

RELIGION AND POLITICS IN BALI: BALANCING TRADITION AND POWER

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ABSTRACT. Ritual ceremonies are the core and main thing in the life of Balinese Hindu society. Ceremonies have become part of everyday life that cannot be separated from Balinese life, and ceremonial rituals become the main needs that must be fulfilled as Balinese Hindus. Ritual ceremonies greatly influence the power system that exists in Bali. The growing political trend is that religion has become a key instrument in gaining political support. The purpose of this research is to look at the relationship between religion and the state in the context of local politics in Bali. This research is a qualitative research with literature review technique that examines various relevant literatures. The data used is secondary data derived from journals, websites, newspapers, and archival reports related to the object of research. The data validity technique uses data triangulation which aims to compare different data sources, so that the data produced is valid. The results show that the relationship between religion and the state lies in the attractiveness that religion offers in the electoral process. Balinese Hinduism provides room for politicians to exercise influence. Religious politics that is able to accommodate the ideological and economic needs of society through ritual ceremonies is seen as being able to become a powerful weapon to achieve political support.

Keywords: Religion; Balinese Local Politics; Political Patronage

ABSTRAK. Ritual upacara merupakan inti dan hal utama dalam kehidupan masyarakat Hindu Bali. Upacara telah menjadi bagian dari kehidupan sehari-hari yang tidak dapat dipisahkan dari kehidupan masyarakat Bali, dan ritual upacara menjadi kebutuhan utama yang harus dipenuhi sebagai umat Hindu Bali. Ritual upacara sangat mempengaruhi sistem kekuasaan yang ada di Bali. Tren politik yang berkembang adalah bahwa agama telah menjadi instrumen kunci dalam memperoleh dukungan politik. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk melihat hubungan agama dan negara dalam konteks politik lokal di Bali. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kualitatif dengan teknik tinjauan pustaka yang mengkaji berbagai literatur yang relevan. Data yang digunakan adalah data sekunder yang berasal dari jurnal, website, surat kabar, dan laporan arsip yang berkaitan dengan objek penelitian. Teknik keabsahan data menggunakan triangulasi data yang bertujuan untuk membandingkan sumber data yang berbeda, sehingga data yang dihasilkan valid. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa hubungan antara agama dan negara terletak pada daya tarik yang ditawarkan agama dalam proses pemilu. Agama Hindu Bali memberikan ruang bagi politisi untuk memberikan pengaruh. Politik agama yang mampu mengakomodir kebutuhan ideologi dan ekonomi masyarakat melalui ritual upacara dipandang mampu menjadi senjata ampuh untuk meraih dukungan politik.

Kata Kunci: Agama; Politik Lokal Bali; Patronase Politik

INTRODUCTION

The political development in Bali from each period of leadership has always changed. During the monarchy system, political power was fully controlled by the king. The king's power was so fascinating, which was influenced by his strong charisma, charming, attractive, able to unite and organize the life of a society (Marbun 1996, 29). The king's power was absolute, in which the king had the power to determine all political, legal, and economic policies. The king's power was central, so that all soldiers/government officials were an extension of the king's power (Moertono 2017, 7).

In Thomas Hobbes *The Leviathan*, it is stated that the absolute power of the king is necessary to eliminate the misery of the people. Hobbes considered the human condition without a leader would create suffering for humans themselves. According to Hobbes, the state must be a *Leviathan*, a monster feared by its people, anyone who dares to

oppose the rules of the state risks getting the death penalty, besides that the state must be strong in order to avoid war, anarchism, divided power, and the state of power (*Leviathan*) is the best form of state (Dorelugu 2019). And the state will be sovereign only by having absolute power (Juliyanto 2022, 14).

Bossuet also introduced the divine right of kings. Divine right implies the belief that God gives kings the authority to control all aspects of people's lives. In his work entitled "Politics according to the Scriptures", Bossuet asserted that power was transmitted by God to the king (Riley, (1990)). Opposition to the king's authority, then, is the same as opposing God's command. The monarchy system essentially emphasizes the absolutism of the king's power in controlling the wheels of government. For Bossuet, monarchy is the most legitimate form of government, and the king is likened to the representative of God in the world, the image of the living God, and occupies the throne of God (Kristiyanto 2005, 217).

