

Digital Village in the Perspective of Indonesian Contemporary Urban Culture

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Abstract

Nowadays, the development of urban areas in Indonesia has shown a very rapid trend. This is not only seen in the physical-spatial aspects of the city, but it is also reflected in the urban culture of its people. This study tries to explore the phenomenon of digital village from the perspective of Indonesian contemporary urban culture, where there has been a shift in the meaning of the term "*kampung*" (village) from a spatial conception to an aspatial dimension. The use of social media has also redefined the terminology of "*kampung*", into a digital space that is dominated by Generations Z and Alpha as digital natives. This study uses a qualitative approach to explore social phenomena related to digital villages and their implications for urban development. The results of this study show that through digital village initiatives, community participation in urban development processes becomes more practical and easily accessible to all groups in the society, yet the implication of this study is to understand how modern urban society works in the digital era.

Saat ini, perkembangan kawasan perkotaan di Indonesia menunjukkan tren yang sangat pesat. Hal ini tidak hanya terlihat pada aspek fisik-spasial kota, tetapi juga tercermin dalam budaya perkotaan masyarakatnya. Penelitian ini berupaya mengkaji fenomena kampung digital dari perspektif budaya perkotaan kontemporer di Indonesia, di mana terjadi pergeseran makna istilah 'kampung' dari konsep spasial menuju dimensi aspasial. Penggunaan media sosial juga telah mendefinisikan ulang terminologi kampung menjadi sebuah ruang digital yang didominasi oleh Generasi Z dan Alpha sebagai penduduk asli digital. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif untuk mengeksplorasi fenomena sosial terkait kampung digital serta implikasinya terhadap pembangunan perkotaan. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa melalui inisiatif kampung digital, partisipasi masyarakat dalam proses pembangunan kota menjadi lebih praktis dan mudah diakses oleh seluruh lapisan masyarakat; sekaligus memberikan pemahaman mengenai bagaimana masyarakat perkotaan modern berinteraksi di era digital.

Keywords: contemporary Indonesia; digital room; disruption era; *kampung digital*; urban culture

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Introduction

The discourse of digital village (*kampung digital*) emerges as a conceptual response to the transformation of urban community life under digitalization and Industry 4.0. Traditionally, the term “*kampung*” refers to a physical settlement characterized by close social relationships, collective activities, shared cultural practices, and strong forms of social interaction. However, digital technologies have expanded this characteristic beyond physical space, creating new forms of community interaction through social media, messaging apps, and digital platforms. In this context, digital village can be understood not simply as a technologically connected neighborhood, but as a discursive construction in which the *kampung's* values, identities, social relations, and collective practices are reproduced, negotiated, and transformed in digital space (Utoyo et al. 2025). Nevertheless, the digital village cannot be separated from the physical aspects of contemporary Indonesian urban landscape.

As an integral part of the urban landscape in Indonesia, the existence of urban village has sociocultural significance for a city's identity (Silas 1992). The image attached to *kampung* is often characterized as a slum and neglected 'back' area, but in fact behind its simplicity and informality, urban village holds a variety of potential that can be adopted and developed for the growth of the city (Putra 2019b). Viewing urban villages requires a paradigm shift, from seeing these areas as 'urban waste' to recognizing them as part of Indonesia's urban heritage. Despite the challenges they face, urban villages remain resilient amid the onslaught of modernity and changing times. It demonstrates the high level of resilience and adaptability of their residents. In this study, the authors encourage readers to reflect on and explore the

unique challenges faced by urban villages in the era of disruption 4.0 through the lens of critical urbanism (Brenner, Marcuse, and Mayer 2009; Putra 2019a). It is achieved by understanding the sociocultural context of urban communities in Indonesia.

Most research on urban villages focuses on physical improvements, poverty alleviation, and improving residents' well-being (Putra and Rosadiana 2024; Winarso 2022). Rarely, if at all, does research connect urban village to contemporary urban culture in Indonesia, or examine how the term “*kampung*” is used liberally across society to define it. To understand this connection, this study will use a cultural studies approach to discuss the role of urban village in contemporary urban culture in Indonesia.

