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Adaptation and Continuity: *Banjar* Organizations and the Preservation of Balinese Ethnic Identity among Transmigrant Communities in Lampung, Indonesia

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze how Balinese transmigrants in Lampung sustain their ethnic identity through community organization, focusing on the adaptation and function of *banjar* organization in both enclave villages and urban settings. Employing qualitative field methods including interviews, surveys, and observation in Balinuraga village and Bandar Lampung city, the research contrasts the preservation strategies of traditional *banjar* institutions. The findings reveal that in rural enclaves, *banjar* structures closely replicate customary institutions from Bali, fostering strong ethnic, religious, and social cohesion. In contrast, urban *banjar* associations demonstrate greater inclusivity, accommodating inter-religious and inter-ethnic members and emphasizing cultural activities to reinforce identity. The study concludes that community organization remains crucial for ethnic continuity, but adaptation is required in diverse urban environments. Its novelty lies in the empirical comparison of *banjar* models across enclave and multicultural contexts, revealing unique mechanisms for maintaining identity. Further research should address generational change and the sustainability of *banjar* structures amid ongoing urbanization and social integration.

Keywords: Balinese; *banjar*; community organization; ethnic identity; transmigrant

1. Introduction

Located at the southern end of Sumatra Island, Lampung Province, Indonesia, has been a primary destination for migrants from densely populated islands like Java and Bali, owing to transmigration policies established by both the Dutch colonial and the Indonesian government. The initiation of

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transmigration coincided with the construction of the Way Rarem irrigation system, which attracted migrants from Java and Bali to settle in rural areas of the province (Hafied, et. al., 2015, pp. 561-577). Bandar Lampung serves as the capital city of Lampung province. In 1980, migrants from Bali province residing in Tanjungkarang, Bandar Lampung, established regular *arisan* (lottery gatherings) meetings to foster community among the growing number of Balinese migrants. The gatherings, known as *Arisan Suka Duka,* rotated among households and aimed to provide mutual support during joy and sorrow, such as weddings and funerals. Notably, unlike certain instances in other parts of Lampung province where cultural diversity led to conflict and disputes, these gatherings facilitated unity (Yanti, 2023; Apriliani, 2019).

One such village is Balinuraga, Way Panji District, West Lampung Regency characterized by the diverse culture and customs of its inhabitants. Initially part of a government-owned forest, Balinuraga was transformed in 1963, when the decision was made to convert the forest into settlements and agricultural land for migrants, particularly from Nusa Penida Island in the province of Bali. The migrants established a *banjar* named Pandearga and chose the village name Balinuraga, signifying Bali still exists (Suwondo 2011, p. 90). Balinuraga village commenced with a single *banjar*, later receiving additional migrant families from Nusa Penida in the 1970s and 80s, leading to an increase in the number of *banjars*. The presence of Balinese settlements was acknowledged in the government administration from the outset of the transmigration program. It was officially registered as the administrative village of Balinuraga (Desa Balinuraga) in the 2000 census. This administrative village consists of both Balinese-dominated and Javanese-dominated settlements, comprising seven sub-villages (*dusun*) among which five are Balinese *Banjar*s, housing a total of 3900 individuals across 780 households (Based on Ministry of Home Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, 2022, in this data, the village of Balinuraga appears as Bali Nuraga). The unique functions of traditional community organizations, such as *arisan* and *banjar*, in mediating mutual support and conflict prevention remain largely descriptive; their deeper impact on local governance, value transmission, and resilience against assimilation pressures is not yet thoroughly understood in the context of Lampung's transmigrant society.

The Indonesian transmigration program, a government-funded initiative, facilitated migration from Java and Bali to outlying islands, primarily focusing on agricultural settlements to stimulate regional development (Warganegara & Waley, 2021; Leinbach, et. al., 1992, pp. 23-47). Balinese migrants in Balinuraga village migrated to Lampung to engage in farming, transforming forest land into rice fields using a rain-fed lowland irrigation system supported by borehole technology. From around 2010, many villagers began utilizing water pumps

for irrigation, resulting in increased rice production. At present, the villagers collectively own approximately 1.500 hectares of rice fields with two harvests per year, while some also own rubber plantations.

Since the independence of the Republic of Indonesia in 1945, the government has been implementing thoughtful policies addressing ethnic diversity within the nation. Notably, in the 2000 population census, the government officially recognized and embraced the presence of 1071 *suku* (ethnic groups) within the Indonesian archipelago, encompassing communities of Arab, Chinese, and Indian origins (Suryadinata, et. al., 2003; Klinken, 2003, pp. 64-87). Current studies typically document the initial establishment and institutional structure of Balinese communities but rarely investigate how ethnic consciousness, social practices, and group boundaries evolve across generations as the community matures and interacts with external influences, such as broader Indonesian multiculturalism and state policies.

Multiculturalism is a concept frequently employed by experts to underscore the acknowledgment of cultural diversity within a particular societal context. This diversity inevitably fosters distinct patterns of interaction among communities and ethnicities with varying cultures. It is important to differentiate multiculturalism from the term multicultural. Multicultural denotes the diversity of ethnic cultures within a region, whereas multiculturalism refers to the approach taken by individuals or groups toward various cultural identities, aiming to either foster harmony or conflict (Arifin et. al., 2019). This perpetual dynamic of mutual respect is a recurrent trait within every community culture, navigating the dualism between conflict and harmony (Joseph 1980, pp. 65-75). While Lampung is recognized for its cultural diversity and increasing ethnic heterogeneity, there is insufficient research on how daily interethnic interactions within transmigrant settlements—specifically between Balinese, Javanese, and other groups—shape patterns of integration, conflict resolution, and maintenance of ethnic boundaries over time.

