

**A REVIEW OF THE GROUNDED THEORY APPROACH
ON PUBLIC SERVICE INNOVATION IN INDIGENOUS VILLAGES**

Sumarwanto

Faculty of social and political sciences,
Universitas Airlangga,
taufik.maulana-@fisip.unair.ac.id;

Welly Kusuma Wardani

Faculty of social and political sciences,
Universitas Airlangga,
taufik.maulana-@fisip.unair.ac.id;

Asri Lestari

Faculty of social and political sciences,
Universitas Airlangga,
taufik.maulana-@fisip.unair.ac.id;

Taufik Maulana

Faculty of social and political sciences,
Universitas Airlangga,
taufik.maulana-@fisip.unair.ac.id;

ABSTRACT

Public service innovation in traditional villages is a practice that not only reflects responses to community needs but also results from unique local cultural, social, and legal dynamics. This study aims to explore and understand the phenomenon of public service innovation in the context of traditional villages in Indonesia through a Constructivist Grounded Theory approach. This approach was chosen because it is capable of exploring the subjective meanings and interpretations of indigenous communities regarding the public services they experience. The research uses a qualitative method with literature review as the primary data collection technique, which includes an examination of scientific sources related to grounded theory, the authority of traditional villages, and public service innovation practices. The findings reveal that public service innovation in traditional villages cannot be separated from traditional values, local deliberation, and unique socio-cultural structures. Case studies such as the Majelis Krama Desa (MKD) in North Lombok and the recording of traditional marriages by the Malay Customary Institution in Muaro Jambi demonstrate how public services are implemented through customary mechanisms that still accommodate principles of human rights and national law. The study concludes that the Constructivist Grounded Theory approach provides a relevant framework for understanding public service innovation based on local wisdom in traditional villages, and recommends the importance of cultural sensitivity and participatory dialogue in the design and evaluation of public policies in traditional areas.

Keywords: *public service innovation, traditional village, grounded theory, local wisdom.*

A. INTRODUCTION

According to the *Peraturan Menteri Reformasi Administrasi dan Birokrasi (Permenpan-RB) Nomor 89 Tahun 2020* concerning the Implementation of Public Service Innovations, public service innovation is a breakthrough in the type of public service that is either an original creative idea and/or adaptation/modification that provides benefits to the community, either directly or indirectly. This is also in line with the statement that innovation is often defined by two interrelated activities, namely a) finding and identifying something new and b) developing this new thing to work in a particular context, Fuglsang (2010). Research on institutional adaptation has identified patterns of how communities innovate in public service delivery across different governance conventions and implementation frameworks, Setijaningrum et al (2025). In the citizen-centred governance model Hartley states that public managers are explorers rather than clerks and citizens are co-producers rather than clients. Thus, in this approach, innovation is considered as an emerging phenomenon, Hartley (2005) in Fuglsang (2010).

Villages as the smallest unit of governance have a very strategic role for national development and are considered to play a role in realizing the ideals of independence. This is the background for the establishment of the *Undang-Undang No. 6/2014* on Villages. The law is evidence that the State respects the presence and role of village communities, including indigenous villages. Indigenous villages in Indonesia are seen as the presence of the principle of communal ownership - in which the means of production and distribution of products (i.e. goods and services) are controlled by the people as a group, Gildenhuis (2004) - which is present in the diversity of Indonesian society.

The emergence of public service innovation cannot be separated from the lived experience, culture, and social processes of a community as the ultimate beneficiary of a public service. In research related to bricolage, Fuglsang (2010) states that the concept of bricolage, which is understood as a small adjustment following the do-it yourself principle, can help analyze and understand how citizens are involved in public service innovation. In one of their studies, Wardiyanto et al (2024) mentioned that research examining cultural literacy and contextual intelligence in public administration shows that effective public services require the ability to navigate cultural, social, and political dynamics in addition to technical capabilities.

Public services can be seen as a form of government interaction with the community in terms of fulfilling basic needs, protecting citizens' rights, and providing various facilities and services that support social and economic welfare. In the process of interaction, the community certainly has social experience, where social experience allows it to be defined as a perceived problem in the utilization of public services so as to encourage the emergence of a public service innovation. So that public service performance is not (solely) about effective design in relation to its objectives, but also about the subjective experience of the

service by its customers, Osborne et al. (2013) in Gaule (2022).

