

# Bureaucratisation of Indigenous Organisation: Case Study of Adat-based Covid-19 Prevention Task Force in the Adat Village of Denpasar

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**Abstract.** This research will examine the bureaucratization process involving traditional village institutions (desa adat) of Denpasar. The Provincial Government of Bali has relied on the role of the adat village through the formation of a customary village-based Covid-19 Task Force to fight the ongoing outbreak ever since the beginning of the pandemic. Denpasar Traditional Village is one of the traditional villages that has activated the Covid-19 Gotong Royong Task Force in its territory and its position as one of the epicenters of the spread of Covid-19 is the main reason for choosing this traditional village as a research object. The bureaucratization of the adat village itself has been going on since the issuance of the Bali Province Regional Regulation No. 4 of 2019. This process focuses on the formation of a state hierarchy of social institutions that were previously scattered and relatively independent. This research will focus on looking at the layered and complex interactions of various social and political interests at the village level while looking at the impact of this process on the essence of traditional organizations on the socio-political life of village communities and the implicit implications for future policies.

**Keywords:** bureaucratization, traditional village institution, Satgas Covid-19.

## 1. Introduction

Bali is one of the busiest tourist destinations in the world, so naturally, when the COVID-19 outbreak began to spread at the end of 2019, Bali was expected to become one of the worst provinces to be infected with COVID-19. However, this has been proven untrue. The first new case of COVID-19 was reported in March 2020. Meanwhile, at the same time, Jakarta had reported 200 cases with 18 deaths (Satuan Tugas Penanganan COVID-19, 2020). Even though Bali is not completely immune to the spread of the disease, the number of reported cases is quite low, especially compared to several other provinces in Indonesia. As a comparison, until 23 November 2021 Jakarta still held the first rank for the highest transmission area with 863,482 cases, while Bali only recorded 114,108 in 9th place (Satuan Tugas Penanganan Covid-19, 2021).

Since the beginning of the pandemic, the Provincial Government of Bali has relied on the participation of Traditional Villages to fight the ongoing outbreak. Each Traditional Village applies its own regulations to control community movements and activities, thereby helping to prevent the mass spread of the virus. Furthermore, a joint effort between the Government and Traditional Villages began on March 28 2020. The Governor of Bali, I Wayan Koster,

together with the Bali Province *Adat* Village Council agreed to form a Covid-19 Task Force based on *adat* villages through Joint Decree No. 472/1571/PPDA/DPMA and No. 05/SK/MDA-Prov Bali/III/2020/. The Covid-19 Task Force is carrying out various efforts related to Covid-19, such as socialisation, education, prevention, and supervision. In its implementation, the *Pecalang* (Balinese traditional security officer) acts as the spearhead in policing and monitoring residents, together with other related elements such as the National Police and the national army (Devita, 2020).

The task force at the village level is part of the government's bureaucratic response to the outbreak. The handling of the Covid-19 pandemic by the Provincial Government of Bali is divided into three levels. The first level is at the provincial level with the issuance of policy and appeal letters detailing instructions from the President. The second level at the district level is coordinating the implementation of operational handling of Covid-19 in the district/city area. Finally, at the third level is the implementation of policies in the village through the Traditional Village Task Force (Bali Provincial Government, 2020).

In Bali, the *adat* village, in its function and authority, is not part of the formal government structure. At the village level, there are two different authorities with two different functions. First, the official village represents the government and carries out administrative functions under the sub-district. Whereas customary village refers to customary authorities who mostly carry out socio-religious functions and are directly responsible to the villagers. The existence of traditional villages is recognized as a socio-religious institution that does not have a hierarchical relationship with the provincial, district and sub-district governments. Each *adat* village has different organizational and membership practices that derive from the wisdom and experience of the village itself.

In 2019, the Provincial Government of Bali issued Provincial Regulation No. 4 of 2019 which regulates all aspects of *adat* villages, such as its roles, authorities, membership, and revenue management. This regulation has explicitly placed customary villages as one of the legal subjects in the province. This was followed by another regulation through Provincial Regulation No.7 of 2019 which authorized the establishment of a new department under the provincial government called the *Dinas Pemajuan Masyarakat Adat* (DPMA) or the Department for the Advancement of *Adat* Society. The new department will oversee economics, finance, law, and development in Traditional Villages. Finally, customary villages are now entitled to receive a minimum of 300 million rupiah from provincial funds (Astajaya, 2019).

