

MASTER THESIS

BEHIND THE BLANK SPOT

THE DISCURSIVE TRANSLATION OF BADUY NON-USE IN INDONESIA'S DIGITAL NATION-BUILDING

TANIA AMARTHANI – 3259285

Joint Educational Program

Msc Philosophy of Science, Technology, and Society - Public Administration

Graduation Committee:

dr. Peter Stegmaier

dr. Le Anh Long

dr. Kornelia Konrad

dr. Alexandria Poole

UNIVERSITY OF TWENTE.



Behind the Blank Spot: The Discursive Translation of Baduy Non-Use in Indonesia's Digital Nation-Building

Master Thesis

Tania Amarthani

3259285

(word count: 22,025)

PSTS Joint Educational Program

Master of Philosophy of Science, Technology, and Society - Public Administration

Graduation Committee:

dr. Peter Stegmaier - PSTS Supervisor

dr. Le Anh Long - PA Supervisor

dr. Kornelia Konrad - PSTS Second Reader

dr. Alexandria Poole - PSTS Expert Advisor

University of Twente

Faculty of Behavioural, Management, and Social Sciences

Enschede, the Netherlands

August 2025

Summary

This thesis is prompted by the first formally recognized instance of deliberate disconnection in Indonesia's digital transformation agenda. In this context, internet access is framed as a universal necessity and an instrument of progress and nation-building, promoted through "internetification" programs. Amidst this push, the Indigenous Baduy Dalam community recently requested that their territory be designated as an internet "blank spot." This request was accommodated by the government, challenging the assumption that connectivity is universally beneficial and offering an important empirical case for analyzing the relations between the government and Indigenous communities in Indonesia.

Guided by the main research question: *"How is the Baduy community's refusal of internet connectivity understood, negotiated, and accommodated within Indonesia's digital governance framework?"*, I employed the Sociology of Knowledge Approach to Discourse (Keller, 2011; 2013) to identify multiple meanings of the internet across actor groups, drawing on semi-structured interviews and field observations. The analysis shows that while some meanings remained internal to specific groups, others circulated through processes of translation, giving rise to three discourse coalitions: a nation-building coalition framing the internet as a driver of integration and development; an adat-sovereignty coalition viewing it as a violation of sacred order and a source of external threat; and an intermediary coalition, composed of journalists, local experts, local officials, and activists, bridging the two through translation.

The intermediary coalition enabled the blank spot accommodation by translating the Baduy's cosmologically grounded refusal into a rationale of moral protection and visibility risk, more closely aligned with the national government's narratives. This translation allowed the refusal to be accepted as a culturally sensitive adaptation within the digital nation-building agenda, but in doing so, it stripped the refusal of its ontological depth. The result is a fragile discursive compromise, the success of which depends on how it is interpreted by different actors. This outcome reflects broader relational dynamics between Indigenous communities and the Indonesian government, which rest on a fragile equilibrium of partial inclusion contingent on alignment with dominant imaginaries and conditional recognition.

From these findings, there is a need for digital governance frameworks that recognize refusal as a legitimate stance, rather than subsuming Indigenous worlds into a singular vision of progress. I therefore call for the acknowledgement of ontological non-use in policy, which refers to refusal rooted in fundamentally different worldviews about technology's place in life. This concept opens possibilities for sovereignty grounded in ontological differences and redefines user-

technology relations, which, in turn, can contribute to a more contextualized digital transformation agenda based on a pluriversal approach.

Keywords: *Baduy Dalam; Digital governance; Internet refusal; non-use; Discourse coalitions; Indigenous sovereignty; Pluriversal approach*

Acknowledgement

This thesis is the product of a journey that would not have been possible without the guidance and encouragement of many people and institutions. Coming from a small village in Indonesia, standing here to present this master's thesis feels like both a privilege and a quiet miracle that I carry with deep gratitude and will never take for granted. Thus, I owe this journey to many people who guided and encouraged me through unfamiliar terrain.

My deepest gratitude goes to my graduation committee. dr. Peter Stegmaier, who has been a constant source of guidance, assurance, and encouragement, cheering me on even when my own steps felt uncertain. Your patience and appreciation made the most challenging stages of this work not only bearable but deeply rewarding. I am also grateful to dr. Le Anh Long for keeping this thesis anchored while opening my eyes to the fascinating world of policymaking. Your expertise in activism has inspired me to see research not only as analysis, but as participation in the worlds we study. To dr. Alexandria Poole, thank you for urging me to ask deeper questions and to make my work sharper, braver, and more impactful; possibilities I might never have pursued without your belief. And to dr. Kornelia Konrad, who first introduced me to the beauty of discourse analysis, a method I came to love, your influence has been a lasting gift.

I extend my deepest appreciation to the Indigenous Baduy community, who graciously welcomed me into their world and shared their perspectives with honesty and generosity. To the local guides, local experts, and journalists who facilitated conversations across cultural and linguistic boundaries, your role was deeply inspiring, enabling this research to exist at all. My sincere thanks also go to the interviewees who shared their time and insights, helping me understand the intricate realities of Indonesia's digital governance landscape.

I am grateful to my colleagues and lecturers in the PSTS and Public Administration programmes at the University of Twente for their inspiration and camaraderie. Special thanks to Cas, my first Dutch friend, whose presence, whether in an academic discussion or in the simple exchange of daily stories, has been a source of joy and grounding. To my fellow Indonesian PSTS cohort of 2023, Adi, thank you for being a *teman seperjuangan* in a place far from home. As well as Beasiswa Kominfo Batch 2023 fellow, I cannot imagine beginning this journey without another Indonesian friend by my side.

To my parents and parents in law, thank you for the unwavering love, prayers, and belief in my path, even when it took me far from home. And to my husband and impromptu research assistant, Satria whose unfailing encouragement carried me through late nights, long drafts, and the occasional crisis of confidence, you are my anchor and my constant. Thank you for standing beside me so that I could stand here.

Finally, I am indebted to the institutions that supported this research: Beasiswa Kominfo (Ministry of Communication and Digital Affairs, Indonesia) and the University of Twente, for providing the academic home and resources that made this work possible. To all who have contributed to this journey in ways big and small, thank you. This thesis carries your fingerprints as much as it carries my name.

Table of Contents

<i>Summary</i>	2
<i>Acknowledgement</i>	4
1. Introduction	9
1.1 Background.....	9
1.2 Problem Statement and Research Question	11
1.3 Key Concepts	12
1.3.1 Non-Use	13
1.3.2 Meaning, Discourse, and Discourse Coalitions.....	13
1.3.3 Translation	15
1.3.4 The Baduy (Urang Kanekes) and Indigeneity Context in Indonesia	16
1.3.5 Digital Transformation Policy in Indonesia	19
1.5 Methodology	20
1.5.1 Research Design and Theoretical Framework.....	20
1.5.2 Data Sampling.....	21
1.5.3 Data Collection.....	22
1.5.4 Data Analysis	25
1.6 Social and Academic Contribution.....	25
2. Discursive Field Formation: Coalitions and Meanings	27
2.1 Discourse Coalitions	27
2.2 Reconstructing Identified Meanings.....	29
2.2.1 The Internet as Violation of the Sacred Adat	30
2.2.2 The Internet as an External Threat	32
2.2.3 The Internet as Digital Visibility Risk.....	33
2.2.4 The Internet as a Tool for Nation-Building	34
2.2.5 The Internet as a Tool for Efficiency and Administrative Legibility.....	35
2.2.6 The Internet as Tangible Technological Presence.....	36
2.2.7 “Hybrid” Pragmatic Meanings of the Internet	37
2.3 Alignment and Transformation of Internet Meanings.....	38
2.4 Conclusion	40
3. Discursive Dynamics: Translation and Dispositif	42
3.1 The Internet Blank Spot as a Discursive Compromise	42
3.2 Intermediaries Translation	44
3.3 The Internet Blank Spot as a Dispositif.....	47
3.4 Recurring Pattern of Inclusion: How the Blank Spot is Accommodated	48
3.5 The Limits of Translation and Fragile Discursive Closure	50
3.6 Conclusion	51
4. Politics of Inclusion and Its Impact on Relational Dynamics between Indigenous Community and Government	53
4.1 Conditional Recognition through Enduring Practices of Symbolic Practices and Negotiated Autonomy.....	53
4.2 Paradox of Inclusion in Digital Nation-Building Agenda	55

4.3 Conclusion 57

5. *The Ontological Turn of Non-Use*..... 59

6. *Conclusion*..... 62

 Limitations and Future Research..... 66

 Reflexivity and Positionality 67

Bibliography..... 68

Appendix 75

List of Figures

Figure 1: Map of Baduy area. Image source: Muntaha & Runturambi (2020).	18
Figure 2: Social arena map of Meanings.....	39
Figure 3: Translation process by intermediary actors	44

List of Tables

Table 1: List of interviewees.....	22
Table 2: List of documents	23
Table 3: Identified discourse coalition in Baduy blank spot case	28
Table 4: Distribution of Discursive Meanings Across Actor Coalitions (based on coded quotations in ATLAS.ti)	30
Table 5: Discursive Trajectories and Field Alignments of Internet Meanings.....	38

Abbreviations

3T	: Frontier, Outermost, and Underdeveloped (Indonesian: Terdepan, Terluar, Tertinggal)
AMAN	: Indigenous Peoples' Alliance of the Archipelago (Indonesian: Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara)
APJII	: Indonesian Internet Service provider Association (Indonesian: Asosiasi Penyelenggara Jasa Internet Indonesia)
BAKTI	: The Telecommunication and Information Accessibility Agency (Indonesian: Badan Aksesibilitas Telekomunikasi dan Informasi)
Bappenas	: The Ministry of National Development Planning/National Development Planning Agency (Indonesian: Kementerian Perencanaan Pembangunan Nasional/Badan Perencanaan Pembangunan Nasional)
Gol	: Government of Indonesia
Komdigi	: The Ministry of Communication and Digital Affairs (Indonesian: Kementerian Komunikasi dan Digital)
Kominfo	: The Ministry of Communication and Information (Indonesian: Kementerian Komunikasi dan Informasi)
SKAD	: Sociology of Knowledge Approach to Discourse
VID	: Digital Indonesia Vision (Translation: Visi Indonesia Digital)

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

In the decades following the Second World War, development thinking increasingly framed technology as the engine of modernization, capable of transforming “underdeveloped” societies (Escobar, 1995). This vision carries a universalist assumption that technological integration is necessary for advancement. The internet has become the prime exemplification of this logic. Celebrated as a marker of progress and modernity (Wyatt, 2003; Felt, 2014), the drive for universal internet connectivity dominantly appears in global declarations such as the “right to internet access” (La Rue, 2011) and embedded in policy frameworks like the UN Secretary-General’s Roadmap for Digital Cooperation, which asserts that “*meaningful participation in today’s digital age requires a high-speed broadband connection*” (UN, 2020, p. 7). While this might be framed positively in many contexts, such narratives naturalizes a logic in which everyone is assumed to want (or should want) connectivity, reinforcing an imaginary of “*one-world world*” (Law, 2011), a connected society where life is deeply intertwined with digital technology (see also Felt, 2014), often sidelining those who cannot or choose not to participate in the expansion of internet connectivity.

In Indonesia, the national roadmap Visi Indonesia Digital 2045 reflects this connectivity imperative, aiming to eliminate internet blank spot¹ areas through “*internetification*”² project across Indonesia (Plate, 2020, as cited in Kominfo, 2020). Beyond expanding infrastructure, this policy advances a broader digital transformation, aiming to integrate all citizens into a connected landscape and framing internet connectivity as integral to citizenship and the nation’s future. This vision is reflected in the push for e-government and the increasing implementation of internet-based governmental initiatives.

However, this vision meets a reality shaped by Indonesia’s vast cultural diversity. Indonesia is home to over 1,331 ethnic groups, each with its own values and relationships with modernity (IWGIA, 2024). While urban communities might embrace the Government of Indonesia’s (GoI) digitalization agenda, others might engage with it differently. Nonetheless, the internetification agenda is promoted as a one-size-fits-all solution that leaves little space for

¹ internet blank spot” refers to areas, both intentionally or unintentionally, without internet connectivity, whether through mobile phone networks, fiber optic infrastructure, or other transmission technologies.

² Internetification refers to process or policy of integrating and expanding internet connectivity and digital technologies into all aspects of society that includes infrastructure development, digital literacy, and economic integration.

different engagement, or even refusal. The normative thrust of such policies often overshadows the possibility that some communities may view internet access as irrelevant.

The Baduy Dalam, an Indigenous community in Lebak, Banten, presents a powerful example of this tension. Known for their strict adherence to traditional customs, Baduy Dalam resists modern life, including the use of the internet (Syarbini, 2015; Kartika & Edison, 2020). In June 2023, they successfully negotiated with the Indonesian government to designate their village area as a deliberately disconnected area without internet signal and infrastructure; an intentional internet blank spot (Iradat, 2023; Syakriyah, 2023). The request was accommodated swiftly by the Gol, making it a well-documented case of an Indigenous community securing state recognition for a stance at odds with national policy. While other precedents may exist across Indonesia's diverse policy landscape, there are no documented cases involving state approval of deliberate internet disconnection. Most instances of Indigenous-state negotiation have centered on land, resource management, or cultural preservation, making the Baduy Dalam case distinctive both in framing digital infrastructure as a site of contestation and in the Gol's accommodative response.

This thesis builds on and departs from existing literature on how national governments manage indigeneity. Recognition of Indigenous communities is often conditional, extended only when their practices align with dominant governance frameworks (Mclat, 2000; Niezen, 2003; Scott, 1998; de la Cadena, 2010; 2015). Escobar's (1995) critique of modernization also highlights how development agendas often impose universalist visions of progress that marginalize non-conforming lifeways. In the digital sphere, Gagliardone's (2016) study of Ethiopia's ICT development shows how internet infrastructure serves symbolic as well as technical functions, linking connectivity to national unity. Although scholarship has increasingly examined Indigenous appropriation of digital technologies for cultural assertion (Carlson & Mongibello, 2021), this thesis focuses on a different mode of technology-user engagement, which is strategic refusal, as exemplified by Baduy Dalam's case.

As a well-researched community, the Baduy have been the focus of several studies examining their refusal of the internet (see Lestarini, 2023; Kusuma et al., 2023). However, such studies often adopt universal assumption of internet necessity, reinforcing the normalization of internet adoption in Indonesia. However, such studies often adopt the universalist assumption of the internet's necessity, reinforcing the normalization of connectivity in Indonesia. Even when refusal is acknowledged, it is frequently explained through external categories such as lack of access, low literacy, or institutional underdevelopment. What remains underexplored is refusal as a meaningful position in its own right, how it is articulated within the Baduy context, and rendered legible to the Gol. This thesis addresses that gap in the discourse. Drawing on interviews with

Baduy actors, national government officials, and intermediaries such as activists, journalists, and local governments, I examine how the internet blank spot become a site of discursive negotiation, particularly on how the different relations between the internet and human is articulated, translated, and ultimately accommodated.

The significance of this study lies not only in documenting a rare instance of recognized a refusal towards technology use, in which scholars in STS have referred to as non-use (e.g. Oudshoorn & Pinch, 2003; Wyatt, 2003), but in using it as a lens to interrogate broader dynamics in digital governance. Rather than treating internet access as an inevitable good, I investigate how connectivity is embedded in normative visions of progress and belonging, contributing to ongoing debates about Indigenous rights and digital transformation policy in Indonesia.

The inquiry in this thesis is also grounded in my firsthand experience as an Indonesian native from a peripheral area of Java, where digitalization policies have been implemented, and my familiarity with communities in Indonesia's 3T regions³ (*Tertinggal, Terdepan, dan Terluar*). These experiences inform the starting point of this research, which critically examines how 'one-size-fits-all' internet policies disproportionately impact rural communities, perpetuating inequalities and eroding cultural values. At the end, this thesis aim to explore the possibility of a more inclusive and culturally sensitive technology governance.

1.2 Problem Statement and Research Question

Indigenous peoples in Indonesia have historically been marginalized through framings that cast Indigenous difference as a social problem to be corrected (Project Multatuli, 2023). Even the Constitution offers conditional recognition. Article 18B(2) of Indonesia's 1945 Constitution affirms recognition and respect for traditional communities *"as long as they are still alive and in accordance with the development of society."* This clause embeds recognition within a governmental nation-building agenda, casting Indigenous difference as something to be aligned with state-led modernization. As recent data shows, in Indonesia, over 687 agrarian conflicts and the criminalization of 925 Indigenous individuals have been recorded in the past decade (FWI, 2024). Most Indigenous community demands for autonomy, particularly regarding land and legal recognition, remain either unrecognized or actively suppressed (AMAN, 2016; Alam et al., 2023). This makes clear that future-making is not a neutral process but rather a continuously contested process shaped by uneven access to power, knowledge, and resources (Jasanoff, 2016; see also Sand, 2023 as cited in Borrmann et al., 2023).

³ Translation: *disadvantaged, frontier, and outermost*. 3T is a term used by Gol to refer to areas that are the furthestmost and inaccessible in Indonesia

This tension becomes more urgent in a country with extensive Indigenous diversity that is undergoing an ambitious digital transformation (Pitaloka & Chariunnisa, 2023). Within this context, the Baduy community's successful request to remain disconnected from the national internet grid presents an unusual accommodation of refusal within a governance system that otherwise frames connectivity as essential to progress. This raises the central inquiry of this study, particularly on examining the narrative of the internet as a universal good and its relationship with Indigenous-government relations in the context of a multicultural country like Indonesia. Using Sociology of Knowledge Approach to Discourse or SKAD (Keller, 2011; 2013), I examine the meanings of internet articulated and circulated across actor groups such as Baduy Dalam, Baduy Luar, national and local government officials, and intermediaries such as journalists and activists. Accordingly, the central research question guiding this study is:

How is the Baduy community's refusal of internet connectivity understood, negotiated, and accommodated within Indonesia's digital governance framework?

The following sub-research questions further guide the analysis:

1. What meanings of the internet are articulated in relation to the Baduy's internet blank spot case, and how do these meanings support or form discourse coalitions?
2. How do these meanings circulate, shift, or become reframed as they move across actor groups and institutional boundaries?
3. How does the internet blank spot decision emerge from these discursive dynamics, and what conditions shape its accommodation?
4. How does the internet blank spot reflect the relations between Gol's and Indigenous community?
5. What insights does this case offer for designing more culturally responsive and epistemically inclusive digital governance frameworks?

1.3 Key Concepts

This thesis is grounded in empirical inquiry. The key concepts outlined below are used as initial analytical points of departure, not as fixed theoretical lenses. The overall findings emerge from the empirical data and the exploratory nature of the research.

1.3.1 Non-Use

The concept of non-use, as developed by Oudshoorn and Pinch (2003), challenges the assumption that technology adoption is inevitable or inherently desirable. Rooted in the Social Construction of Technology (SCOT) approach which emphasizes the interpretive flexibility of technology (Pinch & Bijker, 1984, as cited in Oudshoorn & Pinch, 2003), non-use rejects the notion of a single "correct way of using technology" (Oudshoorn & Pinch, 2003, p. 1). Thus, both users and non-users play active roles in shaping sociotechnical change. Non-use, in this view, is not a passive absence or failure to adopt, but an active and strategic practice embedded in social, cultural, and political contexts. It pushes back against technological determinism and its linear assumption of technological progress.

Wyatt (2003) further expands the concept of non-use specifically in the context of the internet by developing a taxonomy of non-use. She categorizes non-use into four forms. First is the "expelled," who involuntarily stop using the internet due to external factors. Second, the "excluded," who have never been able to access the internet due to institutional or access barriers. Third, the "rejecters," who voluntarily stop using the internet. Fourth, the "resisters," who consciously avoid internet use due to cultural or ethical considerations. This diverse spectrum of internet non-use emphasizes that non-use is a meaningful sociotechnical phenomenon, not merely a deficiency or failure. Together, the collective works of Oudshoorn, Pinch, and Wyatt call for the acknowledgment that understanding sociotechnical change must account for both users and non-users in the analysis of sociotechnical systems.

In this thesis, I used the concept of non-use as a provisional lens to examine the Baduy Dalam community's refusal of internet connectivity. I treated non-use as an open, evolving concept that developed through engagement with empirical data. This approach created space to attend to how the Baduy articulated their own stance and to assess whether their refusal aligned with existing categories of non-use or required new conceptual language. In the synthesis chapter, I revisit the term to evaluate its adequacy in capturing the core of the Baduy's disconnection.

1.3.2 Meaning, Discourse, and Discourse Coalitions

Meaning is not a static label nor a fixed representation of an object. Instead, it is a discursively constructed interpretive schema emerging from the struggles of actors who attempt to define, stabilize, and act upon shared realities (Keller, 2011). These meanings are formed through social processes and are sedimented within societal structures, which can be in the form of policy practices or epistemic claims. In this view, meaning is not something actors merely "have," but is something they do, actively producing and reproducing it through discourse and

situated interaction. Following Foucault (1984, as cited in Keller, 2011), meanings serve as mechanisms of problematization: they define what is considered a threat, a benefit, or a necessity, thereby enabling specific modes of governance while foreclosing others. In that sense, meaning here serve as a discursive product and an analytical entry point into broader relational dynamics between actors.

In this thesis, I deliberately employ *meaning* rather than related concepts such as *framing* or *interpretation*. While framing typically refers to actors' strategic emphasis on particular aspects of an issue (Hajer, 1995), the notion of meaning, following Keller (2011), highlights culturally embedded, epistemically rich, and often ontologically significant interpretations that actors attribute to phenomena such as internet use. This aligns with the interpretive tradition in political science and STS, where meanings are understood as holistic and constitutive of action. As Bevir and Rhodes (2006, p. 7) put it: "*Meanings are always the beliefs of specific people. They include the everyday tacit understandings on which people act without any noticeable deliberation.*" From this perspective, meanings are embedded in lived practices, shaped by historical context, and entangled with collective identities and institutional routines.

Meaning-making, particularly in governance contexts, is inseparable from discourse. According to Keller (2013), discourse is understood as "*analytically definable ensembles of practices and meaning attributions*" (p. 63). It is also emphasized as an observable social practice that is expressed through various forms such as oral and written language, images, and other sign systems (Keller, 2011). Following Foucault (1982, in Keller, 2011), discourses can be seen as battlefields where competing actors struggle over the legitimate definition of phenomena. These struggles are also embedded in what Foucault calls *dispositif*; ensembles of discourses, institutions, infrastructures, regulations, and practices established by organizations or governments to fulfill specific purposes. In this sense, discourse provides the logic and justification, and *dispositifs* materialize and stabilize that logic in concrete arrangements.

Keller (2013) further emphasized that discourses are historically and institutionally situated, meaning that they emerge within specific social contexts and are embedded in structures of power and knowledge. This situatedness aspect of meaning-making is important as meaning articulation is deeply intertwined with how actors' "slice" their contexts to convey situated understandings (Hajer & Wagenaar, 2003). This aligns with Bevir and Rhodes' (2006) view that meanings are holistic and constitutive of action, making it understandable only if we take into account the wider web of situatedness. In this thesis, I draw on SKAD's understanding of discourse as a structured and socially situated practice of meaning-making that produces, circulates, and institutionalizes knowledge within society, but at the constitutive of reality and power.

Hajer (1993) introduced the concept of discourse coalitions to describe how actors align around shared “storylines”, narratives that make sense of complex phenomena. Keller (2011) extends this idea, emphasizing that actors can participate in the same discourse without conscious coordination. This definition allows for looser forms of discursive convergence, which fits the empirical reality of this case where actors often invoke similar meanings, but without shared goals or institutional coherence. In this thesis, discourse coalitions are understood as groups of actors whose statements and practices converge around shared meanings, even if their goals or affiliations differ. This looser formulation is useful in analyzing cases like the Baduy internet refusal, where actors such as government officials, activists, and community members may invoke similar rationales without forming a formal alliance.

1.3.3 Translation

Originating in Actor-Network Theory (ANT), the concept of translation is a foundational concept that describes how heterogeneous elements (both human and non-human) are reconfigured into a network through processes of alignment and transformation to achieve specific goals (Callon, 1984). Latour (2005, 108; as cited on Valler & Blumczynski, 2024) extends this to emphasize the socio-material dimension of translation, where it is not merely mediation or the movement of information, but “a relation that induces the coexistence of mediators.” Thus, in ANT, translation is the very process through which networks (that comprises actors, practices, and material arrangements) are assembled and identities are constituted through their alignment with others.

In a broader context, translation is also a key boundary practice in collaborative governance, operating at boundaries and treating them as junctures where different actors co-produce meaning by negotiating across different views or systems (Quick & Feldman, 2014). In collaborative governance contexts, Quick and Feldman (2014) identify three interrelated practices of boundary work: translating across difference, aligning among difference, and decentering difference. These practices function as mechanisms of managing differences that allow diverse actors to cooperate while keeping “junctures” to keep epistemic or institutional distinctiveness, ultimately building resilience between communities (Quick & Feldman, 2014). This strategic juncture enables coordination amid difference, allowing governance to function despite ontological or normative divergence (Quick & Feldman, 2014).

In Indigenous contexts, drawing on de la Cadena’s (2015) ethnographic work with Andean communities, translation is a mode of engagement between partially connected worlds. This act involves productive misunderstandings that arise when incommensurable worlds attempt to speak

to each other. This view radically departs from the idea of translation as the neutral rendering of Indigenous worldviews into terms legible to the state. Instead, translation is an act of selection and framing.