One approach that is considered capable of understanding the social interactions and experiences felt by participants (the community) is Grounded Theory. Born from the discipline of sociology, Grounded Theory emphasizes the importance of developing an understanding of human behavior through a process of discovery and induction, rather than the more traditional quantitative research process of hypothesis testing and deduction, Elliot et al. (2004). The premise of Grounded Theory is that empirical inquiry should explore social phenomena by looking at what people experience, what problems exist, and how individuals solve these problems. In other words, research is led and guided through the experiences of participants and the findings reflect patterns in these experiences, Engwar (2013).

So far, the assessment of public innovation has only been determined by criteria around how successful the government (through public services) can be as a solution, problem solving, replicability and sustainability. There are still few assessments of public service innovations (especially in indigenous villages) that focus on social experiences, social interactions from the perspective of the community as users and final beneficiaries of the public service itself. The existence of a public service innovation, especially in indigenous villages, has certainly gone through a process of interaction, social experience and socio-cultural changes from the community in the indigenous village itself. As is known, in a traditional village, the application of rules (including public services) has certainly gone through a process of interaction (generally in the form of customary *musyarawah*) between leaders and the indigenous community itself.

Grounded theory is considered capable of understanding how the social experience of indigenous peoples in relation to public service innovations present in an indigenous village. As for the strengths that grounded theory has in analyzing certain themes/studies, grounded theory provides a methodology for developing an understanding of social phenomena that is not previously formed or theoretically developed with existing theories and paradigms. It is further argued that grounded theory is useful for researchers investigating phenomena where there is little previous research Engward (2013). The focus of grounded theory is to investigate what happens in a social context to reveal patterns in social life that participants may or may not be aware of, while maintaining the value of grounded theory, which is to adopt a neutral view of human action/behavior in a social context, Simmons (2006) in Engward (2013).

B. METHOD

The research method used to explain the public innovation of indigenous village authority with a grounded theory approach is qualitative research with a literature study. Literature study is a research process that uses literature sources as a source of data and information. In this study, researchers formulated the research sub themes into 4 (four) sub, namely the history of the emergence of grounded theory (GT), the authority of indigenous villages, public service innovation in indigenous villages, and the advantages and disadvantages of grounded theory in research on public service innovation in villages. With these

four sub-themes, researchers then selected literature by selecting books, articles, journals and online references that are relevant to the research theme. The results of the analysis of the selected literature were used to explore the research theme, resulting in an in-depth understanding of the grounded theory approach as a research methodology for village authority public service innovation.

C. EXPLANATION

History of the Emergence of Grounded Theory (the beginning)

Grounded theory (GT) emerged on the basis of criticism of quantitative research methods that are considered too rigid and only focus on variables, numbers, and statistics. This tends to ignore the social reality of a person's experiences, feelings, perceptions, and subjectives. So there is a need to conduct qualitative research that is not only by testing theories, but by developing theories based on data obtained from the field. Therefore, GT arises from the need to understand social reality and human experience in depth.

Grounded theory (GT) was first introduced in 1967 by two sociologists named Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss, through their book entitled "The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research". This book marks the birth of grounded theory methodology in qualitative research. The grounded theory emerged because the quantitative approach at that time did more research that relied on theory without truth in the data.

The method that Glaser and Strauss want to develop is to explore the truth in the data collected and analyzed to then produce a new theory. This means that grounded theory is developed inductively based on data analysis, not from existing theories (deductive). So it can be concluded that the purpose of grounded theory is to develop new theories based on data, not to test existing theories.

