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Yüzyılı ve Geleceği
ULUSLARARASI
GENÇLİK
SEMOZYUMU

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İNTERNET, SOSYAL MEDYA VE DİJİTAL ORTAMIN GENÇLERE SUNDUĞU SINIRSIZ İMKÂNALAR

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Doğu Asya'nın diğer ülkelerinde olduğu gibi Bali'de de din ve siyasetin hala çok önemli bir rolü vardır. Geleneksel belirli sosyal, kültürel ve siyasal alanlarda geleneksel olandan modern olana doğru değişimler olmasına rağmen, Hindu dini ve Balili siyaset arasındaki ilişki hala Balililerin gündelik yaşamını çok önemli rol oynamaktadır.

Bu bağlamda, bu çalışma Hinduizm ile Balili siyaset arasındaki bazı ilişkilere odaklanacaktır. İlk olarak belirli vakalarda Balili toplumunu etkileyen Balili Hinduizm ve siyasetin nasıl bir etkisi olduğu tartışılmaktadır.

İkinci soru olarak, hükümet, iş adamları ve toplumun küreselleşen Bali dünyasında herhangi bir meslekteki rollerini nasıl oynadıklarıdır.

Üçüncü soru olarak ise, Balili gençlerin çok kültürlü toplumda uyum sorununa nasıl cevap verdikleridir. Bu çalışma, Balili toplumunun gündelik yaşamında ayrışmaya neden olacak problemlerden kaçınma için din ve siyasetin nasıl bir süreci izlemesi gerektiğini daha iyi anlamayı hedeflemektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Din, Siyaset, Sosyal Medya, Dijital Dönüşüm ve Balili Toplumu



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T.C. SULTANGAZI BELEDİYESİ
TÜRKİYE'NİN YÜZYILI VE GELECEĞİ
ULUSLARARASI GENÇLİK SEMPOZYUMU

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RELIGION AND POLITICS IN THE CONTEXT OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION IN BALI-INDONESIA¹

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ABSTRACT

As other parts of Southeast Asian countries, in Bali, religion and politics still play significant roles. Though there are certain social, cultural, and political changes from traditional to modern or post-modern times, but, in fact, the relationship between the Hindu religion and Balinese politics is still considered to play a crucial role in the daily life of the Balinese. In relation to this, this paper will examine some issues related to the relationship between Hinduism and Balinese politics. First, the discussion will be on the important aspects of the Balinese Hinduism in which religion and politics in certain cases have effected the Balinese communities? Second question is how do the government, entrepreneurs, and communities play their roles in anticipating any issues in the Bali globalized world? Third question is what kinds of responses do the young Balinese people attempt to find harmonious ways in a multicultural society? This paper is expected to provide a better understanding on how the process of the maintainance of religion and politics that should be done in order to avoid any problems like disintegration in the daily life of Balinese community.

Keywords: religion, politics, social media, digital transformation and Balinese communities

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I. Introduction

There are not many studies related to the development of the post-modern times in accordance with the Balinese societies. This can be understood since between religion and politics has its strong relationship particularly in the context of social media and digital transformation. This phenomenon is quiet important since, the Balinese youths who are born in the 1980s and 1990s, called as the Millenial Generation are considered significant role in the context of the Balinese development not only in the present time, but also in the near future. There is a significant question that need to be addressed in this paper namely why this issue becomes a crucial issue, particularly for the Balinese youth and for the Indonesian youth in general? It can be understood since these Millenial Generation is considered to be in a cross road of the Balinese culture, in which most of them do not practice their traditional cultural tradition, but paying more attention to the modern and even post-modern culture. This aspect cannot be separated from the process of globalization that happening in the world.