What has happened in Bali over the last two years seems to reflect the bureaucratization of traditional villages. This process focuses on establishing a state hierarchy of social institutions that were previously dispersed and relatively independent. There is some controversy surrounding this new development. Some have credited the governments' efforts as a way of recognizing the existence of *adat* village as a distinct grassroots entity that wields significant power over the lives of the Balinese. Others, however, criticized the regulation for limiting the flexibility of *adat* village as a social organization as well as trying to standardize its format across Bali. In addition, the creation of new departments and incentives has now brought *desa adat* under the control of the Provincial Government of Bali, thereby bidding its independence from the administrative and political powers of the state (Suryawan, 2021).

Against this background, this study will examine the bureaucratization process involving traditional village institutions in Denpasar *Adat* Village. Denpasar Traditional Village is one of the *adat* villages that has activated the Covid-19 Gotong Royong Task Force in its territory. Its position at one of the epicenters of the spread of Covid-19 is the main reason for choosing this traditional village as a research object. This research will focus on looking at the layered

and complex interactions of various social and political interests at the village level while looking at the impact of this process on the essence of traditional organizations on the socio-political life of village communities and the implications for future policies.

## 2. Method

This research was conducted using qualitative analysis of case studies to answer research questions. The case study approach is very useful for conducting an in-depth study of a problem, event or phenomenon in a real-life context. Case studies can be used to explain, describe or explore events or phenomena in the everyday context in which they occur. Because research is carried out directly in its natural context, this makes it easier for researchers to understand and explain causal relationships resulting from a new development or phenomenon, which in this case is the bureaucratization of traditional villages in Bali.

In this case study method, academic literature, and historical records about traditional villages from the pre-colonial period have been examined first to see the history of village transformation on the island of Bali. Then interviews with relevant stakeholders such as representatives from the Denpasar Administration Village and the *Adat* Village Assembly were conducted to see the phenomena that occur in the field.

This study uses data collection techniques in the form of in-depth interviews, namely data collection by conducting in-depth interviews with key informants. In addition, data from secondary sources in the form of documents were also analyzed.

## 3. Discussion

### 3.1. Regulations underlying the bureaucratization of *adat* villages in Bali

Currently in Bali there are 1,493 Traditional Villages spread over all 9 (nine) Regencies/Cities in Bali. In reality, however, the positions between the administrative villages and *adat* villages in Bali can be said to overlap, this is what is then referred to as village dualism. Not only in the form of authority, but there are often conflicts between the customary village and official village areas. From a territorial perspective, there are several forms of relationship between *adat* villages and *administrative* villages (Pitana, 1994), namely:

1. A Village where the territory and members of the administrative and *adat* villages completely overlap. For example, in several mountain villages, such as Serahi, Bunutin, Bonyoh, and Manik Lui.
2. An administrative village which comprises of several *adat* villages, such as the administrative village of Luwus which consists of four *adat* villages and the administrative village of Mekarsari which consists of six *adat* villages;
3. An *adat* Village consisting of several administrative villages, generally located in urban areas. For example, the Denpasar *Adat* Village, consisting of several service villages and sub-districts.
4. An administrative village which territory includes several *adat* villages. For example, the Ubud administrative village consists of six traditional villages which are entirely in Ubud, and one *adat* village which belongs to *Peliatan*.

Regional Regulation No. 4 of 2019 regarding *Adat* Villages in Bali came into force on May 28 2019. This Regional Regulation creates new concepts in terms of strengthening the rights of *adat* villages such as: Position and Status of *Adat* Villages, Main Elements of *Adat* Villages, Awig-Awig, Pararem, and Other Regulations of *Adat* Villages, Duties and

Authorities of *Adat* Villages, Governance of *Adat* Villages, *Adat* Institutions, Old *Adat* Villages, Padruwen and Utsaha *Adat* Villages, *Adat* Village Revenue and Expenditure Budgets and *Adat* Village Finances, *Adat* Village Assembly, Relations and Administration *Adat* Village Cooperation, Development of *Adat* Villages and Development of Rural Areas of *Adat* Villages, Guidance and Supervision, Empowerment and Preservation of *Adat* Villages, Other Provisions, Transitional Provisions, and Closing Provisions, which are described in the body of the Regional Regulation on *Adat* Villages.

It is stated in the elucidation of Perda No. 4 of 2019 that the arrangement and management of *Adat* Villages in Bali cannot be left sporadically separated in independence that is completely separate, per *Adat* Village or per Regency/City, but must be in a single regulatory and management unit, one island, one pattern, one governance (one island, one management, one command) as a form of embodiment of social, cosmic unity and the implementation of Balinese Hindu religious teachings.

