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## Social Evolution of Community Spaces: Adapting to Modernity and Economic Demands in Bali-Indonesia

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### Abstract

*In today's social life, without realizing it, we often encounter a phenomenon called social change. Traditional spaces are no exception. Functionbale banjar as a place to carry out traditional and religious activities, is now shifting towards and tending to economic activity. This research purposed to find out how social evolution occurs from utilization-bale banjar. Social Evolution Theory developed by Herbert Spencer was used to understand the development of human society and how the societies adapt over time. The method used is descriptive qualitative. The research results show that socially, functionally bale banjar evolved from time to time according to society's activities. Starting from the increase in size marked by agrarian community activities, then complexity, namely craft economic activities, differentiation marked by creative economic efforts, and now bale banjar evolved into smart banjar. The implications explain how society evolves towards differentiation to survive in modern era. This research highlights the basic concept of Bale Banjar as the smallest community in Bali which also a place to implement Tri Hita Karana. This study contributes to the literature by providing deep insights of many Bale Banjar have become new places to work and do digital activities (co-working spacs) and other economic activities.*

**Keywords:** Social Evolution, Bale Banjar, Digital transformation, Tri Hita Karana, Co-Working Space

### Introduction

In the social life of today's society, without realizing it, we often encounter a phenomenon called social change (Mastika & NIMRAN, 2020; Yasa et al., 2024; Saputro & Nawangsari, 2021; Elwood & Lawson, 2020; Cekmis, 2023). According to Mel, Ainscow., (2022), social changes are a variation in the accepted way of life, either due to changes in geographical conditions, material culture, population composition, ideology or due to diffusion or discoveries in this society (Malik et al., 2021). In a static society, every society's life is constantly changing (Zinn, 2023). Social change can also be interpreted as a dynamically changing society that affects social systems, values, attitudes, and individual behaviour patterns among groups. The concept of social change is often associated with culture or traditional arts in an area.

The Disruption Era has fundamentally changed all aspects of life (Dewi et al., 2024; Petrović, 2023; Acharya et al., 2023; Nambisan et al., 2019; Jahani, Abbasi, Hosseinifrad, Fadaki & Minas, 2021; Liu, Matthijs, Danaher, Scarcella, Lexer & Rompaey, 2020; Prayana & Darma, 2023). The world is currently facing a phenomenon where everything is shifting and infinite. A new record comes to replace the old order that does not fit the demands of the times. The presence of this era makes people have to be open to technological advances to avoid being left behind in all fields.

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The era of disruption is characterized by people starting to turn to the digital world (Yasa et al., 2024, Liu, Chu, Zheng & Chu, 2021; Ma, He & Gu, 2021; Brownsword, 2022; Nizzero, Cote & Cramm, 2017; Liu, 2022).

The use of social media, *digital platforms*, and the like began to be developed as a support for business activities to government affairs (Hond & Moser, 2022) (Kamboj et al., 2018). Economic development continues to evolve over time. As the growth of business people and digital users from entrepreneurs and freelancers increases (Monaco, 2023), the need for office space to work is limited (Hölzel & Vogl, 2023). Along with the shift in work culture and the increasing trend of *co-working spaces* for cross-generational people (Zhao et al., 2020), users prefer co-working spaces as a new work trend that wants a '*remotely*' work concept that can follow the user's lifestyle and requires space/facilities that can meet all work needs that can be used flexibly (Hölzel et al., 2022). In addition, the impact of the increasing trend of *co-working space* users also provides high opportunities and potential for *co-working space* operators or founders to establish a *co-working space* that can adjust the needs of the intended target users (Zhao et al., 2020).

Bali is no exception, many people work *remotely* so they tend to be flexible to work anywhere, even in public spaces (Hölzel & Vries, 2021). *Bale Banjar* is a public space that can be accessed by the community and used for activities, gatherings, and interactions between communities (Agung et al., 2017). Public space is a public space or land where people can carry out functional activities and other side activities that bind the community, both daily and periodic (Nugraha, 2022). This shows that the availability of public space as a place for creative activities of its citizens is very important. Judging from the dynamics of the development of bale banjar from the 10th-11th centuries, it shows that the dynamics of the socio-cultural development of the community in bale banjar are very dynamic (Sanjaya & Juliarthana, 2019; Gantini, 2014; Juniastra, 2021; Suartika, 2019). This is due to traditional Balinese space, which refers to *Tri Pramana*, namely *village*, *kala*, *patra* (Handayani, 2019). *Village* is a place, *kala* is a time, and *patra* is a condition.