As other parts of the Southeast Asian countries, Bali without any exception has faced certain issues in the context of the development of tourist industry. Certain issues in the Balinese communities since Bali has been determined as the target of the mass tourism Picard, 2006, see also: Covarubias, 2013), in which of course, this policy affects the life of the Balinese. As other of the Indonesian communities as well, the Balinese have faced many impacts of the globalization both the negative and the positive impacts. These negative impacts we can see on how the Balinese cannot any longer to preserve their traditional culture in relation to social media and digital transformation. However, they begin to start to make use the social media and digital transformation in certain aspects of their communication amongst their local community members. However, this has affected on the one hand some impacts on how they have a social cohesion and social harmony since they used this kind of social media and digital transformation and on the other hand, certain issues in relation to the un-harmonious relationship amongst them also happened (cf. Adhika, 2015). These issues are not only perceived by the older generation, but also for the young generation. They commonly realized that on the one hand they perceive that without using social media and digital transformation they will be backward in compared to other communities in Indonesia. Nevertheless, they also perceive that the impacts of the social media and digital transformation will make use not only for their collective communities, but also for

the personal or individual life in which by using this communication way, they will be able to make the distance of the world closer and bringing any issues to their homes. Therefore, it can be said that there are certain changes in the context of the Balinese youth life (Bagus, 1975).

Based on the above phenomenon, this paper will address some questions. Firstly, how the Balinese Hinduism in the context of religion and politics in certain cases have effected the Balinese communities? Second question is, how do the government, entrepreneurs, and communities play their roles in anticipating any issues in the Bali globalized world? Third question is what kinds of responses do the young Balinese people attempt to find harmonious ways in a multicultural society? Through this paper is expected to have a better understanding on how the process of the maintainance of religion and politics that should be provided in a better way, in order to avoid any problems like disintegration in the daily life of Balinese community.

II. Tangible and Intangible Culture: *Kentongan* as Balinese Alarm

Religion and politics in the Balinese society has strong relationship, that can be traced back from the Indian or Indic epics namely *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, that has been considered since the spread of Indianisation or Hinduism in the early of the first centuries. Religion and *adat* or customary laws are difficult to be separated between one to each other. The Hindu religion itself in this context is often related to the issue of local customary laws, called the *adat*. Every *adat* has its own meaning and function, called Desa (place) Kala (time), and Patra (situation or condition). The word of *adat* itself comes from the Arabic word meaning the customary law. In this context, it means what it was and what it is, in which the *adat* is still commonly practiced by the member of the Balinese communities. In every village in Bali has its boundaries which has integrated all of the members in to the concept of *Kahyangan Tiga* (three important concept of a village that has been tied by strongly of the Kahyangan Tiga. The *Kahyangan Tiga* consists of three elements namely the temple of Bale Agung or often called as the Pura Desa (for Brahma), the temple of Puseh for the God Wisnu and the temple of Dalem, that is the temple for the God Shiwa. These are the three significant temples in the context of religious rituals that have been practiced in the Balinese communities.

In addition to this, there is also the concept of *banjar* comes from the word *bebanjaran* or in one line in the Balinese communities. In each *banjar* consists of approximately 250 members such as male and female and they elect their leaders

in a democratic way. The members of the *banjar* have appreciated the social harmony which cannot be separated one to each other, called and social cohesion related to the concept of happiness (*suka*) and sadness (*duka*) or *rwabhineda* (from Sanskrit or Indic word) in the Balinese word means *suka tan pawali duka*, in which positive and negative are connected one to each other that already rooted in a long time of the Balinese history. In other words, those of local *adat* laws have been rooted in the prehistoric, classical and the modern Balinese development. Those *adat* tradition strongly mixed between animism and dynamism, and later by the strongly religious influences. In this context, the Balinese culture based dominantly on those elements, particularly by the Hindu religion. Therefore, it is important to note that Bali is the one only Hindu mosaic in Southeast Asia. This Hindu Balinese communities developed during the 8th and 9th century in Central Java, later moved to 14th century, called the Majapahit dynasty that had played a major role in the context of Nusantara ideology between the islands, that strongly tied one region to other regions and later develop become the Indonesian Archipelago.

