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# Doors of Perception to Space–Time- Meaning: Ideology, Religion, and Aesthetics in Balinese Development

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## Abstract

This article develops a conceptual framework to examine the ancestry and evolution of urban forms within the context of cultural space and its social meaning. The framework is intended as a means for organizing and interpreting information, as was Rapoport's schema, but differs in its perspective. Rapoport begins with design elements and links them to culture; we begin with culture as a process and connect it with contextual settings through which images and configurations are generated and positioned. The framework is applied to the cultural process in Bali by focusing on ideology, religion, and aesthetics, which <sup>14</sup> treated as the main “doors of perception.” This allows a connection with the concept of a **social construction of space** and highlights **the importance of remediating social** conflict with shared values. Examples are used to illustrate the relevance of the doors of perception to urban planning and design in completing the nexus to space–time meaning.

## Keywords

urban form, culture and ideology, social conflict, Balinese Hinduism, adat

## Introduction

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In 1969, Amos Rapoport wrote a seminal work titled *House, Form and Culture*. He argued **that house form is not simply the result of physical forces or any single causal factor but is the consequence of a range of sociocultural factors** (Rapoport, 1969). This, combined with his subsequent writings, is considered to be a watershed in the development of built-environment design. Since then, architects have become familiar with the idea of a homology between architecture and cultural space. The scope of his work is nevertheless limited. It was originally restricted to dwellings characterized by vernacular building—“architecture without architects” (Rudofsky, 1964). Examples include igloos of the Inuit, tepees of the American plains Indians, pueblos of Southwestern United States, and dwellings in the hill towns of Central Italy. For these dwellings, the influence of culture is direct and immediately apparent as other influences remain either

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secondary or nonexistent. It is generally recognized that traditional societies tend to display a close relationship between the form of dwellings and the culture in which they are embedded (Toffin, 1994), so Rapoport's examples should not come as a surprise, but they are convincing.

A subsequent book by Rapoport expanded his initial schema into a choice model of design (Rapoport, 1977). The process of choosing includes images and configurations that are subjected to filters, the most important of which is culture, that remove all but one alternative. There are no means for determining how the alternatives are generated, and the expanded schema lacks detail on the mechanism that allows cultural norms to create "the most common choice." This process nevertheless applies equally for the design of vernacular structures as it does for monuments and multifarious urban spaces. The importance of culture to urban design is retained but at a high cost. Culture is made reflexive in relation to cause and effect; it acts as a limiting agent rather than an expansionary influence; and it is divorced from a unifying principle or theory to give legitimacy to the image that emerges from the filter. Rather, the emerging choice is a residual that will have no existential quantifier if all alternatives are eliminated. With examples taken from recent development proposals in Bali, we show that this can occur within a multicultural community for which the multiple sets of core values are nonconverging. These examples focus on the production of spatial design and cultural form that are alien to the Balinese and show that transcultural conflict frequently ensues from pressure to implement the alien forms. The nature and strength of the accompanying social protest and urban social movements give evidence of the extent to which the value systems are nonconverging, thus making it difficult to effect compromises.

Throughout the world, the Island of Bali has been celebrated for the integrity of its culture, the beauty of its landscape, and the friendliness of its inhabitants. But the progressive impacts of global tourism are generating development pressures in the major cities in Bali, with cumulative effects on urbanization and local culture. The capital, Denpasar, has a greater metropolitan population of roughly 2 million persons. Other centers include Ubud, Gianyar, Klungkung, Tabanan, and Singaraja, and a development bonanza is now ongoing. The existing airport is being expanded, a new international airport is planned for the north, and another has recently opened on Lombok, an island easily accessible from Bali. A railway to circumnavigate the province has also been speculated. A new toll road has just been opened to the Bukit peninsula, a project where the opportunity for massive land reclamation has been consciously created. Most of this is justified on the basis of international tourism arrivals, which are expected to double in 5 years to more than 8 million international visitors.

Under these circumstances it is difficult to claim that Balinese culture is being preserved by this developmental activity, so debates on the usage of both urban and rural space quickly descend into a miasma of ideological confusions, personal opinion, and anecdotal evidence. The issues are emotionally charged because multiple causes are represented, deep-seated resentments are suppressed, and capital formation is threatened. So Bali is a locale where the culture-and-urban-form dilemma looms large, but in the collision between global culture, local culture, and development, we discover that the questions surrounding Balinese culture are being ruled by a search for identity and the material basis for the economy (Cuthbert, 2012; Cuthbert & Suartika, 2014). The intention of this article is therefore to use the proposed conceptual framework with culture as a process to which is added ideology, first and foremost, then religion and aesthetics to examine this spatial conflict and to link it to planning and design of the built environment.

### *Culture and Ideology*

Ideology can be interpreted as an imaginary superstructure for individuals in their real conditions of existence (Althusser, 1971; Gramsci, 1999). In its simplest form, ideology represents a set of ideals and ideas that characterize an individual's world view. More generally, it applies to a group

of people who remain coherent on the basis of shared experiences and values. A useful connection with the cultural process is to note that recognition of this imaginary superstructure probably emerged in ancient times when humans determined that the acquisition of ideas is often more effective when observing other humans, or being taught by them (Boyd & Richerson, 2005). This implies that after the recognition of social learning, survival of a tribe or clan of hunters and gatherers was more fully assured with a mixture of social and individual learning, with the latter based upon innate capacities.

Ideology today is generally taken to denote the ideas themselves. They are typically political in nature and are not restricted to knowledge generation. Ideology should therefore serve as a means of resolving spatial conflicts, but to the extent that it “exists to confirm a certain political viewpoint, serve the interests of certain people, or to perform a functional role in relation to social, economic, political and legal institutions” (Synnowich, 2014); it may complicate conflict resolution by imposing action-oriented systems of beliefs. We recognize that belief systems are generally immutable in the short term, but may evolve over time in the way described by Stuart-Fox (2015) with a comprehensive agenda that requires, among other things, seeking a balance between potentially conflicting components. The prevailing ideology is often dominated by elite groups, but as the composition of these groups becomes altered, so also does the prevailing ideology. Theories of ideology, when placed in context by Jan Rehmann (2014), reveal how hegemony operates, and this has becoming a salient feature of contemporary culture. This process of change is particularly relevant to the nature and character of spatial conflict since it may offer clues as to a possible role that may be filled in by urban planners and designers. The superstructure of ideology may be imaginary in the sense that it is invented, but its effects are real and they will vary substantially among different cultures and subcultures. An understanding of these variations is essential.

