



# Bali Traditional Architecture: Sustainability from the Perspective of Capital Concept

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## Abstract

*This study aims to reveal the sustainability of Balinese traditional residential architectural practices which are based on the provisions of traditional ethnic Balinese social stratification and refers to the capital ownership in Generative Structural Theory from Pierre Bourdieu (economic, cultural, social and symbolic). At present, there are dynamics ownership and capital conversion in the traditional social strata which affect the sustainability of traditional residential architecture practices. The traditional Balinese residential architecture in this study is understood to be the spatial layout and traditional residential buildings of the Middle Bali era. Its sustainability today is seen from the concept of capital in the perspective of Bourdieu's theory. The basic assumption of Bourdieu's theory is basically that humans are in the field of social struggle to emerge victorious by competing with one another. This study is a qualitative research with interpretative descriptive method. Primary data were obtained from selected informants (purposive) and from field observations, as well as secondary data from the literature. The study findings show that traditional residential architecture practices in the Middle Bali era were strongly influenced by capital ownership (economic, cultural, social, and symbolic) with various forms of conversion to traditional Balinese aristocratic (triwangsa). Development at this time has opened the opportunity to control various capital for ordinary community (jabawangsa), so that the realm of Balinese traditional housing becomes a medium of struggle as well as a symbol of success in social struggle. On the other hand, the contestation of Balinese traditional residential architectural practices is a sustainability in the arena of social struggle within Balinese society today.*

*Keywords: capital, sustainability, traditional Balinese residential architecture practices*

## Introduction

The traditional social stratification of ethnic Balinese shows that there is a phenomenon of dominance in the

governance of the community. This statement as Haryatmoko asserted that in all societies, there was always someone who controlled and was

controlled. This dominance relationship depends on the situation, resources (capital) and the actor's strategy. The mapping of power relations is based on the ownership of capital and the capital composition.[1] Capital in Bourdieu's theory are four, namely economic capital, cultural capital, social capital, and symbolic capital.[2][3] Economic capital is a resource concerning financial and production facilities. This economic capital is most easily converted into other forms of capital. Furthermore, cultural capital can be in the form of knowledge, diplomas, cultural codes, writing skills, ways of speaking, ways of being carried out, ways of getting along that play a role in determining social position. Social capital is a network of relationships as a resource for determining social position. Symbolic capital produces symbolic power, so symbolic power often requires power symbols such as position, luxury car, prestige office, title, high status, famous family name or nobility. Thus, symbolic capital is all forms of recognition by groups either institutionally or not.[1]

The description directs the understanding, so strong is its relation to the context of traditional Balinese ethnic housing, when viewed from the basis of its development based on the status of its owner which is in accordance with the traditional social stratification of ethnic Balinese because of birth called *caturwangsa*. [4][5]

*Caturwangsa* consists of two large groups, namely *triwangsa* (*brahmana*, *ksatria*, and *wesia*) and *jabawangsa* (ordinary people or Balinese ethnic social coatings) [6][7]. The dichotomy of the *triwangsa-jabawangsa* called the *menak-jaba* or the aristocratic-ordinary people is very contrasting in terms of the ownership of the four capital in the Bourdieu language. *Triwangsa* tend to have greater capital or central control over resources than the *jabawangsa*, which then has a very large influence in the arena of social struggle. This is also reflected in the architectural appearance of each dwelling, because this dichotomy also very strongly regulates the determination of the right to use the size, type, shape, material, texture and color of buildings in the royal past, which in practice tends to be dominated by aristocrats (*menak*).

Development of capital ownership by the *jabawangsa* today, due to the opening of opportunities for higher education, business opportunities, high positions or in short as a successful professional, leads to the strengthening of economic, cultural, social and symbolic capital. This has changed the understanding of the traditional social structure of ethnic Balinese today. Strengthening the capital of the Javanese also had implications for the architectural appearance of the dwelling. The struggle for traditional social status (birth and profession) with ownership, composition and

capital play in Bourdieu's view in the realm of traditional ethnic Balinese dwellings, so that the practice of traditional architecture of Balinese ethnic dwellings can continue until now, interestingly studied, as described in the discussion.

