



The Identity of Places of Worship as a Means of Spiritualism and Political Propaganda in Indonesia

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Abstract

Indonesia has a unique and diverse religious landscape, with differences in religious life due to the spread of religion assimilated by local culture. This study aims to explain the identity of places of worship as a means of spiritualism in Indonesia. In addition, how are places of worship also possibly a means of disseminating political propaganda. This study used a literature review research methodology through data collection techniques involving reviewing books, relevant literature in academic writings, notes, and various reports related to the article theme of Identity of Places of Worship as a Means of Spiritualism and Political Propaganda in Indonesia. It is known that a place of worship is a gathering place for people who seek to practice their beliefs and their faith, therefore such facilities are vital for inter alia, various religious practices and beliefs to be exercised. However, this maybe different if the existence of a place of worship is used as a means of practical political propaganda dissemination. Places of worship can have two sides of interest, namely first, places of worship are an effective means of spiritualism and spirituality for adherents of religions in self-healing related to psychological and divine values. Spiritualism is the metaphysical belief that the world is comprised of at least two fundamental substances, matter and spirit. There is of course also spirituality which connotes that people recognize and have a feeling or sense or belief that there is something greater than oneself, and thus a lot more to being human than only sensory experiences, and especially that the greater whole of which people are part and parcel, is in essence cosmic or divine in nature. Second, places of worship may also often be abused and



used as a means of political propaganda spreading which is carried out intentionally and consciously to strengthen the intention of a political attitude or is an opinion desired by certain parties or even politicians.

Keywords: Places of Worship, Spiritualism, Political Propaganda

Introduction

Worship is a gathering place for people who believe in their beliefs and practice their faith, so all houses of worship as facilities are essential for various religious practices and beliefs (Sadeghiyan, 2016). In Indonesia, five religions are recognized, namely Islam, Christianity (non-Catholic) and Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism, all of which are included in the constitution, which guarantees freedom of religion and worship for all citizens, including the means of worship (Yunus, 2014). The recognition of these five religions is reflected in various aspects of Indonesian society. For example, religious subjects are taught at all levels, from elementary to tertiary institutions, to access religious facilities so as to worship (Febriani et al., 2020).

Multiculturalism and pluralism are reflected in Indonesia as the principle of national unity, known as "Unity in Diversity." The motto was written as the umbrella of the country and state in the Republic of Indonesia, and it means, "Even though we are different in religion, race, ethnicity, language, and culture, we are integrated in unity under the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia." "Unity in Diversity" has a genuine meaning as a power source to unite the Indonesian nation's divisions. This statement is taken from Empu Tantular's 14th-century "Sutasoma Book" in Javanese Hindu literature (Kawangung, 2019; Lukito et al., 2022).

Even so, each religion has various perspectives in viewing the existence and function of their respective places of worship, which are contained in the table below:

Table 1. Perspective of Places of Worship Based on Religious Verses

Religion	Perspective of Places of Worship Based on Religious Verses
Islam	"And remember when We placed Ibrahim in place of Baitullah (while saying), "Do not associate Me with anything and purify My house for those who are tawaf, those who worship, and those who bow and prostrate." (Q.S Al-Hajj: 26).
Christianity Catholic/Protestant/other	"He came to Nazareth where He was brought up, and according to His custom on the Sabbath He entered the synagogue and stood up to read from the Bible" (Luke 4:16).
Buddha	"Do not insult or hurt, can control oneself according to the rules, has middle attitudes in eating, lives in a quiet place and is active in cultivating a noble mind; This is the Teaching of the Buddhas. (Verses About Buddhas Are Found In The Sixteenth Chapter, Buddha" Vagga, Dharmapada: 185).
Hindu	"The body is purified by water, the mind is purified by truth, the soul is purified by sacred teachings and asceticism, the intellect by true knowledge." (-MD V. 109)
Confucianism Konghucu	The poem "Don't be distracted in life, wherever the night flies, the sky is high, look at the jungle where sentosa is a bird, but you know him. Where is the shelter that is safe and peaceful, People who are virtuous, self-realized, don't be distracted in life. Seek peace remove evil. Build lofty and true, Do not worry friends run everything. As long as your determination is strong, it will be carried out for sure." (Wei De DongTian)

Source: Data processed by the author, 2023

Indonesia has a unique and diverse religious landscape, with differences in religious life due to the spread of religion assimilated by local culture. Thus, places of worship in Indonesia can be used to carry out spiritual activities that can strengthen the relationship of people with God. This study aims to explain the identity of places of worship as a means of spiritualism in



Indonesia. Besides that, how are places of worship used as a means of political propaganda dissemination, especially during a time of elections in Indonesia.

