Conforming to Design Guidelines and Its Effects on Land Use in a Tourist Area: The Case Study of Bali

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Cornelis De Houtman, the head of the Dutch fleet was the first foreigner to arrive in Bali in 1597. He described Bali as a newly discovered paradise. In similarity, Covarrubias also expressed that “The Natives in their primitive state, the palms trees, rolling waves, and all the romantic notions” will go to make Bali a South Sea Island paradise (Covarrubias, 1937). Do such notions still exist in Bali? Does Bali deserve to have such a title, when the local culture and way of life, which is the reason that attracts the tourist most, and its threatened natural beauty has no place within the growth? Spaces under the palm trees are no longer shady places for the local people to seek refuge during a hot day. Coastal areas and its rolling waves are no longer natural views that can be enjoyed by the locals. All of these natural features are part of the major privileges used to promote the tourist industry in Bali in order to earn the foreign dollar. The present situation is that the industry is favored and has special status as a growth industry (Donner, 1987).

The rapid growth of the tourist industry encourages entrepreneurs to develop tourist facilities in a manner, which is economically aimed to meet the satisfaction of the tourists. This is on the same track with the government’s intention to focus more on the economic benefits of the industry. Both local and national governments are often ready to disregard zoning regulations and other qualitative standards in their pursuit to attract tourists that contributes to the development of both the local and the national economy. As a result of such actions, Bali’s development inevitably experiences major conflict between the interest of economic development and the local focus towards conserving the local way of life, such as farming, religious and cultural activities.

Therefore the economic benefits that are pursued should encourage joint consideration towards the social and cultural sectors. A cautious policy will be required to properly address the conflict in the planning system. In the case of Bali, it must not deal with tourism alone, but should involve a range of measurements such as regional planning, environmental policy, the development of agriculture and other economic realms, with local cultural policy and building design guidelines will be a part of it.

In a certain way the tourist industry does contribute to increased unemployment in the region by the construction of new hotels or other tourist facilities. It inadvertently forces farmers and their families away from their villages and their main source of survival through practicing centuries of subsistence agriculture. Consequently, the agricultural production decreases and the prices of food go up. Though the tourist sector may be able to afford the increased costs, the locals however are badly affected. This is not merely an economic case, but it is mostly related to the different interests in using the available land. How are building design guidelines properly addressed to maintain the use of land within the consideration of economic, social and cultural aspects?

In presenting a case study of Bali, this study examines the influential dominance of the tourist industry in the implementation of building design guidelines that indicate the way land is used. It especially assesses by which method design guidelines have to be regulated in conjunction with land use. This process will involve the local concerns in both issues; where in the case of Bali, the community and its institution will play a sufficient role within the process.

This research is conducted within the “Focus Group Research Methodology” that covers three case studies conducted within the various regions of Bali. There are three groups in each case study. Furthermore, the study is done within a methodology that covers the framework of both local value systems and the related theoretical approach towards development. It is expected that, these local value systems will be a reference that leads guidelines on both building design and land use to a particular focus, which is demanded and participated in at the local level. This participation at the local level it is hoped will be sensitive towards the effects of economic
growth. The theoretical approach on the other hand, is a generally related reference in terms of which manner local concerns are addressed within the guidelines. The research findings will be contributions in developing a land use system in which regional economic development is best planned and implemented to sustain the region’s future development.

Key data sources:
Cultural tourism, Investment, economic development, land use change, building design guidelines, traditions and value system, local institution, community participation.

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Reference:
Covarrubias, 1937,