

Baliology: Towards the maintenance of Balinese sustainable development

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ABSTRACT

Baliology is study about Bali, the concept of which is actually about how the Balinese and the Balinists as the experts concerned about Balinese cultural development, regard the recent development of Bali. What kinds of efforts have been made in order to preserve and maintain that sustainable development? The idea to promote Baliology is due to the fast globalization and democratization processes that have developed since the 1980s. These have caused certain social, cultural, economic and political frictions and conflicts not only at the local level but also at the national level. The pertinent question is: how do the local government, entrepreneurs and the local communities anticipate those critical problems in accordance with a harmonious and peaceful life in Bali? This is not only for the local Balinese who are the majority of the population who are Hindus but also for the minority groups who are Muslim, Christian or Buddhist to mention some, that need to be paid attention to in the context of a multicultural society. The aim of this paper is to highlight the significant issues in accordance with those matters. Therefore, through it, some significant aspects will be analysed: Firstly: the social and cultural changes within Balinese communities; Secondly: to what extent have the social and cultural changes occurred in Bali and how do the Balinese anticipate critical problems? and Thirdly: how can the concept of Baliology be implemented not only as a discourse but also as certain regulations for a better life in Bali? by answering these questions, this paper is expected to reach a better understanding of how the local government, entrepreneurs and local communities can work together synergetically to anticipate and solve problems for a better and sustainable life in Bali.

Keywords: Balinese culture, globalization, local genius, Baliseering and sustainable development

INTRODUCTION

There are many studies about India (Indian Studies) and China (Chinese Studies) in Southeast Asia that have been carried out in accordance with the impacts of those countries on local cultures. Both of those countries have been considered to have different concepts if compared to the influences of the Western culture in the regions. The Indian and Chinese cultures are not to be regarded as colonizers in the regions having influenced the Southeast Asian countries in peaceful ways. Meanwhile, in Vietnam for instance, the Vietnamese have never felt that the Chinese had colonized them, though the Chinese influenced Vietnam from more than one thousand years ago (Ardhana, 2012). Due to this, there are some questions that need to be addressed in this paper, particularly in terms of how the Balinese have tried to understand their own culture, though both the Indian and the Chinese on the one side and the western powers, particularly the Dutch, on the other, have influenced Balinese culture.

Baliology is a study of Bali which covers some issues in relation to certain aspects in daily Balinese life. If we talk about Baliology, it is really concerned with significant aspects of Balinese culture and how scholars, not only Western but also Balinese, carry out their research not only in the past but also the present and future. There are some arguments that need to be addressed on how the Balinese culture has changed. This is not surprising, since the study of the Balinese culture is significant in order to be able to preserve and maintain sustainable development in Bali.

INNOVATION

1. The Balinese Culture and the Dutch Perspective

Due to the strong concurrences amongst Western imperialism caused by the industrial revolution, it seems that they tried to strengthen their rule in Southeast Asia (Falyey 2015). For instance, the development of Southeast Asian Studies, later known as regional studies, was not initially due to social and cultural aspects rather than the political aspect which has affected the emergence of certain scholars in political, archeological and anthropological discipline studies. The main goal was to inform certain parties on the developments in the Southeast Asian region regarding how to expand their powers in that region.

This was due to the need in certain crucial contents for an expansion of their powers in Southeast Asia regarding the First World War in 1914-1918. In other words, it can be said that these efforts were in accordance with the development of Southeast Asian Studies at Cornell University in the United States, which later spread to Europe to such as SOAS or School of Oriental and African Studies in London then later also to Germany, Australia and in Southeast Asia itself as we see at the National University of Singapore. However, not all of Southeast Asian states were colonized by European powers. Thailand, for instance, though it was not colonized by the Western powers in fact had its era of revolution during which the Thai people fought against traditional power. Called the Cultural Revolution, it had taken place in 1932.

In accordance with the Balinese Studies, called Baliology, it can be said that since the Dutch colonial era, the Dutch officials had been very worried about the dynamics of Balinese culture, due to the increasing influences of the missionaries in Bali. There were some Dutch scholars who were experts, such as Dr Goris who began to comment on how Balinese culture should be maintained. The Dutch government agreed to preserve Balinese culture through *Baliseering*. This means that the process of Balinization was an ongoing process without being disturbed by any other influences that could threaten the existence of the Balinese culture. A number of arguments related to this issue were concerned with how the Balinese culture could be defended against the negative impacts of cultural influences that could destroy it.

It is important to note that the missionary efforts to contact Bali had existed for a long time. A Portuguese source mentions that the first missionary effort had been made by the Portuguese in 1653. They arrived in the Gianyar and Klungkung Bays, both of which were the centre for the growing Balinese culture at that time. However, the Portuguese effort was unsuccessful due to the increasing development of the Balinese kingdom in Gelgel in Klungkung in the middle of the seventeenth Century. It can be said that the missionary activities were later continued to the southeastern parts of the Indonesian archipelago such as Flores and later, Timor. Both of these

islands lacked Hindu or Indian cultural influences, while the strong Indic lessons firmly developed in Bali (Gust 1994). However, this does not mean that there were no Indic influences in Flores or Timor but they were very limited.

