

Appropriation and Control of Streets by Local Communities in Denpasar, Indonesia 2016

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Abstract

Most discussions over street and public space are related to two keywords 'use and control', which help to define the quality of urban space, accessibility, management, power relations and territoriality. One of the challenges is the intensive appropriation of the street for potentially competing social, economic and cultural activities. Much urban research focuses on city design and planning to accommodate these problems, while others focus on establishing regulations and guidelines for better municipal governance. However, the active role of the local community in street management is rarely discussed.

Based on their distinctive local history, customs and religious place-based values, Balinese communities consider the street as part of their inherited territory and a space for collective socio-cultural actions. This raises two fundamental questions about how to use the street for community purposes and how the local community manages complex street activities to maintain strong relationships with other urban actors. Therefore, the perspectives of the local community, municipality and other street users are analysed to examine the functions of the street and the role of the community in urban management.

The research is based on empirical field data of sixteen street-based socio-cultural activities in Denpasar, the capital city of Bali. The qualitative methodology uses several data collection tools including interviews, observation, mapping and documentary resources. The findings indicate that the Balinese traditional concept of '*Tri Hita Karana*', (harmonious relations between god, humans and the environment) becomes the key factor in creating a balance of control, power, maintenance and use of space. The active involvement of local communities in managing their territory also supports municipal governance through collaboration, negotiation and sharing of power and resources. The tolerance, co-operation and sharing of street space for different ethnic and religious purposes in Denpasar show a mutual respect between communities, which is necessary for creating harmonious urban society. Finally, this research concludes

that the active involvement of the local community is essential for managing and maintaining city identity.