### *Culture and Religion*

In his chapter on religion and culture, Mark Hulsether (2005) posed the question as to whether religion is a subset of culture or vice versa. His answer reverted to Raymond Williams’ notion that culture “is the whole of life” (Williams, 1958/2013). Since religion cannot claim to be that inclusive, it must therefore be a subset of culture. Additional questions can be proposed as to how essential is that subset to culture and to what extent does it comprise a guiding element to induce cultural change. On the basis of Neo-Darwinism theories (20th-century selection of fitter variants to produce species that are adapted to their habitats, plus a theory of inheritance from the science of genetics), there is a presumed tendency for religious thinking to be preset in our brains, but religious concepts are then “piggybacked” on other cognitive adaptations (Sanderson, 2008, p. 141). Thus, the capacity for religious thought is implanted, but its realization requires other cognitive associations that apparently work through the cultural process.

All known world religions address the nature of good and evil and commend ways of achieving human well-being (Taliaferro, 2003), but substantial differences exist in relation to conceptions of “good,” “evil,” and “well-being.” Relatively little interest is placed here on these conceptions per se, but it is necessary to examine the rituals and rules of conduct that emerge from orthopraxy-oriented religions, such as Balinese Hinduism. As is noted in a subsequent section, these religions are characterized by a greater commonality in practices rather than in beliefs. This implies an additional source of conflict exists not only in creating misunderstandings among Hindus and non-Hindus but also in generating conflict situations among Balinese Hindus. In Bali, these situations took place over many centuries and are factored into their belief systems, but when they are viewed externally they may be interpreted as a source of intransigence that is maintained within a very narrow domain, so it may be treated as political weakness and therefore exploited. As with ideology, these special or unique variations must be fully understood.

### Culture and Aesthetics

Greek philosophers directed their efforts toward the investigation of the essential nature of the external world and made no connection between art and beauty, which are the two central concepts of the contemporary view of aesthetics (Kristeller, 1951). Plato conceived of art as if it proceeded with rational principles and rules, so the cognitive aspects gained importance. However, when he discussed beauty in *Symposium*, he spoke not only of physical beauty of humans but also of beautiful habits of the soul and beautiful cognitions (Kristeller, 1951). The word *aesthetics* was not put into the philosophical lexicon until the 18th century, by Alexander Baumgarten (Shelley, 2014). It gave rise to literature that is both broad and deep so that summaries inevitably become unsatisfactory. We can narrow the field considerably by focusing on aesthetic experiences as a sensual reaction to an object, or as stated more concisely by Baumgarten, "The appreciation of beauty is the endpoint of aesthetic experience" (Shimamura, 2012, 3).

It should be noted that if emotions are assumed to be private mental states, then they have only contingent connections to their behavior manifestations and to the language in which they are expressed (Pouivet, 2000). This was reexamined after Wittgenstein introduced the private language argument and then proved that it is unrealizable. This represents a substantial shift from 17th-century theory since the argument that aesthetic experience is private because it is emotional became unacceptable (Pouivet, 2000). This allows emotions to remain unexpressed, but for reasons other than the existence of private language. It therefore recognizes the function of a shared language and compatible cognitive abilities in assessing aesthetic experiences, especially those experiences that form part of a belief system. We suggest in the next section that Balinese art and the sense of beauty in Bali are closely related to the Hindu religion.

## Balinese Culture and Spatial Conflict

### Cultural Diversity in Precolonial Bali

Investigation of traditional Balinese culture, while extensive, has had a limited focus on village culture and the arts, with relatively greater attention given to studies of ceremonies, cockfights (Geertz, 1980), painting (Vickers, 1996), dance (Askovic, 1997), and contemporary village life in general. The transition from villager to urban dweller, one that constitutes a massive shift both in development and in cultural orientation, is seldom addressed, and there is a presumption in much of the recent literature that urbanization of the Balinese is more a breakaway from traditional Balinese culture than a product of it. Many researchers trace this shift to the ideology of Dutch colonial rule and its reinforcement of the then-existing system of social classes.

Despite being a relatively small island with an area of 5,780 km<sup>2</sup>, Bali has multiple cultures. The mountains and lowlands have distinctly different environments with cultures developed to adjust fully to the surroundings. Similarly, urban and rural dwellers have evolved different life styles that generate different experiences together with different ideologies to give meaning to the changes in styles. Of equal importance, the northern coastal region in Bali was historically more open to inter-island trade and acquired a cultural cross-fertilization with Hindu, Chinese, and Islamic traditions. The south is more agricultural with well-constructed rice terraces and intricate irrigation systems, and is predominantly Hindu. Limited rainfall in eastern Bali inhibited economic development in the region and those who settled there established "intense political interactions with both the north and the south" (Pringle, 2004, pp. 6-7). To speak of a homogeneous Balinese culture can therefore be misleading unless it is accompanied by a set of specific, common features and placed in a context to reflect a position along a continuum from the transfer of Indian customs and practices, which began about 12 centuries ago, until the present century. Vickers' (1989) remark prevails:

Ultimately there is no single “real” Bali. When the package is unwrapped, we are left with something of a Pandora’s Box of political struggles, individual glory and suffering, optimism and frustration—in short, both a nightmare and a day dream of a summer’s afternoon. (p. 23)

We follow Durkheim’s practice of interpreting social institutions in the broad sense of indicating the crystallization of certain modes of behavior, especially those that evolve *outside the individual* and add to collective action.<sup>1</sup> *Banjar adat* (customs and traditions) is the basic building block of Balinese society, and *banjar dinas* (administration) is the governance counterpart. These are institutions of and for small communities in all traditional matters (weddings, cremation, temple ceremonies) as well as what is not permitted by tradition. The head of the *banjar dinas* is the *kelihan dinas*, who represents the *banjar* to the subdistrict and district branches of government. According to Pringle (2004, p. 19), “The *banjar* system is credited with much of the Balinese success in implementing government programs, such as family planning and transmigration, because it provides an effective mechanism for community discussion and decision making.”

