation and the sharing of the goals of the Balinese of either agama. Several Balinese adat representatives emphasised that this situation calls for two different types of loyalties, each directed to different institutions and their centres, as well as their different goals. I Made Nurbawa put it in a nutshell when he said: “I have two citizenships: I am a citizen of Indonesia and a citizen of Bali” (“Saya statusnya dua kewarganegaranya: saya sebagai warga Negara Adat Bali dan sebagai warga Negara Indonesia”). “But when should I (or can I) be”, he continued, “a national citizen and when a Balinese adat citizen?”

The respondents expressed in several interviews that the gap between desa dinas and desa adat (or pakraman) has grown wider since otonomi daerah (regional autonomy); at the same time, the exigency to live up to both has become more difficult. The respondents stressed that they did not challenge national citizenship, the national constitution, state law, or national unity. They saw it as a framework within which they tried to accommodate or find a niche where they could achieve their Balineseness and autonomy. Most of my interlocutors pleaded for a reunification of both types of villages or, rather, for a restoration of the pre-colonial conditions, though some conceded that it would be difficult to say what consequences this would have for the villagers concerning adat and dinas.

**Division of Labour between Majelis Desa Pakraman and AMAN**

This issue, whether desa dinas and desa adat should be merged, is, as all interlocutors underlined, an exclusively inner-Balinese problem. They referred to otonomi daerah when asked about such matters and the role of AMAN; they said that a division of labour exists. The Majelis Desa Pakraman, the council or forum of all desa pakraman, is responsible for inner-Balinese questions. Its tasks consist, as described in Perda 03/2001, of the promotion and protection of adat; this forum should also assist in the organisation of religious ceremonies (upacara keagamaan) when needed. The inner-Balinese disputes related to adat, which an individual village is unable to solve, are reported to this forum as a counselling and decision-making body. The case is usually firstly brought to the sub-district level. If no solution can be achieved, the case is handed over to the next higher section until it reaches the highest level, the Majelis Utama Desa Pakraman of the province. The Majelis Utama Desa Pakraman is the official partner of the governor in adat matters. During meetings, the governor  

---

12 Some said that the desa pakraman should also receive judiciary rights according to adat law. Others saw this as rather problematic, since such judgements based on adat law could contradict national law. However, they agreed that a village should have a justice of the peace (hakim perdamaian).

13 Several of the respondents underlined that AMAN pushed the Balinese to create an adat organisation that encompasses the individual villages. The institution of Majelis Desa Pakraman (as outlined in Perda 03/2001) is also said to be the result of AMAN and other Balinese activists.
announces the latest political decisions concerning *adat*, especially the amount of money (redistribution of taxes) destined for the *adat* communities. Majelis Utama Desa Pakraman also receives annual financial aid from the provincial government: 1 billion Rp./year for Majelis Utama Desa Pakraman (province), 100 million Rp./year for Majelis Madya Desa Pakraman (district) and 50 million Rp./year for the Majelis Alit Desa Pakraman (sub-district) (Metrobali March 15, 2013).

The task of this institution to decide in matters of *adat* in such a way that the parties concerned are ready to accept its decision is not an easy one. The intra-village conflicts over *pemekaran* (splitting up) are sensitive issues which are difficult to solve. The forum failed, for example, to achieve reconciliation or to restore peace in the case of *banjar adat* Tamblingan which wanted to split from *desa pakraman* Munduk. The major problem is that the council’s decision is understood by both parties as biased, either by pleading for the status quo or for splitting.

Ironically, the attempts of smaller units to split off from a *desa pakraman* are one of the consequences of *otonomi daerah* and the quest to receive a bigger share of the taxes. As briefly mentioned, the Provincial Government redistributes a certain amount of the taxes among the almost 1,500 *desa pakraman*. This money is then divided among the *banjar adat*, the neighbourhoods. The temptation to get the full sum allocated to a village with the official status of a *desa pakraman* seems to be a common motif of *banjar adat* for *pemekaran* (Bali Post January 3, 2013). Such internal matters, though intrinsically linked to the many ways in which *adat* has become a fundamental issue even in everyday life, are kept within the province, although it clearly transgresses the boundaries between *adat* and *dinas*; even parliamentarians get involved in such problematic cases as well. Two Balinese AMAN representatives who live in the same *desa pakraman*, Les, though in different *banjar pakraman*, know about the challenge associated with this division since this single *desa pakraman* is divided into two *desa dinas*. Should the *desa pakraman* also split into two and follow the path of the separate *desa dinas*? Or should the two *desa dinas* merge? There are proponents of both solutions.