Methodology employed

This paper employed a literature review research method (Zed, 2008). Using data-gathering methodologies, a review of books, academic articles, literature, notes, and numerous publications linked to the article Identity of Places of Worship as a Means of Spiritualism and Political Propaganda in Indonesia was conducted. Here are some things to think about when conducting library research: (1). Data source: The data utilized in library research was secondary data, which is information gathered from textual sources such as books, journals, reports, and so on. (2). Data sources: the data sources in library research were be reliable and relevant to the research topic. (3). Data gathering procedures in library research included reading and studying written sources related to the research issue. (4). Data analysis in library research was done by reading and studying written sources related to the research topic and extracting essential information from these sources (Yuen and Franzini, 2017).

Results and Discussion

The Identity of Places of Worship as a Means of Spiritualism -a brief historical overview

Islam uses a building facility known as a mosque; this building is used for communal worship in Islam. Mosque architecture has evolved throughout history and faced some dramatic changes. Mosques are one of the most important buildings for Muslim communities to gather for their prayers and social activities (Asfour, 2016). The main components of the mosque include: (1). Mihrab is a niche in the wall of the mosque that shows the direction of Mecca, which way Muslims face when praying. (2). Pulpit: The raised platform or pulpit where the priest delivers the sermon or speech. (3). Prayer area: The main area of the mosque where Muslims gather to pray. (4). Ablution room/fountain: A room or fountain where Muslims perform ablution before praying. (5). Primary and secondary entrances: The main entrance to the mosque and any additional entrances. (6). Imam's residence: Some mosques may have the residence of an imam or Bilal, who leads prayers and supervises the mosque and manages the mosque (Ghochani & Mousavi, 2022). In addition to these main components, other features, such as domes, minarets, and decorative elements, vary depending on the particular mosque's cultural context (Zahroh, 2022).

Islam spread to many parts of the world through various means, including propaganda, commerce, and political power. Islam spread peacefully through preaching and the work of religious leaders in many areas of the world. For other places where the spread of Islam was achieved peacefully, it boils down to the excellent character of Islam, which calls for restoring human dignity and civilization (Idris, 2022). Trade is vital in spreading Islam such as West Africa and Asian regions such as Indonesia and Malaysia. Islam was introduced to the population of West Africa through trade in the 8th century CE (Badrudin et al., 2021).

In addition to trade, political power also played a role in the spread of Islam when Muslim dynasties expanded their territory and changed the local population's beliefs, such as the Zoroastrian Sasanian state power that had been incorporated into the Islamic caliphate (Sahner, 2021). The spread of Islam was facilitated by using Arabic as a common language for religious and scientific purposes. The spread of Islam was not uniform across regions, and some areas were more receptive to the religion than others. The spread of Islam was influenced by geography. By the 8th century CE, Islam was no longer a religion of the Arab world alone, expanding geographical boundaries along the Silk Road. Conversions are often the result of economic considerations and financial benefits given to those who join the faith. With an ecologically similar area to the Arabian Peninsula, it is more likely to accommodate Muslim communities (Michalopoulos et al., 2012). However, now, Indonesia is the largest



adherent of Islamic teachings in the world, with nearly 180 million people in the country who have Muslim identities (Ode et al., 2023).

Christianity and its major denomination, Catholicism, use the facilities of the Church, which is a building for Christian religious activities, especially Christian worship for people the Orthodox Church term the 'nation' of God (Nicolaidis, 2010). Whether Catholic or Protestant, or other Christian denomination, the Church is a Christian worship building that accommodates the spiritual activities of its congregation; this is a gathering place for a community of people who believe in Jesus Christ as their saviour and God and gather together in a place to worship and listen to God's words (Liputra et al., 2020). The Church has been an important institution in Christianity since its formation and has played an essential role in shaping Christian belief and practice. Besides that, the Church opposes Christian heresies by fighting heretical teachings, such as agnostic teachings, that try to poison human thought so they do not believe in God and distort the truth (Damanik, 2018). Another function is to deal with domestic violence; namely, the Church is responsible for overcoming the problem of domestic violence, including violence against women in the context of marriage. The Church can provide services and assistance to wives of victims of domestic violence as a manifestation of God's work that embraces, heals, cares for, loves and empowers (Susanta & Putra, 2022).