This study will also explore how the principles of urban village are transforming into digital spaces, simultaneously becoming the embryo of digital village. It is also supported by the role of Generation Z and Alpha as digital natives who facilitate this digitalization process (Tolstikova et al. 2021). Various theories and discourses on social and cultural knowledge will provide a foundation for understanding the digital village phenomenon from a contemporary cultural perspective.

Furthermore, understanding urban village through the lens of digital culture opens new avenues for exploring community engagement, identity formation, and participatory urbanism in contemporary Indonesia. As digital platforms increasingly mediate social interactions, urban village are no longer confined to their physical boundaries; their social networks, local knowledge, and cultural practices are being re-interpreted and shared online. This digital transformation not only preserves the communal values and resilience inherent in *kampung*

life but also redefines what it means to participate in urban culture. By examining this phenomenon, the study seeks to bridge the gap between traditional urban studies and emerging digital practices, offering insights into how heritage, social cohesion, and innovation intersect in the cities of the future.

This study helps explain how modern urban society operates in the digital era, especially among younger generations, aligning with current scholarly debates in urban sociology. Scholars, such as Berry (2012) and Lupton (2013, 2019), emphasize the evolution of society toward greater dependence on technology and how it shapes social dynamics. This perspective underscores the importance of analyzing digital practices as integral to understanding contemporary urban experiences.

This study uses a qualitative research design and digital ethnography to examine how the digital village forms as a hybrid sociodigital public space in contemporary Indonesian urban culture. The study uses interpretive inquiry to explore the emergence of social meanings, daily practices, and collective identities from socio-cultural interactions (Denzin and Lincoln 1994), and the intersection of digital technologies with offline life in the constitution of social relationships, cultural identities, and community engagement (Boellstorff et al. 2012; Bowler 2014; Hine 2020; Pink et al. 2016). The digital village is conceived as a hybrid space in which physical environments, digital connectivity, and social interactions coconstitute one another (Lefebvre 1991; de Souza e Silva 2006). Particular attention is given to public engagement, identity formation, and participation (Fraser 1990; Habermas 1989).

The research combines digital ethnography approach to understand how digital technologies reshape communal interaction, identity formation, and participation among urban

communities in Indonesia. This approach is appropriate because the phenomenon under study closely relates to online social practices, digital communication, and platform-mediated interaction (Bowler 2010; Dumitrica 2013; Kozinets 2010).

The study focuses on the transformation of the concept of *kampung* from a primarily physical and spatial entity into a digitally mediated sociocultural space. In this context, digital platforms function not only as communication tools but also as spaces where social relations, collective identity, and urban cultural practices are reproduced and negotiated. The research sits within the broader discourse of digital sociology and contemporary urban studies, particularly regarding the role of digital technologies in shaping post-industrial urban society (Berry 2012; Lupton 2013, 2019).

Data collection drew on multiple digital sources to provide a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. The primary data were collected from publicly accessible online platforms associated with the term *kampung digital*, including social media accounts, online communities, digital campaign platforms, websites, and discussion forums. The authors purposively selected several digital initiatives because they explicitly use the term *kampung digital* or demonstrate community-based digital interaction relevant to this study's objectives. These include Instagram-based communities such as KampungDigital.ID,¹ online communication platforms such as KampungChat.org,² and community digitalization programs implemented in Indonesian urban areas (see Figure 1 and 2).

