FROM ISOLATION TO INVISIBILITY – WEST BALI, EAST JAVA AND THE BUGIS DIASPORA [1]

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As stated in my abstract this paper seeks to contribute to discussion of 'the evolving nature of the nation state' in Indonesia. The following paper concentrates on relations between the gateway territories of West Bali and East Java that are divided by the Bali Strait. The focus is on West Bali as a peripheral yet strategic place in Bali, and how a Bugis presence there has shaped its history.

After the nightclub bombings of 2002 in Bali local Balinese interests instigated and promoted the Balinese ethnic movement known as *Ajeg Bali* (Naradha, 2003, Titib, 2004). This continuing movement that has been widely discussed by many commentators (Allen&Palermo, 2004; Ida Bagus, 2007; Reuter, 2005; Santikarma, 2003; Schulte Nordholt, 2007; Suryawan, 2004) resolved to strengthen a 'traditional' ethnic identity that equated Balinese ethnicity with Balinese Hinduism. Ajeg Bali stimulated the rebirth of a proto- religious identity that had been enforced by central government edict but by the end of the twentieth century and the end of Suharto's New Order regime was wracked with caste and class differences (Pitana, 1999). Uniting under the banner of Ajeg Bali enabled local Balinese powerbrokers and to some extent the general population to deal with their compatriots who were not

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only ‘not Hindu’ but were Muslim and representative of real threat in a ‘post-bomb’ world.

As a consequence of the bombings, the arterial ferry port at Gilimanuk that links West Bali with East Java came under intense scrutiny because the bombers had entered Bali by that route. This port is located in the far northern reaches of the Jembrana Regency in West Bali some 35 kilometres from the local capital Negara, and 120 kilometres from Kuta where the bombings took place. Local Jembrana police were ordered to supervise the previously unremarkable inter-local traffic between Bali and Java. A culture of mutual suspicion developed between the Balinese authorities and arrivals from Java, even when the arrivals were residents returning to Bali. Bali’s western border was on high alert as the local police checked identity cards, number plates of private vehicles and bus passenger lists. The porous regional border crossing at Gilimanuk was temporarily sealed and from the outside at least West Bali was reconstituted as a liminal, buffer zone explained by the newly articulated dichotomy of Balinese therefore Hindu and not Hindu therefore Muslim. Although many other religious groups are represented in Bali, only the Hindu-Muslim dichotomy was pervasive at this time.[2] Curiously no attention was paid to the inter-local fishing traffic that operates off beaches all the way along the western coast and particularly out of the river-mouth port of Perancak only twelve kilometres from Negara town. This lack of interest is significant because it illustrates internal social contradictions in West Bali that are explained by its history.

The Jembrana Regency in West Bali shares the Bali Strait with the Banyuwangi Regency in East Java. Both places have limited articulation within national discourse as poverty-stricken rural backwaters, far from sophisticated urban modernity and in fact providing a constant migrant labour force for more developed areas in Indonesia and overseas (Hugo, 2007).[3] West Bali was the only regency in Bali bypassed by the international tourist boom prior to the bombings. In many ways development in West Bali and East Java or lack thereof, is symptomatic of the prevailing social conditions that present problems for modern Indonesia - physical

[2] Schulte Nordholt (2007:39-40, 60) discusses the strategies used to marginalise Muslim immigrants from Java, referred to as ‘sweepings’.

[3] There was internal displacement in the 1970s when West Bali was swamped with factory workers from East Java and Madura, and Jembrana residents joined transmigration schemes to far flung islands in the archipelago (Ida Bagus, 2006: 116). In the 1980s West Bali particularly provided farm labourers to Japan. Since the Bali bombings many tertiary qualified Balinese hospitality workers have found work on cruise ships outside Indonesia.

isolation, few employment opportunities, and lack of cohesive authenticity because these areas represent murky cultural zones, in this case the crossover between Islam and Hinduism. West Bali hosts a large Muslim population and East Java is home to an increasing number of local Hindus who form the local congregations of temples developed and often visited by Balinese pilgrims. These areas are problematic because they are far from their central polities and have large socially isolated populations increasingly dependent on remittance money and subject to ideas and influences that bypass local and even national expectations of citizenship.[4]

My own anthropological research in West Bali conducted over the past decade[5] required a backward look at representations of Jembrana histories and particularly those representations that have been embraced by local Balinese. The idea of 'local' was immediately problematic because of the ethnic diversity of the area. The cacophony of voices telling histories is supported by mnemonic, material manifestations that ground memory and compete as alternative and often complimentary versions of local truths (see Ida Bagus, 2006). According to Balinese Hindus in Jembrana their dichotomous partners in settling Jembrana were the Muslim Bugis from Sulawesi, often referred to as *anak Bajo* and *anak kampung*, and historically associated with the area known as Loloan.

