ABSTRACT

Indonesia is renowned as a multicultural state. But for the last ten years, it has been facing social, ethnic, religious, and cultural problems. These tensions can be seen throughout Indonesian society, and there are various attempts to address them. One such area is Bali. The Balinese people live in harmony even as their culture is very diverse. This study attempts to elucidate religious life of a multicultural society, especially Hindus-Moslem relationships in Bali after Denpasar Suicide Bombing in 2002. Using qualitative and phenomenological approach, this research aims at understanding, analyzing, and exploring patterns of Hindus-Moslem relationship, in the hope of understanding how to cultivate harmony within a multicultural society. The Hindus-Moslem relationship in Denpasar (Indonesia) is very distinctive. It has emphasized cooperation in building a social-religious life inseparable from Bali Aga (Balinese life). This study shows that Balinese people are performing this ideal of cooperation through the employment of political, social and cultural initiatives. In this way, the government and the people have attempted to conserve Balinese culture, using its unique tradition of menyama braya, to foster harmonious religious life among the Balinese people.
Introduction

The era of modernization and globalization has had a great impact on the social order of life, especially on the diverse forms of religious life. The manner people practice their religion had changed, not only because religion has undergone a process of contextualization, which embeds it in society, but also because the culture that contextualizes religion is a global culture with foreign values. In this context we can say that religious phenomena need to be understood in a way involving the transformation of the knowledge system, the value system, the system of religious action.¹

Such transformations can have a negative impact on the future life of nation such as Indonesia, because for centuries, up until the last decade, religious life was relatively peaceful and there was no serious conflict. But since Indonesia entered a new phase of reforming the life of the nation, the emergence of political and economic turmoil has begun to taint the reputation of Indonesia as a peaceful and prosperous country. In 1998, the fundamental source of conflict began to involve the two elements of objective culture, namely ethnicity and religion.

This phenomenon seems to affirm Huntington’s thesis that the main determinants of the world’s political arena are differences in culture and civilization, not the disparities of ideological interests, nation states and economies. One of the most important elements of such difference is religion. He also concluded that the clash of civilizations will primarily involve the East versus the West. Furthermore Huntington says that a culture is limited by objective elements such as ethnicity, history, language, institutions, customs and religions. In addition to these objective elements, culture is also limited by the subjective element of self-identification of individuals. In turn, these two things make the intercultural distinctions not only real but also a fundamental source of potential conflict.²

Communities identify with themselves internally and also distinguish themselves from other communities. Therefore, cultural fault lines become the most basic lines of contention. In this tension-filled cultural relation religion is one of the strongest of the differentiating elements.
In many cases of conflictual violence, especially since the collapse of the New Order regime, political interest elements are often involved, but the conflict generally grows bigger when ethnic and religious sentiments are played out. Religion is not the only factor in these cases of conflict or violence, but religious considerations are always present and decisive. This incident grew more complex when al Qaeda attacked the WTC twin towers of New York followed by the Bali Bombing case on October 12, 2002, the Marriot Bomb in September 2003 and the Bom Kuningan in September 2004 by radical groups in Indonesia.³

These events suggest that religious plurality is facing a major challenge in Indonesia. In this regard, the awareness of religious plurality needs to be understood as a natural reality. Only through such awareness can Indonesia have a peaceful interfaith life. The paradigms and attitudes that have tended to be exclusive are now being tested and betrayed in a multireligious setting amidst multicultural society, so that the inclusive, tolerant, even moderate religious paradigm becomes a solution to the problems faced by the Indonesian nation. This is the situation happening now in Denpasar, Bali.

