

Discourses Of Concept Of Sakala And Niskala Spaces At Balinese Ethnic Houses

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DISCOURSES OF CONCEPT OF *SAKALA* AND *NISKALA* SPACES AT BALINESE ETHNIC HOUSES

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ABSTRACT

Architecture is not just about physical manifestations, more than that architecture is the substance of the physical being. The concept is found in Eastern architecture one of them is traditional Balinese architecture. In the traditional Balinese architecture there are *sakala* space and *niskala*, in the form of space for ritual activities and space for non-ritual activities. In the ethnic residence of Bali there are three zones namely holy zone, residential zone and outer space and lebu. All three zones have concrete spaces in the form of physical buildings and abstract space or "special" marker. The existence of the two spaces is maintained in contrast through normative rules. In this research will discuss about the discourse of the concept of the *sakala* space and *niskala* in the home of ethnic Balinese through the approach of local and universal concepts by using qualitative naturalistic method. The result of this research is the existence of balance of *sakala* space and *niskala* on the dynamics of Balinese ethnic house architecture development in maintaining its characteristic.

Keywords : balance, *sakala* space, *niskala* space, ethnic Balinese house

A. INTRODUCTION

The concept of balance is one of Balinese Traditional Architecture characteristic, known as *rwa bhineda*. The concept is based on the philosophy of *tri hita karana* which is the basic foundation in maintaining harmonious relationship between man and God, between human and environment. This dichotomous relationship can be found in spaces in Balinese Ethnic House. These spaces are concrete (*sakala*) and abstract (*niskala*), can be found in every point in the courtyard of Balinese Traditional House. The *sakala* space is the architectural form itself or building and its real boundaries and *niskala* space is abstract space but has manifestation in real form or in empty space.

The concept of balance between the *sakala* and *niskala* space clearly visible start from construction, maintenance and renovation of Balinese Traditional House. Based on the concept of people belief in the existence of the spiritual realms in the real world (earth). Hierarchy between *sakala* and *niskala* are dichotomies, which means they cannot stand alone, the existence of *sakala* can affect the *niskala* and vice versa. So, the spatial management becomes very important to understanding life and culture of Balinese ethnic community. The construction of balinese traditional house, they perform land clearing ceremonies or change of non-settlement land into a land that is suitable for inhabited by humans. After the construction begin, the balance of the *sakala* and *niskala* are also well managed by doing routinely and incidentally spiritual ceremony. Even

to renovate or demolish the building, they also perform land management through the spiritual ceremony before evacuation.

Space in Balinese traditional house generally consists of three levels, for the shrine, human settlement and public space or landscape. These three zones have a balance value *sakala* and *niskala* marked by the elements. The spiritual space is a *Sanggah* or complex for the family temple as the *sakala* and *niskala* space consist of *palinggih-palinggih* and special marker to do an offerings (*banten*). The concrete pace of the residential space is the house itself, intended for the bedroom, socialization, playing and private activities of residents, while the *niskala* space in form of elements *palangkiran* (a place for offerings). In the public space or landscape in form of the entrance, the *natah* and the lawn are the *sakala* space and the *niskala* itself marked by spatial form or special sign.

This research has propose to understand or concept of *sakala* and *niskala* that is dichotomous or balanced through discourse approach. The discourse approach emphasizes the conceptual constructs of empirical phenomena (Lubis, 2004: 148) which essentially states that discourse is a means of generating knowledge through a comprehensive approach resulting in a rule, system and procedure different from the general context. In this research using qualitative naturalistic method through local concept approach and universal concept. The local concept consist of *tri hita karana* and *rwa bhineda*, while the general concept consist of abstract space and concrete and sacred and profane. This is done to parallel between the local concept and the general concept through a dialogue between the two.

B. LITERATURE STUDY

1. *Tri Hita Karana* in Balinese Traditional Architecture

The book of Balinese traditional architecture inventory by the Government of Bali (1985 in Wijaya, 2017) the ³concept of *tri hita karana* consists of three points are *atma* (element of soul), *angga* (element of body), and *khaya* (element of energy, power). On a macro scale, these three points are embodied in: (a) *parhyangan* which is a shrine for Hindus, manifested by temple as an element of reflection of the God; (b) *pawongan* in the form of a human settlement in an indigenous organization and (c) ²*palemahan* in the form of residence or natural environment.