Indonesian history in general and Balinese history in particular, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was already autonomous. This means that the Balinese kings agreed to have economic contact with the Dutch in several efforts, employing as an informal and indirect role as possible but a direct and formal role only if necessary. In other words, the Balinese kings were able to have contact with other kings.

The Dutch saw that the Balinese culture had some problems particularly in the context of slavery in the *perbudakan* and *mesatya* ceremonies (loyalty rituals). Slavery became important since Balinese men were renowned for their strength and dark skins as were the men from Madura, Menado and Timor Island. It is therefore not surprising that the Dutch made use of Balinese men as slaves in accordance with their need for colonial soldiers in the context of wars between one kingdom and another Balinese kingdom and also the Balinese kingdoms versus the Dutch colonial regime. In addition to this, the Dutch also saw the *mesatya* ceremony or loyalty rituals of the Balinese women to their husbands (the Balinese kings) as really against universal human rights. The widow of the king would jump into the fire as a sign of her loyalty to the dead man. Therefore, it is not surprisingly if the Dutch did not allow the holding of such ceremonies any longer. The last *mesatya* ceremony was conducted in the context of the king's cremation in the *Puri* of Denpasar in 1902. Thanks to the ceremony, it was easier for the Dutch soldiers to know where exactly the Puri Denpasar was located.

Following the intensive contact with the Dutch, particularly after the fall of the Balinese king in Buleleng in 1849, the Dutch made use of Singaraja as their centre from which to control Bali. In other words, Singaraja was installed as a main city of the Dutch Indies. There, the Dutch established an Institution for Balinese Culture, called the Gedong Kertya in probably 1919. There, there were many manuscripts, much archeological information, Balinese literature and books called *lontar* collected. The *lontar* are made of palm leaves and told about certain Balinese culture in accordance with the philosophical and historical Balinese notes.

From this perspective, it can be said that globalization had already taken place during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to continue until this time.

2. The Concept of Baliology in the Eyes of the Balinese

The concept of Baliology was introduced in accordance with the concept of Javanology that occurred during the New Order regime focused in Yogyakarta in Java. Yogyakarta, Bali and West Sumatra are well known as the best examples of how those regions are really concerned about their local cultures. There were some experts who were particularly interested in the development of Javanese and Balinese cultures where the concepts relate to how to maintain and preserve local culture for sustainable development.

Javanology, for instance, was strongly supported by the senior Javanese experts on tradition and culture such as Prof Dr Soedarsono, an expert on Javanese dance and gamelan music. From this perspective, it seems that both Balinese and Javanese cultures have similarities in

accordance with the influences of Hindu or Indic culture that occurred in the past of their histories. The concept of Javanology was really related to the Javanese Hindu influences particularly in Yogyakarta and Surakarta which both were centres for palaces which were basically Hindu. The Javanese ideology based on the Hindu or Indic lessons is considered to play a major role in the present day Javanese culture, following the strong rise of Islamic ideology. Not only the influences of Islamic culture but also those of modernization and globalization could strongly permeate the existence of the Javanese culture.

It is well known that the first tourist promotion was in the 1920s. 50 years later, there were some problems in accordance with the negative impacts of the tourist industry. This can be understood, since Bali has no natural resources but does have cultural resources. If the tourist industry brought negative impacts to the Balinese culture it accordingly would attack the Balinese culture (Ardhana 2011). Therefore, some efforts have been decided on in accordance with the classification of Balinese dances into the *Wali* (*sacred dances*), *Bebalihan* (*between the skala and niskala dances*) and *Balih-balihan* dances (*the profane dances*). The *Wali* dances are included among the Balinese dances in accordance with their relation to the sacred dances (Eiseman 2000). The *Bebalihan* are related to the middle context between God and Human beings and the *Balih-balihan* dances are mostly related to the entertainment of the common people. This kind of classification of the Balinese dances was done in the 1970s.

3. Baliology: A Cultural Ideology in Modern Bali

There are only two regions in Indonesia that have strongly paid attention to their local culture called *adat*, namely, Bali and West Sumatra. In Bali, the Balinese culture has most strongly related to two aspects, namely, the local culture, called *adat* (Arabic word) or customary law and the Hindu religion. Meanwhile, in West Sumatra there is a strong relationship between the local *adat* or the Malay culture and the Muslim religion. In past Balinese history, the Hindu religion had a close relation with political ideology as we can see in the traditional era of the Balinese kingdoms where abuse of power often took place. In the modern times, the Hindu religion in Bali has faced many crucial issues related to the political aspects regarding the existence of Hinduism that tended to be in a weak position versus other religions.