There were certain *adat* laws that had been abolished by the colonial regimes in the past of the Balinese history. In some extents, due to the colonial Dutch regime in their colonies, the Balinese for instance, had already changed their *adat* customary laws for instance the *satya* or *mesatya* ceremony that had been controversial against the human rights. The *satya* ceremony or jumping in the fire due to the solidarity with one person, whether he was a king or his husband and due to the certain reason the female would jump to the fire, indicating that she was still love and loyal to his king or his husband. This *satya* ceremony had been conducted by the traditional Balinese kings or rulers in the pre-twentieth century. Not only the *satya* ceremony, but also slave trade had been also not allowed by the Dutch. The Dutch saw this ritual as an opposition against the human right and why finally the Dutch had abolished this *satya* ceremony for ever. From this picture, it can be said that the Dutch together with the Balinese had been successfully to abolish certain customary law that had been considered against the human rights.

It is important to note that at that time there were not many communication and technology, in which the relationship amongst the people still closer in terms of visual terminology. All of the communication they were using in terms of traditional tools like *kentongan* (traditional bells that made from *bamboos*) (Mc.Phee, 1966) as an instance in the Banjar Belaluan Sadmertha in Denpasar, Bali, used to be used in reminding the people for instance in the case of social works with six signs, in emergency situation signs without stopping, amongst the local villagers (Ardhana et al., 2017 cf. Yudha, 2012). However, due to the introduction of the modern technology by using hand-phone in this globalized

world, it has affected the style and the ways of thinking of the Balinese in particular, and the Indonesian people, in general (Yudarta, 2014).

III. European Dreams, the Balinese Youth in the Period of Transformation

The Dutch occupation of the Island of Bali was in short time, particularly after the attack of the entire island of Bali by the colonial Dutch in 1906. After the success of the Dutch expansion in the Island of Bali, the Dutch began to make use the function and role of the traditional bureaucratic system (Vickers, 2012). It meant that the Dutch still made use the power and authority of the local rulers by completing with the new Dutch modern bureaucracy in the entire island of the Indonesian archipelago. It meant that the colonial Dutch still implemented the local rulers by sending them to the colonial schools that had been established from the beginning until at the end of the nineteenth century. The Balinese people did not oppose or against the modern education that had been introduced by the colonial Dutch, through colonial policy, called the ethical policy, that had not been had by other European colonial powers. From this picture, it is clear that the Balinese were accommodative with the new policies, particularly dominantly implemented by the colonial bureaucracy in the colonial regions, not only in Bali, but also in other islands in the Indonesian archipelago. By the successful policies, it can be said that the Balinese were easier to be brought in the colonial Dutch bureaucracy, in which some of the children of the former noblemen were brought into the Dutch colonial schools. In other words, not only the children of the Balinese noblemen from higher ranks preferred to imitate the style of the colonial education system, but also later for the Balinese common people.

It can be understood to what extent the influences of the foreign culture, in the earlier process form the Indian or Indic influences, and later by the European or Dutch culture that had accordingly affected the Balinese culture. Though the Dutch tried to influence the local Balinese culture, but in fact, the Dutch did not allow the foreign culture through *zending* and mission activities to strongly affect the Balinese culture. Therefore, it means that the Dutch strongly controlled any foreign activities that had been done in Bali. In other words, it means that on the one hand, the Dutch tried to install the Balinese in the colonial Dutch bureaucracy, who had foreign or European education system, and on the other hand, the Dutch tried to protect the indigenous Balinese from any foreign influences like Islamization and Christianization. It means that the Dutch preferred that Bali would be in terms of “archaic” and traditional atmosphere. In other words, it means that the colonial Dutch wished that the Balinese preserved their traditional culture. In addition to this, the Dutch even established a new building in Gedong Kirtya in Singaraja in

1919—in which Singaraja was a capital of Bali, located in the North part of Bali at that time. This Gedong Kirtya office was aimed to collect many references in accordance with the archeological, historical and anthropological texts. Most of these material were made from palm leaves or *lontar*. The *lontar* consisted of certain religious activities, or certain folklore, that could be important at that time. Therefore, it is not surprising, if the Balinese still made use *lontar* as their local wisdom in anticipating the global influences that emerged in the twenties.