The power system owned by kings in Bali is influenced by ritual ceremonies, which aim to bind the loyalty of the people to their leaders. This power influenced by ritual ceremonies is also written in Clifford Gertz's work entitled *Negara Teater*, where in his writing Gertz emphasizes that religion is a source of political legitimacy from kings in Bali. Political legitimacy based on religious power is still practiced in Bali, and often religion becomes a political instrument that influences the political preferences of a community. In Gertz's view, the power system is subordinated to a cultural system that has magical-spiritual power, and is hegemonic (MacRae 2005, 394-95). The work of the theater state also emphasizes that the administration of government in Bali is closely related to ceremonies which are the main focus of state administrators (Pramana 2016, 22). During Soekarno's leadership, the *puri* still had political influence and had an important position in the orbit of power in Bali (Suwitha 2015, 112).

During the New Order, the pattern of leadership in Indonesia changed to centralized under Soeharto's control. All policies in the regions, including Bali, followed what Soeharto planned, known as *Repelita* (Five-Year Development Plan). The Golkar Party was a political party that always tried to succeed the New Order government program (Pramana 2015, 66). Every election held, the Golkar Party became the winning party, defeating other parties. The Golkar Party became a single majority that was able to defeat other political forces (Nisa, Na'im, and Umamah 2017, 142). However, it cannot be denied that the New Order government still needs political support by the elites in the regions, one of which is the *puri*. The power of the *puri* lies in its ability to attract the masses from the conquered area (Suryawan 2021).

During the New Order, the *puri* became an extension of Soeharto's interests in the regions, and it was not uncommon for *puri* figures to emerge who were close to Soeharto. After Soeharto was ousted, the formerly centralized power system turned into a decentralized power system. This decentralized system triggered the emergence of total independence for each individual (Libardi 2021). The reformation order became a momentum for local elites in Bali, including the *puri* to restore their lost political power. In Bali itself, patterns of power influenced by religion are still practiced by some elites to win votes during elections. *Puri* in Bali itself has a political modality that comes from its investment in religion and culture. *Puri* in Bali is still respected and seen as important in maintaining the order of religion, culture and customs in Bali. Religion is one of the factors that influence political decisions. Therefore, the *puri*

is one of the actors that is very calculated in political contestation.

In the field of religion, several *puri* in Bali are very active in carrying out ritual ceremonies that involve large numbers of people. *Puri Agung Denpasar* alone has carried out a mass *nyekah* ceremony attended by 271 participants (Widiastuti 2023), and at the same time carried out a mass tooth cutting ceremony attended by 214 participants accompanied by thousands of people from various regions (Widiastuti 2023). *Puri Agung Ubud*, which is located in the Ubud village, also held a mass *ngaben* ceremony attended by 68 bodies from four *banjars* in the Ubud village such as Banjar Ubud Kaja, Banjar Ubud Tengah, Banjar Sambahan, and Banjar Kelod Peken (Kompas 2008).

The *ngaben* and *nyekah* ceremonies are the main procession and must be carried out by all Balinese Hindus to return the spirit (subtle body) to the creator, and purify the *pitara* spirit to become a *pitara* god. Both ceremonies are classified as *pitra yadnya* ceremonies, which are a manifestation of devotion to ancestral spirits in order to get heaven and deliverance (Aliyah 2003). The assistance provided by *puri* not only helps the community in carrying out their obligations as Balinese Hindus, but also helps ease the economy for those who participate in the ceremony.