In this thesis, drawing on SKAD's notion of discursive translation (Keller, 2011), I conceptualize translation as the process by which meanings travel across discourse coalitions. While my focus is on human actors, I also draw on ANT's attention to materiality to acknowledge how infrastructures and artifacts can help stabilize and circulate meanings. In the Baduy case, this perspective is useful for understanding how meanings around refusal became embedded in governance outcomes such as the internet blank spot, where elements like policy documents and network infrastructure form part of the translation chain.

1.3.4 The Baduy (Urang Kanekes) and Indigeneity Context in Indonesia

As this thesis examines the Baduy Dalam within the broader context of indigeneity in Indonesia, it is important to clarify how the term Indigenous community is understood. The term Indigenous community remains contested, with no single definition accepted globally or within Indonesia (Kementerian PPN/Bappenas, 2013). In Indonesia, it is generally associated with "*masyarakat adat*", a term whose meaning varies across legal texts and civil society articulations. The most recent legal framing defines "*masyarakat hukum adat*" as groups that inhabit a specific territory over generations, maintain ancestral ties to land and resources, and govern themselves through customary law and institutions (Draft Law on the Recognition and Protection of the Rights of Indigenous Law Communities, 2013⁴, as cited in Kementerian PPN/Bappenas, 2013). In international frameworks, such as those promoted by the United Nations, Indigenous peoples are defined as culturally and socially distinct groups who are disadvantaged in development processes due to their non-dominant status (as cited in Kementerian PPN/Bappenas, 2013). Advocacy groups in Indonesia, such as AMAN (Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara), build on this definition by asserting that indigenous communities are not merely cultural minorities, but communities that assert collective sovereignty over land, maintain distinct knowledge systems, and govern themselves through customary institutions. This thesis aligns with this latter framing to foreground Indigenous communities not as underdeveloped subjects of state policy, but as political actors embedded in alternative epistemologies and sociotechnical orders.

Baduy Dalam is one of the culturally and geographically protected indigenous communities recognized by the Indonesian government. The area of Baduy is located in Kanekes village, Leuwidamar, Lebak District, Banten Province, approximately 100 kilometers southwest of Jakarta.

⁴ Translated from Indonesian: RUU Pengakuan dan Perlindungan Hak Masyarakat Hukum Adat, Hasil Paripurna DPR, April 11, 2013

Baduy has become a tourist destination due to its unique characteristics, offering an experience for visitors to live in the natural environment (Syarbini, 2015). The Baduy community is divided into two tribes, Baduy Luar (Outer Baduy) and Baduy Dalam (Inner Baduy). Additionally, there is a group called the Dangka, who live outside the designated Baduy area and have adopted the Islamic religion (Arifiani et al., 2019; Muntaha & Runturambi, 2020).

Within the community, Baduy people prefer to identify themselves as Urang Kanekes, or “the people of Kanekes,” based on the name of their territory. People may also refer to themselves more specifically through village-based designations, such as Urang Cibeo, Urang Cikeusik, and so on (Alam et al., 2023). The term Baduy itself is an exonym that is used more widely in public discourse and governance documents, which this thesis continues to use for practicality and readability, while acknowledging the internal preference for Urang Kanekes.

Numerous local studies have examined their cultural and social structures (Wahid, 2012; Utomo, 2017; Arifiani et al., 2019; Muntaha & Runturambi, 2020). The governance of the Baduy follows a hierarchical yet deeply communal system centered around customary law (*adat*). At the top of the Baduy social structure is the Pu'un, the highest traditional leadership that ensures adherence to their cultural and spiritual values (Arifiani et al., 2019; Muntaha & Runturambi, 2020). There are three Pu'un figures, each leading one of the three main Baduy Dalam villages: Cikeusik, Cikartawana, and Cibeo (Kartika & Edison, 2020). Their leadership is hereditary, passed down through the family lineage, ensuring continuity in preserving traditional knowledge and customs (Wahid, 2012). Supporting the Pu'un is the Jaro, a council of leaders responsible for governance and external affairs (Muntaha & Runturambi, 2020). Although the leaders have an important role in managing the values of Baduy, most of the governance matters both internally or externally are conducted by Jaro.

The Baduy governance structure is also closely tied to their spiritual beliefs, which are called as Sunda Wiwitan (Wahid, 2012; Arifiani et al., 2019). Their way of governance does not follow a written legal code but is instead governed by oral traditions and customary rules called *Pikukuh*, a guiding principle that is passed down through generations (Arifiani et al., 2019).

The settlement of the Baduy falls within protected customary land, referred to as ‘Tanah ulayat’, which is safeguarded under Local Regulation (PERDA) of Lebak Regency No. 32/2001. This regulation ensures the conservation of the area, protecting it from any activities that might negatively impact the Baduy people or their natural environment (Utomo, 2017). While they have long been granted protections such as regulated tourism access and recognition of customary land, the internet blank spot status represents a new form of accommodation specific to the digital sphere.

Administratively, the Lebak Regency government holds authority over the Baduy community and their customary land, including matters related to their livelihood, rights, and the conservation of the natural environment (Muntaha & Runturambi, 2020).

There are three settlements in Baduy Dalam (Cikeusik, Cikartawana, and Cibeo) and 55 in Baduy Luar. Together, they cover an area of approximately 51 km², with a total population of 8,734 people, with 5,795 males and 3,939 females (BPS Leuwidamar, 2023). Baduy Luar accounts for 90% of the population, while the Baduy Dalam represents only 10% (Arifiani et al., 2019). Despite their smaller population, Baduy Dalam serves as the center of Baduy's traditional government, where the "Puun" lives (Muntaha & Runturambi, 2020).

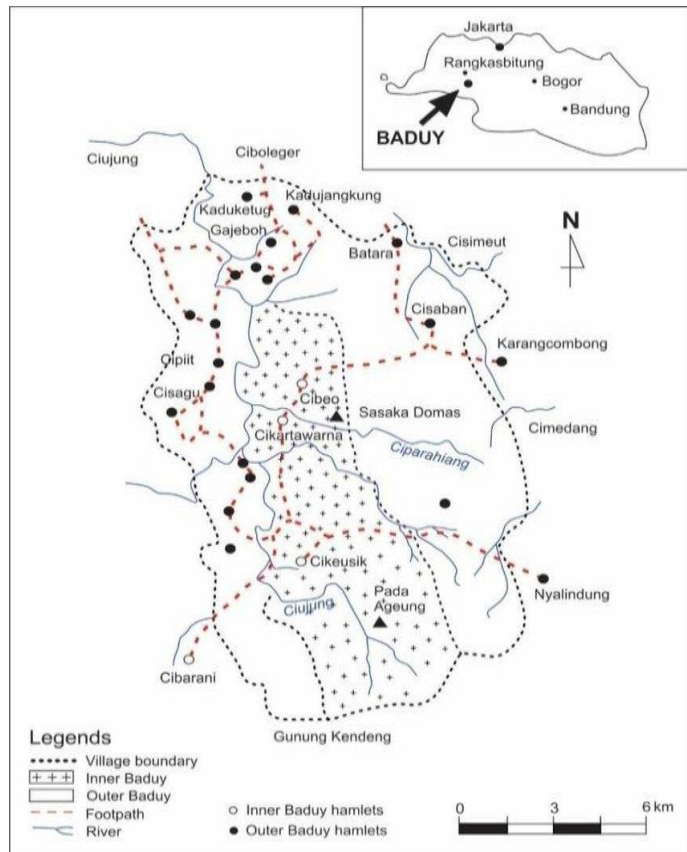


Figure 1: Map of Baduy area. Image source: Muntaha & Runturambi (2020).

Baduy Luar lives in the outer area of the forest and is considerably more open to modernization. With its close contact with other communities, Baduy Luar acts as the bridge between Baduy Dalam and external civilization. Their distinctive feature is their black clothing, which sets them apart from the Baduy Dalam. Meanwhile, Baduy Dalam lives in a more secluded area of the forest and imposes strict regulations on its community, particularly in living without modernization. Upholding their religion called "Sunda Wiwitan" and respect for nature, Baduy Dalam relies on agricultural work (Wahid, 2012). Education in the Baduy Dalam community is entirely non-formal, relying on oral traditions with no written or reading systems (Arifiani et al., 2019). Their appearance is also distinct, characterized by white clothing and headbands that are traditionally handcrafted within the community.

The Baduy village can only be accessed by hiking and traveling on foot. Due to the potential risks involved, visitors are advised to be accompanied by a local guide. While they allow visitation within their territories, Baduy Dalam imposes a regulation that tourists are not allowed to

use modern technologies while visiting, in which the reason of this regulation is further examined in the next chapter.

1.3.5 Digital Transformation Policy in Indonesia

In Indonesia, Digital Transformation (Transformasi Digital) refers to a formal policy agenda led by the Ministry of Communication and Digital (MCI or Indonesian called as Komdigi), aimed at accelerating digital integration across governance, public services, and society. However, the emphasis in official narratives often goes beyond just "digital transformation" as a technical process, but also framed as a nation-building project centered on internetification. As stated by the then Minister of Communication and Information, the guiding spirit of this agenda is framed as "connecting the unconnected" (Plate, 2021 as cited in BAKTI, 2021).

Since 2018, digital connectivity has been a priority in Indonesia's national agenda, reflected in the launching of several roadmap documents on internet development projects (Kominfo, 2023a). Spearheaded by the Ministry of Communication and information, the Indonesian Gol expressed its concerns on the urgency of digital connectivity, noting its power to bring advancements to the society (Setiadi, 2023 as cited in Kominfo 2023b). The Ministry of Communication and Information's digital transformation strategic planning for 2020-2024 consists of five main pillars which are improving and expanding the digital infrastructure, implementing an Electronic Based Governance System or SPBE, improving the adoption of digital technology to the economy sector, increasing the capacity of society to integrate with digital technology, and addressing any challenge to accelerate the digital transformation (Kominfo, 2021). The latest roadmap document, VID 2045, aims to expand internet access with a goal of reaching over 94% internet usage among the population and ensuring that more than 80% of regencies have internet connectivity (Sakina, 2023; Kominfo, 2023a). Even under Indonesia's newly elected president, the rebranding of the name which was Kominfo (Ministry of Communication and Information) to Komdigi (Ministry of Communication and Digital) highlights Gol's stronger emphasis on prioritizing and accelerating digital transformation (Patria, 2024, as cited in Komdigi, 2024).

This ambitious agenda to digitalize Indonesia is part of a broader effort to address the multilevel digital divide across Indonesia, ranging from physical access to the broader social aspects affected by internet usage. One of the main causes is the unequal infrastructure development. According to the data stated in VID 2045, internet user penetration in Indonesia reached 78.19% in early 2023 (Kominfo, 2023b). However, connectivity issues such as uneven and unstable access persist with only 36.5% of villages are fully covered by 4G signal (Komdigi, 2025)

1.5 Methodology

1.5.1 Research Design and Theoretical Framework

This research primarily adopts the Sociology of Knowledge Approach to Discourse (SKAD) developed by Keller (2011, 2013), as both its theoretical and methodological foundation. SKAD is particularly suited to this study as it focuses on how knowledge, meanings, and discursive practices are institutionally and historically situated. It allows the analysis to trace how actors construct, negotiate, and stabilize meanings, especially in contexts where knowledge claims intersect with struggles over cultural legitimacy, such as the case of internet governance and Indigenous resistance in Indonesia. As one of the methodological and theoretical frameworks within a broader field of discourse analysis, Keller's approach focuses on the intersection between collective knowledge systems and social practices, which are suitable for exploring how narratives of modernization and resistance are constructed, institutionalized, and contested (Keller, 2013). Originating from Berger and Luckmann's (1975, as cited in Keller, 2013) sociology of knowledge, Keller synthesizes the core ideas with Foucault's work on power-knowledge, making SKAD a methodology that can offer insights into how power operates through knowledge and discourse. Through this perspective, my analysis is focused on the role of institutional mechanisms in constructing society's everyday reality and the distribution of knowledge (Keller, 2013).

SKAD focuses on interpretative dimensions, making it a more suitable approach to explore the Baduy Dalam case, compared to other linguistically rooted approaches like Critical or Argumentative Discourse Analysis. This precedence is particularly useful as SKAD acknowledges discourses as sites of struggle, as different actors compete to define meanings and establish dominant interpretations (Keller, 2011; 2013). With its strong emphasis on collective socio-historical and institutional contexts, SKAD provides a framework to understand the meaning-making processes within the actors and institutions that are involved in discourse production, contestation, and stabilization (Keller, 2013). In this context, SKAD serves as both a suitable methodological inquiry and a theoretical lens for exploring how the sociotechnical imaginaries of the internet are constructed and contested by different actors in Indonesia.

While SKAD forms the core lens, the thesis also integrates abductive reasoning as a methodological strategy. This abductive approach acknowledges that theory and data are in constant dialogue. Rather than starting from a fixed conceptual framework, I allow empirical findings to inform and reshape the categories of analysis. This exploratory nature is inspired by grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Vasconcelos et al., 2012) but adapted for a more modest and focused inquiry, given the practical constraints of time and resources of this thesis.

Thus, I would like to put a disclaimer that I do not fully commit to grounded theory's pure inductivism but borrow its spirit of empirical openness. To balance this openness, I simultaneously draw interpretive insights from Bevir and Rhodes (2006), who argue that beliefs and meanings are embedded in broader webs of belief and institutional narratives. This include tacit understandings and affective commitments, which are central to Indigenous worldviews and governance rationalities.

In the subsequent analysis, I use the term meaning rather than framing or interpretation. As discussed in Section 1.3.1, my understanding of meaning follows Keller's (2011) emphasis on culturally embedded and epistemically rich interpretations, which differ from the more strategic and issue-specific connotations of framing (Hajer, 1995). Ethnographic methods are therefore well-suited to reconstructing such situated meanings by tracing how actors' understandings are formed, sustained, and transformed through experience and interaction.

Finally, although this study is deeply qualitative and interpretive in nature, it strategically uses some sensitizing concepts such as meaning, dispositif, and inclusive governance as heuristic entry points in the early coding stages. These are not treated as fixed analytical categories but as provisional guides that help organize the data before refining categories through closer empirical engagement.

1.5.2 Data Sampling

To trace the key actors involved in the Baduy internet blank spot case, I used a snowball sampling approach. I started by identifying individuals mentioned in media coverage, particularly those who had given public statements about the issue. Based on this, I initially planned to contact around ten actors, including two from Baduy Dalam, two from Baduy Luar, two Komdigi officials, one local expert, one journalist, and several intermediary figures. I aimed to ensure a balance of perspectives across the state, media, and Indigenous community domains.

In practice, however I was faced with access difficulty. Due to the limited time, I was only able to contact one Komdigi actor, and one local government official provided a written statement instead of participating in a full interview. For the Baduy community, I initially contacted one of the well-known local guides who then introduced me to key figures from both Baduy Dalam and Baduy Luar. I also reached out to journalists who had reported on the case, which helped me gain additional access to intermediary actors and regional officials.

Most of these connections were facilitated through a relatively small circle of sources. To reduce the risk of relying on a narrow network and to avoid reproducing a single dominant narrative, I cross-checked contacts, expanded the sampling chain where possible, and

triangulated accounts across sources. Through this process, I was able to confirm that the individuals I interviewed were indeed relevant and positioned within the discursive field surrounding the blank spot case. While I remain aware of the potential limitations of snowball sampling, I accepted this approach as a pragmatic choice given the constrained scope and timeline of this thesis. I acknowledge that some perspectives may remain underrepresented, but I consider the selected sample analytically sufficient to trace the key discursive dynamics and relational configurations in this case.

1.5.3 Data Collection

To ensure that diverse perspectives are taken into account, empirical data were gathered through the combination of semi-structured interviews and short-term fieldwork observation. The choice of this combination is intentional to enable triangulation of the data, given the nature of resource availability.

Code	Groups	No. of Interviewees	Role	Method & Duration
BD	Baduy Dalam	2	- Traditional figures - Elders	- In-person interviews (60 mins) - 2-day field stay for informal dialogue with 5–10 community members
BL	Baduy Luar	1	Elders	In-person interviews (60 mins) during 1-day visit
LC	Local Guide (Intermediaries)	1	Local villager	In-person interviews (45 mins)
LG	Local Government	2	- Culture and Tourism Department - Communication Department	- 1 in-person interview (90 mins) - 1 written statement
JM	Journalist (Intermediaries)	1	Local journalist in national media	In-person interview (90 mins) + news article review
LE	Local expert (Intermediaries)	1	Local experts and civil officer	In-person interview (60 mins)
KD	National government (Komdigi)	1	Department of Infrastructure - Ministry of Communication and Information Indonesia	In-person interview (90 mins) + VID 2045 document analysis

Table 1: List of interviewees

Code	Document	Issued by	Remarks
OL	Official Blank spot Request Letter	Kanekes village	Publicly available in news media. Original document signed by Baduy Dalam and Luar elders
VID	Indonesia Digital Vision 2045 Roadmap Document	Komdigi	Publicly available in VID 204 official website, as oart of Golden Indonesia 2045 vision

Table 2: List of documents

In total, I collected primary data from eight oral interviews and one written statement (Table 1), as well as two documents (Table 2) covering main actor groups: Baduy Dalam, Baduy Luar, local government, activist/intermediary actors, and national-level officials. Each participant data was anonymized and only shown in grouped categories for analytical clarity (as this thesis later refers to them in terms of actor group. However, this grouping does not assume internal uniformity. These internal differences are acknowledged and reflected in the interpretation of the data where relevant. The Baduy Dalam interviews were supplemented by three days of field observation, during which informal conversations took place with around 5 to 10 community members. These interactions were not formally recorded but contributed to contextual understanding.

The interviews were conducted separately over a span of one month data collection duration, between March 17th and April 10th, 2025. This extended timeline was due to the need to schedule appointments with participants, many of whom were only available after multiple follow-ups. The data collection period also coincided with the lead-up to Indonesia's religious festivities, 2-weeks long holiday, during which many officials and community members were unavailable for direct discussion.

Additionally, a pre-research exploratory discussion was done with a local journalist from a national media outlet in Indonesia who is known for regularly covering Baduy's story. They have reported extensively on the Baduy community and were among the first to cover the internet blank spot request as a significant national news item. This exploratory discussion provided a helicopter view to further set the chronology and first reading (Hajer, 2006) and maintain the risk of a narrow reading of the case (Keller, 2013).

Considering the exploratory nature of the research and limited by the short timeline, semi-structured interviews were chosen as the most appropriate method. This approach balances flexibility and structure, allowing space for open-ended responses and follow-up questions while keeping the discussion anchored within the research scope through guided prompts (Fetterman, 2010; Adeoye-Olatunde & Olenik, 2021). Initially, the research aimed to include interviews with Baduy's elderly figures (Puun) as well. However, due to limited permissions and challenges in

accessing the traditional figures or Jaro, who often act as intermediaries in external communications, have been selected as the primary informants.

Prior to each interview, informed consent, either written or verbal, was obtained from all participants. To protect participants' personal information and views, all interviewees were pseudonymized. The interviews were conducted in Indonesian and were audio-recorded and transcribed, except for interviews with Baduy actors, where recording was not permitted due to community regulations. Informed consent forms and the list of interview questions are included in the appendix.

For the Baduy Dalam community, field observation was particularly important due to the absence of written records and limited verbal communication accessible to outsiders. Given constraints in resources and timeline, I adopted a shorter, more focused ethnographic observation. Initially, fieldwork was planned to begin with a one-day preliminary visit, followed by a one-week stay for in-depth observation. However, due to the announcement of *Kawalu*⁵, a sacred period of ritual restriction, this plan was cancelled and replaced by an initial online discussion with a local guide. Through this discussion, I was eventually granted permission to enter the Baduy area during *Kawalu* month, but with a limited three-day stay permit during March 17th until 19th, 2025.

It is important to note that most members of the Baduy community do not speak Indonesian. Only a few elders or individuals with prior contact with outsiders were able to understand Indonesian. Even so, they responded exclusively in Sundanese, a language in which I do not have full fluency. Therefore, two local guides accompanied me throughout the fieldwork. They supported communication, navigation, and contextual understanding throughout the research process. Both preferred to remain anonymous and were assigned pseudonyms in all field documentation and transcripts. A detailed field journal was maintained to document observations, contextual dynamics, and personal reflections.

Finally, given the nature of this research, which involves the indigenous community and might include personal information gathered through interviews and field observation ethics approval has been obtained from the Ethics Committee of the University of Twente under the application number 250090.

⁵ Kawalu is Baduy's sacred month celebrated annually. During these 3 months long Kawalu, outsiders are not allowed to enter Baduy area, unless given a permission from Baduy elders.

1.5.4 Data Analysis

After compiling the data corpus, including interview transcripts, observational notes, and relevant contextual materials, the analysis began by transcribing all interviews using Amberscript provided by the University of Twente, given the volume of interviews. All transcripts were manually checked, as the interviews were conducted in Indonesian and Sundanese, which Amberscript could not accurately process. To align with best practices in qualitative research and ensure an iterative approach, data were analyzed immediately after they were generated. This was done by manually coding all relevant information from the written notes. Each interview note was coded before proceeding to the next, allowing emerging insights to inform subsequent data collection and refine the focus of inquiry. Before each interview, I had already explained to participants that pseudonyms would be used, so their real names were not recorded. The transcripts were then cleaned, sanitized, and checked for pseudonymization.

The transcripts were processed using ATLAS.ti, a qualitative data analysis software. The analysis was conducted abductively. While initial parent codes such as imaginaries, meaning, and actors were predefined, the content and sub-codes were developed based on the data itself, following an open coding approach. This allowed for inductive exploration while remaining attentive to deductive categories informed by existing literature, especially SKAD. Following open coding, axial coding was used to establish relationships between themes (Keller, 2013). This helped uncover underlying discursive dynamics as well as relational tensions and alignments between actors. In parallel with the coding, repeated readings of the empirical material were conducted to identify meaning patterns and storylines (Keller, 2013). The analysis also considered situational and material contexts, such as the Government of Indonesia's digital roadmap for internet connectivity. An interpretative analytics approach was applied to identify situational meanings, articulated problem structures, and recurring meaning patterns (Keller, 2013).

The findings from this analysis were then synthesized to reconstruct the discourse surrounding internet connectivity, using frameworks such as meaning reconstruction (Keller, 2011; 2013), social arenas, and discourse coalitions (Hajer, 1993). Some findings were visualized using network graphs to map the relationships and connections between key actors and themes.

1.6 Social and Academic Contribution

Practically, this thesis provides an alternative lens for planning and evaluating government-led digital and modernization agendas. Specifically, in the conceptual contribution of the ontological non-use, I aim to open policy discussions that move beyond access metrics toward governance that is attentive to cultural difference and alternative society-technology relations,

including the deliberate choice of non-use. These considerations are intended to inform not only policymakers but also civil society actors and intermediaries who work closely with Indigenous communities, where translation and partial inclusion can carry the risk of marginalization. The study proposes that recognizing a plurality of technology–user relationships can help support more inclusive and culturally grounded forms of governance.

Academically, this thesis bridges two interdisciplinary fields: Science and Technology Studies (STS) and Public Administration (PA) by exploring the discursive process surrounding the Baduy internet blank spot and demonstrates how digital governance are also shaped by situated assumptions about progress and inclusion, which can marginalize non-Western and Indigenous knowledge systems. This thesis draws from STS to expose how meanings are situated, linking it to broader visions of nation-building and struggles for epistemic justice. At the same time, insights from PA help to understand how these situated meanings travel across actor networks, are translated into policy language, and become embedded in formal decision-making.

By reframing the internet blank spot - ‘not as resistance’ or ‘lack’ - but as a strategic non-use (Oudshoorn & Pinch, 2003), this thesis aims to enrich the discussion on Indigenous ontological sovereignty, contributing to broader efforts to decolonize the study of technology and society by extending it into the empirical application on state-Indigenous relations in Global South context. This thesis also seeks to contribute to the growing body of Indigenous studies, particularly in expanding existing literature on the calls for greater inclusion of Indigenous perspectives in governance and knowledge-making (e.g. de La Cadena 2010; Lapointe & Rivard’s, 2005; Carlson & Mongibello’s 2021; Franklin, 2013).

2. Discursive Field Formation: Coalitions and Meanings

This chapter examines how meanings of the internet emerge and stabilize through discourse coalitions shaped by tensions between *national development* and *adat*⁶. I analyze how certain meanings are articulated and aligned through these coalitions, as well as how hybrid meanings surface across arenas. To guide the analysis in this chapter, I focus on exploring the research question: *What meanings are ascribed to the internet in the Baduy case, and how do these meanings support or form discourse coalitions?*

2.1 Discourse Coalitions

Keller's (2011) concept of discourse coalitions expands on Hajer's (1993) idea of *discourse coalitions*, which emphasized how actors may align around shared storylines. Keller shifts the focus toward the broader discursive formations that emerge when actors' statements resonate with similar semantic structures, even in the absence of conscious and strategic coordination or shared policy goals. It is used here to explain how different actors can be discursively linked through recurring meanings, rather than through strategic alliances, which fits the empirical reality of this case, where actors invoke overlapping discourses about the internet but do so from divergent normative positions and ontological grounds. However, it risks flattening the internal diversity within each group. Therefore, I supplement it with discursive positions to capture the situated and shifting stances that actors adopt within the broader discursive field.