Evolution of Grounded Theory (Discourse of the Figures)

The three figures who introduced grounded theory, Barney Glaser, Anselm Strauss, and Kathy Charmaz, turned out to have different ways of thinking in interpreting the grounded theory research. This discourse occurs because of differences in philosophical views, methodological approaches, and interpretations of how the theory should be built. The discourse of the three historical figures of Grounded Theory are:

a. Classic Grounded Theory

Glaser argues that grounded theory transcends all descriptive methods. Furthermore, Glaser argues (e.g., 1978, 1994, 2002a) that grounded theory, in simple terms, is the generation of emergent conceptual categories and their properties that are integrated into hypotheses that produce multivariate theories. Glaser writes in *Discovery of Grounded Theory* that a grounded theory researcher should initially ignore all existing literature regarding the actual research area and simply enter the research field with open eyes and ears and with little prejudice. The researcher only needs to expose himself to the research area, and then the data, as well as the research questions, will present themselves. Furthermore, Glaser states that "all is data", meaning that what happens in the research area is data, whether it is assessed through interviews, observations, diaries, or documents in any combination, Hallberg (2006).

b. Straussian Grounded Theory

Strauss published *Qualitative Analysis for Social Scientists* (1987). Soon after the separation, Anselm Strauss and Juliet Corbin, a nurse researcher in the United States, began their research collaboration. Strauss and Corbin explicitly argued that reality cannot be fully known but can always be interpreted. Strauss and Corbin approached a more limited research area than Glaser and they emphasized the importance of listening to the voices of informants. As such, the research process is enriched by subjectivity as the resulting theory is a created "reality", structured through a transactional process involving the researcher and the data. Strauss and Corbin describe, in their book, a hierarchical coding process that includes three steps, namely open, axial, and selective coding, Hallberg (2006).

c. Constructivist Grounded Theory

Charmaz (1995, 2000, 2006) has presented a constructivist mode of grounded theory, which can be seen as an approach between positivism and postmodernism. Constructivism assumes that there are multiple social realities simultaneously, not just one 'real reality'. In constructivist grounded theory, it is emphasized that data is structured through ongoing interactions between the researcher and participants. It is also assumed that action and meaning are dialectical; meaning shapes action and action influences meaning Hallberg, (2006).

Table 1: Differences between Classic GT, Straussian GT and Constructivist GT

Aspect	Classic GT	Straussian GT	Constructivist GT
Source of theory	Purely from data	Deductive inductive combination	Theory built with participants
Main approach	Purely inductive	Inductive + Deductive	Inductive, interpretive
Basic philosophy	Positivism, empiricism	Positivism, hermeneutics	Postmodernism, constructivism
Researcher role	Neutral, passive observer	Systematic data processor	Active, co-constructor
Literature review	Avoiding literature	Using theory to guide coding	Use of theory integrated to strengthen interpretation
Analysis technique	Open coding, constant comparison	Open, axial, selective coding	Flexible coding

Source: *Author's analysis*

Traditional Village

Indonesia with its diversity that includes ethnicity, race, religion, language, customs and local culture has characteristics or uniqueness that distinguish one region from another. The diversity of cultures and traditions in each region forms a village. Etymologically, the word village comes from Sanskrit, which means homeland, hometown or birthplace. Geographically, a village is defined as a group of houses or shops in a country area, smaller than a town.

Villages as the smallest unit of government have a very strategic role in national development. There are 3 (three) important things that the government has done to strengthen the position of villages as part of the government in Indonesia. First, it issued the *Undang-Undang No. 6/2014* on Villages as a legal basis that regulates the position and authority of villages in the Indonesian government system. Second, the government has established a special ministry that deals with villages under the nomenclature of the Ministry of Villages, Development of Disadvantaged Regions and Transmigration. Third, the government has allocated an increasing amount of Village Fund each year to support the realization of village acceleration. From 2015 to 2024 a total of 608.9 trillion has been disbursed.

The enactment of the *Undang-Undang No. 6/2014* on Villages has given villages a new dignity in the governance system. The Village Law means that villages also have autonomy, authority, and the right to manage their own affairs. The village is recognized as one of the lowest levels of government that is directly related to the people. Thus, villages and rural communities are given the space and legitimacy to be able to organize and manage their own order on the basis of their needs.

According to the *Undang-Undang No. 6/2014* on Villages, Villages are villages and customary villages or what are called by other names, hereinafter referred to as Villages, are legal community units that have territorial boundaries that are authorized to regulate and manage government affairs, the interests of the local community based on community initiatives, origin rights, and/or traditional rights that are recognized and respected in the system of government of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia Sekretariat of State (2014). The designation of village or customary village is adjusted to the designation that applies in the local area Sekretariat Negara (2014).