The church can also play a role in the public political space which can be an active role in public political spaces as a form of 'evangelism' in politics. The church can bring peace through its people and is not dominant in public spaces as it could be (Siregar, 2021). Different parts of the church building serve different functions, such as the sanctuary. This is the main worship space where the congregation gathers for services. It is usually located at the front of the building and may contain an altar or pulpit, which is reduced in size for a view towards the sky, often using a window high above the altar (Wilson, 2012). Additionally, the pulpit is the area around the altar in a holy place where the priest and choir sit during the service. It may also contain a sacristy or crypt to prepare for services. The pulpit is usually located at the front of the church and is often ornately decorated to reflect the importance of the message conveyed (Ganiel, 2021). This may differ in various denominations of course.

Further, the nave is the central area of the Sanctuary where the congregation sits during services. It may also contain an aisle, transept, or side chapels. This small adobe structure is a single-nave building consisting of the central nave, a bell tower located on the facade, two external wooden galleries and ancillary units such as a sacristy, a chapel, and two service areas (Briceño et al., 2019). The sacristy is a room near the sanctuary where robes, vessels and other items used in worship are stored; this sacristy is used as a waiting room or particular preparation room for priests or priests (Riana et al., 2020). In addition, the bell tower if there is one, is a tower that contains bells that are used to call people to worship. It can also serve as a landmark for church buildings. Christians use a bell to signal the time of worship, usually tolled three times. Bells were first used in the Orthodox churches around 200 CE and in the Catholic church around 400 CE and are thought to have been introduced in Italy, based on Orthodox practices, by Paulinus, Bishop of Nola, a town in Campania, Italy. In Italy its use spread rapidly and it was used to gather people for religious events and as a warning when there was a danger (Sasioba et al., 2018).

Further, Niche: This is a small niche in the wall that can be used to display statues or other religious objects. Apse: This is a semicircular or polygonal extension at the end of a church, often containing the altar. Windows and doors: These provide lighting, ventilation, and access to the church. Portal: This is the grand entrance to a church, often decorated with elaborate carvings or sculptures. The decoration: This is the stone decoration at the top of the Gothic window, which consists of a delicate braided design.



In Catholic churches we find further that, cladding may be present. This refers to decorative moulding frames windows, doors, and other architectural features. Rib vaults and their annexes are structural elements that support the church's roof. Sedilia refers to is the chair for the priest, often located on the south side of the pulpit. Further a cornice: is a decorative moulding that runs along the top of a wall or column. Pillars are vertical supports that help hold up the roof and other parts of the building. Each of these elements contributes to the overall design and function of the church building, creating a sacred space for worship and contemplation (Higham, 2020).

With the spread of Christianity from 1534 CE onwards, Portuguese Catholic priests began to spread Catholic teachings to the native populations in lands where they colonized rather actively. By the end of the 16th century CE, about 20% of the population of southern Moluccas were classified as Catholics. In eastern Indonesia, where the Portuguese established Catholic settlements, two other locations are Larantuka (on the island of Flores) and Dili (on the island of Timor). However, clashes occurred between the Portuguese (who wanted to monopolize the spice trade) and the people of Ternate. This seriously reduced the Portuguese influence in the Maluku Islands (Indonesia-investments.com, 2023).

Buddhism has a place of worship called the Pagoda. Vihara, Temple or Pagoda is a terraced building like a tower usually associated with Buddhist temple complexes in the East Asian region. It is a multilevel tower-like structure made from various materials, such as wood, stone, or brick (Robbins, 2016). Pagodas or Cetiya are often used to store relics or sacred objects and may serve as places of worship and meditation. In the Pācityādiyojanā Pāli, cetiya is as a thūpa, the Sanskrit equivalent of a stupa. They are made of bricks and worshipped because some remains of dead monks are enshrined in them (Sarao & Long, 2017).