Nevertheless, the problem of which social unit should be eligible for AMAN membership has not yet been solved. Should each Hindu Balinese *banjar* or *desa pakraman* have the opportunity of becoming an individual member of AMAN? What implications would it have on AMAN if more than 1,480 *desa pakraman* (not to mention their sub-units, the *banjar*) became individual members?

---

14 For example, the Governor of Bali announced at a meeting with the Majelis Utama Desa Pakraman at the governor’s office in November, 2012, that each of the 1,480 desa pakraman will receive 100 million Rupiah in 2013 (Berita dewata 2012).

15 In March, 2013 (the election of the Governor takes place in 2013), the Governor even promised 200 million Rupiah per *adat* village for 2013 (Metrobali March 15, 2013).

16 Another problem, though clearly linked to the *adat/dinas* division of villages, are territorial boundaries (since the territory of a *desa dinas* may differ from the boundaries of a *desa pakraman*) and the implementation of *otonomi daerah*. This may cause problems for some villages that rely on the traditional use of resources (such as well) sometimes located on the territory of a neighbouring village.
As I Made Rimbawa, a former judge and the AMAN representative of kabupaten Buleleng, explained, the current contingency of membership should be replaced by more evident and convincing criteria for membership. The villages and their inhabitants, especially in north Bali, cannot be considered as displaying a homogenous culture. Many villages are culturally mixed with Balinese of Chinese descent, Muslim and Christians (Muslim and Christian Balinese, Arabs as well as migrant workers) living there. The Chinese do not practice separatism by living only among themselves, as one interlocutor emphasised. Probably due to their economic function – as traders, shopkeepers, entrepreneurs, and other business men, but also truck drivers – they live in a rather dispersed way. Therefore, they do not aim at setting up their own desa pakraman.\footnote{As a respondent explicated, the Chinese do not have a particular adat organisation but have a funeral organisation (organisasi kematian) called Bukit Suci (Pure Hill), which unites the Chinese independent of their residence.}

My interlocutor contrasted the ethnic Chinese, most of whom practice Tri Dharma or Kong Hu Cu (Confucian) rituals, with Muslims who prefer living together in separate units. There are Muslim settlements (all of them with the administrative status of kelurahan) in the town of Singaraja\footnote{Singaraja is divided into 18 kelurahan and 1 desa dinas (Desa Baktiseraga), http://ciptakarya.pu.go.id/profil/profil/timur/bali/singaraja.pdf. <June 24, 2013>}.\footnote{Laporan Hasil MUSDA AMAN 2011.} (and beyond), such as Kampung Bugis, Kampung Anyar, Kampung Baru, and Kelurahan Banjar Bali. Some villages in Buleleng, especially in the kecamatan Sukasada and Gerokgak, have a Muslim majority. I Made Rimbawa pointed out that Buleleng has always been a region of cultural plurality and had to accommodate the fact that adat does not mean the same for all these different communities.

Similar to the Hindu Balinese, some of the traditional Muslim villages also have their own territory, their own customs and their own places of worship (seen as equivalent to the Hindu Three Temple System) as well as their own burial place. Some of the Muslim villages have also pleaded to the provincial government to become recognised as desa pakraman (Rieger in press); to my knowledge, the decision is still pending. In this multi-religious context, the question of adat and whether it can be limited to Hindu Balinese adat as defined in Perda 03/2001 arises.

Three Categories of Balinese Adat and Culture

To acknowledge this cultural plurality, local AMAN leaders summoned a meeting (musyawarah) with village adat representatives from the district of Buleleng. As a result of these discussions, they proposed the creation of three categories of Balinese culture as represented in the district. Each category should become a collective member of AMAN. These three categories were: Bali Pesisir, Bali Mula and Bali Apanage (Laporan Hasil MUSDA AMAN 2011). Bali Pesisir subsumes the Balinese who are living along the north coast. All these villages have been interacting with the outside world for centuries due to their location on the trading route to the Spice Islands. Many of them have adapted elements from merchants, sailors, savants, and saints from other Indonesian islands and far beyond (see Hauser-Schäublin and Ardika 2008).
Among the Bali Pesisir, there are also mixed Hindu-Muslim as well as Muslim villages. Some local AMAN representatives have so far already proposed four Muslim villages (Kampung Singaraja, Pegayaman, Kampung Bugis, and Kampung Kajanan), all belonging to the Bali Pesisir category, for membership of AMAN.