It can be seen in the political history of Indonesia which after the Revolution (1945-1950) showed certain trends where Hinduism no longer had its religious compartment. These political dynamics have developed since the 1960s when the Hindu religion in Bali could not be separated from contestation in accordance with the Communist movement in Indonesia in 1965. Due to uncertain political dynamics, the Balinese political elites faced many crucial issues related to political dynamics, such as religious issues, in which Bali strongly depended on the centre in Jakarta. This means that when Bali faced a political issue in the context of national political dynamics, it lost many political victims as happened in the Communist rebellion in 1965 due to the close relationship between *adat*, religion and politics.

During the Communist rebellion in Bali, at that time, more than a hundred thousand Balinese were killed without any clear judgement. That became the main reason why Balinese considered it taboo to be involved in political activities, not only at the local level but also at the

national level. The main question now is, how can Bali take part in modern Indonesian politics, particularly in the context of the maintenance of Balinese identity?

Since the Dutch colonial era, Indonesians have separated the issues of religion, in this case, the Muslim religion. As happened when the Aceh war raged from the end of the nineteenth century until the beginning of the twentieth century. C. Snouck Hurgronje, a Dutch political scholar, tried to differentiate between the Acehese culture in accordance with the social and cultural aspects and the political aspect. According to him, Islam's socio and cultural aspects should be preserved as long as they related to the idea of preserving the Acehese culture or Islamic ideology but on the other hand, Islam as a political ideology should be weakened in order to avoid any effort to develop it as a political ideology in Indonesia. The Dutch argued that this could significantly influence other regions in Indonesia. In other words, it can be said that the Dutch strongly controlled the ideological concepts during their colonial times in Indonesia.

After Indonesian independence, particularly after the revolution (1945-1950), when Indonesia was under the so called Old Regime under President Soekarno then under the New Order of President Suharto, it seems that the local cultures in the Indonesian archipelago had not been paid attention to by the central government in Jakarta for more than 32 years. The central government ruled Indonesia in authoritarian and centralistic ways. This affected both the development of local cultures and the dominant role of the national Indonesian culture (Ramstedt 2004).

In Central Java, particularly in Yogyakarta, there emerged the idea pioneered by Soedarsono of establishing Javanology. The goal was to build the concept of how to preserve Javanese culture from the impacts of modernization and globalization. That happened in the 1980s, when the Indonesian government focused on attracting mass international tourism. However, the impacts can be calculated in terms of how the tourists could destroy traditional Javanese culture. In addition to this, the impacts of tourism could also destroy Javanese ecology. There were some issues too that had developed in relation to archeological and historical matters. During the cultural activities, book exhibitions were conducted at the Sonobudoyo Museum which many Javanese and Balinese students attended during the 1980s.

The idea of Javanology, of which the main point was to maintain the local culture, spread to Bali later. It is significant to see what was happening with Baliology that was developing in Bali. One of Soedarsono's friends and colleagues in Java, the Balinese anthropologist, Prof Dr I Gusti Ngurah Bagus, had a strong concept of what he called Baliology. Since he was an anthropologist, he carried out much research on Balinese culture in accordance with its anthropological aspects. According to him, the Hindu religion in Bali consisted only of ritual and ceremonial activities but how Hindus should find solutions in accordance with the issues on poverty, underdevelopment, the younger generation and religious education (cf. Seely n.d) was not considered. Therefore, it is important that the Hindu religion should make a strong commitment on how to improve the economic competitiveness, aesthetics and philosophical issues of Balinese life. The influences of civilisation that consist of Hindu and Buddhist values seems to encapsulate the ideas of harmonious and peaceful lives and tolerance as we can see in Indic lessons, for instance, *tat twam asi*, *ahimsa*, *swadesi*, *ekam eva adityam Brahman* and from China and Vietnam such as *yin and yang* in which these lessons exist and should not to be considered a threat.

In addition to this, the *lontar* writers (*lontar* means palm tree) could not pinpoint the original accounts from the Balinese ones as some parts are mixed with the myths. They should also be careful in writing evidence about the Balinese palace daily life, since they could be punished by Balinese kings. However, the *lontars* consist of many social and religious values that have been used as a role model for being a good Balinese.

Nowadays in Indonesia, due to the strong process of modernization and globalization, it seems that many local people do not appreciate their local culture in terms of local language, local cuisine, local building architecture, local songs and the like. Meanwhile, the spread of modernity and globalization based on Western values, strongly affected the local culture. Many Balinese traditional irrigation systems have been destroyed due to the fast development of the tourist industry (Staab 1997). They could not exist any longer due to the expansion of the Western economic aspects. As a result, most Balinese leave their lands in the agricultural sectors and later as job seekers, move to the cities to work in the tourist industry. Therefore, it is not surprising that they sell their lands to other people, particularly those mostly from outside Bali, in order to build hotels and other tourist facilities. There has emerged some worry in accordance with the weakness of the local culture in facing the globalization process.

