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# UNDERSTANDING THE BALINESE MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY IN A GLOBALIZED WORLD<sup>1</sup>

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## *Abstract*

*The creation of the multicultural Balinese society is rooted in the long process of its history, traceable through prehistoric, classical, modern and postmodern eras. In the light of this, there are some questions that need to be addressed: Firstly: how can we understand the creation of the Balinese multicultural society? Secondly: through which process can the Balinese society be considered a multicultural society? And, Thirdly: what are the challenges and opportunities that need to be faced regarding Bali as a multicultural society? These pertinent questions will be discussed in this paper and by analyzing the aspects concerned it is expected to have a better understanding of the creation of the Balinese multicultural society that needs to be developed in order to make a contribution not only to the Balinese themselves but also to global societies.*

***Keywords: multiculturalism, Hindusatian, Balinese society, globalization***

## **I. Introduction**

In comparison with other regions in Indonesia like Sumatra, Java and Papua, Bali has very limited natural resources in terms of mining or plantations. Thus, it is not surprising that Bali is dominantly dependent on its cultural heritage in the context of the tourist industry. To be a tourist destination there is the dilemma of how to develop the tourist industry in sustainable ways. The main problems are that there are some serious issues on how to anticipate the migration process of people to the region from different cultures, traditions, ethnicities, local languages and religions. This is not easy.

Though Indonesia has been proclaimed an independent state since August 17, 1945, based on the Pancasila as a state foundation consisting of five basic principles: Belief in the One God, Humanitarianism, The Unity of Indonesia, Democracy and Social Justice, in fact, there are still many issues and discourses, particularly within political dynamics, locally, nationally, and internationally. This means that to be able to live in a peaceful and harmonious way seems to

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have been discussed over a long term. In other words, we should learn more about the similarities and differences in the context of comparative studies on religions, ethnicities, traditions and cultures. In order to achieve this ideal concept through this paper I will address some issues regarding how we can understand the creation of a multicultural society in Bali; in which process the Balinese society can be considered as a multicultural society; and also try to discuss the challenges and opportunities that need to be faced regarding Bali as a multicultural society.

## **II. Understanding a Multicultural Society in a Globalized World**

Before explaining the Balinese multicultural society, we need to understand the creation of multicultural societies in other parts of the world. Alf Mintzel in his book *Multikulturelle Gesellschaft in Nord Amerika und Europa* (1999) provides a clear argument of the difficulties in determining a multicultural society. He claims that the concept of a multicultural society in certain references such as political science, media studies and scientific studies in general, is rarely defined. The concept of a multicultural society only exists in the daily lives of the people. On the one hand, he says, a multicultural society is a hope and on the other, a threat. Therefore, it is not surprising if some scholars use the concept of an intercultural society instead of that of a multicultural society. The concept of an intercultural society is defined as of there being a need to have more active political aspects in the context of cultural exchanges. On the one hand, it means that the pluralism of a society should be seen in the context of intercultural relationships or between minority and majority groups, and on the other, that the acknowledgement of a multicultural society means that there is a togetherness within the different and various cultural traditions.

Mintzel analyzes the concept of a multicultural society from sociological and historical studies that continues until the present day, particularly in the context of a definitive concept on what a multicultural society means. Despite that, it does not mean that there is no effort to find out what is the meaning of a multicultural society. Initially formed in Canada, the idea of a multicultural society and multiculturalism concerns the migration of people from different ethnic groups in a wide term. Historical evidence notes that the concept of a multicultural society was established by a United States and Canadian sociologist, Charles Hobart in 1964.

This was in the context of an International Conference on Christians and Jesus in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. A Senator from Canada and a Slav Professor, Paul Vuzyk explained the typological structure of a migrant multicultural society of Canada in 1965. This kind of a multicultural society based on migration processes, is accordingly followed by Canada, Australia and Britain with Canada considered a multicultural society in 1974 and Australia in 1977/1978. Based on his research in Europe, particularly in Paris, Marseilles, London and Berlin and in New York, Mintzel argues that the phrase multicultural society is not only in terms of etymology, but also in its meaning.