Although the discourse coalitions may appear to diverge on the technical desirability of internet infrastructure, upon closer examination, there is a fundamentally incompatible way of how the internet is portrayed, especially in terms of identity-making. The field data reveal a complex discursive landscape, within which I identify three dominant, but overlapping, discourse coalitions.

⁶ *Adat* is an Indonesian term for customary practices and authority systems rooted in ancestral traditions. In Indonesia, it refers to locally specific forms of law, governance, and social order that often exist among Indigenous communities like the Baduy.

Coalition Type	Actors Involved	Shared Meaning(s)	Description
Adat-Sovereignty Coalition	- Baduy Dalam - Baduy Luar - Activists - Local expert - Journalist - Local guides	- Tangible Technological Presence - Violation of Sacred Adat - External Threat	Articulates internet refusal as a form of epistemic and territorial sovereignty. Seeks to preserve sacred cosmology and guard against symbolic intrusion.
Intermediaries Coalition	- Local government - Activists - Local expert - Journalist - Local guides	- Tangible Technological Presence - External Threat - Digital Visibility Risk - Hybrid Pragmatic view	Translates Baduy refusal into state-legible terms by framing it as protection from moral degradation and digital exploitation. Balances adat values with bureaucratic rationality.
Nation-building Coalition	- Komdigi - Local government - Activists - Local expert - Journalist - Local guides	- Tangible Technological Presence - Digital Visibility Risk - Nation-building tool - Tool for Efficiency and Administrative Legibility	Frames the internet as a symbol and tool of national integration, development, and state modernity. Seeks inclusion through connectivity and digital infrastructure.

Table 3: Identified discourse coalition in Baduy blank spot case

Occupied by national and local government actors, the discursive position of overlapping meanings of the internet as a nation-building tool and a tool for efficiency and administrative legibility forms a coalition that I term the *Nation-building* coalition. This coalition does not merely view internet connectivity as a developmental tool; it treats it as a symbolic and practical vehicle for national integration. This logic reflects the state's desire for legibility, where technologies of classification, standardization, and infrastructure are employed to make populations more visible, knowable, and governable (Scott, 1998). As public services, citizenship systems, and governance platforms shift online, participation in the Indonesian nation-state increasingly depends on digital legibility. Thus, internet access is equated with participation in the modern Indonesian nation-state, reflecting a governance project premised on uniformity, where Indigenous communities are recognized only insofar as they conform to these dominant narratives.

The designation nation-building coalition is used here to emphasize a mode of governance that, following Miclat's (2000) critique of Southeast Asian governance, operates through a black-and-white logic where peace is maintained not through plural justice, but neutralization of local autonomy demands to stabilize the state. In this case, the blank spot is rationalized as a need to shield youth from moral degradation (Blank spot official letter, 2023). Through this, the state

reasserts itself as the moral architect of the nation, deciding which values are worth preserving and through what technological arrangements. Naming this constellation a nation-building coalition, then, is analytical as it challenges dominant nation-state logic.

By contrast, the *Adat-Sovereignty* Coalition centered around Baduy elders and traditional leaders who articulate meanings of the internet through the lens of sacred adat. The Baduy Community arena is internally differentiated by generation and positional lines. Elders articulate meanings rooted in sacred order, while some Baduy Luar inhabit a more transitional position, sometimes expressing openness to connectivity for economic or communicative purposes. Within this worldview, the internet is conceptualized as an intrusion that threatens the cosmological coherence of Baduy life. The tension between the nation-building coalition and the adat-sovereignty coalition is then sharpened by the Gol's drive to manage cultural difference through the language of inclusion embedded in the internetification project.

In the middle, there is the *Intermediary* coalition that includes activists, local experts, journalists, guides, and sympathetic local officials. This coalition does not represent a formal alliance, and its existence only becomes visible through empirical tracing. The intermediaries also occupy a liminal position, translating, mediating, and often reframing the meanings of the internet in ways that can travel between the two poles. The coalitions do not operate as formal institutions. They have a fluid discursive position that varies with context. For example, a local official may voice similar concerns in representing the Indigenous community, but at the same time also echo developmental narratives. This liminal position gives room for the emergence of hybrid meanings that may resemble a middle ground between opposing meanings.

2.2 Reconstructing Identified Meanings

To further elaborate on how this discourse coalition is formed and stabilized, I trace and reconstruct the overlapping meanings articulated by these actors. The identified meanings discussed below are not exclusive to any particular actor or group. Instead, they often circulate across coalitions, intersect through generational and institutional lines, and are often transformed as they are reframed by different actors.

	Adat-sovereignty coalition 24	Intermediary coalition 50	Nation-building coalition 20
Meanings: [Hybrid] Pragmatic and Conditional adoption 17		11	3
Meanings: Digital visibility risk 28	10	22	
Meanings: Efficiency and Administrative Legibility 27		17	16
Meanings: External threat 21	12	7	1
Meanings: Material Presence 7	2	3	2
Meanings: Nation Building tool 14		5	5
Meanings: Violation of Sacred Adat 10	3	2	

Table 4: Distribution of Discursive Meanings Across Actor Coalitions (based on coded quotations in ATLAS.ti)⁷

The table below presents the co-occurrence of each identified meaning with actors grouped into three major discourse coalitions. It can be inferred that the coalitions were constructed based on shared patterns of meaning-making rather than formal alliances. The numbers represent the frequency of coded quotations in which a given meaning was articulated by or associated with members of each coalition. As the table shows, meanings do not belong exclusively to a single coalition. They circulate across different actor groups, resulting in areas of overlap where similar meanings are often mobilized for different reasons. At the same time, the overlap in meanings across coalitions suggests a shared discursive ground that helped make the internet blank spot implementation possible. For this reason, I now turn to a more detailed analysis of each meaning to examine how it is articulated differently across coalitions.

2.2.1 The Internet as Violation of the Sacred Adat

The most fundamental meaning that emerges within the Baduy community, particularly Baduy Dalam, is a conceptualization of the internet as a violation of *adat*, their sacred customary law. This view, expressed in interviews with community elders and reinforced through repeated references in field conversations, reflects a belief that internet connectivity is incompatible with the spiritual logic and normative order of Baduy cosmology. It anchors the Adat-Sovereignty coalition and remains largely in tension with the Developmental coalition, whose visions of digital inclusion and progress are ontologically incompatible with this sacred refusal. As noted from Baduy Dalam elders, technology such as "TV, radio, and mobile phones," are explicitly labeled as "excessive" according to their adat rules (Baduy Dalam, personal communication, March 2025) not because of what they do, but because of what they are. No further justification is considered necessary. This meaning is articulated primarily by elders in Baduy Dalam and Baduy Luar. Intermediary actors such as) journalists, sympathetic government officials, and local experts (see Appendix A.1). Internal to Baduy, this meaning is stabilized through the use of Pikukuh as the

⁷ This table visualizes how each meaning category co-occurs with members of the Adat-sovereignty, Intermediary, and Nation-building coalitions. Numerical values reflect the frequency of coded quotations, indicating the relative discursive prominence of each meaning within a coalition.

dispositif, a stabilizing force that regulates what is allowed to be changed, shared, or connected (Keller, 2011). A proverb commonly cited among Baduy elders encapsulates how internet is seen as something that enable connection with external world:

*“What is long must not be shortened. What is short must not be extended.”*⁸ (Baduy Dalam elder, personal communication, March 2025)

Within Baduy community, knowledge is stratified, reinforcing a mode of boundary maintenance where only certain actors are “authorized” to speak or interact with outsiders (Interview BL, see Appendix A.1.2). This is done to protect their ontological commitments, resembling partial connections; a form of translation that allows their world to enter political discourse without being fully captured by it (de la Cadena, 2010). Practically, this strategic act is often used to maintain epistemic sovereignty and control their own narrative, limiting what is legible or accessible to others (Gieryn, 1983; Vasconcelos et al., 2012; Tuck and Yang, 2014).

This articulation of meaning is reinforced through the network of dispositif both in the form of unwritten rules rooted in karmic consequences and practical regulations (Interview BD, see Appendix A.1.4; A.1.5). This includes routine meetings between generations to teach core *adat* values, periodic sweeping practices done by elders to confiscate forbidden artifacts, and spatial boundary enforcement, such as prohibiting visitors from using and operating digital devices in Baduy Dalam territory. Although these dispositifs do not operate under formal law, they include mechanisms of sanctions⁹ that further reinforce their normative weight.

Baduy’s stance towards the internet in this context reflects a form of *non-use* that is a meaningful and deliberate decision rooted in cosmological order (Oudshoorn and Pinch, 2003). In this case, the act of refusing the use of internet is reframed as a moral achievement, an expression of spiritual stewardship. This articulation also reveals a fundamental clash of sociotechnical imaginaries exerted by Gol and the Baduy. For Baduy, their non-use is about preserving a counter-imaginaries that does not require digital visibility or technological adoption; a vision of the future that contests dominant state narratives and articulates alternative trajectories of sociotechnical order (Jasanoff, 2015).

⁸ Translated from Sundanese language, original quotation “Panjang teu meunang dipotong. Pendek teu meunang disambung.”

⁹ In Baduy’s belief, as cited from the communities, there are two kinds of sanctions: *adat law* and *natural law*. This sanction includes social exclusion or ‘imprisonment’ within the community or the invocation of karmic consequences through adat cosmology, where violations are believed to provoke illness, misfortune, or natural disasters.

2.2.2 The Internet as an External Threat

Derived from the previous meaning, this meaning is more focused on the practical “violation.” This meaning is most often articulated by members of Baduy Luar, who, due to their proximity and interaction with non-Baduy actors, are more familiar with digital technologies. While the elders in Baduy Luar may not use these technologies themselves, they observe the growing influence among younger generations and visiting tourists. This further reinforces a collective perception of the internet as a channel for external threats, which grounded in concrete concerns about the erosion of values for younger generations and the sanctity of their adat, especially through the increasing interaction between Baduy communities with non-Baduy outsiders (Interview BL, see Appendix A.2.1). In this context, the internet enables unregulated, unmediated interaction with the outside world, bypassing the traditional guardianship structures that normally regulate such contact. An activist also publicly stated this shift in a news interview:

“Android [phones] owned by Baduy children have changed their mindset, attitudes, and behavior. Nowadays, many Baduy youth are no longer willing to help their parents in the huma (fields).”¹⁰ (Suhada, 2023 as cited in Nazmudin & Arief, 2023)

While not expressed explicitly, Baduy Dalam elders also acknowledged the increasing vulnerability of younger generations, especially in Baduy Luar, to external technological influences. However, when asked about this, these leaders recognize the limitations of enforcement where they cannot fully prohibit such exposure without risking disengagement from parts of the broader Baduy community. Therefore, Baduy Dalam elders are still waiting for *ilapat*¹¹ (cosmological guidance) to determine a rightful course of action. In the meantime, elders continue to reinforce internal discipline through intergenerational moral education.

This articulation of concern regarding the internet as external threat can be traced with historical context where interaction with outsiders is part of a long history of external encroachment

“All of it just damages our adat... Back in my fathers’ time, they upheld the rules...group visits were not even allowed.”¹² (Baduy Luar elder, personal communication, March 2025)

As stated in the official blank spot request letter, concern then becomes the grounding justification of the blank spot, institutionalizing the meaning of the internet as both a moral and generational

¹⁰ Translated from Indonesian language, original quotation: “Android [HP] yang dimiliki anak-anak Baduy telah mengubah pola pikir, sikap perilaku mereka, kini sebagian besar anak muda Baduy enggan lagi membantu orang tuanya berhuma (berkebun).”

¹¹ *Ilapat* in Sundanese refers to a supernatural sign or omen, often sensed through dreams, feelings, or seemingly coincidental events.

¹² Translated from Indonesian language, original quotation: “soalnya kabeh ge ngarusak adat... jaman bapak urang ngatugasna. ..., rombongan rombongan mah teu meunang.”

threat (see Appendix A.2. 6). While not articulated explicitly by national government actors during the interview, this meaning also reflects similar concern that have been circulating in Indonesian digital policy for years. In 2024, the Minister of Communication and Digital explicitly cited concerns over online gambling, harmful content, and the need to provide “a safe internet space for children” (Hafid, 2024 as cited in Kuncorojati, 2024). This reinforces a broader imaginary of the internet as an external threat that is morally corrupting and in need of state control.

2.2.3 The Internet as Digital Visibility Risk

While this meaning may seem similar to the previous theme of external threat, where both focus on what the internet brings into the community, they are differentiated in this context under two main reasons: (1) difference in underlying imaginaries, and (2) difference in who articulates these meanings and through what experiences.

First, digital visibility risk, as used here, refers to the anxiety that arises when sacred spaces, rituals, or ways of life are recorded and circulated in digital environments without consent or contextual understanding. It is not merely about privacy in a liberal sense, but about epistemic sovereignty, the right to control how knowledge about oneself is produced and framed (Tuck & Yang, 2014). Therefore, this meaning focuses on what flows out; what is made public to digital outsiders. On the other hand, the previous meaning of external threat is focusing on what flows in; external influence that poses as an encroachment on the inside life of Baduy. Second, this meaning is more commonly articulated by intermediaries since they are the ones who witness firsthand how Baduy culture is recorded, reframed, and often misrepresented in digital contexts. Because Baduy Dalam themselves do not use smartphones or consume online content (Interview BD), the harms of digital circulation are not directly experienced but mediated through observation and discourse.

While this meaning originally emerged within Intermediaries, Baduy Luar actors echoed this meaning, though articulated differently. They referred to longstanding prohibitions rooted in beliefs that the rituals and daily practices of the Baduy are not performances to be shared with the outside world. Thus, as stated by Baduy Luar traditional figures, publishing them online risks violating their sacredness (Interview BL, see Appendix A.3, 2). Prohibitions on livestreaming, geotagging, or photographing sacred spaces are now enforced informally through verbal warnings (Interview LE, see Appendix A.3, 6). This framing of *visibility risk* then became a key justification behind the blank spot request. Intermediaries who regularly witnessed such cultural leakage online began to view internet disconnection as an urgent protective measure. It was this urgency, rooted in fears of epistemic harm rather than technical access, that eventually drove them to

support and facilitate the formal request for Baduy Dalam to be declared a blank spot (Interview LE, see Appendix A.3, 7).

Although originating from adat concerns, this meaning also subtly underpins elements of the nation-building discourse, where visibility risk is reframed as the spread of unethical or disruptive online content threatening national unity. As per 2017, Komdigi had recorded over 42,000 citizen and institutional complaints regarding negative online content, with categories such as SARA (ethnic and religious intolerance), pornography, and hoaxes ranking highest (Komdigi, 2020). These overlapping anxieties help stabilize the meaning of the internet as a visibility risk, creating a discursive space grounded in a shared sense of urgency to protect the community from digital exposure, ultimately contributing to the rationale behind the internet blank spot request.

2.2.4 The Internet as a Tool for Nation-Building

This meaning primarily circulates among national and local government actors occupying the nation-building coalitions. This meaning carries a hopeful and future-oriented vision, positioning the internet as a government instrument to unify all communities, even the rural ones, by drawing symbolic and material boundaries around who belongs to the nation, and under what terms (Yuval-Davis, 2006). This meaning is embedded in formal policy and institutional discourse, particularly *Visi Indonesia 2045*, a digital roadmap that envisions Indonesia as a globally competitive, technologically sovereign nation, one of the world's top five economies driven by digital infrastructure, innovation, and high-quality human capital by 2045 (Bappenas, 2019; Kominfo, 2023b).

*"Everyone without exception should have access. Because this is related to the digital divide....The ultimate goal aligns with what's stated in the Constitution: to enlighten the life of the nation"*¹³ (Komdigi, personal communication, April 2025).

Here, the internet is framed as a universal good and national imperative, where the digital divide is treated as a failure to fully integrate citizens into the imagined national collective. Full connectivity becomes a vision of national uniformity, where digital inclusion marks "membership" in the nation itself. This nation-building logic also materializes in a spatial dispositif that maps Indonesia's internetification project into two zones (Interview KD, see Appendix A.4, 6). Commercial areas¹⁴ are assigned to private telecom providers, while non-commercial 3T regions

¹³ Translated from Indonesian language, original quotation: "Semua orang tanpa terkecuali itu harusnya memiliki akses. Karena ini kaitannya sama dengan adanya kesenjangan digital... Tujuan akhirnya seperti visi itu di Undang Undang Dasar: mencerdaskan kehidupan bangsa"

¹⁴ Urbanized regions, typically cities or metropolitan clusters, which already possess stable digital infrastructure and commercially viable for private telecom investment.

are delegated exclusively to BAKTI, a state-owned institution under Komdigi. Through initiatives like BTS tower construction and satellite deployment, BAKTI is responsible to achieve the full internet coverage for all Indonesian areas. Through this, the state positions itself as both caretaker and integrator, bridging “unconnected” regions and effectively creating a state monopoly over infrastructural development in frontier areas. This mapping resembles what Gagliardone (2016) observed in the Ethiopian context, where digital infrastructure can function as a territorial technology of sovereignty, used to assert central authority over zones historically seen as marginal or unruly.

Even though this meaning is most explicitly articulated by national government actors, some intermediaries often occupy this discursive position. Actors who support the Baduy’s refusal may still reproduce this imaginary, consciously or not, showing how the nation-building logic of digital connectivity has become hegemonic, subtly defining what it means to belong, participate, and be modern in the Indonesian state.

2.2.5 The Internet as a Tool for Efficiency and Administrative Legibility

Among national and local government actors, the internet is conceptualized as a mechanism for state rationalization, particularly in its role of streamlining governance processes. This meaning is deeply shaped by the logic of state legibility, wherein government institutions pursue standardization procedures to render communities more knowable and administratively manageable (Scott, 1998). Such standardization often privileges values like simplification and procedural clarity. In tandem with the growing digitization of public services, ideals such as transparency, efficiency, and responsiveness become institutionalized as normative indicators of good governance.

The first key dimension of this meaning is the promise of digital efficiency. This meaning revolves around the idea that the internet can help to improve the overall governance process (Interview KD, see Appendix A.5, 1-2). With the implementation of online-based systems, administrative workflows can be monitored and completed in real-time, eventually holding public officials more accountable.

A second dimension is the utilization of internet as a gateway to market participation and economic integration (Interview LG, see Appendix A.5, 3). This is reflected through the digitalization of small and medium enterprises (UMKM) and the promotion of local tourism. Indigenous groups are often expected to adopt the use of a digital marketplace platform to improve their sales performance and reach.

A third and more normative aspect of this meaning concerns information accessibility and administrative transparency. Here, digital infrastructure is imagined as leveling the field of governance, enabling all citizens to access public information simultaneously regardless of geography. Budget transparency platforms and citizen-reporting apps are cited as evidence of participatory governance (Interview KD, see Appendix A.5, 6). In addition to outward transparency, this articulation also links internet access to improved internal decision-making. Yet, even as these tools promise equity, they embed a performative logic where access is equated with digital connectivity, and thus, participation becomes contingent on being online. A Komdigi online crowd-reporting app for connectivity gaps (Interview KD), for example, while framed as participatory, paradoxically excludes precisely those who are structurally offline, like the Baduy Dalam. This reflects state legibility logics, which state simplifies and renders populations visible through technical systemization, where connectivity becomes a requirement for recognition. This meaning thus helps reproduce a bounded vision of national participation, structured not around plural belonging, but around legibility to state metrics and digital infrastructures.

2.2.6 The Internet as Tangible Technological Presence

This meaning cuts across coalitions and is articulated by all actors. This meaning resonates with the notion of internet materiality, challenging the dominant narrative that frames the internet as immaterial or abstract (Ceruzzi, 2006). Across interviews, Baduy Dalam and Baduy Luar described the internet through material reference points like phones, signal towers, or connectivity equipment, rather than as an abstract digital system. This articulation is especially common among Baduy elders who have limited or indirect interaction with the internet itself. This meaning stabilizes their rejection towards the cellular signal tower in Cijahe, where such infrastructure is described as *“buyut baru,”* a term that signifies taboo or unfamiliar objects that do not belong in their geographical world. This physical conceptualization of the internet is also articulated by state actors through the reference of digital infrastructure like the optical fiber and cellular networks as the most important aspect of improving internet coverage across Indonesia (Interview KD, see Appendix A.6, 2).

What emerges, then, is a shared recognition of the internet’s materiality that targets not only the function of the internet (its content or use). This articulation gives the discursive basis for the internet blank spot request by giving physical form to what is otherwise seen as an abstract infrastructure. Unlike abstract regulatory mechanisms such as content filtering or digital literacy which presume a conceptualization of the internet as informational or symbolic, the internet blank spot offers a concrete territorial fix that aligns with the Baduy’s lived experience. This spatial logic

also helped make the internet blank spot proposal feasible in the lens of government actors through technical fix like signal redirection.

2.2.7 “Hybrid” Pragmatic Meanings of the Internet

This meaning emerges as a hybrid imaginary, produced through co-production processes that draw from multiple epistemic traditions (Jasanoff, 2004). It is not explicitly or consistently articulated by any single actor group. Rather, it crystallizes through interpretive synthesis across empirical findings reflecting discursive potentials rather than stabilized imaginaries. As such, it remains open-ended and prospective, gesturing toward futures in which plural lifeworlds and pragmatic compromises can coexist without requiring ontological convergence.

Among local government and intermediary actors, this meaning manifests as a form of regulated pragmatism, where permission is contingent upon state-aligned use. Thus, the internet is neither fully embraced nor categorically rejected but accepted conditionally through local values as a filter (Interview LG, see Appendix A.7, 1). In these cases, digital exposure is reframed as acceptable when self-authored. Some Baduy actors, especially digitally literate Baduy Luar, increasingly adopt this discursive position. For example, a Baduy Luar YouTuber began producing his own content after witnessing misrepresentations by outsider influencers (Interview JM, see Appendix A.7, 4). Their position allows them to reinterpret or even challenge dominant meanings through producing their own digital content, aiming to correct misrepresentations and share knowledge on their own terms. Such initiatives mark a shift from passive agency to discursive counter production, where the internet is re-appropriated as an instrument of narrative control.

Yet, representational sovereignty is not merely a question of content creation. Non-Baduy interviewees emphasize the difficulty of conveying Baduy knowledge through digital formats. Due to the cultural norms of communication within the Baduy community, they tend to avoid speaking straightforwardly, resulting in the need for a significant time and attention for context to fully understand the Baduy community. As a result, attempts to represent Baduy life through online content often fail to capture its real meaning. This is why many intermediaries also argue that genuine understanding requires direct experience, not secondhand media exposure (Interview LG). In this sense, representational sovereignty is not just about producing content; it is about redefining the terms of visibility itself. However, it is also critical to note that this sovereignty needs to be approached carefully. Since this hybrid meaning is constantly negotiated across multiple actors, it is important to take into account reflections such as: Who governs these digital platforms through which Baduy representation circulates? What emerges here is not simply a middle ground, but instead, it is a negotiated stance that challenges both total visibility and total

withdrawal. As such, it reminds us that the hybrid imaginary is still in formation, where there is a space where plural knowledge systems co-author the terms of digital presence without erasing difference.

2.3 Alignment and Transformation of Internet Meanings

Meanings of the internet evolve dynamically over time through interaction between actors. This dynamic results in transformed meaning, stabilization, or even marginalization that enables the formation of discourse coalitions. Table 3 maps these trajectories, showing how meanings transform, which actors carry them, and how stable each meaning has become in practice. Here, stability refer to the extent to which a meaning has become institutionally embedded, widely repeated across actor groups, and taken for granted within specific governance frameworks (Keller, 2011; Jasanoff, 2015). A meaning is considered *highly stable* when it is formally codified in policy documents, enacted through dispositifs, or widely reproduced by influential actors. Conversely, meanings marked as *low stability* are still contested, emergent, or analytically inferred rather than discursively settled. Here, we can also infer how hybrid meanings, while theoretically significant, have not yet consolidated into shared or institutionally recognized imaginaries.

Internet Meaning	Transformed From / Into	Primary Actors	Stability
Internet as Nation-building tool	Foundational in nation-building discourse. Refined to a more concrete meanings: "Tool for efficiency and administrative legibility"	Komdigi, local government	High
Internet as Tangible Technological Presence	-	All actors (Komdigi, Baduy, intermediaries)	High
Internet as Violation of Sacred Adat	Rooted in cosmological worldview. Transformed to "External Threat"	Baduy Dalam and Baduy Luar elders	High
Internet as External Threat	Builds from "Sacred violation", reinforced by outsider contact	Intermediaries, Baduy Dalam and Baduy Luar	Medium
Internet as Digital Visibility Risk	Builds from "External threat" that is more focused on online misrepresentation.	Intermediaries	Medium
Internet as Tool for Efficiency and Administrative Legibility	Refines "Nation-building" into operational logic	Komdigi, local government,	High
Hybrid meanings	Middle ground of "Efficiency" and "Digital Visibility Risk"	Intermediaries	Low

Table 5: Discursive Trajectories and Field Alignments of Internet Meanings

To visualize these dynamics, Figure 2 applies the Social Arena Mapping framework (Clarke, 1991; Vasconcelos et al., 2012). It shows how meanings circulate across three overlapping arenas: Baduy community, government, and public, each containing “social worlds” such as Komdigi, Baduy youth, or content creators. The figure highlights how some meanings converge into coalitions, while others remain discursively exclusive or structurally constrained.