Cultural Dialogue Towards Civil Society

At the end of the New Order period of power, the discourse of civil society became attractive as an issue in academic circles and society at large. This is because the socio-political conditions of Indonesia was uncertain resulting in the levels of identity crisis and also the crisis of civilization. The term “civil society” according to Naquib al-Attas is a society that upholds the values of civilization.⁴

The discourse is widely leveled by academics like Hikam who state that civil society is organized as voluntary, self-generating, and self-supporting. As a political space, civil society is a territory that ensures ongoing behavior, action and self-reflection, not constrained by material conditions of life and not absorbed within official political institutional networks, in which the implicit importance of free public space, free by citizens without any hegemony from any party, including from the government.⁵
Indonesia post-reformasi, dissolved lantak. Power eventually spread in state institutions at the provincial, district, kelurahan and up to the village level. Pakraman Village (Local Country) in the city of Denpasar Bali was impacted by this power. The spirit of regional autonomy as one of the strategies to build civil society in Denpasar grew stronger, so that Pakraman village seemed to be a symbol of renewal for the people of Bali. They considered Pakraman village as the last bastion of Balinese culture. Various movements and programs preserved the traditions from extinction. The government together with the Balinese community began to popularize its jargon “Ajeg Bali”, meaning that Bali should be built on Balinese culture, and Balinese culture built by the Hindu breath.

Bali’s desire to regulate the shari’a-based regulations of Hindu shari’a began to apply. Although based on the Hindu shari’ah, these local regulations still provided opportunities for other religions to coexist, as this culture is a long established culture since the small kingdoms of Bali such as the Waturenggong kingdom in Klungkung, the Badung Kingdom in Denpasar. In this royal period the term “brama” was popularized, but because of the modernization and the New Order’s political hegemony the tradition gradually did not appeal to the Balinese people.

Thus one of the Ajeg Bali that must be recovered is “to be like braya” (I am you, and you are me). This shows the affirmation tolerance among religious believers in the city of Denpasar Bali. The key concepts held by Hindus as a guide in establishing interfaith harmony are “Tat Twam Asi” and “Yama Niyama Brata. Tat Twam Asi means I am you. Yama Niyama Brata means you are me.

According to the Balinese, if we love ourselves, we must say and do to others as we do to ourselves. If these principles can be run, then the peace of life in this world will be realized. The concrete form of applying the concept can be found in everyday life such as ngupoin tradition, mapitulu mejenukkun, ngejot, and others. This is the foundation of interfaith harmony in Denpasar.

The form and process of intertwining strong religious interfaith as well as the implementation of “Ajeg Bali” or “Ajeg Hindu” seems to
continue to emphasize the multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, and pluralistic Balinese social structure. This is reflected in the vision that was proclaimed by the Government of Denpasar, namely “Creative Cultured Denpasar in Balance Towards Harmonization”. Ajeg Hindu as an icon of Bali in the eyes of national and international, seems to be in line with the multicultural theory initiated by George Ritzer, who emphasizes the problem of marginalization of human intellectual tendencies. In essence, this theory holds that minority groups and marginalized groups should be empowered to occupy a more important position and are given equal significance in the social world.

Ajeg Bali as a strategy to unite multicultural society in Bali, especially in Denpasar, is the most appropriate choice to maintain Bali as a peaceful and prosperous region. If we look from the perspective of the history of the so-called fundamentalist jargon in Hinduism, it does not mean a closing of religious tolerance in the local area, but instead it provides an opening for harmony in religious life, because the jargon is coupled with a popular concept with the term “brama menyama”. The term (Baleg Bali) was applied, suggesting that the people of Denpasar should be independent through Balinese culture. This is a response to the New Order period, where the government acted merely as an agency to manage tourism in Bali with its Sapta Pesona jargon which resulted in Bali losing its cultural roots. As a result this collapsed with the arrival of the Bali Bomb 2002.

As stated by Antonio Gramsci, there are two main levels of structure in government: civil society and political society. Civil society groups cover the entire transmission apparatus often called private, such as educational institutions, mass media, and including religious institutions. While the political community or state group includes all public institutions that hold the power to implement government policies. According to Gramsci, hegemony is a political class that succeeds in persuading other classes in society to accept its moral, political and cultural values.
The people of Bali began to realize that the Balinese must rise and stand on their own feet. To borrow the language of A.S Hikam, Balinese people must build a civil society based on their identity. It seems that Hindu buildings in Bali are needed to inspire Bali *maxarthaṃ jagadhita ya ca iti dharma* (inner welfare) as envisioned by Hindu and Balinese society in general. The terms “Ajeg Bali” and even “Ajeg Hindu” were popularized and reappointed to make Bali a brighter, safer, and more enchanting place, reflecting the kingdom of Bali in the past.⁹