In general, we understand a multicultural society as characterized by high human migration followed by pressures and conflicts. This has become a common concept of a multicultural society which developed based on historical and migration processes. The main question therefore is, whether there is a real concept of a multicultural society? Mintzel tries to formulate why there are so many concepts of multicultural societies in the world. He builds his research on what is really happening based on historical and actual realities in the societies. By this way, he expects to have a better understanding of the dynamic processes of a society by looking at the historical dynamics in the context of a multicultural society which is identical with an intercultural society. Thus it can be understood why the author has looked at the historical dynamics on how a society could develop to be a multicultural or a mono-cultural society (Ardhana 2002: 125).

The concept of a multicultural society is introduced in order to differentiate between that and a mono-cultural society. A mono-cultural society refers to a society that is an archaic or indigenous society, strongly appreciated by the members of that society. A multicultural society, in contrast, has its heterogeneities in the context of multi cultures, in which cultures can live side by side in the context of a belief system, ideology, cognitive symbols etc. There are four basic models of a multicultural society such as: sub-culture, hegemony, migration based on historical processes and migration based on actual processes.

Mintzel argues that if a society has a layer of modern culture, it can be considered a multicultural society. In a modern society, social and cultural pluralism can be a characteristic. World culture is defined by the findings of the high national cultures, as we can see in the knowledge and science systems, the mass culture we can see in pop and rock music and the sub-culture in the youth culture. Additionally, this is a way of determining the existence of an ethnic

culture. Though the concept of a multicultural society is still problematic, it can be roughly determined that a multicultural society is constructed by heterogeneous societies, having their own cultures in certain places or states.

It is even as Hoffman and-Nowotny (1992) argue, that a society is a multicultural one if a community or a number of communities are a part of a majority group. Despite that, the feeling of togetherness is important in the context of common justice and common security. However, Hoffman-Nowotny (1992) and John Rex (1996) mention that in a multicultural society the formal and private aspects should be separated. In addition to this, Harmurt Esser (1993) says that in a multicultural society there are ethnic structures that bargain their contacts and communications in order to solve problems. Therefore, it is important to have a guarantee for ethnic integration. As a result, if there is no solution in a peaceful way, the group in question cannot be considered a multicultural society.

In this case, Ireland and the former Yugoslavia are thought to be multicultural societies. A multicultural society that develops at the present time influences the form or social structure based on different and heterogeneous cultures. If we trace back the emergence of multicultural societies, according to Mintzel (1997), there are eight groups of these societies in the world.

The first group is the big country areas, multiethnic, immigration multicultural societies such as America and Canada.

The second group is the western and south-western European countries that already have received the characteristics of multicultural societies through the migration processes both in colonial and postcolonial periods, for instance: The Netherlands.

The third group is the mainland of Europe, multicultural and multiethnic such as Belgium, southeastern Europe, the former Yugoslavia or the Balkans and North Italy.

The fourth group is the European countries that are well developed based on immigration processes such as Germany, Switzerland and Austria.

The fifth group is the countries that are based on Indian cultures, South America and Ibero-Rhoma cultures such as Mexico, Bolivia, Peru and Ecuador.

The sixth group is the multicultural and multiethnic societies located outside of Europe such as in Central and Southeast Asia such as India, Malaysia and Indonesia.

The seventh group is the migrated British societies to Australia.

The eighth group is multicultural and multiethnic as in African countries, such as the Republic of South Africa and the indigenous people populated countries of Africa.

This categorization of Mintzel's is aimed at our more easily understanding the types of multicultural societies in the world which are still not understood in Southeast Asia. This can be seen in the case of the Philippines and Timor Leste where the conditions are very different. Both of these countries are influenced to a very limited extent by the Indianisation or Hindusation processes. Therefore, it is important to include the Philippines and Timor Leste in one type or group, where those countries are different in terms of cultural heritage and traditions if compared with Malaysia and Indonesia.