¹ See <https://www.instagram.com/kampungdigital.id>

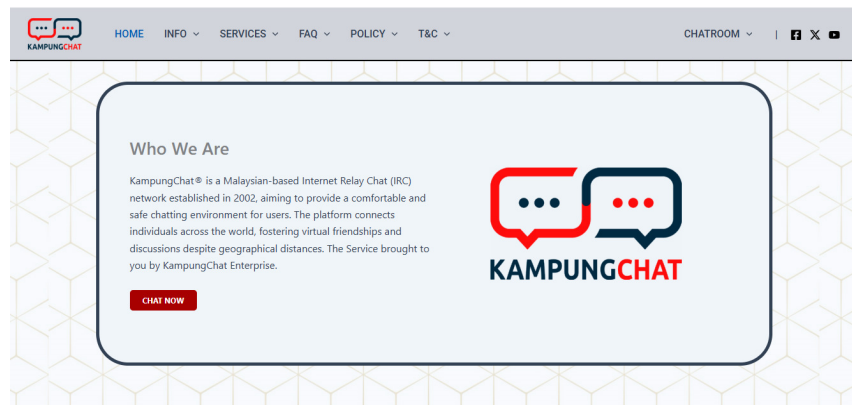
² See <https://www.kampungchat.org/>

Figure 1
Kampung Digital ID



Source: Instagram of kampungdigital.id. 2024.

Figure 2
Kampung Chat



Source: kampungchat.org. 2024. 2024.

Purposive sampling was employed to identify digital platforms and online communities relevant to the research objectives. The sampling process focused on digital communities that show communal interaction, participatory engagement, and digital representations of urban social space. The study used keywords such as “*kampung digital*,” “digital community,” and “urban digital participation” to identify relevant online materials and digital traces. The selected platforms were then observed to examine patterns of interaction, communication

practices, visual representation, and forms of digital participation among users.

Furthermore, this study adopts a critical digital sociology perspective to interpret the findings. This perspective helps explain how digital platforms are embedded in broader social, cultural, and political structures, including issues of power, exclusion, and commodification in digitally mediated urban life (Lupton 2014). Through this approach, the research does not merely examine digital technology as a neutral instrument, but also critically evaluates its

implications for social relations and urban public space in contemporary Indonesia.

Ethical considerations were also taken into account throughout the research process. The study used only publicly accessible digital content and did not involve private communication or the extraction of personal data. User anonymity was maintained to protect the privacy of online participants and comply with ethical standards in digital research.

Through this methodological framework, the study seeks to understand better how digitalization transforms the meaning of *kampung* in contemporary Indonesian urban culture and how digital platforms increasingly function as hybrid spaces for social interaction, participation, and cultural production.

Urban Culture

In cultural studies theory, one approach to understanding contemporary urban culture is the encoding-decoding theory proposed by Hall (1980). In this theory, Hall examines cultural approaches to digital culture, closely linked to television. Although this theory was initiated 40 years ago to examine contemporary cultural phenomena in cyberspace, it is still considered highly relevant today, where the use of information technology and social media has become part of everyday urban life.

Smartphone use among urban communities in Indonesia is now essential. Smartphone applications such as Twitter (X), WhatsApp, Instagram, and others keep users connected to variety of information. Referring to Hall (1980) and the encoding-decoding theory, smartphone use, as with television, can be seen as a process of discourse production and code meaning received by the audience, where the audience's interpretation of the message is strongly influenced by the sociopolitical context. It is also

supported by more recent research by Morley (1986) on the power of culture in digital media.

The author's perspective in discussing this study utilizes a critical digital sociology approach. As Lupton (2013, 2014, 2019) states, a critical digital sociology approach examines phenomena in society resulting from the development of information technology, using reflective analysis grounded in social and cultural theories. Digital sociology examines how technology changes social processes and how individuals and society must create new social structures in a digital society.

From a sociological perspective, space can be interpreted as a container where social interactions take place and where social relations among individuals, communities, and society are created. According to Lefebvre (1991), space is produced through a dialectical process among three key factors: perceived space, conceived space, and lived space. Furthermore, Soja (2008) argues in his book about third space that first space is a physical space that can be quantified, second space is a conceptual space, and third space is a space that can be felt.

Digital technology has expanded this understanding of space. Social media platforms create hybrid spaces where physical and virtual interactions coexist. Urban communities increasingly experience social life simultaneously in material environments and digital networks. Smartphones function not only as communication tools but also as mediators of cultural participation, political expression, and social belonging.

