

The Ngayah Tradition as a Liminal Space: The Transformation of Cultural Meaning and Social Solidarity of the Seminyak Bali Traditional Village Community in the Era of Global Tourism

Dita Ariyanti¹, Arif Purnomo²

^{1,2}Social Science Education, ^{1,2}Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, ^{1,2}Semarang State University, Semarang, Central Java, Indonesia.

Corresponding Author: Dita Ariyanti

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ABSTRACT

The ngayah tradition is one of the local wisdoms of the Balinese people that plays an important role in maintaining the sustainability of the social, cultural, and religious life of the indigenous community. However, the rapid development of the global tourism industry in Bali, particularly in the Seminyak Traditional Village, has brought about various social changes that have influenced community participation patterns and how these traditions are interpreted. This study aims to analyze the implementation of the ngayah tradition in the Seminyak Traditional Village as a liminal space that demonstrates the transformation of cultural meaning while maintaining the social solidarity of indigenous communities amidst the dynamics of tourism globalization. The study used a qualitative approach with data collection techniques through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation studies. Research informants consisted of traditional leaders, parents, and the younger generation involved in the implementation of the ngayah tradition. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify patterns, meanings, and socio-cultural dynamics that develop in the practice of ngayah. The results of the study indicate that the ngayah tradition is still

actively implemented in various traditional, religious, and social activities as a means of strengthening the values of religiosity, mutual cooperation, social responsibility, and cultural identity of the Balinese people. On the other hand, the development of global tourism has driven a transformation in the implementation and interpretation of ngayah, especially among the younger generation who are trying to adapt tradition to the demands of modern life. Based on the perspective of liminality, the Seminyak Traditional Village community is in a transitional space between traditional values and the modernity of global tourism, so that ngayah functions as an arena for cultural negotiation that allows for an adaptation process without eliminating fundamental inherited values. The novelty of this research lies in the conceptualization of ngayah as a cultural liminal space that plays a role in building cultural resilience, strengthening social solidarity, and maintaining the sustainability of indigenous community identity amidst the flow of tourism globalization.

Keywords: ngayah, liminality, cultural transformation, social solidarity, seminyak, global tourism.

INTRODUCTION

Bali has developed into a global tourist destination, strategically positioned within the international tourism industry. The intensive growth of the tourism sector has not only contributed to regional economic growth but also has implications for the social and cultural dynamics and identity construction of local communities living in tourist areas (Cheer et al., 2019). Several studies have revealed that the expansion of global tourism activities often gives rise to a complex process of cultural transformation, as local communities strive to maintain their cultural identity while adapting to evolving economic and social demands in the modern era (Salazar, 2018; Winter, 2020). This phenomenon is evident in the Seminyak Traditional Village, which in recent decades has experienced rapid development into an international tourist destination, with hotels, restaurants, beach clubs, and various economic activities based on the tourism sector.

Amidst the rapid flow of globalization and the development of the tourism industry, the indigenous people of Seminyak continue to maintain the ngayah tradition as a cultural institution that plays a crucial role in maintaining social cohesion while preserving traditional values passed down through generations. Ngayah is understood as a form of voluntary service carried out collectively without any focus on material gain, and is an integral part of the Balinese social system, which is based on the spirit of mutual cooperation and shared responsibility (Yasa et al., 2025). From a social capital perspective, ngayah practices contribute to building trust among community members, strengthening social networks, and forming collective norms that support the sustainability of community life (Putnam, 2000). Furthermore, recent research shows that cultural practices based on collective participation play a crucial role in strengthening social resilience and maintaining the sustainability of local communities amidst increasingly dynamic

global changes (Aldrich & Meyer, 2014; Wilson, 2018).

However, the expansion of the global tourism industry also presents various challenges to the sustainability of local cultural practices. Various studies indicate that modernization and global economic integration have the potential to drive increased individualism, shifting value orientations, and decreasing levels of community participation in traditional communal activities (Cohen & Cohen, 2019; Daskon & Binns, 2010). These symptoms are beginning to be seen in several areas of Bali, including Seminyak, as the younger generation becomes increasingly involved in the tourism sector, leading to changes in their patterns of social interaction and relationships with traditional activities. This situation indicates a cultural transformation that not only impacts the form of community involvement in traditional activities but also influences how they understand and interpret traditions that have long been part of the community's collective identity.