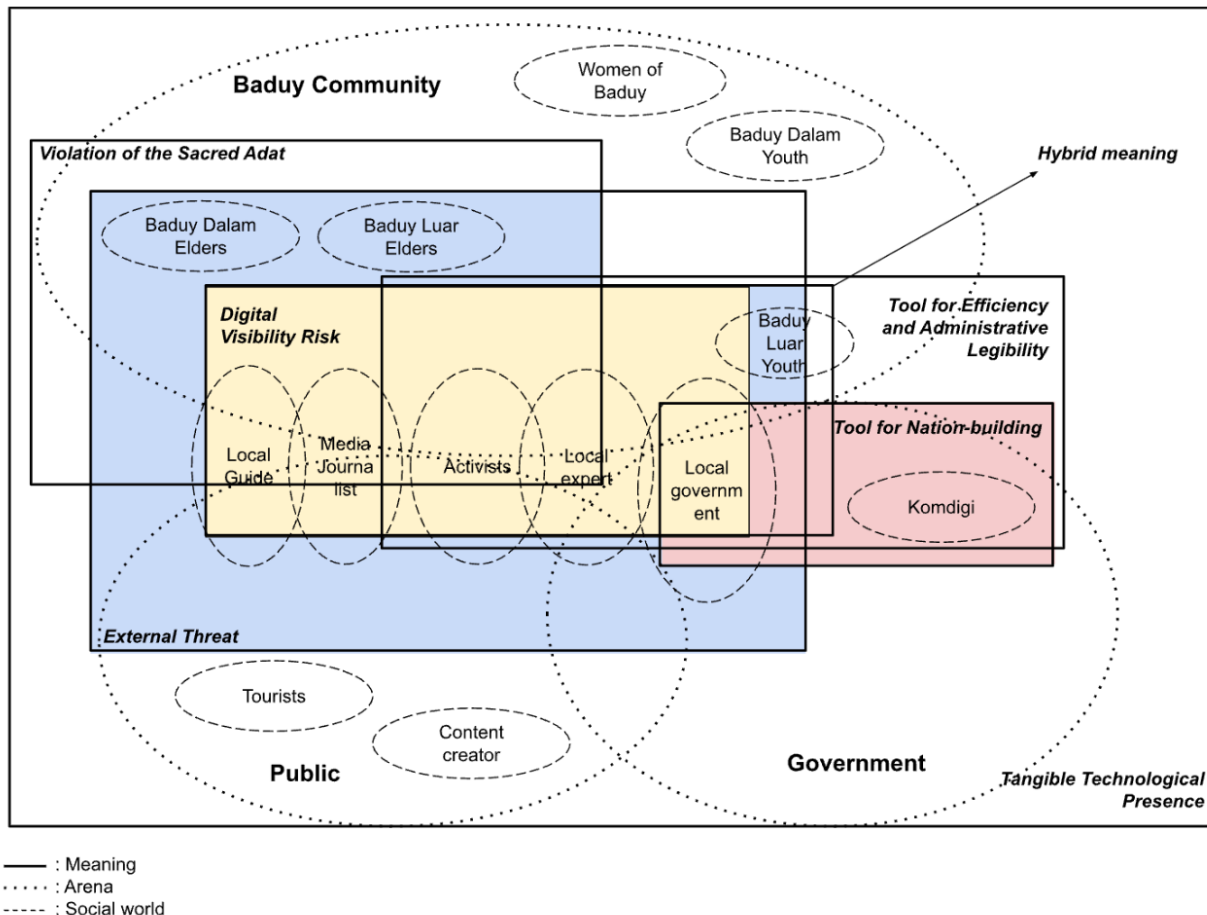


Figure 2: Social arena map of Meanings

One of the most stable meanings is the *Internet as a Nation-Building Tool* (red box), circulating in Indonesia since the early 2000s. This meaning reflects broader global imaginaries of digital progress and developmental modernity shaped by international institutions and Western frameworks that cast technology as a driver of national cohesion and advancement (Abbate, 1999; Escobar, 1995). This meaning became stabilized through programs like *Visi Indonesia 2045*, which frames connectivity as a symbol of inclusion and progress. Over time, it narrows into a more instrumental framing, *Internet as a Tool for Efficiency and Administrative Legibility*, emphasizing measurable outcomes like public service efficiency and economic participation. These meanings are circulating primarily within nation-building coalitions and remain exogenous

to Baduy community. These meanings, highly stable and endorsed by government actors, travel easily within policy frameworks because they resonate with dominant institutional rationalities that privilege clarity, standardization (Scott, 1998)

In contrast, some meanings remain discursively exclusive and structurally constrained. Although *the Internet as a Violation of the Sacred Adat* takes root in long-standing customary norms and articulated strongly by Baduy elders, it lacks institutional portability in entering the nation-building coalition. Its exclusion from governmental discourse is reinforced by their self-imposed dispositifs such as oral prohibitions and strategic governance boundaries through the appointment of Kanekes office village (Interview BD). As a result, this meaning is largely absent from government discursive field and only cautiously acknowledged by intermediaries. Through interaction with intermediaries and exposure to external incursions, this sacred violation meaning gives rise to the more relationally articulated *Internet as External Threat*. This meaning, co-produced by intermediaries, local officials, and some Baduy actors, shifts the focus from cosmological intrusion to experiences of commodification, misrepresentation, and surveillance. Over time, this evolves into *Internet as Digital Visibility Risk*, emphasizing epistemic sovereignty and representational control. These meanings are less stable than the dominant nation-building discourse, but they demonstrate filtered convergence. For instance, *Digital Visibility Risk* has been partially translated into the rationale for the internet blank spot. This translation allowed the request to travel through governance systems despite deep ontological differences.

Taken together, these findings show that meanings are not static nor owned by any single actor group. They move across arenas, reframed and sometimes altered in the process (Keller, 2011). This helps clarify why some meanings become central to governance outcomes, while others remain invisible. Instead, what we see is a shifting discursive field where meanings are co-produced through interaction, though always shaped by unequal power (Jasanoff, 2004). The blank spot policy, for example, did not emerge from shared understanding but from the selective stabilization of meanings that could bridge conflicting epistemologies.

2.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, I traced the discourse coalitions that emerged around the internet in the Baduy case and its discursive trajectories through which the meanings held by each coalition are stabilized, contested, or even translated. By reconstructing three dominant discursive positions and mapping the overlapping meanings, I argue that meaning-making around the internet is far from neutral because its relational process is shaped by divergent epistemologies and institutional positions.

The three discursive coalitions that shape this meaning-making process are: (1) the nation-building coalition, primarily made up of national and local government actors who see internet access as tool for nation-building; (2) the adat-sovereignty coalition, rooted in Baduy cosmology, where the internet is framed as a threat to sacred norms and epistemic sovereignty; and (3) the intermediary coalition, which includes journalists, activists, local officials, and guides who move between the two, translating and reframing meanings across institutional and ontological divides.

Although six core meanings of the internet were identified ranging from sacred violation to digital efficiency, none of these meanings are tied exclusively to a single group. They circulate across coalitions, are reframed in context, and at times merge into hybrid meanings such as conditional use and representational sovereignty. These hybrid forms are mostly articulated by intermediaries who operate across epistemic fault lines, enabling partial alignment without resolving the deeper tensions.

The internet does not enter the Baduy context as a neutral or universal infrastructure. Each actor group engages with it from within their own historically and institutionally situated standpoint, generating various dynamic meanings that are part of an ongoing contest between imaginaries. What emerges is not a shared understanding of the internet, but a fragmented discursive field where meanings co-produce governance possibilities.

3. Discursive Dynamics: Translation and Dispositif

Building on the previous chapter's reconstruction of how various actors ascribe meaning to internet use and refusal, this chapter examines how those meanings are actively negotiated and translated. Here, I analyze the patterned interaction between meanings, actor positions, and institutional structures, or in other words, the discursive dynamics. I focus especially on the role of intermediaries in translating between epistemic worlds, making refusal intelligible to the state, and stabilizing policy responses like the internet blank spot. This is particularly useful to uncover the struggles over which meanings become normalized, while others remain marginal or contested.

3.1 The Internet Blank Spot as a Discursive Compromise

The case of the Baduy internet blank spot cannot be fully understood through the lens of traditional policy failure or success. Instead, it is best understood as a discursive compromise, a recurring negotiation space that allows conflicting meanings of the internet to converge and accommodates the divergent needs of actors without fully reconciling them. In the internet blank spot, the coexistence of refusal and accommodation materialized into a technical-spatial arrangement of signal redirection.

Officially requested in mid-2023, the blank spot request was processed through multiple stages. Initially, concerns emerged both within the Baduy community and among external actors closely involved with it, particularly around the increasing circulation of digital content featuring Baduy people. These concerns prompted the drafting of an official request letter, signed by several adat leaders and formalized through the Kanekes village administration. However, several interviewees noted that key adat leaders were not fully involved in the decision-making process. Although the blank spot was presented as a community-driven initiative, it is the intermediary actors who played a central role, as evidenced through the drafting and escalating of the request through the formal letter (Interview BL, LE see Appendix B.2, 4-5).

This letter was then submitted to the Bupati of Lebak Regency in June 2023 to go through formal governance channel (Rizqoh, 2023). It was later forwarded to the President, with a notification sent to MCI (Interview KD). Kominfo then tasked the relevant department and telecommunications providers like Indosat-Ooredoo Hutchison to conduct a technical survey (Kansong, 2023 as cited in Rizqoh, 2023). During this stage, providers visited the Baduy area and held follow-up discussions with community representatives (Interview BD).

Yet, the community was not homogeneous in its stance. During discussion between Baduy and telecommunication providers, Baduy Dalam supported the removal of internet access, but some Baduy Luar members requested to maintain internet access for economic and logistical reasons (Interview LE). In response, providers implemented a technical workaround: the signal towers in Cijahe and Sobang were reconfigured to divert signal away from the core Baduy Dalam villages, but still accessible in Baduy Luar area (Syahrial, 2023). According to the Bupati, as of September 2023, Baduy Dalam had largely been cleared of connectivity, as confirmed during a follow-up Zoom meeting with Kominfo officials (Anik, 2023 as cited in Rizqoh, 2023). However, recent empirical observations suggest that a weak signal remains detectable in some Baduy Dalam peripheral areas. When questioned about this, local authorities indicated there has been no clarity on the follow-up regarding the long-term enforcement and monitoring of the blank spot implementation (Interview KD).

This disjuncture complicates the claim that the blank spot was a purely Baduy-driven proposal. Findings from interviews suggest that Baduy elders were unaware of the early procedural steps, only learning of the implementation once representatives from provider companies arrived in their village to conduct technical adjustments. While the Kanekes village leader was the one who signed the request letter, representing *Jaro Tangtu*, the Baduy internal governance, the Baduy Dalam elders state that they are still waiting for spiritual guidance to further manage this. Thus, they will partially allow Baduy Luar members to still use the internet. Local government officials echoed this uncertainty, stating they were “*waiting to see what kind of policy [adat leaders] will decide on*”¹⁵ (local government, personal communication, March 2025). Even among those who claimed deliberations had occurred, the timeline reveals long delays and unclear communication (Interview JM, see Appendix B.1, 3).

From the process, it is evident that the blank spot was made possible by the functional alignment of divergent justifications. For intermediary actors, the blank spot was primarily framed as a protective measure to prevent further digital exploitation that could compromise the Baduy’s moral and cultural future. Meanwhile, for government actors, blank spot was an attempt to respect culture, gesturing an expression of inclusive governance (Interview KD, LG, see Appendix B.1, 4-5). As a discursive compromise, the blank spot surfaces deeper concerns around representational legitimacy and procedural opacity. The absence of clear communication and the limited involvement of Baduy Dalam leaders challenge the notion of full community ownership and raise critical questions about whose voice is ultimately inscribed in the governance decision. What enabled this accommodation was the way intermediary actors exert a strategic act of honoring

¹⁵ Translated from Indonesian language, original quotation: “Kita menunggu kebijakan dari mereka seperti apa.”

difference by foregrounding misunderstanding and refusing the seduction of univocality (de La Cadena 2015). To understand how this compromise took form, I turn first to the process of discursive translation and the mediating actors involved.

3.2 Intermediaries Translation

As discussed in the previous chapter, the meanings that ultimately justified the Baduy blank spot did not originate solely within the community. They emerged through a process I refer to as “discursive translation,” by which actors reframe meanings into forms that are intelligible across discursive positions. This translation involves transformation, displacement, and the negotiation of interests (Latour, 2005). In this context, translation done by intermediaries¹⁶ becomes a necessary precondition for the Baduy’s request to be disconnected from the internet, to be seen as governable.

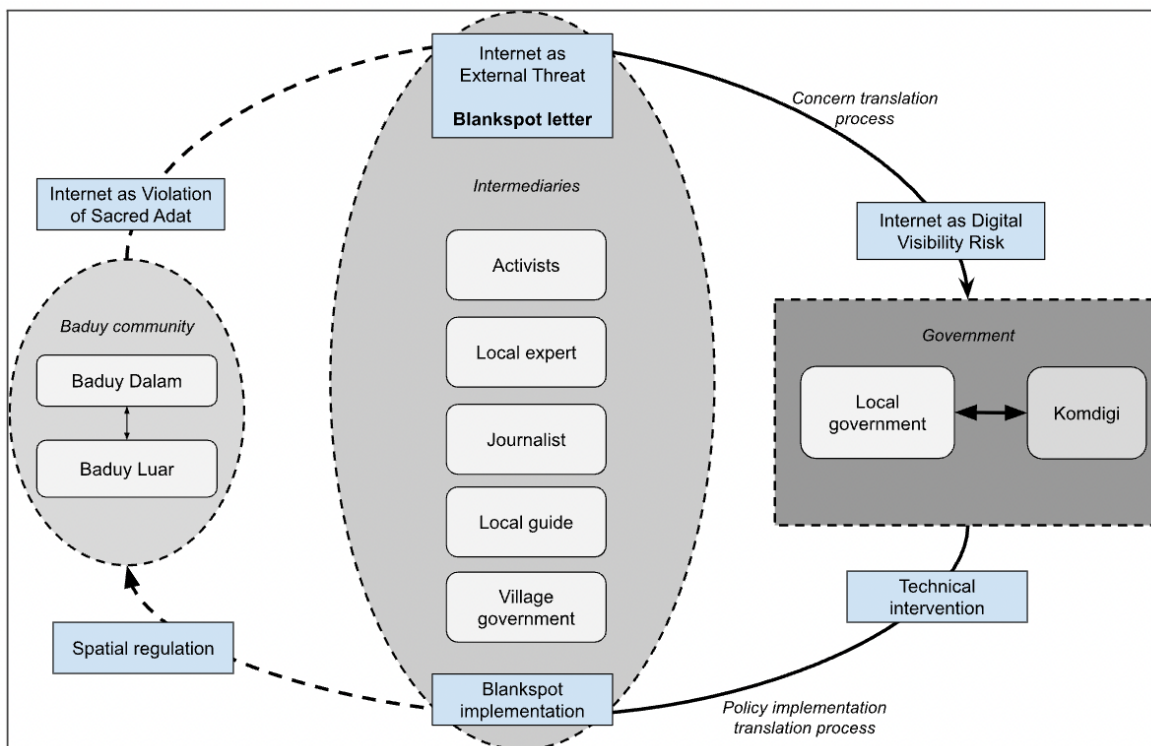


Figure 3: Translation process by intermediary actors¹⁷

As illustrated in Figure 3, rather than a linear relay from Indigenous actors to the state, the process unfolds through a discursive bridge occupied by intermediaries who translate concerns

¹⁶ This intentional grouping of actors such as activists, journalists, local guides, and village leaders under the category of “Intermediaries” should not be mistaken for ideological unity. This grouping emerged from grounded patterns in the interview data, where these actors articulated similar concerns and used overlapping justifications when speaking about the internet and the blank spot request.

¹⁷ Figure 3 here zooms in on the discursive translation process that has been briefly illustrated in Figure 2.

at multiple junctures. The Baduy community maintains distance from the outside world through selective knowledge-sharing, which limits direct engagement with formal institutions. As a result, Baduy voices may struggle to directly penetrate the discursive and institutional fields that define national policy. Intermediaries bridge this gap, transforming ontological concern rooted in adat (*Violation of Sacred Adat*) to practical risks (*External Threat*), and finally to secular concerns legible to the state (*Digital Visibility Risk*). Each step narrows or reframes the original concern to fit a different epistemic logic, resembling a partial connection that renders Indigenous ontologies partially intelligible to state actors, but only by reducing them to culturally acceptable categories (de La Cadena, 2010). This translation is evident in the official document of the internet blank spot request letter which explicitly justifies the request by appealing to state-recognized risks:

*"To restrict, reduce, or block applications, programs, and negative content on internet networks that could affect the morals and character of the younger generation"*¹⁸ (see Appendix)

Such terms to *"negative content"* and *"eroding moral of the young generation"* do not originate from Baduy cosmology, as they are derived from Baduy's interaction with non-Baduy actors. Here, the translation is not a neutral activity because in the process, the original meaning that sees the internet as a violation of sacred *adat*, is reframed through secularized terms, such as moral concern, which align more with bureaucratic rationality than with cosmological beliefs. What gets lost is then the entire worldview that refusal is grounded in. As a result, instead of recognizing the ontological reason of internet refusal, Kominform officials recognized and responded to the translated version of Baduy's concern, accommodated the technical-centered solution.

*"It's not disruptive, it's just that tourists who enter Inner Baduy and then take selfies can't be sent directly... Not being able to report live is the problem."*¹⁹ (Kansong, 2023 as cited in Pitaloka & Chariunnisa, 2023)

Intermediary translation in the Baduy the internet blank spot case operates a hybrid enactment of boundary work practices. The differences are translated into a shared domain in which state actors could interpret Indigenous resistance as a culturally grounded exception. Simultaneously, differences among actors are aligned through strategic "junctures" in the form of the internet blank spot to maintain differences in purpose. For the GoI, the internet blank spot keeps government

¹⁸ Translated from Indonesian language, original quotation: "Membatasi, mengurangi atau menutup aplikasi, program dan konten negatif pada jaringan internet yang dapat mempengaruhi moral dan ahlak generasi muda."

¹⁹ Translated from Indonesian language, original quotation: "Tidak mengganggu ya, cuma wisatawan yang masuk ke Baduy Dalam ya terus swafoto tidak bisa kirim langsung...Tidak bisa live report itu sih kendalanya."

legitimacy and authoritative power, maintaining its image as a government that listens to the indigenous community and even signals a digital governance that respects cultural diversity. For activists, it provides a form of protection against digital exploitation. For Baduy elders, particularly in Baduy Dalam, it offers a buffer that allows them to operate their own culture without direct engagement with the external world. Finally, through the process of decentering difference, intermediaries helped shift attention away from intractable epistemic conflicts, enabling collaborative movement. The result is a mode of “efficient resilience” in which new connections multiply possible actions without dissolving distinctions (Quick & Feldman, 2014; Walker et al., 2004).

Drawing on Walker et al.’s (2004) “stability landscape” metaphor, this can be seen as modifying the landscape to create resilience of each community. While the Baduy’s cultural system forms its own basin of attraction, the GoI-led internetification agenda acts as a destabilizing force. Intermediary translation does not reverse these pressures but modifies the landscape: rather than deepening the valley through fortifying the community’s internal resilience, intermediaries work to widen the government’s valley edges, expanding what can be included within the stable system without pushing the community out of its core identity.

The involvement of intermediary translation is a recurring pattern within the relationship between the indigenous community and state actors. In Indonesia, as evidenced in the case of the Ammatoa Kajang indigenous community, the involvement of intermediary actors and their mediating role is often cited as a success factor in building indigenous recognition by the government (van der Muur, 2018). So does it within the Baduy community. Mediated translation did not only happen in blank spot requests, it also occurred in the rebranding of “Saba Baduy”²⁰, where there were intermediary actors who initiated a request to the government to change the term “tourism” to “cultural visit”, ensuring less exploitative tourism practices (see B.2, 6). This illustrates a recurring pattern of delegated representation, where intermediaries often take the initiative to communicate on behalf of Baduy’s interests. In national governance system, Baduy also has authorized a formal institution like Desa Kanekes government office to interface with the government (see B.2, 7). These practices allow Baduy leaders to maintain boundaries while engaging with governmental actors.

²⁰ Initially known as Wisata Baduy, the community branding was later renamed Saba Baduy in 2020. This changed is claimed to better reflect local values and language because the term “wisata” (tourism) was seen as misaligned with Baduy cultural norms, implying entertainment and commodification. In contrast, “saba” is a Sundanese word meaning a respectful visit, emphasizing proper conduct and alignment with adat customs.

3.3 The Internet Blank Spot as a Dispositif

The result of intermediary translation led to the formation of a blank spot as a dispositif; an assemblage of spatial, discursive, and institutional practices that shapes conduct by structuring the field of possible action (Foucault, 1984; Vasconcelos et al., 2012). Unlike formal regulations, the internet blank spot materializes governance through spatial-technical arrangements, enforcing an area-bound regulation that governs not only members of the Baduy Dalam community but also non-Baduy actors such as visiting tourists. By reconfiguring signal towers and legitimizing disconnection, this blank spot embeds a normative logic where non-connectivity becomes an expected and governable mode of behavior within the Baduy Dalam area.

This governance arrangement can also be read through Goulet and Vinck's (2023) concept of innovation by withdrawal, which foregrounds processes of detachment from entrenched sociotechnical arrangements, the formation of new attachments that make "doing without" viable, and the accommodations between them. The blank spot is not just a passive absence of infrastructure, it is also a dispositif that stabilizes detachment from internet connectivity while fostering attachments to adat-based governance, oral knowledge systems, and territorial boundaries. The result is a form of withdrawal that is institutionally embedded and generative, extending the "innovation by withdrawal" framework into the realm of Indigenous sovereignty and highlighting how withdrawal can serve as both a protective boundary and a constructive governance strategy.

Crucially, the emergence of this dispositif must be situated within a longer genealogy of attempts to regulate digital representations of the Baduy community. As one local expert explained, the push for the internet blank spot arose after prior efforts to discipline digital practices failed to curb the circulation of viral, objectifying content. These earlier efforts included convening Banten-based content creators for socialization sessions about the ethical representation of the Baduy (see B.2, 8). These earlier dispositifs relied primarily on moral persuasion and symbolic governance but proved insufficient in shaping digital behavior. In response, intermediaries, motivated by what they described as moral obligation, escalated their strategy to request the blank spot officially. In public interviews, these actors framed the internet restriction as a measure to prevent a "lost generation," further reinforcing the normative legitimacy of the internet blackout as a governance tool (see B.2, 9).

3.4 Recurring Pattern of Inclusion: How the Blank Spot is Accommodated

As a new form²¹ of accommodation specific to the digital sphere, the internet blank spot accommodation can be linked to the recurring pattern in Indonesia's national governance, in which Indigenous communities are recognized through mediated processes that align with state logics (van der Muur, 2018). A similar dynamic is evident in the case of the Ammatoa Kajang in South Sulawesi. Van der Muur (2018) shows that their formal recognition as an Indigenous group was not granted solely on legal grounds, but through informal ties to regional elites and a less-confrontational posture. By contrast, other communities in areas such as West Sinjai, despite similar claims, were denied recognition due to their lack of local political connections (van der Muur, 2018). In the Baduy case, the presence and involvement of similar intermediary actors, some of whom hold positions in local government, played a key role in shaping both the recognition and accommodation of the blank spot request. This mode of translation enables a frame of Baduy's request as "governable" through its alignment with existing institutional procedures without directly challenging Gol institutional authority or development agenda. In line with Povinelli (2002), Indigenous communities are often granted conditional recognition only when they perform a non-threatening, authentic difference. This logic is mirrored in Article 18B (2) of the Indonesia 1945 Constitution, in which Gol is obliged to recognize adat communities only "*in accordance with the development of society*." The Baduy blank spot request was read not as a challenge to development, but as a politically safe gesture of cultural protection that aligns with Indonesia's preferred image of national harmony rather than political contestation. Besides, blank spot legitimacy was further reinforced by being framed as a one-off case of contextual facilitation rather than a shift in the digital transformation mandate. This is important to be underlined as Baduy's blank spot was granted while there is an ongoing struggle of Indonesian indigenous communities to expedite the pass of the draft of the Indigenous Peoples Rights Protection Bill a protective regulation for Indonesian indigenous community rights, that has been postponed by the Indonesian national legislative body since 2018 (FWI, 2024). Crucially, the internet blank spot procedural compliance and peaceful demeanor are the contributing factors that allowed the Gol to accommodate it.

Beyond procedural factors, the legitimacy of a policy is also reinforced by institutional histories and symbolic status (Bevir & Rhodes, 2006). In the case of the Baduy, historical and

²¹ I refer as a "new form" as interview data from Gol shows that there is no other strategic internet blank spot implementation in Indonesia other than Baduy.

institutional recognition contributed significantly to the government's accommodation of the internet blank spot request. The Baduy hold a unique position within Indonesia's national discourse as a culturally distinct Indigenous group, already idealized and symbolically endorsed by the Gol. This recognition is institutionalized through formal instruments such as Regional Regulation of Lebak Regency No. 32 of 2001, which affirms their customary land rights (Alam et al., 2023). In Indonesia, the existence of such "*declarative recognition*" authority gave significant leverage for indigenous communities in negotiating government accommodation (AMAN, 2016). Thus, this legal foundation facilitated Baduy to assert authority over their territory, as they did for the internet blank spot where it is operated through spatial-based intervention.