The Cetiya are classified into Srraka, Pribhogika, and Uddesika. First, Srraka, which means cetiya or pagoda, is where the Buddha's or his great followers' relics are kept. Second, Pribhogika refers to locations and artefacts associated with the Buddha, such as Bodh Gaya and Bodhi trees. The third category is Uddesika, which refers to cities where Buddha statues are stored so people can remember them (Sarao & Long, 2017). Pagodas can be found in many Asian nations. While many stone constructions like this one exist in Japan, pagodas and Buddha statues are the most well-known. Stonecuts dating from the second half of the 13th century are common throughout Japan. In terms of type and absolute number, there remain some stone pagodas from the Heian period (794-1185) and earlier (Sat, 2021).

Buddhism is an old religion that started in India and is based on the life taught by Siddhartha Gautama; Buddhism has a great history throughout Southeast Asia, where it was practised long before recorded history began (Tamney, 1998). Different monuments give tangible proof, and the core of Buddhism ingrained in the region's socio-cultural practices provides intangible evidence (Gupta & Verma, 2021). Buddhism has spread over Asia, Europe, and America over time. The growth of Buddhism is usually attributed to two main factors: patronage by governmental elites who encouraged missionary activity in the Indian subcontinent and elsewhere and the support of religious communities. Furthermore, the economic assistance of merchants has been one of the most powerful social groups in the Buddhist Hinayana community since the Buddha's time (Hawkins, 1999).

The many stages of the expansion of Buddhism as an institutional religion reflect the distinct manifestations of these two elements. For the first time in history, the Mauryan Empire combined most of the Indian subcontinent under a coordinated political and regulated administrative system. In the case of Buddhism, this evolution was followed by extensive missionary operations supported by the ruling class of the Mauryan empire, which encompassed practically the whole Indian subcontinent while involving almost no commercial groups or moving beyond India (Hawkins, 1999). The various stages in expanding Buddhism



as an institutional religion reflect the specific expressions of these two variables (Strauch, 2019). Buddhism has also expanded to other countries due to Bhrikuti's contribution to the expansion of Buddhism in Tibet. In modern terms, Bhrikuti Day will serve as a 'Brand Ambassador' for Buddhism in Tibet (Rana, 2017).

Hinduism uses the means of the temple as a place of worship. Temples are places of worship for Hindus, especially in Bali, inhabited by adherents of Hindu beliefs. Pura Langgar, also known as Penataran Agung Dalem Jawa Bunutin Temple, is a Hindu temple complex; however, inside, there is a small prayer room for Muslims which, if Muslim tourists visit and want to worship, and the symbol represents the spirit of Hindu-Islamic brotherhood, in Bali and is essential in building multiculturalism in Indonesia (Flood, 1996). In addition, Puri Agung Karangasem is a palace in Bali that applies the concept of a blend of cultures in its architecture, combining Balinese, colonial and Chinese influences (Hendrata & Saliya, 2023). Finally, a hotel resort in Kuta, Bali, adopts a neo-vernacular approach to its design, which includes modern, environmentally friendly materials such as Palimanan stone, ironwood and shingle roofs.

In Hinduism, there are no regular days for worship (Parpola, 2015). Different deities are associated with various days of the week and might be remembered on that particular day. Worship is less formal than other types of religious worship, and attendees are free to come and go as they wish. Hindus frequently worship in the morning or evening, whether at home, in temples, or on pilgrimages. Hinduism is the most ancient religion and the first religion known to humans (Flood, 1996).

Hinduism is a religion that has given rise to a very complex culture in the fields of astronomy, agriculture, philosophy and other sciences. Due to the broad and detailed coverage of Hinduism, it is sometimes difficult to understand (Bakar, 2012). Hinduism (Sanskrit: Sanatana Dharma of Eternal Truth) and Vaidika Dharma ("Knowledge of Truth") are religions that originate in the Indian subcontinent. This religion is a continuation of the Vedic religion (Brahmanism), which is the belief of the Indo-Iranian (Aryan) people. This religion may have existed as early as 3102 BCE. and 1300 BCE and is the oldest existing religion in the world.