The Balinese *banjar*, the primary focus of our analysis, transcends mere organizational structure to constitute an integral social sphere of community life. As a fundamental component of the Balinese customary village (*desa adat*), its members are tasked with maintaining communal Hindu temples. The *banjar* is considered the executing body of the sacred obligations of the customary village and is entrusted with local governance, upholding general conduct, and consequently, public welfare (Geertz & Geertz, 1975, p. 16). In essence, the *banjar* represents the smallest societal unit embodying shared value standards, akin to Barth's conceptualization. Moreover, within schools, ethnic Balinese and Javanese individuals teach the Lampung language, indicating a high level of adaptability among Balinese transmigrants in communication (Anwar, 2017;

Malimi, et. al., 2015). Most existing studies focus on the historical movement and economic integration of Balinese transmigrants but seldom provide in-depth analysis of how the *banjar* organization adapts to different local contexts, especially regarding its role in social cohesion, ethnic identity, and religious practice in both enclaved rural villages and multicultural urban centers.

Given these regional and historical traditions, it is reasonable to anticipate that Balinese transmigrants would endeavour to establish a *banjar* organization in a new land, thereby fostering and expanding their social environment anchored in shared value standards. Over more than seventy years, nation-building in this highly multi-ethnic nation could be perceived as an endeavor to blend vast ethnic differences. Have these differences been blurred? Has ethnic consciousness waned? Has a unified national identity begun to surface? There is a need for empirical research that bridges sociological and anthropological theories—primordialism, constructivism, and multiculturalism—with the lived realities of transmigrant groups, to assess whether identity boundaries are blurred, ethnic solidarity persists, or national identity becomes more salient in multi-ethnic settings.

2. Literature Review

Amidst the profound political reformation following President Soeharto's resignation in 1998, Dutch Indonesian Gerry van Klinken observed a sudden surge in local conflicts, partially rooted in ethnic disparities. He acknowledged that [c]ertainly, ethnicity has persisted in post-1998 Indonesia in ways modernization theorists had not foreseen. Notably, he observed that Indonesia's recent ethnic conflicts have tended to be between indigenous and settler populations, framing them as struggles between local elites for influence, utilizing any available arguments. While primarily focused on the conflicting dimensions of ethnic relations, he also raised an intriguing yet under-researched question: How do people solidify their identities as Dayak, Madurese, and others, despite the government's nation-building efforts? (Klinken, 2003, pp. 64-87).

This paper endeavours to address Klinken's query by examining and dissecting the Balinese community organizations known as *banjar*, established by Balinese transmigrants in Lampung, Indonesia. Transmigration, a circumstance fostering sensitivity towards ethnic differences, affects migrants and the surrounding communities. American anthropologist Clifford Geertz, in his 1963 paper "The integrative revolution: Primordial sentiments and civil politics in the new states", posited that what the new states – or their leaders – must somehow manage regarding primordial attachments is not to wish them out of existence by belittling or denying their reality, but rather to

domesticate them. He elaborated the primordial attachments as the inherent elements of place, language, lineage, appearance, and lifestyle that form an individual's sense of self, defining who they are at their core and with whom they indissolubly belong, attributing their power to nonrational foundations of personality (Geertz, 1963).

While Geertz didn't explicitly utilize the terms of ethnicity or ethnic identity, his depiction of primordial attachments discusses the underpinnings of ethnicity and ethnic identity. His framing of primordial attachments as the givens faced scrutiny from proponents of the constructivist approach to ethnicity, pioneered by British school anthropologist Fredrik Barth.

In contrast to Geertz, Barth considers sharing a common culture as an implication or result, rather than a primary and definitional characteristic of ethnic group organization. He views ethnic groups as a form of social organization, with members who self-identify and are identified by others as constituting a distinguishable category among others of similar order. Barth delves into the emergence of such distinctions, arguing that [t]he identification of another person as a fellow member of an ethnic group implies a shared set of criteria for evaluation and judgment. Each ethnic group, according to Barth, possesses its value standards, thereby maintaining ethnic boundaries despite changes in shared cultural practices. His focus lies on the processes involved in establishing and preserving ethnic borders (Barth, 1998, pp. 11-13).

A decade later, another anthropologist, Ronald Cohen, amidst the surge in anthropological studies on ethnicity following Barth's work, attempted to define ethnicity as a *series* of nesting dichotomizations of inclusiveness and exclusiveness. This nesting quality, as Cohen explains, resembles a social distance scale in which the greater the number of distinguishing markers, the closer one gets to a particular person and/or their kin group. He further states that [t]he division into an exclusive grouping is always done concerning significant others, whose exclusion at any given scale level creates the dichotomy of us versus them. This definition offers a perspective that aids in comprehending a multi-layered sense of belonging, encompassing ethnic differences that may manifest across a spectrum, from daily interactions within the local community to their role in national political mobilization (Cohen, 1978, p. 387).

Cohen defines ethnicity elsewhere in the paper as a collection of sociocultural markers that delineate a shared identity among both members and non-members. These markers typically encompass physical appearance, names, language, customs, place of origin, history, myth, religion, and more, their usage contingent upon the specific circumstance of each case. In daily community interaction, ethnic distinctions are often discerned and acknowledged most prominently through language and customary behaviour. However, in political

mobilization, historical narratives and origin myths become significant markers that are frequently manipulated.

Another approach, termed instrumentalism, regards claims to ethnicity as a product of political myths, deliberately crafted and exploited by cultural elites seeking advantages and power. Primordialism, instrumentalism, and constructivism are outlined as the primary approaches to ethnicity, anticipating the constructivist perspective to reconcile these diverse approaches (Sokolovskii & Tiskhov, 1996, pp. 191-192).