In the field of culture, the role of *Puri Agung Ubud* is familiar, where the *puri* is very actively involved in various cultural activities, such as organizing Ubud Royal Weekend (URW) activities, staging dances in the *puri's ancak saji*, where these arts and culture activities indirectly bring income to artists in Ubud, and the *puri* family is also actively involved as a customary village administrator in the Ubud environment. The various roles of the *puri* in religious and cultural activities have led some of its elites to obtain political positions such as regional heads and legislative members. *Puri Agung Denpasar* figures such as Cok Ratmadi served as Badung regent from 1999 to 2005 and was a member of DPD for the 2014-2019 period. There is also Anak Agung Gde Ngurah Puspayoga who served as Mayor of Denpasar for the period 1999-2004, once as Deputy Governor of Bali in 2008-2013. *Puri Agung Ubud* figures such as Cok Ace served as Regent of Gianyar in 2008-2013, and has served as Deputy Governor from 2018-2023. In addition, there are names such as Cok Ibah who has served as a member of the Gianyar DPRD and the Bali Provincial DPRD.

Some previous studies that discuss the relationship between religion and the state (politics) can be seen in the writing of (Adhikari 2019) entitled

“Religion and Indian Politics”, which in his writing explained that the issue of religion has always been a central issue in political dynamics in India. Political leaders in India use religion as a political instrument to obtain public office, and also to smooth their business interests. In the Indian state, the attraction that religion offers in the life of the state is its ability to influence the political ideology of society. Political ideologies based on religious dogmas are seen as capable of being used to gain public office.

Furthermore, an article from (Baggett 2020) entitled “The Relationship between Religion and Politics in a Globalizing World”, explains that the relationship between religion and the state is seen from the influence of religion in influencing all aspects of human life. In his writing, it is emphasized that the political decisions a person makes can be influenced by divine values that are upheld as a central element in a person’s life. An article by (Salahu 2023) entitled “Politics, Religion and Electoral Outcomes in Nigeria: The 2023 Presidential Election in Perspective” explains that religion will always be a determining factor in voting behavior in elections. In Nigeria, religious political movements originating from Muslims and Christians are an important political force in winning votes in the 2023 elections. Religion is seen as necessary to be involved in the political process, in order to be able to contribute to the progress of the country.

In essence, some of the previous studies agree that the relationship between religion and the state (politics) lies in the appeal of religion in influencing a person’s political ideology. Religion is seen as capable of influencing a person’s belief values, because it contains religious dogma or God’s revelations. The ability of religion to build ideological power is what determines the survival of religion in the midst of modernization today. Meanwhile, this paper seeks to offer a novelty related to the relationship between religion and the state, where religion turns out not only to have an appeal from its ideological side, but religion also has an appeal from its economic side. The ability of religion to build ideological and economic ties is what determines the survival of religion in a modern world, so it is not uncommon for religion to be involved in a political process.

This research wants to explain that religion does not only have ideological power in influencing people’s political preferences. But religion has economic power in helping the community’s economy, and this economic power is the key power of religion in political activities. The *puri elite* is an example of how this religious and cultural entity transforms into a political entity that has a

major influence on the community’s economy. The relationship between religion and the state is so strong due to the attractiveness offered by religion in the midst of modernization. The focus of this research is to discuss how religion provides an ideological and economic attraction to contemporary Balinese society which leads to the achievement of certain political interests.

METHOD

This research is a qualitative research with literature review technique, which seeks to synthesize several relevant papers. This research was conducted systematically, structured, and sourced from various relevant literature reviews. The theoretical basis used is Peter L. Berger’s theory of political religion and James Scott’s theory of economic patronage. Berger’s theory is used to explain the relationship between religion and the daily life of a community. Religion is seen as a culture that has been passed down from generation to generation and is based on dogmatic teachings that guide human life. In Balinese Hindu society, religion is related to non-material and material things. Non-material refers to prayers or mantras, while material refers to ceremonial infrastructure as a form of devotion to *Ida Sang Hyang Widhi*. And these material elements are often used as political instruments to influence the political preferences of the Balinese people.