Meanwhile, from the perspective of Indonesian culture, according to Lahpan (2016) and Lahpan, Putra, and Hidayana (2024), space can be interpreted as a container for socio-cultural expression and a place of negotiation for local communities. It can be seen from several cultural activities carried out by indigenous

communities in Indonesia, where space is a place where cultural performances take place, with very high community involvement and participation so that there is no distance between the audience and the performers (Turino 2008). So, it can be concluded that the meaning of space in Indonesian culture is a container for the expression of togetherness and solidarity of the community formed by sociocultural relations.

Furthermore, the interaction between digital culture and urban space in Indonesia shows how technology reshapes not only communication but also social belonging and cultural participation. Smartphone applications and social media platforms extend physical space, enabling urban communities to negotiate identities, express opinions, and participate in cultural activities virtually (Nugraha 2019; Setiyawati, Sofian, and Parmudi 2019). This digital extension of space creates a hybrid sociocultural environment, where traditional values of togetherness and community coexist with new, technology-mediated forms of interaction. As such, urban Indonesians are not only consumers of digital content but also active producers of cultural meaning, reflecting a dynamic interplay between technology, social behavior, and the enduring importance of cultural and communal identity.

An important example of this transformation can be observed through the emergence of community-based digital initiatives such as KampungDigital.ID. KampungDigital.ID is a youth-oriented digital movement focusing on education, digital literacy, international collaboration, and community empowerment. The initiative demonstrates how digital culture in Indonesia is closely linked with collective participation and social solidarity.

The organization has conducted several educational and innovation programs involving Indonesian youth. One notable initiative was the

Youth Innovation Forum Japan 2020, which brought together young participants to discuss Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly quality education and sustainable cities. The program included campus visits, technology seminars on Japanese Society 5.0, and cross-cultural educational experiences.

KampungDigital.ID also developed scholarship and educational programs targeting Indonesian students from both urban and rural backgrounds. The movement promoted digital literacy, international networking, and educational mobility through online campaigns and social media engagement. Reports from educational communities indicate that the scholarship programs attracted thousands of online participants and supporters.

This phenomenon shows how digital platforms increasingly function as sociocultural spaces where urban youth construct aspirations, social capital, and collective identity—digital communities such as KampungDigital.ID blur the boundaries between local and global space by enabling Indonesian youth to participate in international discourse while maintaining communal and national cultural values.

From Hall's encoding-decoding perspective, initiatives like KampungDigital.ID can be interpreted as processes of cultural encoding, where digital messages related to innovation, education, and empowerment are disseminated through social media. At the same time, audiences actively decode these messages based on their own social experiences, educational background, and aspirations. Consequently, digital culture becomes a site of negotiation between global technological modernity and local cultural identity.

The rapid expansion of digital culture has significantly transformed Indonesia's urban middle class. Koentjaraningrat (1994) argued

that national cultural development is closely related to the mentality and orientation of society. A progressive society requires innovation, productivity, and confidence in collective capability. In contemporary Indonesia, digital technology has helped create new urban mindsets characterized by connectivity, flexibility, creativity, and entrepreneurial orientation.

The urban middle class increasingly depends on digital platforms not only for communication but also for economic activity, education, and social recognition. Digital media facilitates new patterns of work, online entrepreneurship, content creation, and virtual networking. At the same time, digital participation also creates new forms of inequality related to access, literacy, and algorithmic visibility.

The Indonesian urban experience demonstrates that digitalization is not simply technological modernization but also cultural transformation. The interaction between traditional communal values and digital communication technologies produces hybrid sociocultural environments where local identity remains important despite global connectivity.

The interaction between digital culture and urban space in Indonesia reflects a broader transformation of social relations in the digital era. Through smartphones and social media platforms, urban communities actively produce, negotiate, and reinterpret cultural meanings in both physical and virtual environments.

Theories from Hall, Lefebvre, Soja, and Lupton remain highly relevant in understanding how digital technology reshapes urban culture and social participation. In Indonesia, digital initiatives such as KampungDigital.ID demonstrate that digital space functions not merely as a technological infrastructure but also as a socio-cultural arena for community empowerment, youth participation, and collective identity formation.

