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**The Stigma of Artificial Intelligence Technology in Balinese Traditional Village
Communities and The Implications for the Customary Legal System**

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Abstract

The rapid development of digital technology, particularly Artificial Intelligence, has significantly influenced various aspects of social life, including governance and legal systems within indigenous communities. In Bali, the *desa adat* (customary village) represents a traditional legal community that regulates social order through norms derived from *awig-awig*, *pararem*, and deliberative decision-making processes among community members (*krama desa*). These customary legal systems function not only as mechanisms of social regulation but also embody religious and philosophical values grounded in the concept of *Tri Hita Karana*. The integration of Artificial Intelligence in the administration and data management of customary villages offers opportunities to enhance efficiency in governance and the documentation of customary regulations. However, its introduction has also generated stigma and resistance among members of indigenous communities, who perceive AI as a potential threat to traditional values, the authority of customary institutions, and the sacredness of certain cultural practices. This study employs a socio-legal approach to examine the interaction between customary law, state law, and digital technology within Balinese indigenous communities. The findings reveal that stigma toward Artificial Intelligence is concerns about shifts in the authority of customary leaders (*prajuru desa adat*), and potential distortions of sacred cultural values. The stigma against AI is influenced by the technological literacy gap, concerns about the shift in authority of traditional village leaders, and the potential for distortion of cultural values and traditional norms. Therefore, the integration of technology should respect customary institutional structures and strengthen the legitimacy of *awig-awig* as a source of local law.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence; Balinese Customary Law; Indigenous Communities; Legal Pluralism; Technology Stigma

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is founded on the rule of law, where two legal systems operate concurrently. The first is the formal, written law, such as statutory regulations enacted by the state. The second is unwritten law, commonly known as customary law (*adat law*). Each region in Indonesia possesses its own distinct customary legal system, which functions as a guideline for regulating daily social life and community interactions. Customary law itself consists of a set of norms and rules that originate and develop organically within the community. It is inherently inseparable from the society in which it exists, as it reflects the values, traditions, and lived experiences of the people. In practice, customary law serves as a fundamental reference for community members in certain regions. It is carefully preserved and continuously upheld to ensure social harmony and continuity. Moreover, it governs various aspects of social conduct, including ways of speaking, behaving, and acting within the community, thereby shaping patterns of interaction and maintaining order in everyday life.

Customary law as recognized by the community is fundamentally intertwined with religious values and elements. This is evident in Balinese customary law, which is deeply rooted in the teachings and principles of Hinduism. The Balinese customary law community

develops and enforces its own legal system based on these religious foundations. The Balinese customary law community refers to Hindu adherents who are bound either by territorial ties within a village (*desa*) or by genealogical affiliations (*soroh*). In organizing their social life, Balinese society places strong emphasis on maintaining balance and harmony. This principle of balance is considered essential, particularly in the era of globalization, where local customs, traditions, and cultural practices are increasingly vulnerable to being replaced by external influences, including Western culture, if not properly preserved. Moreover, this concept of balance also plays a crucial role in guiding development amid ongoing modernization. The advancement of modernity has brought significant impacts, especially in the growth of tourism and infrastructure development. As a result, Bali has ultimately emerged as one of the primary tourist destinations in Indonesia today. (Wiryawan, 2015)

In Bali, there is a philosophical concept known as *Tri Hita Karana*, which serves as a fundamental guideline for indigenous communities. This philosophy emphasizes three essential relationships: *Parahyangan*, referring to the connection between humans and the divine; *Palemahan*, which highlights the relationship between humans and the natural environment; and *Pawongan*, which concerns harmonious relations among people. This framework helps explain why Bali has gained recognition as a leading global tourism destination. The strong presence and continuity of its customary communities particularly their ability to integrate culture, religion, traditions, and social practices have played a crucial role in sustaining Bali's unique identity and global appeal.

With the advancement of modernization particularly in the realm of digital technology such as *Artificial Intelligence* (AI) significant transformations have occurred across various aspects of contemporary life. However, the acceptance of this technology has not been uniform, especially within indigenous communities that are guided by distinctive systems of values, norms, and social structures. In Bali, *desa adat* (customary villages) as entities of customary law communities possess strong communal and religious characteristics. As a result, the presence of AI is often perceived not merely as a technological innovation, but also as a social phenomenon that gives rise to particular forms of stigma. The rapid growth of digital technology, especially AI, has reshaped multiple dimensions of human life, including the economy, education, and legal systems. AI has evolved beyond a simple supporting tool into a sophisticated system capable of conducting analysis, making predictions, and even generating data-driven decisions. Nevertheless, its acceptance has not developed evenly across all segments of society. Within indigenous communities particularly in Balinese customary villages the emergence of AI has instead triggered complex and multidimensional social dynamics, manifested in the form of stigma and varying degrees of resistance.