Scott’s theory is used to explain the dependency effects caused by religious politics carried out by politicians. This dependency effect is motivated by economic motivation caused by various assistance for ceremonial infrastructure (*banten*) or (*dana punia*), repair of *banjars* and other infrastructure that supports traditional ceremonial activities of the Balinese Hindu community. In this research, the type of data used is secondary data, which comes from databases in the form of journals, books, newspapers, internet sites, and archive reports related to the research topic. The data validity technique used is to use data triangulation, which is triangulation sourced from different data. This triangulation aims to verify the data used in order to obtain valid results.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Religion and Political Ideology of Society

Religion is an important element in the life of Balinese Hindu society. Religion provides guidance for an individual in realizing his devotion to God (*Ida Sang Hyang Widhi*). In Berger’s theory, it is explained that the absence of religion will cause human life

to be filled with uncertainty, and misery. Humans are living beings who are full of vulnerability, full of uncertainty, and their lives are not perfect. Humans need to construct the reality that exists in their environment, in order to be able to create the meaning of life for humans themselves, including understanding right and wrong actions. In Berger's view, the world is a man-made product (Hjelm 2019, 226), therefore humans must create a life order for their survival. Berger views that religion has a major influence in shaping human knowledge and behavior. Humans understand that the perfection of their lives can be achieved by following religious rules, and carrying out religious teachings in accordance with their beliefs. Berger's thesis in (Nabil 2022, 846) regarding secularization was declared wrong by him, and he stated that other regions were more religious than the previous period.

The Balinese Hindu community in implementing religious teachings is based on the Tri Hita Karana principle of life, which means the three causes of happiness. It contains *parahyangan* teachings which means balancing relationships with God (Ida Sang Hyang Widhi), *pawongan* which means balancing relationships with fellow humans, and *palemahan* which means balancing relationships with nature (Adhitama 2020, 35). The concept of Tri Hita Karana is realized in the daily lives of Balinese Hindus, which is practiced in religious ceremonial activities. Ritual ceremonies in the lives of Balinese Hindus have become the everyday life of the Balinese themselves, it can even be said that since humans were born until they went to the creator all through ritual ceremonies. The implementation of Balinese Hinduism is not only enough with prayers containing mantras, but must also be equipped with infrastructure that supports these religious activities, for example *banten*. This ceremonial infrastructure is the core of Balinese Hindu rituals, and often this ceremonial infrastructure becomes a commodity fought for by political elites in gaining political support. Ritual-based politics in Bali involves cultural elites as its pawns, and is supported by its liaisons (Suryawan 2012, 317).

Respect for the existence of the *puri* is still held firmly by most Balinese Hindus, who in their belief that the *puri* is a cultural heritage from the ancestors that must be respected and preserved. Even the Balinese themselves have the belief that the *puri* (king) is the incarnation of God who is given the mandate to govern society. The king is seen as a representative of God with the power to lead the people. This belief concept is called *Dewa Raja*, which means an understanding that views the king as

a God (Sudrajat 2012). The concept of this belief is still believed and passed down from one generation to another, and a form of community respect for the *puri* is by carrying out *ngayah* (dedication) activities which are carried out sincerely to assist the implementation of religious ceremonies in the *puri*. The *ngayah* culture itself is understood as a form of obligation of Balinese Hindus which is a reflection of the karma marga teachings, and is carried out sincerely and gotong royong (Pitriani 2020, 158).

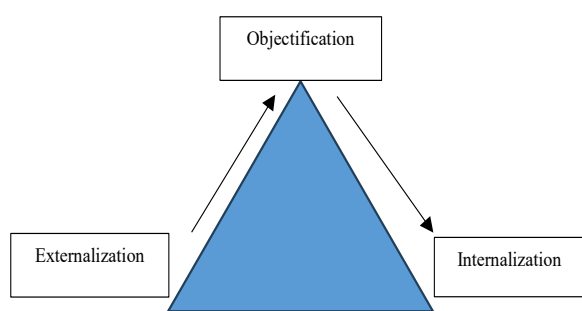
Puri plays an important role in the life of Balinese Hindus, especially in the implementation of religious ceremonies. In ceremonial activities, the *puri* is often involved as the head of major ceremonies (*pengraja karya agung*), where the role as *pengraja karya* is an asset that strengthens the existence of the *puri* (Panuju 2019, 78). The duty of the *puri* in its capacity as *pengraja* is to assist in the smooth running of a large ceremony (*karya gede*). *Puri* is also placed as *penglingsir*, who is asked for advice and input regarding the implementation of the ceremony. It is not uncommon for the *puri* to also play a role in making donations (*dana punia*) either in the form of money or goods that are needed in large ceremonial rituals. The assistance provided by the *puri* certainly economically alleviates the costs required in the implementation of the ceremony.