Regional Regulation No. 4 of 2019 is then supported by several other regulations that regulate customary village activities, such as in terms of funding. One of the most important and is still a reference in the field, namely Governor Regulation No. 15 of 2020 concerning the policy package for accelerating the handling of covid-19 outbreak in the Province of Bali which contains technical instructions for the utilization of customary village funds sourced from the 2020 APBD.

Starting from 2020, the Provincial Government of Bali allocates *Adat* Village Funds sourced from the Universal Budget for the 2020 Fiscal Year each in the amount of Rp. 300,000,000.00 to all 1,493 *adat* villages in Bali. The funds have been transferred directly to the account of each *Adat* Village and are intended to finance Routine Expenditures and Program Expenditures. Routine expenditure includes administrative expenses and payroll, while program expenditure are used to finance programs related to the members' social and cultural activities.

In the midst of implementing the financing of *Adat* Village programs, Bali is facing the COVID-19 outbreak. In an effort to deal with the outbreak, the Provincial Government of Bali has given directions to *Adat* Villages to reallocate the *Adat* Village Fund budget for handling COVID-19. The use of funds as mentioned above must then be accounted for through several processes, including submitting a Statement Letter and RKT Changes to Krama Desa *Adat*, and a copy to the Governor of Bali through the Head of the Office for the Advancement of Indigenous Peoples of the Province of Bali. As well as *prajuru adat* villages have the obligation to collect and store all evidence of activity transactions, both in the form of lists of beneficiaries and receipts and receipts for purchases of goods. In addition, the *Adat* Village Council participates in supervising and guiding the implementation of the use of these funds.

### **3.2. Bureaucratisation of *Adat* Villages seen from the Covid-19 Prevention Task Force**

Weber's general concept of bureaucracy is further elaborated by Vifell & Thedvall (2012) who then divides the concept of bureaucratization into three analytic dimensions. The first dimension is formalization, in which more and more organizational procedures are becoming routine phenomena and are carried out based on formal procedures and structures. The formalization of activities leads to the adoption of several types of structures, procedures and work methods. Things that are not adopted in the framework are inappropriate to do (Røvik, 2000). Formalization is also understood as the establishment of hierarchical decision-making

structures and institutionalized rules, as well as specialization and division of labor to create predictability.

In the case of the Traditional Village in Bali, the process of forming the Mutual Cooperation Task Force for the Prevention of Covid-19 shows this. The establishment of the task force is outlined in the Joint Decree of the Governor of Bali and the Council of *Adat* Villages of the Province of Bali Number: 472/1571/DPMA and Number: 05/SKMDA-Prov. Bali/III/2020 Concerning the Establishment of a Mutual Cooperation Task Force for the Prevention of COVID-19 Based on *Adat* Villages in Bali and has been formed since March 28 2020.

The second is precision, namely the ongoing effort to clarify and refine the definition of certain concepts. Process precision is a key feature of bureaucracies because they aim to organize activities in a rational and stable manner (Weber, 1958; Handelman, 2004). Precision will clarify the scope and scope of an organization and its components into certain categories. Individuals will become members of organizations, things will become assets, and ideas will become principles and policies. This precision can usually be found in the outlined jobdesk of the administrators or members of the organisation.

The tasks of the Gotong Royong Task Force are regulated in the fifth provision of the Joint Decree of the Governor of Bali and the Bali Province Traditional Village Council Number: 472/1571/DPMA and Number: 05/SKMDA-Prov. Bali/III/2020, The job description is as follow.:

- a. Main task
  - 1) Empowering the members (*Krama*) of the *Adat* Village and youth (*Yowana*) to work together in carrying out programs related to COVID-19 prevention.
  - 2) Designating the facilities of *Adat* village as the Task Force Coordinating Post.
  - 3) Coordinating and synergizing with related parties including security forces in the *Adat* Village in COVID-19 prevention programs.
- b. Noetic Tasks
  - 1) Asking for grace (*nunas ica*) at *Khayangan Tiga Desa Adat* Temples by means of *Nyejer Daksina* until COVID-19 ends.
  - 2) Praying to God (*Ida Bhatara Sasuhunan*) in accordance with the local tradition, hoping that the outbreak will soon resolved.
- c. Practical/ worldly tasks
  - 1) Tasks to prevent COVID-19:
    - a) Delivering education, outreach, prevention, guidance, and supervision related to COVID-19.
    - b) Direct all members of the village not to visit crowded places and reduce activities that involve many people.
    - c) Collect data on the members and/or guest members who have just returned from working outside Bali or abroad, who are included in the category of Persons Under Monitoring for COVID-19.
    - d) Directing the members and/or guest members who are included in the Persons Under Monitoring category to carry out independent isolation at home according to health standards.
    - e) Preparing masks, hand sanitizers, and washing hands with soap, and the like.
    - f) Reporting members and/or guest members who are included in the Persons Under Monitoring category to the nearest Health Center.