To make this somewhat more complicated, a customary village in Bali is called a *desa* and each *desa* may have more than one *banjar adat*, which, at the *desa* level, is called *desa adat*. According to Vipriyanti (2008) in 2007 Bali had 3,945 *banjar adat* compared with 1,420 *desa adat* and 3,007 *banjar dinas* compared with 693 *desa dinas*. *Banjar* and *desa* represent different administrative levels, but to some extent they overlap in the physical sense. *Desa* are villages with a specific geographical location and are normally bounded, but the boundaries may change over time. *Banjar* are identified as hamlets, or wards, which would be smaller than villages in Western concept, and would be unincorporated. In Bali, they are said to be “customary” with the supposition that they were established sometime in the past as a collection of families and are strictly bounded. The basic components that go into these institutional structures in Bali have changed little since the 8th century, but some of the functions have changed over time. For example, while *dinas* have retained much of their original social functions, they became more hierarchical and merged with institutions of the state at the district level (Warren, 1993).

Hindu Balinese comprise a minority within their nation-state, but represent a majority within Bali. Moreover, it is clear that the dominant majority shaped the intercultural and interreligious relations with coinhabitants, an increasing number of which is non-Hindu. It should be noted that the Hindu Balinese do not claim to be indigenous in the contemporary, internationalist sense. After arriving from the Majapahit Kingdom of Java in the 14th century, they strongly supported Balinese *adat*, and as stated by Hauser-Schäublin (2013, p. 133) “understand themselves as *masyarakat adat* or people whose life is governed by tradition.” This has important implications for the nature of Bali’s social institutions and the limited capacity of Hindu Balinese to identify with the social institutions other than those which evolved from their own culture and ideology, especially those that emerged from Western capitalism. The latter is taken up in the two subsections that follow. We are concerned here mainly with the nature of the institutions and practices that evolved with the active participation of Hindu Balinese.

Anthropologists generally assign indigeneity to Bali Aga,<sup>2</sup> who are sometimes called “old Balinese” or “mountain Balinese.” Hauser-Schäublin (2013) suggested that Bali Aga commonly includes all those villages, forms of social organization, and ritual practices that are considered different from accepted Hindu-Balinese organizations and practices. There is more certainty of a transfer from the dominant culture to the Bali Aga, but it is nevertheless likely, though not directly provable since Bali Aga were without written records, that some cultural experiences and ideology were transferred in whole or part to the dominant culture. One of the timeless survivals from the earlier era was the institutional setting for common land and the mobilization of labor to construct and maintain the intricate irrigation system that allowed wet rice production in hilly land (Pringle, 2004). Similarly, the purpose or the orientation of the social institutions in Bali has

been maintained to ensure that societal living is based upon mutual help from within<sup>3</sup> and relies upon the notion that help given by one member of the *banjar* or *desa* will be reciprocated on the basis of equal work as measured by allocated time (*ngoopin*) rather than by market value (Vipriyanti, 2008).

Within these conditions of cultural diversity the question of Balinese identity arises almost exclusively from the lack of autochthony, as was noted above, and from the attempts to superimpose other cultures on the Hindu Balinese. The word *ajeg* means upright, strong, erect, and is directly concerned with the concept of *kebalian*, literally translated as “Balineseness” or Balinese collective identity. Unlike other social movements that tend to have a specific objective in mind, *kebalian* is almost impossible to define, hence in principle utter confusion tends to prevail. As will be indicated subsequently, Western capitalism added further complications by introducing a commodification of Balinese culture and accelerating cultural adaptation by dangling the “carrot” of rapid economic development through tourism.

### *The Politics of Ideology and Origin of Conflict in Bali*

For Bali, external ideology emerged from Western economics and politics, and conflicted with traditional social and religious values. In order to examine the sources of this conflict it is necessary to search for the ways in which “ideas of different kinds grip the minds of the masses and thereby become a ‘material force’” (Hall, 1986, p. 26). It is principally a matter of determining the combination of thoughts and beliefs that stabilize the particular form of power and domination that characterize a society and those thoughts and beliefs that do the opposite. Generally, the destabilizing elements are more easily delineated since disruptions are, by their very nature, more radical than the persuasive approach that is referred to as “soft power” (Nye, 2004).

This is easily exemplified by the indiscriminate killing and abuse of the poor in Bali by the Suharto Government from 1966 to 1989, which has been well documented (Cribb, 1990; Eltn, 2008; Mehr, 2009; Robinson, 1995). Gittings noted at the time of Suharto’s death in 2008 that even the most stubborn of dictatorships come to an end. Despite predictions by his ruling clique that he would lead Indonesia into the 21st century, his term of office, which began with bloodshed in 1967 ended equally bloodily in 1998 (Gittings, 2008). As to the impact this reign had on the Balinese people, Michael Picard (1990, p. 37) indicated that “the Balinese have been readily praised for their ability to borrow whatever foreign influence suits them while nevertheless maintaining their identity over centuries.” The evidence relating to this conviction is substantial, yet the pressure on the Balinese to sacrifice tradition must have been at least equally substantial and was resisted at considerable cost. It was sustained largely through Hindu religion in Bali, but that created a different form of identity crisis.

### *Balinese Religion and Aesthetics*

Marshall McLuhan (1963, p. 14) is credited with popularizing the Balinese saying: “We have no art. We do everything as well as we can.” Subsequently, McGraw (2013, p. 38) elaborated on this by saying that “art, music, religion and tradition, it is imagined, were once seamlessly integrated into a holistic Balinese experience that they have no words of their own for such concepts,” and Dibia and Ballinger (2004) explained further that *seni* (art) is an Indonesian word. The Balinese refer to an “artist” as a skilled person (*tukang*) rather than one who is engaged in an art form. The word for dancer or actor is *pragina*, which means someone who beautifies. Art in Bali is such an integral part of all rituals that it cannot be easily taken out of context. This nearly inextricable quality arises from the importance of religion in the ritualistic nature of the Balinese culture.