Stigma surrounding AI within Balinese customary village communities can essentially be understood as a social response to something perceived as new, unfamiliar, and potentially disruptive to an established social order. AI is often viewed as a symbol of modernity that does not fully align with local values. From the perspective of indigenous communities, technology is not neutral; rather, it carries embedded values that may influence patterns of social interaction, power relations, and even spiritual dimensions of life. However, in practice, processes of social adaptation do not always unfold smoothly. Within broader social integration contexts, individuals or groups frequently encounter challenges that hinder their acceptance, one of which is the presence of strong social stigma (Hendarto, A. R., Firmansyah, A. D., & Nugroho, A., 2022). Society often responds with suspicion and prejudice toward certain groups, leading to social exclusion, limited employment opportunities, and reduced social support (Efendi, 2019). Such conditions may increase the likelihood of recurring negative outcomes, including the risk of repeated deviant or unlawful behavior.

METHODS

The study entitled “*Stigma of Artificial Intelligence Technology within Balinese Customary Village Communities and Its Implications for the Customary Legal System*” adopts a socio-legal research approach. This approach examines law not only as a body of formal written rules (*law in books*), but also as it operates in everyday social practices (*law in action*). This methodological framework is selected because the research does not merely focus on legal regulations governing technology and indigenous communities. Rather, it also seeks to explore how members of Balinese customary villages interpret, respond to, and construct stigma toward Artificial Intelligence within their daily lives. In this context, the study positions law as a dynamic social phenomenon that evolves alongside cultural values and technological change. Furthermore, this approach enables a more comprehensive understanding of the interaction between technological developments and customary legal systems, particularly in revealing how social perceptions and cultural norms influence the acceptance or rejection of AI in indigenous settings.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Based on empirical findings obtained through interviews, observations, and document analysis in several Balinese customary villages, it was identified that *Artificial Intelligence* (AI) has not been fully embraced in a positive manner by indigenous communities. Instead, various forms of stigma have emerged, reflecting uncertainty, concern, and a degree of resistance toward the technology. AI is not consistently perceived as a neutral or purely beneficial innovation. Rather, its presence has contributed to the formation of socially constructed stigma within customary village settings, shaped by local value systems, collective experiences, and existing structures of customary authority. The findings further indicate that stigma toward AI is neither uniform nor singular. It manifests in multiple layers and variations, illustrating the complex interaction between modern technological developments and deeply rooted socio-cultural traditions. Importantly, this stigma does not merely arise from limited understanding; it also functions as a protective mechanism through which indigenous communities seek to preserve their cultural values and sustain their collective identity.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is often framed as a marker of modernity that may disrupt established customary structures. It is frequently perceived as a product of external, global value systems, lacking direct alignment with Balinese local principles that emphasize balance and spirituality. Within this context, AI is not merely understood as a technical tool, but rather as a system carrying particular ideological implications, such as efficiency, rationality, and individualism. These values are viewed as potentially conflicting with the communal orientation, togetherness, and harmony that underpin life in customary villages. As a result, there is a growing concern that the adoption of AI could gradually shift societal values from a collective framework toward a more individualistic orientation, which in turn may weaken social cohesion within the customary community.

One of the key findings of this study is the perception that AI operates as a system lacking “feeling” and “spirit.” Within Balinese customary village communities, a sense of feeling and spiritual considerations play a crucial role in decision-making processes, including the resolution of customary disputes. AI, which relies on algorithms and data processing, is viewed as incapable of capturing these deeply rooted values. Research informants emphasized that decisions reached through customary deliberation involve elements of empathy, wisdom, and moral judgment qualities that cannot be replicated by machines. This perception reinforces the stigma that AI is not appropriate for use in matters

related to customary law, as it is considered unable to deliver the kind of substantive justice that remains central to the indigenous legal system.

