

CASTE SYSTEM IN EAST SUMBA: SHARED REALITY AND THE LEGITIMATION OF SOCIAL INEQUALITY

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ABSTRACT

The caste system is a particular way of social stratification to which it belongs only through birth and is characterized by having a solid, rigid, and immobile system and this is the reality that is lived on the island of East Sumba in Indonesia. The relationship between Maramba (high caste) and Ata (low caste) is prominently unequal. This is where the principal question arises: **How do cultural elements and psychological mechanisms interact to bolster social inequality through the caste system in East Sumba?** The author employed an ethnographic research approach, and found that cultural elements and psychological mechanisms work to legitimate inequality through shared reality, but its works different depending on caste. The shared reality where the different cultural elements and psychological mechanisms converge is based on the physical and social consequences perceived by both castes.

Keywords: Shared Reality, System Justification Theory, social inequality, stratification, East Sumba.