It was clear, when the colonial Dutch policy introduced initially the tourism industry by establishing the first hotel, called the Bali Hotel, located in Denpasar, South Bali in the 1920s. It was conducted particularly after Dutch introduction their Ethical Policy in nineteenth years later (1901) in the Netherlands Indies. The introduction of tourism industry in the Balinese society had actually affected the style of life of the Balinese in particular and other ethnic-groups, like the Javanese in Java, the Menadonese in North Celebes, in general. In the Dutch colonial era, the Balinese did not implement the mass tourism policy, however, but the significant policy was, how to get the quality of the foreign tourists who visited Bali. Therefore, it is not surprising, if there emerged many local artist, like the Balinese artists, craft-mans, dancers, painters with had outstanding quality in the jobs.

In addition to this, most of the Balinese painters, for instance, were strongly influenced by the comings of the western or European painters who were good at coloring in their paintings. The local or Balinese painters got the benefit from these process. Most of them had already learnt how to use colorful materials. It meant that there were many interesting paintings that had been done by the Balinese painters in compared to the previous period, that was before the coming of the European artists. It means that the use of visual medias was more important by having face to face approaches between the Balinese and the Balinese and between the Balinese and the European artists as well. The European who visited Bali saw the Balinese used the traditional alarm in using communicative devices amongst them, particularly in the social works.

It seems that there was a close relationship both between one member and another member of the *banjar* as the traditional Balinese organizational system in the village levels, and also in the context or *subak* or traditional Balinese irrigation system. Togetherness became more important in every family member and most of the Balinese worked in the agricultural sectors, producing rice that became one of the basic need in the context of the Balinese foods. The European painters like Smith, and others saw this socio cultural atmosphere by producing many paintings products in the context of the Balinese ecology and its beautiful

environment. Those products were brought to the Balinese palace in Ubud Gianyar for instance, and later will be sold to the other European tourists who visited Bali. From this picture, it seems that there was a mutual or reciprocal relationship between the Balinese painters who most of them were a farmer and their noblemen who controlled the religious and the Balinese ritual activities in the village levels. However, this situation has later changed in which in the modern Indonesia, the government introduced the mass tourism to the Balinese, particularly in the 1980s.

IV. Religion and Politics in the Context of Social Media and Digital Transformation in Bali

The tourism industry had been introduced by the Dutch in their colonial era in the Indonesian Archipelago for such a long time in the 1920s. After the Indonesian independence in 1945, the Indonesian government continued the policy of the tourism industry sector both in the Old Order, called Orde Lama since 1945 under the first President Soekarno, and for the New Order called Orde Baru started in the 1966 under the President Soeharto. In the period of Soekarno for instance, the style of life of the Balinese seemed conveniently. There was no king or raja any longer. The noblemen from Gianyar, even married with the European girl and introduced its palace to the European tourists to stay in the palace in Ubud Gianyar. It means that the Balinese traditional elites involved strongly in the tourist sectors. However, the Balinese artists seemed no longer brought their paintings to the palace. But, they sold their arts products by establishing certain place or art shops in Denpasar located very closely with the first hotel in Denpasar, the Bali Hotel. It means that many artists, who most of them were farmers had to divide their time to work for religious and ritual activities, in the rice fields, in the *banjar*, for instance in Ubud and its surrounding areas of Gianyar District. Then later, they started to open their shops in Denpasar as well. This means also that the Balinese has changed their daily life by involving themselves in the new tourist industry.

