

# Social Tension Between The Javanese And Balinese Ethnic Groups: The Case Of Lembah Mukti Village, Donggala Regency

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this study is to determine the social norms that exist between the Javanese and Balinese ethnic groups and to identify the potential for conflict between the social relations of the Javanese and Balinese ethnic groups in Lembah Mukti Village, Dampelas District, Donggala Regency. This study uses a qualitative research method that aims to describe the phenomenon. Data collection was obtained through observation, interviews, and documentation. The use of purposive sampling techniques allowed the researcher to selectively choose 7 informants. The data analysis process was as follows: First, information was collected from various sources. The data was summarized and simplified without losing its original meaning. The data was then organized to understand patterns. Then, reviewing and discussing to formulate conclusions that could become credible descriptions of the findings, which could potentially change as further evidence emerged. The results of the study show that, first, there are differences in social norms that trigger social tension between the Javanese and Balinese ethnic groups. Second, these differences in norms and culture become a potential source of conflict, reinforced by the ethnocentrism of both ethnic groups. It is concluded that social relations between the two ethnic groups will continue to experience tension if there is no safety valve capable of resolving conflicts of interest.

**Keywords:** Interethnic Interaction, Social Norms, Ethnic Conflict

## 1. Introduction

According to Selo Soemardjan, society is a group of people who live and work together in a social relationship that has existed for a long time, enabling them to organize themselves and consider themselves a social unit with clear boundaries. They also produce culture and share a common territory, identity, customs, traditions, attitudes, and a sense of unity bound by commonality. In other words, society is a community of people bound by common culture, territory, and identity, and possessing a strong sense of unity (Soekanto, 2006).

Interethnic interaction occurs due to a gradual process of adjustment in human character and behavior. Interaction can certainly be achieved with various considerations when adjustments occur in political, social, cultural, or economic aspects. Ethnic heterogeneity is characterized by settlements inhabited by various ethnic groups and religions within a complex community. In this condition, there is the potential for conflicts between ethnic groups, tribes, and religions (Pontoh, 2021).

Social relations between groups are not always considered harmonious even though they live side by side (Susan, 2012; Taib, 2010). Therefore, the relationship between the Javanese and Balinese ethnic groups in Lembah Mukti Village cannot be considered a perfect or harmonious social relationship.

Differences in religion, language, and ethnicity are social characteristics that reflect ethnic diversity. This also applies in Lembah Mukti Village, Dampelas Subdistrict, Donggala Regency. The community in Lembah Mukti Village is ethnically diverse, with two ethnic groups dominating in terms of population, namely the Javanese and Balinese ethnic groups originating from the islands of Java and Bali.

The Javanese and Balinese ethnic groups have different cultures, resulting in both positive and negative stigmas between the two. Since 2016, there have been frequent incidents of mob violence committed by Balinese youths against Javanese youths. This is caused by the consumption of alcoholic beverages by Balinese youths. This incident angered the Javanese youth, who retaliated. After the incident, both parties, the Javanese youth and the Balinese youth, were summoned by the village authorities for mediation to prevent such incidents from recurring in the future.

## 2. Method

This study aims to describe phenomena with a focus on the processes and meanings revealed by the research subjects, often using analysis. In qualitative research, the orientation towards the processes and meanings revealed by the subjects becomes the center of attention (Bungin, 2012). This research was conducted in Lembah Mukti Village, Dampelas Subdistrict, Donggala Regency. The technique for determining informants was carried out purposively, in which the researcher determined 7 informants and 1 key informant.

## 3. The Struggle of Group Norms and the Potential for Ethnic Conflict between Javanese and Balinese

This section will discuss the research findings, which consist of two aspects: (1) Social Norms Between the Javanese and Balinese Ethnic Communities; and (2) Potential Conflicts Between the Javanese and Balinese Ethnic Groups.

### 3.1. Social Norms Among the Javanese and Balinese Ethnic Communities

The population of Lembah Mukti Village is predominantly composed of the Javanese ethnic group, followed by the Balinese, Sundanese, Madurese, Dampelas, Bugis, and Makassar ethnic groups. However, in this case, the researcher focuses on examining the social norms and potential conflicts that occur between the Javanese and Balinese ethnic groups, as these two groups are the dominant ethnicities in Lembah Mukti Village.

Social norms between the Javanese and Balinese ethnic groups in Lembah Mukti Village refer to rules, expectations, or guidelines of behavior that are accepted and recognized within a set of norms and etiquette that govern interactions and relationships between individuals from different ethnic or cultural groups. They determine how individuals

should behave, interact, and act in various situations. Social norms may relate to various aspects of life, such as dress codes, ways of speaking, ethics, values, manners, and others.