The category of Bali Mula (sometimes also called Bali Aga, though the interpretation and assessment of both terms vary) contains a number of villages which the Dutch had originally classified as pre-Hindu or even animistic (see Hauser-Schäublin 2004). These are mainly villages in the mountain area that had not been under the continuous influence (or dominance) of the Hindu courts (and their priests) in the south. They, therefore, practiced rituals (such as burying a corpse instead of cremating it) that differed from those in the southern plains. After a consultative meeting in Singaraja in 2011, the AMAN representatives listed seven villages as Bali Mula (Laporan Hasil MUSDA AMAN 2011).

The category of Bali Apanage consists of the “main-stream” Balinese culture. Many noble immigrants from south Bali are living in such “Apanage villages” in Buleleng. Many of these families are affiliated in one or the other way to royal courts and Brahmana priests; today, many of them hold important positions in these villages.

The AMAN leaders from Buleleng have submitted a request for acknowledgement of the three categories of Balinese culture and accepting them as members of the organisation to the headquarters of AMAN. An answer has not yet arrived (in July 2012).

The tripartite categorisation of “the Hindu Balinese” reminds one of Geertz’s classification of three socio-cultural or religious streams (aliran) in Java: He distinguished the court-oriented, refined priyai from the syncretic abangan tradition of the peasantry and the santri of the pious Muslim worldview (Geertz 1960, but see also Latif 2008). Without discussing whether this classification is “correct” or not, we have to note that this adaptation to Bali is understandable in the attempt to acknowledge plurality with regard to possible AMAN membership and to overcome homogenization and limitation to the Hindu Balinese. Nevertheless, it will be difficult to anticipate the consequences of these new distinctions which, as such, emphasise difference by eclipsing similarities and interconnectedness. In fact, the distinction especially between “Bali Mula/Aga” and “Apanage” becomes increasingly blurred by intra Hindu Balinese reformation resulting in standardisation – and by Perda 03/2001, which defines “the Hindu Balinese village” (see above and Hauser-Schäublin and Harnish in press).

Additionally, the progressing economic development (mainly tourism) and urbanisation of Bali and its corresponding lifestyles also raise the question, to what extent does adat still determine everyday life, especially of job holders and city dwellers.

All of my interlocutors were aware of the difficulty of defining adat without mixing it with agama (see Hauser-Schäublin 2011). The latter, religion, is consequently avoided by AMAN as an organisation. It focuses exclusively on adat and, in fact, has managed to unite Muslim, Christian, Hindu, and any other followers of ritual practices and beliefs throughout the archipelago by arguing on behalf of adat. In the case of Bali, local adat, as described in Perda 03/2001, is intrinsically linked to agama Hindu (see also Warren 2007). The amalgamation of adat and agama for the non-Hindu Balinese are
experienced even in their everyday life. It is, therefore, no surprise that Muslim village representatives wrote “keagamaan” or “religi” into the AMAN list when asked about their local particularities. By contrast, the Hindu Balinese filled in dance performances and the like (Laporan Hasil MUSDA AMAN 2011). Thus, the question I asked my interlocutors was, if the Balinese speak of their adat – as Bali Hindu or Hindu Bali – do they not anticipate that it is inseparably interlinked with agama?

Most of my respondents denied that adat Bali also implies agama Hindu. One of them added the term budaya (culture) to emphasise the neutrality when he spoke of “budaya adat Bali-Hindu”. On further enquiry, he added that Balinese citizens of the Muslim creed are already included in this term; he made a distinction between “budaya Hindu” and “budaya adat Bali Hindu”. The former implied a Hindu culture, the latter a “culture of Bali Hindu adat”. Concerning the name of their religion, he said, he would have preferred “Agama Bali” as the official denomination, but since the national state requires that each citizen follows a world religion, the government would not have accepted this name (Picard 2004, 2011). Therefore, the affiliation with Hinduism as a world religion was chosen and accepted as a name. Today, many Balinese ask themselves whether “Agama Hindu” should not to be changed to “Agama Hindu Bali” to emphasise the localised aspect of this religion (Picard 2011). The interlocutor concluded that it is the spirit of Hinduism that enlivens Balinese adat: Perda 03/2001 already makes the interconnection between adat and agama (especially in the definition of the tasks of Majelis Desa Pakraman) explicit. The same interlocutor added that another forum (Forum Kerukunan Umat Beragama), in which he is also involved, is taking care of harmonious relations between communities of different religions.

