Analysis of Symbolic Violence Practices in Balinese Vernacular Architecture: A case study in Bali, Indonesia

Ngakan Ketut Acwin Dwijendra\textsuperscript{a}, I Putu Gede Suyoga\textsuperscript{b}, \textsuperscript{a}Udayana University, Bali, Indonesia, \textsuperscript{b}Sekolah Tinggi Desain Bali, Indonesia, Email: \textsuperscript{a}acwin@unud.ac.id, \textsuperscript{b}gsuyoga@std-bali.ac.id

This study debates the vernacular architecture of Bali in the Middle Bali era, which was strongly influenced by social stratification discourse. The discourse of social stratification is a form of symbolic power in traditional societies. Through discourse, the power practices of the dominant group control the dominated, and such dominance is symbolic. Symbolic power will have an impact on symbolic violence in cultural practices, including the field of vernacular architecture. This study is a qualitative research with an interpretive descriptive method. The data collection is completed from literature, interviews, and field observations. The theory used is Pierre Bourdieu's Symbolic Violence Theory. The results of the study show that the practice of symbolic violence through discourse on social stratification has greatly influenced the formation or appearance of residential architecture during the last six centuries. This symbolic violence takes refuge behind tradition, the social, and politics. The forms of symbolic violence run through the mechanism of doxa, but also receive resistance symbolically through heterodoxa.

Keywords: Balinese, Vernacular, Architecture, Symbolic, Violence.

Introduction

Symbolic violence is a term known in Pierre Bourdieu's thought, referring to the use of power over symbols for violence. Violence, in this context, is understood not in the sense of radical physical violence, for example being beaten, open war, or the like, but more persuasive. Symbolic violence is subtle, and is not even felt as ‘violence’, because it has become the habitus of a society.
Symbolic violence has entered almost all aspects of life, including the realm of architecture. The Balinese vernacular architecture is also full of symbolic violence. This can be seen from the basis of its formation, based on the social status or caste of its owner (Dwijendra, 2003, 2019, 2020; Fashri 2014). The Triwangsa group — Brahmana, Ksatrya, and Wesia — as traditional Balinese nobles, occupy dwellings named griya, puri, and jero. The three types of dwellings are built to the highest standards. This is in contrast to the right to use residential (umah) standards for prabali, and other jaba (ordinary peoples), who are only entitled to the smallest standard (Dwijendra, 2008, 2009, 2019).

The standard provisions for measurements are based on traditional social status, and then manifest into various types of buildings that may only be used by certain groups (Wiryasa, 2017; Nurjani, 2019; Sueca, 2007). Each group of citizens has the right to use different types of buildings. This indicates that the practice of symbolic violence in the realm of BVA has been in effect since the Middle Bali era, namely since the stipulation of the provisions in the manuscript Asta Kosala Kosali guide of Bali vernacular architecture, as Dalem, the highest king of Bali in that era.

The relation of language and power as the relationship of symbolic power that forms this reality is referred to by Bourdieu (1995: 66), and Broadbent (1973), as symbolic power. It is this symbolic power that ultimately demands the establishment of legitimacy to be recognised, believed, adhered to, and regarded as truth. There is a form of agreement with the viewpoint of the dominant group that is subtly invested. Such a situation is termed by Bourdieu (1994: 129), and Hooykaas (1980), as doxa. Doxa is the dominant viewpoint of the ruler who expresses himself and applies himself as a universal point of view. Symbolic domination opens opportunities for the creation of symbolic violence.

Violence is defined by Lardellier (in Haryatmoko, 2010, 2017) as the principle of action based on the power to force others without consent. In violence, there is an element of domination to other parties in various forms which can be verbal, physical, visual, or psychological. The real expression of violence can be manipulation, slander, untrue preaching, cornering words, insults, or condescending and threatening harsh words.

