

PAPER • OPEN ACCESS

## Conception of Spatial Dualism around the Banyan Tree in Denpasar, Indonesia

To cite this article: I K M Wijaya 2018 *IOP Conf. Ser.: Mater. Sci. Eng.* **434** 012226

View the [article online](#) for updates and enhancements.



**ECS** **240th ECS Meeting**  
Digital Meeting, Oct 10-14, 2021  
**We are going fully digital!**  
Attendees register for free!  
**REGISTER NOW**

# Conception of Spatial Dualism around the Banyan Tree in Denpasar, Indonesia

I K M Wijaya

Department of Architecture, Universitas Warmadewa, Jalan Terompong No. 24,  
Denpasar, Bali, Indonesia

amritavijaya@gmail.com

**Abstract.** This study aims to examine the conception of the duality between *sekala* (tangible) and *niskala* (intangible) spaces on the banyan tree and the elements of markers and markers of both spaces. The method used in the study is interpretive naturalistic. Approaches that occur in the banyan tree with an understanding of the concept of dualism and the concept of space *sekala* and *niskala*. The results obtained are the "ritual conception" on the banyan tree creating a harmony dualism relationship between the *sekala* and the *niskala* space. With rituals approach to take effect on (1) a banyan tree that has elements: *saput poleng* (chessboard patterned fabric), *pelinggih* and element offerings (*bebantenan*) as a sign that around the banyan there is a space that is *niskala* which in the context of belief and respect for values of spirit influences spatial settings and spatial use behavior; and (2) those elements are also a sign of the "ban on cutting or destroying" the banyan tree, so that space utilized for social and economic activities is exist.

## 1. Introduction

The concept of space according to Eastern thought, as Lao Tzu in [1], the essence of space is the unfathomable elements. Lao Tzu combines between being and non-being in his thinking about the concept of space and becomes an important structure in contemporary aesthetics about space. The concept of the Lao Tzu space, which is the Eastern, thought is contrary to the Western concept, which states that the most important thing of space is the palpable elements. According to [2], the characteristic nature of space into five elements called the place (*topos*) that is (1) place the object that is in it; (2) the place is not part of the enclosure; (3) the place of an object is no larger and no smaller than that object; (4) the place can be left by the object and can be separated also from the object; and (5) the place always follows the object, although the object continues to move until it stops in its position.

Sacred space (temple) in general is a place used for worship of God or objects and people who are considered sacred. Contrast between the sacred space and the profane space, which is the space outside the sphere of the sacred space. The sacred space is the place to get an orientation in the chaos homogeneity of the profane world, a place to discover the world, a place to experience real life. Every sacred space has what he calls *hierophany*, that is, the thing that becomes the manifestation of its sacredness. For animists, for example, *hierophany* is a tree or a big rock. The sacredness born of this *hierophany* directly. The mountain for example, becomes sacred because that is where the Musa meet God. To maintain this sanctity, the contrast between sacred space and profane space must be preserved. Otherwise, the sacred space can lose its sacredness. One of the things that indicates a space is considered



sacred is the existence of a rule or prohibition that binds everyone who enters the space. The more sacred a space then the more rules or restrictions that must be obeyed [3].

Balinese traditional architecture consists of two elements of nature that is *sekala* and *niskala*, which embodies human life as a whole and complete. The element of scale and *niskala* is a contradictory yet complementary and mutual categorical or dualistic element called the *rwabhineda* concept. The traditional Balinese architecture must be able to express both the real (tangible) and the *niskala* (intangible) elements, which in their manifestations are capable of bringing the realistic dimension and at the same time bringing dimensions that are beyond reality. In the form of architecture (*sekala*), the emission outside of reality (*niskala*) placed in the form of unity and emanated on every part of the architecture. This is similar to the concept of Ida Sang Hyang Widhi (God) belief that does not need to be directly shown or depicted in a form but must be given in such a way that the architectural form can radiate the power of Ida Sang Hyang Widhi (God) that is intangible [4].

The concept of space dualism around the banyan tree in the city of Denpasar in the form of space *sekala* and *niskala*. *Sekala* Space in this case is the spaces that are used for trading activities and social interaction and *niskala* space is a ritual space as a space of the spirit of the place. Both spaces are mutually reinforcing by maintaining the "contrast" of both spaces. The contrast does not mean showing each other's identity or superiority but creating a harmony between the two spaces. The existence of the *niskala* space will be clearly visible territory through the spiritual attitude and the "positive" attitude of the use of concrete space. In addition, the existence of the secular space is created after the existence of the *niskala* space is reached. This mutual reinforcement attitude is based on the belief principle of Balinese Hindu community in Denpasar about the *niskala* forces affecting *sekala* activities, so that people usually perform routine and incidental ritual activities in order to maintain the harmony of the two spaces. The statements in accordance with the concept of dualism space is harmony, which means that between two spaces are complementary [5].