In addition to legal recognition, the Baduy have been prominently featured in state cultural narratives. The Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture, for instance, has promoted Baduy for the nomination for UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage, signaling a degree of state endorsement and symbolic recognition. Likewise, as noted by Indonesia's indigenous advocacy network, AMAN, recognition in Indonesia is often contingent on visible signs of cultural authenticity such as adherence to traditional dress, local customs, and non-modern lifestyles (Arman 2023, as cited in Jain, 2023). In contrast to other groups who face struggle in gaining recognition due to a lack of cultural uniqueness performance due to the modernized lifeways, the Baduy's consistent performance of cultural continuity, such as the Seba Baduy and distinct daily activities, reinforces their legitimacy in the eyes of the Gol.

Yet it is not only institutional history or legal status that enables accommodation. Recurring discursive patterns, especially in government and media narratives, play a crucial role in shaping the symbolic legibility of Indigenous refusal. Concerns over uncontrolled visibility in digital spaces have been circulating in Indonesian digital policy for years. For instance, there has been repeated news about the increasingly emphasized risks posed by the circulation of inappropriate or "unethical" content. As early as 2017, Komdigi had recorded over 42,000 citizen and institutional complaints regarding negative online content, with categories such as SARA (ethnic and religious intolerance), pornography, and hoaxes ranking highest (Komdigi, 2020). In 2024, youth moral protection has become a national priority as explicitly stated by the Minister of Communication and Digital (Hafid, 2024 as cited in Kuncorojati, 2024). Over time, phrases like "cultural preservation," "digital exploitation," and "respect for tradition" became stable tropes through which the internet blank spot was understood and justified. These concerns about youth moral decline, the need to protect cultural identity, and the risks of unregulated internet content (while not grounded in Baduy's adat) created a room for compromise in which the internet blank spot could

be understood not as refusal, but as protection. This protective framing then reaffirms the Gol's central authority in maintaining nationhood and its future.

Taken together, these cases reveal a recurring pattern in Indonesian governance: the partial inclusion of Indigenous communities is often contingent on a convergence of factors like intermediary mediation, historical-symbolic recognition, and alignment with dominant discourses.

3.5 The Limits of Translation and Fragile Discursive Closure

The Gol's response in the internet blank spot case, rather than signaling recognition of ontological plurality, reveals an effort to govern exclusion through narratives of morality and cultural protection. As discussed in previous sections, this stems in part from the translation process itself. While it enables the internet blank spot accommodation, it simultaneously introduces the risk of sidelining the Baduy's own agency. Translation, especially when operationalized unidirectionally, carries the danger of privileging one domain of meaning-making over others (Quick & Feldman, 2014). In this case, it prioritizes government and intermediaries' moral and cultural preservation as the dominant narrative frame, while filtering out claims rooted in Baduy's cosmological beliefs. This selective filtering reproduces asymmetry in how knowledge is recognized and acted upon in policymaking. It risks generating a form of epistemic injustice (Fricker, 2007), where Indigenous actors are represented but may not be substantively heard, structurally constrained by institutional logics that narrow the forms of knowledge deemed valid or legible (Latulippe & Klenk, 2019).

Moreover, translation often assumes a coherent and unified Indigenous voice when in reality, internal diversity exists within the Baduy community itself. In doing so, translation can flatten or misrepresent internal diversity. In the Baduy case, this is visible in how the *dispositif* affects different segments of the community. Some Baduy Luar individuals continue to use digital platforms for tourism and small business, while Baduy Dalam leaders have expressed cautious silence, waiting for spiritual guidance rather than institutional directives. Yet, in translation, these plural positions are often collapsed into a "single" narrative of Baduy's voice.

These issues point to the fragility of internet blank spots as discursive closure. What counts as "success" in this case depends on who is doing the interpreting. Although often claimed as a successful implementation in national media, there has been little structural follow-up since the blank spot was implemented. As observed during fieldwork, weak internet signals still continue to intermittently reach parts of the Baduy region, with no formal mechanism to assess or monitor the policy. This lack of structural follow-up sustains a productive ambiguity, in which no further complaints may be interpreted as a solved problem. Importantly, this fragility is politically productive. Precisely because the internet blank spot operates as an ambiguous compromise, it

enables the Gol to symbolically accommodate the disconnection request without confronting its ontological stakes. The Gol may claim successful inclusion, while the Baduy may regard it as a temporary arrangement. In this ambiguity, all coalitions preserve their respective positions through multiple interpretation. The Gol can claim to have upheld inclusion and cultural sensitivity, maintaining its narrative of inclusive digital nation-building, while Baduy actors may view the internet blank spot as a temporary arrangement of autonomy over their land. It would be misleading, then, to view the internet blank spot as a case of full closure in Hajer's (1995) sense. Rather, it constitutes an ongoing site of negotiation that reveals the persistent fragility of epistemic alignment and cultural legitimacy in digital governance. Framed as a protective gesture, it in fact extends government authority into the moral terrain of Indigenous life. Although the articulation of internet as source of moral decline originates from intermediaries' articulation, the Gol 's adoption of this discourse elevates it into a policy rationale. Through this move, the Gol positions itself as the arbiter not only of technological development but of moral direction of the nation as well. Control over internet infrastructure thus becomes a proxy for control over which cultural influences are deemed acceptable, particularly for younger population. The underlying antagonism between adat-sovereignty and nation-building in this context is contained, shifted into the moral register of right and wrong, thereby stabilizing hegemonic order under the surface (Miclat, 2000; Mouffe, 2005).

What emerges is a paradox of recognition: the internet blank spot enables inclusion of different worldviews, but only by narrowing the terms of that inclusion. In this case, the Baduy are made "understandable" to the state through the logic of cultural exception, rather than as holders of an alternative worldviews. The Baduy are made visible not as equals, but as exceptions to be preserved. Thus, translation by intermediaries enable the policy to exist, but at the same time, it also contributes in a process of containment.

3.6 Conclusion

Key argument in this chapter is that there is a paradox of recognition that emerges in the governance of Baduy's blank spot. Internet refusal in this case is accommodated by being translated into terms that strip it of its ontological grounding. What appears as a gesture of inclusion is, in fact, a conditional integration through discursive compromise and symbolic alignment. This reflects a broader governance logic in Indonesian digital policy, where difference is made legible through the translation that is more aligned with the government's narrative. The

blank spot, then, should be read not as a resolution, but as a discursive compromise that create a room for differences, but without fully engaging it.

The internet blank spot was accommodated through a convergence of factors such as recurring pattern of intermediary mediation, discursive buildup of moral concerns in digital media, and Baduy's historical and legal status. However, the same translation process that enabled accommodation also constrained the terms of recognition. What was legitimized was not refusal in its own terms, but its translated version that has been framed as a harmless exception within a pluralist governance narrative. In this sense, inclusion became conditional, and recognition was granted only to the extent that Indigenous knowledge could be domesticated within dominant rationalities. This points to the limit of the translation process and the blank spot as a fragile discursive closure. Importantly, this fragility is politically productive, governing the ambiguity of inclusion.

With this in mind. I now turn to the next chapter that discusses the implications of the blank spot's implementation, particularly how it extends beyond infrastructure and reshapes the ways non-use, indigeneity, and digital futures are negotiated within Indonesia's sociotechnical landscape.

4. Politics of Inclusion and Its Impact on Relational Dynamics between Indigenous Community and Government

As discussed in the earlier chapter, the way Baduy community's refusal was discursively translated and stabilized into the internet blank spot decision. Yet this compromise did not resolve the underlying tensions. Instead, it exposed and reproduced the fragile equilibrium between the Baduy and the GoI. However, the effect of this translation process does not end with the implementation of the internet blank spot. Under the language of accommodation, the Baduy are faced with an ongoing struggle to assert more than symbolic recognition and negotiated autonomy over their own governance system within the Indonesian nationhood. In the following analysis, I examine how politics of conditional inclusion continue to shape the Baduy–state relationship, and how they reflect broader patterns in the relational dynamics between the Indonesian state and Indigenous communities across nations.

4.1 Conditional Recognition through Enduring Practices of Symbolic Practices and Negotiated Autonomy

Across the literature on Indigenous-state relations, scholars have noted that inclusion often hinges on a fragile and conditional equilibrium where Indigenous groups are recognized only so long as they remain compatible with dominant frameworks of national governance and citizenship (Niezen, 2003; de la Cadena, 2015; Miclat, 2000). This conditionality tends to revolve around processes of uniformization, where Indigenous communities are expected to conform (administratively or developmentally) to be rendered “appropriate” citizens within a unified national project (Scott, 1998; Fleras, 2000; Niezen, 2003). Rather than embracing plurality, such arrangements often tolerate difference only when it is depoliticized and rendered harmless to prevailing governance logics (Miclat, 2000). This logic plays out concretely in the Baduy case. The blank spot, while framed as an act of cultural accommodation, ultimately stabilizes a form of inclusion that reaffirms state legibility. It permits the Baduy to “refuse” digital infrastructure only insofar as that refusal is made legible through bureaucratic and moral frameworks.

This conditionality is also evident beyond the blank spot itself, manifesting in the recurring practices that structure the Baduy - GoI relationship. One example is Seba Baduy, the annual ceremonial visit in which Baduy elders deliver agricultural offerings to the regent of Lebak and the

governor of Banten. Officially promoted as part of Indonesia's national heritage, the event is often framed as a harmonious ritual of mutual respect where the government facilitates but does not intervene, and where the Baduy's cosmological order is symbolically honored. As one local government official described it, "we only act as facilitators and never interfere in adat" (Interview LE, see Appendix B.3, 1). Tracing *Seba Baduy's* genealogy, however, a complex asymmetrical relationship between the indigenous community and government is revealed. As several elders and local experts note, the ritual was historically rooted in an act of symbolic submission, where the Baduy delivered agricultural harvests to local rulers as a gesture of loyalty. This transactional foundation, offering material goods in exchange for recognition, signals a selective articulation of what it means to belong as part of Indonesia's society. Rather than a neutral celebration of cultural pluralism, *Seba Baduy* functions as a dispositif that manages Indigenous visibility through symbolic recognition while leaving ontological sovereignty untouched. This kind of case invites reflection on the politics of belonging, going beyond who is included or excluded, but also taking into account under what terms inclusion becomes acceptable (Yuval-Davis, 2006).

The paradox of conditional autonomy becomes most visible when governance logics collide. Modern national governments often rely heavily on infrastructure, documentation, and standardized procedures to render communities legible and governable (Scott, 1998). Meanwhile, the Baduy governance logic is grounded in communal trust and spiritual accountability. Their refusal to participate in certain programs is not just a matter of administrative noncompliance, but a rejection of the deeper governance imaginary that equates development with infrastructure and modernization. As one government representative put it:

*"Apart from the issue of administrative reporting, their mindset is that village funds are meant for development, and they reject that because the Baduy must not be touched by modern development."*²² (Zamroni 2025, as cited in Nazmuddin & Assifa, 2025)

This clash of imaginaries becomes evident in selective participation in government programs like *village fund*²³, national identification card (KTP) registration, and national elections (see B.3, 2–3). Field data confirm that only Baduy Luar residents possess KTPs, while Baduy Dalam do not. Yet within Indonesian administrative logic, holding a KTP is central to being recognized as a legal

²² Translated from Indonesian language, original quotation: "Selain masalah pelaporan administrasi, mindset mereka jika dana desa itu digunakan untuk pembangunan, dan mereka menolak itu karena Baduy tidak boleh tersentuh pembangunan modern,"

²³ According to the Village Law, *Dana Desa* (Village Fund) is defined as funding sourced from the State Budget (APBN), allocated to villages and transferred through the district or municipal budget (APBD Kabupaten/Kota). It is intended to finance village governance, development, community guidance, and community empowerment (Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 6 Tahun 2014 tentang Desa, 2014)

citizen. This creates a paradox in which Baduy Dalam are socially acknowledged as part of the nation, but administratively, their citizenship exists outside the state's legibility framework.

Despite these divergent governance logics, efforts have been made to bridge the two systems through the appointment of the village office of Desa Kanekes (see B.3, 4). This intermediary structure enables a degree of coexistence that lets Baduy conform to Gol's procedural demands while enabling them to maintain their own autonomy. Yet, the underlying tensions remain unresolved because autonomy in this context does not operate as an equal partnership, but instead as a form of boundary management; a negotiated space in which the Baduy are granted limited room to maneuver, so long as they conform to the government system. What appears as harmonious coexistence is, in practice, reproducing a paradox of inclusion under the government's continuous homogenization effort.

4.2 Paradox of Inclusion in Digital Nation-Building Agenda

The conditional recognition of Indigenous communities is a recurring pattern across Indonesia (van der Muur, 2018). Being recognized as an "Indigenous" community under the Indonesian nation often depends on how communities cultivate ties with regional powerholders and seek external validation, especially when their claims are seen as non-threatening and mediated (van der Muur, 2018; Miclat, 2000). In the Baduy case, their recognition is similarly shaped through discursive translation by intermediaries, who reframe their refusal in terms more legible to the state. The silver lining of this paradox of inclusion is that Indigenous communities are included as part of Indonesia only as long as their difference is filtered through mediated relations.

This paradox of inclusion also extends into the domain of digital transformation. Within Indonesia's digital agenda, there is an implicit nation-building logic, envisioning social cohesion through uniform access to the internet, without acknowledging that not all communities conceptualize participation in the same way. This conditional inclusion, centered in state central authority, is evident in the way it is often equated with connection, framed as a universal good by the government. For instance, under the leadership of the new minister, Komdigi has reaffirmed its commitment to inclusive digital transformation, targeting infrastructure expansion to remote areas as a mechanism to deliver digital justice (Hafid, 2024, as cited in Dharmaraj, 2024). As one official put it:

“Everyone without exception should have access. There are no exceptions. Because this is related to the digital divide.”²⁴ (Komdigi, personal communication, April 2025).

This attempt to “internetify” all communities in Indonesia reinforces a narrative of unity within a broader national identity, where connectivity becomes both a symbol and an instrument of belonging. In this context, modernity is used by the state as both a material and symbolic center of its legitimacy (Andersen, 2015). Within this logic, indigenous refusal of the internet is either rendered as a residual ethnicity to be integrated or as a symbolic exception to be tolerated, but never as a legitimate political alternative. In the Baduy case, this “symbolic exception” took the form of a moral discourse, where the internet blank spot was justified as a necessary intervention from the Gol to protect youth from cultural and moral degradation. In this context, internet access is embedded within a broader nation-building project of moral ordering.

The digital transformation agenda transcends beyond internetification project. Public service delivery is also increasingly conducted through digital platforms and internet-based applications. This digitalization patch signals that participation and obligations of Indonesian citizenship are heavily dependent on digital legibility as well. The problem with this digital legibility is that it risks marginalizing those who do not (or cannot) access the digital artifacts. Whether unintended or strategic, this marginalization is structured by a sociotechnical imaginary that treats internet connectivity as both a developmental imperative and a moral good, projecting a future of Indonesia in which all communities are expected to integrate into the digital state. For communities like the Baduy, who deliberately position themselves outside this digital trajectory, the options become limited, either adopt the infrastructure and the normative expectations it carries, or be rendered partial citizens, disconnected both infrastructurally and politically.

Encouragingly, there are actually initial signs that Gol is moving beyond the logic of exception-making toward more structural recognition of difference. As local government stated:

“Keputusan ini menunjukkan komitmen pemerintah untuk menghormati... ada komunitas yang memilih untuk hidup tanpa akses internet.” (Local government, personal communication, April 2025)

Yet this recognition must not remain a symbolic or isolated compromise. Instead, it should inspire a broader reorientation in digital governance that redefines inclusion not as integration into a pre-

²⁴ Translated from Indonesian language, original quotation: “Semua orang tanpa terkecuali itu harusnya memiliki akses. Ngga ada pengecualian gitu. Karena ini kaitannya sama dengan adanya kesenjangan digital.”

existing system, but as co-production across diverse epistemic worlds grounded in community-defined values and futures (Jasanoff, 2004; Latulippe & Klenk, 2019).

This lack of Indigenous participation within broader Indonesia's national agenda is further echoed by journalists and local experts, who note that Baduy perspectives only surface in public and governmental discourse when they go viral. The Baduy were granted space to be different, but only in ways that satisfy public fascination, such as viral portrayals of their disconnection from modern technology. But when it comes to voicing their refusal of state dispositifs like e-KTP registration or internet infrastructure, their perspectives are rarely centered. Thus, true sovereignty entails not only affirming Indigenous knowledge systems but also dismantling external legal and institutional barriers that restrict their full expression (Latulippe & Klenk, 2019). The pressing challenge here is to address structural barriers that prevent Indigenous voices from entering national debates on their own terms. A more inclusive framework would require a redistribution of representational power, enabling Indigenous communities to speak for themselves, not merely be spoken for (Niezen, 2003). As previously discussed, the hybrid meaning of the internet as representational sovereignty might offer such an opening. Ultimately, the Baduy case invites a pluriversal rethinking of inclusion; co-production across ontologically distinct lifeworlds in which I will discuss in the next chapter.

4.3 Conclusion

The internet blank spot policy illustrates a fragile compromise where its perceived success lies not in resolving epistemic difference but in strategically suspending it. The Gol's ability to accommodate Baduy refusal without confronting its ontological grounds reflects a conditional inclusion that enables the appearance of respecting indigenous community cultures without committing to genuine inclusion. This mode of governance builds on a longer-standing fragility in the relationship between indigeneity and nationhood, where indigeneity is often seen as residual ethnicity to be integrated or as a symbolic exception to be tolerated (Hall, 1995; Andersen, 2015).

Intermediary actors play a central role in translating Baduy refusal into moral narratives legible to the state, effectively expanding the state's role from guarantor of connectivity to protector of the nation's morals. This reveals how the internet blank spot, though framed as an exception, ultimately reinforces the hegemonic imaginary of a unified nation. Findings on the enduring conditional recognition of Baduy through symbolic practices and negotiation suggest that inclusion, when operationalized through ambiguous dispositifs like the internet blank spot, risks reinforcing the very exclusions it seeks to address. The fragility of this internet blank spot arrangement that rests on intermediaries' translation, dependence on compromise, and

avoidance of ontological negotiation exposes the limits of current inclusive governance frameworks. Yet, this dynamic also reveals a gap where more pluralistic and reflexive forms of digital governance might take root, a question I take up in the following chapter.

5. The Ontological Turn of Non-Use

In the previous chapter, I have examined how discursive translation by intermediaries plays a central role in shaping how the Baduy's refusal of the internet is reframed and ultimately accommodated by the Gol. These processes often result in paradoxical outcomes where refusal is symbolically recognized, but its deeper ontological grounds are obscured. Thus, as my conceptual culmination, I call for the acknowledgement of *ontological non-use*²⁵ in the policymaking language. This concept is used to better explain Baduy's collective internet refusal rooted in cosmological order. This concept refers to the refusal to adopt a technology that goes beyond cultural preference, but an ontological stance rooted in different world-making. In this view, the internet bears disruptive risk for how relations with nature, ancestors, and cosmology are configured. This concept emerged inductively as a response to address the absence of a framework in explaining the forms of technology engagement on the community-level that are deeply entangled with ontological order, as seen in the Baduy case.

As evidenced in the interviews, interactions with technology that are rooted in spiritual and moral cosmologies (such as those articulated by Baduy elders) are rarely acknowledged within official policy discourse. Government actors often dismiss such framings as outliers. In response, the Baduy's refusal of internet connectivity is translated by intermediary actors as a moral and cultural protection, creating a discursive middle ground, allowing refusal to be accommodated without appearing as a threat to national digital inclusion agendas. In this translated narrative, the Gol retains its role as the central actor of the digital transformation agenda, while recasting itself as the guardian of Indigenous morality. While these discursive translations can be politically effective, allowing the Baduy to secure space to exercise their autonomy, they also produce a paradoxical form of inclusion where they fail to account for the alternative ontologies that actually motivate the refusal. It is precisely this gap that the concept of ontological non-use seeks to address. If inclusion in digital governance is to be meaningful, it must engage seriously with ontological difference and the risk of translated forms of refusal that emerge from it.

Drawing from the concept of technological non-use (Oudshoorn & Pinch, 2003) combined with political ontology (Blaser & de la Cadena, 2018), ontological non-use describes a form of

²⁵ Early in this thesis, I used the concept of "non-use" as an initial entry point into understanding the Baduy Dalam community's refusal of internet connectivity. However, the empirical findings complicate its sufficiency. Unlike much of the non-use literature (e.g., Oudshoorn & Pinch, 2003), which frames refusal as individual or organizational withdrawal from default adoption, the Baduy refusal operates differently. It precedes use altogether, grounded in long-standing cosmological commitments that render internet connectivity ontologically incompatible from the outset. It is not a matter of lack of access nor of individual choice, but a collective, ontologically grounded position stabilized through the use of dispositifs (such as adat) and external accommodations (like the internet blank spot). This case extends the concept of non-use both horizontally (by offering cosmologically rooted justifications) and vertically (by shifting the scale of analysis to entire communities). In this light, "non-use" risks flattening a mode of world-making into a behavioral label. While I retain the term for clarity, I argue that ontological non-use more accurately reflects the stakes: not just a refusal of technology, but a refusal to let external systems define the terms of meaningful life.

refusal that goes beyond epistemological difference, such as alternative knowledge systems or cultural values. Instead, it arises from a fundamental incompatibility between worlds. Rather than adopting terms like “belief-rooted” or “cosmological non-use,” which still imply epistemic difference within a shared ontological ground, I propose ontological non-use to name a refusal that resists beyond the function of the internet, but also the cosmotechnical order it brings (such as infrastructures of visibility, traceability, and disembodied interaction). I draw this usage from the pluriverse concept, which frames Indigenous communities as enacting distinct ontologies rather than alternative epistemologies (Escobar, 2018) and political ontology, which extensively critiques “one-world world” (Law, 2015), demanding that politics should be reimagined as a space of negotiation among divergent “worldlings” enacted through distinct ontological assumptions (Blaser & de la Cadena, 2018). Ontological non-use also builds on precedent literatures on Indigenous refusal as a mode of sovereignty and relational autonomy (e.g., O’Sullivan, 2006; Andersen, 2015) and Hui’s (2017) concept of cosmotechnics, that sees technology as embedded in a particular moral and ontological order. From this lens, the Baduy’s refusal of internet connectivity can be understood as a collective act grounded in a distinct ontological commitment to a world in which internet connectivity is an ontologically dissonant presence that disrupts the sacred order that sustains their world. Thus, their stance should not be seen as an outlier to be tolerated at the margins of progress but resembles a “discontinuation governance” that refers to an intentional and socially constructed withdrawal from the dominant socio-technical regime (Stegmaier, 2023). In the Baduy case, this form of discontinuation governance operates at the scale of a self-governing community, where withdrawal is collectively maintained through shared ontological commitments. What is at stake, then, is not just access or inclusion, but the legitimacy of divergent human–technology futures.

Ontological non-use, thus, foregrounds the possibility that meaningful inclusion in digital governance requires legitimizing refusal and recognizing the multiple worldlings. Rather than viewing non-use as a deficit to be corrected, this concept repositions it as a world-affirming stance. Practically, this concept reshapes how digital policy frameworks engage with Indigenous communities in three key ways. First, epistemic inclusion is not enough. Recognizing Indigenous knowledge, adat, or belief is insufficient if the universal assumption of digital transformation remains non-negotiable. Ontological non-use demands a governance framework that acknowledges multiple worlds, not just multiple viewpoints. Secondly, policy design (especially government-led digital transformation) must confront ontological dissonance. Inclusion should shift from access to services to “inclusion” as a negotiation of worlds, giving indigenous communities a role as active agents that can define issues on their own (Niezen, 2003). This can

also open space towards more sovereign indigenous communities, shifting beyond a merely protected cultural enclave sub to the homogenizing logic of nation-building development. This means creating institutional space for both adoption and refusal as a legitimate outcome of technology-human relations. Thirdly, digital transformation must become pluriversal. If the internet is to be a public good, it must be re-imagined as something that can exist differently across different ontologies, not imposed as a universal infrastructure with local tweaks. This demands a move toward a pluriversal policy framework (Escobar, 2018; de la Cadena & Blaser, 2018) that acknowledges the existence of multiple worlds rather than multiple perspectives on a single world. In the Indonesian context, a pluriversal policy approach would start with institutionalizing zones for ontological non-use through legal acknowledgment. Moving forward, a pluriversal framework would enable differentiated governance mechanisms such as formal protocols for community-led signal zoning or locally sensitive impact assessments.

In conclusion, centering ontological non-use moves us beyond a logic of inclusion defined by infrastructural access and toward a framework that defends the right not to be rendered governable through dominant epistemic categories. A truly inclusive digital governance would not merely translate Indigenous worldviews into state legibility, but open a space in which ontological difference itself becomes a foundation for plural futures.