Ultimately, Indonesian urban digital culture represents a hybrid condition where communal traditions, participatory values, and technological innovation coexist dynamically. Urban Indonesians are not passive consumers of digital content; they actively shape the meaning of space, identity, and community in the digital age.

Era of Disruption: Digital Transformation, Urban Space and the Rise of Digital Communities in Indonesia

Nowadays, the authors often hear the term Industry 4.0 echoed in development forums and scientific studies, so much so that it has stuck in our minds. However, what exactly is meant by the jargon Industry 4.0? According to Sutriadi (2015), Industrial Revolution 4.0 is closely related to the use of ICT (Information and Communication Technology) in industrial activities, which is expected to reduce human intervention in the production process and ultimately increase product efficiency. It will certainly have implications for the conventional understanding of industrial processes that the authors have so far.

So, what are the consequences of implementing Industry 4.0 on the lives of urban communities? Several social researchers see the phenomenon of Industry 4.0 as having transformed the social fabric of urban communities, where the demand for a smart society based on the use of digital devices has become inevitable (Manovich 2009; Mazali 2018). This change has significantly altered the behavior and lifestyle of urban communities, making them highly dependent on the use of information technology in their daily lives.

Social transformation in urban communities also shapes and influences the quality of the built

environment for urban residents. In the case of urban village, the emergence of the colorful *kampung* phenomenon in several cities in Indonesia is one example of how digital transformation plays a role in improving the quality of settlements (Adiwibawa 2017; Romadi 2019). The urban middle class, as a digitally literate segment of society, plays a driving force behind this initiative. However, if the authors examine it critically, behind this initiative lies a very clear social class struggle. For example, the colorful village (*kampung pelangi*), as a manifestation of a space created for the existentialism of the middle class on social media, often ignores and sacrifices the rights of the area's residents (Wulandari and Luthfi 2019). It was discussed by Dovey and King (2012) regarding the dangers of slum tourism, which is considered an effort to beautify urban poverty and is an inseparable part of the market ideology that benefits certain groups of society without addressing the fundamental problems of the slum areas themselves.

In addition to the phenomenon of colorful *kampung* in urban areas, the use of information technology has also made it easier for urban communities to communicate and access various information. Public spaces on digital platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc., have played a significant role in the transformation of urban society in Indonesia. The use of digital platforms in the daily lives of urban residents enables them to become digital citizens of the world (Ohler 2010), this is due to the interconnectedness of global citizens through the use of smartphones in their hands.

The embodiment of *kampung* in digital format can be seen in how the principles of the *kampung* are transformed into a metauniverse. *Kampung*, as a physical and spatial entity, will certainly have very different characteristics from

the virtual world, but there are several similarities between the two. Both entities provide a platform for community meetings and gatherings within a container, which can function as a social space, a terminology later popularized by Emile Durkheim (Buttimer 1980).

In this context, the implementation of Industry 4.0 also raises important questions regarding inclusivity and social equity in urban development. While digital technologies offer opportunities for efficiency, participation, and innovation, unequal access to digital infrastructure and skills may deepen existing social disparities between urban social classes (Kim, Sabri, and Kent 2021). Urban residents who lack digital literacy or economic capital risk being excluded from both physical and virtual social spaces, reinforcing what scholars describe as the digital divide. Therefore, the transformation of *kampung* and urban social spaces in the era of Industry 4.0 should not focus merely on technological adoption or visual enhancement, but should also prioritize community empowerment, participatory planning, and equitable access to digital resources. Without such considerations, digital transformation may function less as a tool for social progress and more as a mechanism that reproduces structural inequality within urban society.

An important example of digital community formation in Indonesia can be observed through KampungDigital.ID, a youth-oriented digital movement focusing on digital literacy, education, scholarship dissemination, youth empowerment, and international collaboration. Through Instagram and other digital platforms, KampungDigital.ID actively disseminates information regarding educational opportunities, youth development programs, and global networking initiatives for Indonesian youth.

The platform has organized various educational campaigns and international programs, including the Youth Innovation Forum Japan, discussions on Society 5.0, digital entrepreneurship initiatives, and scholarship promotion activities. Through these programs, KampungDigital.ID demonstrates how digital space can function as an extension of communal culture within contemporary Indonesian society.

