IN RESPONSE TO INDEX OF DENPASAR AS ISLAMIC CITY: A CASE OF POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS ACCOUNTABILITY

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Abstract

Last May 2016, the Maarif Institute published the names of 29 cities in Indonesia with high indexes of Islamic Values (IKI/Indeks Kota Islami). Those values are: religious tolerance, security, law enforcement, leadership and women leadership, rights of children and disabled, so as other welfare indicators. Denpasar was ranked third following the index of Yogyakarta and Bandung. This rank shows that the Bali bombings failed to disturb the Islamic values in Denpasar. A view of the attitude of political institutions confirms the above assumption: political institutions such as the PDIP and the GOLKAR (respectively the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle and the Functional Groups Party) did not support participation to the two mass demonstrations of November 4th and December 12th 2016 in Jakarta to protest Ahok’ supposed blasphemy of the Al Maidah Qoranic verse. Hence their Balinese Moslem members did not participate in those events, contrary to members of the Bali Branch of the PKS (Justice and Welfare Party). Considering that the PKS is a cadre party in Duverger’s meaning of the word, we can wonder about their role in implementing Islamic Values in the so-called Islamic city index. Most importantly, one can also wonder about the role played by Balinese tradition of tolerance in the achievement of Islamic values in Denpasar city and other parts of Bali.

Key Word: Positive responses, Political institutions, Accountability and Index of Denpasar Kota Islami

INTRODUCTION

The Maarif Institute is an institution which rests on the principles of humanity and culture in relation to Islam and Indonesia as a multicultural country. It has recently produced a grading of Indonesian cities according to their relative respect of Islamic values. In the related index of Islamity, the city of Denpasar comes third, the first being Yogyakarta and the second Bandung. This was an interesting result, as Denpasar is a Hindu-majority city with an important Moslem minority.

This index comprises safety, welfare and happiness of the community in that city among other indicators. Safety includes freedom of political rights, children and disability rights. Welfare comprises job availability and opportunities, proper income and access to health services; happiness comprises sharing, friendship and environmental harmony that create living comfort.

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But it also indirectly relates to relative Islamity and tolerance in a multi-cultural Indonesian environment. This paper aims at underlining some positive elements that have contributed to the classification of Denpasar as an Islamic city.

On which assumption this index was established? It rests on a modern, post-textual reading of the Quranic text such as practiced by modern clerics and researchers of the Maarif Institute. According to Jimly Asshidiqie, a reputed expert in Islamic law and Islamic governance, this index should be used as a lesson (pembelajaran) or, in modern lingo, as a paradigm for Islamic clerics from other parts of Indonesia² (such as Padang city or Makassar or the province of Nangroe Aceh Darrusallam) who claim in their speeches that their cities are Islamic, even though it is not safe for women and children to walk alone there at night.

STATE OF AFFAIRS

Yet, first things come first. What is the actual state of affairs in Denpasar? The level of relative safety, welfare and happiness of Denpasar is undisputable. The safety of Denpasar and the welfare of its community is demonstrated by the fact that various communities live harmoniously side by side: Muslims, Hindus, Budhist, Catholic, Christians, Kong Hu Chu and even other minority spiritual traditions. The Bali bombing of 2002 and 2005 did not significantly disturb Islamic values in the city. Even though cynical comments can be heard here and there regarding the December 2016 Jakarta demonstrations, the level of safety of the city of Denpasar is relatively high.

Regarding welfare, it cannot be denied that the city of Denpasar is one of the most dynamic cities of Indonesia. It attracts thousands of migrants every year. Many of them are Moslem. To people from Jember, Banyuwangi and Lombok, Denpasar is a city where gold is to be found in the streets.

Regarding happiness, there are many cultural events in the city. Many events draw people from all communities. Denpasar is a favorite spot for tourists from Jakarta and other great Indonesian cities, which is a sign of its attraction.

THE BALINESE BACKGROUND

To explain this positive situation, the first thing to be taken into account is the cultural and historical background of the Balinese society, which has been in contact with Islam for centuries.