### **III. Local and Foreign Cultures in the Context of the Balinese Multicultural Society**

Indonesia, for instance, has been included by Alf Mintzel (1997) in the sixth of the eight groups. By this sixth group, it is understood that Indonesia like other Southeast Asian countries has a long process of history and tradition. In this case, the Indonesian culture has already been rooted in the prehistoric, classical, modern and postmodern times. To have a better understanding of the Balinese multicultural society along with the Indonesian multicultural society it is important to look at the long process of migration and history in the region.

From historical evidence we know that in Indonesia the Indian and the Chinese cultures have strongly influenced the Indonesian culture in general and the Balinese culture in particular. The early contacts between India as well as China and Indonesia were already in train in the first centuries. The ancient Javanese and Balinese cultures, for instance, were in many respects influenced by the Indian or Hindu culture. A highly evolved culture flourished as far back as 3000 BCE along the banks of the River Sindu giving rise to the Indian culture; the philosophy of which provided a strong basis for the Balinese culture. Despite that, animism and ancestor worship are still practiced in Bali. According to Ardika (2012: 2), archeological excavations at Sembiran and Pacung, located in northeastern Bali, have unearthed several types of Indian pottery as well as carnelian glass beads from the prehistoric times. He argues that there was a direct contact between Bali and India in the first century. From this it can be deduced that the foreign influences had already become rooted in the long historical process of the region. This can be understood, since there were many kingdoms in Indonesia that claimed the existence of

many kingdoms such as the Kutai in East Kalimantan in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, Tarumanegara in the 5<sup>th</sup> century and the later developed Srivijaya in the 7<sup>th</sup> century as a Buddhist kingdom in South Sumatra, continued by the Majapahit in the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

Before the expansion of Majapahit to Bali, the Bali Aga society was maintaining its cultural traditions in villages such as Trunyan and Tenganan that were built before the Hindu era. The centre of the Bali Aga is located in East and North Bali, generally placed by the coastal lakes or in the mountainous regions such as Sidatapa, Pedawa, Tigawasa, Sembiran, Lateng and Dausa. Later, during the Majapahit reign in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, the Javanese came to Bali and spread their cultural traditions that still can be seen with the old Javanese culture enriching the Balinese culture until the present time. In keeping with its long history and traditions, Bali for instance, really depends on its geographical position and historical processes. The influences of the Javanese Hindu culture contributed to the creation of Bali as a multicultural society (Ardhana 2015: 40).

Later, this cultural development was continued by the Islamic sultanates that reigned in the coastal areas of the Indonesian archipelago from the 12<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. The Islamisation that spread to Bali, can be also traced from the historical notes particularly in the classical period of Balinese history, which lasted from the 10<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> centuries. In the Kertanegara temple in Kubutambahan village-- now in the Buleleng regency-- there has been found the worship of the Ratu Mekah. In addition to this, there are some Hindu shrines such as Ratu Sundawan (the shrine for the Sundanese ethnic group), Ratu Ayu Subandar (the shrine for the Chinese ethnic group), the previously mentioned Ratu Mekah (the shrine for princesses from Mekah?), Ratu Melayu (the shrine for princesses from the Malay world) and Ratu Dalem Pingit (the worship for the indigenous Bali ethnic group from Bulian). From this it can be deduced that the idea of multiculturalism has taken place over a long period in the northern parts of Bali; since the prehistoric times to develop further in the period of classical Balinese history. There is also a temple known as the *Pura Negara* or the “Republic Temple”, in which every *Odalan* celebration the people hang in the front of the temple Indonesian flags or Merah Putih (red and white flag) (Pageh 2013: 35).

As happened in other parts of the Indonesian archipelago, Bali waged wars also between one kingdom and other kingdoms with even one kingdom, the Badung, in South Bali, asking the Javanese and the Bugis for help in the wars. Through these opportunities, some of these

“helpers” were allocated places such as Kampung Bugis, Kampung Selam in Pengastulan or Candi Kuning in the Buleleng regency, Angantiga in the Karangasem regency, Kampung Kusamba in the Klungkung regency and Kampung Jawa, Kepaon, Pamogan in the Badung regency. These Kampung Islam or Selam in the Badung Kingdom, for instance, in the past, were given land, in case the king or raja needed help, they could come easily to assist the king against other kingdoms.