The authors of this paper share Barth's focus on ethnic interactions at the community level, as the initial step for transmigrants in a new land involves establishing a community to secure their livelihoods. In Barth's theory, the establishment of community borders through a set of value standards is closely linked with custom and religion. Customs dictate the accepted way of life, validated by religious beliefs. This shared way of life forms the bedrock of communal solidarity, bolstering a sense of belonging and comfort within the community.

3. Method and Theory

The methodological and theoretical framework of this study directly addresses the identified research gaps by employing a comparative, multi-sited ethnographic approach to examine the adaptation and function of *banjar* organizations among Balinese transmigrants in both a rural enclave (Balinuraga village) and an urban, multicultural context (Bandar Lampung city). Unlike prior research, which has seldom explored how traditional community structures evolve in response to diverse local environments, this study systematically investigates both organizational adaptation and the lived experiences of ethnic identity maintenance. This paper introduces two variations of *banjar* organizations, one established in a migrant village and the other in the provincial capital. Both variations emulate the name and functions of the traditional Balinese community organization, known as *Banjar* from Bali.

This paper contends that the *Banjar* serves as an easily accessible community-networking tool for the Balinese migrants, functioning as a social hub to uphold their ethnic identity within the transmigration area of southern Sumatra. Data presented in this paper were gathered through extensive field research, involving intensive interviews with the members of these *banjar* communities and field observation conducted from 2018–2019. Additionally, this study utilizes raw data from the 2000 population census to scrutinize the demographic backgrounds of residents in both locations. The population census in Indonesia was conducted in 2010, but its raw data are not yet publicly available. The raw data of the 2000 census is the only available data that offers

statistical information at the village and neighbourhood level in almost all provinces. The 2000 census raw data used in this paper were offered by the Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University, Japan.

Intensive fieldwork, including in-depth interviews and participant observation, is used to capture the nuanced daily practices, social boundaries, and mechanisms of integration or distinction that arise in each context. The study also incorporates triangulated demographic analysis from the 2000 population census and structured surveys targeting school-age children, thereby offering longitudinal and generational perspectives on identity shifts, language use, and inter-ethnic interaction—areas previously underrepresented in the literature. The authors conducted a survey on 12–13 September 2018 using a structured questionnaire distributed to pupils in fourth, fifth, and sixth-year classes (aged 8–13 years old) at an elementary school near the Balai Banjar Bhuana Shanti. The questionnaire was designed to gather information about the pupils' ethnic background as well as that of their fathers and mothers. In addition, the survey explored the pupils' preferred language in family interactions and the situations in which they feel a strong sense of ethnic identity. The questionnaire used in this survey was similar to the one previously administered in the village of Balinuraga to ensure consistency and comparability of the data.

Theoretically, the research draws upon and operationalizes concepts from primordialism, constructivism, and boundary theory (e.g., Barth's focus on ethnic boundaries; Cohen's social distance), explicitly linking how the *banjar*'s functions may reinforce, alter, or blur ethnic boundaries in response to sociocultural and institutional pressures. By integrating empirical and theoretical analysis, the methodology addresses both the descriptive and explanatory deficits previously noted in studies of transmigrant community life and ethnic identity.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Demographical background of the administrative village of Balinuraga

The demographic composition of the administrative village (*desa dinas*) of Balinuraga, situated in the South Lampung district, consists of seven administrative sub-villages. Balinese migrants and their descendants exclusively occupy five sub-villages, while the remaining two are predominantly inhabited by residents from Java Island, primarily Muslims. According to the 2000 population census (see Table 1 for the ethnic composition of the village), the village had a total population of 3,114 individuals, including 10 foreigners, distributed among 816 households.

Table 1. The ethnic composition of the Indonesian citizens of the village of Balinuraga

Ethnic group	Number of residents (persons)	Percentage (%)
Balinese	2,308	74.36
Javanese	432	13.92
Sundanese	140	4.51
Others	224	7.22
Total	3,104	100 %

Source: The author's calculation is based on 2000 population census data

During the 2000 population census, the villagers were notably young, with 75% of them under 40 years old (refer to Table 2). Additional data from the 2000 census (not presented in this paper's tables) indicates that 676 individuals were born on the island of Bali, 160 were born on the island of Java, and 2,217 were born in the province of Lampung. Moreover, only 43 individuals had migrated to this village between 1995 and 2000, suggesting that by the time of the 2000 census, the villages had already reached a state of maturity and stability.

Table 2. The age composition of the Indonesian citizens of the village of Balinuraga

Age	0-9	10-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70～
Number (person)	663	666	617	360	264	202	191	141
Percentage (%)	21.36	21.46	19.88	11.60	8.51	6.51	6.15	4.54

Source: The author's calculation is based on 2000 population census data

The religious composition (see table 3) roughly aligns with the ethnic breakdown, where Hindus predominantly belong to the Balinese community, while non-Hindus (Muslim, Catholic, Protestant) constitute the majority among other ethnic groups. Interestingly, the count of Hindus slightly surpasses that of the Balinese residents, which could be attributed, in part, to the presence of non-Balinese individuals who have married into Balinese families.

