

# Artificial Intelligence and the Sociology of Folklore: A Comparative Study of Turkey and Indonesia

Dewi Christa Kobis<sup>1</sup>, Michel Farrel Tomatala<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Universitas Sam Ratulangi, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup>STMIK Multicom Bolaang Mongondow, Indonesia

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## ABSTRACT

*This study examines how Artificial Intelligence (AI) mediates the production and circulation of folklore in Turkey and Indonesia and asks: How does AI mediate folklore production and circulation in both contexts? And What similarities and differences characterize AI-folklore interaction from a sociological perspective? Using a qualitative comparative cultural sociology design, the analysis draws on Turkish sociological theory, Ziya Gökalp's concept of halk kültürü and Şerif Mardin's center-periphery framework alongside documentary and digital ethnographic observation of publicly accessible folklore texts, AI-mediated outputs (retellings, translations, summaries), and platform-based circulation. Findings show that AI mediates folklore production through textual regeneration, translation, narrative standardization, and platform-oriented adaptation, while circulation is shaped by recommendation, tagging, ranking, and translation interfaces that regulate visibility, dissemination, and the dominance of particular versions. Although both countries experience algorithmic pressures on cultural memory and narrative visibility, impacts diverge by context: Turkey's institutionally anchored cultural authority tends to constrain AI toward selective continuity, whereas Indonesia's pluralistic and decentralized landscape allows AI and platforms to operate as stronger cultural gatekeepers, enabling more transformative reinterpretations. Overall, the study concludes that AI is a structural cultural mediator whose sociological effects are context-dependent, amplifying existing power relations rather than uniformly transforming folklore.*

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### Corresponding Author:

Dewi Christa Kobis,

Department of English Literature,

Universitas Sam Ratulangi.

Email: kobisdewichrista@unsrat.ac.id

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The advancement of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has not only reshaped technological systems but has also significantly influenced social and cultural practices [1]. AI technologies such as natural language processing, automated text generation, and algorithmic content curation increasingly participate in the production and circulation of narratives [2]. As a result, cultural forms that were traditionally transmitted through human agency such as folklore are now mediated by intelligent systems. This shift marks a critical transformation in how collective memory, cultural identity, and social values are preserved and reinterpreted in contemporary societies.

Folklore has long been examined within sociology and literary studies as a social product that reflects communal experience, moral values, and cultural continuity. Classical sociological perspectives emphasize folklore as an expression of collective consciousness rather than an individual creation. However, existing studies on Artificial Intelligence largely focus on technical efficiency, prediction models, or computational performance, while sociological analyses of AI-mediated cultural narratives remain limited. In particular, there is a lack of research that situates AI within the sociological study of folklore, especially in comparative cultural contexts.

From a sociological standpoint, the integration of AI into folklore practices raises fundamental questions. When algorithms, generate, translate, or curate folklore narratives, who hold cultural authority? How is authenticity negotiated when tradition is mediated by non-human agents? These questions become more complex in societies with strong historical relationships between folklore and national or local identity. Yet, most AI-related research does not sufficiently address these sociological dimensions, resulting in a conceptual gap between technological innovation and cultural analysis.

This study addresses this gap by adopting a comparative sociological approach to folklore in Turkey and Indonesia. Turkey provides a particularly relevant theoretical foundation through the works of Turkish sociologist such as Serif Mardin and Ziya Gokalp. Gokalp conceptualized folklore as the core of national culture of in Turkish, written as (*halk kültürü*), emphasizing its role in shaping collective identity during modernization processes [3]. Meanwhile, Mardin's center-periphery theory highlights the social dynamics between elite modernization projects and popular cultural traditions [4]. These frameworks offer valuable tools for understanding how folklore functions within broader social structures, and how AI may alter these dynamics by becoming a new mediating force between cultural centers and peripheries.