After the fall of Old Order in 1966, the New Order regime taken over the power and later introduced the new concept of mass tourism in Bali particularly in the 1980s. The government even opened many tourist destinations in Gianyar in particular and in other Bali districts in general. In addition to this, the government established the local art market in Sukawati, called the Pasar Sukawati in 1980s. It is not surprising, if in the streets between Denpasar and Gianyar were opened many art shops, namely jewelry art shops, paintings art shops, Balinese traditional cloth art shop and the like. This government policy has changed the life style of the

Balinese, working in the tourist industry sectors. Most of the young generation do not like working in the agricultural sectors any longer.

In the succeeding period, the tourist industry has become important sector in the Balinese society. Bali has not enough the natural resources. It means that the Balinese really depends on the tourist industry sector and accordingly the Balinese culture becomes significant aspect that need to be paid more attention for the sustainable Bali development program. However, the impacts of the tourist industry cannot be avoided. The Balinese got both the positive and negative impacts of this process. Due to the mass tourism development in Bali, it has seemingly affected the quality development of the Balinese not only in the cities, but also in the villages levels.

In certain families in the Balinese communities in particular, and in other regions Indonesia in which the tourist industry sectors have been introduced already affected their societies in terms of social, cultural and economic aspects. The Balinese elites used this situation to control many religious sites and given them many facilities in order to get votes in certain Bali local elections. By using sms, whatsapp and other facilities the elites strongly controlled their members. In the previous period in which the certain *banjars* used the *kentongan* as the traditional alarm, later they still used this *kentongan*, but in reality most of them used the modern technology like hand phones (sms, whatsapp, and the like). Due to the use of the new modern technological devices has accordingly caused many social changes in the daily life of the Balinese communities from elites to the common people.

One of the negative impact of this impacts has caused the lack of personal communication amongst the family members. In other words, it can be said that due to the introduction of new technology communications, in which internet or other social media and digital transformation have played a major role in changing the Balinese communities in particular, and the Indonesian society in general. There are certain notes in here namely before the introduction of the social media and the like, the Balinese families had many opportunities to talk and discuss about their everyday life in the *banjar* or family levels. However, due to technology development they have no time any longer to visit their *banjar* even no time to work in their *subaks*. Instead of that, the Balinese used the newcomers from other regions such as from Southeast island or Nusa Tenggara to ask and pay them to work in the rice-fields and the like. It is even the Balinese have to pay fines since they cannot complete their social works in the *banjars*. From this picture, there is a problem in accordance with the social cohesion or social harmony amongst the *banjar* members.

Until at the present time, the Balinese used to practice their *adat* identities in accordance with the Hindu religious and rituals. It seems that on the one side, they practice their *adat* in terms of flexibility, but on the other side there are certain crucial issues related to how they should preserve and maintain their *adat* or customary laws sustainable ways, in which the Balinese has to work hard in anticipating certain negative impacts due to the social media that they have already knew in communication amongst the *banjar* or *subak* members. In the past, it can be said that the *banjar* has positive function for both happy and sad situation, called in the Balinese term as *Suka* and *Duka* or the *Banjar Suka Duka*. One the one hand, for *Suka* or the happy feeling. there is no problem in which they can use their *banjar* for happy and religious and ritual activities like celebrations, anniversary, arts festivals and the like. However, on the other hand, for *Duka* feeling, there are many crucial and complex issues related to the cremation for instance. A member of *banjar* is not allowed to have a cremation in his village, since he dead people is accused to oppose against the local or *adat* regulation. Therefore, he and his families are considered to be separated by other his *banjar* members, called *kasepekang*. This is not surprising, if there are certain conflict amongst the members of a *banjar* in the village. He cannot come home due to this conflict situation. Due to this conflict situation, the modern Balinese began to rethink what kind of policies should be done in order to solve the problems of *kasepekang*.