Table 3. The religious composition of Indonesian citizens of the village of Balinuraga

Religion	Number of residents (person)	Percentage (%)
Islam	636	20.49 %
Catholic	16	0.52 %
Protestant	1	0.03 %
Hindu	2,451	78.96 %
Total	3,104	100 %

Source: The authors' calculation based on 2000 population census data

4.2 Community organisations of the Balinese residents

Among the seven sub-villages in Balinuraga, five are exclusively inhabited by Hindu-Balinese migrant families. In these five sub-villages, residents have established a Balinese customary village (*desa adat*) and elected customary officials to oversee its management. They refer to their sub-village as a *banjar*, mirroring the terminology used on their native island. The organizational structure is rooted in Hindu Balinese traditions and encompasses various official roles: *bendesa/klian adat*, *carik, klian banjar, klian pura, pecalang,* and *pemangku* (Astara, 2017, pp. 94-110; Suprapto, 2015, pp. 225-250).

The customary village of Balinuraga comprises three village temples, mirroring those found in Bali: *Pura Puseh* (Origin Temple), *Pura Desa* (Village Temple), and *Pura Dalem* (Netherworld Temple). These temples serve as focal points for communal religious activities, notably the periodic temple festivals (*odalan*). Adjacent to *Pura Dalem* lies the village's communal graveyard (*setra*), reserved exclusively for use by the villagers. Additionally, the village is equipped with a village meeting hall (*wantilan*) for an annual gathering of the entire village (*sangkep desa*), and a *banjar* meeting (*sangkep tempek*) occurs every 35 days within each *banjar*.

The ethnic uniformity prevalent among the Balinese living in this area is evident from a questionnaire administered by the authors (see Table 4) at two elementary schools situated within the five Balinese *banjar*. The survey was conducted on 13 September 2018, and the respondents were the pupils of fourth, fifth, and sixth-year classes (8-12 years old). This survey inquired about the ethnic background of the pupils' fathers, mothers, and the pupils themselves, their preferred language within family interactions, and the instances when they strongly identify with their ethnic heritage.

Table 4. The results of the questionnaire survey at Balinuraga village about ethnicity and ethnic identity (total respondents: 74 persons)

Ethnicity	**Balinese**	**Javanese**	**Palembangnese**	**Lampungnese**	**Sundanese**
Father's	72	2	-	-	-
Mother's	68	2	2	1	1
Own	72	2	-	-	1
Language used within the family	Balinese 66	Javanese 2	Indonesian 6	-	-
Occasions to feel ethnic identity*	Ethnic language 17	Customary rituals** 7	Ethnic cloths 19	Ethnic arts 9	Religious festivals 26

Notes: * This allowed plural answers

** These include, for example, the life-cycle rituals such as birthdays and marriages.

The collected responses revealed that among 74 respondents, five children came from inter-ethnic marriages, and three of them reported using Indonesian as their primary language within their families. Due to the prevalent ethnic homogeneity, most pupils not only use Balinese within their families but also with their school classmates. As a result, the proportion of instances where the ethnic language catalyzes feelings of ethnic identity is not notably high. However, a significant percentage of respondents identified religious festivals as an occasion for affirming their ethnic identity. This prominence could be attributed to the frequency of these events throughout the year and the distinctions between their village festivals and those of neighbouring Muslim hamlets. These responses strongly indicate the pupils' steadfast commitment to their ethnic identity without any apparent hesitation.

4.3 Community activities of the Balinese residents

The community activities in the customary village of Balinuraga mainly focus on traditional and religious activities (Photo 1, Photo 2). Regularly held cultural and religious activities include daily prayers, voluntary work, *baleganjur* and *makidung* exercises, *dharma wacana* teachings, celebrations like *Purnama Tilem, Nyepi, Siwaratri, Kuningan*, and temple festivals. Daily prayers take place in the afternoon, while voluntary work (*ngayah*) is typically done weekly to clean up the surroundings. The Balinese ethnic identity itself serves as a tourist attraction (Davies, 2017, pp. 225-236; Putra & Cresse, 2012, pp. 272-297; Picard, 2008).

Photo 1. A street in the village of Balinuraga on the Hindu festive day of *Galungan* (taken by Author 1 on 27 July 2019).

Photo 2. Balinuraga village crossroad on the *Galungan* day (taken by Author 1 on 27 July 2019).

Purnama Tilem involves collective prayers at Pura Desa (Village Temple) based on the lunar cycle. Nyepi marks the Hindu New Year's Day according to the Saka calendar. Galungan-Kuningan feast days are the most significant celebrations for Hindus (see Photos 1 & 2). Each village temple celebrates its own festival day called *odalan*, marking the temple's founding day. These festivals occur every 210 days in alignment with the *wuku* calendar, and every village household participates in these celebrations.

4.4 Demographical Background of Bandar Lampung City and Its Balinese Residents

As the capital city of a province that attracts numerous migrants, Bandar Lampung exhibits a significant ethnic diversity. Table 5 illustrates an ethnic composition resembling that of Indonesia overall, except for the indigenous Lampung peoples (categorized in the 2000 population census as *Peminggir, Pepadun,* and *Pubian* peoples) (Tirtosudarmo, 2021), constituting the second largest ethnic group. Notably, in this cityscape, the Balinese residents in 2000 comprised a mere fraction of the population, numbering 2,722 persons, equivalent to 0.37 percent of the total city populace. The 2000 census distinguishes Bali Aga people who originate from several mountainous villages in the island of Bali from ordinary Balinese people. In Table 5, the numbers of these two people are summed up into the number of Balinese.

The Balinese residents of Bandar Lampung skewed relatively young, as detailed in Table 6, with a majority under the age of 50 years old. Further data from the 2000 census indicates that 27.85 percent of them were born outside of the province, while 6.24 percent were residing outside the province in 1995. These statistics not only suggest a gradual increase in Balinese migrants to the city but also imply the existence of long-term residents among them.