6. Conclusion

Prompted by the unusual case of Indigenous refusal being formally accommodated within Indonesia's digital transformation agenda, and the public attention it attracted, this thesis set out to answer the main research question: *How is the Baduy community's refusal of internet connectivity understood, negotiated, and accommodated within Indonesia's digital governance framework?*

To answer this, I initially identified multiple meanings of the internet articulated by various actors. While some meanings remained exclusive to specific groups, others circulated across actor groups through adoption and translation. These discursive dynamics formed the basis for emergent discourse coalitions; clusters of actors assembled around shared meanings (see chapter 2.2). I identified three such coalitions: (1) the *nation-building coalition*, occupied by Kominfo and local government actors, who frame the internet as a symbol and tool of national integration, development, and state modernity; (2) the *adat-sovereignty coalition*, where the Baduy construct the internet as a violation of sacred adat and as an external threat; and (3) the *intermediary coalition*, composed of local experts, journalists, local-government officials, and activists who bridge both coalitions through the translation of meanings. Importantly, these coalitions do not operate in a strategic way in Hajerian sense. The Baduy community tends to have a passive stance, setting boundaries rather than actively engaging in strategic discourse. Instead, it is the intermediaries who actively leverage these boundaries, bridging them with government actors, which often through processes that involve the translation of meanings and concerns. Thus, rather than being intentionally political, the coalitions emerge more unconsciously through patterns of articulation.

This coalition arrangement, particularly the intermediary coalition, led to the designation of the internet blank spot. Here, the intermediaries played a crucial role in translating the Baduy community's refusal of the internet, which is rooted in cosmological commitments, into a discourse of moral protection and digital visibility risk, a concern already familiar and present in existing government narratives. The blank spot request was thus framed as a last resort safeguarding measure against the internet, positioned as a moral threat to Indigenous youth. This translation subtly relocated the moral authority to protect Indigenous communities and internet safety to the national government, allowing them to maintain their position as the central actor in directing digital transformation, while at the same time, also framing Baduy's refusal into something less contrasting to the government's authority. In this sense, the government also actively co-produced the translation framing, agreeing to the urgency of the internet blank spot. As a result, the internet

blank spot request was presented as a culturally sensitive adaptation within the broader digital nation-building agenda. This reframing eventually contributes to the accommodation of the Baduy's refusal to use and engage with the internet.

However, because the internet blank spot request was justified through different rationales by different actors, the success of its implementation depends on who is doing the interpreting. The resulting internet blank spot policy represents a discursive compromise; a temporary alignment among actors who hold fundamentally divergent meanings of the internet. However, this compromise also reveals a paradox of inclusion. While the Baduy refusal was accommodated by the Gol, its legitimacy was only recognized after being stripped of its ontological depth. The blank spot policy should thus be understood as a fragile symbolic compromise, less a closure than an attempt to balance Indigenous self-determination with the government's push for nationwide digital connectivity. However, this arrangement leaves a gap in practice, as the deeper reason behind Baduy's refusal to use the internet remains present and unresolved. This is because intermediary translation, while sometimes protective, also filters Indigenous meanings to fit dominant (in this case, governmental) narrative. What this reveals is a deeper tension at the core of Indonesia's digital governance: the conditional nature of inclusion.

Indigenous communities like Baduy, are often framed as a subject of the government agenda of development, seeing them as an outlier; a problem to be solved and brought into alignment with national visions. Programs like *internetification* also carry similar assumption. This is evident in the Gol roadmap, such as Visi Indonesia 2045, which frames internet connectivity as a prerequisite for national integration and participation in digital governance (see Chapter 2.2.4-5). Here, the assumption is that if everyone can access technology, they will become more developed, and thus the grand vision is that governance itself will become more inclusive by being able to reach and engage a broader population. However, this vision becomes paradoxical when applied without regard for community autonomy or ontological difference. In the case of the Baduy, the internet is not simply seen as a disruptive technology. It is not even compatible in their worlds, and its presence may cause disruption in their sacred order of life.

This brings us back to the broader issue of the politics of inclusion in the context of digital transformation policy. Indonesia's national policies tend to prioritize universal access to technology risks reproducing a pattern of conditional belonging, where Indigenous communities, though formally recognized as part of the nation-state, are seen as conditionally legitimate based on their conformity to dominant infrastructures. What appears as a technical issue, a lack of internet access, is, in fact, an ontological struggle over which forms of life are recognized within the digital nation. When digital inclusion is pursued without acknowledging such ontological

boundaries, it risks reinforcing marginalization rather than overcoming it. This is already visible in the ways the Baduy have been subject to digital exploitation, including misrepresentation and the commodification of their cultural presence online (see Chapter 2.2.3).

With these findings, this thesis challenges the universal assumption of *internetification* and calls for a more plural, situated approach to digital governance. Specifically, I offer a conceptual contribution through the notion of *ontological non-use*. This concept responds to the absence of recognition for ontologically grounded forms of refusal in Indonesia's digital policy discourse. Indonesia's current policy frameworks focus on infrastructural barriers, rarely acknowledging varied ways of user-technology relations in relation to the plural ontological context. At the same time, studies on technology non-use focused on rational choice (Oudshoorn & Pinch, 2003; Wyatt, 2003) and often fall short in capturing refusals rooted in radically different ontologies. Ontological non-use also invites a more plural conversation in digital technology policy. In this context, *ontological non-use* offers a way to better explain the Baduy's refusal as a legitimate expression of sovereignty grounded in alternative ontologies, rather than as a deficit to be corrected. Centering digital transformation policies with ontological non-use, then, creates space for indigenous communities to define their own ways of being on their own terms.

For policy actors, this urges a shift to a more adaptive and context-sensitive approach in digital transformation, as well as acknowledging that both adoption and refusal are legitimate ways of engaging with technology. As emphasized earlier, a practical starting point would be the legal recognition of the Baduy region as an area of ontological non-use, allowing for formal protection and meaningful follow-up aligned with the community's values.

While I have introduced the concept of ontological non-use to better understand the Baduy community's refusal on its own terms, my aim has not been to take sides or offer a definitive solution to the tension between Indigenous communities and the government. Rather, this thesis seeks to make those tensions visible. To show how meanings shift as they cross discursive boundaries. And to demonstrate that these shifts matter, especially when questions of sovereignty and recognition are at stake

In this light, I do not conclude with finality. Rather, I offer this thesis as a preliminary pathway toward a more reflexive critique of the universalizing assumptions embedded in Indonesia's ambitious developmentalist and nation-building imaginaries. Specifically, in which internet connectivity and technology advancement are framed as tools for equalizing development and achieving national integration, but at the same time, risk marginalizing communities whose worldviews fall outside dominant governmental logics. While I understand that there much remains to be unpacked in future research, I hope this thesis contributes to ongoing conversations

about how to engage more ethically and reflexively with communities whose knowledge systems are too often flattened in the name of progress.

Limitations and Future Research

Given the context specificity and situatedness, the findings in this thesis are not intended to be generalized, nor should be seen as a replicable model for other Indigenous communities in Indonesia. Many Indigenous communities may actively seek access to digital infrastructure, and their aspirations should not be obscured by a romanticized or monolithic reading of technological refusal.

Another limitation concerns empirical access and representational scope. Due to the cultural norms and guarded boundaries of the Baduy Dalam, empirical data collection was limited. Stengers (2000) quote in de La Cadena's (2010) work reminded me that, as a researcher positioned outside both the Baduy community and the state, I recognize that my role is not neutral. The analysis inevitably reflects my interpretive lens, and while I aim to amplify rather than overwrite Indigenous perspectives, I do not claim to preserve any “authentic” voice. The act of translation is always partial, situated, and shaped by the demands of academic discourse. Therefore, I also do not claim my position here as the advocate of the Baduy communities.

There is also a limitation related to the temporal and scope of the data collection. The fieldwork was conducted over a limited period and focused on the lead-up to and aftermath of the blank spot designation. Although I contextualize this event within longer historical trajectories of Baduy governance and cultural preservation, the thesis emphasizes contemporary discursive formations and sociotechnical imaginaries. A longer-term ethnographic engagement would be necessary to trace how the meanings of technology evolve over time and in response to shifting infrastructural and political contexts.

Institutionally, this thesis draws primarily on perspectives from the infrastructure-oriented department of Komdigi, which may bias the analysis toward a developmental or technical framing. Due to time and access limitations, I was unable to include insights from actors in regulatory, cultural, or national-level institutions. This may risk an overly unified portrayal of “the state”, when in fact government actors are heterogeneous, internally contested, and shaped by competing mandates.

Given these limitations, future research are needed. First, the concept of ontological non-use warrants deeper theoretical and empirical investigation. Future research could examine how such non-use is defined and practiced in other Indigenous contexts, and the risks of framing it as an absolute form of sovereignty that could isolate communities from beneficial forms of engagement. Second, there is a need for deeper ethnographic inquiry into Indigenous digital refusal to explore its internal heterogeneity and to understand how it interacts with shifting dynamics. This can help in prescribing a more concrete policy model. Future work could focus on

developing actionable frameworks for epistemically plural governance, exploring how refusal and conditional use can be institutionally supported without being co-opted or flattened by dominant logics of inclusion

Reflexivity and Positionality

I write from a native Indonesian standpoint as a Javanese woman with lived experience of the digital divide in rural settings. This positions me as both an insider and an outsider in the Baduy case. I share national references and policy literacies with GoI, yet I remain external to Baduy cosmology and governance. I therefore do not claim neutrality. I aim for critical distance and accountability for how my background informs my interpretive analysis.

I also conduct this research as part of a Master's program funded by a scholarship from the Ministry of Communication, an institution implicated in the case. To mitigate it, I separated funding from data decisions, contacted interviewees directly rather than through the scholarship department, triangulated interview and document sources and kept a reflexive journal.

With this, I acknowledge my positionality and potential biases that may influence this study, as the research will significantly rely on my interpretation as the sole researcher who will conduct the whole process by myself. However, my academic background in International Relations, Public Administration, and Philosophy of Society, Science, and Technology Studies (PSTS) plays a key role in shaping how I should approach and conduct this research, particularly in making deliberate efforts to engage thoughtfully and critically self-aware at every stage. Following this, I often use a first-person perspective alongside third-person or personified pronouns (such as "this research") to highlight my position within the research. During the empirical research, I acknowledge that it requires constant reflexivity to avoid romanticizing or undermining Indigenous values or overgeneralizing findings.

I would also like to acknowledge that, as English is not my native language, I used several digital tools to support the writing and translation process, including Grammarly, Google Translate, and DeepL. These tools were limited to linguistic support and did not generate the research content. I reviewed and edited all outputs to ensure they convey my intended meaning and reflect my scholarly voice. Additionally, interview transcriptions were processed using Amberscript, and I have taken care to implement pseudonymization and ensure that all recordings and transcripts are securely stored in accordance with ethical research standards.

Bibliography

- Adeoye-Olatunde O. A. & Olenik N.L. (2021). Research and scholarly methods: Semi-structured interviews. *Journal of American College of Clinical Pharmacy*:4
<https://doi.org/10.1002/jac5.1441>
- Alam, N. R., Handoyo DP, S., Suhermanto, & Prihatini, L. (2023). Legal Protection of Ulayat Rights In The Traditional Communities of The Baduy Tribe. *Novateur Publications*, 2, 173–182. <https://novateurpublication.org/index.php/np/article/view/184>
- AMAN (2016). Academic Manuscript on Drafting a Law on Indigenous Peoples [Naskah Akademik Penyusunan Rancangan Undang-Undang tentang Masyarakat Adat], *Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara*, <https://www.aman.or.id/publication-documentation/38>
- Andersen, C. (2015). Indigenous Nationhood. In Teves, S.N., Smith, A., & Raheja, M. H. (Eds.). *Native Studies Keywords*. In The University of Arizona Press. (pp. 180-198)
- Arifiani, K. N., Wijaya, C., Irfan, A., Septiasari, A., Iskandar, J., Supangkat, B., Partasasmita, R., & Setyawan, A. (2019). Review: Local wisdom of Baduy people (South Banten, Indonesia) in environmental conservation. *Asian Journal of Ethnobiology*. 2
<https://doi.org/10.13057/asianjethnobiol/y020204>
- BAKTI (2021, January 29). BAKTI Kominfo "Ngebut" Selesaikan Lelang dan Tandatangani Kontrak Pembangunan BTS 4G Sejak Awal Tahun 2021 [BAKTI Kominfo "Speeds Up" Completion of Auction and Signing of 4G BTS Construction Contract Since Early Year January 29, 2021, BAKTI Kominfo], *BAKTI Kominfo*,
<https://baktikomdigi.id/id/detail-berita/bakti-kominfo-ngebut-selesaikan-lelang-dan-tandatangani-kontrak-pembangunan-bts-4g-sejak-awal-tahun-29-januari-2021>
- Bappenas (2019). *Indonesia 2045: Berdaulat, Maju, Adil, dan Makmur [Indonesia 2045: Sovereign, Progressive, Just and Prosperous]*, Jakarta: Kementerian PPN/Bappenas
- Bevir, M. & Rhodes, R. (2006). *Governance Stories*, New York: Routledge.
- de la Cadena, M., & Blaser, M. (Eds.). (2018). *A World of Many Worlds*. Duke University Press.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv125jpzq>
- Borrmann, V., Coenen, C., Nordmann, A., Cantoni, R., Dickel, S., Groves, C., Grunwald, A., Hurlbut, B., Jasanoff, S., Khushf, G., Pfoth, S., Rip, A., Sand, M., & Schües, C. (2023). Future Conversations – A Topical Exchange. In Grunwald, A, Nordmann, A, & Sand, M. (Eds.) *Hermeneutics, History, and Technology*. Routledge (pp.. 42-72)
- BPS Leuwidamar (2023). *Leuwidamar Subdistrict in Figures*.
- Callon, M. (1984). Some Elements of a Sociology of Translation: Domestication of the Scallops and the Fishermen of St Brieuc Bay. *The Sociological Review*.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-954X.1984.tb00113.x>
- Carlson, B. & Mongibello, A. (2021). Indigenous Resistance in the Digital Age: The Politics of Language, Media and Culture. *Anglistica* Vol. 25, issue 1. pp.1-8.
<https://doi.org/10.6093/2035-8504/2021/1>
- Ceruzzi, P. E. (2006). The Materiality of the Internet, *IEEE Annals of the History of Computing* 28 (3): 96, 10.1109/MAHC.2006.58.
- De La Cadena, M. (2010). Indigenous Cosmopolitics in Andes: Conceptual Reflections beyond "Politics". *Cultural Anthropology*, 25(2), 334-370. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1548-1360.2010.01061.x>

- De La Cadena, M. (2015). *Earth Beings: Ecologies of Practice across Andean Worlds*. Duke University Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv11smtkx>
- Dharmaraj, S. (2024, October 2024). Digital Equity and Security: Indonesia's New Digital Minister's Vision, *OpenGov*, <https://opengovasia.com/2024/10/24/digital-equity-and-security-indonesias-new-digital-ministers-vision/>
- Ems, L. (2014). 'Amish Workarounds': Toward a Dynamic, Contextualized View of Technology Use, *Journal of Amish and Plain Anabaptist Studies* 2(1):42-58.
- Ems, Lindsay. (2022). *Virtually Amish: Preserving Community at the Internet's Margins*. 10.7551/mitpress/11792.001.0001.
- Escobar, A. (1995). *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World* (STU-Student edition). Princeton University Press. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt7rtgw>
- Escobar, A. (2011). Sustainability: Design for the pluriverse. *Development* 54 (2): 137–40.
- Felt, U. (2014). Sociotechnical imaginaries of “the internet”, digital health information and the making of citizen-patients. In Hilgartner, S., Miller, C. and Hagendijk, R. (2014) *Science and Democracy: Making Knowledge and Making Power in the Biosciences and Beyond*. London/New York: Routledge
- Fetterman, D. M. (2010). *Ethnography Step-by-Step* (3rd Eds). SAGE Publications
- Franklin, M.I. (2013) *Digital Dilemmas: Power, Resistance, and the Internet*, New York: Oxford University Press
- Fricker, Miranda (2007). *Epistemic injustice: power and the ethics of knowing*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- FWI (2024, December 18). Pengesahan RUU Masyarakat Adat pada 2025: Menanti Tindakan Nyata DPR dan Pemerintah kepada Masyarakat Adat, [Ratification of the Indigenous Peoples Bill in 2025: Waiting for Real Action from the DPR and Government towards Indigenous Peoples], *Forest Watch Indonesia Press Release*, <https://fwi.or.id/menanti-pengesahan-ruu-masyarakat-adat-pada-2025/#>
- Gagliardone, I. (2016). *The Politics of Technology in Africa. Communication, Development, and Nation-Building in Ethiopia*. 10.1017/9781316823149.
- Gieryn, T. F. (1983). Boundary-Work and the Demarcation of Science from Non-Science: Strains and Interests in Professional Ideologies of Scientists. *American Sociological Review*, 48(6), 781–795. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2095325>
- Glaser, B., & Strauss, A. (1967). *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.
- Goulet, F., & Vinck, D. (2023). “Beyond withdrawal, rethinking innovation in society: introductory considerations”. In *New Horizons for Innovation Studies*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing. Retrieved Aug 10, 2025, from <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781803925554.00007>
- Hajer, M. A., & Wagenaar, H. (Eds.). (2003). *Deliberative Policy Analysis: Understanding Governance in the Network Society*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hajer, M. (1993). Discourse Coalitions and the Institutionalization of Practice. In Fischer, F. & Forester, J. (Eds.). *The Argumentative Turn in Policy Analysis and Planning*. Duke University Press. (pp. 43-76)
- Hajer, M. (1995). *The Politics of Environmental Discourse. Ecological Modernization and the Policy Process*, Oxford: Clarendon Press

- Hajer, M. (2006). Doing discourse analysis: Coalitions, practices, meaning. In Van Den Brink, M. & Metze, T. eds. *Words matter in policy and planning - discourse theory and method in the social sciences*. Utrecht: Koninklijk Nederlands Aardrijkskundig Genootschap.
- Hui, Y. (2017). On Cosmotechics: For a Renewed Relation between Technology and Nature in the Anthropocene, *Techné: Research in Philosophy and Technology*, 21:2–3: 319–341, DOI: 10.5840/techne201711876
- Iradat, D. (2023, October 23). Baduy Resmi Tanpa Internet [Baduy Officially Without Internet]. *CNN Indonesia*. <https://www.cnnindonesia.com/teknologi/20231010091252-213-1009247/baduy-resmi-tanpa-internet>.
- IWGIA (2024). Indigenous peoples in Indonesia. *International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs*.
<https://www.iwgia.org/en/indonesia.html#:~:text=Indonesia%20is%20the%20home%20of,to%2070%20million%20Indigenous%20Peoples>.
- Jain, K. (2023, November 13). Perjuangan masyarakat adat di Indonesia dalam merebut kembali tanah leluhur mereka [The struggle of indigenous peoples in Indonesia to reclaim their ancestral land], *The Conversation*, <https://theconversation.com/perjuangan-masyarakat-adat-di-indonesia-dalam-merebut-kembali-tanah-leluhur-mereka-216753>
- Jasanoff, S. (2015). Future Imperfect: Science, Technology, and the Imaginations of Modernity. In Jasanoff, S. & Kim, S. (Eds). *Dreamscapes of Modernity: Sociotechnical Imaginaries and the Fabrication of Power*. The University of Chicago Press (pp. 1-33)
- Jasanoff, S. (2016). *The ethics of invention: technology and the human future*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.
- Jasanoff, S. (2004). *States of Knowledge: The Co-Production of Science and the Social Order* (1st ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203413845>
- Kartika, T., & Edison, E. (2020). Masyarakat Baduy Dalam Mempertahankan Adat Istiadat Di Era Digital [The Baduy Dalam Community Preserving Traditions in the Digital Era]. *Prosiding ISBI Bandung*. Vol 1, No 1 (2019).
- Keller, R. (2011) The Sociology of Knowledge Approach to Discourse (SKAD). *Humanities Studies* 34:43–65. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10746-011-9175-z>
- Keller, R. (2013). *Doing Discourse Research: Introduction for Social Scientists*. SAGE Publications
- Kementerian PPN/Bappenas (2013). *Masyarakat Adat di Indonesia: Menuju Perlindungan Sosial yang Inklusif [Indigenous Peoples in Indonesia: Towards Inclusive Social Protection]*. Kementerian PPN/Bappenas
- Komdigi (2020, August 26), Lawan Konten Negatif dengan Literasi Digital [Against Negative Content with Digital Literacy], *Komdigi Press Release*, <https://www.komdigi.go.id/berita/sorotan-media/detail/lawan-konten-negatif-dengan-literasi-digital>
- Komdigi (2024, October 21), Komdigi, Bentuk Komitmen Pemerintah Percepat Transformasi Digital [Komdigi: The Government's Commitment to Accelerating Digital Transformation]. *Komdigi Press Release*, <https://www.komdigi.go.id/berita/siaran-pers/detail/komdigi-bentuk-komitmen-pemerintah-percepat-transformasi-digital>

- Komdigi (2025a, June 02), Sinyal Internet Telepon Seluler 4G [4G Cellular Phone Internet Signal], *Satu Data Komdigi*, <https://data.komdigi.go.id/article/sinyal-internet-telepon-seluler-4g>
- Kominfo (2020, July 21). 4 Langkah Kemkominfo Dorong Transformasi Digital [Four Steps by the Ministry of Communication and Information to Promote Digital Transformation]. *Postel.go.id*. <https://www.postel.go.id/berita-4-langkah-kemkominfo-dorong-transformasi-digital-27-4883>
- Kominfo (2021), *Rencana Strategis 2020-2024 Kementerian Komunikasi dan Informatika [2020-2024 Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Communication and Information]*, <https://www.komdigi.go.id/kinerja/rencana-strategis>
- Kominfo (2023a). *Menghubungkan dan Memajukan Bangsa Melalui Akselerasi Transformasi Digital Connecting and Advancing the Nation Through Accelerated Digital Transformation*. Kominfo Annual Report 2022.
- Kominfo (2023b). *Digital Indonesia Vision 2045*. Ministry of Communication and Information Republic of Indonesia
- Kuncorojati, C. (2024, October 22), Ini Alasan Kementerian Kominfo Diganti Jadi Komdigi [This is the reason Kominfo rebranded to Komdigi], *Medcom.id*, <https://www.medcom.id/teknologi/news-teknologi/zNAR7lzb-ini-alasan-kementerian-kominfo-diganti-jadi-komdigi>
- Kusuma, A., Pebriyanti, F., & Al Atsari, M. F. (2023). Analisis Framing Pada Pemberitaan Radarbanten.Co.Id Atas Penolakan Suku Baduy Terhadap Pemasangan Internet Di Wilayahnya [Framing Analysis of Radarbanten.Co.Id's Coverage on the Baduy Tribe's Rejection of Internet Installation in Their Territory]. *Journal Of Sciencetech Research And Development*, 5(2), 330-340. <https://doi.org/10.56670/jsrd.v5i2.218>
- La Rue, F. (2011). *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression (A/HRC/17/27)*. United Nations Human Rights Council. <https://undocs.org/A/HRC/17/27>
- Lamont, M., & Molnár, V. (2002). The study of boundaries in the social sciences. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 28, 167–195. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.28.110601.141107>
- Lapointe, L., & Rivard, S. (2005). A Multilevel Model of Resistance to Information Technology Implementation. *MIS Quarterly*, 29(3), 461–491. <https://doi.org/10.2307/25148692>
- Latour, B. 2005. *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Latulippe, N., & Klenk, N. (2020). Making room and moving over: Knowledge co-production, Indigenous knowledge sovereignty and the politics of global environmental change decision-making. *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability*, 42, 7-14. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cosust.2019.10.010>
- Law, J. (2011). *What's wrong with a one-world world*, Paper presented to the Center for the Humanities, Wesleyan University Middletown, Connecticut, <http://www.heterogeneities.net/publications/Law2011WhatsWrongWithAOneWorldWorld.pdf>.
- Lestarini, R. (2023). Sinyal Internet di Baduy: Dilema Antara Tradisi dan Modernisasi [Internet Signal in Baduy: A Dilemma Between Tradition and Modernization]. *UNES Law Review*, 6(2), 4326-4348.