Loloan as a counterpoint to Hindu Jembrana:

Loloan used to be a small inland river-port representing the first serious settlement of Bugis seafarers in the Jembrana region. By the end of the eighteenth century, the presence of these interlopers forced the local Hindu polity to re-establish its centre close by and Puri Negara was born (Ida Bagus, 2006:92-93). Eventually this area became the capital of the regency, Negara. Local histories illustrate that changing allegiances over the last three hundred years have resulted in cooperation and conflict between Balinese locals and their counterparts in Loloan. These Balinese locals have always been the representatives of other regimes nestled further into Bali, or at least further away from Java, namely Mengwi, Badung and Buleleng-Karangasem (see Schulte Nordholt, 1992, 1996; Worsley, 1972). In spite of a mixed ethnic population, Loloan has always been associated with its original inhabitants the Bugis (Suwitha, 1996). Loloan is Muslim and the majority of the rest of the population of Jembrana

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[4] Muslims from East Java and West Bali who work as domestic servants in the Middle East are exposed to local cultural practices that impact on their identities as practicing Muslims.

[5] I began formal research in Jembrana in 1998 but I have had a long association with this region since my marriage to a Jembrana resident in 1981.

are Balinese Hindu. Whenever political strife erupts in Jembrana by necessity fluid Jembrana identities sharpen and religious identities dominate. Loloan as only one of many smaller Muslim settlements in Jembrana is always the reference point for division along religious lines because it is seen as the core urban centre of Islam with remnants of distinctive architecture and in some parts distinctive language and dress.

Loloan is no longer a port. The river was diverted in the 1970s and the port itself was filled in for residential development. Marooned inland twelve kilometres from the sea, Loloan has survived as the heartland of Muslim education and identity, a busy micro-community of religious boarding schools (*pesantren*)[6], mosques, sacred gravesites (*keramat*), boat builders, horse and cart (*dokar*) drivers, *tempeh*, *semprong, keripik* and *bakso*[7] makers who produce and trade their specialist goods all over the regency. The services and goods that originate in Loloan are produced to a lesser degree in the scattered Muslim fishing communities on the coastal fringes but Loloan represents an identifiable centre for Muslim activities. The significance of this place in the Jembrana psyche cannot be over estimated because the capital Negara developed out of Loloan and not vice-versa. Loloan has remained a vibrant, parallel presence in the area dominated by Balinese Hindu symbols of local citizenship.[8]

Loloan as a Balinese place:

Loloan is all the more curious because historically it is associated with the Bugis diaspora, rather than migration from East Java across the Bali Strait. According to mytho-histories some important migrants did make the crossing from Java, particularly ancestral prophets (Mpu) who purportedly brought Hinduism across the Bali Strait to Bali between the twelfth and sixteenth centuries (Rubinstein, 1991). These Mpu continued on into the heartland of Bali. From the sixteenth century onwards the outpost called Jembrana in West Bali served the political needs of the various Balinese kingdoms that controlled the kingdom of Blambangan in East Java. By the seventeenth century Loloan was already an established port and well-known

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[6] The only *pesantren* for females on Bali is in Loloan (Ida Bagus, 2006:206).

[7] These specialist foods are always produced by Muslims and relished by local populations, Hindu and Muslim alike. Soya bean cake *(tempeh*) is a universally popular cheap source of protein, sweet coconut wafers (*semprong*) are used throughout West Bali as party food, cassava chips (*keripik singkong*) are sold as far as Denpasar, and meatball soup (*bakso*) is enjoyed from food carts throughout the villages. The Krama Bali Bakso phenomenon (see Schulte Nordholt, 2007:60) that urged Hindus to eat pork ball soup in place of Muslim *bakso* was short-lived and unpopular in Jembrana.