One of the Ajeg Bali that must be revived as a civil society building is the role of history. Islam was introduced in 1460 during the Gelgel Kingdom in Klungkung. In Tabanan itself the role of Islam had existed since the early 19th century. Therefore, togetherness and harmony of Muslims and Hindu society in Bali is a part of its cultural tradition and must be maintained. That logic is what the Balinese Islamists want to rebuild in the context of the Muslim-and-Bali relationship. However, the contemporary context, especially the sociopolitical and economic context, has distorted this harmony. Even the Bali bombings eventually exacerbated the problem of tolerance among religious people in Denpasar in particular and in Bali in general.

Anak Agung Ngurah Agung,¹⁰ for example, carries the need to rebuild “Bali Harmony” in the Bali Hindu-Muslim Fellowship (PHMB). According to him, the old era was characterized by a social culture where values were applied consistently by Hindus and Muslims. From the point of value, Bali as a result had a beautiful nature, and this beauty is preserved because Bali implemented Tri Hitakarana and Tat Twam Asi. While from the perspective of Social Culture. Bali has an open culture but still able to preserve the culture of *brama*, a *seguluk*, different *pakṣi bina pakṣa*. The two Balinese values are in line with the Islamic concept, so that local values are applied by different communities but together. As a result the old-time Balinese community for example able to create harmony despite the difference *akidahnya*. That spirit was to be developed by the people of Bali as a form of foundation of interfaith harmony in Denpasar Bali.
The Pathways of Building Civil Society

There are various pathways that the local community uses to maintain the dialogue of the Hindu-Islamic cultures in Bali:

**a. Political Path**

Denpasar City Government together with Pakraman Village are creating policies for enhancing security and environmental order according to *brama* in the local area. To maintain the stability the Governor of Bali issued a policy that is the Governor of Bali Regulation dated July 16, 2008, Number 32 of 2008 on Forum Kerukunan Umat Beragama (FKUB). One of the duties of the governor of Bali is the maintenance of religious harmony.

In one of the articles (article 4) it is mentioned that the duties and obligations of the Governor are as follows: First, to maintain the peace and order of the community, including to facilitate the realization of religious harmony in the regions. Second, coordinate the activities of vertical institutions in the area in the maintenance of religious harmony. Third, cultivate harmony, mutual respect and mutual understanding and mutual trust among religious communities in the region. Fourth, foster and coordinate collaboration among the regents and vice regents, mayors and deputy mayors in the administration of local government in the field of peace and public order in religious life.11

The new policy was carried out by the Mayor of Denpasar in 2009 by issuing Decree No. 8 of 2009 on Forum of Religious Harmony (FKUB) and Denpasar Mayor’s Decree number 188.45/76/HK/2009 on the Establishment and Composition of Advisory Board of Forum Kerukunan Umat Religious (FKUB) Denpasar City. In the event of problems related to religious life prior to the issuance of the Decree, the Local Government would bring the relevant parties together to find a solution. In addition through written policies also through social media as expressed by the Governor of Bali Mangku Pastika in his political speech, that through customs, culture, and religion of Hinduism, Bali will be maintained security and order. He invites all the people to mengajegkan Balinese
customs and culture one of the agenda Ajeg Bali is menyama braya.\textsuperscript{12}

The Local Government Program of Bali Province has become the foundation for interfaith dialogue every year in Denpasar. On October 28, 2013 Denpasar government has held a program of religious life coaching involving the leaders of religious institutions, Pakraman village institutions, religious leaders, community leaders, leaders of related institutions.