- Lyons, S. R. (2015). Nationalism. In Teves, S.N., Smith, A., & Raheja, M. H. (Eds.). *Native Studies Keywords*. In The University of Arizona Press. (pp. 168-179)
- McDonnell, L. M., & Elmore, R. F. (1987). Getting the Job Done: Alternative Policy Instruments. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 9(2), 133–152.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/1163726>
- Miclat, G. (2000). Internationalisierung der Mindanao-Krise: Die Solidarität der Völker ist gefragt [Internationalization of the Mindanao crisis: Solidarity of the peoples is needed] (K. Korn, Trans.). *INFOS-INSiGHT*, 16(3), 11–12. (Reprinted and translated from INFOS-INSiGHT: Essay zu Fragen Mindanaos, May 24, 2000, originally published in English)
- Mouffe, Chantal (2005). *On the Political*. New York: Routledge.
- Muntaha, P. Z. & Runturambi, A. J. S., (2020). The Local Wisdom Of Baduy Reviewed From The Perspective Of Sdgs Concept (Research In The Indigenous People Of Baduy, Lebak, Banten). *International Journal of Advanced Research*. 8. 91-101.
- Nazmudin, A. & Arief, T. M. V. (2023, June 9), Suku Baduy Terancam Kehilangan Satu Generasi karena Ponsel Pintar [Baduy Tribe Threatened with Losing a Generation Due to Smartphones], *Kompas*,
<https://regional.kompas.com/read/2023/06/09/201835378/suku-baduy-terancam-kehilangan-satu-generasi-karena-ponsel-pintar?page=all>.
- Nazmuddin, A. & Assifa, F. (2025, February 13). Tak Bisa Bikin LPJ, Desa Kanekes di Lebak Banten Tolak Dana Desa Rp 2,5 M [Not Able to do Reporting, Kanekes Village in Lebak Refuses Village Fund worth 2,5 B], *Kompas*,
<https://regional.kompas.com/read/2025/02/13/123215978/tak-bisa-bikin-lpj-desa-kanekes-di-lebak-banten-tolak-dana-des-rp-25-m>
- Niezen, R. (2003) *The Origins of Indigenism: Human Rights and the Politics of Identity*. Oakland, CA, 2003; online edn, California Scholarship Online,
<https://doi.org/10.1525/california/9780520235540.001.0001>
- O'Sullivan, D. (2006). Needs, rights, nationhood, and the politics of indigeneity. *MAI Review LW*, 1(1), 12.
- Oudshoorn, N. & Pinch, T. (2003). *How Users Matter: The Co-Construction of Users and Technologies*. Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- Pitaloka, P.S. & Chariunnisa, N. (2023, October 20). Cerita Suku Baduy Dalam Tolak Internet dan Berhasil Jadi Wilayah Blank spot [The Story of Baduy Dalam Rejected the Internet and Succeeded in becoming Blank spot Area], *Tempo*,
<https://www.tempo.co/arsip/cerita-suku-baduy-dalam-tolak-internet-dan-berhasil-jadi-wilayah-blank-spot -130486>
- Povinelli, E. A. (2002). *The Cunning of Recognition: Indigenous Alterities and the Making of Australian Multiculturalism*. Duke University Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv116895z>
- Project Multatuli (2023, February 28). Project Multatuli dan Masyarakat Adat: Suara dari Penjaga Terakhir Bumi [Project Multatuli and Indigenous Peoples: Voices from the Last Guardians of the Earth], *Project Multatuli*, <https://projectmultatuli.org/project-multatuli-dan-masyarakat-adat-suara-dari-penjaga-terakhir-bumi/>
- Quick, K. S., & Feldman, M. S. (2014). Boundaries as Junctures: Collaborative Boundary Work for Building Efficient Resilience. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory: J-PART*, 24(3), 673–695. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24484833>

- Rizqoh, F. (2023, October 7). Kawasan Baduy Dalam Resmi Jadi Blank spot Internet [Baduy Dalam Area has officially set as Internet Blank Spot], *Detik News*, <https://news.detik.com/berita/d-6969667/kawasan-baduy-dalam-resmi-jadi-blank-spot-internet>
- Sakina, P. (2023, December 13). Kemenkominfo luncurkan VID 2045, rencana jangka panjang bidang digital [Ministry of Communication and Information Launches VID 2045, a Long-Term Digital Sector Plan]. *Antara News*. <https://www.antaranews.com/berita/3869451/kemenkominfo-luncurkan-vid-2045-rencana-jangka-panjang-bidang-digital>
- Scott, J. C. (1998). *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. Yale University Press. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1nq3vk>
- Syahrial, M. (2023, June 09). 4 Fakta Warga Baduy Minta Sinyal Internet dan Aplikasi Negatif Dihapus [4 Facts About Baduy Residents Asking for Internet Signals and Negative Applications to be Removed], *Kompas*, <https://bandung.kompas.com/read/2023/06/09/145056178/4-fakta-warga-baduy-minta-sinyal-internet-dan-aplikasi-negatif-dihapus?page=all#>.
- Syakriyah, A. (2023, July 28). The Indonesian village that wants to cut off the internet. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/jul/28/the-village-that-wants-to-cut-off-the-internet>
- Syarbini, A. (2015). Kearifan Lokal Baduy Banten [Local Wisdom of the Baduy in Banten]. *Refleksi*, Vol. 14, No.1. pp. 55-74.
- Tuck, E., & Yang, K. W. (2014). Unbecoming Claims: Pedagogies of Refusal in Qualitative Research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 20(6), 811-818. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800414530265> (Original work published 2014)
- UN (2020). *Report of the Secretary-General: Roadmap for Digital Cooperation*, United Nations
- Undang-Undang Dasar Negara Republik Indonesia Tahun 1945. (1945). [The 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, Article 18B(2)].
- Utomo, L. (2017). Legal Protection of Land Control of Baduy Indigenous People and Sedulur Sikep. *Journal of Indonesian Adat Law (JIAL)*. 1. 63-108. 10.46816/jial.v1i1.17
- Valler, M., & Blumczynski, P. (2024). Reassembling the ruins: revisiting Latour's concept of translation in Modernity's growing aftermath. *The Translator*, 30(3), 334-351. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13556509.2024.2312613>
- van der Muur, W. (2018). Forest conflicts and the informal nature of realizing indigenous land rights in Indonesia. *Citizenship Studies*, 22(2), 160–174. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13621025.2018.1445495>
- van Hulst, M., & Yanow, D. (2014). From Policy “Frames” to “Framing”: Theorizing a More Dynamic, Political Approach. *The American Review of Public Administration*, 46(1), 92-112. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0275074014533142> (Original work published 2016)
- Vasconcelos, A. C., Sen, B., Rosa, A. and Ellis, D. (2012) Elaborations of grounded theory in information research: arenas/social worlds theory, discourse and situational analysis. *Library and Information Research*, 36 (112). pp. 120-146.
- Wahid, M. (2012). Sunda Wiwitan Baduy: Agama Penjaga Alam Lindung di Desa Kanekes Banten [Sunda Wiwitan Baduy: A Religion Protecting the Nature Reserve in Kanekes

- Village, Banten]. *el Harakah: Jurnal Budaya Islam*, 13(2), 150-168.
doi:<https://doi.org/10.18860/el.v0i0.1888>
- Walker, B., Holling, C. S., Carpenter, S. R., & Kinzig, A. (2004). Resilience, adaptability and transformability in social-ecological systems. *Ecology and Society*, 9(2), Article 5.
<https://doi.org/10.5751/ES-00650-090205>
- Wyatt, S. (2003). Non-Users Also Matter: The Construction of Users and Non-Users of the Internet. In Oudshoorn, N. & Pinch, T. (Eds.). *How Users Matter: The Co-Construction of Users and Technologies*. Massachusetts Institute of Technology. (pp. 67-80)
- Yanow, D. (2007). Interpretation in policy analysis: On methods and practice. *Critical Policy Studies*, 1(1), 110–122. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19460171.2007.9518511>
- Yuval-Davis, N. (2006). Belonging and the politics of belonging. *Patterns of Prejudice*, 40(3), 197–214. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00313220600769331>

Appendix

A.1 The Internet as Violation of the Sacred Adat

No	Group	Interview Excerpt and Statement	Translation
1	LE	"Itu buyut baru, sesuatu yang pantangan.....karena mereka hidup dengan alam yang ketika waktunya semuanya kan mengikuti alur waktunya...Nah, ketika ketika ada satu distorsi yang mengganggu mereka, pasti ritmenya akan berubah."	"That's something entirely foreign, a kind of taboo... because they live in harmony with nature, where everything follows its natural rhythm....Now, when there is a disruption that disturbs them, their rhythm will inevitably change..."
2	BL	"Itu maja karamat. Lalakon. Te meunang dicaritakeun....Ngena aya cangkang, aya isi. Nu cangkang na bisa diceritakeun. Tapi isi na mah teu meunang."	"That is sacred knowledge. A life-path. It must not be told... It's like a shell and its core. The shell can be talked about. But the core, must not be shared."
3	JM	"Bilangnya kan kayak enggak tahu, dari puun, udah dari sononya gitu....Mereka ngasih tau ilmu kalo emang itu dipake, kalo enggak ya ngapain dikasih tau gitu."	"They would say something like, 'we don't really know, it's just how it has always been, from the puun (customary authority).' They only share knowledge if it's meant to be used, if not, then what's the point of telling it?"
4	BD	"Kalau tidak terjadi pada dirinya, itu bisa terjadi pada anak keturunannya, nanti kuwalat."	"Even if it doesn't happen to them directly, it could affect their descendants later, there will be consequences, a kuwalat."
5	LE	"Sebenarnya ini sudah sudah berjalan gitu, dan norma itu mereka pegang dengan kuat secara komunal, karena satu hal mereka percaya bahwa kalau melanggar adat pasti akan ada balasannya, pasti akan ada karma. Itu yang membuat mereka sangat takut."	"In fact, this has long been in practice, and the norm is upheld strongly at the communal level, because they believe that any violation of adat will inevitably bring consequences, there will be karma. That's what makes them deeply afraid."

A.2 The Internet as External Threat

No	Group	Interview Excerpt	Translation
1	LC	"Contoh salah satunya ya mereka bisa kenal sama orang luar gitu...lewat HP gitu kan. Didoktrin lah intinya....Ternyata ya orang luar itu punya rencana jahat. Itu yang merusak."	"One example is that they can come into contact with outsiders through mobile phones, for instance. In the end, it's like they're indoctrinated... And it turns out those outsiders have bad intentions. That's what causes the harm."
2	JM	"Cuman emang kita nggak bisa pungkiri gitu, ada hal negatif lainnya. Kalau aku denger dari temen temen di sana. Anak-anak kecil sekarang lebih banyak yang suka main game gitu."	"But we really can't deny that there are negative sides too. From what I've heard from friends over there, kids nowadays are more into playing games"
3	LE	"Karena mungkin dalam perspektif teman teman di Baduy dalam, teknologi atau	"Because perhaps from the perspective of friends in Baduy Dalam, technology or the

		internet atau ini bisa membawa dampak buruk bagi kelangsungan kebudayaan mereka, adat, ritus dan lain sebagainya.”	internet could bring harmful effects to the continuity of their culture, adat, rituals, and so on.”
4	LG	“Khususnya yang beredar di sosial media ini tentunya perlahan nanti akan merusak budaya itu terutama untuk generasi regenerasi di Desa Kanekes nya seperti itu.	“Especially the content circulating on social media. Over time, it will gradually erode the culture, particularly affecting generational continuity in Kanekes Village”
5	OL	“Keberadaan gawai/telepon pintar... dirasa mengakibatkan merosotnya moral generasi kami... Menghapuskan aliran sinyal internet... sehingga Tanah Ulayat Baduy menjadi wilayah yang bersih dari sinyal internet (Blankspot area internet).	“The presence of devices or smartphones is perceived to have caused a decline in the morals of our generation... Eliminating internet signal access would make the Baduy customary land an area free from internet signal, a blank spot
6	LG	“Namun, pemerintah juga memiliki kekhawatiran terkait dampak negatif teknologi, terutama terhadap komunitas adat seperti Baduy Dalam. Mereka khawatir bahwa penetrasi internet yang tidak terkendali dapat menggerus nilai-nilai budaya dan tradisi yang dijunjung tinggi.”	“However, the government also has concerns about the negative impacts of technology, especially on Indigenous communities like the Baduy Dalam. They worry that uncontrolled internet penetration could erode the cultural values and traditions they hold in high regard.”
7	OL	Demi terjaganya tradisi adat budaya kami dari pengaruh negatif akibat alat pembuka akses informasi tersebut, dengan ini kami mengusulkan dan memohon kepada Bupati Lebak melalui Kepala Dinas Kominfo Kabupaten Lebak, atau yang terkait kewenangan itu, untuk : Menghapuskan aliran sinyal internet, atau mengalihkan Pemancar Sinyal (tower) agar tidak diarahkan ke wilayah Tanah Ulayat Baduy dari berbagai arah, sehingga Tanah Ulayat Baduy menjadi wilayah yang bersih dari sinyal internet (Blankspot area internet)	In order to protect our traditional and cultural traditions from negative influences due to this tool for opening access to information, we hereby propose and request the Regent of Lebak through the Head of the Lebak Regency Communications and Information Service, or those related to that authority, to: Eliminate the flow of internet signals, or divert signal transmitters (towers) so that they are not directed towards the Baduy Ulayat Land area from various directions, so that the Baduy Ulayat Land becomes an area that is clean of internet signals (Blankspot internet area)

A.3 The Internet as Digital Visibility Risk

No	Group	Interview Excerpt	Translation
1	LC	“Dan bahkan yang mirisnya gini, kakak jadi orang Baduy. Semisalkan ada youtuber sudah dikasih 100ribu naik cetak untung jutaan.”	“And what's really disheartening for being a Baduy. For instance, a YouTuber is giving 100,000 rupiah, and then makes millions from the content.

2	BL	"Jadi ya sebenarnya di Baduy mah teu menang ditayangkeun, teu menang digambar... wilayahna tidak boleh."	"Actually, in Baduy, you're not allowed to be filmed, not allowed to be photographed... territory is off-limits."
3	LE	"Nah, jadi mereka datang itu tidak punya konsep ke Baduy itu. Jadi ngeliat anak cewe Baduy habis keramas akhirnya diikuti. Jadi yang muncul glorifikasi terkait eksploitasi tubuh...Kemudian meledak ketika pernikahan....yang jaipongan itu direkam, disebarluaskan."	"So, they come to Baduy without any understanding of the context. They see a Baduy girl after washing her hair and start following her. What emerges is the glorification tied to the exploitation of the body... Then it escalated during a wedding, when the jaipongan dance was recorded and widely circulated."
4	LG	"Tetapi yang muncul adalah keresahan dari warga terkait konten konten yang ada di sosial media."	"What has emerged instead is growing concern among residents about the content circulating on social media."
5	BL	"Contoh youtuber yang masuk itu kalau tanpa ijin, tidak boleh harus balik, harus punya surat ijin dulu gitu kan. Tidak sembarangan upload ke media kan enggak boleh sekarang."	"For example YouTubers who enter without permission are not allowed. They must turn back, they need to have a permit first. You can't just upload content to the media carelessly anymore." ^f
6	LE	"Mereka itu hanya meminta tidak ada aktivitas yang memanfaatkan internet di kampung itu. Artinya, orang misalnya kalau masuk ke Cibeo, Cikeusik, Cikartawana, alat komunikasinya, HP nya mati aja. Walaupun dinyalakan tidak bisa nandain di Google Maps. Misalnya tidak bisa foto langsung upload, tidak bisa live streaming di sana."	"What they are asking is simply that there be no internet-based activity in those villages. This means, for example, when someone enters Cibeo, Cikeusik, or Cikartawana, their communication devices, their phones, should be turned off. Even if turned on, they won't be able to appear on Google Maps. You can't take a photo and upload it directly, and live streaming isn't possible there." ^f
7	LG	"Jadi banyak konten Baduy Dalam yang masuk ke internet seperti itu. Sehingga mungkin salah satu solusinya, Baduy dalam itu di blank spot seperti itu. Sehingga pemerintah desa waktu itu mengeluarkan surat permohonan untuk blank spot di Baduy Dalam seperti itu"	"So there is a lot of Baduy Dalam content that goes into the internet like that. So maybe one of the solutions is that Inner Baduy is in a blank spot like that. So the village government at that time issued a letter of request for a blank spot in Baduy Dalam like that."

A.4 The internet as Nation-building Tool

No	Group	Interview Excerpt	Translation
1	KD	"Kalau harapan dari kementerian, itu bisa dilihat di Visi Indonesia Digital... Indonesia itu bisa keluar dari middle income trap menggunakan teknologi digital... Tujuan akhirnya seperti visi itu di Undang Undang Dasar: mencerdaskan kehidupan bangsa."	"The hope from the ministry can be seen in the Vision for Digital Indonesia... The idea is that Indonesia can escape the middle-income trap through digital technology. The ultimate goal aligns with what's stated in the Constitution: to enlighten the life of the nation."

2	VID	"negara maju dengan kualitas manusia yang unggul serta menguasai ilmu pengetahuan dan teknologi" * President Joko Widodo's foreword	"A developed country with superior human resources and mastery of science and technology"
3	KD	"Beberapa tahun ke depan Indonesia ini pasti akan ada bonus demografi ya? Jadi kita akan menggunakan teknologi digital ini... untuk memperkuat sumber daya manusia kita."	"In the next few years, Indonesia will experience a demographic bonus, right? So we're going to use digital technology to strengthen our human resources." ¹
4	VID	"Pembangunan Infrastruktur ke depan diarahkan untuk..Meningkatkan konektivitas fisik dan virtual...Konektivitas digital dan virtual dipenuhi dengan peningkatan jaringan broadband hingga 100 Gbps dan literasi TIK untuk seluruh kelompok masyarakat."	"Future infrastructure development is directed toward improving both physical and virtual connectivity... Digital and virtual connectivity will be achieved through broadband network upgrades of up to 100 Gbps and ICT literacy programs for all segments of society."
5	LG	"Pemerintah Kabupaten Lebak memiliki harapan besar bahwa kemajuan teknologi... akan membawa dampak positif bagi masyarakat... melalui digitalisasi UMKM dan sektor pariwisata, serta memperluas akses pendidikan dan informasi."	"The Lebak Regency Government holds high hopes that technological advancement will bring positive impacts to society, through the digitalization of MSMEs and the tourism sector, as well as by expanding access to education and information."
6	KD	"Jadi , kalau untuk daerah 3T yang sama sekali tidak komersil itu jadi tugasnya BAKTI. Nah daerah kalau perkotaan gini kan udah pasti komersil ya. Tapi ada daerah yang bukan daerah 3, tapi dia secara pendapatannya operator itu enggak terlalu komersil ya"	"So, for 3T areas that are not commercial at all, that is BAKTI's job. Well, urban areas like this are definitely commercial. But there are areas that are not 3T areas, but in terms of revenue, the operators are not very commercial, right?"

A.5 The internet as Tool for Efficiency and Administrative Legibility

No	Group	Interview Excerpt	Translation
1	KD	"Kemudian ada juga tujuan teknologi pemerintah digital itu fokus ke bagaimana supaya mendorong pemerintahan baik di pusat maupun khususnya daerah untuk bertransformasi digital, kemudian melakukan revitalisasi untuk meningkatkan layanan publiknya..kita bisa meningkatkan efisiensi dan efektivitas pemerintahan."	"There is also a goal behind Gol's digital technology agenda, which focuses on encouraging both central and especially regional governments to undergo digital transformation, and to carry out revitalization in order to improve public services..... it allows us to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of governance."
2	KD	"Jadi perijinan telekomunikasi itu sudah full online. Jadi kalau yang tadinya orang datang ke loket, ada jam kerjanya ya"	"So telecommunication licensing is now fully online. So if previously people came to the counter, there were working

		misalnya jam delapan sampai jam berapa, empat jam berapa. Begitu udah selesai jam kerja, jam empat, udah ngga bisa urus lagi karena perangkat kerja saya di kantor saya nggak bisa. Sekarang full online jadi darimanapun bisa mengajukan perijinan telekomunikasi dengan catatan punya akses internet, file file yang sudah didigitalkan sekarang atau apa gitu. Tinggal masukkan ke, pertama lewat ke OSS di luar ya, kita adanya e-telekomunikasi dan kita masukkan ke situ. Semua itu mau jam berapa pun boleh silahkan."	hours, for example, from eight to what time, four hours. Once working hours were over, at four o'clock, I couldn't take care of it anymore because my work equipment in my office couldn't. Now it's fully online so from anywhere you can apply for telecommunication licensing as long as you have internet access, files that have been digitized now or whatever. Just enter it, first through the OSS outside, we have e-telecommunications and we enter it there. All that, whatever time you want, is fine."
3	LG	"Bagi Pemerintah Kabupaten Lebak, teknologi adalah alat untuk....mendorong pertumbuhan ekonomi daerah melalui digitalisasi UMKM dan promosi pariwisata."	"For the Lebak Regency Government, technology is a tool to drive regional economic growth through the digitalization of MSMEs and the promotion of tourism."
4	LG	"Kemudian juga udah bergerak e-commerce mereka. Buat yang tadinya hanya jangkauannya lokal saja, sekarang sudah banyak. Melalui internet ini penjualannya sampai ke luar daerah bahkan sampai ke luar negeri"	"Then they have also moved to e-commerce. For those who previously only had a local reach, now there is a lot of it. Through the internet, sales reach outside the region and even overseas"
5	JM	"...olshop ini kan juga bisa menambah jangkauan orang orang yang emang pengen ngebeli UMKM mereka. Bisa nambah penghasilan mereka dong. Meskipun itu, bukan menjadi mata pencaharian utama mereka. Mata pencarian mereka ya tetap berladang. Berladang enam bulan, selama nunggu itu kan bisa diisi sama jualan online gitu. Mereka menjual tenun atau apa."	"... this online shop can also increase the reach of people who really want to buy their MSMEs. It can increase their income. Even though that is not their main livelihood. Their livelihood is still farming. Farming for six months, during that time they can fill it with online sales. They sell weaving or something."
6	KD	"Kalau penganggaran itu kita ada aplikasi sendiri. Jadi nanti kalau auditor masuk, kita kasih aksesnya ke sana. Jadi silahkan lihat pelaksanaan anggaran di kita seperti apa."	"For budgeting, we have our own application. So when auditors come in, we give them access to it. They can directly see how our budget implementation works."
7	KD	"Kemudian bisa mempercepat pengambilan keputusan. Kita juga ada pusat monitoring telekomunikasi di sana ada peta sebaran infrastruktur telekomunikasi. Fiber optik ada di mana saja. Kemudian titik titik BTS 2G 3G 4G sampai 5G, itu kelihatan semua yang sudah dilaporkan oleh operator. Itu datanya bisa kita olah untuk pengambilan	"Then we can speed up decision making. We also have a telecommunications monitoring center. There is a map of the distribution of telecommunications infrastructure. Optical fiber is everywhere. Then the 2G 3G 4G to 5G BTS points, you can see everything that has been reported by operators. We can process the data for decision making. It can be used as comparative data."

		keputusan. Bisa sebagai data pembanding.”	
8	KD	“Ada dari PMT itu mengeluarkan aplikasi, jadi masyarakat bisa ikut melaporkan.”	“There’s an application launched by the Ministry of Communications, so the public can also participate in reporting (for blank spot area)”

A.6 The Internet as Tangible Technological Presence

No	Group	Interview Excerpt	Translation
1	LC	“Jadi si tower internet itu ada di kawasan Baduy Luar. Di tanah adat Baduy Luar, di perbatasan Baduy Luar. Mereka tuh merasa mengganggu karena tanah titipan nenek moyang kan harusnya di situ.”	“So the internet tower is located in the Baduy Luar area. On Baduy Luar customary land, right at the border....that land is an ancestral trust, it’s not supposed to be used for such things.
2	KD	“Karena kan kita tahu kalau internet dan lain sebagainya itu runningnya di atas infrastruktur telekomunikasi, optik, kemudian seluler juga”	“Because we know that the internet and everything related to it runs on telecommunications infrastructure, optical fiber, and also cellular networks”

A.7 Hybrid Meanings

No	Group	Interview Excerpt	Translation
1	LG	“Tetep kita harus memposisikan fasilitas internet ini sesuai dengan kaidah kaidah adat budaya yang berlaku di tempat baik Kasepuhan atau pun Baduy....kita intervensi dengan bijak juga seperti itu. Sambil memang harus kita harus kita kawal bareng bareng. Mungkin nanti ada seperti ini ya boleh misal internet digunakan, tetapi harus kita awasi penggunaannya. Konten konten apa yang misal tidak boleh seperti itu. Nah, nanti kan bisa jadi ada kerja sama nih antara Kominfo misalnya dengan pemerintah desa. Ketika misalnya ada tayangan. Ini kita berbicara ketika sudah ada regulasi ya. “	“We must position internet infrastructure in accordance with the prevailing cultural values, whether in Kasepuhan or Baduy....It means we need to intervene wisely. At the same time, we must monitor it together. For example, the internet may be allowed, but we must supervise its use, what kinds of content are permitted, and what is not.....Eventually, there could be collaboration between Kominfo and the village government. This would apply, of course, once proper regulation is in place.”
2	BD	"Teknologi, éta gumantung kana jelma anu ngagunakeun éta"	“Technology, it depends on who and how it is used actually...”
3	LG	“Diawal saya katakan tidak semua informasi yang ada dalam mereka itu harus disampaikan ke dunia luar, tetapi ada juga yang mereka ingin sampaikan dan itu sukur sukur bisa menjadi tuntunan.	“Not all of their knowledge needs to be shared with the outside world. But there are things they want to communicate, ideally, to guide others. For instance, raising awareness about protecting

		Contohnya misal untuk sosialisasi atau kampanye menjaga lingkungan, menjaga mata air seperti itu, kampanye untuk tidak merusak gunung, tidak merusak hutan. Kemudian ada tradisi misalnya untuk bercocok tanam tanpa menggunakan pupuk yang non organik seperti itu. Kemudian misalnya mereka ingin menyampaikan bahwa, keguyuban atau kekompakan dalam bermasyarakat itu masih harus tetap di jaga.”	water sources, forests, or traditional organic farming practices. They also want to convey that social harmony and solidarity remain vital values.” ^l
4	JM	“Alasan dia kenapa dia mau bikin konten, karena dia resah liat konten-konten yang ada. Yang bikin orang luar, terus narasinya itu pada jahat jahat kalo kata dia gitu kan. Jadi akhirnya dia juga bikin sendiri untuk meluruskan..”	“His reason for making videos was because he was disturbed by the content already out there made by outsiders, with what he called malicious narratives. So eventually, he decided to produce his own content to set the record straight.”
5	LE	“Itu kalau untuk kesenian alat seni aja mereka udah mulai mau podcast misalnya, seperti itu boleh karena memang untuk kebutuhan pembelajaran. Misalnya sempat ditanya 'Lot boleh tidak angklung Buhun Kanekes diajarkan di sekolah? Boleh....Misalnya, a akan sangat fasih ngomong tenun Baduy. Jadi B akan sangat fasih ngomong tentang angklung buhun. Misalnya si C akan pasti dengan celempung,... generasi kesini sebenarnya, generasi yang lahir tahun 80an.”	“They've started exploring podcasting as a medium for cultural education. There was even a conversation about whether it would be allowed to teach the 'Kacapi Buhun' angklung in schools. And the elders said yes.....[Baduy actor A] is fluent in explaining Baduy weaving, [Baduy actor B] can speak about the angklung, and [Baduy actor C] knows the celempung. This younger generation, born in the 1980s and after,..."
6	LE	“Butuh waktu lama memang memahami Kanekes dengan berbagai aktivitasnya, karena kan yang terjadi hari ini, yang ada hari ini itu ya representasi dari tadi, empat ratus tahun yang lalu, sehingga, masih tampak seperti didramatisir karena aktor aktornya kadang di Baduy itu kan selalu tidak bisa menjawab dengan to the point.”	“It takes a long time to understand Kanekes with its various activities, because what exists today is a representation of what happened 400 years ago, so it still seems dramatized because the actors in Baduy sometimes can't answer to the point.” ^l

B.1 Blankspot Implementation and Process

No	Group	Interview Excerpt	Translation
1	LC	"Belum ada komando dari tokoh adat... yang menyurati ke Presiden itu oknum luar Baduy... Jaro dan Cikeusik tidak mengetahui."	"There hasn't been any directive from the customary leaders... the one who sent the letter to the President was someone from outside the Baduy community... Jaro and the leaders in Cikeusik were not aware of it."
2	JM	"Jadi itu ada orang... mendorong masyarakat Baduy untuk menolak, memutus jaringan internet... akhirnya surat itu keluar. Kesebar, kedenger juga sampe Komdigi... Tapi aku saat itu juga enggak ikut... informasi hal-hal yang kayak gitu tuh gak dapet... Itu pemerintah Lebak sih yang engga terbuka banget."	"So there were people... encouraging the Baduy people to reject, cut off the internet connection... finally the letter came out. It spread, even Komdigi heard about it... But I didn't participate at that time... I didn't get information about things like that... It was the Lebak government that wasn't very open."
3	LG	"Keputusan ini menunjukkan komitmen pemerintah untuk menghormati dan melindungi hak masyarakat adat untuk menjalankan tradisi dan budaya mereka. Pemerintah mengakui bahwa dalam era digital, ada komunitas yang memilih untuk hidup tanpa akses internet demi menjaga identitas dan nilai-nilai mereka...terdapat pengecualian khusus di wilayah Baduy Dalam, di mana pemerintah menghormati permintaan masyarakat adat untuk membatasi akses internet demi menjaga kelestarian adat istiadat mereka."	"The government acknowledges that in the digital era, there are communities who choose to live without internet access in order to preserve their identity and values....there is a specific exception in the Baduy Dalam area, where the government respects the Indigenous community's request to limit internet access in order to preserve their traditional customs"
4	KD	"In principle, we at Komdigi or the telecommunications sector simply adjust based on requests. Because, of course, we respect those customary traditions."	"Memang pada prinsipnya, kita Komdigi atau sektor telekomunikasi itu menyesuaikan aja sesuai permintaan lah. Karena kan kita menghormati adat istiadat itu."

