



Research Article

## THE ROLE OF POWER IN THE EXISTENCE OF *SUBAK CULTURAL LANDSCAPE* IN DENPASAR, BALI

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### ABSTRACT

Preservation of existing cultural heritage and the need for new facilities is a struggle that characterizes the development of a city. In Denpasar City, Bali Province there is a *Subak* cultural landscape in the form of an agricultural area. *Subak* cultural landscape has been designated as a World Cultural Heritage by UNESCO (WBD). The *subak* WBD site established by UNESCO consists of 4 regions spread across Bali Province. The *subak* area in Denpasar City by the city government is also conserved by establishing it as a green open space. Although it has been designated as green open space, land conversion continues to occur in *subak* land. The preservation of *subak* cannot only be carried out by regulations. *Subak* conservation must be carried out comprehensively involving all related elements. In city ecology there are three main things that influence and move dynamically, namely, politics, economy and culture. This article will review the power and its role in the existence of the cultural landscape of *Subak* in the city of Denpasar. This article consists of three main parts. The first part discusses the cultural landscape of *subak* in Denpasar City as green space and its changes. The second part discusses the *cultural* position of *subak* landscape as a component of the city. The final part is to analyze what influences power, and what its role is in the development of *subak* cultural landscape in Denpasar City, Bali Province.

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### INTRODUCTION

Based on the provincial regulation of Bali, tourism developed in the Province of Bali, Indonesia is culture-based tourism. Regional culture of Bali as part of Indonesia's national culture is a dominant potential in developing tourism in Bali (Oka, 1991). Hakim, Jae, Sun (2009: 6-7) states that, the sustainability of tourism in Bali is one of which depends on cultural preservation and natural landscape. In addition to the natural culture and landscape in Bali there is a distinctive cultural landscape namely *subak*, which is a blend of natural culture and landscape.

*Subak* cultural landscape has been designated as a World Cultural Heritage (WBD) by UNESCO in 2012. According to UNESCO there are two values that deserve respect for the *subak* cultural landscape. The first value is the management of the *subak* system that applies a democratic system. Decision making in the management of *subak* is based on the results of the *paruman* (*subak* member meeting). The second value is the philosophy of the *subak* system, namely *Tri Hita Karana*, which prioritizes harmony between *parahyangan* (Spirit), *pawongan* (Human), and *palemahan* (universe) (Surata 2013, Dwijendra 2008).

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*Subak* cultural landscape that has been designated as WBD consists of three components that cannot be separated, namely: (1) *Palemahan* in the form of paddy fields; (2) *Pawongan* namely *subak* members; (3) *Parahyangan* namely the *subak* temple. *Subak* cultural landscape sites in Bali that are designated as WBD by UNESCO are: Ulun Danu Batur and Lake Batur, Pakerisan watershed, Catur Angga Batukaru Area, and Taman Ayun Temple Area (Windia, Wiguna, 2013: 178). *Subak* cultural landscape preservation by the Regional Government of Bali, not only on the WBD site. *Subak's* cultural landscape outside the WBD site is also preserved. In Denpasar City the *subak* area is preserved by the city government by establishing it as a Green Open Space (Denpasar City Regulation No. 27 of 2011, article 101).

From the results of Trigunasih's study (2015), paddy field area (*Subak* cultural landscape area) in Denpasar City in 1992 was 7,194.66 hectares, and 2015 was 2,554.12. The function shifts of paddy fields in Denpasar City from 1992 to 2015 reached 4,640.44 hectares or 201,763 hectares/year. The conversion of rice fields in the city of Denpasar is largely a residential area (Riana, 2014). Factors that encourage land conversion in the *subak* cultural landscape in Denpasar City include: low income of rice farming, land owners who work outside the agricultural sector, relatively high land prices that encourage landowners to sell their land, open business activities in the non-agricultural sector, customary activities (including religion in them), the

desire to follow the behavior of the surrounding environment, weak implementation of the Spatial Detail Plan (Dewi, Sarjana, 2015: 171). Another thing that is also a driver of land conversion is tourism activities which are concentrated around Denpasar (southern Badung area) (Wall, 2003: 52).

In general, cultural landscape is not static but dynamic. Changes in traditional cultural landscape formed in the past will continue in the future. The negative impacts that occur cannot be overcome by regulations, but require comprehensive handling. The way to deal with ecosystem problems needs to be adjusted to the changes that occur. If there are major changes, the risk of unsustainability is also large (Türkyılmaz, 2016: 509; Plieninger *et.al.*, 2014). The conversion of agricultural land to the *subak* cultural landscape in Denpasar has a negative impact, among others: irrigation channel interruption, large amount of plastic waste in paddy fields, low quantity and quality of irrigation water, disruption of cropping patterns, weakening of *subak* cultural values (Dewi, Bachelor, Pradnyawati, 2016: 167). It can be concluded that land use in cultural landscape cannot be avoided and can have a negative impact.