Hinduism is the third largest religion in the world after Christianity and Islam, with nearly a billion people (Parpola, 2015). Hindus mostly live in the Indian subcontinent about 90% of followers of this religion. This religion was once widespread in Southeast Asia until around the 15th century, to be precise, until the fall of Majapahit—the Spread of Hinduism in Indonesia. Since then, this religion has been replaced by Islam and Christianity. Currently, the majority of supporters of Indonesian Hinduism are Balinese and, at the same time, the largest on the island of Java, Lombok, Kalimantan (Dayak Kaharinga tribe), and Sulawesi (Toraja and Bugis-Sidrap).

Confucianism, also referred to as Ruism (Nylan, 2008) is a system of thought and behaviour originating in ancient China, and is a tradition, philosophy, religion, a humanistic or rationalistic religion, a way of governing, and also a way of life (Yao, 2000). Confucianism developed from the teachings of the Chinese philosopher Confucius (551–479 BCE) (Littlejohn, 2010). Confucianism's adherents use the Confucius shrine as a means of worship, also known as the Confucius shrine, which is a place of worship for Confucius and other vital religious figures. Displays of personal items that once belonged to Confucius and places described in his biography powerfully evoked the ancient sage in scholarly pilgrims visiting his home area and temple in Qufu, Shandong (Murray, 2014). The teachings of Confucius are one of the oldest religious and philosophical beliefs in the world. The philosophy and religious system are based on the teachings of the great Chinese philosopher, namely Confucius or in Mandarin, Kong Fuzi or Kongzi (Yao, 2000; Nylan, 2008). Kong Fuzi is thus also a nickname for Confucius. In ancient China, the word "zi" at the end of a person's surname was an honorific



title for that person. Confucius real name was Kong Qiu alias Zhong Ni. He was born in 551 BCE in the state of Lu. His father was a warlord and died when he was three, and his mother died when he was 26. Confucius lived during the Chunqiu period in Chinese history (Yao, 2000). Confucius lived in the country of Lu, which was the most advanced in culture compared to other countries. Confucius died at 72 in 479 BCE (C Dewi, 2021). In Indonesia until now, there have been 6 (six) Confucius Institutes spread across various cities. The capital city of Jakarta, Indonesia, is centred on the UAI (Al-Azhar University of Indonesia) campus under the name PBM (Mandarin Language Center).

The core of Confucius' teachings lies in ethics and morals that regulate human relations according to their respective statuses and guidelines for everyone to behave and act in work and life. Confucius' moral teachings contain elements of human wisdom such as Ren (humanity), Yi (virtue/justice), Li (methods/rules of action), Zhi (knowledge), Xin (integrity), Zhong (loyalty), Xiao (respect for parents), Gong (to be honourable), Yong (to be brave), Chi (to be shy), Liang (to be kind), Cheng (to be honest), Lian (cleanliness), Wen (to be chivalrous), Shu (to be forgiving), Zhengming (adjust) (Yao, 2000). Guided by the above commendable qualities, chaos in society can be overcome, and in turn, the country can return to running peacefully and orderly. In social life, Confucius' teachings say, "Don't do things to other people where you don't want similar actions from them." At the government level, Confucius emphasized the need for every ruler to act based on humanity (Ren) and justice (Yi) so that his people would still be loved and obeyed. If a king can rule a country, he can conquer the world.

Places of Worship as a Means of Political Propaganda

Diverse religions must stand for justice but should not raise any demands as a religious community and then not at the cost of other religions. In addition, all political leaders should also safeguard that religion is not used as a medium of domination, repression and discrimination over other faiths. All religions should have a more or less equal response to all religious conflicts or demands made by states when these threaten people and nature.

In some case studies, the role of political communication through political propaganda is inextricably linked to houses of worship. Propaganda is the manipulation of critical symbols to manipulate group sentiments. The term attitude is defined as a proclivity to act predictably. Attitudes do not arise directly from experience but through conclusions drawn from cues of conventionalized significance (Lasswell, 1927). Propaganda is the deliberate use of communication by one group in society to affect the views and behaviour of others.