## Method

This study is a qualitative research with interpretative descriptive method. Analysis of primary data (obtained from determined informants/purposive and from field observations, in addition to secondary data from the literature), is based on Generative Structural theory from Pierre Bourdieu. Bourdieu's theory has a basic assumption that humans are in the arena of social struggle, where there is competition with each other both individuals and groups to fight to become winners. Bourdieu provides a number of concepts in order to understand the arena of social struggle which in this study focuses on the concept of capital. The purpose of this study is to uncover the connection between the *triwangsa* dichotomy and *jabawangsa* on traditional architectural guidelines, with ownership and conversion of capital (economic, cultural, social and symbolic) in Bourdieu's thinking in the realm of Balinese ethnic residential architecture in the developmental influence of Balinese development in the present.

## Results and Discussion

Traditional Balinese residential architecture is understood as the layout and building of ethnic Balinese dwellings. This ethnic Balinese dwelling is called *karang sikut satak* or *karang desa*, because the plot is actually owned by the *desa adat* (traditional village) given to its citizens with "responsibilities" called *ayahan desa*. Thus, the residents who occupy it are strongly related to joint responsibility in the management of traditional activities in a traditional village area, such as the implementation and maintenance of *Kahyangan Tiga* temples (three main temples or *pura* i.e *Pura Desa*, *Pura Puseh*, and *Pura Dalem*), also related to activities among fellow communities local customs, in addition to joint responsibility for the sustainability and preservation of the territorial environment of the local traditional village.

One interesting thing in the social interaction of ethnic Balinese, which is then related to the existence of residential architecture is the existence of social stratification or traditional community coating. This coating system is called *caturwangsa*. *Caturwangsa* groups people into two big groups, namely the *triwangsa* and the *jabawangsa*. The dichotomy of these indigenous people is more popularly called *menak* and *jaba* or noble and ordinary people. The political system of royal power in the

Majapahit era (Middle Bali era XIV-XVIII AD) strongly emphasized the traditional social stratification system based on *caturwangsa* so that it was well established,[8][9] even well maintained during the colonialism era in Bali because it was in line with the political policy of ‘*devide at impera*’, After independence, the dichotomy of *menak-jaba* is still well established as a traditional cultural practice that is deemed necessary to be encouraged, at least this can be seen from the slogan “*Ajeg Bali*” which was popular in the 2002s.[10]

This dichotomy has massively placed the mastery or ownership of various resources called “capital” in Bourdieu’s view of economic, cultural, social and symbolic capital, greater or centralized to the *menak*. Conditions like this directly affect the dominance of the *menak* over the *jaba* in almost all traditional social relations, not the exception of the residential architecture. Capital ownership and a large composition among the *menak*, placing architecture (spatial planning and building) of Balinese traditional dwelling as a medium of social struggle.

Large resources related to financial ownership (money and property) that are very potential as a means of production or economic capital in the language of Bourdieu owned by the *menak*, become a fundamental resource in building housing with types, materials, colors that are more

permanent and luxurious. Likewise this economic capital is most easily converted to other capital. Strong economic capital provides opportunities for learning at a higher level, so that the cultural capital of the growing number of *menak* with the acquisition of knowledge and diploma ownership becomes evidence of the achievement of higher education levels, mastery of high cultural codes, ways of speaking and writing skills, ways of being carried out as well as ways getting more along plays in increasing the social position of the *menak*.

The higher of economic and cultural capital, the more the network of social interactions that can be developed by the *triwangsa*, as Haryatmoko said, that social capital in the form of this network of relationships, as a resource for determining social position. Furthermore, the most important achievement is symbolic capital ownership. Mastery of symbolic capital will produce symbolic power. So to support symbolic power often requires symbols of power as mentioned above. [1] For the *triwangsa* the nobility as a symbolic capital is inherited from birth, so that it remains to be nurtured in a network of social interactions as an amplifier of social capital. Thus, the choice to strengthen traditional power symbols shifts to the traditional appearance of residential architecture.

The rules for spatial planning and traditional residential buildings of the

triwangsa have also been determined in the traditional Balinese architecture both in *Kosala Kosali* and *Asta Bumi*, in addition to the other of architecture design guidelines. Mastery of this traditional design knowledge on the other hand is also a cultural capital. This traditional design guide places *triwangsa* with rights to land area, size, type of building, which is relatively larger (monumental) than *jabawangsa*, besides the use of the texture and color of their rights are also more dominated by the *menak*. This is understood as a form of symbolic violence by Bourdieu. Violence that is not felt as a form of violence for the party that is dominated, even felt naturally must be so.[11][12] The *jabawangsa* people accept without questioning the use rights of smaller sizes, shapes, materials or colors in traditional residential designs that are simpler.