To improve religious social harmony in the city of Denpasar, FKUB has pursued the following agenda: first, holding regular meetings every month whether there are problems or not. Second, holding meetings to solve minor problems and avoid misunderstandings. Third, making personal visits to religious institutions, especially attending religious ceremonies. Fourth, holding gatherings which brings together braya of religious communities. Fifth, holding deliberations and seminars according to the vision of FKUB mission.\textsuperscript{13}

According to I Made Subawa (Head of Kemenag General Affairs Office of Denpasar), the pattern that was built by the government together with FKUB and FKAUB to foster interfaith harmony is reflected in dialogue forums between students, religious leaders, community leaders and inter-religious institutions. In 2000 for example, FKAUB held the first dialogue theme “Avoid the Use of Symbols and Religious Attributes”. In 2001, the theme of “Applying Local Wisdom to Brama in the Perspective of Religions”. The results of this dialogue have been agreed to be immediately applied through the implementation of religious teachings of each. The results of these dialogues served as the basis and evaluation of the subsequent dialogues until 2003.

In 2004 the implementation of dialogue no longer raised the theme of \textit{brama} because it is considered this theme has been applied by several religions to the praxis area. The theme of the current dialogue is directed to solving the praxis problem faced, namely the execution of the Nyepi holiday that falls on Sunday (March 11, 2004) simultaneously with the implementation of the worship service for Christians. The dialogue resulted in a mutual agreement in the fraternity (unifying braya) which arranged the implementation of \textit{Nyepi} and the Sunday Service went smoothly.
In 2005, inter-religious dialogue carried the same theme as in 2004 related to the Nyepi holiday which coincided with the Friday prayer (11 March 2005), it was wisely agreed that the Friday prayer will be held as usual but there was a suggestion from the dialogue participants not to use a loudspeaker. In the same year the dialogue was held back to reinforce the first agreement that the implementation of Nyepi and the Friday prayers continued without any interference.

In addition, the dialogue of 2006 emphasized the attempt to realize genuine harmony by establishing an understanding of “where the earth is rested in the heavens.” An additional dialogue in 2007 built on the results of the 2006 dialogue with the theme: “Build Kerahayuan To Realize Bali Jagadhita”. The purpose of this dialogue was concerned with the welfare of the people of Bali in general and religious people in Denpasar in particular.14

As the condition of religious life in Denpasar is more conducive and there are no signs of significant friction, the subsequent dialogues from 2008 to 2013 were directed to building prosperity in the economic field to support the building of religious life in Denpasar Bali. The dialogue in 2010 had the theme “Family Welfare from the Perspective of Religions”. They tried to re-explore the themes related to the building of religious life in the perspective of their respective religions, so religious adherents in Denpasar would be able to develop a praxis that bridges religious ideologies.

The condition is in line with what I Ketut Sukanata, said that the tradition of Nyama Braya is quite high in Bali, since the term Nyama Selam, Nyama Cina has always been familiar to the ears of the Balinese Success is not only to achieved the highest levels but also at the bottom levels, such as the tradition of ngayah bareng (mutual cooperation) in banjar-banjar and villages in Denpasar. For instance, the practice of cooperation among Hindus, Buddhists and Muslims in religious ceremonies.

These various policies and the implementation of the Denpasar Decree described above have enhanced the growth of religious tolerance. Regardless of the shortcomings and the advantages of the policies taken,
the policy still gives its own color to the interfaith harmony-building in Denpasar city in particular and in Bali in general.

b. Cultural Path

The cultural diversity of the people of Denpasar city emerges from various ethnicities, but the original Balinese culture has the greatest power. Hinduism cannot be separated from the existence of Balinese culture itself. Balinese Hinduism becomes a system of values and norms implemented in a system of actions and social systems, and has contributed to harmonious cultural diversity.

So fundamentalist Bali does not impede the rise of pluralistic awareness in the city of Denpasar. Precisely the fundamentalistic spirit is the entrance to build awareness of multiculturalism of Denpasar society towards building a strong pluralism. This happens, because Balinese culture, based on Hinduism, is also supported by *jargonnya* which is popular in the term “*menyama brama*” always socialized and practiced as a center of plural society. In addition to ethnic and cultural pluralism, religious plurality is also deeply represented (Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist, Catholic, Christian, and Confucian). Differences of beliefs do not lead to any negative impacts on the existing social order, it is the difference that brings vibrancy to the city of Denpasar.