This study aims to examine the harmony concept of dualism spaces between space *sekala* and *niskala* and architecturally is to examine the elements of signifier and signified of both spaces. The results of this study are used in the space conception of space dualism on Balinese traditional architecture specifically in public spaces. Perception of public space in general is the space for uncommon activities and uncontrolled conservation. However, in the conception of Balinese Hindu society, public space has a common core (spirit) and the use of concrete space. The method used in the study is interpretive, interpretive naturalistic interpretation through phenomena around the banyan tree, through interpretation based on an understanding of local and theoretical conceptions (dualism) and interesting conclusions that crystallized from empirical analyses.

## 2. Research methods

The study of the conception of the duality of space and *niskala* space in the banyan tree requires a naturalistic study through the exploration of empiric phenomena. Initial observation, an understanding of the empirical phenomena, which focuses on the utilization of space around the banyan tree. To understand that, the researchers are self-bonding the theoretical bonds that can justify the observed phenomenon. Literature study based on the results of initial observation that there is utilization of space around the banyan tree not only by people who are Hindu Bali but also by non-Hindu Balinese people. So the literature studied is the space in the architecture, sacred space and profane and the space of sacred and *niskala* in architecture and conception *tri hita karana*. Further observation, deepening the study through a more detailed observation of ritual activities undertaken by space users and communities that have links to the banyan space, elements of the banyan tree, and the rules of entering the banyan space. In collecting the information, the researcher uses the tools in the form of cameras and equipment for sketches and stationery to record the information obtained by naturalistic. Unstructured interviews, digging up information about spatial governance around the banyan tree and the history of the banyan tree. The information is obtained through direct involvement (participant) which means the researcher has the status as a buyer in the locus.

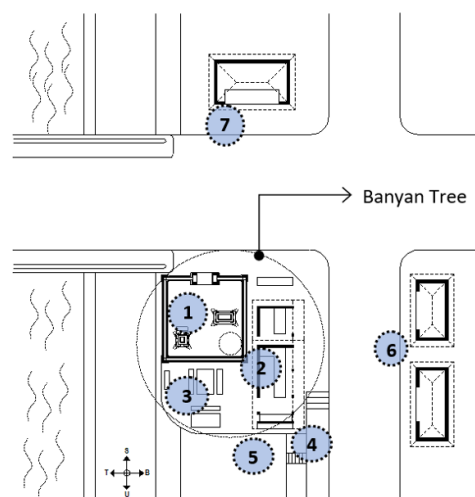
### 3. Results and discussion

#### 3.1. Conception of the Sekala and Niskala space around the banyan tree

Denpasar City is a city that has heterogeneous life from various races. The community is divided into three indigenous people of Denpasar, people outside the city of Denpasar and people outside the island of Bali. Generally, these communities live in the city of Denpasar to earn a living that mostly as a trader. Local trading activities by local communities have occurred or occurred since the first time the outsiders entered the city. Such activities generally take place or public space that is easily accessible and easily recognizable such as crossroads, close to the bridge and spaces that are considered strategic in peddling wares. The preferred pattern of places is space with large banyan trees or trees. This pattern is chosen based on the concept of markers and space markers, in which the banyan tree is a recognizable marker as a person's cognitive in knowing a place, so the place becomes a place of strategic value. In addition, the banyan room has a thermal comfort value because banyan as a shade tree with a wide canopy provides shade for the users under it. The development of time, the spaces around the banyan are not only utilized by regular or fixed traders but also by traveling traders. These traders come from outside of Denpasar and Bali Island to offer a variety of merchandise.








Besides being used as a trading space, the space around the banyan tree is also used as a social interaction space. Surely, this is very spontaneous to form a new space for trading activities. Social activities in question is a meeting or meeting of a group of people who have planned before, play activities conducted by a group of young people or children, and other social activities.