In accordance with the *Undang-Undang No. 6/2014* on Villages, the Village has the right to carry out governance, development, community development and community empowerment in the Village. The four (4) village authorities recognized in the law, include 1) authority based on the right of origin, 2) local authority on village scale, 3) authority assigned from the Government, Provincial Government, or Regency / City, 4) other authorities assigned by the Government, Provincial Government, or Regency / City Government in accordance with the provisions of laws and regulations. Meanwhile, the authority of indigenous villages includes 1) regulation and implementation of governance based on the original structure; 2) regulation and management of ulayat or customary territories; 3) preservation of the socio-cultural values of indigenous villages; 4) settlement of customary disputes based on customary law applicable in indigenous

villages in areas that are in line with the principles of human rights by prioritizing deliberative settlement; 5) organization of indigenous village judicial peace sessions in accordance with the provisions of laws and regulations; 6) maintenance of peace and order in indigenous villages based on customary law applicable in indigenous villages; and 7) development of customary law life in accordance with the socio-cultural conditions of the indigenous village community. State Secretariat (2014)

While villages have characteristics that apply generally throughout Indonesia, customary villages have characteristics that differ from those of villages in general, particularly due to the strong influence of adat on local governance systems, local resource management, and the socio-cultural life of village communities. In practice, the governance system and the management of social life in adat villages have significant differences compared to conventional villages. These differences mainly lie in the legal system, governance, territorial arrangements, and the socio-cultural system.

In essence, indigenous villages have an important authority and position to preserve the local wisdom and traditions of indigenous peoples. This authority includes regulating the social, cultural, and economic aspects of indigenous peoples. Even in government affairs, villages are given the space to organize the administration of their village government, in this case public services with mechanisms based on their cultural identity. The authority of customary villages provides space for indigenous peoples to manage their lives in accordance with existing ancestral traditions and culture. Customary villages also have an important function in the Indonesian government system in maintaining the continuity of customs and strengthening the nation's cultural identity.

Thus, customary villages help maintain a balance between local cultural preservation and national development, while ensuring that modernization does not erode the nation's cultural roots. The role of customary villages is clear evidence that cultural diversity in Indonesia is not a barrier, but a force that enriches and strengthens unity within the framework of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia.

Table 2: Differences between Villages and Customary Villages

Aspects	Village	Customary Village
Definition	A legal community unit with territorial boundaries that has the authority to regulate and manage government affairs, the interests of the local community based on community initiatives, origin rights, and/or traditional rights that are recognized and respected within the government system of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia.	A customary law community unit that historically has territorial boundaries and a cultural identity formed on a territorial basis that is authorized to regulate and manage the interests of the Village community based on original rights.
Legal System	National law	Customary law
Government	Village government is more administrative in nature, led by the Village Head (formed through village head elections), which focuses on organizing village administration, village development, socio-cultural development and community empowerment.	Customary governance is based on customary structures, which can be led by customary figures, tribal chiefs, or customary leaders (appointed based on customs), with a focus on preserving and managing customs, customary governance, managing customary territories and developing local culture.
Territorial arrangements	Refers to government administrative boundaries (district/city, province).	Based on customary boundaries that have been passed down from generation to generation.
Social and Cultural Systems	Socio-culture follows national development and modernization, but remains based on local values.	Social and cultural systems are strongly influenced by adat, customary norms, ceremonies, and customary law.
Focus	Governance, development, empowerment	Preservation of customs and traditions

Source: Author's Analysis

Discussions

Public service innovation in indigenous villages

Public service is at the heart of governance. The village, as one of the lowest levels of government, must also be able to provide services to the village community. These services aim to help facilitate the affairs of the Village community, fulfill the basic and rights of the Village community, and to encourage the acceleration of growth and development in the Village. Public services in the village may include health, education, infrastructure, population administration, environment, socioeconomics, and security and order. By holding the principles of openness, fairness, speed, effectiveness, and efficiency in every fulfillment of services to the community.

Public services in the Village will be the success point of Village Government governance itself. Whether or not a Village Government is good will be judged by how far public services are provided and felt fully by the community. If the service is good, it will encourage trust and participation of the village community. On the other hand, if services are slow and complicated, dissatisfaction and distrust will arise in the village community.