In sum, as has become evident, adat cannot be treated as an independent category but is interlinked with agama – and also with politics. In the province of Bali, the Hindu Balinese are the dominant majority, as acknowledged and reinforced by the Provincial Regulation (Perda 03/2001). All other non-Hindu Balinese – clearly minorities – have become second-class citizens in their own province. This seems to exceed by far the expectations and goals the AMAN founders had in 1999.

However, one of my interlocutors still regretted that local AMAN’s efforts and goals did not sufficiently acknowledge the expectations and claims of Balinese activists, particularly to get a bigger share of taxes from the central government for the benefit of Bali and its culture. He expects the elaboration of more explicit policies from AMAN and, therefore, welcomed the founding (in 2012) of Forum Perjuangan Hak Bali (Forum for the Fight for Balinese Rights, FPHB; see Joewono 2012). One of the main actors is the secretary of Majelis Madya Desa Pakraman in Denpasar.

What are the Balinese AMAN activists’ further expectations concerning AMAN as a nationwide organisation?

---

19 Balinese Hinduism was recognised as one of the national religions by the government in 1958.

20 This forum seems to be founded as a reaction to the Permendagri No. 32/2011 (Peraturan Menteri Dalam Negeri Nomor 32, 2011 Tentang Pedoman Pemberian Hibah Dan Bantuan Sosial Yang Bersumber Dari Anggaran Pendapatan Dan Belanja Daerah). This regulation of the Ministry of the Interior outlines (and redefines) the relationship between the central government and the provinces concerning the redistribution of taxes destined as support and social assistance in the provinces.
One respondent pointed out that a formalized link between Majelis Desa Pakraman (which, ultimately, is an institution set up by the province) and AMAN does not yet exist. A closer cooperation could create more synergy. Since Bali is a province with a high percentage of foreigners living there (work migrants, tourists, investors, business people, etc.), one respondent expressed the hope that the Hindu Balinese will get support from AMAN as a national organization. AMAN could or should assist the Hindu Balinese in their own endeavour to facilitate the adaptation of foreigners to Balinese culture: The foreigners should learn more about Balinese culture and behave in an appropriate way. This field is seen as a possible interface between AMAN and Majelis Desa Pakraman.

**Addressing the Future: “Bali Goes Global”**

An overview of the activities and goals of the Balinese AMAN representatives shows that they predominantly understand AMAN as a national organization with excellent international networks and donor organizations. They appreciate the direct contact and the exchange of ideas with other AMAN members from different provinces during national meetings. For them, AMAN is seen as a two-way bridge from the local to the national and the global perspective. One of the representatives, who is also member of the UNESCO Board supervising the Balinese UNESCO World Heritage (listed in 2012), emphasised that Balinese culture is now propagated worldwide. The Balinese World Heritage bears the title: “Cultural Landscape of Bali Province: the Subak System as a Manifestation of the Tri Hita Karana Philosophy” (Cultural Landscape 2012). In the nomination text, the Balinese subak or wet rice irrigation system is featured as a social and material expression of the Hindu Balinese “philosophical concept” of Tri Hita Karana, which brings together the realms of the spirit, the human world and nature” (ibidem). Described as (an unchanging) spiritual-ecological irrigation model and practice, this important aspect of Balinese culture is understood as an exemplar for the world community: “Balinese culture goes global”, as another respondent called it.