[8] Examples of such symbols are Hindu shrines and ceremonies at all Government buildings, including police stations and schools. Conversely this Muslim presence has influenced local Hindu engagement with esoteric material culture usually associated with Islam, particularly sacred gravesites (*keramat*) (see Ida Bagus, 2006)

enough in Blambangan to be named the adoptive childhood home of the famous anti-Dutch freedom fighter Surapati (Kumar, 1976). Surapati, also known as the 'Balinese slave', was exposed to a 'Balinese' world in Loloan[9] that was Bugis and non-Hindu and this world had become a wedge between the Hindu polities of Blambangan and the derivative Jembrana realm and its overlords elsewhere in Bali.

By the eighteenth century, Blambangan the last Hindu kingdom in East Java was under pressure from the Dutch (*kompeni*) from the west and established Bugis interests from the east (Oetomo, 1987). The Bugis diaspora at this stage had fought its way through Sumbawa, Lombok and Bali, with a major outpost in Blambangan (Hägerdal, 2001). The pattern in Loloan and Blambangan was familiar. Trade networks developed into defended settlements – Jembrana histories mention that heavily armed ships arrived in Loloan and the Bugis occupants erected a fort, in spite of orders from the local ruler to disarm. This is reinterpreted as cooperation with the local polity (Reken, nd) although clearly as described also in Babad Blambangan (Oetomo, 1987:61), Bugis fighters established and vigorously defended their trade monopolies throughout the archipelago.

It may seem irrelevant to be revisiting these histories but I am attempting to establish an understanding of how the Bugis came to be so influential in Jembrana. The historical relationship between Loloan and the rest of Jembrana is symbiotic – the threat of Bugis control of the Bali Strait was obviously a threat to Balinese interests in the eighteenth century, just as it became problematic for the Dutch in the nineteenth century after they had pacified all of Java as well as North and West Bali. Even after the Dutch placed the first of a series of regents on the Jembrana throne in 1849, Bugis characters from Loloan were involved in the manipulation of political outcomes in supporting and opposing the various successive contenders (Ida Bagus, 2006).

Bugis in Loloan continued to influence Jembrana politics well into the twentieth century. This was never more evident than during the 1965/66 communist purges and particularly the attacks on Puri Negara, the pre-eminent local ruling house at that time. According to the official Puri Negara history, the palace (*puri*) was ransacked and male members murdered by mobs from Loloan with the help of opposing royals from a village called Tegal Cangkring (Parintosa & Suryawan, 1984).

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[9] This is according to one version of three Javanese chronicles (*babad*) discussed by Kumar. Importantly this *babad* from East Java describes the familiar world of inter island trade and West Bali is represented by Loloan and Bugis traders (see Ida Bagus, 2006).

The local Bugis presence had persisted in defiance of Puri Negara that had after all been established to counter Bugis influence in the region. Since the 1920s members of Puri Negara had been heavily involved in the copra and rice trade, no doubt negotiated through close marriage ties to local Chinese trading families. By the 1960s these consortia based in Puri Negara also had the monopolies on ice production and secondary processing industries. The purges of 1965/66, known locally as 'Gestok', destroyed the powerful ruling dynasty and also wiped Jembrana off the political radar because it had been heavily communist. At that time Jembrana experienced a wave of violence from across the Bali Strait that according to local commentators was filtered via Loloan when residents of Loloan had joined forces with anti-communist Ansor mobs from East Java (Ida Bagus, 2006a). Loloan became a mediation point for mob violence whipped up by anti-communist propaganda and masquerading as religious fervour.[10]

The abolitionists:

The Bali Strait that divides Bali and Java represents both threat and opportunity, exposing the landfall region of West Bali in particular to the full brunt of inter-island dialogue and experience. Hägerdal (2002) referred to West Bali as both "periphery and bridgehead", suggesting the tension created between physical isolation from central Bali and the potential for expansion through close proximity to Java. Schulte Nordholt (2007) described Bali as "an open fortress", emphasising that membership of the Indonesian national federation implies a threat to authenticity and a struggle to maintain specific ethnic identity. Ida Bagus (2006) likened the effects of contact between West Bali and East Java to "a litmus test" for Balinese experience, although in recent years the human traffic has passed straight through on the way to 'Kuta' to service tourism and infrastructure needs, rarely stopping in West Bali. Following this recent pattern Jembrana was also bypassed when bombs were detonated to destabilise Bali as safe tourist destination.[11] In any case, over time West Bali has been variously isolated and reincorporated into a variety of broader political schema that have pulled it further into Bali, further into Java and further into nation state membership.