Table 5. The ethnic composition of the Indonesian citizens of the city of Bandar Lampung

Ethnic group	**Number of residents (person)**	**Percentage (%)**
Balinese	2,722	0.37
Batak	14,459	1.97
Bantenese	59,418	8.08
Javanese	284,753	38.71
Lampung indigenous people (Peminggir + Pepadun + Pubian)	103,184	14.03
Malay Palembang	47,024	6.39
Minangkabau	25,994	3.53
Sundanese	87,299	11.87
Chinese	21,963	2.99
Other	88,754	12.07
Total	735,570	100

Source: The author's calculation based on 2000 population census data.

Table 6. The age-grade composition of Balinese residents in the city of Bandar Lampung

Age	**0-9**	**10-19**	**20-29**	**30-39**	**40-49**	**50-59**	**60-69**	**70～**
Numbers (person)	507	654	762	449	219	79	31	21
Percentage (%)	18.63	24.03	27.99	15.03	8.05	2.9	1.14	0.77

Source: The author's calculation based on 2000 population census data.

Table 7 displays the religious affiliation of Balinese residents in Bandar Lampung in 2000. A fairly large portion of them had converted to Islam, perhaps adapting to the predominant Muslim identity of the city.

Table 7. The religious composition of Balinese residents in the city of Bandar Lampung

Religion	**Number of residents (person)**	**Percentage (%)**
Muslim	947	34.79
Catholic	39	1.43
Protestant	25	0.92
Hindu	1,664	61.13
Buddhist	45	1.65
Others	2	0.07
Total	2,722	100

Source: The authors' calculation based on 2000 population census data

4.5 Community Organisations of Hindu Balinese Residents in Bandar Lampung

As the population of Balinese migrants in the Tanjungkarang neighborhood increased, community activities began organizing into a region-wide organization also called a *Banjar*. Traditionally, the term *banjar* denotes a sub-village unit in Bali; however, in this context, it signifies a voluntary mutual aid association rather than a sub-neighborhood unit. Initially, Bandar Lampung city had three *Banjars*. Nowadays, there are four *Banjars* in Bandar Lampung: Banjar Satria, Banjar Bhuana Shanti, Banjar Tengah, and Banjar Sukabumi.

In 1981, the residents of Banjar Way Halim (later renamed Banjar Bhuana Shanti) agreed to establish a permanent meeting place known as Balai Banjar, or community meeting hall, intended for Hindu religious studies and as a centre for Balinese cultural arts. In 1999, a teacher named I Ketut Narya generously allocated an 800-square-meter plot of land as the Balai Banjar for Banjar Way Halim. Subsequently, in 2009, upon completing the construction of Pura Bhuana Shanti (Bhuana Shanti temple) within the Balai Banjar area (refer to Photo 3), the *banjar* members decided to rename Banjar Way Halim to Banjar Bhuana Shanti. Currently, Pura Bhuana Shanti and Balai Banjar collectively form a unit

known as Balai Banjar Bhuana Shanti, Urban Village Labuhan Dalam, District Tanjung Senang, Bandar Lampung City, serving Balinese residents residing in the western part of Bandar Lampung city.

According to a 2010 leaflet published by this *banjar*, Banjar Bhuana Shanti comprised 178 households, totalling around 712 residents. The leaflet indicated that in 1987, the *banjar* consisted of 57 households and a population of 150 individuals. By 2005, these numbers grew to 129 households and 413 residents, showcasing a consistent increase in the *banjar's* size over time. The population is categorized into five sub-groups based on residential areas, each managed by a *juru arah* (messenger staff).

The organizational structure of Banjar Bhuana Shanti includes a head (*ketua* or *kelihan*), a secretary (*sekretaris*), an accounting staff (*bendahara*), six sub-section heads, and five messenger staff (*juru arah*). The *banjar*'s activities encompass religious, educational, societal, cultural, economic development, youth and sports, legal, human rights, and broadcasting affairs. This division of activities mirrors typical structures found in various government organizations, akin to administrative villages. *Banjar* staff are elected every five years, aligning with the administrative village staff, and the terms used for these roles are common Indonesian terms for governmental officials. Notably, one staff member explained the deliberate choice of using common Indonesian terms instead of Balinese terms to accommodate the multi-ethnic composition of Bandar Lampung city's residents.

The association manages several communal assets, including a meeting hall (Balai Banjar), Pura Bhuana Shanti temple, a smaller Pura Melanting temple adjacent to the meeting hall, and a cemetery divided into three sections for Hindus (with a cemetery temple called Pura Merajapati), Muslims, and Christians. This diversity in the cemetery sections possibly reflects the presence of Muslim and Christian Balinese within the *banjar*. Additionally, the *banjar* possesses a set of gamelan musical instruments and sacred dance costumes (Yudarta, 2025).

The authors conducted a survey using a questionnaire (see Table 8) distributed among students attending an elementary school near the Balai Banjar Bhuana Shanti. The survey was conducted on 12 Sept. 2018, and the respondents were the pupils of the sixth-year class (10-13 years old). The questionnaire was almost like those discussed earlier in the village of Balinuraga.

Table 8. The results of the questionnaire survey in Bandar Lampung (total respondents: 77)

Ethnicity	**Javanese**	**Lampungnese**	**Palembangnese**	**Sundanese**	**Others**
Father's	36	15	7	5	14
Mother's	41	4	5	11	16
Own	35	15	4	2	21*
Language used in the home**	Indonesian 72	Javanese 4	Lampung 4	Sundanese 2	Others 4
Occasions to feel ethnic identity**	Ethnic language 47	Customary rituals 24	Ethnic clothes 12	Ethnic arts 7	Religious festivals 0

*Five out of 21 respondents answered Indonesian.