On the cultural side of tolerance we can underline the fact if that the Balinese have all along lived alongside Moslems in a religiously non-confrontative way, it is for a number of specific reasons: 1/ The Moslems did not come as invaders; 2/ they came in Bali with agreement of the princes and to fill specific functions, such as mercenaries, doctors, traders, and they settled in areas that was given to them, for example a forest in the case of Pegayaman (Northern Bali) or a

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river estuary in the case of Loloan in Jembrana; 3/ Balinese religious tradition does not emphasize truth, but act (karma); the Balinese often say that “all religions are the same, only their path differ”; they often integrate elements of Moslem tradition in their own cults and traditions; 4/ in the East-Javanese Babads, the Balinese Hindus, unlike the Dutch, were not classified as “infidels” (kafir), and a nobleman such as Raden Sastra Ningrat (1819) even came to Bali to study Islam. Thus, Lombard got this name from the Dutch register or Daghregister (1846-1847; 268-269). These history accounts were derived from Couteau (1999).

Recent history must also be taken into account: Indonesian nationalism has been a cross-religious cement. Moslem Javanese fought alongside Balinese in the mountains of Bali against the Dutch (1947) as part of the independence struggle. For this reason, in the set up of identity of people living in Bali, nationalism was long a more important factor than religion. A related factor is the fact that Sukarno, even though he was a Moslem, was a Balinese by his mother. As we shall see below, the role of nationalism is also found in Moslem parties such as the Nadhatul Ulama, which emphasizes the cultural and national aspect of Islam and hence creates a common ground with the local Balinese.

At a deeper level, this positive inter-religious background rests on the good insertion of local traditional Moslem communities in their Balinese environment. A few examples of harmonious cohabitation can be given here:

- The Moslems from the village of Pegayaman in North Bali are all using traditional Balinese names such as Wayan, Made, Nyoman and Ketut.
- Across the island can be found Moslem tombs whose guardians are often Balinese. The best known is that of Seseh Beach, whose local Moslem saint attracts pilgrims from Java.
- All around the coastal area of Bali are found small Bugis communities, whose members often became local kings mercenaries.
- This long historical tradition of tolerance still irrigates the behavior of the local Muslims and Hindus. It prevents Muslim organizations with a narrower interpretation of Islam from taking hold over the island. Thanks to the Balinese community up to now that FPI (Front Pembela Islam) is not yet penetrating the island.

Regarding the attitude of the local Moslem, it can be said that the Islamic precept: “your religion is your religion, my religion is my religion” was applied in an open way: Moslem and Hindu remained “separate” in matters of rites and religious practice: the Moslem had their mosques, often built with the help of the king; they had their own ritual and food-related practices; but in all other social, political and even cultural matters they shared their life alongside their Balinese brothers. This shows that among the Balinese Moslems the concept of ‘Kafir’ (miscreant) was not emphasized, and was certainly not given the negative connotation it now tends to have.

There are many examples of the ensuing cohabitation between Hindu-Balinese and Moslem-Balinese. In some villages, such as Banyu Biru in Jembrana, the local Moslems could still recently be seen helping their Balinese neighbors preparing platforms or other implements for an upcoming temple festival. This is due to their relatively recent conversion to Islam. They also

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4 Couteau, J 1999. Bali et L’Islam, Tribute to Denys Lombard, Archipel
consider the shrines of those temples as the residence of their pre-Moslem ancestors. In other parts of Bali, most notably in Buleleng, one can come upon shrines for the worship of Moslem ancestors, usually called Ratu Mekkah. Those shrines were made to honor Moslem visitors of the past, some of whom took provisional residence in local villages. They were usually traders or tabib (medicine-men). Now their visit has taken a legendary form, translated in the setting up of “Ratu Mekkah” shrines. They still put not pork offerings so as no fresh blood meal such as lawar.

The picture below shows on the night of 4\textsuperscript{th} February 2017, in Pacung village temple, a performance of Gambuh.

Picture No. 1 A Performace of Muslim as Tabib/traditional Doctor in Pacung Temple (4\textsuperscript{th} February 2017)
But there are many more signs of positive encounters between Islam and Bali. One can mention here the case of the village of Pegayaman, already mentioned above. The Moslems of this village descend from a group of soldiers “given” to the Buleleng king Panji Sakti at the end of the 17th century. They were settled in a forest area and mixed with neighborly Balinese to the extent that all now do have Balinese names. During the Jagaraga war of 1849, when the Dutch launched themselves to the conquest of North Bali, it was a Moslem from Pegayaman who organised the strategic defense of the kingdom. So this means that their primary loyalty laid with the local Balinese king.