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA) also supports public services in the village by issuing the *Permendagri No. 2/2017* on Village Minimum Service Standards (MSS). In reference to Lovelock (2001), service standards are predetermined specifications regarding certain aspects of a service, which aim to ensure consistency in the implementation of these services. Service standards are needed as a control and benchmark tool for the Government so that it is not arbitrary and truly provides public services in fulfilling community rights. The existence of this Permendagri regulation is expected to accelerate the improvement of the quality of services to the Village community, in order to encourage openness and facilitate the fulfillment of the basic rights of the Village community.

Despite the fact that in the field, public services in the Village still have some shortcomings due to lack of infrastructure, limited systems and information, and slow handling of services. For example, in the administration of population administration, there are still many problems in the field due to the lack of information, slow handling, convoluted flow, and possibly the existence of "illegal levies" outside the existing official provisions. Convenience and speed should be the main principles of public services, so that people can immediately fulfill their basic rights and create true trust in the Village Government.

The demands of public services and technological advances mean that the Village Government must be responsive to the situation. This can be done by innovating in services, increasing the capacity of the apparatus, and maximizing the use of technology for services. Village governments are required to continue to adapt and innovate in order to provide quality services that are relevant to the dynamics of the times.

Innovation is important because it can encourage the creation of services that are faster, effective, transparent, and in accordance with the needs of the community. Without innovation, public services in the village will be left behind and it will be difficult to respond to the challenges of an ever-evolving era.

Ultimately, this can hamper efforts to improve the overall welfare of the community. Reference Osborne & Brown (2005), explaining that innovation in public services involves the creation and implementation of new ideas to produce improvements in policies, programs, or services aimed at better meeting the needs of the community.

Village authority also encourages the Village government to be able to innovate public services. There are several public service innovations in the Village, namely digital-based administration and correspondence services, the creation of a village website, village tourism development, the application of village management and financial systems, and the development of social media for information and communication. The existence of public service innovations can help improve the quality of services to the village community. Innovation is not only limited to the use of technology, but also to increasing the capacity and mindset of the apparatus, improving work procedures, professionalism, and a more humanist approach to the community.

The authority based on the right of origin contained in the *Undang-Undang No. 6/2014* on Villages, the customary village has the right to organize and manage government affairs and natural resources in its territory in accordance with prevailing customs and traditions. This right includes the management of customary land, the organization of the government system, and the preservation of culture and customary norms that guide the life of the indigenous village community. Public service innovation in indigenous villages is an effort to improve the quality of services to indigenous villagers, while maintaining and respecting existing traditional values. Although indigenous villages have different governance systems and cultures from villages in general, public service innovation is still important to ensure effectiveness and efficiency in providing services to indigenous villagers.

In the context of Indonesia's plurality, indigenous villages have a unique position as government entities that have existed since before the Indonesian state was established. The unity of customary law communities that live with values, norms and rules that have been passed down from generation to generation are constitutionally recognized through the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia Article 18b "The State recognizes and respects the unity of customary law communities and their traditional rights as long as they are still alive and in accordance with the development of society and the principles of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, which are regulated by law". This recognition gives autonomy to customary villages to organize their customary village governance system, in this case public services based on local wisdom. This article takes one example in North Lombok Regency of village governance in terms of dispute resolution services through the Village Krama Council (*MKD*). Through the *Peraturan Bupati Lombok Utara No. 20/2017* on Village Krama Council Guidelines, *MKD* is mandated as a Village Community Institution in charge of dispute resolution in the village.

Villages in North Lombok Regency can form *MKD* with the scope of disputes that can be submitted for handling including: minor criminal offenses included as complaints, civil cases, and customary disputes. The *MKD* is expected

to accommodate problem solving with a customary law approach based on the norms, culture and values of village local wisdom. According to Najmul Akhyar, Regent of North Lombok for the 2016-2021 period, the role of *MKD* is to solve problems in the community, based on three perspectives, namely based on religious law, customary law and government law. It is not uncommon for problems resolved by custom to be more successful than formal approaches. An example is the maintenance of the forest in Bayan. If someone cuts down a tree in the middle of the forest, even if it is just one tree, the person will be fined with customary law sanctions. The effect is much heavier than formal legal sanctions. If it cannot be resolved with customary sanctions, then the person is subject to social sanctions, namely being expelled from the village Sukocokongso (2019). It should be underlined that the scope of dispute resolution by *MKD* does not include serious criminal offenses. There are still consequences (serious criminal offenses) to be tried in the realm of formal law, in this case through the police and trials.