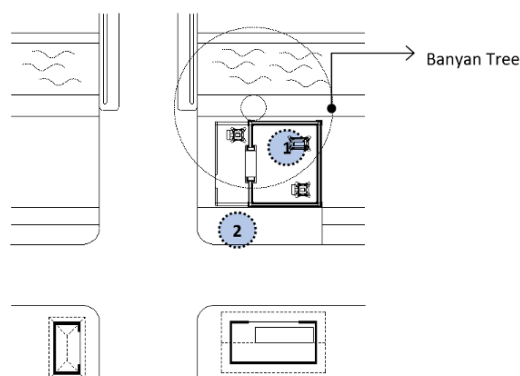
Utilization of these spaces is not only by people who are Hindu Balinese but non-Hindu Balinese people. This will produce an interesting with the concept of a banyan tree as one of the sacred trees in Bali. The non-Hindu people who use the banyan tree as their activity platform still maintain the existence of the space that is the regulations such as the limit of the place of selling outside the wall of the buffer, keep the physical clean room, not valuable words taboo and not banyan tree. This of course is not directly rewarded for the tree called *tenget*. The same is also done by users who are Hindu Balinese, in addition to the above mentioned attitude is also ritually performing activities *mebanten* (something in the form of offerings) in *pelinggih* (temple) banyan tree with the rules that spread in general or sacred. This attitude is a conception in maintaining harmony between the banyan tree spaces that is *niskala* with space used as a secular or profane activities are balanced *sekala*. The statement above showed on the figures 1, 2 and 3.



**Figure 1.** Layout setting of *Niskala* and *Sekala* spaces (case 1).



**Table 1.** Description of figure 1.

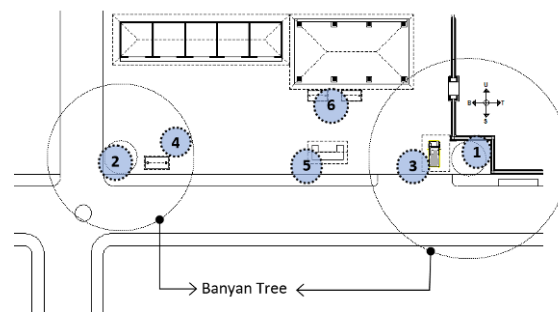
No	Figure and Description	No	Figure and Description
1	 Elements of <i>Niskala</i> Space: <i>Pelinggih</i> and <i>Penyengker</i> (Fence)	2	 Setting of Warung Space
3	 Part of Warung Space: Lounge	4	 Setting of Social Space: space for gathering
5	 Setting of Playground Space	6	 Motorbike of Cleaning Area
7	 Setting of Warung Space		



**Figure 2.** Layout setting of *Niskala* and *Sekala* spaces (case 2).







**Table 2.** Description of figure 2.

No	Figure and Deskripsi	No	Figure and Deskripsi
1	 Elements of <i>Niskala</i> Space: <i>Pelinggih</i> and <i>Penyengker</i> (Fence)	2	 Setting of Incidental Elements



**Figure 3.** Layout setting of *Niskala* and *Sekala* spaces (case 3).

**Table 3.** Description of figure 3.

No	Figure and Deskripsi	No	Figure and Deskripsi
1	 Elements of <i>Niskala</i> Space: <i>Saput Poleng</i>	2	 Elements of <i>Niskala</i> Space: <i>Saput Poleng</i> , <i>Pelinggih</i> and <i>Pelangkiran</i>
3	 Setting of Incidental Elements	4	 Setting of Semi-Fixed Elements
5	 Setting of Semi-Fixed Elements	6	 Setting of Semi-Fixed Elements

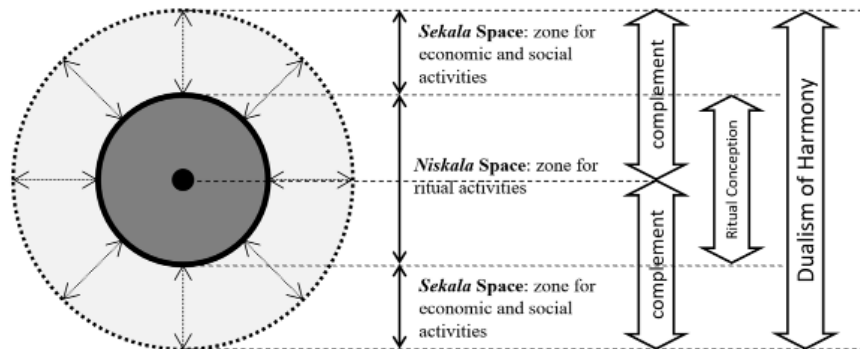
Tracing the value of the banyan tree by the natives as a tree that has a value of *tenget* (spirit of place), and beliefs as a space with magical or haunted values. It is depicted from the phenomenon of banyan tree utilization as a means of Bali Hindu ritual ceremony performed through certain rituals or as media of human soul liberation (read nebusin). The name of the banyan tree or waringin has a concept with *Kalpavrsa* or *Kalpataru* concept that is one of the five sacred trees that grow in the heaven of Lord Indra [6] in [7]. The concept of the *Kalpavrsa* reinforces that the banyan is a tree with high sacred values characterized by marking elements and space markers. The lenses on the banyan tree contain spiritual elements of *pelinggih-pelinggih*, *pelangkiran*, plaid fabrics (patterned chessboard) and the barrier element (wall partition) surrounds Banyan Tree.