Most of the Balinese do not stay in one place in one *banjar*. They live in an outside of the *banjar*, outside of the village and even outside of the provinces. It is even, they already married with foreign partners and live in abroad. They need to solve their problem when they have accident or *duka* situation, in which most of them staying outside Bali want to see the cremation ceremonies and the like. Some problems on this issue is the most expensive of the cremation cost that have been arranged by the certain Balinese noblemen in the *gerias*, which are supposed to have a significant authority in the cremation and ritual in Bali. The *geria* is significant place for a priest who has an authority in the religious and ritual ceremonies in the Balinese society.

Most of the offerings that are need in the cremation places, coming from the *gerias*. The offerings are considered very expensive, though there are three standards for this namely *utama* or high, *madya* or medium and *nista* or below. Though these classifications, but some of the Balinese perceive these are also as a burden, since they are in a shame due to the standard or simple religious and ritual ceremonies. Therefore, they prefer to hold the ceremony not in the common cemetery that are belonged to the *banjar adat* or local *banjar*. In addition to this, such a problem has been perceived too hard not only by the Balinese, but also for

non-Balinese. The non-Balinese like the Javanese and other newcomers also perceive how difficult are to have a religious and ritual ceremonies in Bali. For the young generation, particularly for the Millenial generations, who is born in the 1980s and 1990s perceive themselves as the member of certain society that need to have their-own regulation. It is important to note, that most of them want to have a special cremation place that can integrate between the religious aspects and the social media and digital transformation.

In this case, the using of social media and digital transformation has become important not only for the Balinese, but also for other foreign people who have family linkage with the Balinese. Therefore, it can be said that not only the Balinese have such a conflict, but also for other ethnic groups coming from other regions of Indonesia and also for the foreigners staying in a long time in Bali. Most of them hope, there would be a special place for religious and ritual activities, in which various ethnic-groups may come to have a creation ceremony and ritual in the same place. It is important to have certain religious and ritual activities that are completed by technology and communication devices in terms of social media and digital transformation, so that the family members staying in Indonesia and in abroad can witness the religious and rituals activities as well. This means that the Balinese need to have better technology and communication devices and the like in maintaining and preserving their cultural tradition in a globalized world in order to have a better understanding for the sustainable community development not only in Bali in particular, but also in Indonesia in general.

V. Conclusion

It can be concluded that the Balinese are in now in a crossing road. The maintenance and preservation of the Balinese culture that rooted in a long time of its prehistoric, classical, and modern times, had actually been done not only by the recent ruling class, but since in the traditional, colonial times, particularly in the Dutch colonial era. However, the recent government both local and national government should work sinergically. The Balinese really hope that the government should present in their social, cultural, economic and political issues due to the recent global development and tourism industry (Nordholt, Klinken, 2014). There are some impacts on this development, positively and negatively. However, due to the negative impacts caused many difficulties for the Balinese in anticipating the social, cultural, economic and political conflict both in local and national level (Robinson, 2006, see also: Ardhana, 1993). Therefore, in order to have a better life in the context of a multicultural society, the Balinese need to have

a share place on how the religious and ritual activities can be done together and smoothly, by adopting and adapting new technology like social media and digital transformation, that would be easier for not only the Balinese, but also other ethnic groups and various religions and local beliefs could be maintained in peaceful and harmonious ways.

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Bu bağlamda, bu çalışma Hinduizm ile Balili siyaset arasındaki bazı ilişkilere odaklanacaktır. İlk olarak belirli vakalarda Balili toplumunu etkileyen Balili Hinduizm ve siyasetin nasıl bir etkisi olduğu tartışılmaktadır.

İkinci soru olarak, hükümet, iş adamları ve toplumun küreselleşen Bali dünyasında herhangi bir meslekteki rollerini nasıl oynadıklarıdır.

Üçüncü soru olarak ise, Balili gençlerin çok kültürlü toplumda uyum sorununa nasıl cevap verdikleridir. Bu çalışma, Balili toplumunun gündelik yaşamında ayrışmaya neden olacak problemlerden kaçınma için din ve siyasetin nasıl bir süreci izlemesi gerektiğini daha iyi anlamayı hedeflemektedir.

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