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[10] There was plenty of this same fervour within Balinese Hindu communities where fellow villagers committed most atrocities. The point here is that Loloan was perceived as impervious to the purges and complicit in a pact with East Java. This enduring perception may have been convenient to alleviate collective Bali Hindu memory when the tortures and killings were over.

[11] This is only one of the many reasons for and outcomes of the bombings but this is not the place to extrapolate further.

Since the colonial Dutch first established western education in Indonesia, Balinese have crossed to Java for higher education not available in Bali (see Djelantik, 1997). Jembrana has produced two politicians who were educated in Java and later gained notoriety beyond the western region. Both characters ignored the localising features of Jembrana and Bali in their secular bipartisan approach to politics and both have suffered for their attempts to shed parochial identities.

The first Balinese Governor of Bali, Anak Agung Sutedja came from Puri Negara and represented the first generation of modern Indonesian Republicans (Robinson, 1995). In spite of his royal birth he was a staunch supporter of land reform and although not an active member of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) was suspected of harbouring communist sympathies. Having been educated on Java he was a nationalist at heart and looked to modern education as the key to development in a post-colonial world. He disappeared in Jakarta during the communist purges of 1965-66 and is presumed murdered. His high profile within the nation state was expunged and the heavily communist Jembrana, once proud of this successful native son, was also cowered during the subsequent New Order Regime.

In the year 2000, at the end of the New Order Regime during the period known as Reformasi, another figure emerged from the political ranks in West Bali (Schulte Nordholt, 2007:48-49). Pak Gede Winasa, the current Regent (Bupati) of Jembrana serves his constituency on a reformist platform. Like Sutedja, Pak Winasa was tertiary-educated on Java and developed a strong Indonesian identity from living amongst his non-Balinese compatriots (de Kansas, 2003). For both men the issue of caste was an impediment to modernity. For left-leaning Sutedja caste hegemony was usurped by secular political nationalism, although he himself was born royal in Jembrana as a result of his caste.[12]

Pak Winasa came to the fore as a member of the *Pasek* Movement that demands the abolition of caste differences in the non-secular ritual domain (Pitana, 1999). In 2000 when he was first controversially named Bupati of Jembrana, he visited all the local Brahmana priests with his own non-Brahmana priest by his side to explain his position on modernised state sponsored rituals.[13] Pak Winasa is a work in progress now into his second term as Bupati Jembrana, this time elected by popular

[12] Sutedja was the son of Jembrana's last anointed Raja and should have inherited that title (Parintosa & Suryawan, 1984).

[13] I was present at one of these meetings in a Brahmin compound in 2000.

vote on a platform of free education and medical care for Jembrana residents. His success at implementing Regional Autonomy and raising the profile of Jembrana along with his own at a national level failed to win him the Governorship of Bali in 2008. His five freedoms (*lima bebas*) platform was daring – free education, free healthcare, freedom from poverty, freedom from unemployment and freedom from corruption - and appealed to the aspirations of many Jembrana Balinese, who also favoured him as a representative of the strong *pasek* movement. He ran last in the Gubernatorial election for other reasons.

The Winasa reformist platform extends to his personal life. His high profile wife Ibu Ratna Ani Lestari, a Muslim from East Java is also the Bupati of Banyuwangi, across the Bali Strait in East Java. In the post-bomb Ajeg Bali climate this marriage between a Balinese Hindu and a not-Hindu and therefore Muslim has serious ramifications.

Repeating history:

The dream team of husband and wife Bupatis straddling the Bali Strait divide has historical precedent in the fortuitous association with mythological history and with Pak Winasa's own mythological apical ancestor Dang Hyang Bang Manik Angkeran (Sumarta, 2006:260), whose Balinese son married an East Javanese daughter spawning the Arya Pinatih, a Bali-wide Pasek group. In this case Pak Winasa and his East Javanese wife represent an idealised historical preference for Jembrana-East Java relations.

West Bali and East Java are both gateways into their respective islands and these abutting islands are distinctive for their religious differences above all else. In pre-Dutch times the Eastern Salient of Java was not yet Muslim and represented the remnants of a great Hindu-Buddhist culture. In this new millennium, if Bali is packaged as Hindu then Java, with the largest population of Muslims in the world is definitely Muslim. East Java has always been the home to assimilated Islam, represented by the Nahdlatul Ulama but this is increasingly fraught with reformist and rationalising influences (see Campbell & Connor, 2000), as was obvious in the religious boarding schools (*pesantren*) that radicalised the 'Bali bombers' who all hailed from East Java.