Therefore, it is expected that like the idea of Javanology to develop the local culture, the Baliology program will also relate its cultural programs to the preservation of the Balinese language for instance. It is important to note, that I Gusti Ngurah Bagus has played a dominant role in activating Baliology, especially during his leadership as the Director of the Balinese Language Center. Therefore, Baliology developed greatly in the context of Balinese anthropology and language.

Certain networkings have been done in relation to inviting some scholars expert in the Balinese culture, like: Mark Hobart, Adrian Vickers, Helen Creese, Lyn Parker and Linda Connor who held many international seminars on the Balinese cultures. Not only the foreign experts were invited to speak out but some younger Balinese experts were also invited to attend the international conferences, namely, I Wayan Ardika, I Ketut Ardhana, I Nyoman Darmaputra and I Putu Gede Suwita at Macquarie and Sydney Universities in the 1990s. All of these Balinese younger people were expected to be scholars in various disciplines in social and cultural sciences and humanities studies.

Most of these experts were really concerned with the idea of Baliology pioneered by I Gusti Ngurah Bagus. This can be understood since in the 1980s and 1990s on the one hand, there emerged some issues on how the Balinese cultures had to be developed and on the other, there were social, cultural, economic and political conflicts at the Bali Nirwana Resort (BNR), belonging to Suharto cronies. In addition to this, there were problems related to the building of the sea toll roads, *Garuda Wisnu Kencana* and some negative impacts of the coming of the Chinese travel agencies who brought many Chinese guides from China. At that time, however, we did not realise, for instance, the impact of the coming of the Chinese tour guides.

The concept of Baliology is considered to have really basic principles of the Balinese cultures or *Ajeg Bali*. The phrase *Ajeg Bali* means to stand tall, strong, unshakeable, remain on principle or rigid and have no tolerance. The *Ajeg Bali* should be interpreted as having no tolerance in matters relating to customary rules, *awig-awig*, *bhisama*, or Balinese Hindu regulations,

Balinese ethics and the teachings of Hinduism in daily life. These concepts should be *ajeg*, meaning no tolerance of any other.

At present the development in Bali has succeeded in deceiving the spirit of *Ajeg Bali* that is often expressed arrogantly and loudly in every meeting and campaign. The *Ajeg Bali* which has no tolerance is very tolerant of matters relating to tourism development and investors with a grand masterplan, coupled with the phrase *Ajeg Bali*. This causes the Balinese to be complacent and sometimes is believed to make the Balinese themselves forget themselves. The teachings of the *Tri Hita Karana* or indigenous people who have very clear rules to maintain the condition of Bali, are increasingly “tolerant” of tourism development plans. For instance, the height of buildings will increase the greenhouse effect and irradiation or reduction of green spaces reduced because it is blocked by building. The height of buildings causes the air not to circulate freely. <https://nakbalibelog.wordpress.com/tag/ajeg-bali-apa-itu/>.

It is expected that through the idea of Baliology, the Balinese will be capable of preserving and maintaining Balinese culture in the context of the Indonesian culture which is of a multicultural society, as well as rooted in the region of Southeast Asia. It is expected also, that the Balinese culture will contribute not only at the local level but also at the macro level, for instance, through the, in this case, concept of *Tri Hita Karana*, that is the balance between man and God, man and man and man and nature or ecological aspects to the universal or International culture in the context of Balinese sustainable development (Ardhana 2016).

CONCLUSION

To sum up, it can be said that though the Hindu religion came from India and is not the aboriginal religion of Bali, it was initially in Bali strongly related to the political aspects in the context of the traditional Balinese kingdoms. Like other religions from outside Bali, the Hindu religion has been acknowledged as a formal religion amongst the other five formal religions: Islam, Christianity, Catholicism, Buddhism and Confucianism.

However, in the modern time, the Balinese do not develop Hinduism in the context of the political aspect, due to the Communist rebellion that broke out in 1965, when more than a hundred thousand Balinese were killed. This could happen since there was a strong relation among *adat* or the local customary law, religion and politics. Later, Balinese considered it taboo to develop the Hindu ideology regarding political activities. It can be said that until the present time, the Balinese who are mostly Hindu, do not wish to have a political party based on the Hindu religion.

Therefore, in order to be able to maintain the existence of Balinese identity, they developed the idea, not through a political party but through the concept of Baliology to cover the socio and cultural aspects of the Balinese culture. The concept of Baliology has been developed since the 1980s and is expected to provide a better understanding of how to maintain Balinese culture not only at the present time but also in the future in the context of an Indonesian multicultural society.

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