B. 2 Discursive Dynamics

No	Group	Interview Excerpt	Translation
1	LG	"Mereka bukan menutup diri. Ya, itu adalah 'mungkin' ketentuan adat mereka"	"They're not isolating themselves. Well, it's perhaps just part of their customary rules."
2	OL	Keberadaan gawai/telepon pintar yang dapat dimiliki oleh seluruh masyarakat termasuk warga adat Baduy, dirasa mengakibatkan merosotnya moral generasi kami yang telah bisa mengakses berbagai aplikasi dan konten	"It is felt that the existence of gadgets/smartphones that can be owned by the entire community, including the Baduy indigenous people, has resulted in a decline in the morals of our generation who have been able"

		tidak mendidik bertentangan dengan adat.	to access various non-educative applications and content that are contrary to custom."
3	JM	"Setelah suratnya keluar baru ngawal tuh. Ternyata jauh sebelum itu,...Nah pas di tanya engga, ini mah panjang gitu. Ada orang belakang nih yang emang ngedorong buat menghilangkan internet di Baduy gitu kan. Ternyata itu ada diskusinya sebelum itu gitu."	After the letter was issued, they escorted it. It turned out that it was long before that,... Well, when asked, it was long like that. There was someone behind the scenes who was pushing to eliminate the internet in Baduy. It turned out that there was a discussion before that.
4	LE	"[Nama Aktivist] juga salah satu yang mendorong untuk blank spot pada akhirnya, setelah tidak ada perubahan dan beliau merasa berdosa sehingga mungkin berinisiatif akhirnya mengeluarkan surat itu untuk meminta Presiden atau Kominfo untuk menutup akses di 3 kampung. Karena kalau menutup semuanya susah karena secara ekonomi mereka butuh QRIS sampai ke Gazebo, pembayaran dan lain sebagainya. Butuh jemput tamu. Sekarang mereka udah pegang Whatsapp, saya, saya udah di Rangkas, satu jam lagi sampai Cioleger gitu sih."	[Activist Name] was also one of those who pushed for a blank spot in the end, after there was no change and he felt guilty so he probably took the initiative to finally issue the letter to ask the President or Kominfo to close access in 3 villages. Because if they close everything, it will be difficult because economically they need QRIS to the Gazebo, payments and so on. Need to pick up guests. Now they already have Whatsapp, me, I'm already in Rangkas, another hour to Cioleger.
5	LC	"Belum ada komando dari tokoh tokoh adat sebenarnya. Baru apa ya, antek antek saja. Contoh kemaren yang mereka menyurati ke pemerintah sebenarnya bukan masyarakat adat kan, yang menyurati ke Presiden Jokowi waktu itu."	There has been no command from traditional figures actually. What is it, just lackeys. For example, yesterday, the ones who wrote to the government, to President Jokowi at that time. were not actually indigenous people.
6	LE	"Sama juga ketika misalnya 2021 yah. Mereka juga meminta untuk menolak diksi frase pariwisata atau wisata diganti menjadi saba budaya. Itu juga kan tidak keluar langsung dari lembaga adatnya, tapi dari orang luar yang diminta oleh lembaga adat"	"It was the same in 2021. They also requested the rejection of the term 'tourism' and asked for it to be replaced with 'saba budaya' (cultural visit). But that request didn't come directly from the customary institution, it came from outsiders who were asked by the customary leaders to convey it
7	LG	"Nah dulu ada menggunakan, makanya Sekretaris Desa di Desa Kanekes itu orang luar Desa Kanekes. Dengan catatan karena orang Desa Kanekes, mereka tidak boleh sekolah formal. Nah, untuk pemanfaatan teknologi administrasi itu, maka yang mencatat itu sekretaris desa itu harus orang luar Desa Kanekes, tetapi tetap seijin leluhur dan adat."	"So in the past, the Village Secretary in Kanekes Village was someone from outside the community. That's because people from Kanekes are not allowed to attend formal schooling. So, for the use of administrative technology, the person responsible for record-keeping had to be from outside Kanekes, but

			always with the permission of the ancestors and in accordance with adat
8	LE	“Dari 2021 ketika pandemi,...ada pertemuan di rumahnya [activist] di Pandeglang menghadirkan konten kreator se-Banten.... Kalau bisa yang konten kreator itu bikin konsep dulu....[activist] juga salah satu yang mendorong untuk blank spot pada akhirnya, setelah tidak ada perubahan dan [activist] merasa berdosa sehingga mungkin berinisiatif akhirnya mengeluarkan surat itu untuk meminta Presiden atau Kominfo untuk menutup akses di 3 kampung.”	“Since 2021 during the pandemic,... there was a meeting at the [activist]’s house in Pandeglang that brought together content creators from across Banten. The idea was that these content creators should first develop a concept. [The activist] was also one of those who eventually pushed for the blank spot, after seeing no change and feeling a sense of guilt perhaps, prompting the decision to issue a letter to the President or the Ministry of Communication and Informatics requesting that access be shut down in the three villages.”^l

B.3 Relational Dynamics

No	Group	Interview Excerpt	Translation
1	LE	“Betul, selama ini memang pemerintah Kabupaten Lebak tidak intervensi terkait ritus adat, keinginan, lebih kepada fasilitasi.”	“That’s right, so far the Lebak Regency government has not intervened in adat rituals or desires; it has focused more on facilitation.”
2	LE	“Masyarakat di Kanekes menolak Banke, Bantuan keuangan... dana desa. Kenapa harus ada LPJ? Kami mah teu bisa LPJ... Mereka nggak mau.”	“The people in Kanekes reject Banke, financial aid... village funds. Why should there be an accountability report (LPJ)? We can’t do LPJ... They don’t want it.”
3	LG	“KTP saja mereka yang pokok tidak bisa tidak mereka gunakan bukan? Sekali lagi, bukan untuk menentang hukum positif yang ada di Indonesia, tetapi ya mereka satu entitas masyarakat adat yang harus kita lindungi... Mereka ketika berkendara ke Jakarta sekalipun harus jalan kaki... Nah apalagi internet.”	“Even the KTP (national ID), they only use when absolutely necessary, right? Again, it’s not about defying Indonesia’s positive law, but they are an Indigenous community that must be protected... Even when traveling to Jakarta, they go on foot... So, internet? Even more so.”
4	LE	“Jika ada sesuatu yang dirasa mereka perlu bantuan atau mereka butuh sesuatu yang memfasilitasi... mereka udah paham mekanismenya dan itu bagus karena saya pikir dari dua belah pihak ini terjalin harmoni... urusan-urusan yang sakral, yang ritual misalnya, itu tidak diganggu.”	“If there’s something they feel they need help with or if they need something to facilitate... they already understand the mechanism, and that’s good because I think there’s harmony between both parties... matters that are sacred, like rituals for example, are not interfered with.”

Appendix C. Interview Question

Topic	Baduy Dalam	Baduy Luar	MCI	Lebak Government	Activists/Journalists
Intro	Can you tell me a little about Baduy Dalam?	Can you tell me a little about Baduy Luar?	Can you tell me about MCI and its role in digital development in Indonesia?	Can you tell me about Lebak government? ((Follow up)) To what extent is your work affected by technology or Indigenous community policies?	Can you tell me about your work? ((Follow up)) How does it relate to Indigenous communities and/or digital policy?
Imaginations of tech	What does technology mean to Baduy Dalam? <i>*What do you think the technology could bring to Baduy Dalam, and what would it take away?</i>	What does technology mean to Baduy Luar? <i>*Do you think technology could help Baduy Luar in the future?</i>	What does technology mean to the national government (MCI)? <i>*Are there different interpretations of digital transformation within MCI?</i>	What does technology mean to Lebak government?	How do different groups (government, media, civil society) view the role of technology in Indigenous communities?
Principles	What values guide life in Baduy Dalam? ((Follow up)) You mentioned values XXXX, how do they shape decisions about technology?	What values guide life in Baduy Luar? ((Follow up)) You mentioned values XXXX, how do they shape decisions about technology?	Can you describe what is the digital transformation policy in Indonesia? What is the role of MCI in this policy?	What is the Lebak government's role in digital transformation policies? <i>*How does the local government navigate national policies while addressing local needs?</i>	What are the main narratives that shape discussions about digital inclusion for Indigenous communities? What important news articles have been written on this theme, if any? <i>*How do you think technology can affect traditional communities in Indonesia?</i>
Internet/technology perception/use	What does the internet mean for Baduy Dalam? <i>*How would the use of the internet affect the traditions and values of Baduy Dalam?</i>	What does the internet mean for Baduy Luar? <i>*How has access to the internet changed life in Baduy Luar?</i>	What does the internet mean for the national government? <i>*How does the government define "internetification" and what are its main goals?</i>	What does the internet mean for the Lebak government? <i>*What does Lebak government think about the adoption (or non-adoption) of technology (particularly internet connectivity) by communities like the Baduy Luar and Baduy Dalam?</i>	How do you see the role of the media in shaping public opinion about technology use (particularly internet connectivity) in rural and Indigenous communities? <i>*From your observations, how do Indigenous communities like the Baduy interpret and negotiate their engagement with internet technologies?</i>

Internet Blankspot	Can you tell me about the decision to request an internet blank spot for Baduy Dalam? <i>*How did the community discuss and make this decision?</i>	Do you know about Baduy Dalam's request for internet blankspot? How did Baduy Luar respond to that?	When Baduy Dalam asked to keep the internet out, how did the government decide on that request? <i>*Is there any impact from the rejection of technology(particularly internet connectivity) on the Baduy's relationship with the government and society?</i>	How does Lebak government understand and respond to the Baduy Dalam's stance on internet connectivity? <i>*Did Lebak government involve in the discussions between MCI and Baduy about the internet blankspot request?</i>	How has the Baduy Dalam's internet blankspot been portrayed in the media?
Institutional context	When it comes to discussions about technology, how do different voices within Baduy Dalam contribute to decision-making?	When it comes to discussions about technology, how do different voices within Baduy Luar contribute to decision-making?	Could you tell me about how digital transformation policies take shape within MCI? Who tends to be involved, and how do different perspectives get considered?	How are digital transformation policies for Indigenous communities discussed and negotiated within the Lebak government?	When covering or advocating for Indigenous digital issues, how do different opinions or priorities emerge among activists, journalists, or organizations?
Relations with government	What are the most important government offices for the Baduy Dalam? How did Baduy Dalam communicate with the government about the internet connectivity? <i>*Did the community feel that the government understood and respected their concerns?</i>	What are the most important government offices for the Baduy Luar? How does Baduy Luar engage with the government, especially regarding technology? <i>*What role do you think the government should play in facilitating technology for Baduy?</i>	How does the government involve (and negotiate with) Baduy communities in decisions about technology, particularly regarding digital policies? <i>*How does the government engage with communities that opt out?</i>	How does the Lebak government coordinate with MCI regarding digital policy for Indigenous communities? How does the local government engage with Baduy to address their needs and concerns?	How do advocacy groups and journalists engage with government policies on Indigenous digital issues? Which advocacy groups/journalists are most intensely engaged? Why do you think that is?
Future (normative)	What are Baduy Dalam's hopes and concerns for the future regarding technology, particularly internet connectivity?	What are Baduy Luar's hopes and concerns for the future regarding technology, particularly internet connectivity? <i>*What are your concerns regarding government policies technology</i>	What are the national government's hopes and concerns for the future regarding technology, particularly internet connectivity and its policy? <i>*How does the government plan to balance digital transformation goals with cultural diversity</i>	What are Lebak government's hopes and concerns for the future regarding technology, particularly internet connectivity and its policy? <i>*What kind of policies or approaches do you think would be the most effective in addressing the</i>	What are your hopes and concerns for the future regarding technology, particularly internet connectivity and its policy? <i>*How do you think discussions around technology (particularly internet connectivity) should be approached to ensure a more</i>

		<i>(particularly internet connectivity)?</i>	<i>and Indigenous autonomy?</i>	<i>diverse needs of the Baduy communities?</i>	<i>inclusive and culturally sensitive digital policy? *What role should media and civil society play in shaping discussions about digital inclusion and Indigenous autonomy?</i>
Others	Are there things about the internet or technology that you think others don't understand about Baduy Dalam? What would you want people to know?	How do Baduy Luar bridge the communications and influence between the external society and Baduy Dalam?	What does the government mean when it talks about digital inclusion? How do you define it? Are there things about the digital inclusion that you think others don't understand? What would you want people to know? What role do you see for communities that choose not to engage with technology (particularly internet) in the broader development agenda of Indonesia?	What are the main challenges the Lebak government faces in implementing digital policies for rural communities like the Baduy?	Are there any common misconceptions about the Baduy and their relationship with technology that you think should be addressed?

LEMBAR INFORMASI

Judul Penelitian

Behind the Blankspot: Baduy Dalam's Non-Use and Sociotechnical Imaginaries of Indonesia's Internetification Project

[Di Balik Blankspot: Pilihan untuk Tidak Menggunakan Teknologi oleh Baduy Dalam dan Imaginari Sosioteknis Internetifikasi Indonesia]

Konteks

Penelitian ini dilakukan sebagai bagian dari Thesis Master dalam program gabungan Philosophy of Science, Technology, and Society (PSTS) dan Public Administration di University of Twente, Belanda.

Informasi Kontak Peneliti

Tania Amarthani

WhatsApp: +6285859706233

Phone: +31623761462

amarthania@gmail.com / taniaamarthani@student.utwente.nl

Tujuan Penelitian

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi perspektif komunitas Baduy Dalam dan pemerintah Indonesia mengenai konektivitas internet. Studi ini ingin memahami bagaimana pilihan tidak menggunakan internet oleh Baduy Dalam berhubungan dengan pelestarian budaya masyarakat tradisional, serta bagaimana hal ini berdinamika dengan kebijakan transformasi digital pemerintah Indonesia. Temuan penelitian ini akan berkontribusi pada diskusi akademik dan wawasan kebijakan terkait pendekatan digital yang lebih inklusif dan sensitif terhadap budaya.

Pengumpulan Data

Penelitian ini akan dilakukan dengan menggunakan metode wawancara dan observasi. Wawancara akan direkam dalam bentuk audio (dengan izin partisipan) atau dicatat secara tertulis jika perekaman tidak memungkinkan. Untuk observasi, data akan dicatat dalam bentuk catatan lapangan tertulis yang mendokumentasikan praktik keseharian, budaya, dan interaksi dengan masyarakat. Tidak akan ada perekaman audio atau video selama observasi.

Adapun rekaman wawancara akan disimpan dalam format pseudonim untuk menjaga kerahasiaan data partisipan. Rekaman ini nantinya akan digunakan untuk penelitian akademik di masa depan sesuai dengan pedoman etika dan perlindungan data University of Twente. Jika data yang dikumpulkan nantinya digunakan untuk penelitian lain, data tersebut akan tetap anonim, dan informasi yang bersifat pribadi tidak akan dibagikan tanpa izin eksplisit dari partisipan.

Manfaat dan Risiko Berpartisipasi

Partisipasi dalam penelitian ini bertujuan untuk membantu meningkatkan pemahaman mengenai perspektif alternatif dalam kebijakan transformasi digital, maupun teknologi secara umum. Studi ini juga bertujuan untuk meningkatkan mengeksplorasi keberagaman cara hidup dan bagaimana hal ini dapat diintegrasikan guna mencapai kebijakan digital yang lebih inklusif.

UNIVERSITY OF TWENTE.

Tidak ada risiko yang signifikan dalam partisipasi penelitian ini. Wawancara diperkirakan berlangsung selama 30–60 menit. Untuk pertanyaan yang dirasa sensitif, partisipan bebas untuk melewati pertanyaan atau mengakhiri partisipasi kapan saja tanpa konsekuensi apa pun.

Adapun penelitian ini telah ditinjau dan disetujui oleh Komite Etika BMS, University of Twente, dengan nomor aplikasi 250090 untuk memastikan kepatuhan terhadap standar etika penelitian.

Prosedur Penarikan dari Penelitian

Partisipasi dalam penelitian ini bersifat sukarela. Partisipan dapat mengundurkan diri kapan saja, tanpa perlu memberikan alasan. Jika partisipan memilih untuk mundur, semua data yang telah dikumpulkan dari mereka akan dihapus dan tidak akan digunakan dalam penelitian.

Pengumpulan dan Penggunaan Informasi Pribadi

Selama penelitian, informasi seperti peran, jabatan, atau afiliasi komunitas mungkin akan dikumpulkan. Namun, semua data tersebut akan disimpan dalam format pseudonim, artinya informasi pribadi akan disimpan secara terpisah dari data penelitian utama untuk menjaga kerahasiaan partisipan. Identitas partisipan tidak akan dicantumkan dalam laporan hasil akhir atau publikasi, kecuali partisipan memberikan izin eksplisit. Partisipan memiliki hak untuk mengakses, memperbaiki, atau meminta penghapusan data pribadi mereka kapan saja. Jika partisipan memiliki kekhawatiran tentang bagaimana data mereka digunakan, mereka dapat menghubungi peneliti atau Komite Etika University of Twente.

Perlindungan Informasi Pribadi

Semua data yang dikumpulkan akan disimpan dengan aman di cloud yang dikelola oleh University of Twente, dengan akses terbatas hanya bagi peneliti dan pembimbing akademik yang berwenang.

Jangka Waktu Penyimpanan Data

Data penelitian akan disimpan sesuai dengan pedoman etika dan kebijakan perlindungan data University of Twente. Rekaman wawancara, jika ada, akan disimpan dalam format pseudonim untuk menjaga integritas penelitian dan mengurangi kemungkinan adanya wawancara ulang yang dapat mengganggu kenyamanan partisipan di masa depan. Setelah penelitian selesai, data akan ditinjau untuk menentukan relevansinya bagi penelitian akademik di masa depan. Jika tidak lagi diperlukan, semua data akan dihapus secara permanen untuk menjaga privasi partisipan.

Komite Etika BMS

Jika ada pertanyaan atau kekhawatiran mengenai hak sebagai partisipan penelitian, dapat menghubungi:

Secretary of the Ethics Committee, Faculty of Behavioural, Management and Social Sciences (BMS), University of Twente

Email: ethicscommittee-hss@utwente.nl

UNIVERSITY OF TWENTE.

LEMBAR PERSETUJUAN PENELITIAN
Anda akan menerima salinan formulir persetujuan ini

Silakan centang kotak yang sesuai:

Ya Tidak

Partisipasi dalam Studi

Saya telah membaca dan memahami informasi studi yang diberikan pada tanggal [DD/MM/YYYY], atau telah dijelaskan kepada saya. Saya memiliki kesempatan untuk bertanya, dan pertanyaan saya telah dijawab dengan sepenuhnya. ☐ ☐

Saya secara sukarela menyetujui untuk menjadi partisipan dalam penelitian ini dan memahami bahwa saya dapat menolak menjawab pertanyaan atau mengundurkan diri dari penelitian kapan saja tanpa konsekuensi apa pun. ☐ ☐

Saya memahami bahwa partisipasi saya melibatkan berbagi perspektif dan pengalaman tentang konektivitas internet dan pelestarian budaya Baduy Dalam (termasuk perspektif dan opini mengenai peran teknologi dalam kehidupan sehari-hari, nilai-nilai, budaya, dan tradisi yang mempengaruhi perspektif tersebut) ☐ ☐

Penggunaan Informasi dalam Studi

Saya memahami bahwa informasi yang saya berikan akan digunakan untuk keperluan akademik dalam bidang Science and Technology Studies serta Administrasi Publik. ☐ ☐

Saya memahami bahwa informasi pribadi yang dapat mengidentifikasi saya (misalnya, nama atau lokasi) tidak akan dibagikan di luar tim penelitian. ☐ ☐

Saya menyetujui bahwa informasi saya dapat dikutip dalam hasil penelitian. ☐ ☐

Saya memberikan hak cipta bersama untuk publikasi, artikel berita, atau siaran pers kepada Tania Amarthani terbatas untuk penggunaan dengan tujuan akademik. ☐ ☐

Persetujuan untuk Perekaman Audio/Video

Saya menyetujui untuk direkam dalam bentuk audio. ☐ ☐

Saya menyetujui untuk direkam dalam bentuk video. ☐ ☐

Penggunaan Data di Masa Depan

Saya memahami bahwa data yang saya berikan akan disimpan secara aman di cloud yang dikelola oleh University of Twente selama penelitian ini berlangsung dan hanya digunakan untuk keperluan penelitian ini. ☐ ☐

Tandatangan

Nama

Tandatangan

Tanggal

UNIVERSITY OF TWENTE.

Saksi

Saya telah menyaksikan bahwa formulir persetujuan ini dibaca dan dijelaskan kepada partisipan, dan mereka telah diberikan kesempatan untuk bertanya sebelum menyetujui.

Nama saksi

Tandatangan

Tanggal

Saya telah membacakan lembar informasi secara akurat kepada calon partisipan dan, sebaik mungkin, memastikan bahwa partisipan memahami apa yang mereka setuju secara bebas.

Tania Amarthani

Tandatangan

Tanggal**Rincian kontak untuk informasi lebih lanjut:****Tania Amarthani****WhatsApp: +6285859706233****Phone: +31623761462**amarthania@gmail.com / taniaamarthani@student.utwente.nl**Informasi Kontak untuk Pertanyaan tentang Hak-hak Anda sebagai Partisipan Penelitian**

Jika Anda memiliki pertanyaan tentang hak-hak Anda sebagai partisipan penelitian, atau ingin mendapatkan informasi, mengajukan pertanyaan, atau mendiskusikan masalah apa pun tentang penelitian ini dengan orang lain selain peneliti, silakan hubungi Secretary of the Ethics Committee/domain Humanities & Social Sciences of the Faculty of Behavioural, Management and Social Sciences at the University of Twente by ethicscommittee-hss@utwente.nl

UNIVERSITY OF TWENTE.

UNIVERSITY OF TWENTE
Drienerlolaan 5
7522 NB Enschede

P.O.Box 217
7500 AE Enschede

P +31 (0)53 489 9111

info@utwente.nl
www.utwente.nl