The development of space/community culture in bale banjar will adjust to the current social conditions of the community without having to get out of the philosophy and cultural concepts of the banjar community/citizens. Indeed, bale banjar and banjar residents in Bali are very responsive to the development of the current era or can be called adjusting the current *trend* of social development in society (Adnyani, 2019; Varlina & Yani, 2022; Aryanatha, 2019). Balinese culture is known to be flexible and flexible to adapt to the development of its era, but Balinese culture, especially the culture, customs and customs that exist in bale banjar will not be separated from history, its original function and culture agreed upon in bale banjar. thus, bale banjar in Bali is increasingly developing its utilization by local communities. *Remote* workers in several areas in Bali utilize bale banjars as a place to work and meet with colleagues of the same profession (*remote* workers but different companies). Meeting with colleagues of the same profession can establish intimacy, add relationships, and can exchange ideas related to problems in their respective jobs.

The concept of banjar as a *co-working space* has actually existed and developed since long ago. The dynamics of social development of the community, especially banjar young people who more often utilize their activity space as a space for creativity in bale banjar. Bale banjar is used as a gathering place for young people, where when young people gather, ideas/thoughts and actions will arise to realize these ideas. The process from the beginning of the creation of ideas

to realizing ideas with actions and producing a work. This process can be categorized as creative activity. This process often occurs in groups of banjar young people where this process is accommodated in bale banjar. Therefore, the urgency of this research is that the activities and characteristics of modern society in Bali tend to grow, this has an influence on the development of the function of traditional tools, namely bale banjar. Bale banjar as a place that accommodates the activities of the community, now not only functions as a traditional activity or activity and just a place for young people to gather, but also for economic activities, ranging from social activities to *co-working spaces*.

Social evolution is a theory Herbert Spencer developed in sociology (Ardhana & Ardhana, 2015). Social evolution is a theory that describes the development and progress of human society from a primitive level to a more complex and advanced level. Social evolution involves changes that occur in social structures, values, social institutions, and technology in society over time. Social evolution aims to explain how human societies develop and adapt in the face of environmental changes and social demands (Handayani, 2019). Social evolution also emphasizes the importance of natural selection in influencing social development, where the theory claims that societies that are able to adapt and meet environmental demands will survive and advance while societies that are unable to adapt and meet environmental demands will decline or perish. Social evolution is a concept proposed by Herbert Spencer, a 19th-century British scientist who combined the views of biological evolution with human social and cultural development. Social evolution is a theory that explains how human societies develop and adapt over time (Ardhana & Ardhana, 2015).

Social evolution starts from the evolution of individuals merging into families, families merging into communities, communities into societies, and societies into states, and so on (FACD, 1989; Chi & Wylie, 2014; Appukuttan, 2016). *First Principles* (1862) is one of Spencer's monumental works. He stated that society should adhere to the law of the persistence of force, i.e., the strong will survive. Spencer's conception of social evolution is part of his more general conception of the evolution of the universe. In his book *Social Statics*, Spencer argued that society is an organism, in a positivistic and deterministic perspective. Natural laws can be used as a basis to explain all social phenomena. According to Spencer, just as natural laws determine the evolutionary process of the human biological body, natural laws also determine the process of social evolution. Furthermore, Spencer argues that society is an autonomous organism and evolves independently without the will or direction of each of its members in accordance with natural law (Basthoni, 2018; Murthada & Abubakar, 2018; Astriawan & Nurcahyono, 2021). For example, a person with all his shortcomings is certainly very difficult to survive without the help of others. To complement the shortcomings of each individual, they are encouraged to join others. According to Spencer, there are four stages of social evolution: the first stage is the size increase stage. Gradually an organism will grow in size as society will grow in terms of number and size. Second, the stage of complexification. After going through the process of increasing size, the structure of an organism will become more complex as the structure of social organizations becomes more complex over time. Third, the stage of differentiation. One of the consequences of social evolution is the division of tasks or functions that are increasingly diverse (differentiation). This division of labor and functions leads to social stratification. Furthermore, society is divided into social classes. Fourth, the integration stage. The existence of differentiation is thought to cause divisions. For this reason, there must be a process to overcome these divisions and the integration process. This integration stage is also one of the stages in the evolutionary process. This process is natural, spontaneous and automatic without engineering so

that integration towards this balance runs well. Humans as members of society do not need to make extreme efforts to realize this integration process. (Elizabeth, Azuz, Massenga, Siahaan, Winarti, Suprayitno, & Anggarawati, 2023).