The ²concept of *tri hita karana* is not only translated in the context of settlements, but also in the micro scale of residence. Wastika (2005), the realization ²of the concept of *tri hita karana* on residential scale are: (a) *sanggah* or *merajan* zone as a spiritual zone to worship Sang Hyang Widhi and the ancestors of each family; (b) the *natah* zone or the central courtyard as a space for setting up houses for sleeping and performing ceremonies and other social activities and (c) the *lebuh* zones as a place to place unused materials and farmland.

2. The concept of *Rwa Bhineda* in Balinese Traditional Architecture

The concept of *rwa bhineda* are two opposites but complementary to one another. The concept of this dichotomy or dualism in the Balinese perspective of human being as *bhuana alit* (microcosm) is part of the universe as the *bhuana agung* (macrocosm). The analogy of this concept is also a relationship between residential buildings with its inhabitants which both aspects are a unity in forming a balanced and harmonious holistic space. (Swellengrebel, 1960)

In relation to this research, the concept of *rwa bhineda* is manifested between the *sakala* space (concrete) and the *niskala* (abstract) space. Where the existence of the *niskala* space becomes the substance of the space of the *sakala* or the existence of the *niskala* space is in the dimension of the *sakala*. Both spaces are maintained to balance through the spatial management through ritual ceremonies and rules that bind the two spaces.

3. The Concept of Sacred Space and Profane

According to Eliade (1957 in Wijaya, 2017), that the sacred space is also called the "temple" is the space to get chaos orientation homogeneity profane world, discover the world and feel the real meaning. While profane space is a space that is not bound to the rules of sanctity. The sacred space has the character of being a manifestation of a sacred space (hierophant) like a tree or a large stone and there are binding rules in using and entering the space.

In Balinese traditional house, sacred space in the form of a shrine or *marajan* marked by elements *palinggih* and physical boundary (*penyengker*). Not all activities can take place in the area, only activities related to ceremonies and rituals are allowed, including not allowed for women who are during periods or *cuntaka*.

4. The Concepts of *Sakala* and *Niskala* Space

In Balinese traditional architecture there are two properties of space that is *sakala* and *niskala*. These two spaces are dualistic in which their existence is contradictory but complementary to each other. In architectural form, the two elements must be realized to create balance between the visible and abstract elements. The form of architecture (*sakala*) and emission outside the form (*niskala*) placed in a unity and manifested in every part of the architecture. (Hasil Sabha Arsitektur Tradisional Bali, 1984 in Wijaya, 2017).

5. Concept Space In Architecture

The concept of space in architecture consists of two understandings of East and West. The concept of space in Eastern thought is represented by Lao Tzu (in Ashihara, 1983) that is a space consisting of two elements of being (visible) and non being (invisible) and the essence of the space

are non-palpable elements (non being). Whereas in Western thought according to Aristotle (in Ven, 1991), the most important element of a space is a visible element. These elements are: (a) the place of the object enclosing it; (b) ¹ the place is not part of the enclosure; (c) the place of an object is no larger and no smaller than that object; (d) the place can be left behind by the object and can be separated from that object and (e) the place always follows the object.

C. METHODOLOGY

This research uses qualitative naturalistic method through local concept approach and universal architectural concept. The concepts are knowledge to understanding the values contained in every phenomenon in this research. The focus of this study emphasizes the conceptual discourse on case objects relevant to locus in Balinese ethnic homes. The final result is the conceptual discourse about the space of the sacred and the *niskala*. The steps of this research are as follows:

- 1) Understanding of *sakala* and *niskala* concepts, *tri hita karana*, *rwabhineda* and universal concepts that have relevance to the topic.
- 2) Survey and field observation on Balinese ethnic residential objects in lowland and mountain areas.
- 3) Analyzing through the dialogue of the concept of the sacred space and *niskala* through selected cases with local concepts and universal concepts.
- 4) Synthesize and summarize the results of the analysis in the form of the concept discourse about the space of *sakala* and *niskala* in ethnic home of Bali.

D. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. ³ The ² concept of *Tri Hita Karana* on *Sakala* and *Niskala* Spaces

Implementation of the concept of *tri hita karana* in residential dwelling consists of connection space with the Ide Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa (God) a spiritual place (*sangguh*) known as *parhyangan*; social interaction space (the people) called *pawongan* and space connection between humans and nature in the form of site (*pakaran*) known as *palemahan*. Each zone of space consists of two spaces, namely concrete and abstract.

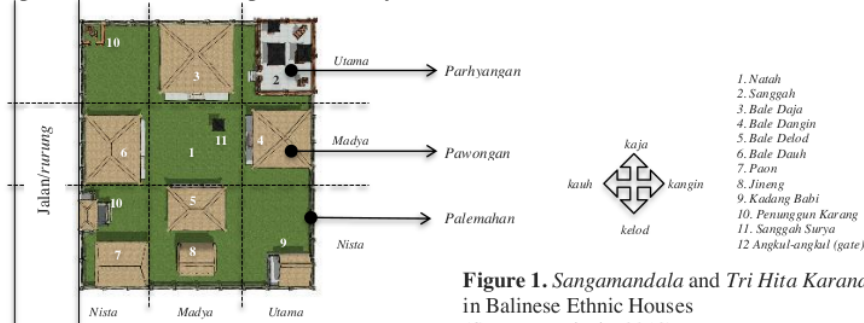


Figure 1. Sangamandala and Tri Hita Karana Concept in Balinese Ethnic Houses
(Source: analysis, 2018)

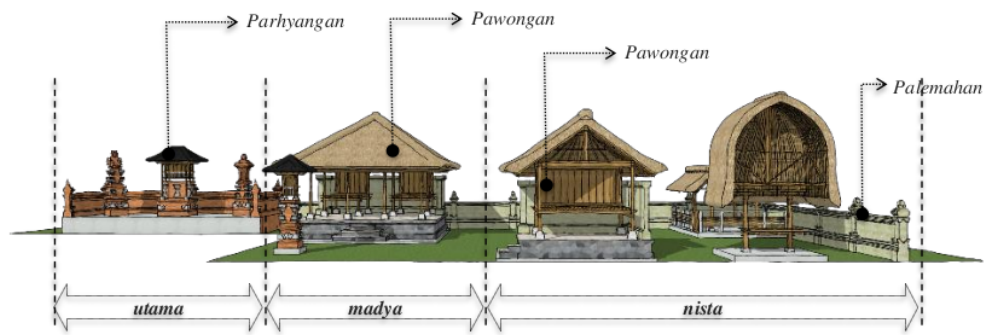


Figure 2. *Sangamandala* and *Tri Hita Karana* Concept in Section of Balinese Ethnic Houses
(Source: analysis, 2018)

Space interaction between people and the God is a place to accommodate spiritual activities. The concept of zoning of hierarchy of higher mandala (*utama ning utama*) in nine zoning Balinese house (*sangamandala*) for lowland Bali settlements or *ulu* (*utama*) positions on Balinese highland settlements. This space consists of elements of *palinggih-palinggih* which is a form of sacred building with different functions as a spiritual manifestation and belief of Balinese Hindu society. In each *palinggih* there is a rong or place to put the conspiracy. In addition there is also an empty space in the center of the tread and the front of each *palinggih* and the entrance of the temple or *sangguh* which is used as space to put elements as an abstract space marker (*niskala*). This place or space is a zone for spiritual activities value in the form of a *sekala* space characterized by elements of *palinggih-palinggih* and other elements, while the *niskala* space is characterized by spiritual elements of *bebantenan* (offering) placed on the *palinggih* elements.