The most difficult to overcome violence is symbolic violence, which operates through discourse. It is called ‘symbolic’ because the impact commonly seen in physical violence is not apparent. There are no injuries, no traumatic consequences, no anxiety, no fear, and the victim does not feel the violence or dominated. Symbolic violence runs because of the recognition, willingness, and voluntary involvement of the dominated parties (Bourdieu, 1991, Budihardjo, 2013). Symbolic violence, according to Bourdieu, is the imposition of a system of symbolism and meaning (e.g. culture) on groups over the class, and in such a way that it is experienced as something legitimate (Jenkins 2004: 157; Dwijendra, 2003).
The extent to which the practice of symbolic violence is hidden in the practice of BVA, becomes something important and interesting to study (Amanati, 2008; Ardika, 2015). Based on the statement, the focus of this study is to examine the form of symbolic violence in the practice of vernacular architecture in Bali.

**Research Method**

This study is a qualitative research with an interpretive descriptive method. The data collection was completed from literature, interviews, and field observations. The data was analysed using Pierre Bourdieu's Symbolic Violence Theory.

**Results and Discussion**

**Traditional Stratification of Balinese Society**

The stratification or traditional social status of "caste" is a reference in determining the standard size of the layout and building of Balinese Vernacular Architecture (BVA). The concept of colour chess, which was later degraded as caste chess, emphasised the difference in the right to use standard sizes in design. Thus, the standard of the measure becomes a symbol that can be read as a social status or symbolic capital. Furthermore, differences in social status will distinguish the perspective and behaviour of traditional Balinese society, also known as symbolic power.

Standard sizes underlie the formation of architectural physics. In semiotics, the physical form of architectural works in the form of space and buildings is a marker. Epistemic markers of 'form' contain 'meaning' markers (Sueca, 1999, Surahmat, 2016). The interaction of meaning through symbolism is one of the struggles in traditional Balinese society. Efforts to truly control symbolic capital are in the framework of symbolic power. Furthermore, symbolic power will trigger the practice of symbolic violence in the cultural practices of Balinese people.

**Symbolic Forms of Violence in Balinese Vernacular Architecture**

In the context of BVA, the standard size listed in the Balinese architectural manuscript, *Asta Kosala Kosali*, is understood as a benchmark for the dimensions of architectural elements, such as pole size, pole height, yard area dimensions, and type of building shape, and are
always associated with the ‘rights’ of a person, due to the social status or caste he carries (Wood, 1993; Wikstrom, 1995).

Traditional Balinese social stratification consists of Brahmana, Ksatrya, and Wesia, as three groups of traditional Balinese nobility. These three groups of citizens are called quarters, residing in the ‘innards’ region or inside. Meanwhile, the jaba wangsa for the community groups that occupy the area in ‘jaba’ or outside the occupancy of the three groups of citizens. The name jaba wangsa is carried by ordinary people, namely the pre-emperor, and groups of citizens who are lowered or even turned off the nobility of their nationality, as well as those who hid their nationality for survival in the era of the inter-kingdom war (Rusbiantoro, 2001; Simon, 2004; Stephany, 2009).

The ownership of social status by itself already contains symbolic power, then with symbolic power the dominant group has the potential to commit symbolic violence (Shils, 1971; Rabinow, 2002; Ritzer, 2014). The domestication of symbolic violence or ‘habituation’ of symbolic violence is not realized because it is very subtle, and it has even become a daily habitus of the people (Proshansky, 1983; Prijotomo, 1992; Ritzer, 2014). The domestication of symbolic violence on BVA has been established for more than six centuries, namely since the victory of the expansion of the Majapahit kingdom over the kingdom of Ancient Bali (1343 AD).

The practice of symbolic violence in BVA takes the form of position discrimination and the castration of rights (Goris, 1984; Gelebet, 1986; Geriya, 2007). These forms of symbolic violence arise through the mechanism of symbolic violence in the form of doxa. Doxa is the ruler's point of view, and it can be a myth or be considered the truth. Doxa, which appears in the practice of BVA, is a view that shows that the standard size for the quarter is one of the symbolic powers of the quarters over the jaba wangsa.

The symbolic violence in BVA’s work emerged in the form of the discriminatory treatment of position and rights because of unconscious caste. Meanings are produced symbolically in language (Covarrubias, 1974; Patton, 1980; Barker, 2005; Pakilaran, 2006). Consider the language of statements in the Asta Kosala Kosali manuscript, “this is the size for brahmana, ksatrya, wesya, prabali (jaba wangsa)”. Thus, the meaning of differences or castes which is produced symbolically in the Balinese tradition, opens the opportunity for the creation of symbolic violence through class domination (Foucault, 1971; Piliang, 2004).