Indonesia, by contrast, represents a pluralistic and decentralized folklore landscape, where narratives are deeply embedded in local communities rather than a single national framework [5]. Folklore in Indonesia functions as a repository of regional identity, moral education, and communal memory [6]. The introduction of AI into this context raises sociological concerns similar to those in Turkey, yet shaped by different historical and cultural conditions. A comparative analysis of these two countries allows for a deeper understanding of how AI interacts with folklore across distinct sociological environments.

Turkey and Indonesia are selected as comparative cases because both countries possess rich folklore traditions that continue to play a significant role in shaping collective identity, while simultaneously experiencing rapid engagement with digital technologies and artificial intelligence. Despite these similarities, the two countries differ markedly in their sociocultural structures and historical relationships between folklore and modernization. In Turkey, folklore has long been integrated into national identity formation and modernization projects, as articulated in Turkish sociological thought that emphasizes the role of *halk kültürü* within a centralized cultural framework. In contrast, Indonesian folklore is characterized by its pluralistic and decentralized nature, deeply embedded in local communities rather than organized within a single national narrative. This contrast provides a productive comparative lens for examining how artificial intelligence mediates the production and circulation of folklore under different sociological conditions, allowing the study to identify both shared patterns and context-specific dynamics in AI-folklore interactions.

The proposed approach of this research is a qualitative comparative cultural sociology framework. Rather than evaluating AI from a purely technical perspective, this study treats AI as a social agent that participates in cultural production. By analyzing how AI technologies influence the creation, circulation, and reinterpretation of folklore narratives in Turkey and Indonesia, this research highlights the sociological implications of algorithmic mediation in cultural life.

The novelty and innovation of this current study lie in its interdisciplinary integration of artificial intelligence, sociology, and folklore studies. While previous research often treats AI as a neutral technological tool, this article positions AI as an active participant in the transformation of cultural meaning. By combining Turkish sociological theory with comparative cultural analysis, this research contributes new insights into how folklore evolves in the age of artificial intelligence and how technology reshapes the relationship between tradition, society, and modernity. By referring to the whole explanation of this section, the research questions leading this study are: 1) how does AI mediate the production and circulation of folklore in Turkey and Indonesia? and 2) what similarities and differences characterize the interaction between AI and folklore in Turkey and Indonesia from a sociological perspective?

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

### 2.1. Research Design

This study employs a qualitative comparative research design grounded in cultural sociology. The qualitative approach is selected to explore the sociological meanings, cultural implications, and social dynamics underlying the interaction between artificial intelligence and folklore. Rather than evaluating artificial intelligence from a computational or performance-based perspective, this research examines AI as a social mediator involved in the production and circulation of cultural narratives.

A comparative framework is adopted to analyze two distinct sociocultural contexts: Turkey and Indonesia. Comparison enables the study to identify both convergences and divergences in how AI engages with folklore within different historical, cultural, and social structures. This design is particularly suitable for addressing the study's research questions, which emphasize mediation processes and sociological patterns rather than technical outcomes.

### 2.2. Theoretical Framework

The analysis informed by Turkish sociological theory, particularly the works of Ziya Gokalp and Serif Mardin. Gokalp's concept of folklore (*halk kültürü*) as the core of collective culture provides a foundation for understanding folklore as a social expression of identity, values, and communal memory. Meanwhile, Mardin's center-periphery framework is employed to examine the structural dynamics of cultural authority and power relations in the mediation of folklore.

Within this framework, Artificial Intelligence is conceptualized as a non-human social agent that participates in cultural production [7]. AI systems through text generation, translation, and algorithmic curation are analyzed as actors that potentially reshape existing cultural hierarchies, influence narrative visibility, and redefine pathways of cultural circulation [8].

### 2.3. Data Sources

The data for this study consist of qualitative textual and digital materials, including:

1. Folklore texts and narratives, from Turkey and Indonesia that are publicly accessible in digital or documented forms.
2. AI-mediated folklore outputs, such as AI-generated retellings, translations, summaries, or adaptations of folklore narratives.
3. Digital platforms and repositories where folklore is circulated using or through AI-supported systems (e.g., automated storytelling tools, AI translation interfaces, and algorithmic content platforms).
4. Secondary scholarly sources, including sociological and folkloristic studies, to contextualize folklore practices within each country.