Another example of village public services based on authority based on the right of origin is the public services organized by the Malay Customary Institution in Muaro Jambi Regency. As stated in the *Peraturan Daerah Muaro Jambi Nomor 11 Tahun 2002* concerning Empowerment, Preservation and Development of Customs and Customary Institutions of Muaro Jambi Regency, it confirms that customary institutions have one of the duties and functions, namely accommodating and channeling community opinions to the Government and resolving disputes concerning customary law, customs and community habits.

One of the public services organized by the Malay Customary Institution is the registration of customary marriages. In the Malay custom in Muaro Jambi, the marital status of the bride and groom is not only considered as a relationship between two individuals, but also as a bond between the extended family of the bride and groom and is part of the customary social structure. Therefore, the organization and recording of marriages in the traditional village of Muaro Jambi is carried out by custom and state.

The existence of a public service system in a customary village is a crystallization of the history, social structure, and cultural values that have developed long before the formation of a modern state because basically customary villages are formed from customary law communities that govern themselves based on norms, rules, and principles that have been passed down from generation to generation.

It is important to remember that public services organized by indigenous villages based on the right of origin must still pay attention to the principles of human rights and must not conflict in principle with national law, especially related to justice in serious cases such as violence or even the loss of a person's life. Thus, the implementation of public services in indigenous villages is not a form of resistance to the state, but a concrete manifestation of the principle of state recognition of pluralism and respect for socio-cultural diversity in Indonesia.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Grounded Theory in Research on Public Service Innovation in Indigenous Villages

The Grounded Theory method is a qualitative research approach that aims to build theories from the ground based on data collected directly from the field. Grounded Theory focuses on how meanings, norms and social practices are formed and carried out under certain conditions. Analyzing public services organized by indigenous village governments, Grounded Theory is very suitable for exploring the phenomenon of public services that have distinctive characteristics based on history, culture, and social values that are different from conventional public service systems. Public services in indigenous villages often do not follow conventional service schemes and procedures established by the state. Indigenous village service mechanisms rely on customary norms, the role of customary institutions, and the collective values of indigenous communities. Therefore, an open and exploratory research approach is needed so that researchers are able to capture the local reality as a whole. The advantages of the Grounded Theory approach in examining the phenomenon of public services in indigenous villages include:

a. Exploring social phenomena rooted in local wisdom.

Public services in indigenous villages often do not fully follow formal state patterns, but are based on customs, deliberation, and the role of customary institutions. Because these patterns are unique and contextual, the Grounded Theory approach allows researchers to find local theories that are born from the real practices of the community, rather than from theoretical frameworks brought from outside.

b. Making room for customary concepts to emerge from the data

In Grounded Theory, research concepts and categories are built from data in the field, not imposed from existing theories. This is particularly appropriate in indigenous villages, where the public service system may use terms, mechanisms or principles that are different from modern state bureaucratic terms, such as the concept of "customary deliberation" or "nirik mamak duties".

c. Favoring the perspectives of local actors

Grounded Theory encourages researchers to look at public services from the perspective of indigenous people themselves. This is important to understand how indigenous villagers value good public services, who is considered authorized to deliver them, and how public service decisions are made through customary mechanisms.

d. Flexible and responsive to new findings in the field

The iterative nature of the data collection and analysis process allows researchers to respond quickly to field findings and conduct analysis to deepen important aspects that emerge. This approach is suitable for capturing the richness of the social context, culture, and local values that may not be immediately apparent in the early stages of data collection.

