



Transformation of Mutual Cooperation Values in the Digital Era: A Case Study of Urban Societies in the Archipelago

Susanty Septy¹

¹) State Islamic University of Sultan Thaha Saifuddin, Jambi, Indonesia,

* Corresponding Author: Susanty Septy. Email: susan@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the transformation of mutual cooperation values in the context of urban communities in the archipelago in the digital era. Mutual cooperation, as one of the basic values deeply rooted in Indonesian culture, is now facing challenges due to the rapid development of technology and digitalization that affects social interactions in society. This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study method in urban communities with high digital access. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and literature analysis to understand how the concept of mutual cooperation has changed in participation patterns, forms of collaboration, and how people interact collectively in the digital space. The results of the study show that although the value of mutual cooperation remains relevant, the patterns and forms of its implementation have shifted, such as the increase in mutual cooperation activities based on digital platforms and changes in social relations in society. This study also identifies that digitalization allows the formation of virtual mutual cooperation, which allows people to continue to collaborate even though they do not meet physically. These findings provide important insights for the government and other stakeholders in designing social policies that facilitate the strengthening of mutual cooperation values in the digital era.

Keywords: Mutual cooperation, Value Transformation, Digital Era, Urban Society, Nusantara

INTRODUCTION

The value of mutual cooperation is one of the most important cultural foundations for Indonesian society. Historically, mutual cooperation reflects cooperation, solidarity, and a sense of togetherness that is manifested in various forms of communal activities, both in rural and urban areas (Geertz, 1963). However, the rapid development of technology and digitalization has brought significant changes in the social life of society, especially in urban areas where access to technology is higher. This change raises questions about





how traditional values such as mutual cooperation remain relevant or even transform in the digital era, where the way of interacting and collaborating is increasingly influenced by digital technology (Putra & Kurnia, 2022).

In the digital era, urban communities are experiencing changes in the way they interact and work together. Various digital platforms allow people to collaborate virtually without having to meet physically, as seen in various digital mutual cooperation initiatives in the form of fundraising, application-based social activities, and online community platforms (Hidayat et al., 2023). The presence of this technology, although it facilitates interaction, also has the potential to change the form, frequency, and quality of mutual cooperation itself. With technology, mutual cooperation is no longer limited to physical space or close social relationships, but includes a wide network that can be accessed via the internet, which can have positive or negative impacts on people's social relations (Astuti & Wijayanti, 2023).

However, the transformation of mutual cooperation values in the digital era is not free from various challenges. The digitalization of social interactions has the potential to reduce the emotional closeness and social bonds that are usually present in physical mutual cooperation activities. For example, several studies have shown that virtual interactions cannot always replace the depth of relationships created through direct contact in traditional mutual cooperation activities (Supriyanto, 2023). In an urban context, people tend to be busy with their daily routines, so the form of mutual cooperation that is built is more pragmatic and oriented towards time efficiency rather than strong emotional bonds (Kurnia & Pratama, 2023).

By considering these aspects, this study aims to analyze how the value of mutual cooperation is transformed in the context of urban society in the digital era, especially in terms of participation patterns and forms of collaboration. This study is important to understand the impact of digitalization on social values that are the foundation of community cohesion, as well as its implications for social policies that can support the strengthening of mutual cooperation values in an increasingly virtually connected era. By understanding this value transformation, it is hoped that appropriate strategies can be identified to facilitate the sustainability of mutual cooperation in a form that is relevant to modern society (Sari et al., 2022).

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study method to explore the transformation of mutual cooperation values in urban communities in the Indonesian archipelago in the context of the digital era. The research locations were selected purposively in several large cities in Indonesia, where access to digital technology is higher and digital-based mutual cooperation activities are starting to develop. Primary data were collected through in-depth interviews with key informants, including urban communities, community leaders, and academics who have expertise in sociology and social change. In addition, participant observation was conducted in various community activities that utilize digital platforms for collaborative activities, such as online fundraising and other virtual community activities (Astuti & Wijayanti, 2023).