One can also mention the syahbandar officials who dealt with foreign traders of all origins. Most were Moslems chosen by the king. They looked after taxes of imported goods and controlled the ways and manners of the local foreigners. The syahbandar had to be able to speaking high caste Balinese as well as Malay.

To further underline the above-mentioned remarks about Balinese tolerance, we should depict the condition of some traditional Moslem communities of Bali.

Regarding tolerance, on the Moslem side, we can notice that of the 12 important political parties, two of them, the most “orthodox” and “narrow-minded” Islamic parties, do not have a local representation in Bali: PPP and Bulan Bintang. It means they have no followers. We can notice an attempt at displaying tolerance from a party that is ideologically connected with Islamism and Moslem Brotherhood, such as the the PKS (Justice and Welfare Party), which did not hesitate to field four non-Moslem candidates in the last parliamentary election. It won three seats in the local council.

Those facts must take into account the composition of the population. A recent student thesis has shown that it was the Moslem from the Kampung Java in the city center of Denpasar that
made up most of their cadre, rooter and voters (Mahayadnya, 2015). This kampung Jawa, known as dusun Wanasari, has been a Moslem settlement since the 1920s. The city center has also witnessed an influx of Punjabi and other Moslem traders who settled in Jalan Sumatra in Denpasar next to the biggest textile market in the center of Denpasar. It can be noted that some Punjabi were also Sikh, which demonstrates a pattern of inter-religious tolerance.

POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS IN AN ACCOUNTABILITY CASE

Asshidique⁵ said that “Islamic city index can be seen as a correction for moslem leaders and clerics in order to work on their cities” to practice of Islam in term of humanity but not aqidah/credo of Islam.

Al Chaidar (1998) in his book entitled of “1999 Election and The Fight of Islamic Parties versus Secular Parties” had indicated that all political institutions are aiming at building an Indonesian civil society. This meant that the Moslem ‘ummah’ must define itself beyond religious affiliation, and beyond the politics of religion to take its own part in national development. The politics, including the politics of Islam, should follow those basic principles; those principles should be the main source of legitimacy. Within the same scope of understanding, the pursuance of Islamic values should respect and adapt to the local conditions that are deemed favorable. Hinduism in Bali, Animism in Papua and the likes in other parts of the country. In such contexts, the interpretations of the Qoranic text should rest on the principles that irrigate the whole text rather than on litteral and often contradictory statements found in such or such verses. In other words the interpretation should be contextual and tolerant toward other environments.

Further more, the fact that the PKS was one of the Moslem parties to have gained political support in Denpasar seems to confirm the tolerance both of the local society and of Islam in the context of Denpasar. Contrary to what Gede Gedzha Aldino Putra Mahayadnya, a young researcher from Udayana (2015), is stating, the fact that the PKS has representatives who are Hindu shows that the PKS is not stuck in the politics of identity. This is all the more interesting as the PKS, unlike other political institutions such as the PDIP and the GOLKAR (respectively the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle and the Functional Groups Party), is a cadre party in the sense defined by Duverger. It may have a strong following from the Kampung Java and other Moslem-dominated environments, but it goes beyond mere politics of identity.

In last 2014 national election, the PKS was able to put forward four non Moslems cadres, namely: Made Sutirta (Province parliemantary/DPRD Province), Komang Giri (District Council/Dapil II Blah Batuh), Ngakan Made Rai (District Council/DPRD Dapil I Gianyar) and Ni Nyoman Ayu Yudiani (District Council/DPRD Dapil II Belahbatu-Tampak Siring)⁶. This demonstrates a certain opening, but at the same time, the PKS did not object to having some if its followers participating to the massive anti-Ahok demonstrations in November and December 2016, following the Ahok’s ‘blasphemy’ affair. To go back into history, and before the Maarif Institute had devised its IKI or Index of Islamic City, for the 2009 elections, the PKS had


⁶ Antara, News.com PKS Punya Empat Caleg Hindu Bali
presented no less than 26 Christians candidates to fulfill the available seats at the district council level throughout Indonesia\textsuperscript{7}.