The Instagram-based activities of KampungDigital.ID reveal several important characteristics of urban digital culture in Indonesia. First, digital communities increasingly function as spaces for collective aspiration and social mobility, especially among urban youth and aspiring middle-class communities. Second, social media enables decentralized participation, allowing individuals from different regions to interact and collaborate without physical limitations. Third, digital communities create alternative public spaces outside formal institutional structures, allowing youth participation in educational and global discourse.

This phenomenon reflects Hall's encoding-decoding theory: digital platforms become arenas for producing and interpreting cultural meaning. KampungDigital.ID encodes messages related to innovation, empowerment, global networking, and youth participation through digital content, while audiences actively interpret and negotiate these messages according to their own sociocultural experiences and aspirations.

The shift from physical to digital interaction also indicates changes in social class dynamics within urban Indonesia. According to Indonesia Statistic Central Bureau (2024), approximately 66.35 percent of Indonesia's population can be categorized as middle class or aspiring middle class. The expanding middle class contributes significantly to higher internet penetration, smartphone ownership, and digital participation.

This condition supports Bourdieu's (1989) argument that social space is closely related to the distribution of economic, cultural, and social capital. Individuals with greater digital literacy and technological access possess stronger capacity to participate in virtual social spaces. Consequently, digital transformation also reflects the reproduction of class relations within urban society.

The emergence of digital communities, online participation, and virtual interaction may also be interpreted as the formation of a "metauniverse" of social space. Although virtual spaces lack the material characteristics of physical *kampung* environments, they increasingly function as arenas for identity formation, social interaction, and collective participation. Urban residents now experience social life in both physical and digital dimensions, creating hybrid sociocultural existence.

Despite the opportunities Industry 4.0 offers, digital transformation also raises serious concerns about inclusivity and social equity. Kim et al. (2021) argue that unequal access to digital infrastructure, internet connectivity, and technological literacy can deepen existing social disparities. In Indonesia, lower-income communities and marginalized urban residents often have limited access to digital resources, creating what scholars call the digital divide.

This inequality shows that digital transformation is not solely technological progress. Implementing smart city initiatives, digital urbanism, and online participation must also consider accessibility, community empowerment, and participatory planning. Without equitable access to digital infrastructure and education, Industry 4.0 risks reproducing structural inequality rather than reducing it.

Industry 4.0 has fundamentally transformed urban culture and social space in Indonesia. Digital technology increasingly shapes communication practices, urban lifestyles, public participation, and the production of urban space itself—the emergence of colorful *kampung* projects, digital citizenship, and online communities such as KampungDigital.ID illustrates how urban residents increasingly experience social life through hybrid physical and virtual environments.

Nevertheless, digital transformation also reveals important tensions related to social class, spatial commodification, and digital inequality. Therefore, understanding contemporary urban transformation in Indonesia requires not only technological analysis but also critical attention to power relations, social justice, and participatory urban development. Ultimately, the future of urban digital society depends not merely on technological advancement, but on how digital transformation can be directed toward inclusive, equitable, and community-oriented social progress.

Digital Village in the Context of Urban Culture

In the context of contemporary urban culture, digital transformation in urban society is inevitable. The authors can see and reflect this in the daily lives of people who are highly dependent on the use of gadgets for various purposes. Urban youth, whether millennials, generation Z, or generation Alpha can be said to be digital natives and an age group believed to have the cognitive ability to perform multitasking work (Prensky 2001). This is reinforced by the statement by Veen and Vrakking (2006) who coined the term *homo zappiens* as a new generation of learners, who can learn independently without the help of an

instructor or teacher. Departing from this statement, it is certain that digital transformation, which is also supported by the generational shift, from previously digital immigrants to digital natives, will smooth the process and will change the urban cultural landscape as the authors know it.