From a cultural resilience perspective, social change is not always viewed as a form of cultural degradation. Berkes and Ross (2012) explain that communities with high levels of resilience are able to maintain their identity and fundamental values through adaptation to various social, economic, and environmental changes. In line with this view, Maclean et al. (2013) emphasize that cultural resilience is formed when a community is able to continuously negotiate between tradition and modernity so that culture remains existent and relevant to current developments. In this context, the ngayah tradition can be understood as an adaptive mechanism that allows the Seminyak Traditional Village community to maintain its cultural identity while actively interacting with the ever-changing global reality.

This phenomenon can be explained through the liminality approach introduced by Turner (1969). Liminality refers to a transitional state where an individual or group finds themselves between two different social

structures, opening up space for the negotiation of identity, values, and social practices. Thomassen (2014) states that the concept of liminality is not only relevant in the context of religious rituals but can also be used to understand various processes of social change involving cultural transformation and collective identity. In societies experiencing the pressures of change due to globalization and the development of tourism, liminal spaces become arenas where traditional values and global modernity meet (Andrews & Roberts, 2012). In the context of the Seminyak Traditional Village, this condition is reflected in the community's position between efforts to maintain traditional values through the ngayah tradition and the need to adapt to the demands of modern life shaped by the development of the tourism industry. Based on this description, this study aims to examine the implementation of the ngayah tradition in the Seminyak Traditional Village, Bali, as a liminal space that demonstrates the process of transformation of cultural meaning while maintaining social solidarity among indigenous communities amidst the flow of tourism globalization. The novelty of this study lies in its effort to view ngayah not only as a social and religious practice, but also as an arena for cultural negotiation that demonstrates how indigenous communities build cultural resilience in the face of social changes brought about by the development of global tourism.

MATERIALS & METHODS

This research was conducted in Seminyak Traditional Village, Seminyak Village, Kuta District, Denpasar City, Bali Province. Within the area, there are four banjars, namely Banjar Seminyak Kaja, Banjar Seminyak Kangin, Banjar Seminyak Kelod, and Banjar Tatag Seminyak, which are part of the community's social structure and the location where the research activities took place. Seminyak Traditional Village is one of the traditional villages with unique characteristics because it is located in a rapidly developing international tourism area. This development has brought a significant influence of globalization on the social life of the community, especially the younger generation, both in mindset, lifestyle, and value systems adopted. Seminyak Traditional Village has the authority to regulate and manage its territory independently based on the applicable customary legal system. This allows the values of local wisdom, including the ngayah tradition, to be preserved and implemented in the daily lives of the community.

The local tradition of Ngayah is a form of Balinese local wisdom that reflects sincere devotion without expecting material rewards. The term ngayah comes from the Balinese root word "ayah," meaning work or service, and then acquires the prefix "ng," indicating active action in the form of voluntary devotion (Suwindia, 2015). The meaning of ngayah is not limited to physical activity, but also reflects a form of devotion to Ida Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa, ancestors, and fellow human beings (Titib, 2003).



Figure 1. Map of Seminyak, Bali



Figure 2. Implementation of Ngayah

This study applies a qualitative method, a research approach that focuses on exploring and understanding the meanings held by individuals and groups in dealing with various social phenomena (Creswell, 2017). The use of this method aims to gain a deep understanding of the implementation of the ngayah tradition in the Seminyak Traditional Village, Bali, as a liminal space that reflects the process of transformation of cultural meanings while also serving as a means of maintaining social solidarity of indigenous communities amidst the dynamics of tourism globalization. Research data were obtained from various sources, namely through in-depth interviews involving teenagers, parents of teenagers, and the Head of the Seminyak Traditional Village. In addition, the researcher conducted direct observations of the implementation of the ngayah tradition to obtain a comprehensive picture of this cultural practice. Other supporting data were collected through a documentation study that included various documents and recordings of activities related to the implementation of the ngayah tradition. The data collection techniques in this study were conducted through three main methods. First, in-depth interviews were used to obtain information regarding the informants' experiences, understandings, and views on the ngayah tradition in the Seminyak Traditional Village, Bali, including the dynamics of the transformation of cultural meanings and the indigenous community's efforts to maintain social solidarity. Second, direct observations were conducted of the ngayah tradition to gain a comprehensive understanding of the cultural practices taking place in the community. Third, documentation studies were used to examine various documents, archives, and recordings of activities related to the implementation of the ngayah tradition. Data analysis was conducted using a thematic approach, beginning with a data reduction stage to select and focus information relevant to the research objectives. Next, the organized data was presented in an interpretive narrative to

identify the processes, patterns, and social values that developed in the implementation of the tradition. The final stage of analysis was conducted by drawing inductive conclusions through the integration of field findings and document review results to produce a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under study.