Propaganda frequently employs symbols, rhetoric, and emotional and illogical components of human sensitivities (Lilleker, 2006). For example, "The Beginnings of Political Islam in Switzerland: The Muslim Brotherhood Mosque in Geneva and the Swiss Authority" in 1960, led by fugitive Muslim Brotherhood leader Said Ramadan. The Swiss government approved the initiative because it was supported by various pro-Western Arab countries that had resisted Nasser's Egypt (Rickenbacher, 2020). The case "Political Misuse of Hagia Sophia as a Missing Object from the Conquest of Istanbul" demonstrates how Islamist nationalists in Turkey utilized the 1453 conquest of Istanbul as political propaganda. The Hagia Sophia in Istanbul is a source of contention because of its dual status as a prayer hall (mosque) and a secular venue (museum) (GÜR, 2023).

In the modern age, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Turkey's present President, was inaugurated at the Hagia Sofia Mosque. The Campus Da'wah Movement (Tarbiyah Movement) after that spread through campuses. Initially, Saudi Arabian and Egyptian alums carried out this activity through Friday prayers, talks, and informal forums. The Tarbiyah Movement is carried out by students from the Bandung Institute of Technology and students from other universities in Indonesia (Fadilah et al., 2020). Mosques in Indonesia are inextricably linked to the



sociopolitical dynamics of various Islamic groups or organizations, including Nahdlatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah, and hardline groups outside of formal government institutions (Putrie et al., 2018).

In Renaissance Venice, the Church employed all available resources to fight the unbelievers, including posters, flyers, and brochures by Christian monks announcing a Christian victory against the Muslims. Visual narratives support and reinforce such propaganda (Rakic, 2017). To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation on Christian Land Reform, Luther's 1520 CE thesis urged the princes of the German kingdoms to join in church reform. He cited various attacks on the Papacy's excesses and the entire Roman ecclesiastical establishment, particularly those functioning in Germany, as evidence of the need for such a reform. He also articulated a detailed and bold proposal for church reform for the first time (Pietsch, 2014).

During Hitler's time of leadership in Germany (1933-1945), Nazi propaganda bolstered the National Socialist cause and captivated the German youth. Nazi indoctrination bred racial hatred and virulent anti-Semitism. The Gleichschaltung (coordination) program brought state governments, professional groups, German political parties, and many cultural bodies under Nazi control, resulting in "captured" entities in education, the legal system, and the whole economy (Nicolaidis, 2018). Germany was dominated by a powerful propaganda machine that ruled nearly every aspect of society. The Protestant and Catholic faiths played essential roles in this instance (Nicolaidis, 2018) which sadly ultimately led to the extermination of millions of people in concentration camps. The Nazis wanted the subordination of the church to the state. Many Nazis viewed Catholics as being unpatriotic. Kershaw stated that the Nazis believed they needed to replace class, religious and regional allegiances by a "massively enhanced national self-awareness to mobilize the German people psychologically" for the coming struggle and war" (Kershaw, 2000: 172). Cornwell (1999) in his book *Hitler's Pope: The Secret History of Pius XII*, argues that Pope Pius XII, both prior to and during the Nazi period, assisted in the legitimization of Adolf Hitler's Nazi regime in Germany, through pursuing the agreement of a Reichskonkordat in 1933. Cornwell says that the then pope did not do enough to try to stop the Holocaust.

At that time, in Romania, non-political institutions played a decisive role in stemming the spread of totalitarian ideology. The Roman-Catholic clergy of Timișoara Diocese acted as a counter-ideological element and, therefore, a symbolic social protection force against the increasing pressure of National Socialist propaganda between 1930 and 1944 (Panu, 2019).

According to the Church Law Centre In the Unites States of America,

Churches and other 501(c)(3) organizations have been prohibited from supporting specific political candidates since the passage of the Johnson Amendment in 1954. The Internal Revenue Code provides that, by definition, 501(c)(3) organizations do not "participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distributing of statements), any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for public office... A substantial part" of a 501(c)(3) organization's activities may not be directed at influencing legislation (including regulatory rulemaking). A church is allowed to take positions on issues that are important to it and its congregation. Such "issue advocacy" can even touch on topics that are central to a political campaign without running afoul of the rules. But the line between issue advocacy and candidate endorsement is often blurry, and churches need to think carefully about how their specific context may affect the appropriateness of devoting significant resources or time to an issue that may be construed as partisan. (Church Law Center, n.d.)