The disadvantages of the Grounded Theory approach in researching the phenomenon of public services in indigenous villages include:

a. Time-consuming Research Process

Grounded Theory demands an iterative and in-depth data collection and analysis process. For public service innovations in indigenous villages, where the dynamics of custom are fluid and the decision-making process is slow, data collection can be very lengthy. Emerging innovations may not be fully mature enough to be immediately theorized.

b. Risk of Losing Focus on the Formal Policy Context

As Grounded Theory emphasizes building theory from local realities, there is a risk of overlooking the formal or national policy dimensions that also frame public service innovations in indigenous villages. In fact, in practice, innovations based on the right of origin in indigenous villages often have to interact or negotiate with state legal frameworks (such as Village the *Undang-Undang No. 6/2014*).

c. It is Difficult to Measure Innovation Effectiveness Objectively

Grounded Theory focuses more on understanding social processes and meanings, rather than quantitatively measuring the effectiveness or performance of public services. This is a limitation if the research aims to assess how successful the public service innovation is compared to certain standards or in the context of policy evaluation.

d. Data Validity Challenges

In indigenous communities, it is possible that the information provided is more normative (what should happen) than descriptive (what actually happens). Without strong data triangulation, Grounded Theory could potentially fall into the trap of idealizing indigenous narratives without enough evidence of how public service innovations are actually implemented.

e. Researcher Subjectivity

Although Grounded Theory claims to build theory from data, in practice researchers still carry interpretive biases. In the context of indigenous villages that have their own customary norms and language, the interpretation of researchers who do not fully understand local customs can cause distortions in the formation of categories and concepts.

D. CONCLUSION

Indonesia as a multicultural country has a variety of ethnicities, religions, customs and local cultures that enrich its regional characteristics. The village, which comes from the Sanskrit word for homeland or hometown, is the smallest unit of government with an important role in national development. To strengthen villages, the government passed the *Undang-Undang No. 6/2014* on Villages, established the Ministry of Villages, Development of Disadvantaged Regions and Transmigration, and allocated increasing amounts of Village Funds. The law grants autonomy to villages, including indigenous villages, to manage governance, development, community development, and community empowerment. Indigenous villages have distinctive legal, governance, territorial management, and socio-cultural systems compared to ordinary administrative villages, with customary law as the basis for their management.

Public services are one of the indicators of successful village governance. The government supports service improvement through the *Permendagri No.*

2/2017 on Village Minimum Service Standards. However, there are still obstacles in the field such as limited facilities and slow services. Public service innovation in the village is important, including the use of digital technology, strengthening the capacity of the apparatus, and involving local wisdom.

In the context of indigenous villages, public service innovation emphasizes respect for tradition by improving service quality. Examples include the establishment of the *Majelis Krama Desa (MKD)* in North Lombok, which resolves disputes using customary approaches, and the registration of customary marriages by the Malay Customary Institution in Muaro Jambi. Public services based on the right of origin must uphold the principles of human rights and be in line with national law, which is evidence of the state's recognition of Indonesia's socio-cultural diversity.

Grounded Theory can analyze social phenomena based on people's real experiences. In this context, Classic Grounded Theory emphasizes the suitability and usefulness of theories in real contexts and allows theories to be continuously developed in line with new data found. Straussian Grounded Theory emphasizes the importance of a systematic research process and the connection of theory with empirical data. In a constructivist perspective, theory prioritizes interpretation and abstract understanding over cause-and-effect explanations, and recognizes the subjectivity of both participants and researchers. Therefore, reflexivity and awareness of social, historical, and interactional contexts are essential in the quality of Constructivist Grounded Theory.

Considering the characteristics of each Grounded Theory school, the Constructivist Grounded Theory approach is more suitable for researching a public service innovation in indigenous villages. Constructivist Grounded Theory emphasizes understanding the subjective meanings and interpretations of each participant in a social, historical and local cultural context. Public service innovation in indigenous villages cannot be understood only from quantitative data but it is also necessary to understand how the participants involved construct their meanings, experiences and interactions with these innovations.

In conducting research on public service innovation in indigenous villages using the Constructivist Grounded Theory approach, the researchers recommend the following:

- a) Focusing research on how indigenous people understand, interpret and experience public service innovations, by collecting community narratives about the service changes they feel.
- b) Open a space for dialog, by helping participants build a shared understanding of the concepts of innovation, service and success according to their local values.
- c) Researchers should have a deep contextual understanding of local customs, social structures and language, this will enrich data interpretation and prevent distortion of meaning when developing theoretical concepts.
- d) Constantly compare data from one participant to another, from one concept to another, to find patterns and variations in the experience of public service innovation.

- e) Ensure that the research results can benefit indigenous villages, for example by recommending ways to improve service innovation based on local wisdom.

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