Subak cultural landscape has an important meaning for Balinese culture, Bali tourism, and the sustainability of Balinese life, so it needs to be preserved. In fact the function of the subak land in Bali has occurred, especially in the city of Denpasar. The Denpasar City Government has issued a regulation on green open space which in principle, most of the cultural landscape of *Subak* is designated as green open space, but land conversion still occurs. Management of cultural landscape requires comprehensive handling; therefore it is necessary to review other factors that influence changes in cultural landscape. The cultural landscape subak in Denpasar City is part of a city with clear territory. In the territory of subak cultural landscape there are land fields (units of space) with individual or group ownership. Individuals and groups of rulers in the territory (power) are important space controllers. Harvey, 1973 (in Hariyadi, Setiawan, 1996: 11, Dwijendra 2009), states that reviewing space in the aspect of mastery of space is called the socio-political approach. In this approach space is seen as a means of production and accumulating power. This approach also emphasizes the territorial aspects of connecting space units with certain organizations in other words space control by a group is important. If space in the control of a particular group, then it is possible for other groups to utilize the space.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Cultural landscape is a different geographical area and unique from a joint work between nature and humans. The world cultural heritage committee classifies cultural landscape into three categories, namely: (1) Landscape designed and made intentionally by humans, and most easily identified. This landscape concerns parks designed for aesthetic reasons, which relate to monumental religious buildings or others; (2) Evolving organic scenery, as a result of social, economic, administrative and / or religious work that reflects the process of evolving forms and features; 3) Associative cultural landscape that might be valued for religion, art or cultural associations with natural elements (UNESCO 2008, in Windia, 2013: 174) Cultural Landscape *Subak* is an associative category of cultural landscape because it has modified natural elements, and culture.

The discussion of the conversion of land in the *subak* landscape of the city of Denpasar cannot be separated between the cultural landscape of the *subak* as a traditional cultural landscape and the city where the cultural landscape is located. In discussing city architecture with cultural landscape in it three terminologies will be used, namely components, elements, and ingredients. Components are elements that have been strung together with other elements for a particular purpose. Elements are elements that have not been strung together. Ingredient is material in elements (Wijono, 2011: 53). The relationship of ingredients, elements, and components of urban architecture can be seen in Figure 1.

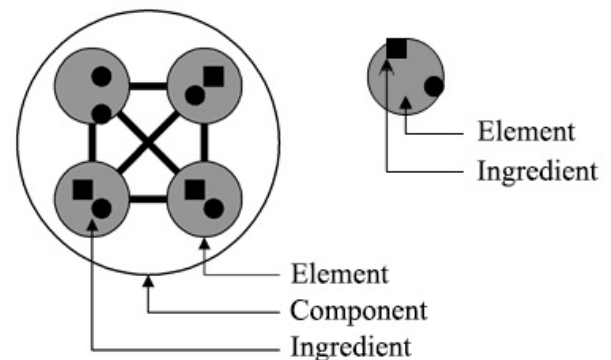


Figure 1 Ingredient, elements, and components of urban architecture

Source: Wijono, 2011:53.

The urban architecture component by Lynch (1960) consists of: paths (vehicle and pedestrian roads), edge (the part that limits the city), district (parts of the city), nodes (important points in a city), and landmarks (objects or buildings which are very prominent). Shirvani (1985) added a new component, namely land use and activities. Land use and activities involve people who have evolving values and views. Broadly speaking, the components of city architecture consist of artificial physical components and non-physical components. Artificial physical components are the main components forming the architecture. Non-physical components are external components that put strong force on the physical component (Wijono, 2011: 62). In the socio-political approach this non-physical (force) component, by Harvey (1973) and Dwijendra (2018), is called Power. The definition of the concept of power in relation to the city and its governance are those who have the possibility to influence the direction of the development of the city (Weber, 1968, in Balestrieri, 2014). Discussing the *subak* culture landscape in Denpasar cannot be separated from Green Open Space. Power that has an effect on Green Open Space will affect the cultural landscape of the *subak*, besides the power that is in the culture landscape of the *subak*.