A continuing furore around the religious allegiances of both Bupatis has been unrelenting. In Bali, Pak Winasa a *pasek* Hindu is accused of being secretly Muslim (Patung, 2008). In East Java Ibu Ratna Ani Lestari is accused of being Hindu or at

least not truly Muslim through her marriage to Pak Winasa (Patung, 2006). According to Indonesian marriage law Ibu Ratna, a registered Muslim could only marry a fellow Muslim because Islam only recognises marriages between fellow believers. This fact is not lost on Jembrana locals who have seen many Balinese males marry Muslim women and convert to Islam. One village close to Loloan, Desa Kombading is named for such conversions and throughout my fieldwork I came across cases of male converts to Islam as well as female converts to Hinduism through marriage and vice versa. In a post-bomb Ajeg Bali world ambiguous religious allegiance is impossible because religion as Hinduism defines Balinese ethnicity.[14]

Back to the Bugis:

Whilst there seem to be obvious connections between East Java and West Bali, history tells us that the Bali Strait was always a strong psychological and physical impediment to mass migration in either direction. The Bugis settlement in West Bali was born out of necessity, a strategic place from which to defend trading interests that stretched into the Blambangan realm of East Java. West Bali was also strategic for local Balinese polities who had continuing interests in East Java. Loloan came to represent a Bugis wedge that impeded Balinese access to East Java. Over three hundred years Bugis and Balinese battled for control of the Bali Strait from the insignificant outpost of Jembrana. Ultimately they lost to the Dutch although they continued the battle by manipulating favour with their colonial Dutch overlords.

The Bugis presence in Jembrana has faded into the background as a new battle rages across the Bali Strait. The modernising Regents of Jembrana and Banyuwangi with their secularising mission of universal education and healthcare and their erstwhile defiance of non-secular interests represent in many ways ‘this Asian century’. Unfortunately their progressive ideas on public policy and their inter-religious marriage may have come at a bad time.

The Bali bombings exacerbated a sense of urgency about the loss of Balinese identity and the pressures of both national and global citizenship. The Balinese promoters of the Ajeg Bali movement identified a disturbing imbalance in Balinese relationships with their place. Other interest groups have also taken up the cause to ‘save’ Bali, including a movement by western ecologists to name the whole of Bali a

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[14] Religion as Islam also increasingly defines East Javanese identity.

World Heritage Site in order to protect the fast depleting natural resources of the paradisaical island.

Bali as a product of the touristic gaze will always be represented as a place that needs to preserve and maintain a certain type of identity and environment (Picard, 1995). The Ajeg Bali movement in many ways reflects this static image of Bali. The histories shared between West Bali, East Java and the Bugis diaspora tell us a lot about Balinese experience that is invisible within the Ajeg Bali discourse. Cooperation and conflict between various ethnic and religious groups reflect the archipelagic nature of Indonesia. With their ambiguous religious allegiances the reformist Regents of West Bali and East Java also pose a threat to Ajeg Balinese security in a post-bomb world. Bali is resistant to a national development agenda that elides ethnic and religious difference. The preference for religious chauvinism and parochialism in the Ajeg Bali message seems safer and more attractive to a population of voters under extreme pressure to maintain a specific ethnic and religious identity within a nation state that is perceived as increasingly hostile.[15] The politics do not always reflect this social uncertainty.

As two Bupati's work to normalise relations between West Bali and East Java using a secularist platform, for Balinese Hindus in West Bali, Loloan and Islam loom as warning spectres of a continuing religious divide. Loloan is deeply embedded in Jembrana history and landscape, a microcosm of the nationally dominant discourse of Islam that is threatening to swamp local sensibilities. So far Bali has failed the 'litmus test' represented by innovation on the part of the married Regents of Jembrana and Banyuwangi.

[15]The national anti-pornography laws (*UU Antipornografi dan Pornoaksi*) that have been mooted for some time in Jakarta have their roots in fundamentalist Islamic attitudes concerning moral behaviour and have caused widespread protest in Bali (see Suardika, 2007).

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