The Press Trust of India recently advised that The Election Commission of India had requested political parties and religious leaders in that country to to desist from using places of worship



for propaganda dissemination during the Lok Sabha polls and also not indulge in activities that would likely lead to political tensions between different castes and communities. The BJP requested it to make available special observers at mosques to thwart any attempts to "polarise voters on religious lines" during the elections (India Today. 2017).

In such a political context, the Catholic Church, as part of the Indonesian nation, is called upon to be involved in efforts to support and develop democracy for the realization of shared prosperity (*bonum commune*). The Second Vatican Council in the *Apostolicam Actuositatem* (AA) -1965 (Cheyney, 2011), document strongly encourages the Church to participate in improving and perfecting the world. The Church is not only sent to convey the news about Christ and distribute His grace to the people, but the Church must participate in pervading and perfecting the world order with an evangelical spirit (Cheyney, 2011),

In Indonesia, to be precise, the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election was the latest political event heavily loaded with the politicization of religion, which also had implications for political polarization (Sembiring et al., 2023). The Al Mайдah case that imprisoned Basuki Tjahja Purnama is the primary evidence. There are fears that religion will again be unthinkingly sold to seize power. Recently, the debate about whether mosques can be used as a platform for political discussion has emerged. There is a link between political developments and religion (Nasution et al., 2023). This need creates a conflict of interest called politics. In political interests, religion is a powerful fuel for the political machine. Even though they cannot keep places of worship from talking politics, religion should be able to direct politics in a more productive direction and not in a destructive direction.

This condition shows that houses of worship are often used as places for political propaganda, especially in elections, and is a phenomenon that occurs in several regions in Indonesia. The politicization of religion refers to the use of places of worship for practical political purposes. This condition makes a house of worship a place for political propaganda. However, some people believe that houses of worship should only be used for religious and educational activities, not political ones. In conclusion, during elections in Indonesia, the politicization of religion was a phenomenon that occurred in several areas where it was used as a means of political propaganda.

Conclusion

Politics should be guided by the ethics and values of religion and all places of worship should be respected. Places of worship are an effective means of spiritualism and spirituality for adherents of religions in self-healing aspects related to psychological and divine values. Places of worship have an essential role in meeting the spiritual needs of religious communities. Like (1). Mosque (Islam): Aside from being a place of worship, a mosque also serves as a place to study, teach, and discuss the Islamic religion. (2). The Church (Protestant and Catholic Christians): The Church is a visualization of the values of spirituality, ethics, and traditions that the local people of God live based on their faith. (3). Pura (Hindu): Temples function as places of devotion to God, as means of educating and building morals, as well as historical sites and preservation of Hindu culture. (4). Vihara (Buddhist): Vihara is a place of worship for Buddhists and a centre of activity to devote worship service to dharma. (5). Temple (Confucianism): Apart from being a place of worship, the temple also functions as a symbol of religious beliefs, a source of spiritual teachings, a centre for social activities, a centre for the assimilation of arts, and a historical site and preservation of Chinese culture.

Apart from that, the house of worship is also a visualization of the values of spirituality, ethics, and traditions that are lived by the local followers of God based on their faiths, not as a source of religious conflict. Churches, Mosques, Temples, etc., cannot favour or oppose any particular candidates for a political office but some places of worship can become a tool of interest if political propaganda is carried out during worship. Political propaganda in places of worship



is an intentional and conscious effort to establish the intention of a political stance or an opinion desired by a particular party. The truth about religious values included in religious and political propaganda communications can be used to influence public opinion in political choices because the relevance of religious rationality and spirituality can be a very beneficial factor in political communication and electability. Therefore, there is a need for religious moderation, which can be a perspective in community guidance in Indonesia, which is not directly related to political propaganda or political interests, which can cause polarization of religious communities. Propaganda that is political is an attempt to disseminate principles or ideas by making organized efforts to promote political objectives. From a Christian perspective when Jesus says to his disciples “go ye into all the world and preach my gospel” he speaks of a future spiritual Kingdom beyond the grave, he does not refer to any political objective. The natural relationship between religion and all politics is one where the most important political issues are deemed to have some religious answers to issues such as the legitimacy and validity or otherwise of regimes, the restrictions of a specific authority, and the rightness or wrongness of laws, and such can all be derived from religious teachings.

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