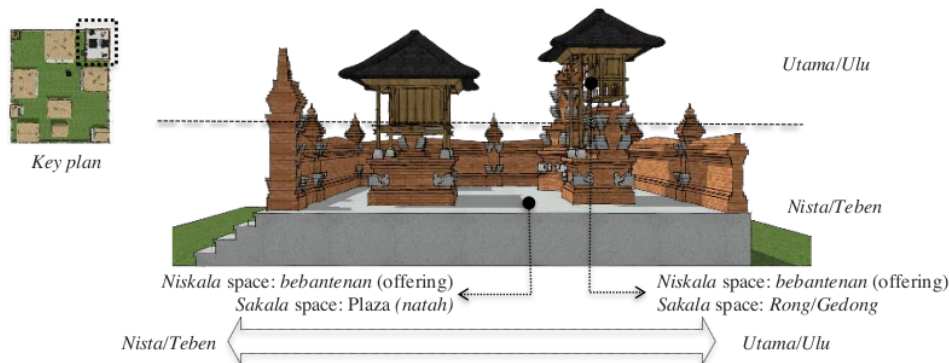


Figure 3. *Sakala – Niskala* Concept on Temple Area (*Parhyangan*)
(Source: analysis, 2018)

The next zone is *pawongan* in the form of residential buildings that functioned as a space of interaction between residents of the house. The rooms of the *sakala* form the bed room, living room, kitchen and bathroom. This space area in the pattern of residence *sangamandala* and

residential patterns of mountain communities are in the middle zone (*madya*). Although functioning for occupancy, but the value of *niskala* remains a matter of great concern because each element has a soul or *niskala* space. This can be found when the construction is completed, then the ceremonial activities *pebersihan* (sterilize the spaces are *niskala*). It is believed to keep harmony between the space of *sakala* and *niskala* remain awake, with the hope of peace in spaces are created well. In addition, there are sometimes elements of the *niskala* space in this building as *palangkiran*.

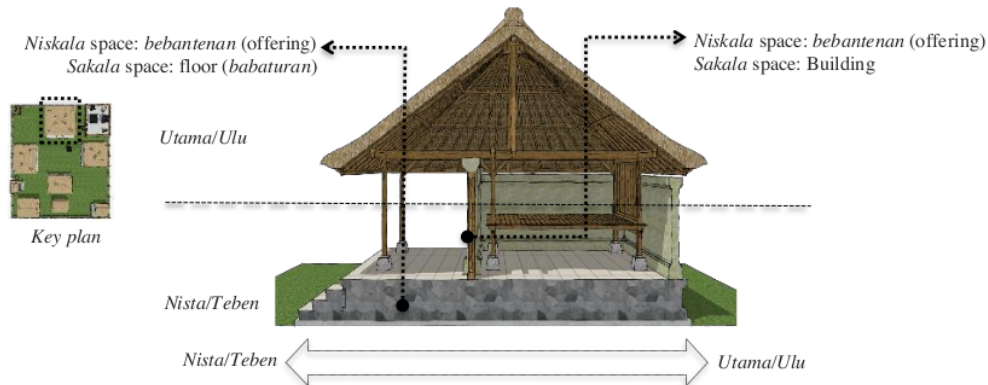


Figure 4. *Sakala – Niskala Concept on Bale Daja Building*
(Source: analysis, 2018)

Landscape in Balinese traditional house consist of *natah*, garden and entrance. These elements are relationship between people and nature. The existence of the garden in the house *pakarangan* not only create a beautiful visual, but also create thermal comfort through the production of oxygen by these plants. Each of the outer space has a *niskala*'s form of *pakarangan* (tread) consist of *palinggih panunggun karang* (spiritual element), the space of the park is marked by the space for offerings, the plaza (core) is the core room of the yard which is used as a ritual space to create a balance between the space of the sacred and the *niskala* and the entrance of the *angkul-angkul* with space *niskalanya* are in the *lebu* (the outer portion) and both sides of the *angkul-angkul* body.