Cultural landscape in a city is a component of the city's ecology. According to Zahnd (2006: 183), urban ecology is the exchange of substances in a closed system (in this case the city itself). In the ecology of the city there are three main things that move dynamically, namely: the city economy, city politics, city culture. Thus the economic power, political power and cultural power of the city, will influence the development of the city including the cultural landscape in the city.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In Denpasar City there are 42 *subaks* which are still recorded in the Culture Service. The entire *subak* is spread in 4 sub-

districts namely North Denpasar, West Denpasar, East Denpasar, and South Denpasar. The *subak* (rice fields) that are still functioning in the city of Denpasar can be seen in the distribution map of paddy fields.

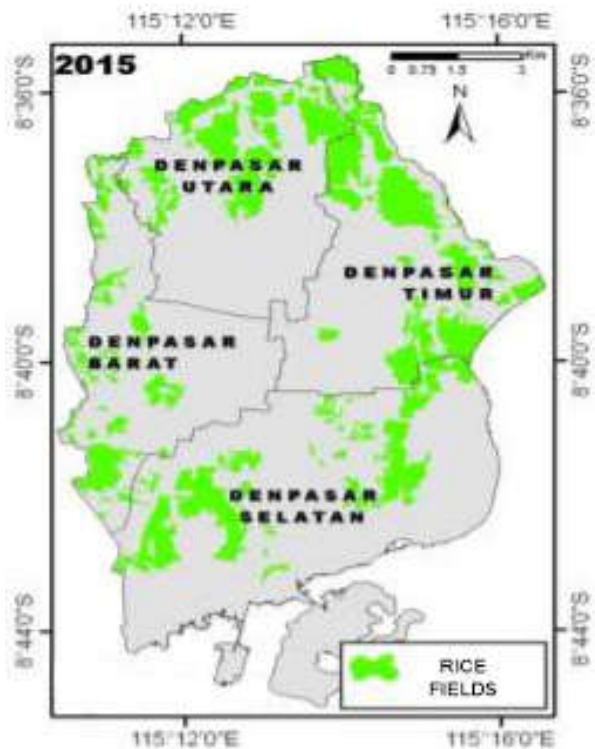


Figure 2 Rice fields in Denpasar City in 2015

Source: Results of analysis of Landsat II Citra, April 15, 2015 in Trigunasih, 2015

*Subak* organization is an independent organization. The operation does not depend on the location/position of the geographical, governmental authority, or customary authority. The *subak* organization is based on shared use, a water source for irrigating members' fields. *Subak* organizational structure can be seen in Figure 3.

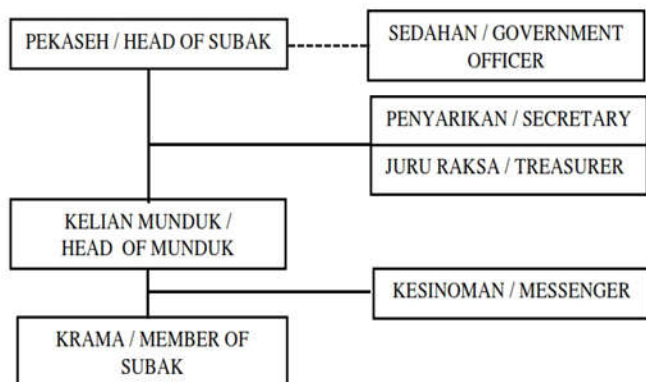


Figure 3 Organizational Structure of *Subak* in Denpasar City  
Source: Suryada, Suartika, 2017:314

The level of change that occurs in *subak* in Denpasar city varies. The most easily seen change is the level of land conversion that occurs. *Subak Sembung* is one example whose land conversion rate is helped a little. The landscape conditions of *Subak Sembung* can be seen in Figure 4.