**This question allowed for plural answers.

Considerable ethnic diversity was observed, with over half of the respondents identifying as Javanese. Among the collected answer sheets from 77 respondents, 37 were children of inter-ethnic marriages, and 36 indicated the use of Indonesian as the primary language within their households. Even among those from non-interethnic marriages, the trend leaned towards employing Indonesians within their family. Respondents highlighted the use of their ethnic language as the primary occasion for expressing their ethnic identity. Notably, none cited religious festivals as such occasions, marking a stark contrast to the results obtained from the questionnaire conducted in Balinuraga village (refer to Table 4 above).

Two respondents had Balinese parents, with one using Balinese among family members while the other predominantly used Indonesian. Additionally, three respondents had either a Balinese father or mother, and all of them utilized Indonesian within their households. Among these, two identified themselves as both Balinese and Javanese, while the remaining respondents identified solely as Indonesian. These responses illustrate the minority consciousness among Balinese pupils within the city's ethnically diverse context, reflecting a swaying in their ethnic identity.

4.6 Community Activities of Hindu Balinese Residents: A Case Study of Banjar Bhuana Shanti

The Banjar Bhuana Shanti's meeting (see Photo 3) is regularly on the first Sunday of each month. Alongside these routine meetings, the *banjar* engages in various customary activities, including the *odalan* festival of the Pura Bhuana Shanti temple, which commemorates its founding day every 210 days, collective prayers during Purnama (full moon) and Tilem (dark moon), and the preparation of offerings for Hindu holy days.

Photo 3. Pura Bhuana Shanti temple viewed from the meeting hall in the complex of Bhuana Shanti Banjar (taken by Author 2 on 12 September 2018).

Photo 4. Waiting for the Full Moon Night prayer at the meeting hall (taken by Author 1 on 20 May 2019).

For instance, the full moon night prayer held on 20 May 2019, for example, was characterized by a very casual and relaxed atmosphere (see Photo 4), while the *odalan* festival commemorating the foundation day of the temple captured the authentic ambiance of a traditional Balinese ritual (see Photo 5). On the festive day of Kuningan, members from diverse *banjar*s congregated in Bandar Lampung city to visit the regional Hindu temple, Pura Kahyangan Jagad Bandar Lampung, located within the city, offering prayers and tributes to celebrate the holy day of Kuningan (see Photo 6).

Photo 5. The *odalan* festival at the Pura Bhuana Shanti temple (taken by Author 1 on 16 November 2019).

Photo 6. The Kuningan Day prayers at the Pura Kahyangan Jagad Bandar Lampung temple (taken by Author 1 on 3 August 2019).

Furthermore, the *banjar* hosts Pasraman Saraswati, Sunday classes focussing on Hindu religion for primary, junior and senior high school children of its members. These classes aim to compensate for the absence of Hindu religion education in Bandar Lampung's primary, junior and senior high schools, given the small number and dispersion of Hindu residents throughout the city.

4.7 The Dadia Organization and its Activities

Dadia represents a domestic group organized by Balinese people within a hamlet, comprising members from various households interconnected through the familial relationships between their household temples, known as *sanggah* (among commoners) or *mrajan* (among nobles). This group's collaborative essence is demonstrated through their participation in periodic festivals held at the original household temple (*sanggah gede or sanggah paibon*) (Sudarsana, 2017).

In Balinuraga village, Balinese migrants established multiple *dadia* groups as their families expanded within the migrant land. This was facilitated by the exclusive residence of Balinese migrants in five designated hamlets within the village. Conversely, Balinese individuals in Bandar Lampung city lack explicit *dadia* groups, likely due to their dispersed living arrangements across the city without a concentrated, exclusive residential area.

The *dadia* holds significance not only as a collective entity in village social life, as discussed by Geertz & Geertz, but also in religious and ontological domains. Balinese beliefs stipulate that souls reincarnate (numitis) into newborn babies within their *dadia* group. Traditionally, in Balinese homeland practices, when a baby is born, the father consults a diviner (balian) to determine which deceased member's soul from their *dadia* will enter the newborn. Subsequently, during the 105-day ritual (*upacara nyambutin*) following birth, the soul identified by the diviner is invited into the baby's body. This consultation with a diviner is termed maluasang.

In Balinuraga village, villagers continue to believe in the reincarnation of their souls into newborns within their *dadia* groups. Several diviners reside in the village, and *maluasang* rituals persist for newborn babies. Multiple *dadia* groups have established their *kawitan* temples and routinely conduct group rituals to strengthen their members' bonds. The *kawitan* temple is publicly recognized as the *dadia* temple. A *kawitan* is a clan-like domestic group that includes many *dadias* from a wide range of villages throughout the island of Bali, while a *dadia* is a lineage-like group composed only of the residents from one hamlet. For instance, the Pemacekan Agung ceremony took place on 29 July 2019 at the Pura Kawitan Pasek Gelgel temple in Balinuraga village (see Photo

7). Pemacekan Agung, a celebration of the temple's founding (also known as *piodalan*), occurs every 210 days following the *wuku* calendar.

Preparations began a week before the ceremony, with female members organizing necessary ritual offerings while male members cleaned their ancestors' statues three days prior. The ceremony, led by the temple priests (*pemangku*), involved the participation of all Pasek Gelgel *dadia* members. The ceremony started at 4 p.m., and the holy water (*tirta*), the most essential element for the Hindu Balinese rituals, was made on the site by one of the Brahmana priests (*pedanda*) living in Balinuraga village.

