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BALIOLOGY: ITS ROOTS AND MEANING IN THE MODERN INDONESIA¹

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Abstract

Bali has been well known not only because of its beautiful nature in the tropical region, but also due to its richness at cultural tradition. This island has its excellence, due to its characteristic as the only one of Hindu mosaic in Southeast Asia. Bali has been considered a significant interest from the prehistoric, classical and modern and even postmodern times. It is not surprising, if many interests have paid strong attention to this island, due to its social and cultural capitals that have been significant not only in local, national and even international levels. In the pre traditional times, Bali had been attacked by its neighbouring power. In the Dutch colonial times, the island had been also attacked by the Dutch, though it was later protected under the name of Baliseering, the foreign or European scholars named Bali as the Island of Paradise, the island of thousand temples, and it is only recently, Bali has been acknowledged as island that has certain cities of the World Heritage City. Due to this picture, there are some questions that need to be addressed in this paper. Firstly, what is really going on in this island? Secondly, why it seems that Bali need to be protected not only by the domestic interests, but also by the international interests? And thirdly the Balinese interpret this phenomenon in accordance with what they try to conceptualize under the name of Baliology that its roots and meaning already rooted in the long process of the Balinese past? These are pertinent question that need to be addressed in this paper in order to have a better understanding on how Bali Island has been tried to preserve and maintain its cultural tradition not in short term, but also in the long term.

Keywords: Baliology, social and cultural capitals, domestic and international interests, and modern Indonesia

I. Introduction

During the New Order, Indonesia was managed centralistic and authoritarian by the Indonesian regime. The lack of management in the Old Order began to be revised dealing with some controversies in accordance with the foreign policies such as “*Ganyang Malaysia*”. With this policy it was argued that Indonesia would not cooperate with other neighbouring states like Southeast Asian countries. We

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did not understand one to each other. Since the high level of the idea of nationalism or chauvinism it was not surprising if Indonesia was well known as “Hitler from Asia (*Hitler von Azie*)”. This discourse would influence the impression of Indonesia as new and strong state in Southeast Asia.

In the new period, called “The New Order” in 1966—1998, the new paradigm was introduced based on the national development. Indonesia was ruled by this regime under the leadership of Soeharto for more 32 years. Indonesia became more known in overseas and some political critics could not be avoided. This was caused by the military and political annexation to East Timor and certain significant political aspects were concentrated in accordance with those issues.

It can be said that the impression on Indonesia at that time was in the critical and crucial situation, not only due the domestic political situation, but also by the international political development. The political aspects, focused in the central government became major issues related with the economic growth policy and national stability. Meanwhile, the social and cultural aspects in the local levels became less appreciated by the central government.

Therefore, there were some critics against the government policy in accordance with certain issues related to democracy, transparency, clean government, and caused the downfall of the New Order regime in 1998. This caused the emergence of a new wind on how to manage the state and the community in accordance with those aspects. In relation to this idea, it can be understood that academicians, intellectuals, wished to have a new perception on local people, local culture, community based development, local autonomy. This became a background on how the idea to have a Baliology to become important in the context of strengthening the local culture. There are some significant questions that need to be addressed in this paper. Firstly, how can we understand the local politic in the context of the idea of Baliology? Secondly, what kinds factors have influenced the idea of Baliology? Thirdly, in what ways the Balinese have implemented the idea of Baliology? And Fourth, how should the Balinese develop the idea of Baliology in the present day Bali and in the global world?

Through these questions, it is expected to have more understand on the concept of Baliology and its implementation with the local government, local entrepreneurs and local people in Bali.

II. The Concept of Baliology

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, West Sumatra are well known as the best examples on how these regions really concerned about the local culture. There were some experts who really concerned about the development of Javanese and Balinese culture. It can be understood both of those concepts related to how to maintain and preserve the local culture for the sustainable development.

Javanology for instance was strongly supported by the senior Javanese experts on tradition and culture such as Prof. Dr. Soedarsono who was an expert on Javanese dances and Javanese gamelan musics. From this perspective, it seems that both of those cultures have the similarities in accordance with the influences of Hindu or Indic culture that occurred in the past time of their histories. The concept of Javanology was really related to the Javanese Hindu influences particularly in Yogyakarta and Surakarta. This Javanese ideology based on the Hindu or Indic lessons has been considered to play a major role in the present day Javanese culture, since on the one hand the strong Islamic ideology. Not only the influences of Islamic culture, but also the influences of modernization and globalization could be influenced strongly the existence of the Javanese culture. This can be understood since both of these places were the centers of the Javanese palaces who were Hindu.

It is well known that the first tourist promotion had been promoted in the 1920s. 50 years later, there were some problems in accordance with the negative impacts of tourist industry. It can be understood, since it is considered that Bali has no natural resources, but cultural resources. If the tourist industry would affect the negative impacts to the Balinese culture, accordingly would attack the Balinese culture. Therefore, some efforts have been decided in accordance with the classification of Balinese dances into the *Wali*, *Bebalihan*, *Balih-balihan* dances. The *Wali* dances are included the Balinese dances in accordance with its relation to the sacred dances. The *Bebalihan* are related to the in middle context between God and Human being, and the *Balih-balihan* dances mostly related to the entertaining for the common people. These kinds of classification to the Balinese dances was done in the 1970s.

III. Baliology: A Cultural Movement in the Modern Bali

As already happened with the Javanology, it is significant to see on what happening with the Baliology that developing at the same time in Bali. Some Soedarsono colleagues in Java like Prof. Dr. I Gusti Ngurah Bagus had strong concept on what he mentioned about the Baliology. Since he was an anthropologist, he carried out many researches on Balinese culture in accordance with the anthropological aspects. The Baliology program also related with the preservation of the Balinese language. Since has also a Balinese linguist. It is important to note, that during his leadership as the Director of the Balinese Language Center. Therefore, the Baliology was much developed in the context of the Balinese anthropology and Balinese language. There were also some issues that had been developed also in relation the archeological and historical perspectives. During the cultural activities and book review, book exhibitions that had been conducted at the Sonobudoyo Museum, many Javanese and Balinese students attended those cultural activities during 1980s.

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

Most of these experts were really concern the idea of Baliology that had been pioneered by I Gusti Ngurah Bagus. It 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 hand, there were some issues on social, cultural, economic and political conflicts on the Bali Nirwana Resort (BNR), belonged to the Soeharto cronies. In addition to this, it was also 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, we did not know, for instance, the impacts 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. Ajeg Bali means to stand all, strong, unshakeable,

remain in principle, or rigid and has no tolerance. Ajeg Bali should be interpreted as having no tolerance. Tolerance in matters relating to customary rules, awig-awig, bhisama, Balinese ethics, teaching of Hinduism in daily life. These concepts should have been Ajeg and there was no tolerance.

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

IV. Baliology, Cultural Heritage and the Sustainable Balinese Development

However, after more than 30 years we can witness on how the Chinese brought also their Chinese tour guides from China. The Chinese tour guides have mistaken in translating and giving information about certain aspects of the Balinese culture to the Chinese tourists. We should learn from these experiences during the uncertain situation in developing the Balinese tourist industry and its relationship with the concept of the Baliology.

V. Conclusion

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