### 2.4. Data Collection Procedure

Data collection follows a documentary and digital ethnographic approach [9], [10]. Folklore narratives from Turkey and Indonesia are first identified and categorized based on their cultural origins and modes of transmission. Subsequently, instances where artificial intelligence mediates these narratives such as through generation, translation, or redistribution are documented.

The study does not involve direct human subjects or experimental manipulation of AI systems. Instead, it focuses on existing AI-mediated cultural artifacts and their sociological implications. This approach ensures that the analysis remains centered on cultural meaning and social structure rather than technological optimization.

### 2.5. Data Analysis

Data analysis is conducted using qualitative thematic analysis combined with comparative sociological interpretation. The analytical process involves several stages:

1. Thematic coding of data to identify patterns related to production, circulation, and reinterpretation of folklore mediated by AI.
2. Sociological interpretation using Gokalp's and Mardin's theoretical frameworks to analyze issues of identity, cultural authority, and structural power.
3. Comparative analysis between Turkey and Indonesia to identify similarities and differences in AI-folklore interactions.

This analytical strategy directly addresses the research questions by revealing how AI mediates folklore practices and how these processes vary across sociocultural contexts.

### 2.6. Research Validity and Limitations

To enhance analytical validity, the study employs theoretical triangulation, drawing on multiple sociological perspectives to interpret the data. The comparative approach further strengthens the analysis by situating findings within broader cultural and social structures. However, this research is limited by its qualitative scope and reliance on secondary and digital sources. The study does not aim to generalize findings statistically but rather to offer contextual and theoretical insights into the sociological dimensions of AI-mediated folklore.

### 2.7. Ethical Considerations

All data used in this study are derived from publicly accessible sources. No personal data or human participants are involved. The research adheres to academic ethical standards by appropriately acknowledging sources and avoiding misrepresentation of cultural narratives.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results and discussion of the study by directly addressing the two research questions. The analysis is grounded in cultural sociology and conceptualizes Artificial Intelligence not as a neutral technological instrument, but as a social mediator embedded within cultural structures, symbolic hierarchies, and power relations [11]. By organizing the findings according to the research questions, this section clarifies how AI mediates folklore practices and how those processes differ sociologically between Turkey and Indonesia.

### 3.1. RQ1: How Does AI Mediate the Production and Circulation of Folklore in Turkey and Indonesia?

This subsection addresses the first research question by examining how AI intervenes in both the production and the circulation of folklore. The findings indicate that AI mediation operates through identifiable mechanisms that reshape folkloric narratives, their forms, and their pathways of dissemination.

### 3.1.a. AI Meditation in the Production of Folklore

This study finds that AI mediates folklore production through several recurring mechanisms observed in both Turkey and Indonesia. These mechanisms do not replace traditional storytelling practices but reconfigure how folklore is reproduced and reformulated in digital environments. Based on the thematic analysis, four dominant modes of AI-mediated folklore production were identified:

1. **Textual Regeneration:** AI reproduces folklore through retellings, paraphrasing, summarization, and stylistic simplification. This process prioritizes readability and coherence, often at the expense of performative and contextual elements typical of oral traditions [12].
2. **Linguistic Translation:** AI enables folklore to circulate across linguistic boundaries. However, translation often prioritizes global comprehensibility over local idioms, metaphors, and culturally embedded expressions, thereby functioning as a form of cultural reinterpretation rather than neutral transfer [13].
3. **Narrative Standardization:** Diverse and complex narrative forms are normalized into linear, plot-driven structures. Cyclical storytelling, ritual repetition, and symbolic ambiguity are frequently reduced to clear narrative sequences, reflecting algorithmic preferences for recognizable story patterns [14]–[16].
4. **Platform-Oriented Adaptation:** Folklore is reshaped to suit educational platforms, children’s content, and short-form digital media. In this mode, folklore is optimized for engagement, pedagogical clarity, and platform compatibility rather than communal meaning-making [17]–[19].