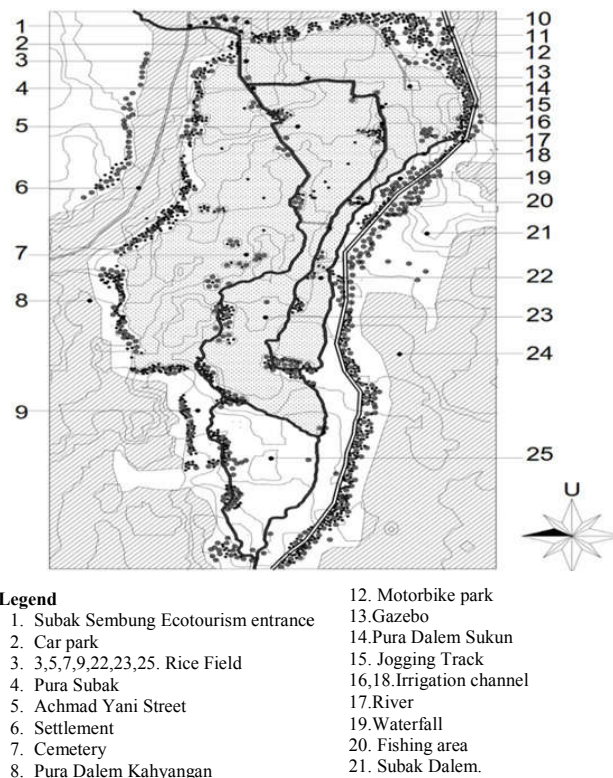


Figure 4 Condition of Subak Sembung Landscape

Source: Suryada, Paramadhyaksa, 2017: 4-44.

The components of *Subak Sembung's* cultural landscape are still complete, namely: *palemahan* (paddy field), *pawongan* (*subak* and *subak* members), *parahyangan* (a holy place with rituals). In *Subak Sembung* the *subak* organization is still running well. *Pekaseh*, *kelian munduk*, extracts and mercenaries, are still influential in the management of *subak*. *Subak* members also influence the development of *subak*. *Subak* members who influence the development of *subak* are *subak* members who have large land. Large landowners consist of royal descendants, and ordinary people. Elements that can influence outside the *subak* organization include: local government, educational institutions, non-governmental organizations, entrepreneurs, traditional authorities (*kelian banjar*, *adat bendesa*, religious leaders). In *subak Yang Batu* there is no active paddy field. The remaining vacant land is mostly sleeping land that has not been utilized by the owner. The *subak* organization is incomplete, (there are only people who are only). *Subak* active members no longer exist. The *subak* temple still exists but its function is no longer related to the *subak* function.

Non-physical components in the city (with the cultural landscape *subak* in it), namely humans, are components that put pressure on artificial physical components that can cause changes in land functions. The human elements (power) that play a role in influencing the development of *subak* cultural landscape include:

1. *Subak* management (*pekaseh*, *penyarikan*, *juru raksa*, *kesinoman*) has the main task of managing *subak* operations. The operational activities of the *subak* organization include: irrigation water management, coordinating the agricultural system at a time, meeting members, organizing collective religious rituals. *Subak* administrators can directly influence *subak* management;

2. The dominant landowner consists of the descendants of the king and ordinary people. Descendants of kings can influence decisions to be taken in the management of *subak*. The descendants of the king had an influence on other landowners because the descendants of the king still played a role in traditional government institutions, namely traditional villages. Customary villages are traditional government institutions that still exist in Denpasar City. Dominant landowners have an influence because of the vast land tenure, also generally have land located in strategic positions such as being roadside or controlling access to the *subak* area.
3. Government (mayor, sub-district head, village head, head of the environment, head of the Department of Land, head of the Agriculture Service, head of the Public Works Agency, head of the Environmental Agency). There are two categories of government elements, namely: the first element of government related to administrative issues, the second is the element of government related to the operation of *subak*. The governing element is influential in the administrative and technical aspects of *subak* operations;
4. Institutions of Higher Education can provide ideas in the development and preservation of *subak*. Higher education institutions can also provide direct assistance in the form of community service activities.
5. Non-Governmental Organizations: can provide advocacy in dealing with cases that occur in *subak*. Non-governmental organizations can also act as mentors in developing breakthrough programs such as ecotourism.
6. Entrepreneurs; can provide assistance in the form of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in the management of *subak* and breakthrough programs such as ecotourism. CSR can be in the form of *subak* support activities, or it can be in the form of funding.
7. Traditional authority (*bendesa*, *kelian banjar*, descendants of the King, spiritual figures): can be influential in terms of customary authority. *Subak* members in general are people who are still bound to traditional institutions such as the *banjar* and *pakraman* village. *Pakraman* and *banjar* village policies will affect *subak* members. In *subak* religious rituals that are both collective and individual are carried out. Religious ceremonies involve priests and stakeholders (religious leaders). Religious figures also influence the activities of *subak*.

## CONCLUSION

Even though it has been designated as green open space, in the cultural landscape of *subak* in Denpasar City, land conversion still occurs. The level of change in land use changes that vary in each *subak* is influenced by the role of power. Power that influences the existence of *subak* can be summarized, namely: Managing *subak*, dominant landowners, government authorities, academics, NGOs, entrepreneurs, and traditional authorities. These elements have an effect in accordance with their respective authorities.

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