My Balinese interlocutors, almost without an exception, saw the strength of AMAN in shaping the future of their villages and Bali as a province. They realised that the preservation of adat is not enough for a viable future. Several of the representatives are running social, economic and ecological development projects or NGOs, some of them with considerable success: I Made Suarnata, the AMAN representative from Pengubenang (Kerobokan), is very active in the environmental NGO Yayasan Wisnu. He and the AMAN representatives from Les and Catur are involved in a number of different projects, all of them with a strong environmental component, such as ecowisata (ecotourism), agrowisata (agrotourism), aquawisata (the rehabilitation of coral reefs for snorkelers) or the production of certified bio coffee. The idea of sustainable economic and social development is prevalent in their expectations for the future. They all aim at empowering the villagers and assisting them in gaining new sources of income by cultivating, at the same time, the “spirit of adat” in the sense of Tri Hita Karana.
The Yayasan Wisnu also has special programmes for “capacity building” in the villages on its agenda; capacity building should create the prerequisite for the implementation of sustainable projects on the local level. Some of the programmes, which are also promoted by AMAN, are ideologically supported (transfer of knowledge) and even subsidised by international NGOs with whom AMAN has been successfully cooperating for many years (see chapter by Sanmukri). All of my interlocutors were hoping to get more involved in international networks and organisations through AMAN for the sake of their projects. They were all aware of the fact that the label “indigenous people” AMAN used in the English translation of masyarakat adat is an advantage in getting interlinked with international organisations and supporters of “indigenous peoples”. If the translation of masyarakat adat were “peoples of traditions” (or similar), this would be much more difficult. I Dewa Nyoman Suardana from Penutukan (Buleleng) reminded that the change of name from desa adat in desa pakraman is, from an international perspective, a disadvantage. While adat has become an established concept which has been translated with “indigenous”, pakraman does not fill the same slot. “There are bukum adat, indigenous rights, but no bukum pakraman, pakraman rights; there are indigenous land rights but no pakraman land rights; this makes no sense”, he concluded. He has already written and talked about this issue in different media and pleaded for a reintroduction of the term desa adat.

The electronic media – email, internet platforms and mobile phones – play a crucial role among the activists in their communication within Bali and beyond. The social media, such as Facebook, are used for the exchange of information and opinion-making. Some of the representatives frequently comment on matters of adat and politics in these media. I Made Nurbawa from Belatung (Tabanan), who is working in the regional Broadcasting Commission of Indonesia and is especially experienced in communication matters, highlighted the importance of fast communication in today’s networks. He pointed to the way in which traditional adat leaders – those who are in office due to particular adat regulations within individual villages – communicate with each other: It focuses on personal face-to-face interactions, mainly during official village meetings, rather than electronic media. In most desa pakraman, a man enters the village association – the krama desa – only when he is married. The krama desa is based on the principle of seniority and a man gradually steps up in the krama desa hierarchy the older he gets until he reaches one of the most important positions – unless he is a widower or all his sons are married. In this respect, some local variations exist; but in general, a man has to step down from the krama desa when his sons are married and have children.
Modern technology plays an important role in today’s organisation of AMAN Bali, as well as of adat temple ceremonies (here, doing the accounts in the temple Bale Agung in Catur village after its sumptuous renovation and elaborate rituals).

Photo: Brigitta Hauser-Schäublin 2012

By contrast, a local AMAN representative is independent from the otherwise binding rules of adat of his village if he wants to start some special activities and cooperation with NGOs. One of my interlocutors praised AMAN membership and the freedom it provides when he said: “I attended AMAN meetings when I was still a very young man and I can continue far beyond my 60s; I can stay and be active as long as I want.” Another respondent praised the democratic principle of AMAN because everyone can be elected as a representative: “There [in contrast to the national parliament] I really see people on the council who are like me, ordinary people.”

Nevertheless, some of the representatives who were very much in favour of AMAN’s democratic principles got caught up in contradictions. One of them lamented that some NGOs at an AMAN congress in Pontianak (Kalimantan), KMAN III 2007 pleaded for an equal participation of women in AMAN matters. My interlocutor argued that adat, politics and decision-making is the domain of men according to Balinese adat. Yet, adat and its values should be protected; gender equality and women’s rights, therefore, run contrary to Balinese adat. In spite of his (and others’)
opposition, the AMAN congress decided to give women the same rights as men; AMAN’s provincial representatives have to consist of one man and one woman.\footnote{In Bali, the female AMAN representative of Bali province is the wife of a male AMAN representative of a kabupaten.}

This interlocutor apparently did not think that the democratisation he had welcomed in matters of krama desa membership and adat leadership also contradicted village adat. Adat rights and human rights – indigenous groups have received international support thanks to the UN Human Rights Convention and subsequent declarations – are, at least in some points, incongruent (see also Bourchier 2007:125; Warren 2007:198). However, as several respondents remarked, democratisation and development imply “social transformation”. One interlocutor emphasised that social transformation will be necessary for Balinese villages so that they may confidently look ahead and not only back to the past and its traditions. Some also mentioned “multicultural” coexistence and tolerance when asked about what they understood by social transformation. One representative added that it is only recently that people have started to categorise themselves and others according to agama, thus highlighting differences and eclipsing commonalities. Here, social transformation means to bring people out of their shell – without losing one’s own roots in adat.