While these modes appear in both countries (Turkey and Indonesia), their cultural effects differ depending on the sociocultural context.

### 3.1.b. AI Meditation in the Circulation of Folklore

Beyond production, AI also mediates how folklore circulates and gains visibility. AI-driven platforms influence through recommendation systems, automated tagging, ranking algorithms [20], and translation interfaces [21], [22]. These systems regulate:

1. **Which folklore narratives are visible:** AI prioritizes folkloric narratives that are more digitized, searchable, and compatible with platform logics, while locally embedded or orally transmitted traditions remain less visible [23].
2. **How widely they are disseminated:** Recommendation and sharing algorithms amplify selected narratives across digital networks [24], enabling broad circulation for some traditions while limiting others to marginal digital spaces [20].
3. **Which versions become culturally dominant:** Through repeated ranking, translation, and aggregation, AI privileges standardized or optimized versions of folklore, gradually establishing them as dominant cultural representations.

In this sense, circulation is not a neutral process of distribution but a site of cultural power [25], where algorithmic visibility increasingly as a marker of legitimacy [26].

## 3.2. RQ2: What Similarities and Differences Characterize AI-Folklore Interaction in Turkey and Indonesia from Sociological Perspective?

This subsection addresses the second research question by comparing how AI-folklore interactions unfold within different sociocultural structures.

### 3.2.a. Similarities Between Turkey and Indonesia

Despite contextual differences, several shared sociological patterns emerge across the two cases, indicating that AI-mediated transformations of folklore are not entirely context-specific but are shaped by broader structural dynamics associated with digital platforms and algorithmic systems:

1. **AI as a Non-Human Social Actor**  
In both countries, AI actively participates in cultural production and circulation, consistent with actor-network theory. AI does not merely transmit folklore but shapes how it is produced, interpreted, and distributed [8], [27].
2. **Transformation of Folklore into Digital Artifacts**  
Folklore increasingly shifts from oral, performative modes of transmission to mediated textual and visual forms within digital environments. This transition alters not only how folklore is transmitted but also how it is received, interpreted, and experienced by audiences, as narratives become detached from their original communal and performative contexts and reembedded within technologically mediated platforms [28], [29].
3. **Algorithmic Mediation of Cultural Memory**  
Collective memory is increasingly shaped by digital infrastructures that privilege visibility, accessibility, and engagement over ritual or communal validation. This pattern is observable in both Turkey and Indonesia, where digital platforms and AI-mediated systems function as dominant sites of remembrance, reorganizing collective memory around algorithmic circulation and platform visibility rather than traditional communal performance, ritual authority, or intergenerational transmission [30]–[32].

These similarities indicate that AI introduces comparable structural pressures across different cultural contexts.

### 3.2.b. Differences Between Turkey and Indonesia

Despite these shared patterns, the interaction between AI and folklore differs substantially due to distinct cultural and institutional structures.

Table 1. The Differences Between Turkey and Indonesia

No.	Aspect	Turkey	Indonesia
1	Cultural Position of Folklore	Core of National Identity ( <i>halk kültürü</i> )	Plural cultural resource
2	Role of AI	Reinterpretative Mediator	Transformative agent
3	Cultural Authority	Institutionally anchored	Fragmented and decentralized
4	Dominant Risk	Cultural selectivity	Cultural homogenization

In Turkey, folklore remains closely tied to national identity and collective culture, as articulated by Ziya Gökalp [3]. AI therefore functions mainly as a technological extension of tradition, reinforcing continuity while selectively filtering narratives [33], [34]. In contrast, Indonesia's highly pluralistic folklore tradition lacks a singular ideological framework governing cultural authority [35], [36]. As a result, AI gains greater autonomy in shaping narratives, often prioritizing platform logic, educational utility, and audience engagement over local cosmological depth [5], [14], [37], [38].