This design knowledge which is laden with symbolic capital is a form of recognition by institutional groups (*adat*). This is in other languages, a form of sustainability of traditional Balinese residential architecture since the kingdom or era of the Middle Bali. The next question is how is its development in the present, after the wide open opportunities for the whole community to receive education (increasing cultural capital), which then will also have the potential to develop economic, social and even symbolic capital? What is the dynamics of

symbolic violence in the arena of social struggle and how does this affect the sustainability of traditional residential architecture?

The rapid of development in all fields at the present time, as well as the progress of tourism in several regions of Bali, has indirectly changed the order of the agrarian community to industrial services. This, on the other hand, can be seen as an opportunity for self-improvement for the *jabawangsa*, who were previously limited to working in the agricultural sector. Business opportunities are increasingly wide open, which is captured by the *jabawangsa* as an opportunity to improve the economy. This condition affects the increase in overall financial and economic income for the *jabawangsa*. Increased economic capital in the Bourdieu language, is also converted to increase cultural capital by continuing education to a higher level. At the same time social capital also increases with the increasingly broad network of social interactions, as opportunities for interaction become wider and more diverse. The high level of educational attainment (cultural capital) is also an opportunity to gain a high position, which indirectly also influences higher income (economic capital). Strengthening economic capital, then again can be converted and composed into other capitals as Haryatmoko said above.[1] Economic capital can also be converted to get

symbolic capital, in addition to luxury goods (movable objects), also in the form of residential architecture.

Strengthening economic, cultural, and social capital to equal menak, some even exceeding the ownership of the *triwangsa*, also indirectly triggers and stimulates a desire to further strengthen symbolic capital. Symbolic capital that is expressed as symbolic power also appears in symbols of power, such as luxury car ownership, high positions, academic achievements, prestigious offices, and today's lifestyles. One thing that is also a symbol of power is displayed through a form of traditional Balinese style residential architecture that is better than before; For example, by choosing the type and use of building materials, completion techniques, naming of occupancy (*griya*, *puri*, *jero*), even the standard size also uses the standard size of the *triwangsa*. This is done because the achievements of the position (whether in politics/ government, religion, business/ economy, social/*adat*) achieved have reached a peak point, equivalent to the status of the *triwangsa*. The traditional Balinese residential architecture for the *jaba*, is thus also used as a tool of social struggle.

If expressed in other words, the contestation of the development of traditional Balinese dwelling, both by the *triwangsa* who indeed inherited (according to birth) the ownership of capital in Bourdieu's thought



Fig. 1. The Balinese Traditional Architecture with a simple design



Fig. 2. The Balinese Traditional Architecture with ornamental design

(economic, cultural, social and symbolic capital), as well as that carried out by the *jabawangsa* who fought (in accordance profession) strengthening the four capitals, can be interpreted together to make a form of traditional Balinese residential architecture as a medium of social struggle. Behind all these struggles, the winner is “the sustainability of Balinese traditional residential architecture in the present”. In addition, there has been a renewed understanding in understanding the status of Balinese ethnic social stratification, which is re-developing the strengthening of understanding



of *caturwarna* (status according to profession), which coexists with the still existence of *caturwangsa* (status according to birth).

## Conclusion

The existence of traditional Balinese architectural design of residential housing in the Middle Bali era, not apart from the strong influence of social stratification system, *caturwangsa* in the Balinese ethnic who dichotomized the structure of the ethnic Balinese into *triwangsa* (*brahmana*, *ksatrya*, *wesia*) and *jabawangsa* or the *menak-jaba* (aristocracy-ordinary people). The concentration of ownership of capital in Bourdieu's (economic, cultural, social, and symbolic capital) in the *menak*, its causes the domination of the *menak* of the *jaba* in all aspects of

life, including the architectural forms of their dwellings.

Development at this time has opened the opportunity to control the four capitals for the *jabawangsa*, so that the contestation of the development of traditional Balinese dwelling, both by the *menak* and by the *jaba*, can be interpreted together make a form of traditional Balinese residential architecture as a medium of social struggle. Behind all these struggles, the winner is the sustainability of Balinese traditional residential architecture today. In addition, the understanding of *caturwarna* again strengthened, which coexists with the still existence of *caturwangsa*.[]

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