The harmony between religious followers in Bali in general and in the city of Denpasar in particular have so far been relatively harmonious, never having experienced any serious clashes. This is so because Balinese society has inherited a tradition that has been developed from generation to generation since the 15th century. The creation of harmony between religious believers, thanks to mutual understanding and mutual respect - respect among different ethnic groups and religions. Like the Nyepi (New Year Saka 1935/2013 M) celebrated by the Hindu community in Denpasar, the Muslim community is helping the process of implementing Nyepi’s success in their respective neighborhoods.

In each neighborhood before Nyepi they held a meeting to discuss
Nyepi preparations ranging from security to technical matters. Although it did not follow any ceremonial tradition, it was decided that every alley in their Javanese village organized a patrol. This was to avoid the occurrence of things that have interfered with the Nyepi in the past. This was done not at the request from the Hindu community but at the request of the Muslim community both in the village of Kepaon, Kreneng, and in the village of Java Denpasar Bali.

Similarly, during Nyepi holiday falls to coincide with Friday in 2011. Based on a joint decision between MUI and Bali WALUBI, it was agreed that these two big days can still be conducted in accordance with their respective goals. First, Muslims who perform the Friday prayers are encouraged to choose the nearest mosque; secondly, it is advisable not to use motorcycles or cars to the mosque but just walk; thirdly, Friday sermons are allowed to use the loudspeakers but the sound of the sermon is kept out of the mosque.

The condition is in accordance with the original expectations, namely the two big days of Islam and Hinduism continue to run as before, which does not reduce the meaning and purpose of both ceremonies (Nyepi and Friday prayers). Hindus can run Nyepi in accordance with its original meaning, that is, there is no activities of any kind including the making of sounds. They can practice nyepi in their homes without any sounds or lights.

Such conditions has become part of the life of a multicultural society (Islam and Hindu) in Denpasar. When Muslims commemorate Isro ‘Mi’raj at the Darussalam Ubung mosque as well as in the Holy High Mosque, the Hindu community provides both food and security assistance. Security is conducted by the pecalang who dress in the Hindu customs to maintain security and order for the smooth running of the event..

Self-control becomes an important foundation in realizing interfaith harmony in Denpasar Bali. Self-control will be able to bring peace to society. Various religious activities in Denpasar encourage cultural activities and the realization of a balance of outer and inner development. The balance of development is to awaken human beings who always
have limitations and weaknesses. The interfaith harmony in this tourist destination has escaped the trials and challenges that have tested it, such as the Bali Bombing in 2002.17

Hindus on Sunday, March 17, 1991 celebrated the Nyepi holiday of the new year of Saka 1913 which involves the *tapa brata*, or avoiding the four taboos: not working, not traveling, not indulging lust, and not kindling fire. In this holiday, muslims make *takbiran Idul Fitri* and Christians worship in the Church. “Thanks to the mutual understanding and harmony among the people, each religion can celebrate their holy day. The condition is especially admirable since even though the people of Bali are 84% Hindu, they can participate in the successful implementation of the National Quran Tilawatil Selection (MTQ) in 1998. Since the early times, the Balinese people have had a love for all people, and still uphold sense of unity among themselves and unity of the nation. The future seems optimistic if there is this continued harmony between Islam and Hinduism. The art which blended Balinese and Islamic elements, was once used to enliven the opening of STQ to XIII National level in Bali.

The culture of *brama* can be a leading program for multicultural society in Denpasar, because *brama* has a strategic meaning for the development of Bali in the future. Such language is important for all religions in Bali. In the dialogue held by the FKUB Bali in recent years, all religious representatives expressed their views on the concept of *brama* and its relevance to the teachings of their respective religions. The views and acknowledgment of some religious figures can be illustrated that the jargon (as *braya*) is one of the sectors driving the interfaith tolerance of Bali, especially in the city of Denpasar.