The study reveals that the deliberative forum known as *paruman desa* constitutes one of the most sacred components of decision-making within Balinese customary villages. This institution serves not only as a venue for collective deliberation, but also as a space for transmitting values, reinforcing norms, and strengthening social solidarity. In this context, AI is often perceived as a potential threat that could disrupt this traditional mechanism. Several informants expressed concern that the introduction of technology into decision-making processes might reduce the level of direct social interaction and community participation. Furthermore, there is apprehension that the source of legitimacy could shift from consensus-based social approval toward a more technocratic, system-driven form of authority. Such a shift is seen as potentially diminishing the role of customary leaders (*prajuru adat*) and weakening the active involvement of community members (*krama desa*) in collective decision-making.

Balinese customary village communities demonstrate a high degree of sensitivity toward the sacred dimensions of social life. Many elements of customary practice—such as religious rituals, the management of communal land, and social organization—are deeply intertwined with spiritual meaning and cannot be separated from everyday activities. In this setting, the introduction of AI raises concerns about the possible “desacralization” of matters regarded as sacred. For instance, the digitization of customary data is seen as potentially diminishing the sanctity of information that has traditionally been safeguarded within the community. Accordingly, the stigma surrounding AI extends beyond technical considerations and touches upon the philosophical and religious foundations of indigenous life. This perception has tangible implications for the implementation of technology within customary villages. Several initiatives related to administrative digitalization, the management of community member (*krama desa*) data, and the documentation of customary law have encountered obstacles in practice. In some instances, these programs have not functioned effectively due to limited community participation. These findings indicate that the success of technological adoption depends not only on technical readiness but also on the level of social acceptance. Furthermore, the presence of stigma has constrained the exploration of AI’s potential in supporting customary legal systems, including its possible use in dispute data analysis or the management of indigenous knowledge and information.

Despite the concerns and negative perceptions surrounding AI, it also holds potential benefits for customary villages and indigenous communities in Bali. One notable positive aspect of the stigma toward AI lies in its function as a protective mechanism for preserving customary values. In practice, Balinese customary communities indirectly employ this stigma as a form of social filter, ensuring that incoming technological innovations do not undermine the fundamental principles of their traditional way of life. Values such as balance, harmony, and spirituality are safeguarded through a critical and cautious attitude toward technology. In the absence of such skepticism, there is a risk that technological adoption would occur uncritically, potentially eroding the cultural identity of indigenous communities. Within the Balinese customary legal system, human elements such as empathy, moral sensitivity, and substantive justice play a central role. The perception of AI as a system “without a soul” serves as a reminder that law should not be reduced to a purely mechanical, data-driven process. This perspective helps prevent the dehumanization of legal practice, where decisions might otherwise rely solely on algorithmic logic without adequate consideration of ethical and social dimensions.

CONCLUSION

The stigma held by Balinese customary village communities toward *Artificial Intelligence* (AI) constitutes a complex social phenomenon. It not only reflects a degree of resistance to modernization but also demonstrates a form of cultural adaptation aimed at preserving the continuity of indigenous values. This stigma arises from a perceived mismatch between the nature of AI characterized by rationality, algorithmic processes, and impersonal operations and the value system of Balinese customary society, which is grounded in balance, spirituality, and communal life. Empirically, this stigma manifests in various ways, including the perception of AI as a threat to customary values, concerns over the disruption of deliberative mechanisms (*paruman desa*), distrust toward opaque technological systems, and anxiety about the potential loss of human and sacred dimensions within customary life. These perceptions are further shaped by factors such as levels of digital literacy, the structure of customary authority, and generational differences in outlook. Nevertheless, the study also finds that the stigma surrounding AI does not solely produce negative consequences. On the contrary, it carries constructive elements as a form of social protection that helps safeguard indigenous values, encourages a more selective and critical approach to technology adoption, preserves deliberative traditions, and prevents the dehumanization of customary legal practices. Moreover, this stigma contributes to reinforcing the cultural sovereignty of indigenous communities in the face of globalization and digital transformation.

Accordingly, the presence of stigma toward AI in Balinese customary villages should not be viewed merely as an obstacle, but rather as part of an ongoing process of social adaptation. This process allows for a more cautious, context-sensitive, and sustainable integration of modern technology into customary legal systems. Therefore, it is essential to adopt approaches that are responsive to local values, participatory in nature, and grounded in legal pluralism, so that the utilization of AI can align with the characteristics of Balinese customary communities without undermining their identity and indigenous wisdom.

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