RESULT & DISCUSSION

Implementation of the Ngayah Tradition in Seminyak Traditional Village

The research results show that the ngayah tradition remains an important part of the social and cultural life of the Seminyak Traditional Village community. This practice is carried out in various traditional, religious, and social activities, involving the active participation of villagers. The implementation of ngayah is not limited to preparations for religious ceremonies at the temple, but also includes environmental cleanliness, the construction and maintenance of traditional facilities, security for religious activities through the *pecalang* (traditional village chiefs), and various social activities aimed at strengthening the community's communal life.

The continued existence of the ngayah tradition demonstrates that the Seminyak community still upholds the values of collectivity passed down through generations. Community involvement in ngayah activities is not based on economic considerations or material gain, but rather stems from a collective awareness as members of an indigenous community with a moral responsibility for the continuity of their social and spiritual life. In this context, ngayah is understood not simply as voluntary work but as a form of devotion that simultaneously encompasses religious, social, and cultural dimensions.

Research findings show that the implementation of ngayah serves as a social space that brings together various community groups regardless of age, social status, education level, or profession. During the implementation of traditional activities, people working as hotel employees,

entrepreneurs, informal sector workers, traditional leaders, and even the younger generation engage in joint activities to achieve collective goals. This situation reflects the principle of community proposed by Turner (1969), namely the formation of egalitarian social relationships that temporarily eliminate hierarchical boundaries within society.

From a social capital perspective, the practice of ngayah serves as a mechanism for reproducing shared values that strengthen community social networks. Putnam (2000) explains that social capital is built through

trust, norms of reciprocity, and social networks that enable communities to work together effectively. In the context of the Seminyak Traditional Village, ngayah activities serve as a means of forming and maintaining social capital that contributes to the sustainability of the indigenous community's social system. Thus, the implementation of ngayah not only serves to maintain the continuity of tradition but also strengthens the community's social capacity to face the various changes brought about by the development of global tourism.

Table 1. Implementation of the Ngayah Tradition in Seminyak Traditional Village

Forms of Ngayah Activities	Actors Involved	Developed Values	Social Function
Preparation for religious ceremonies	Indigenous people, youth, indigenous women	Religiosity, responsibility	Maintaining the continuity of the ritual
Cleanliness of traditional environment	Community and youth group	Mutual cooperation, environmental concern	Strengthening social solidarity
Construction of traditional facilities	Banjar people	Cooperation, dedication	Supporting communal needs
Securing traditional activities	Pecalang and youth	Discipline, responsibility	Maintaining social order
Social community activities	All citizens	Social concern	Strengthening community cohesion

Ngayah as a Liminal Space in Global Tourism Society

An analysis based on Victor Turner's theory of liminality shows that the ngayah tradition in Seminyak Traditional Village exists in a transitional space that brings together two distinct value systems: traditional customs and the modernity of global tourism. Seminyak's position as an international tourist destination forces the community to confront increasingly complex economic demands, job mobility, and lifestyle changes. Meanwhile, the community remains obligated to uphold various customary obligations that underpin communal life.

This situation creates a liminal situation, a situation where society finds itself between two interacting social structures. Turner (1969) explains that the liminal phase is a transitional space that allows for identity negotiation and the formation of new meanings. In the context of the Seminyak Traditional Village, the community has not

completely abandoned the traditional values embodied in ngayah, but it also cannot ignore the modern economic realities shaped by the development of the tourism industry.

Research findings indicate that most people working in the tourism sector face time constraints to fully participate in traditional activities. However, this situation does not necessarily eliminate their participation in the ngayah tradition. Instead, communities make various adjustments to continue contributing according to their capacity and available time. This phenomenon indicates that local culture is not disintegrating, but rather undergoing a process of adaptation to ongoing social changes.

From Thomassen's perspective (2014), liminality is a social space that allows for the emergence of new forms of identity as a result of negotiations between the past and the present. The ngayah tradition in Seminyak Traditional Village demonstrates how the community maintains a balance

between customary obligations and modern economic needs. Therefore, ngayah serves not only as a cultural practice but also as an arena for negotiating indigenous identities in the face of tourism globalization.