Bale banjar is an open building that can function as a facility where banjar residents can release all burdens, discuss various problems, obtain information and receive direction. Talking about bale banjar cannot be separated from the banjar system, Christina, Gantini., (2017), emphasizes that in Bali there is a so-called banjar system, so there is a bale banjar building where banjar residents hold meetings and other activities. The center of the banjar is the bale banjar where community members meet on fixed days. The Banjar is headed by a chief called klian banjar. He is in charge of all matters concerning the social life of the banjar as a community and religion. Bale banjar is constructed as a place for krama banjar (banjar members) to conduct sangkepan (meetings, gatherings, receiving information and interactions) and as a place for traditional activities as well as providing equipment for religious rituals. Therefore, as a public space, bale banjar basically has a social, cultural, religious, political function, in the present time it has increased economic functions and its sustainability is maintained, maintained together. The good and bad of the bale banjar building is the center of attention, the responsibility of its citizens because it has benefits (Christina, Gantini., 2017). Bale banjar in Bali cannot be used by just anyone for certain purposes, they must ask permission from the banjar clan. If it is used temporarily and if it is allowed, it can be used, but for just shelter there is no need to ask permission.

The concept of a co-working space is a shared workspace designed to connect individuals who work independently without specific company affiliations. The concept of a co-working space is a shared workspace designed to connect individuals who work independently without specific company affiliations (Zhao et al., 2020). The co-working space concept provides a collaborative environment where individuals can work alongside others and have access to shared resources and facilities. The concept of co-working spaces fosters collaboration, knowledge sharing, and creativity among individuals (Hölzel & Vries, 2021). These spaces offer a physical workspace and promote a sense of community, openness, diversity, and sustainability. The rise of co-working spaces has brought about significant changes in the way workspaces are used in cities, with implications for economic and socio-cultural aspects (Zhao et al., 2020). While Herbert Spencer's concept of social evolution emphasizes the progress and development of society, there are opposing views that argue against the idea of linear progress and evolution in human societies.

As social organization becomes increasingly complex over time, one consequence is the differentiation of tasks or functions, leading to social stratification and the division of society into social classes (Ardhana & Ardhana, 2015). The significance of accurate weather forecasts cannot be overstated in today's rapidly changing world (Zhao et al., 2020). The development of co-working spaces has generated a shift in the traditional paradigm of work environments, fostering a more collaborative and dynamic setting. (Monaco, 2023). These spaces provide a place for individuals to work and serve as hubs for networking, idea-sharing, and skill exchange (Flipo et al., 2022, Muna et al., 2023). By bringing together people from diverse professional backgrounds, co-working spaces create an ecosystem that encourages innovation and cross-disciplinary collaboration. Moreover, the concept of co-working spaces aligns with the evolving nature of social organization, as described by Herbert Spencer (Inglis & Thorpe, 2023). As societies become more complex, the differentiation of tasks and functions leads to a layered social structure, reflecting Spencer's notion of social stratification and the division of society into

distinct classes.

The use of an office or other working environment by people who are self-employed or working for different employers, typically so as to share equipment, ideas, and knowledge. In other words, the use of co-working spaces by individuals who are self-employed or working collaboratively to share space, ideas and knowledge for mutual progress. Collaborative work environment, sharing equipment, ideas and knowledge are the main concepts of Co-working Space. Not only that, it includes renting workspace that is used jointly and open to other users, besides that co-working space users come from different backgrounds such as entrepreneurs, freelancers, associations, consultants to students. Co-working Space is a workplace used by professionals from various fields. There are various workers / entrepreneurs with work / industry backgrounds who have the aim of getting a wider network and can collaborate with similar or different industrial fields. In 2017, the co-working space industry in Southeast Asia experienced a 15% growth spurt. This industry holds immense promise in Indonesia, particularly with the flourishing startup scene in major cities like Bandung. Additionally, the growing trend of flexible freelancing is further fueling the industry's expansion.