Data analysis was conducted thematically by identifying patterns of participation and changes in the form of collaboration in society related to the value of mutual cooperation. The triangulation process was applied by verifying findings from interviews, participant observations, and the latest literature to increase the validity and reliability of the research results (Sari & Putra, 2022). The data collected were also





analyzed through an inductive approach, allowing for new findings related to challenges and opportunities in maintaining the value of mutual cooperation in the digital space. Thus, this study provides an overview of the dynamics of mutual cooperation in the digital era and its implications for social policy in the urban environment of the archipelago (Kurnia & Pratama, 2023).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

This study found that the value of mutual cooperation in urban communities in the archipelago has undergone a transformation in the digital era, especially in participation patterns and forms of collaboration. Digital technology, such as social media and community applications, has enabled people to stay connected and collaborate without being limited by distance. Interviews showed that platforms such as WhatsApp, Telegram, and various social media are widely used to coordinate social activities, such as fundraising and charity events. With technology, interactions in the form of virtual mutual cooperation can be carried out more quickly and practically, while reaching wider participation (Astuti & Wijayanti, 2023).

This form of mutual cooperation has shifted from physical activities to digital collaboration. Online donation and fundraising platforms such as Kitabisa and GoFundMe are widely used by the public to support social initiatives. This virtual collaboration can reach more support due to easy access and fast response times. This finding is in line with the view that digital technology expands the scope of mutual cooperation, enabling participation from communities beyond regional boundaries, who previously had difficulty engaging in social activities (Kurnia & Pratama, 2023; Lubis & Santoso, 2022).

However, there are challenges in the digitalization of mutual cooperation. Several respondents indicated a decrease in emotional closeness in digital-based interactions due to the lack of direct contact. Digital mutual cooperation focuses more on efficiency and results, but lacks the closeness that is usually created in physical mutual cooperation. This shows that virtual collaboration needs to be balanced with direct social interaction to maintain the depth of relationships between individuals, even though technology facilitates collaboration (Rohmah & Sugiyanto, 2023).

Technology also opens up new opportunities to expand mutual cooperation. Digitalization enables a wider mutual cooperation network with cross-regional involvement. For urban communities with high mobility, digital platforms are a means to stay involved in social activities without being limited by time and place. These findings suggest that with the right approach, digitalization can strengthen the value of mutual cooperation in modern society, as an important element in social cohesion (Putri & Santoso, 2023).

Discussion

The findings of this study reveal a nuanced transformation of mutual cooperation (gotong royong) in urban Indonesian societies within the digital era. The research highlights a critical intersection between traditional cultural values and technological advancement, demonstrating how digital platforms are reshaping social interactions and collaborative practices. The most significant observation is the shift from physical to virtual mutual cooperation. Digital platforms like WhatsApp, Telegram, and online fundraising sites such as Kitabisa have fundamentally altered how urban communities engage in collaborative activities.





This transformation is characterized by increased accessibility, broader reach, and enhanced time efficiency. The digital space has effectively dissolved geographical barriers, enabling cross-regional participation that was previously challenging.

However, the study also reveals important challenges inherent in this digital transformation. While technology facilitates broader collaboration, it simultaneously risks eroding the emotional depth and interpersonal connections traditionally associated with mutual cooperation. Respondents noted a potential decline in social intimacy, suggesting that virtual interactions cannot fully replicate the nuanced social bonds formed through face-to-face interactions. The research demonstrates that digital mutual cooperation is more pragmatic and result-oriented. Urban communities, characterized by high mobility and limited time, find digital platforms an efficient alternative to traditional collaborative methods. This pragmatism reflects broader societal changes driven by technological integration and urban lifestyle dynamics. Importantly, the study suggests that digitalization need not be viewed as a threat to mutual cooperation but as an evolutionary adaptation. The key lies in maintaining a balance between virtual and physical interactions, ensuring that technological convenience does not completely replace meaningful social connections.

CONCLUSION

The study reveals a significant transformation of mutual cooperation (gotong royong) in urban Indonesian societies within the digital era, demonstrating how traditional cultural values adapt to technological advancement. Digital platforms have fundamentally reshaped social interactions, expanding collaborative practices beyond geographical limitations through tools like WhatsApp, Telegram, and online fundraising platforms. While these technologies facilitate broader and more efficient participation, they simultaneously challenge the depth of social connections traditionally established through face-to-face interactions. The research highlights a nuanced shift from physical to virtual mutual cooperation, where urban communities increasingly engage in social activities through digital networks, prioritizing time efficiency and wider reach. However, this transformation is not without complexity; the study identifies a potential erosion of emotional intimacy in digital interactions, suggesting that technological facilitation must be balanced with meaningful personal connections. Despite these challenges, the findings indicate that mutual cooperation remains a resilient and adaptable social value, capable of evolving to meet the demands of a rapidly digitalizing society. The research provides crucial insights for policymakers and social researchers, emphasizing the need to develop strategies that leverage digital technologies while preserving the fundamental human elements of social solidarity and community support.

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