Apart from the Islamic influences, there were Protestant and Catholic traditions and cultures that developed in accordance with the spread of these religions during the colonial era in the past of Bali history. This can be seen in what happened in Dalung in the Badung regency and also in the Ekasari village in the Buleleng regency.

Based on the similarities of the historical facts, Indonesia has emerged as a modern state. However, this was only in the western colonial period which tried to introduce the western concepts on colonialism, anti-colonialism and revolution that we can see at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This means that it was only at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, particularly after the fall of the kingdoms and sultanates under the Dutch colonial regime, that the Dutch began to install the modern bureaucratic system.

#### **IV. Challenges and Opportunities for Bali as a Multicultural Society**

Through migration and historical processes Bali has developed as we can see at present, to be considered a multicultural society. This can be seen in the migration process of the Javanese to the island through certain religious influences as above. Foreign influences also occurred when Bali was introduced by the Dutch to the tourism project that has been developed since the 1920s. This further developed both in the Old regime and under the New Order regime. Many changes took place particularly after the New Order regime that governed with authoritarian and centralistic power for more than 32 years. This caused many changes in terms of social, cultural, economic and political aspects, since the New Order regime gave priority to developing tourist projects, particularly in the southern parts of Bali. The Balinese have accordingly changed the paradigm of their lives from the agrarian mindset to tourist project services oriented, such as in travel agencies, hotels, villas, transportation etc.

Due to this fast development much land has been sold and many houses have been built for the outsiders who work in the tourist projects particularly for those residing in the southern and western parts of the Badung regency, in South Bali. This means that Bali has faced many challenges, since the non Balinese who are not Hindu, are not only in Kampung Kepaon or Kampung Bugis as already mentioned, but in the new residential places that have also been built, in several regencies and a city, called Perumnas (*Perumahan Nasional*), in which the population comes from different cultural traditions, ethnic groups, languages and religions. This situation accordingly strengthens the creation of the Balinese multicultural society, with this program not only implemented in Bali but also in other parts of Indonesia.

As elsewhere in Indonesian society, the Balinese multicultural society has faced many challenges that developed quickly due to the globalization process. As described by Mintzel in his work (1997), in his classification of three forms of multicultural society into three categories:

- a. General and peripheral culture: The general culture is assumed as the national culture and peripheral culture as a part of a dominant or national culture. However, the peripheral culture competes with the national culture. For instance, we can see this in Thailand where there are sub-cultures such as the Karen sub-culture which is Christian and competes with the sub-ethnic culture of the Burmese and the sub-ethnic cultures of Islamic communities;
- b. General and sub-culture, in this context the dominant and the sub-cultures overlap one another. This we can see in the present America, which can be considered a “Salad Bowl”, in which there are many sub-cultures such as the Indians, the Germans, the Chinese etc;
- c. General, sub-culture and peripheral culture: In this third type each of this general culture, sub-culture and peripheral culture has the same position as we can see in the present day Indonesia.

Due to these forms, the Indonesian multicultural society in general, like the Balinese multicultural society, can be classified into the third form, where the Indonesian culture can be categorized as the general or national culture, the sub-cultures based on the ethnic-groups, and also the peripheral cultures that we can see in the border areas in the regions of Indonesia. Looking at this third classification means that the general culture (Indonesian culture) has the

same position as the sub-culture (the Balinese culture) and other peripheral cultures, for instance the Dayak culture in the border areas. As has happened with other cultures in the Indonesian archipelago, the Balinese culture has been influenced by foreign cultures such as that from India which has greatly contributed the ideas of Hindusation or Indianisation, the Chinese culture, which has mostly been determined by the Buddhist culture, the Arab, which is dominantly influenced by the Islamic culture and the European culture, in which the majority has been influenced by the Protestant and Catholic cultural traditions, during the colonial period.