Puri Agung Ubud is a *puri* that often provides assistance for ceremonial infrastructure needed by a traditional village. *Puri Agung Ubud* organizes several mass funeral ceremonies that are attended by the community around the *puri*. People who participate in the mass *ngaben* ceremony are charged a small fee, and other costs are borne by the *puri*. *Puri Agung Ubud* is also often asked for help by the Ubud community to make improvements to *sesuhunan* (*bhatara*/God) who resides in a temple. In addition, material assistance related to the financing of ceremonies during the *piodalan* ceremony at the temple which is also becoming *puri* family responsibility has often been done by *Puri Agung Ubud*.

Ceremonial activities are a core and main thing in the life of Balinese Hindus. For Balinese Hindus, the ceremony is a form of devotion to God (Ida Sang Hyang Widhi) known as the concept of *yadnya*. The concept of *yadnya* means sincere offerings to Ida Sang Hyang Widhi. *Puri Agung Ubud's* assistance is often given to help the community in carrying out *Dewa Yadnya* ceremonies such as *piodalan*, *ngodak sesuhunan*. *Yadnya* is an obligation that must be done by Balinese people, as a form of gratitude for what God has given so far. The routine of the *puri* in providing ceremonial assistance is what will later

relate to the electability of the Puri Agung Ubud elite who are running in the election.

Religious politics aimed at helping the implementation of religious ceremonies is the same as helping the community fulfill their obligations as Balinese Hindus. Several puri in Bali are active in ceremonial activities, both as *pengraja* *karya* (chief of large ceremonies), or donors in the form of money, ceremonial facilities, or contributions of ideas that have high value in the eyes of the community. Social modalities that originate from ceremonial rituals have become the key for several puri elites to be able to achieve political office. Berger's theoretical framework which explains the process of internalizing religion as an important commodity in politics can be seen in the following image.



Source: (Berger & Luckmann, 1991)

Figure 1. Berger's Dialectic Theory

Berger's dialectic process can explain how the ideological attraction offered by religion fulfills the obligations of the Balinese Hindu community. (1) The externalization stage is a condition where the puri as an elite culture still plays an active role in ceremonial and customary activities in Bali. Cultural hegemony through a series of ceremonial rites causes the position of the puri to be so dominant in the midst of community life. (2) The objectification stage is the stage where the hegemony of the puri culture becomes a social reality of society, even becoming a cultural norm that cannot be changed. Furthermore, (3) The internalization stage is the stage where individual humans and communities who adopt these cultural norms create an understanding that sometimes cannot be explained logically. This internalization process ultimately creates a social structure where the presence of the puri is seen as something commonplace, and its presence is needed to maintain the traditions of the Balinese Hindu religion and culture. This modality of religion and culture is an important capital for the puri elite to enter the world of politics.

The dialectic process can provide an explanation of how the cultural hegemony carried out by the puri through large ceremonial rituals has a positive impact on the existence of its elite in the political

arena. Ceremonial rituals become the opening door for political elites to plant their influence in the midst of society. In Berger's theory, religion is a balancer of human life to avoid uncertainty and destruction. Therefore, religion still has an ideological appeal for some communities, especially in Bali. Religious practices in Bali are manifested in ceremonial rituals that symbolize the devotion of its people to Ida Sang Hyang Widhi. This is a space for politicians to plant their political influence.