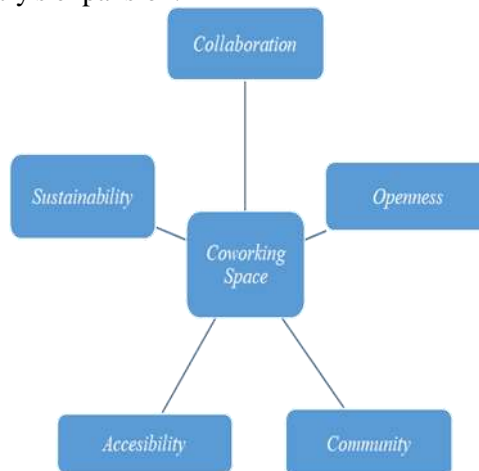


Figure 1. Characteristics of co-working space  
Source: Kwiatkowski and Buczynski (2017)

According to Kwiatkowski, there are several characteristics of Co-working Space that need to be considered in its development, including: a. Collaboration: the principle that prioritizes the involvement of all parties in a place (Co-working Space), collaborating in creating a value or goal. b. Openness: a community with the same goal of opening a wider network for the development of their business or business, so that there is collaboration between Co-working users. c. Community: a community with the same goal of opening a wider network for the development of their business or business. Openness: openness in sharing information, ideas, and experiences so that a transfer of knowledge occurs among the community. c. Community: a community with the same goal of opening a wider network for the development of their business or business, so that there is collaboration between users of the Co-working Space. d. Community: a community with the same goal of opening a wider network for the development of their business or business, so that there is collaboration between users of the Co-working Space. Accessibility means that Co-working Space must be open to all people in general and also to workers (freelancer workers, Start Up businesses, etc.) who are running a business / business in

particular. e. Sustainability: co-working must have sustainable value, Co-working Space is not only a place to meet and facilitate for space facilities, but also has long-term goals in developing business ideas, mentoring to collaboration between fellow Co-working Space users.

## **Methodology**

This qualitative research method involves interviews with co-working space users and founders/managers/coordinators (Zhao et al., 2020). The researchers used a qualitative research method to gather data for their study on co-working spaces in Bali-Indonesia. The researchers conducted semi-structured interviews with both Bale Banjar, a provider, and users of co-working spaces in Bali, Indonesia, to gather qualitative data for their study (Mohajan, 2018). The method used in this research is a descriptive qualitative research approach method, in order to be able to describe a condition in detail and in depth about what actually happens in the field (Williams, 2021). The subject of this research is bale banjar in Bali. In determining the sample and population, this research uses purposive sampling and snowball sampling techniques to get informants who are considered the most competent with the issues raised, so that the data obtained is expected to be in accordance with the research objectives.

This research is rooted in Herbert Spencer's Social Evolution theory which is used in solving research problems. This theory points to four stages of social evolution: the size increase stage, the complexification stage, the differentiation stage, and finally the integration stage. This research's data and data sources are primary and secondary data. Primary data was collected through interviews with informants and observations in the field. Then secondary data is obtained from documentation, book references regarding bale banjar in Bali and its development, and other relevant books. In testing the validity of the data, researchers used data triangulation techniques, method triangulation techniques, and added informant reviews. The data triangulation technique was used to compare one informant's data with another. The method triangulation technique is used to compare data obtained from interviews, observations, and document analysis. Meanwhile, informant review is a communication process to make an agreement between researchers and informants (especially main informants) regarding the data collection process results, so that the informants concerned can approve the data to be presented in the research report.

## **Results**

Historically, the term "*banjar*" is thought to have emerged in the 12th century. According to Ardika (Agung et al., 2017), the term "*banjar*" first appeared during the reign of Udayana in Bali. The latest finding in the Julah inscription is the first to include the term "*banjar*." Although Ardika cannot confirm whether the term refers to the concept of "*banjar*" as we know it today, he considers "*banjar*" to be the result of a change from the term "*wanua*." This change occurred towards the end of Balinese rule. This change occurred towards the end of Old Balinese rule and the arrival of Majapahit. In Bali, "*banjar*" is often identified with social solidarity in joy and sorrow. Banjar is a place where Balinese people gather to discuss common interests. It also serves as a place for internalization of values, including personal, cultural, and social values, as each member of the "*krama*" in a *banjar* has social, cultural, and religious responsibilities towards fellow *krama*. Thus, members of the *krama* within a particular banjar area are bound by the social norms that apply within the banjar. The role of the banjar in Bali is very important, because in idealism, the banjar is able to become the defense of Balinese people in maintaining their social identity. Moreover, the banjar serves as a center of creativity and art for the younger generation,

especially in cities with limited land. The *Banjar* becomes the center of cultural education for the younger generation. Thus, it can be concluded that the banjar's function not only reflects social aspects, but also has cultural and religious dimensions. These three roles are what enrich the Balinese value system.