The strong competition existing in Indonesia between political parties has been discussed at length by Ben Anderson in his book, ‘Imagined Communities’, and defined as resting on an unending or permanent fights between the \textit{santri} and \textit{abangan} Moslems (orthodox Moslems and nominal Moslems). However, the pertinence of Anderson’s assertion was questioned by Donald K Emerson who, after doing some field research, argued that this idea of a competition between santri and abangan does not translate the actual reality. There are no real cultural and sociological boundaries between the so-called santri and abangan. This fluidisation of Islamist identity is probably the result of the improvements achieved in education during the late forty years all over Indonesia. There are much less uneducated Moslems now. And the madrasah or pesantr\text{e}n do not shape one single type of Moslems, not to mention that there are other ways, such as mosques tabligh, to spread Moslem teachings of one kind or another. It must be noted here it is not only Hindu Balinese who refuse the presence of the FPI (Front Pembela Islam) in Bali, but also all local Moslem institutions and associations of some importance.

Harold Crouch, a specialist on the Indonesian military and Indonesian politics in Indonesia was asthonished by what he saw of the ICMI (\textit{Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Indonesia}) during the Suharto era. He found that the ICMI elites who spoke in the name of Islam more often than not had little knowledge in the Islamic field. This is one of the mysteries of Indonesian Islam, to be sometimes represented and discussed by people with little Islamic knowledge.

But there are indeed other situations, when Moslem institutions play a prominent political role. We can mention here the role played by two biggest Moslems organizations of the country, namely NU (Nahdatul Ulama), arguably the biggest Moslem organization in the world, whose strength is mainly found in rural areas; and the more urban, and traders’ based Muhammadiyah. Both institutions can be classified as moderate, the first one by emphasizing the role of local culture in Indonesian Islam, and the second one by making a more modern, yet still moderate reading of the Islamic tradition. Both institutions have played an important role in stabilizing\textsuperscript{8} the Moslem communities in Denpasar whenever tensions occurred, like after the Bali bombings or following the Ahok’s ‘blasphemy’ affair. In Denpasar itself, at the peak of the Ahok affair, neither the Nadhatul Ulama nor the Muhammadiyah took side. They clearly did not encourage their members to go to Jakarta and take part in the November and December 2016 demonstrations. Regarding the political parties, in spite of its local moderate stance, the PKS allowed its members to demonstrate against Ahok. The local PDI-P did not object to the legal case, but discourage people to participate to demesntrations.

We must underline the role of Nhadatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah as providers of positive social capital for the Denpasar Moslem community: both are definitely instrumental in sustainly tolerance and security.

\textsuperscript{7} Voa Islam.com Non Muslim di Tubuh PKS Edisi 21 Octobre 2010
\textsuperscript{8} Kompas, 12 September 2016
AHOK SUPPOSED BLASPHEMY OF THE AL MAIDAH QORANIC VERSE CASE

Table 1: Attitude of the Parties/Moslem Organisations From BALI regarding the 4-11 and 2-12 Mass Demostrations

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The table above gives attitude and the response of political parties members so as Islamic Institutions in Bali regarding the Ahok Blasphemy affair. By negative response; it means that the party or organisations are againsts Ahok and think that he has proferred blasphemy against Islam. By positive response, it means that the party or organisation think that Ahok is innocent and has never been blasphemous. By No Action means that the parties and organisation mentioned above think that no action should taken againsts Ahok even to attend the massive demonstration in Jakarta during November and December 2016.

The reading of the table shows that parties and moslem organisations from Bali are all staunch defenders of tolerance and enhance of welfare and happiness based on peacefull inter communal cohabitations.

CONCLUSION

To conclude this paper, the position of Denpasar with regards to Islamic Index is based on two things. The first one is the historical openness both religious and socio-cultural of the local Balinese traditions. The second point is that outside actors such as national parties and moslems organisations have always had and still have a moderate and open attitude toward Balinese and their tradition in spite of the differences between religions. Tolerance thus prevail. It showed recently with regard to the Ahok affair.

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