Religion as an Instrument of Economic Patronage

In the context of politics, religion becomes an important instrument for puri elites running in elections. Puri elites who advance in politics must have political investment in the community. The various ceremonial assistance that the puri has provided to the community has an economic value that binds the community's loyalty to the political wishes of the puri elite. The puri places itself as a patron with all the economic resources it has to help the community in fulfilling its needs related to ceremonies. The community as clients will never be able to repay the puri's services in material form, but they can only repay with loyalty to the wishes of the puri family. This is where a patron-client relationship pattern will emerge that can be utilized for political purposes. The advanced puri elite has a clear basis for approaching the community, because of the role of the puri which often helps to succeed major ceremonies, and assistance in supporting infrastructure for ceremonial activities. According to Osakwe (2007) in (Elekwachi and Ufomba 2024, 4) patron-client relationship patterns are also seen in employment politicization activities based on the principle of political patronage by certain political classes.

Puri Agung Ubud also often helps repair temples that are places for Balinese Hindus to carry out worship activities. This temple repair assistance can not only be interpreted as a way for the puri to help the community fulfill their obligations as Balinese Hindus (ideological ties), but this assistance is interpreted as a way for the puri to ease the cost side (economic ties). This ideological and economic element is an opening door for the puri elite who run in politics later. In addition, this temple repair assistance is continuous, where the relationship between the puri and the community will never break, because if a ceremony is held at the temple, the puri family will usually be involved. So that the patron-client pattern of the puri and the community will still exist and be stable in the frame of religion.

Puri also plays a role in helping the community's economy through cultural tourism, such as the Puri Saren tourist attraction. In some countries, this puri tourist attraction is better known as palace tourism (Ni Made 2011, 2). This Puri Saren tourist attraction is interpreted as a way for the puri to help people who work in the tourism sector. Puri Saren is a symbol of Balinese Hindu religion and culture, where the location of this puri is open to foreign tourists. Puri Saren tourism is so well known by the international world, but this tourist attraction does not simply eliminate the sacred and ethical values of the puri itself. The existence of Puri Saren tourism indirectly helps improve the economy of a region. Puri Saren will become an economic epicenter, which drives the economy and opens new jobs for the community. Religion as an important instrument in influencing people's political ideology, must also be supported by the influence of religion in driving the community's economy.

According to James Scott's thinking, patron-client patterns can be formed due to several things, namely the first inequality in the ownership of economic resources (Scott 1972). Puri as a relic of the monarchy era still has assets with high economic value. In addition, there are puris in Bali that have business octopuses in the hospitality sector such as Puri Agung Ubud. The economic resources owned by the puri cause the puri to be able to help the community in fulfilling its main duties related to religious ceremonies. The second is the mutual trust between patron-client (Scott 1972).

Patron-client relationships can be formed and will last, if each party has a sense of mutual trust that has been established for a long time. This mutual trust is the main foundation of the relationship between the puri and the community in Bali. Furthermore, the third is that the relationship is flexible and can lead to other aspects of life (Scott 1972). In this case, besides the puri as a symbol of the implementation of the ceremony, the puri is also a cultural symbol that serves to preserve Balinese customs and culture. So it is necessary to underline that the religious and cultural roles that have been carried out by the puri have an impact on the economy of a society. And the political investment that has been carried out by the puri, will be a strong capital for its elites who compete in the political arena. To see James Scott's theoretical framework regarding patron-client, it can be explained in the image below Figure 2.

The picture above can explain that the patron-client relationship built between the puri and the community is based on religion, where the puri often helps the community in fulfilling the infrastructure

needed for ceremonial and customary activities, such as helping to repair temples, helping to repair wantilan, *banjar* and various other ceremonial activities. Economic investment through ceremonial instruments is one of the main keys that brings the elite of the puri and the community closer during the election moment. Puri in Bali with various modalities that they have play a role as a patron who is always willing to help the community, both materially and non-materially related to religious ceremonies. The community that is helped feels indebted to the puri, and in return they submit their loyalty, loyalty to the puri as a form of serious commitment. This economic value is what ultimately becomes an even stronger binding force between the puri and the community.