During the holy water preparation, sacred dances accompanied by a gamelan orchestra—such as *rejang dewa* by children, *rejang renteng* and *rejang sari* by adult members—were performed. Following the holy water preparation, *dadia* members congregated on the temple grounds, receiving blessings with the holy water sprinkled on offerings and individuals by the village priest. A collective prayer, guided by the Brahmana priest, ensued, concluding the ceremony around 9:30 p.m. with approximately one thousand attendees.

Photo 7. The periodical festival of Pura Kawitan Pasek Gelgel, Desa Balinuraga (taken by Author 1 on 29 July 2019).

On the other hand, Balinese migrants in the city of Bandar Lampung, especially those of the younger generation, seem not to preserve their ancestral beliefs and practices concerning the reincarnating soul among *dadia* members. Notably, no Balinese diviner resides in Bandar Lampung city. When we inquired with some young Balinese university students in the city about the soul of a baby, they simply mentioned that babies acquire their souls during pregnancy, aligning with Muslim beliefs.

4.8 The Balinese Approach to Sustaining Ethnic Identity

For transmigrants, establishing or joining a community rooted in shared values is crucial for ensuring a stable life. The Hindu Balinese face a unique circumstance, being not only an ethnic minority but also a religious minority in transmigrant regions. The Indonesian state mandates adherence to one of the officially recognized religions. To comply with this requirement and practice their faith, Hindu Balinese transmigrants necessitate communal establishments like Hindu temples and graveyards, which must be constructed and upheld collectively. Preparing a proper graveyard is of utmost importance for the Hindu Balinese, serving as both a burial ground and the site for cremation ceremonies, marking the transition of the deceased individual's soul into an ancestor soul through essential funeral rituals.

Since the 1960s, the Indonesian Hindu Council has advocated for the construction of Hindu temples in major cities, accommodating Hindu Balinese migrants. These organizations maintain regional branches across Indonesia, actively fostering Hindu religious development both within and beyond the island of Bali (Parisada, 1967). The council introduced a new temple style featuring a single altar at the centre of the courtyard for the worship of the supreme god. This type of Hindu temple is called Pura Jagatnatha (Jagatnatha style temple). The style reflects the Indonesian official definition of religion, which stresses the worship of a single supreme god. The inaugural temple of this style, Pura Jagatnatha, was erected in 1969 in Denpasar, Bali's provincial capital, swiftly followed by a temple within a graveyard in Jakarta in 1970 (Kagami, 1992, pp. 315-330).

Customary villages in Bali serve as pivotal traditional communities responsible for preserving culture, customs, and social structures, especially through festivals. These villages are bastions where Balinese customs, arts, and cultural traditions are preserved and passed down across generations. Embedded within traditional craft villages are rich cultural activities, encompassing religious ceremonies, dance, music, and other traditional practices, all underpinned by esteemed cultural norms and values. Indigenous villages inherently maintain social hierarchies intertwined with the Hindu-Bali religion and are overseen by traditional leaders responsible for upholding customary rituals. Acting as cultural guardians, these villages sustain the cultural identity of both Balinese migrants and indigenous inhabitants.

In contrast, administrative villages function as governmental administrative units primarily serving administrative and public service purposes. While pivotal for public services and resource management at the village level, administrative villages may not prioritize cultural preservation or national identity as extensively as indigenous villages do. They often encompass

multiple indigenous communities, representing a broader administrative entity incorporating diverse indigenous village communities. In Bali, administrative villages often coexist alongside customary villages, with administrative boundaries containing several customary villages within them. The Balinese in Lampung, according to the article, live in a traditional village. This is because the study discusses how Balinese migrants from Bali to Lampung keep their ethnic identity. Language, religion, culture, and social contact are all ways in which ethnic identity reveals itself. Within the framework of their traditional society, Balinese people have a strong ethnic identity. This is demonstrated by the presence of customary standards governing community life, such as language, religion, culture, and society. These traditional standards assist the Balinese in maintaining their ethnic identity even while they are not in Bali.

The community space of Balai Banjar Bhuana Shanti contains the graveyard not only for Hindus, but also for Muslims and Christians, which indicates the existence of Muslim and Christian members within the Banjar Bhuana Shanti, and there is an emphasis on the mutual-aid characteristics of the association. The inter-ethnic marriage rate among the Balinese transmigrants in the city of Bandar Lampung was not high at the time of the 2000 census. Although the city residents contain many Hindus who are not Balinese (mostly of Chinese origin), we can observe the tendency among Hindu Balinese residents to have a spouse of the same ethnicity in the 2000 census data. In this sense, the Banjar Bhuana Shanti is primarily an ethnic association and an avenue for maintaining ethnic identity in migrant areas.

The Balinese *banjar* associations in the city of Bandar Lampung regularly observe religious holidays and other celebrations. They routinely hold a *pasraman* for Hindu Balinese pupils. The *pasraman* is a Hindu religious learning activity through non-formal education channels to cultivate and transfer Hindu doctrine to the younger generation. Hindu Balinese residents in Bandar Lampung usually carry out the *pasraman* activities every week at each *banjar* meeting hall. To encourage young people to join, however, they package *pasraman* (Winanti, 2021) activities with a gamelan orchestra, Balinese dancing, and yoga (Ambarsari, 2025) practice. The implementation of this activity is expected to help the younger generation continue to develop cultural as well as religious activities in the future.