Religions that place greater emphasis and reliance on rituals and rules of conduct, as noted previously, are called orthopraxy-oriented religions, and those that put more emphasis on beliefs,

creeds, and spirituality are called orthodox. Hinduism and Judaism are substantially higher in orthopraxy, and correspondingly lower in orthodoxy, compared with Protestantism (Laurin & Plaks, 2014). Robert Smid (2005) indicated that orthopraxy is important for Hinduism mainly “because the commonality of *practices* among Hindus far exceeds the commonality of *beliefs*.” It seems that it is not merely a distinction made by religious scholars but also by Hindus themselves in recognizing their identity in terms of practices. This runs counter to the typical Western model of religions, but it is an emphasis that proves to be a characteristic not only of Hinduism but also of Asian religious and social traditions generally.

Balinese rituals are spectacles of color and sound, and their main purpose is to please the deities and ancestral spirits. Art, if not a ritual in itself, is a part of the ritual. The arts express the values that the Balinese hold dear, such as balance and harmony. *Taksu*, or spiritual charisma, is the pinnacle of energy that every Balinese performer strives for in order to mesmerize both the human and divine audience (Dibia & Ballinger, 2004). Perhaps more fundamentally, rituals maintain the focus on the belief that all living things have souls that are eternal. Upon death of the body, the soul transforms into a new entity since it is part of the *paramatma*, the Supreme Soul. Hindus tend to worship various deities, but choose one Supreme Being to follow. The process of reincarnation of the souls through a cycle of rebirth is believed to continue until the soul achieves perfection and salvation, and is then reunited with the Supreme Soul.

The different form of identity crisis, mentioned at the end of the previous subsection, stems from the difficulty in deciding how to classify Balinese Hinduism, relative to other variations of that religion. As Picard (2011) describes it, it is more a search for clarification and recognition for external purposes than a case of Balinese leaders of different political persuasions closing ranks to defend their religion against internal schisms. Balinese leaders knew what Balinese Hinduism was, but they had difficulty passing that on to Indonesian authorities or to the rest of the world. Part of the problem arose when Indian religious influences reached the Indonesian archipelago and were combined with archaic Balinese customs, at a rudimentary stage of the development of Hinduism. The arrival of Europeans, at a later point in time, restricted the ties with India when Hinduism blossomed there (Picard, 2011). Differences in the evolution of Balinese versus Indian Hinduism therefore could not have been prevented. Equally important, however, was the in-built flexibility of Hinduism for individual choice, so that the way religious practices evolved was, and still is, difficult to ungle.

The linkage with aesthetics is even more subtle. According to Davies (2007), no writings about aesthetics, specifically as a discipline, exist in Bali. Instead, art invokes traditional concepts that encompass Balinese aesthetics such as unity and balance between elements and form, as well as the culturally sustained desire for perfection. It is important to note that these aesthetics apply equally to Balinese houses where mutual harmony between the house, as an entity, and its occupants is sought. The house is effectively linked to the occupants' ancestors.

The question as to whether religion in Bali was a prime influence on aesthetics, or the other way around, is most effectively approached by considering the lengths to which Balinese artists, musicians, dancers, and puppet masters extend themselves in order to preserve the illusion of magic and mysticism. Consider a few examples from Davies (2007). Shadow puppet theater (*wayang kulit*) uses electronic amplification of the voices of the puppeteers, but uses candlelight for the shadows simply because the movement of the flame with surrounding air imparts an illusion that the projected shadows are breathing, whereas electric lights “kill” the otherwise life-like images. The desire for the illusion of anthropomorphism is apparently stronger than any aestheticism associated with more sharply illuminated shadows. Similarly, the Balinese gamelans are paired and tuned slightly apart. The effect is that notes that are played on both instruments resonate with a specific periodicity as a result of the slight difference in frequencies that are emitted, so that additional “beats” are perceived and give a seemingly magical, resonating sound. For many generations Balinese artists have chosen to express in their art form that which is most conducive to the traditional objective of art—Balinese Hinduism.



## Space–Time Meaning in Bali

According to Bali's customary law, or *adat*, land is the property of Mother Nature, with kings and local authorities exercising worldly rights to mediate disputes. Household land was held in collective trust by the *desa*, and this entailed an implicit, joint responsibility for the maintenance, both physically and spiritually, of two or more temples within the *desa* that are dedicated to the deities (MacRae, 2006). Customary rules applied to specific aspects of the design of the dwellings. This began to change in 1977 with Bali's integration within the Indonesian state, when it became necessary to conform to the basic regulation of land matters and agrarian principles that were devised by the Sukarno government, and are often referred to as BRLMAP.<sup>4</sup> The fundamental goal of these regulations, though not always stated, was "to generate a nationally unified system of land management in accordance with the adopted Indonesian ideology of a market-based capitalist system" (Suartika, 2007, p. 167). Against this, Bali has been recognized by the Indonesian authorities as a "gravity train" for tourism since the 1970s. Interfering excessively in traditional Balinese practices would ultimately choke off a substantial part of the tourism revenue.

Conflicts arising from this issue of land usage are likely to continue and to take the form of a struggle over Balinese resources, principally land and other natural resources, with *adat* principles and procedures pitted against the producers of cultural products, together with their financial capitalists who supply the funds for investment. For the immediate future, rural land is likely to be at the center of this conflict since expansion of tourism facilities, under the present height restrictions for buildings, would mean less land and water for traditional agrarian pursuits. Urban space is nonetheless likely to be affected either directly or indirectly.

To understand this, it is necessary to look briefly at the post-Suharto Balinese Provincial Regulation, Perda 03/2001. The introduction to Perda shows that the *desa adat* was renamed *desa pakraman*, but with the latter described as the unity of the customary legal community (*masyarakat hukum pakraman*). Constituent parts of this include a set of village regulations, called *awig-awig*, which, as stated in Perda, must not contradict religion (*agama*). The relevance of this to space–time meaning in Bali is that it simplifies the devolution of authority by making the local officials the arbiter of conflicts over *agama*. In doing so, however, it complicates administration by opening the way for disagreements and inconsistencies among the various *desa pakraman*. Conflict resolution is the responsibility of the Assembly of Desa Pakraman (Rideng, Nurjaya, Subawa, & Djatmika, 2015) and its success will require acceptance at the local level.