Regarding the use of the term "*kampung*" in the digital culture of urban communities in Indonesia, the term has now become a trend among the digital native generation. The transformation of the *kampung* from a physical entity to a metauniverse has redefined our meaning and understanding of the term. This can be seen in several examples of the use of the term "*kampung*" in the daily lives of online citizens, both in the form of digital platforms such as KampungDigital.ID, which focuses on offering creative products and social media platform management, or the *kampung* marketer program, which offers community-based digital marketing services (Sulasih et al. 2022).

Empirical observation of KampungDigital.ID demonstrates several important characteristics of contemporary digital urban culture in Indonesia. First, the platform utilizes social media as a participatory public space where young people exchange information, build networks, and construct collective aspirations. Second, the platform emphasizes collaborative learning and community-based empowerment, reflecting the communal values traditionally associated with *kampung* culture. Third, the platform's digital activities reveal how urban youth increasingly rely on virtual environments for educational mobility, professional development, and social recognition.

KampungDigital.ID has also organized several programs related to youth innovation, digital entrepreneurship, and international

collaboration. For instance, the *Youth Innovation Forum Japan* introduced Indonesian youth to discussions on Society 5.0, sustainable development, and global technological innovation. Through online engagement and social media campaigns, the platform successfully connected participants from different regions in Indonesia, illustrating how digital space can transcend geographical boundaries while maintaining communal participation.

This transformation indicates that the *kampung* is no longer merely understood as a physical settlement, but also as a metauniverse of social interaction and collective identity. Digital platforms increasingly function as spaces where urban communities negotiate belonging, solidarity, and participation in virtual environments.

The emergence of digital village initiatives also reflects broader transformations in urban social space. Digital platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and online forums increasingly function as new forms of public space where social interaction takes place. In this context, virtual environments replicate several characteristics traditionally associated with *kampung* life, including collective interaction, participation, and social networking.

Another form of digital village is the KampungChat, a chat room website allows users to interact, communicate, and exchange ideas with other users on a digital platform. There are also grassroots initiatives from community groups trying to introduce and implement digital technology in their communities, one of which is in the city of Yogyakarta through the internet village program (Tremblay 2018; Yunanto 2014). The hope is that this program will increase community participation in accessing the internet, which will impact the economy and quality of life of residents.

These examples demonstrate how digital technology increasingly mediates urban social relations. The role of digital platforms extends beyond communication and becomes an important mechanism for constructing identity, facilitating participation, and producing social space. This condition reflects a broader shift toward post-industrial urban society characterized by the dominance of information technology and service-based economies.

The digitalization trend in all sectors of urban life will continue to increase in the coming decades, and will certainly become the new norm that will affect crucial aspects of social life, such as education, health, public services, the economy, and financing (UN DESA 2020). As digital natives, the Millennial, Z, and Alpha generations will help determine and shape the future of the digitalization process in Indonesia, including the creation of inclusive and safe digital spaces. The voices and actions of young people as agents of digital change will transform the lifestyle and patterns of urban people in the coming decades.

So, what about the role of digitalization in urban development? Regarding this, Sutriadi and Wulandari (2014) stated that the use of information technology plays a significant role in coordinating the planning process, but its utilization is not evenly distributed among local governments in Indonesia. For example, the Surabaya City government has been quite successful in creating innovations in urban digital systems, such as e-KTP, Suroboyo Bus, e-Health, e-UMKM, e-Budgeting, and e-Surat (Qatrunnada, Utomo, and Putri 2022). Therefore, collaboration between the government, the community, and the private sector can be carried out through the use of digital platforms, which of course can save and shorten

time, and have a broader impact because it can be reached by all levels of society.

The widespread use of information technology in everyday life demonstrates that urban society in Indonesia is slowly transitioning into a post-industrial society. This aligns with the thinking of Touraine (1969) who stated that the main characteristics of this society are the shift from an industrial-based economy to a service-based sector, supported by the dominant role of information technology, as well as the emergence of a new social class based on technological mastery. The Indonesian case demonstrates the central role of digital platforms in accelerating the transformation of urban society from industrial to post-industrial.