Vickers (1989) describes one way which has been used by the colonial power to redefine the image of Bali as a Paradise Island as follows:

*There is much that has been forgotten in the world's image of Bali. Early European writers once saw it as full of menace, an island of theft and murder, symbolized by the wavy dagger of the Malay world, the kris. Although the twentieth-century image of the island as lush paradise drew on the earlier writings about Bali, these were only selectively referred to, when they did not contradict the idea of the island Eden. The overall negative intent of most of the earlier western writings about Bali has been discarded.*

A scholar of Bali Tourism Studies, Michel Picard (1997) argues that since the Dutch colonial rule in Indonesia, the colonial power had already contributed to the shape of the Balinese identity. He (1997: 186) says that Bali is “*a Hindu island surrounded by a sea of Islam*”. By this argument it seems that there is the implication that:

*On the one hand, by looking for the singularity of Bali in its Hindu heritage, and by conceiving of Balinese religious identity as formed through opposition to Islam, the Dutch set the framework with which the Balinese were going to define themselves (Picard 1997: 186).*

From this it seems that the creation of the contemporary Balinese identity is a construction, which depicts the Dutch colonial image, Indonesia and tourism. What is known as the “Picard Project” is indeed to deconstruct the Balinese contemporary statement by tracing back to the historical construction (1997: 184). This is, of course, in the context of what efforts have been made, to strengthen the ethnic consciousness with the cultural history, in which the Balinese culture has been viewed in the context of a cultural artefact.

*The allegedly immutable and primordial unity of religion, custom, and art/culture, through which the Balinese presently define their identity is the outcome of a process of semantic borrowings and of conceptual reframing in response to the colonization, the Indonesianisation, and the touristification of their island (Picard 1997: 185).*

In the past the Balinese society was an agrarian society. However, due to the fast tourist development, causing many changes, it rushed from an agrarian society to one deeply involved in the tourist industry. These changes affect Balinese daily life. Therefore, many social conflicts emerge regarding the land management and accordingly influence how the Balinese determine their identity. On the one hand, the tourist industry gives opportunities for the Balinese to live in a modern world or in a globalized world, but, on the other, many problems have burgeoned due to unskilled human resources forcing them to invite many outside people who have different cultural traditions, to stay in Bali for their work in the tourist industry. On the one side, this situation has contributed to the emergence of the Bali multicultural society but on the other, it seems to cause many social, cultural and economic conflicts regarding the limited opportunities in the tourist industry. The Balinese have begun to ask about their identity as Balinese regarding the concept of the “Balinesness of the Balinese”, or “*Kebalian Orang Bali*” and “*Ajeg Bali*”. The aim of this concept is to revitalize the indigenous Balinese cultural traditions that will be useful not only for the Balinese people but also for their society in the context of the Balinese cultural identity. In other words, it means that the Balinese must maintain their cultural identity by working together with the local government, local entrepreneurs and local people when by encouraging their cultural traditions in the tourist program, they will get the benefit in the context of the prosperity of their people.

In terms of political dynamics, Bali has been strongly influenced by the role of the political elites. This means what and to what extent is the role of bureaucrats, intellectuals, local figures, culture experts and artists in shaping the Balinese identity? Ericksen (1993), for instance, writes that historical evidence shows the role of the nation-state building in the context of constructing the Balinese identity. Therefore, it is difficult to anticipate any changes due to the fast globalization processes that have already taken place around the world. However, a strong commitment is needed to understand the emergence of a Balinese multicultural society, based on migration and historical processes and also to understand better any challenges and opportunities that face the Balinese in the present day developments.

## **V. Conclusion**

The Balinese cultural identity is a construction from many elements such as culture and traditions, based in prehistory, classical history, modern history and post modern culture. The Balinese culture that was based on the indigenous culture has competed with the national politics and globalization, where this global aspect is presented by the tourist industry that was introduced during the colonial times.