Transformation of Cultural Meaning in Ngayah Practice

Social changes occurring in the Seminyak Traditional Village have influenced how the community interprets the ngayah tradition. Research shows differences in perspective between the older and younger generations in understanding this practice. For the older generation, ngayah is viewed as a form of spiritual devotion closely linked to traditional and religious obligations. Participation in ngayah is considered an integral part of Balinese identity and a manifestation of devotion to God and the traditional community.

Meanwhile, the younger generation tends to view ngayah as a symbol of cultural identity that is important to maintain, even though its implementation needs to be adapted to the demands of modern life. This difference in perspective indicates that cultural transformation is underway in Seminyak society. However, this transformation does not lead to the disappearance of tradition, but rather to a process of reinterpreting cultural values that keeps traditions relevant in a changing social context.

From Hall's (1997) perspective, cultural identity is not fixed, but rather undergoes a continuous process of construction and reconstruction in response to social changes. Research findings show that the meaning of ngayah has shifted from being merely a traditional obligation to a symbol of cultural identity and collective community pride. Despite changes in how communities interpret the tradition, core values such as togetherness, devotion, mutual cooperation, and social responsibility remain the foundation.

This transformation of meaning demonstrates the ability of the Seminyak Traditional Village community to adapt cultural practices to changing times without

losing the essence of their values. Thus, the ngayah tradition serves as a concrete example of how local culture can survive through a continuous process of adaptation and reinterpretation.

Ngayah as a Mechanism for Cultural Resilience and Strengthening Social Solidarity

Research findings indicate that one of the primary functions of the ngayah tradition is to strengthen social solidarity within the Seminyak Traditional Village community. Through these shared activities, the community builds close social relationships, strengthens a sense of community ownership, and creates social cohesion, which serves as the foundation for the continuity of traditional life. The interactions that occur during ngayah facilitate cross-generational communication and strengthen emotional bonds among community members.

From Durkheim's (1893) perspective, social solidarity is a moral force that maintains societal integration. The practice of ngayah demonstrates how this solidarity is reproduced through collective activities involving active community participation. This activity serves as a means of strengthening collective consciousness and affirming the communal identity of indigenous communities amidst rapid social change.

Furthermore, the ngayah tradition also serves as a form of cultural resilience. Berkes and Ross (2013) explain that a resilient community is one that is able to maintain its identity and core values through adaptation to change. In the context of Seminyak Traditional Village, the sustainability of ngayah demonstrates the community's ability to maintain local cultural values while adapting to the dynamics of global tourism. Ultimately, ngayah serves not only as a mechanism for cultural preservation but also as a social strategy that enables communities to face the challenges of modernization. Through this tradition, communities build social capital, strengthen solidarity, and

maintain the cultural identity that underpins indigenous community life. These findings confirm that the continued existence of ngayah represents a tangible manifestation of the cultural resilience of the Seminyak

Traditional Village community in the face of social transformations triggered by globalization and the development of the tourism industry.



Figure 3. Conceptual Model of Research Findings

The model shows that ngayah not only functions as a socio-religious practice, but also as a cultural adaptation mechanism that allows communities to maintain collective identity while adapting to social changes brought about by global tourism.

CONCLUSION

The research results show that the ngayah tradition in the Seminyak Traditional Village is still actively practiced as an integral part of the social, cultural, and religious life of the indigenous community. This practice not only serves as a form of collective devotion in various traditional activities and religious rituals, but also serves as a means of transmitting the values of religiosity, mutual cooperation, social responsibility, and communal solidarity. Amidst the development of the global tourism industry, the ngayah tradition has undergone a transformation in its implementation patterns, becoming increasingly flexible and adaptive to social and economic changes and the demands of modern life. However, these changes do not eliminate the essence of the cultural values contained within it, but rather demonstrate the community's ability to maintain traditions through a continuous process of adaptation.

Based on Victor Turner's liminality perspective, the Seminyak Traditional Village community exists in a transitional space that brings together traditional values

and the modernity of global tourism. In this liminal space, ngayah functions as an arena for cultural negotiation that allows the community to maintain its collective identity while adapting to changing times. This finding confirms that ngayah not only serves as a socio-religious practice but also as a mechanism for strengthening social solidarity and cultural resilience of indigenous communities. The novelty of this research lies in the conceptualization of ngayah as a cultural liminal space that explains how local traditions function as a medium for negotiation between tradition and modernity, thereby contributing to the sustainability of Balinese cultural identity amidst the flow of tourism globalization.

Declaration by Authors

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