## Discussions

*Bale banjar*, as a territory-based organization, has an important role in formulating regulations in the form of *awig-awig* (rules) of *banjar pakraman* (Subekti et al., 2020). This rule binds all members of the krama and community organizations operating in the banjar area. The moral foundation underlying this rule is known as "*menyama braya*", the principle of social unity that views every individual in society as a brother, encouraging the obligation to help and collaborate with each other (Boon, 1976). The "*banjar suka duka*" concept reinforces the commitment to mutual aid and collaboration, both in happiness and sadness. By engaging in helping activities in various situations, the Banjar Pakraman implements a social security system for its members (Agung et al., 2017). Gotong royong actually has a reciprocal nature that plays a role in providing social assistance and carrying out joint religious obligations or duties.

Historically, Balinese people have long practiced a dynamic system of values, norms, and laws within their traditional villages, known as *desa pakraman* (Ardhana & Ardhana, 2015). Pakraman villages are places where Balinese people follow and are shaped by a number of systems that include values, morals, laws, and culture, which are mutually recognized and reflect the collective identity of the community (Subekti et al., 2020). Therefore, the social actions carried out by Balinese people are strongly influenced by the value system formed when they are part of the Pakraman village community. The scope under the pakraman village is the *bale banjar*. The social life of the krama or community in the banjar will affect the social life of the pakraman village. *Bale banjar* is based on the principle of *Tri Hita Karana*.

As a cultural concept, *Tri Hita Karana* is realized in three main aspects (Wiryanan & Ernawati, 2024). The first is man's relationship with God (*sukerta tata agama*). This concept emphasizes the importance of the presence of *Tri Kahyangan* for every Pakraman village resident, by maintaining places of worship and ceremonies in each *kahyangan*, promoting sacred art, and delving deeply into religious teachings. The second aspect is human relations, also known as *sukerta tata pawongan*. In this dimension, the importance of ethics in daily behavior is emphasized, both within the family, between families, at the banjar level, and in the traditional village as a whole. The ethics in question are that every banjar citizen has the same position under customary rules, as long as they have become part of the krama community. In this equality of rights and obligations, the importance of the principle of reciprocity is emphasized, where everyone has a responsibility to give in the hope of receiving similar treatment.

The combination of these two factors makes Balinese banjar communities tend to have similar views on values, character, and choices when interpreting and understanding their social environment. The third aspect is the relationship between people and the environment, known as *sukerta tata palemahan*. This relates to the delineation of banjar areas, the structure of places of worship, and the settlement patterns of indigenous village communities in accordance with the *Tri Mandala* concept. Hindu communities in Bali are taught to wisely maintain the balance of their relationship with nature (Wiryanan & Ernawati, 2024). The necessity to fulfill social and physical needs reinforces the belief that humans cannot function optimally if disconnected from their social environment.



The evolution of the function of bale banjar in Bali is drastic. Especially in the era of technology that is massively developing and starting to penetrate all sectors of the economy, it encourages local communities to switch from face-to-face systems to digital systems (Wulandari & Mahagangga, 2021). Most communities and private and government companies have begun to not require their employees to come to the office, but can work from home or anywhere that feels safe and comfortable to get the job done. Banjar as one of the closest spaces from home with maximum internet connection is the right choice to be used as a workplace for the community (co-working space) ((Flipo et al., 2022; Piirsalu-Kivihall et al., 2023). Along with this, the development of tourism in Bali has also played a role in driving the evolution of the function of bale banjar. The impact is evident in one bale banjar, Banjar Belaluan, which has become a business center for Balinese handicrafts and souvenirs. And not only that, since it became a training center for Balinese Traditional Makeup, Bale Banjar Kereneng is also frequently visited by both domestic and foreign guests. It is also not uncommon for people to come to the bale banjar, bring a laptop or just a smartphone, sit in the banjar for hours to do their digital activities, ranging from online meetings, to compiling or doing office work (Nambisan et al., 2019).