The term *brama* is not only popular among Balinese (Hindu) people, but it is also popular among immigrants (*Nyama Selam*). Religious differences are not seen as a challenge, but a natural part of the religious life of a multicultural society (Hindu-Islam). They have mutual tolerance, mutual understanding, mutual respect between them, they can distinguish between doctrinal areas and social areas.
To avoid conflict among religious believers in Denpasar, scholars and religious leaders have always been active in preventing preachers, ustaz, ngaji teachers and mosque khotibs in Denpasar for creating religious intolerance through preaching division, for instance, the use of negative epithets such as “kafir, pig, or idol worshiper”. This needs to be done to avoid the traps of division that many Islamic radical groups are promoting. These themes have a severe impact on the disengagement of the various religious communities from one another.

Acknowledging such practices gives one hope that there is a possibility to maintain togetherness and use such foundations in realizing harmony among religious people. Yet there are still many forces which create suspicion, anxiety, insecurity among religions. Therefore, multiculturalism has not yet reached a foundational or root level.

c. Social Path

Regardless of the pros and cons of “multiculturalism” whether to tolerate a certain degree of disunity or to strive for a unified nation, the thing we must be aware of is the emergence of ethnic, cultural, and ethnic divisions within the bodies of our own nation. The situation of Denpasar Bali involves a variety of cultures from the archipelago such as Java, Madura, Makasar, Bugis, and also the tribe of Bali itself. It is a situation which shows distinct cultural possibilities.

The condition of multi-ethnicity is is a paradox that on one hand shows the beauty of a mosaic of distinct colors, and on the other hand harbors a potential for conflict. This needs to be managed wisely so that the potential for conflict is not realized. In Denpasar Bali the existence of interfaith harmony is built through education and social network (NGO). The Miftahul Ulum education institute in the village of Java Denpasar developed a vision of mission as beriku: learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together, and learn to face others (four pillars of education).

According to Djarot Soedarman (headmaster of MTs Miftahul Ulum), to achieve the four pillar’s objectives, the 3rd pillar is the most urgent, since the community environment is different from the island of Java.
Therefore, to realize a harmonious life between Islam and Hinduism, then learning to live together should be stressed so that the students can learn to know their environment, learn to do good within their environment, and learn to deal with their environment.

**Conclusion**

To reaffirm the social harmony of the post-Bali Bali Hindu-Muslim community in Denpasar, the local government and the community have agreed to strengthen the interaction between Islam and Hinduism through *brama* culture. This tradition is developed through the political, cultural and social channels of education in the local area. Through such practices, civil society’s power to develop local civil society in Bali in particular and in Indonesia in general can be strengthened.

**ENDNOTES**


10 Born from the castle (kingdom), Ngurah Agung was raised in Hindu pesraman. The ancestors of Ngurah Agung are known to have closeness with Islam. One of them
is A.A. Manik Mas Mirah, the daughter of king Pemecutan, who is married to the West Madura king Cakraningrat IV. Mas Man Mas then converted to Islam and renamed Siti Khodijah. However, Ngurah Agung’s interest to Muslim leaders has emerged since he knew about Abdurrahman around 1995. Since then, Ngurah Agung often visited pesantrens in East Java and established relationships with kiai. From this he is eloquent in reciting dhikr. Upon closeness with the Muslims, he is often called as Ngurah Agung Muslim. See “Ngurah Agung Restoring Hindu-Muslim Rift”, Tempo, August 21, 2013.


15 This can also be seen in Local Regulation no.3 year 1991 where the development of tourism is based on the Balinese idea of maintaining the harmony of relations between tourism and society and culture. And also several times Bali Governor Mangku Pastika conveyed in some *sambutanya* that “with the customs, culture, and religion of one is the Hindu religion is the basic capital to realize security based on custom, culture, and religion. In addition, also in the Vision of the Mission of Denpasar, namely: “Creative Culture with a Cultural Insight in the balance Towards Harmony”, in one of its mission to grow the identity of the people of Denpasar city based on Balinese culture.

16 The 2002 Bali Bombing case as a first step for multicultural society to build inter-ethnic and inter-religious togetherness. This has spawned several institutions such as FKUB, FKAEN, PHMB with the agenda of dialogues in order to build harmony between interethnic and interfaith religion in Denpasa.


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