Source: (Eschbach, 2018, p. 43)

Figure 2. Patron-Client Theory

In previous studies there are similarities in seeing the relationship between religion and the state (politics), where religion is seen as having an attraction that lies in the ability of religion to build an ideological bond. Religion becomes an important instrument in influencing people's political ideology, because it contains belief values, religious dogmas that people believe come from God's revelation. Meanwhile, this research offers a novelty in seeing the relationship between religion and the state, where religion turns out not only to have an appeal from the ideological side, but also religion has an appeal in building an economic bond to a society. In addition, this research wants to offer a political approach that comes from the values of Balinese Hindu beliefs. The political approach of the puri elite in Bali is an approach based on the values of local wisdom of Balinese Hindus, and this approach requires trust, loyalty from each party.

The uniqueness of this research lies in the political approach used by political elites in gaining political support. The political approach taken by the puri elite in Bali must be understood as a form of social investment that has been instilled in the community. In addition, the puri elite has several modalities that distinguish it from other political elites, where the puri elite has a symbolic modality that comes from historical values that are so respected by Balinese

Hindus. Symbols and language are theoretically able to influence people's attitudes (Sipa, Wadi, and Fahrurrazi 2021, 39). Titles of nobility, the caste system is still strongly preserved by most Balinese people, and this is why the value of symbols is still important in politics. Even the caste system in Bali is seen as a social system of Balinese society that is strongly influenced by traditional thinking (Alit 2023, 10). Next is the economic modality that comes from various wealth assets that are still controlled by several puri in Bali, and this is an important capital to help the community in ceremonial activities.

The religious politics carried out by the puri elite in Bali itself is based on the philosophy of Tri Hita Karana, which helps facilitate the needs of the community related to balancing the relationship with God (Ida Sang Hyang Widhi) through assistance in temple repairs, piodalan, ngodak sesuhunan, *pengrajaeg karya agung*. The meaning behind the assistance can not only be understood in an ideological context, but the assistance can also be interpreted in an economic context. Puri helps repair the temple of a Pakraman village, for example, the community that is helped feels indebted to the puri family for contributing to facilitating the obligations of the community as Balinese Hindus, and besides that the puri economically helps to alleviate the costs incurred by the community in the repair.

The political approach derived from the Balinese Hindu belief value is very unique, because the approach is by building temples, helping in the procession of *ngodak sesuhunan* ceremonies, providing dana punia, which is a political approach that is not found anywhere in the world. Religion in this study has two important elements that can influence people's political preferences, namely religion has immaterial value and material value. The immaterial value of religion lies in the philosophical and ideological values within it, while the material value lies in the economic value of the ceremonial infrastructure that must be issued by Balinese Hindus. According to (Norris, Pippa 2004) in her book entitled *Sacred and Secular: Religion and Politics Worldwide*, it is stated that the presence of religion in human life has provided a sense of existential security. Humans try to construct and interpret life through religious teachings. The absence of religion will cause human life to experience vulnerability, misery and anxiety in living their lives in the world.

In addition, religion is still in demand due to the economic value offered in the midst of the current era of modernization. The pattern of assistance provided by the puri itself leads to a patron-client model, where the puri provides assistance to a certain community

in the form of money, goods and services. The community as *pengayah* will never be able to repay the puri's kindness, but their loyalty is needed when the puri elite advances in the political stage. This pattern of patron-client relationship must be based on commitment, mutual trust from each party. And the relationship between the puri and the community has been established for a long time since the monarchy era, and this relationship is still ongoing because the puri consistently helps the community around the puri, in terms of organizing ceremonies, and some assets owned by the puri are used to open businesses, residences, rice fields and tegal which are cultivated by the farming community where the results are given to these farmers as their livelihood.

CONCLUSION

The appeal of Balinese Hinduism lies in its ideological and economic power that can be used for political purposes. These two elements of political power can be seen in a ritual ceremony. Often politicians or puri elites provide ceremonial assistance, both material (*dana punia*) and non-material (*pengrajaeg karya*). This assistance can be interpreted as helping the Balinese people fulfill their main obligations as Balinese Hindus and at the same time helping the community economically through the provision of ceremonial facilities and infrastructure. The appeal of Balinese Hinduism is what opens the door for politicians and puri elites to gain political support.

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