The case of Balinuraga village in the province of Lampung is fairly different. The situation is more akin to the traditional villages on the island of Bali. The customary unit in Bali is referred to as *desa adat* and has been co-existing with the administrative unit (*desa dinas)* since the Dutch colonial period. The name of this traditional style unit was officially changed to *desa pakraman* after the promulgation of the Bali provincial regulation in 2001. The administrative

village of Balinuraga, as an official unit (*desa dinas*), is composed of seven sub-villages (*dusun*), and five of them only have Hindu Balinese residents. These five sub-villages, which the Balinese residents call *banjar*, form a traditional Bali-style village which has three kinds of village temples (Pura Puseh, Pura Desa, and Pura Dalem), and a common graveyard (Warren, 1993; Kagami, 2003, pp. 65-80; Kagami, 2005, pp. 46-71). Life here for Hindu Balinese villagers seems to greatly resemble life in the province of Bali. They speak in Balinese among themselves, have common Hindu temples and a graveyard, elect official staff to maintain traditional customs and religious activities, and periodically hold temple festivals. They form *dadia* groups and believe in their reincarnation into newborn babies in their *dadia*. They still conduct a visit to village diviners to ask about the reincarnating souls of newborn babies (*maluasang*) and routinely hold festivals at *dadia* temples. The reincarnation into the *dadia* members guarantees the maintenance of the Balinese ethnicity.

However, within the broader Indonesian society, robust social integration prevails among multi-ethnic communities. This integration stands as a robust social modality fostering the development of knowledge, skills, values, economics, politics, culture, defense, security, health, agriculture, animal husbandry, as well as science and technology (Darling-Hammond, 2017).

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

This study reveals that the transplanted Balinese community in Lampung province demonstrates two distinct models of ethnic identity preservation within the *banjar* organization, shaped by local context and demographic composition. In Balinuraga village, a rural enclave, the *banjar* closely replicates the traditional Balinese communal structure, bolstered by religious rituals and the continued belief in reincarnation through *dadia* membership. This configuration effectively sustains a strong, cohesive Balinese identity, largely insulated from external influences. In contrast, *banjar* organizations in urban Bandar Lampung adapt to greater ethnic and religious diversity by emphasizing inclusive mutual support networks and cultural expressions such as music and dance. However, this approach risks weakening core elements of Balinese identity if not supported by ongoing religious and customary practices.

The transplanted Balinese community, known as a *banjar* in Lampung province, exhibits differences in detail influenced by different regions and social circumstances. In this paper, two cases of *banjar* organisations compare their structures and activities. Both represent Balinese migrants' endeavors to establish a new life in a new land, yet their community-building approaches diverge. The enclaved villagers in Balinuraga village meticulously recreate a

strict copy of the Balinese traditional community, enabling them to uphold belief in reincarnation within the *dadia* members. Conversely, those residing in Bandar Lampung do not strictly adhere to Hinduism; rather, they prioritize mutual support in times of joy and sorrow. While the Balinuraga villagers maintain their ethnic identity through belief in reincarnation within *dadia*, those in Bandar Lampung rely on the perpetuation of traditional culture, such as gamelan music and dances, which may not inherently ensure Balinese ethnicity.

The effectiveness of these strategies in preserving ethnic identity raises questions. How can these strategies continue to be effective for the maintenance of ethnic identity? Balinuraga village, resembling a Balinese colony-like enclave, provides a steady foundation, contingent or maintaining some degree of socio-cultural isolation can be maintained to some degree. Despite being part of a larger administrative village unit and engaging in economic activities beyond their enclave, the five Balinese sub-villages possess their customary organization, Hindu temples, graveyard, religious practitioners, educators, and diviners. Sustaining this social structure hinges on village size and ongoing Hindu religious practices. However, uncertainties linger regarding future generations' choice of vocation and residence in a Balinese enclave.

Banjar organisations in the city of Bandar Lampung face challenges in sustaining themselves. The inclusion of a graveyard for Muslim and Christian members signifies openness to other religions, accentuating the organization's emphasis on mutual support. These graveyards may serve Balinese migrants who have embraced Islam and Christianity. While the first generation joined due to a shared Balinese cultural background, subsequent generations, disconnected from their land of origin, might lose motivation to engage in *banjar* activities, particularly if they cease to adhere to Hinduism. *Banjar* organizations devoid of Hindu religious practices may devolve into mere centers for Balinese gamelan music and dance lessons.

Customary and administrative villages, pivotal in Indonesia's administrative and social framework, especially in Bali, are crucial for Balinese native residents. Balinese transmigrants have established *banjar* associations as their most immediate community in the new territories, primarily to facilitate Hindu religious activities. In an enclaved transmigration village, they replicate a full-scale Balinese traditional community, albeit a rarity in the province of Lampung. In the more ethnically diverse, heterogeneous ethnic condition in the provincial capital city of Bandar Lampung, *banjar* associations are inclusive of Balinese transmigrants from varied religious backgrounds. They need to attract the Balinese transmigrants of other religions through Balinese cultural activities. This demonstrates a heightened sensitivity to ethnic identity among those in Bandar Lampung.

5.2 Recommendations

Future strategies to maintain Balinese ethnic identity should encourage the intergenerational transmission of key religious and cultural traditions—particularly in urban, multi-ethnic settings—by integrating Hindu education, ritual participation, and language preservation into *banjar* activities. *Banjar* organizations in cities should develop programs that appeal to both religious and secular members, ensuring cohesion while respecting pluralism. Partnerships with public institutions and targeted youth engagement may foster stronger attachment among younger generations. Policymakers and community leaders should support the dual role of customary and administrative villages, recognizing their significance for social integration, cultural resilience, and the long-term sustainability of minority identities in migration contexts. Further research is needed to examine the long-term outcomes of these adaptation strategies, especially the potential for hybrid forms of ethnic identity and the challenges posed by ongoing urbanization and intermarriage.

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