2) Building Mutual Cooperation among Customary Village Krama:

- a) Collect data on customary Village Krama who need assistance with basic needs.
- b) Collect basic basic needs from Krama Desa Adat who are able to work together and distribute them to Krama Desa Adat who are taking advantage of COVID-19 to ease their burdens of life.
- c) Collecting *punia* funds (charitable donation) from members and/or guest members to help other village members in need and support the implementation of the operational duties of the Gotong Royong Task Force.

Based on the interview account from Jero Mangku I Nyoman Sudarja, Ida Penyarikan (Secretary) of Denpasar *Adat* Village, the Covid-19 taskforce in the Denpasar *Adat* Village have followed the stipulated framework. The countermeasures activities were led by *Ida Bendesa* (Head of *adat* village) working together with *pecalang* (traditional security force) and *Seka Teruna Yowana* (Youth Organisation) under the sub-villages. Some of the activities include distributing masks, distributing groceries to residents undergoing independent isolation, and spraying disinfectants in public places in collaboration with BPPD and Denpasar Red Cross.

When asked about the initiatives of these programs, *Ida Penyarikan* mentioned that the entire program was "a command from the government," which in this case refers to the Joint Decree of the Governor of Bali and the Council of Traditional Villages of Bali Province Number: 472/1571/DPMA and Number: 05 /SKMDA-Prov. Bali/III/2020 Concerning the Formation of a Mutual Cooperation Task Force for the Prevention of COVID-19 Based on *Adat* Villages in Bali. Indeed, the process of formalization, compromise and agreement that occurs is difficult to ignore and challenge. The more rigid the forum and hierarchical system that is adopted, the less space for the actors in it to complete the concept other than what has been stated explicitly (Vifell & Thedvall, 2012).

The last analytic dimension in bureaucratisation is visibility which means making policies clear through archived and published action plans and standards. Visibility is part of Weber's (1958) idea about the importance of written documents as a record of decisions in terms of increasing stability and predictability. Written documents make it easier for decisions and policies to be communicated throughout the organization. When policies become visible, the actors in them are required to follow these policies.

In addition to the tasks and procedures for implementing the Covid-19 Prevention Mutual Cooperation Task Force, this visibility effort can also be found in the Monitoring and Evaluation (Monev) program conducted by the DPMA. Based on *Ida Penyarikan's* account, the DPMA has conducted Monev in the field twice since 2020. Furthermore, the *adat* village is also required to report the use of the *Adat* Village Fund sourced from the APBD.. The report is deposited annually through the *Adat* Village Financial Information System (also called SIKUAT) application.

The third dimension becomes the path of changing an entity into a bureaucratic organization. And these three changes will later provide the ability for organizations to exercise control over their members. Precise and defined assignment of tasks in a hierarchy means those at the top can control those at lower levels and ultimately span the entire organization. This control, as elaborated by Orwell, pervades the entire bureaucratic structure, and is expressed through predetermined rules.

## 4. Conclusion

Regional Regulation No. 4 of 2019 is the starting point of the bureaucratization of *Adat* Villages in Bali. The implementation of this regulation provides new rights and obligations for *Adat* Villages, such as the provision of budgetary funds that are required to be accountable to the Provincial Government. Following the analytic dimension developed by Vifell & Thedvall (2012), this study analyzes the process of bureaucratization of the Denpasar *Adat* Village based on formalization, precision, and visibility. Formalisation gave rise to many new organizational procedures which became routine phenomena and were carried out based on formal procedures and structures. The issuance of the Joint Decree of the Governor of Bali and the Council of Traditional Villages of the Province of Bali is one of the milestones in the bureaucratization of Traditional Villages during the pandemic. The second dimension is precision, namely the ongoing effort to clarify and refine the definition of certain concepts. The description of the tasks and implementation procedures which are clearly illustrated in the Joint Decree of the Governor of Bali and the Council of Traditional Villages of the Province of Bali is evidence of this process. The last analytic dimension is visibility which means making policies clear through archived and published action plans and standards. In addition to the tasks and procedures for implementing the Covid-19 Prevention Mutual Cooperation Task Force, this visibility effort can also be found in the Monitoring and Evaluation (Monev) program conducted by the DPMA.

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