One of the most important influences on the social construction of space, in Bali, can be identified with the widely held view that many of the current problems arose from the shift away from the *desa adat* authority to a more centralized, authoritarian regime under Suharto's New Order from March 1967 to May 1998. A reversal of this shift developed soon after Suharto was forced to resign as president, and the effects of this process continue to be discussed (Sujarwoto, 2012). Initial perceptions of a significantly greater local autonomy were apparent, but it is clear that progress has been slow. The institutions of the state that were associated with the New Order have not been easily restructured. Suharto remained singularly influential until his death in 2008, with family and former cronies overseeing much of his legacy (Elson, 2008; Harsono, 2008; Koerner, 2004). This suggests that the social construction of space–time meaning in Bali is often constrained by a rigid institutional structure, especially those relating to land use regulations.

In reference to tourism as the second influence on the social construction of space, Warren (2007, p. 171) suggested that in the last decade of the Suharto regime "a steady stream of unpopular large-scale tourism resort and real estate projects were imposed, often at sites of customary and religious significance." Warren also noted that a development project at Padanggalak was halted, not by public demonstrations, impact assessments, or the courts, but by the *adat* community responsible for the sacred site at the confluence of two rivers. This occurred by invoking the Hindu "sanction of *kasepékan* (similar to excommunication) against the governor, who happened to

come from the village in which the project was sited” (Davidson & Henley, 2007, p. 31, in reference to Warren’s Chapter 8). This is of course a somewhat unusual set of circumstances and cannot be declared a victory in the long-running conflict over the balance of power in Bali, but it nevertheless illustrates the primacy of Hindu traditions in Bali and how that might work in restoring a balance after the enormous tilt in favor of the central control (Widjaya, 2002; Warren, 2005). This suggests that conflict may be a catalyst for change in social construction of space–time meaning, especially if it is reinforced by similar changes in social production<sup>5</sup> of space–time meaning.

An additional influence on the social construction of space in Bali involves the *patterns* of recent devolution of authority from the central government in Indonesia to local-level decision making (Davidson & Henley, 2007) and the parallel trends with *Ajeg Bali*, an autonomous movement whose agenda was to promote a revanchist culture for the Balinese (Allen & Carmencita, 2005). It is clear from recent trends that the process of reversing the authoritarian regime and restoring the *desa adat* is more than a simple technical problem of institutional design and that “economic and political reforms of any type needed to be enforced politically and through political struggle” (Hadiz & Robison, 2005, p. 237). In this regard, the comment by Ann Booth (2003, pp. 199–200) remains appropriate, “Both the center and the empowered regions must face up to the hard realities that the challenges which lie ahead will be formidable, and that the alleged benefits from decentralization may be slow in materializing.” The Balinese are heavily dependent upon themselves to achieve and to maintain political empowerment. That does not say anything that is new, but it nevertheless allows us to argue that ideologies of external origin, imposed through hegemony, are slowly being replaced in Bali with rudiments of ideology foregone.

Finally, spatial conflict has arisen from the characteristic of *adat* law in granting the *right to allocate* and the *right to avail* within the community and for the community. This aspect of the law was informal and that made it vulnerable to political manipulation. *Adat* concepts of order and stability, the foundations of all institutions both private and public, were heavy on ideals but light on formal rules. Not surprisingly then, social movements arising from them could easily become “bandwagons for the pursuit or defense of private wealth and power” (Henley & Davidson, 2007, p. 5). The ability of *adat* concepts to remain relatively unaffected by a national centralization of power made Balinese the victims in Suharto’s New Order. Since 1998, the direction of the “bandwagon” has been reversed, but the path has not yet returned directly to the immediate postcolonial position. That is partly because the focus of *adat* in that period was one of protecting the weak communities from the strong capitalists who sought control of their ancestral land, and strong bureaucrats who would take away their ancestral customs. Now the focus is on the mobilization of the dispossessed villages, “not in the name of marginality and dispossession but in the name of ancestry, community, and locality” (Henley & Davidson, 2007, p. 23; see also Hauser-Schäublin, 2013). This underscores the importance of identifying the nature of changes in social construction to understand what is required for social mediation.

To provide a brief overall evaluation of these influences, apart from the lack of financial resources,<sup>6</sup> the greatest obstacle for *desa adat* to engage more actively in the social construction of space in Bali is the failure of Perda 03/2001 to remove fully the vested power of the central government to unilaterally regulate usage of the nation’s land, water, and air resources as a final arbiter. Devolution of authority under Perda 03/2001 is not permanently guaranteed, but could be reversed when commercial interests are paramount. This acts as a source of reticence in the struggle for bottom-up authority since any gains could be eroded if the struggle begins to pay positive dividends and these benefits are partly for fully captured by the “other side.” At worst, it could alienate the local community representatives against efforts to restore *hak ulayat*, the customary rights of communal property of a community, since those rights may be extended or removed when the state sees fit to do so. The implementation of *hak ulayat* is more about control than about the customary principles and practices of territorial management. This makes it a source of conflict rather than a means for resolving it (Suartika, 2007). Mediation of the social



**Figure 1.** (a) Photo of golf course at Pan Pacific Nirwana with Tanah Lot Temple in the distance (on the left panel). (b) Photo of Tanah Lot Temple from opposite direction (on the right panel).

Source. Guste Ayu Made Suartika (Author and copyright).

production of space–time meaning in Bali through social processes is emphasized here as a means to the desired ends, which involve the restoration of social justice in Bali, even though the processes will remain impermanent until they are either codified into law or into Balinese culture.