The connection with the utilization of space around the banyan tree for profane activities and spiritual activities shows there is a relationship between *niskala* and *sekala* spaces. Tidy, haunted or sacral neutral space characterized by elements *pelinggih*, *pelangkiran*, *saput poleng* (Plaid Fabric), *penyengker* (wall partition) or the rules in entering the space. This *niskala* space is maintained its existence through ritual activities by the society of the use of space and society that have a confident relationship with the banyan tree. In contrast, *sekala* space tends to be used for secular or profane activities. However, in the utilization of space *sekala* does not mean the existence of non-space is not maintained. In the use of this space, the control of attitudes and orientation utilization and space spacing into things to consider as well as in this space there is also space that is *niskala*. It is characterized by the form of offering (*banten*) which is placed on the merchandise stand and at the bottom of the merchandise stand, as well as the addition of trace elements in the merchandise section. What distinguishes Balinese Hindu and non-Hindu Balinese traders is the presence of these elements in booths and wares.

### 3.2. Conception of dualism in the room around the banyan tree

Dualism (dual-duality) is the oldest conception in the archipelago and is generally seen as a contradictory and mutually exclusive antithesis concept [5]. However, unlike the concept of space *sekala* and *niskala* in the banyan tree that is harmony. Dualism in the Balinese Hindu concept is known as *Rwabhineda*. This harmony dualism is born from the understanding of the concept of harmonious balance through the philosophy of tri hita karana that is three-harmonic relationship between man and God (Ida Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa), human with human and human with environment. There is management in maintaining the relationship is the conception of *tattwam asi* (I am you and you are me). This conception asserts that it is necessary to maintain a balance between two different poles in creating a harmonious and balanced space. In [8, 9] understanding of diametric, concentric and triadic dualism. Triadic conception is characterized by an understanding of "reconciliation" that is an agreement between two opposite couples to form a balance. The meaning of reconciliation in the spatial and *niskala* spatial relations is characterized by the ritualistic governance of the two spaces in creating a harmonious relationship between the two.

*Sekala* Space is a space that is used for secular activities or profane and space noetic space is used as a ritual activity. The dualism of space and *niskala* space is not negating but mutually reinforcing. The harsh space of the banyan tribe provides "safety and comfort" in the context of belief and belief while the secular space strengthens the existence of the *tenget* through ritual activity on the banyan tree. Thus, between space and *niskala* mutually reinforce (complement) in forming balance and harmony of space around the banyan tree called harmony dualism. The statement above showed on the figure 4.



**Figure 4.** Scheme conception of dualism spaces *Sekala* and *Niskala*.

#### 4. Conclusion

The value of abstract space of the banyan tree in the Indonesian archipelago culture has different perceptions. Most of the people of the archipelago consider the banyan tree as a haunted space that needs to be abandoned or destroyed, but in Bali, especially Denpasar as the research locus, perceives the abstract space (*niskala*) banyan as space that needs to be maintained in creating "balanced and harmonious space" (*sekala*). The contrast of the spatial and *niskala* spaces is characterized by marking elements, clear boundaries and normative rules that bind the two spaces. Through the reconciliation of space in the form of ritual activities and wise attitude in the utilization of space, it will create a space of mutual menged and balanced. The dualism of space and *niskala* is complementary or reinforcing the so-called harmony dualism through ritual attitudes by the local community.

#### References

- [1] Ashihara Y 1983 *Merancang Ruang Luar*.
- [2] Van D V C 1991 *Ruang dalam Arsitektur* (Jakarta Gramedia Pustaka Utama).
- [3] Eliade M 1957 *The Sacred and The Profan* (New York Harcour Brace and Word).
- [4] Anonim 1984 *Rumusan Arsitektur Bali Denpasar* (Hasil Sabha Arsitektur Tradisional Bali).
- [5] Kusdiwanggo S 2017 *Prosiding Temu Ilmiah IPLBI 2017* Lhokseumawe Program Studi Arsitektur Universitas Malikussaleh Lhokseumawe 93–100.
- [6] Munir M 1997 *Hiasan Kalpataru pada Candi Budha Periode Jawa Tengah* (Gadjah Mada Yogyakarta).
- [7] I K M Wijaya 2009 *Konsep Ruang di Sekitar Pohon Beringin Yang Tumbuh Pada Area Publik di Wilayah Denpasar-Bali* (Thesis, Gadjah Mada Yogyakarta).
- [8] Levi-Strauss C 1963 *Structural Anthropology* (New York Basic Books Inc).
- [9] Gelebet I N 1986 *Arsitektur Tradisional Bali* (Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Denpasar).