Returning to the initial question of this study, how relevant is the digital village from the perspective of contemporary urban culture in Indonesia? Based on the explanation above, it is certain that digital transformation is inevitable in the current era of disruption, especially with the increasing dependence of Generation Z and Alpha on the use of gadgets in their daily lives. As agents of the formation of contemporary urban culture in Indonesia, the role of these two generations will be very important in shaping and creating new cultures, including the formation of social spaces in the form of metauniverses, such as chat rooms, discussion spaces, sales places, or as a form of social validation (Onifade 2022).

Certainly, a major challenge for regional and city planners regarding the digitalization of the planning process is to transform the discourse on public space and also involve the younger generation in the urban planning process through digital platforms. The existence of urban public spaces, which were previously spatial and served as a place to build urban social cohesion (Putra and Horne 2015), is slowly transforming

into digital spaces. These opportunities must be seized immediately by urban planners in the era of disruption, in order to create inclusive urban spaces with the help of information technology.

Despite its progressive promise, the concept of the digital village should not be viewed uncritically as a neutral or universally beneficial outcome of digital transformation. Digital platforms are often shaped by market logics, algorithmic control, and unequal power relations, which can undermine the communal and egalitarian values traditionally associated with the *kampung*. Rather than fostering collective participation, digital village initiatives may privilege digitally literate, economically advantaged, and urban middle-class users, while marginalizing those with limited access to technology or digital skills. Furthermore, the reliance on privately owned platforms raises concerns about data exploitation, surveillance, and the commodification of social interaction, where community engagement is transformed into measurable metrics and economic value. Without critical governance frameworks and strong public oversight, the digital village risks becoming a symbolic label that masks structural inequalities, rather than a transformative model for inclusive urban social space.

In the Indonesian context, digital village initiatives may therefore operate simultaneously as spaces of empowerment and mechanisms of exclusion. Without strong public regulation, inclusive digital literacy programs, and equitable access to technological infrastructure, the digital village risks becoming merely a symbolic representation of modernization rather than a transformative model for socially inclusive urban space.

The emergence of the digital village reflects broader transformations occurring within contemporary urban culture in Indonesia. Digital

technology has fundamentally reshaped social interaction, community participation, and the production of urban space. Platforms such as KampungDigital.ID demonstrate how digital environments increasingly function as extensions of communal culture, enabling youth participation, collaborative learning, and virtual social networking.

At the same time, digital transformation also introduces important challenges related to social inequality, technological access, and the commodification of community interaction. The future of digital urbanism in Indonesia therefore depends not only on technological advancement but also on the ability of governments, communities, and planners to create inclusive, participatory, and equitable digital spaces.

Ultimately, the concept of the digital village illustrates how traditional communal values continue to evolve within contemporary technological environments. Rather than disappearing, *kampung* culture is being re-interpreted and reconstructed within digital platforms, creating new forms of social space that combine local identity, virtual participation, and global connectivity.

Conclusion

Digital village represents the transformation of traditional communal values, social relationships, and collective identities into digitally mediated spaces within contemporary Indonesian urban culture. Digital platforms, exemplified by KampungDigital.ID and KampungChat.org, extend community interaction beyond physical boundaries, creating hybrid sociocultural spaces that facilitate youth participation, knowledge exchange, and social networking. However, these transformations also reveal challenges related to digital inequality, social exclusion, and the commodification of community interactions.

This study lies in its integration of cultural studies, critical digital sociology, and urban studies to conceptualize digital village beyond technological adoption. By examining digital initiatives through the perspectives of cultural meaning, social space and power relations, this study contributes a critical understanding of how traditional communal values are reproduced and negotiated in digital environments. It also highlights the relevance of digital communities for more inclusive and participatory urban planning in Indonesia.

Nevertheless, this study is limited by its qualitative approach and reliance on purposively selected, publicly accessible digital platforms, particularly in examining community interactions and digital initiatives. Future research could incorporate interviews, participant observation, comparative case studies, and quantitative methods to explore users' experiences across different socioeconomic groups and urban contexts. Further investigation is also needed to assess how digital village initiatives can promote equitable participation, strengthen community resilience, and inform inclusive urban planning practices.[]

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