### *Examples Derived From Recent Development Activities in Bali*

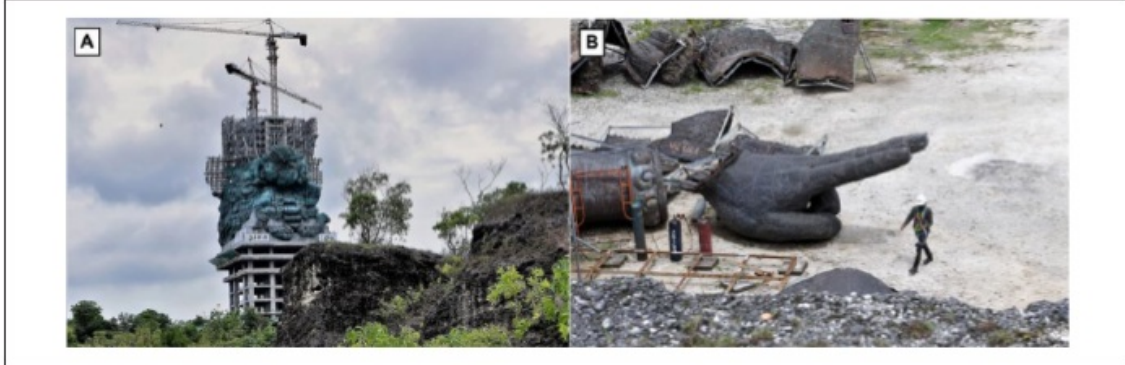
The first public protest of significance in Bali accompanied the development approval for the massive Bali Nirwana Resort in 1991. In 1994, after demonstrations escalated to embrace 5,000 people, the development project was halted for a short period in order to resolve the issues of the *Bhisama*, a religious statement on the encroachment of sacred sites by development (approximately 2 km insulating radius is required). The object in question was *Tanah Lot Temple*, one of the most sacred and iconic sites on the island. The 5-star Pan Pacific Nirwana Bali Resort and golf course sits on top of a cliff overlooking the temple (Figure 1, left panel).

The resort hotel and golf course are obviously situated to obtain benefit from the view of the temple, which is particularly impressive at sunset. The resort has been in existence for 20 years and is now in the process of being demolished for a new and larger 6-star hotel and golf course to be owned by the Trump Hotel Collection (Salna, Ho, & Dahrul, 2017). It is clear that the Balinese are sharing the beauty and tranquility of the ancient sea temple with tourists, but at a high cost as a result of an increasing number of tourists, greater visual encroachment from the expanded resort facilities, and the unrelenting pressure on the sources of fresh water for the island (Ashbury, 2017; Cole, 2012). Additionally, the development project was tainted by allegations of corruption, blackmail, and the manipulation of codes of practice, for which approximately 100 landholders issued complaints of being deceived and threatened in order to induce them to accept the terms of the land acquisition for the project (Hirsch & Warren, 2002; Suartika, 2010).

A second example is the Garuda Wisnu Kencana Cultural Park in Bali (or GWK as it is referred to in Bali) which is constructed over an abandoned limestone quarry (Putra & Krisnati, 2013) so it does not encroach upon valuable land, nor does it desecrate a religious site. However, as reported in *Coconuts Bali*:

1

Controversy had shrouded GWK even before it was built. The mega-project was protested by Hindu religious leaders who argued that the gigantic statue would disrupt the spiritual balance in Bali and it was just not right to use a sacred symbol as a commercial tourist attraction. Moreover, buildings are [normally] restricted to the “height of a coconut tree,” capped at 15 meters in Bali; however, the project was conceived anyway by those who argued it could bring in more tourists and thus more revenue to Bali.



**Figure 2.** (a) Garuda and Vishnu in the process of construction at GWK. (b) Detail of the left hand of Vishnu in the construction site, adding a sense of scale to the image.

Source. Gusti Ayu Made Suartika (Author and copyright).

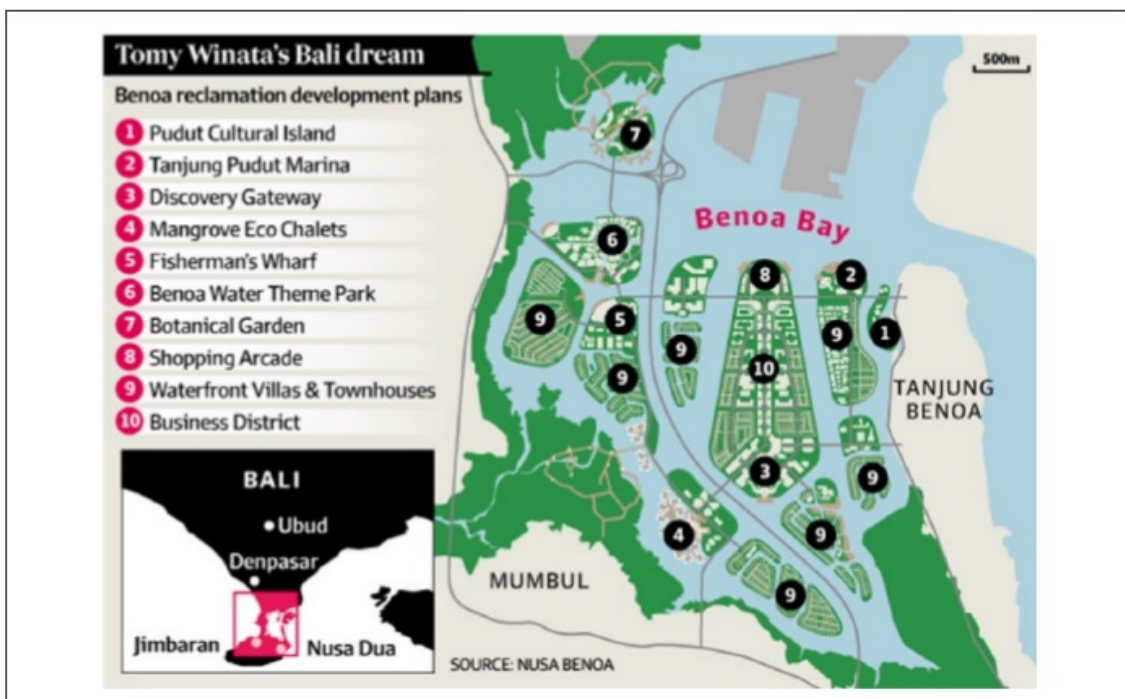
The greatest encroachment of GWK on the Island of Bali arises from its large scale. A statue of Wisnu (sometimes spelled Visnu), which is a major Hindu deity, sitting on a Garuda, a mythical Indonesian bird with a body of a human, is expected to reach 120 meters (Figure 2). It would thus be taller than the 92-meter Statue of Liberty in the New York Harbor. The wingspan of the Garuda is designed to be 64 meters and that, together with its height, makes it the largest statue in the world. The park represents a commercial entity with space for outdoor music concerts, shopping plaza, exhibition hall and street theater, and various eating places. Many Balinese believe this comprises a subversion of *kebudayaan yang merakyat*, or people's culture. Not only is the Balinese language commodified with the sale of tickets but also the production of urban meaning is undermined. Bali has never known the centralization of cultural products (aesthetic production) as a commercial/industrial event. Arts and crafts are village based, and the Balinese considered that the rest of the island would suffer economically if such a project were to be completed, possibly in 2018.