The strong influence of caste discourse as traditional social stratification in the Balinese Mid era or Majapahit’s era was clearly architecturally evident from the different types of entrances and differences in the use of spatial and structural dimensions (Krier, 2001; Kagami, 2003; KDanesi, 2011). The type (design and naming) of the entrance for each
citizen is different. Namely, the entrance for brahmins is called bintang aring; the 'main king' is called the kori agung (the roof is overlapping); for the wesya group and also the subordinate king, the residential door is called the kori (without overlapping roofs); and the house entrance of jaba groups is called angkul-angkul.

The difference in the use of building materials and ornaments at the door of their home is also a sign of symbolic violence (Derek, 1991; Astra, 2010; Bakhtiar, 2014). Brahmins are entitled to use red brick materials, palm fiber roofs or combinations of sandstone with red bricks. The Ksatrya also use red brick material and a combination of sandstone or can also use only one type of material, such as red brick or sandstone, as well as the right to use the residential door material for the Wesya. The roof cover of the kori may use fibers or reeds or have a brick structure. However, for the people of the jaba, they may only use raw clay material and raw printed bricks for the body of the dwelling door, with a alang-alang roof.

The ornamental usage rights are also the same. Only the dominant quarterly people can use a complete and carved ornament, while the jaba wangsa group has no right to decorate their dwellings with decorative forms. Thus, the shape of the jaba wangsa residential building is simply plain and without ornaments. Bourdieu states that the dominant system finds expression in various cultural practices (Kusbiantoro, 2011; Lubis, 2014; Bourdieu, 2016; Adhika, 2020), in this context, on BVA.

The symbolic violence in the size of BVA revealed it is centred on tradition and politics or the kingdom. On the other hand, it should be recognised that symbolic violence has implications for the preservation of the BVA style, or it can be referred to as the retention of the BVA identity (Poerwadarminta, 1989; Wood, 1993; Wikstrom, 1995).

Bourdieu (in Fashri, 2014: 198) shows that language and discourse are practices of power used by dominant groups to control the dominated. Conversely, for marginalised groups that are dominated, language and discourse are used to question, resist, and delegitimise the symbolic power created by the dominant group.

The symbolic violence revealed in the BVA also experienced resistance, which was also symbolic, namely in the form of heterodoxa. Heterodoxa is a way of thinking that is contrary to doxa and is even against doxa. The collapse of the royal era by the modernisation of the colonial era in the nineteenth century and post-independence, undermined the system of royal political policy. This opens the opportunity for heterodoxa in BVA (Swellengrebel, 1984; McCullagh, 2004; Sueca, 1999). The rise of modern development that does not refer to the standard provisions of BVA size by Balinese ethnic groups (both tri wangsa and jaba wangsa groups), are forms of heterodoxa. The practice of heterodoxa is increasingly prevalent.
because modern Balinese people are more compromised with practical discourse, efficiency, and current trends in architecture, such as the minimalist style (Suambara, 2014; Putra, 2015).

Conclusion

Finally, from the explanation above, some conclusions can be drawn, as follows. (1) The practice of BVA shows symbolic violence that is very strong in relation to the discourse of Balinese ethnic caste and is a reflection of the identity of Balinese architecture in the Middle Bali era; (2) Symbolic violence, in the practice of BVA, is in the form of doxa, through mechanisms of tradition and politics or the kingdom; and (3) Symbolic violence also receives symbolic resistance, namely through heterodoxa. Reading the phenomenon of symbolic violence in the practice of BVA can provide awareness that many of the practices of symbolic violence were finally gaining resistance in the times of development by new architectural styles and new political policies.
REFERENCES


Geriya, IW. (2007). 'The concept and strategy of revitalizing local wisdom in the environment of Bali', in AAGR Dalem, IW Wardi, IW Suarna & IWS Adnyana (eds), Local wisdom in environmental management, Udayana University Publishers, Denpasar, pp. 52-60.


Nordholt, HS (1986). *Bali: colonial conceptions and political change 1700-1940 from shifting hierarchies to ‘fixed’ order*, Rotterdam: Erasmus.