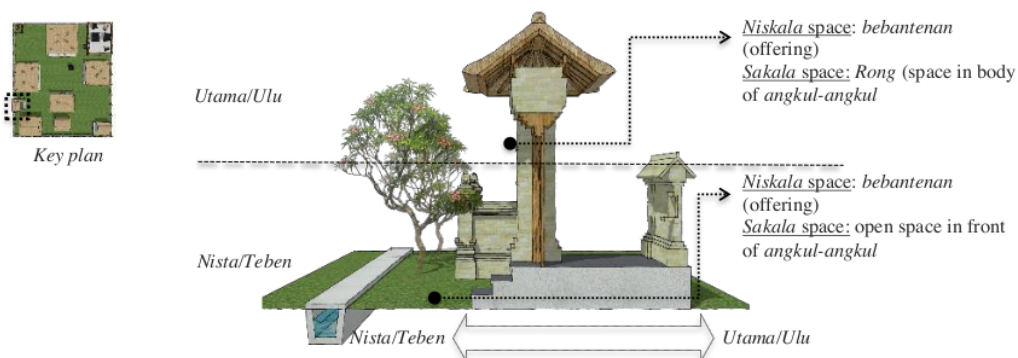


Figure 5. *Sakala – Niskala Concept on Angkul-angkul area*
(Source: analysis, 2018)

The concept of harmonious relationship between people and the god, human with human and human with the nature of keeping the balance between space *sakala* and *niskala* in each zone of space. Balinese traditional architecture is an architecture that maintains the consistency of these three aspects, because the architecture is not only the physical appearance (*sakala*) but the soul (*niskala*) of the physical manifestation.

2. *Rwa Bhineda* Concept on the Balance between *Sakala* and *Niskala*

The concept of *rwa bhineda* as an aspect that reinforces the value of *sakala* and *niskala*. The concept teaches that the balance is created by two dichotomous elements. One element will not be balanced without the contrary element, such as the *sakala* and *niskala* in Traditional Balinese lawn. The presence of the *sakala* element (concrete) is not sufficient without the *niskala* element (abstract), since the *niskala* values are the soul of the sacred values. Like the human body will not live without soul or spirit.

Given the realization of Balinese Traditional House that is not only composed of residential buildings but also there are sacred buildings and other spiritual elements. The presence of elements of the sacred space as a precursor space in the construction processes. Before a site is converted into residential, the shrine is first element to be built in the form of *Turus Lumbung* (simple form of balinese shrine, consist of four tree branches post). This means that the soul of the house is the first thing that was built before constructing the physical form of the human dwelling. Therefore, *sakala* (residential buildings) and *niskala* (sacred buildings) are two aspects that must exist in Balinese Traditional House to create harmony and comfortable atmosphere.

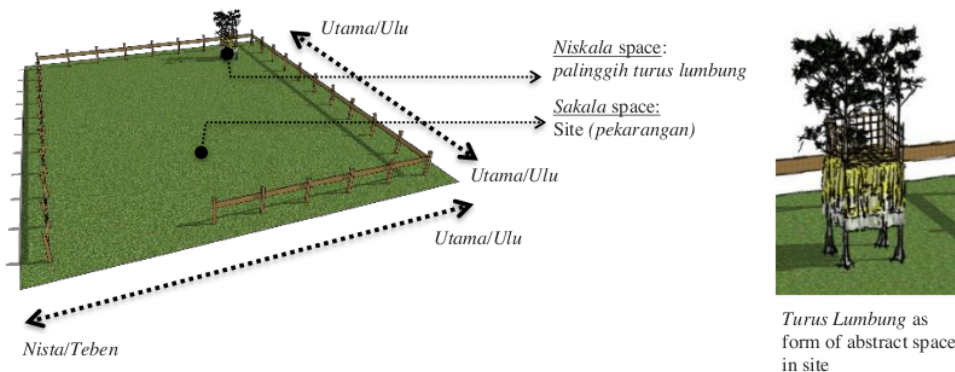


Figure 6. *Sakala – Niskala Concept on Open Site*
(Source: analysis, 2018)

The concept of *sakala* and *niskala*, not only applied when starting the construction, but also after the houses was built and inhabited, the relationship between the two spaces are maintained through routine and incidental spiritual activity.

The illustration above describe how to create and maintenance of a Balinese traditional house, where the presence of *sakala* and *niskala* values becomes something that important to be maintained in balance. But how when a building is renovated or demolished. In this activity, the *niskala* value in the house is inactivated before being renovated or demolished.