The megaproject proposed for Benoa Bay is likely to encroach upon nearly all of Bali. It has relatively long history of intimidation and extortion in order to encourage islanders to sell land initially on Palau Serangan, or Turtle Island, in 1997 for the purpose of establishing a theme park, with a development application that was submitted by Tommy Suharto (Nakad, 2008; Wardana, 2014). Land reclamation was intended to increase the size of the island from 112 hectares to 365 hectares and it then became clear that a critical element of the proposed development was the potentially adverse effect on the bay from the destruction of mangroves and from the altered tidal flows as result of the dredging and landfill. The project was abandoned early in 1998 as a consequence of the inability of President Suharto to avoid the full effects of the Asian financial crisis, which began the previous year, and led eventually to his forced resignation. Tommy Suharto's financial position was obviously affected as well. More than 18 hectares of mangroves were destroyed during the construction that began in 1997, and the turtles, which were on the endangered list for some time, were forced to abandon the island since the reclaimed sand was too coarse for them to bury their eggs. In general, the ecological effects of the construction, well detailed by Nakad (2008), are consistent with the predictions made by the early protestors. Concern is now growing that the new and much larger proposal will be association with even greater destruction.

The new project at Benoa Bay is slated to include 12 artificial islands, a mini-city with gated communities, Venice-style canals, townhouses, condominiums, hotels, botanic gardens, Disney-style themed parks, marinas, a cultural island, a retail and business district, and mangrove chalets. We can add to this list a few golf courses and a Formula 1 racetrack. The project will be built



**Figure 3.** Artist's sketch of Fisherman's Wharf, Benoa theme park, and botanical garden.  
Source: Nusa Benoa. Retrieved from <http://www.nusabenoa.com>



**Figure 4.** Map of the proposed Benoa Bay project.  
Source: Nusa Benoa & Cassrels, D. (2014, September 9). The businessman who aims to turn Bali into the new Palm Islands. *The Australian Financial Review*. Retrieved from <http://www.afr.com/lifestyle/anguish-bali-tourist-development-and-the-enigmatic-tomy-winata-20160829-gr3v4r>.

on an existing ecosystem that contains 1,375 hectares of mangrove forests, five rivers, and 14 villages that contain a population of 150,000 people. It also contains 70 religious sites and 31 temples within the bay area (Cassrels, 2016; Wibawa, 2017). Figure 3 shows four of the 14 islands, 10 of which are identified in Figure 4.

Tomy Winata, the Indonesian millionaire, whose privately owned PT Tirta Wahana Bali International, known as TWBI, is the project developer with, presumably, a consortium of investors. Since land in southern part of Bali currently has a market value of about US\$7 million per hectare, buying the land for the mega project along the coast would cost about US\$5 billion. In his doctoral thesis at Murdoch University, Agung Wardana estimated that using reclaimed land would save Winata about US\$2 billion (Cassrels, 2016). With a bonus of that size, it is obvious why the bay was chosen as the site for the mega complex. It also highlights the polarization between the Balinese creation of urban meaning in a way that preserves traditional land use practices, and that of international financial capital in a way that seeks the highest rate of profit. When interviewed by Deborah Cassrels for *The Australian Financial Review* in September 2016, Winata stated that he wanted to bring Bali into the 21st century and prevent it from being “only a cheap tourist destination.” He obviously did not realize that most of the 4 million Hindus in Bali do not want to embrace a form of 21st-century global capitalism containing nothing of indigenous cultural significance, as it includes design vignettes that belong to an emergent “branded” global culture that is promoted, if not also conceived, in places like Singapore, the French Riviera, Dubai, South Florida, and Las Vegas. Presumably Winata does not understand that Balinese Hindus attach considerable importance to the sources of wealth and every Hindu must reject personal gain that is contrary to dharma (Sreeranjani Subba Rao, 1998). Winata may also fail to understand that Bali’s more loyal tourists appreciate the island’s natural beauty and like being surrounded by Bali’s traditions (Picard, 1990, 2008), which are already beginning to disappear—like the sea turtles of Turtle Island.

The design typologies associated with the development examples noted above are all alien to Balinese culture and are a major affront to tradition. Bali will be further themed to suit the global tourism industry, which seems to follow Debord’s notion that within the “‘society of the spectacle’ tourism is fundamentally nothing more than the leisure of going to see what has [already] become banal” (Debord, 1967). In Nusa Benoa as in Nusa Dua, Bali’s deeply symbolic culture will be reduced to ornament and appliqué, to symbols stuck on doors and placemats, and commercially produced paintings in dining rooms, while the immense depth of urban meaning is ignored (Weiner, 1995). The resulting “banality” will have nothing to do with Balinese people, whose place in the cosmos has deep religious connotations that cannot be abstracted away from space, place, and built form. Cultural space in the new Nusa Benoa will either be ignored or reduced to a simulacrum of the real in the sole interest of speculation and capital accumulation.

### Implications for Urban Planning and Design

Returning briefly to Rapaport’s culture filters, the three examples in the previous subsection are consistent with the view that such applications in multicultural communities with nonconverging core values are likely to be perverse. Either no urban plans and designs will emerge through the multiple filters or the residuals that appear will be of such insignificant value to the respective cultures that they are allowed to “fall through the cracks” of the filters. How, then, can urban planning and design proceed in a constructive way so that it gives ample attention to cultural influences? We are unable to provide guaranteed solutions since multiculturalism is necessarily varied and generalized outcomes are expected to be rare. In this article, we aimed for a framework that is sufficiently flexible to encompass variations, yet solid enough to provide useful starting points. These points we designated in the title of the article as doors of perception.<sup>8</sup>

Aldous Huxley used the phrase as the title of an essay that was published as a book in 1954 and in it he gave an account of his experiences with a psychedelic alkaloid, known as mescaline. In the essay, he went beyond the description of a drug-induced enlightenment, in seeing the world as if for the first time, to point out that we humans live in a narrow band of perception that hopefully can be broadened without the use of drugs—by breaking down barriers and entering new

spaces. Perhaps Steven Johnson's (2010) notion of *adjacent possible*, or a variation of it, would be useful. It is essentially a guided process of entering metaphorical spaces, each of which is a collection of thoughts and ideas, and then moving to adjacent spaces that may have linkages to the first. This process of seeking linkages is continued until strands of thought are formed in such a way as to yield understanding and perhaps new ideas.