All of these foreign cultures have contributed strongly in creating the Balinese identity. The indigenous culture has been successfully developed together with the national and global cultures. The uniqueness of the Balinese culture has been promoted in encouraging the tourist industry. Though, there are many influences from outside Bali, these foreign cultures have strengthened the Balinese culture into a multicultural society. Therefore, the Balinese society is a multicultural society that has been created in the context of migration and historical processes. There are many discourses that have been contested in terms of how locality, national politics, and global economics are competing in the globalized world. Though there are many changes due to globalization, in fact, the Balinese can adopt and adapt their cultural traditions in the context of sustainable development.

Though, there are many challenges to be faced in the context of globalization, they should become opportunities in order to strengthen Balinese sustainable development and compete with other cultures both regional and global or universal. It is expected that by defending Balinese multicultural society, it will encourage the needs of all people on the island and accordingly make a strong contribution not only for the Balinese themselves at the micro level but also to global societies at the macro level.

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## CURRICULUM VITAE

**I Ketut Ardhana** is Professor of Asian History in the Faculty of Humanities Studies– Udayana University. He was the former Head of the Southeast Asia Division-Research Center for Regional Resources- the Indonesian Institute of Sciences, Jakarta (PSDR-LIPI), 2001-2009. His research project is on tourism and border studies in the Southeast Asian region, including: Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore and the Philippines. Previously he took the English course at the School of Oriental and African Studies, (SOAS) - University of London-England (1990), at the University of Belconnen in Canberra-Australia (1992), the Dutch course at Erasmus Huis, Universiteit te Leiden in the Netherlands (1990), and the German course at the Goethe Institute in Mannheim and at Passau University (UP) in Germany (1996-1997).

He studied history in the Faculty of Letters in the Department of History at Udayana University, Denpasar, Bali- and continued his studies to obtain the Drs. (Doctorandus Degree) at the Faculty of Letters – Gadjah Mada University (UGM) in Yogyakarta in 1985. He graduated with his Master’s Degree (Master of Arts in Asian Studies) at Southeast Asian Centre-Faculty of Asian Studies, the Australian National University (ANU) in Canberra, Australia in 1994. Then got his PhD degree or Dr. phil. (Doctor Philosophie) at *Sudostasoenkunde, Philosophische Fakultat*, Universitat Passau in Germany with the predicate *Magna Cum Laude* in 2000. He was granted a Fellowship to carry out research in area studies at the University of Passau in Passau-Germany in 2003 and also a Fellowship in the Centre for Southeast Asian Studies (CSEAS), Kyoto University, Kyoto, Japan, in 2004.

He was a Committee member on the collaborative project between Indonesia and the Netherlands at NIOD (*Nederlandsch Instituut voor Oorlog Dokumentatie*) or the Dutch Institute for War Documentation) from 2004 until 2009. He has been a member of IFSSO (International Federation of Social Science Organizations) from 2003 until now and was elected as the first Vice President. In Seijo University in Tokyo, in 2015, he was elected as the second Vice President. He is also a founding member of the World SSH (World Social Sciences and Humanities) and presented his paper in Buenos Aires, Argentine, in 2010. He wrote an article on the “Review of *The Encyclopedia of Indonesia in the Pacific War: In cooperation with the Netherlands Institute for War Documentation*” in *the Journal of Indonesia*, Vol. 91, 2011 published in Cornell, the US and one on “Early Harbours in Eastern Nusa Tenggara”, in John N. Miksic and Goh Geok Yian, *Ancient Harbours in Southeast Asia: The Archaeology of Early Harbours and Evidence of Inter-Regional Trade* for the Bangkok SEAMEO SPAFA Regional Centre for Archaeology and Fine Arts in 2013. He was appointed the Head of the Center for Bali Studies at Udayana University in Denpasar, Bali, in 2010, and later as the Head of Postgraduate Program on Cultural Studies, Faculty of Social and Humanities Sciences at Udayana University, a position he still holds.