Based on observations, not all Javanese and Balinese ethnic groups have close relationships with each other. The potential for conflict or disagreement between the social norms of the Javanese and Balinese ethnic groups can be caused by differences in culture, traditions, values, and fundamental belief systems. The Javanese and Balinese ethnic groups have different histories, religions, and beliefs, which form the basis of their social norms and rules. Lewis A. Coser's theory of social conflict, in assessing this reality, reflects the conflicts that arise from cultural, traditional, and religious differences between the Javanese and Balinese ethnic groups. These conflicts often arise in the different rituals, beliefs, and religious celebrations of the two groups.

Differences in religious rituals between the Javanese and Balinese ethnic groups, such as differences in views on offerings, incense, and frankincense, indicate significant differences in religious beliefs and practices. This creates conflict in views regarding religious practices that are considered polytheistic or impermissible in Javanese society, but are an integral part of Balinese beliefs.

### **3.2. Potential Conflict Between the Javanese and Balinese Ethnic Groups**

Conflict is defined as differences in goals, beliefs, attitudes, or behavior. In other words, based on beliefs formed from ethnic culture, an ethnic group has common goals and achieves these goals through the attitudes or behavior patterns of its members. These goals are aspirations that must be achieved, but in reality, they are not always realized due to various factors. In fact, the culture that is believed in may also be threatened by various factors, both internal and external.

Inequalities in the distribution of resources, economic opportunities, access to education, employment, and health care can create feelings of dissatisfaction and frustration among disadvantaged ethnic groups. This can trigger conflict because these groups feel that they are not treated fairly in society.

Analyzing the dominance or excessive exploitation of natural resources by Balinese people in Lembah Mukti Village. The emphasis on the fact that various aspects of natural resource management, such as rice fields and the processing of wood or rattan in the forest, are carried out by Balinese people may imply that they dominate the use of natural resources in the village.

Imbalances in natural resource management can be interpreted as one group having excessive control or access, while other groups may feel marginalized or denied equal access to available resources. Negative connotations may be associated with questions of fairness, equitable distribution, or negative impacts on ecosystems or the environment due to excessive use of natural resources.

Lewis A. Coser's theory of social conflict reflects the conflict that developed from disagreements over natural resource management between the Balinese and Javanese ethnic communities. This conflict relates to the different control and utilization of natural resources between the two groups.

Statements regarding the dominance of Balinese people in the management of agricultural land, forests, and wood or rattan processing show differences in the ownership and utilization of natural resources. This creates an imbalance in the distribution of and access to resources, which in turn can affect the economic and social dynamics of the village.

This situation reflects social conflict in the context of village head elections rooted in religious and ethnic differences between the Javanese and Balinese communities. First, in the context of religious identity, statements highlighting election based on religion indicate conflict in preferences for leaders of the same religion. This reflects the conflict that arises from differences in religious identity in achieving leadership positions in society. Coser highlights that this kind of conflict can be a source of social or political change.

Second, ethnic identity conflicts arise from preferences in choosing leaders from the same or different ethnic groups. Statements that underline the desire to preserve the traditions and cultural values of a particular ethnicity in leadership reflect conflicts that arise from differences in ethnic identity and the desire to preserve cultural heritage. Coser emphasizes that such conflicts can be a starting point for positive change or agreement between groups.

Although this conflict can cause tension, Coser also emphasizes that conflict can be an opportunity to increase understanding and cooperation between groups. In the context of village head elections, conflicts arising from religious and ethnic differences can trigger constructive dialogue and collaborative efforts to achieve better understanding and fight for leadership that represents the interests of all groups in the community.

Inequality in political power for other ethnic groups can sometimes arise from a history of political domination by a particular ethnic group, creating a political structure that privileges one group while disadvantaging others. This is often reflected in systemic discrimination, limited access to political resources, and disproportionate representation in political structures. Ethnic polarization and tension can also lead to political segregation, hindering equal access and political participation among various ethnic groups. Addressing this inequality requires a holistic approach and collective efforts to build a political system that is inclusive and fair to all ethnic groups.

In this context, ethnic differences often have a real impact on how citizens from each ethnic group have access to political decisions and policy-making in the village. Unequal political power can be reflected in decision-making that benefits one ethnic group over another, creating inequalities that can exacerbate inter-ethnic tensions.

#### 4. Conclusion

Differences in religious practices have the potential to cause conflict because they contradict the beliefs of both ethnic groups. Imbalances in access to and management of natural resources between ethnic groups are a source of conflict (tension). The Balinese

ethnic group dominates the ownership and management of resources such as agricultural land, gardens, and untapped forest potential. This has the potential to create social, economic, and environmental imbalances between the two ethnic groups. Political constituencies at the village level take into account administrative areas, facilitating local participation and aspirations of residents.

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