Ideology, religion, and aesthetics were presented as three such doors, but there are others. An important one that emerged from the three examples is social movements. As Manuel Castells noted in a paper published in 2006, 23 years after his *The City and the Grassroots: A Cross-Cultural Theory of Urban Social Movements* (Castells, 1983) first appeared:

2

If we were to state the first law of social organization it would be that where there is domination there is resistance to domination. And because domination, under all its forms, and in all contexts, has intensified in the last two decades, so has resistance, in spite of appearances. And so it will always be. The problem is that resistance changes its form (Castells, 2006, p. 221).

Marc Edelman (2001, p. 285) noted the paradigm shifts in theories of collective action and indicated that debates have centered "on the applicability of these frameworks in diverse settings, on the periodization of collective action, on the divisive or unifying impact of identity politics and on the appropriateness of political engagement by researchers." It might seem to be a daunting task for urban planners and designers to plunge into this ever-changing subuniverse of thought. They should, nonetheless, be aware of domination and resistance, within and near the areas to be planned and designed, in order to anticipate spatial conflicts. Awareness must precede anticipation and that must come before solutions. The journey from awareness to new solutions and then to new theories to explain the solutions is not a linear one. As Castells (2006, p. 219) stated: "Thus it becomes essential to identify the new forms of resistance and the new projects of social change, in their ideological diversity. Also it is essential to keep our minds open to the variety of forms of social protest"

Another door that proved to be especially relevant is globalization and the Hindu religion. As stated by Singh and Aktor (2015, p. 1927): "It would be wrong to say that Hindu traditions are unaffected by modern globalization processes." opposing effects on religion can be discerned. One is the tendency of a religious group to close itself off from others and "emphasize the borders to surrounding society." The other tendency is toward openness. Both can exist with different religious groups, but intolerance of one tendency or the other seems to increase with the strength of the tendency, and stronger tendencies tend to induce greater intolerance. Singh and Aktor perceive this to be happening with the old principle of *satyameva jayate* ("only truth triumphs") now being replaced by *arthameva jayate* ("only wealth triumphs"). As before, we stress the need for awareness to be attained before planning and design options are considered.

Ethnoecology is an additional door to perception that could open new possibilities. The authors of a case study on cultural landscape and ecotourism in Bali (Hakim, Kim, & Hong, 2009) concluded that the unique cultural landscape in Bali is the result of indigenous philosophy and a very long period of applying ethnoecology. They recognize the importance of preserving this ethnological management of the island's resources by applying it to all tourist-related development. A similar emphasis has been placed on the preservation of ethnographic needs. "Social relationships are the basis of social space, yet these relationships necessitate materiality in the form of embodied space and language, to work as a medium of discussion or analytic device" (Low, 2009, p. 34). If extended, it may also help resolve social disputes.

A final door to be mentioned stems from the notion that most urban social movements revolve around the inadequate provision of items of collective consumption and are in a major sense defined by this fact. In other words, the lack of provision by the state in creating and maintaining the institutions necessary to maintain and enhance life processes—education, health, public housing, social welfare, public open space, and so on—will almost always give rise to social tensions. To

date, collective consumption has eluded any form of protest in Bali against a political system where every dimension of social welfare is seriously inadequate and the pursuit of capital by billionaires is oppressive. In this regard, we might suggest that the predominant focus should be in identity-seeking by Balinese people, in the sense that any instrumentality to ameliorate their own conditions of existence is missing from the overall equation. In addition to the public protests in Bali that were described in the three examples reported in this article, perhaps protest also needs reoriented to be instrumental to the real problems of living. Increased attention should therefore be given to injustices and unsatisfied needs for which public protest has not yet materialized. This adds further emphasis on the need to add new doors of perception to the evolving cultural elements before applying filters to urban designs. This is not a new idea. It was stated by the Taoist philosopher Lao Tzu more than 2000 years ago: To gain knowledge, add things every day; to attain wisdom, remove things every day. Durable urban designs need both knowledge and wisdom.

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### Notes

1. Refer to Steven Lukes' introduction to Durkheim (1982), page 5, and to Durkheim's statement on page 248.
2. The word "Aga" was apparently coined by anthropologists and is not in the Balinese language.
3. When it is required, *krama banjar/desa* (member of the *banjar/desa adat*) may contribute in the form of material contribution and/or labor. Material contribution is called *pesu-pesuan* and labor contribution is named according to the nature of the respective tasks. When it is performed to support temple-related activities it is called *ngayah*. When it is carried out to help other *krama banjar/desu* it is referred to as *ngoopin*.
4. Officially known as Act No. 5 of 1960 Concerning Basic Regulations on Agrarian Principles, the President of the Republic of Indonesia. Retrieved from <http://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/ins3920.pdf>
5. For comments on the distinction between social production and social construction of space, see Low (1996).
6. *The Bali Times* reported on October 15, 2015, that efforts are being made by the provincial government of Bali to obtain a greater share of the revenue from tourist visas on arrival, which are estimated to yield to the central government about Rp47 trillion per year. Direct transfers of this to the provincial government of Bali this year were reported to be only Rp800 billion, or less than 2% of the total. This does not include state budget funds in the form of infrastructure projects through the Ministry of public works. Retrieved from <http://www.thebalitimes.com/2015/10/15/bali-expects-greater-funds-from-tourism/>
7. Retrieved from <https://coconuts.co/bali/news/bali-hopes-eyesore-gwk-construction-finished-2018-imf-world-bank-meeting/>
8. The phrase was used in a somewhat different context by Margaret Weiner (1995) but stimulated its application to this article.

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