So it can be concluded that *sakala* (concrete elements) and *niskala* (astract elements) is a unity that must exist in a Balinese Traditional house. The shrine as the soul of the compound (land) and residential buildings and yard as the physical elements.

3. The Dialogue between Concrete (Being) and Abstract (Non Being) with *Sakala* and *Niskala* Spaces

The Eastern Thought of ¹Lao Tzu combines "being" and "non being" in space as a similar concept with the *sakala* (concrete) and *niskala* (abstract) spaces in Balinese traditional architecture. In the concept, both aspects are contained in a space of concrete elements and abstract elements that become the soul of the real space. In traditional Balinese architecture, explaining the same thing that architecture is the personification of human being which consists of soul and physical element.

In the Balinese ethnic house consists of three zones namely spiritual zone, residence zone and open space zone. Each space consists of two aspects: concrete (*sakala*/being) and abstract (*niskala*/non being). Concrete aspects of physical form of building or space and abstract form of space marked by spiritual elements. This shows that the abstract space (*niskala*/non being) is a spiritual or divine space cannot be touched but can be felt through a concept of trust and marked by "special" elements. Concrete space (*sakala*/being) is a space that can be seen and touched its presence.

4. The Dialogue between Sacred and Profane Concepts with *Sakala* and *Niskala* Spaces

Eliade (1957), sacred space as a place to get chaotic orientation homogeneity (contemplation space) that has opposition to profane space. To maintain the existence of spaces, the contrast of both becomes important. Likewise the space of the *sakala* and *niskala* to be balanced if the contrast of both awake by distinguishing space that is divine and space for humans.

The sacred space has a hierophant marker element. Marker in Balinese ethnic house in question is *palinggih-palinggih* in the temple, *palinggih panunggun karang*, *natah* and *lebuh* from the yard of the house. These elements are essential from the ethnic Balinese yard. Existence as important elements will be preserved if there are rules in behaving against those elements. For example, not allowed to enter the temple area without using prayer clothes.

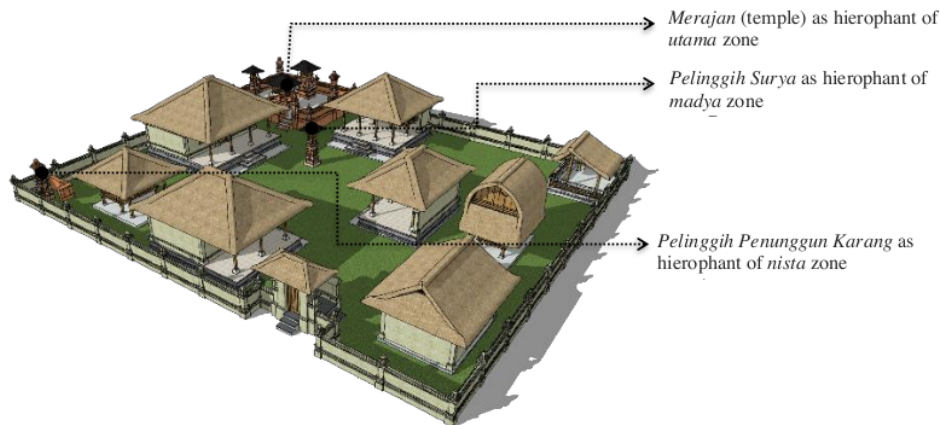


Figure 7. Form of Transcendent Space in Balinese Ethnic Houses
(Source: analysis, 2018)

E. CONCLUSION

The research about discourses ⁶ the concept of balance of *sakala* and *niskala* spaces at Balinese ethnic houses is not a research by producing an absolute conclusion on the case study of Balinese ethnic house. There is still much to be search and study through wider and more detailed approaches. The conclusions of the above analysis are:

- 1) The existence of the *sakala* and *niskala* space in the Bali ethnic house has a characteristic Balinese ethnic architecture is answering the challenges in planning the architecture of Bali in the future in macro and micro scale.
- 2) The balance of *sakala* and *niskala* space is maintained by presenting form aspects and maintaining their contrast in the Balinese ethnic house.

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