The quality of WiFi or internet network also affects whether or not someone feels comfortable doing their digital work in the bale banjar. This is one of the advantages of bale banjar to become a co-working space for the community, besides that people do not have to spend a lot of money to sit for hours at bale banjar. In contrast to working spaces, which usually provide a café or small shop where umkm sells and prohibits visitors from bringing food so that the café or shop that sells benefits from purchases made by visitors. The characteristics of co-working space are Collaboration, Openness, Community, and Accessibility (Wall & Crowe, 2023). Basically, bale banjar as a public space for the krama or community, it is very legitimate for the krama if they want to come to bale banjar to carry out certain activities (Astawa et al., 2019). However, if the activity involves a large number of people or not krama banjar, they should ask permission from the head of the neighborhood or traditional kelihan as a form of notification of the activity. In this research, the utilization of bale banjar as a co-working space for the local kramanya or banjar community members (Hölzel & Vries, 2021; Wiryawan & Ernawati, 2024).

The principle of collaboration in the co-working space criteria is naturally applied by the krama, because those who utilize the bale banjar as a co-working space are the krama of one banjar, so the relationship will be well established. The traditional Balinese "bale banjar" already functions on the principles of co-working: collaboration comes naturally within the community, open conversations lead to knowledge sharing, the "manyama braya" concept fosters a strong sense of community, and the tradition of mutual support reflects sustainability. Opening "bale banjar" as co-working spaces could bring wider benefits.

The advancement of modern times brought about striking social changes. These changes involve a shift from a closed society to a more open society and a shift from homogeneous values to diverse values (Hölzel & Vries, 2023). The modern era, characterized by advances in science and technology, has erased cultural boundaries between countries. Local cultures tend to be involved in the globalization process and become part of world civilization, involving the entire human population (Wulandari & Mahagangga, 2021). The development of modern technology provides people with a wide range of access options according to their preferences. This is also true in the domain of art, with modern technology enabling the development of diverse art forms, both domestic and foreign, in today's society. Talking about the Banjar as an organizational forum that is smaller in scale than a Pakraman Village and can gather the entire community in a social unit



within the Bale Banjar, it actually has a very dynamic development.

The dynamic development of Banjar and Bale Banjar started from the beginning of the formation of Banjar as a social unit in the same territory in the 10th-11th century along with the emergence of Subak and Pakraman Village (Ardhana & Ardhana, 2015). The evolution of the function of bale banjar in Bali, which now focuses more on smart communities, has added new functions to the utilization of bale banjar. Changes in the thinking patterns of people who are more modern and economical have had an impact on changes in social patterns in the bale banjar environment (Ardhana & Ardhana, 2015; Handayani, 2019). Apart from socially, the evolution of the function of bale banjar also has implications for the cultural life of the community. Efforts to evolve the function of bale banjar in Bali have implications for community culture, both including ways of thinking, conceptions, and ideas about culture, as well as cultural objects, including the content of culture, one of which is art. Seen from the culture system, the evolution of the function of bale banjar which is carried out consciously by krama banjar indirectly changes the way of thinking, ideas and conceptions of the community about the function of bale banjar so far. So to say, in this research, field facts were found about the socio-cultural dynamics of the community in Bali which are reflected through the appearance of the bale banjar.

Bale banjar, the traditional community halls of Bali, have always been more than just structures; they are a reflection of the island's dynamic society and its deep-rooted philosophy of Tri Hita Karana. This philosophy, which emphasizes harmony between people (Pawongan), nature (Palemahan), and the divine (Parahyangan), has guided the evolution of bale banjar throughout history. Initially, these spaces were deeply connected to the agricultural way of life, serving as gathering places for the community and supporting the agrarian economy. As Bali transitioned towards a more complex society, bale banjar adapted seamlessly, becoming centers for craft economies and later, hubs for creative services. This reflects the Balinese ability to embrace progress while maintaining a harmonious relationship with their environment.

Today, in the era of rapid technological advancement, bale banjar continue to evolve, transforming into "smart banjar" or co-working spaces equipped with internet access. This shift caters to the needs of the digital generation and demonstrates the community's commitment to staying connected in the modern world. This remarkable journey from agricultural hubs to digital centers highlights the resilience and adaptability of Balinese traditions. Modernization, economic shifts, tourism, and government programs have all shaped this evolution, ensuring that bale banjar remain vibrant community spaces where the spirit of Tri Hita Karana continues to thrive.

### **Disclosure Statement**

The study authors have no overlapping or contradictory interests in the article completion and dissemination.

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