### 3.2.c. Sociological Interpretation of Differences

From a sociological perspective, these differences reflect variations in cultural authority and the degree of institutional mediation within each society. In Turkey, relatively strong cultural institutions such as state-supported cultural frameworks, academic traditions in folklore studies, and a historically articulated understanding of folklore as a core component of national culture continue to shape how folkloric narratives are interpreted and circulated [39]. Within this context, AI's influence is moderated by existing institutional and symbolic structures, limiting its capacity to radically redefine meaning and ensuring a degree of continuity between traditional cultural authority and digital mediation [40].

In contrast, in Indonesia, the absence of a strongly centralized cultural authority governing folklore allows AI and digital platforms to assume a more prominent role in organizing cultural visibility and interpretation [41], [42]. The highly pluralistic nature of Indonesian folklore, combined with fragmented institutional mediation, enables algorithmic systems and platform logics to function as primary cultural gatekeepers, shaping which narratives gain prominence and how they are framed [43]. As a result, AI-mediated processes play a more decisive role in influencing meaning-making and cultural recognition.

These contrasting patterns demonstrate that AI does not exert uniform sociological effects across contexts. Rather than acting as a determining force, AI's cultural impact is mediated by pre-existing social structures, institutional arrangements, and power relations. This finding underscores the importance of situating AI within specific sociocultural contexts, highlighting that technological mediation amplifies or constrains existing dynamics of cultural authority rather than replacing them.

### 3.3. Integrated Discussion: AI as a Structural Cultural Mediator

Synthesizing the findings from RQ1 and RQ2, this study demonstrates that AI operates not merely as a neutral technological tool, but as a structural mediator of culture embedded within broader social, institutional, and symbolic frameworks. Through its capacity to shape the production, circulation, and visibility of folkloric narratives, AI intervenes in multiple foundational dimensions of cultural life, including cultural authority, collective identity formation, and the construction of social memory.

First, AI mediates "cultural authority" by influencing which narratives are amplified, standardized, or marginalized within digital environments. Algorithmic recommendation systems and platform logics function as mechanisms of selection and prioritization [44], often privileging narratives that align with dominant engagement metrics, educational utility, or platform compatibility. In contexts where cultural authority is institutionally consolidated such as Turkey, this algorithmic mediation tends to operate within pre-existing symbolic and institutional constraints, reinforcing established interpretations of folklore as a component of national culture. By contrast, in more pluralistic and institutionally fragmented contexts such as Indonesia, AI assumes a more pronounced role in organizing cultural visibility, effectively acting as a gatekeeping structure that shapes which folkloric narratives gain recognition and legitimacy in the public sphere.

Second, AI plays a significant role in "collective identity formation" by reframing folklore as a digitally mediated cultural resource. Folkloric narratives circulated through AI-assisted platforms increasingly function as markers of identity that are consumed, shared, and reinterpreted by diverse audiences. While this process enhances accessibility and facilitates intergenerational transmission, it also risks simplifying complex cosmological meanings into more universally legible or marketable forms. As a result, collective identities constructed through AI-mediated folklore may emphasize symbolic coherence and visibility over local specificity and ritual depth.

Third, AI intervenes in the "construction of social memory" by reshaping how folklore is archived, retrieved, and recalled. Digital systems enable the preservation and dissemination of folkloric texts at unprecedented scales, contributing to the durability of cultural memory beyond localized oral traditions. However, this form of preservation is not neutral. Algorithmic curation and data-driven classification introduce new hierarchies of remembrance [45], privileging narratives that are more frequently accessed, digitized, or algorithmically optimized, while less visible traditions risk further marginalization.

Overall, AI-mediated cultural processes produce a dual effect. On one hand, AI enhances cultural accessibility, preservation, and transnational circulation. On the other hand, it introduces structural challenges related to cultural depth, representational equity, and symbolic power, underscoring the need to critically examine AI not only as a technological innovation but as a sociocultural force embedded within existing power relations.

Table 2. AI as a Structural Mediator of Folklore: Cross-Dimensional Sociological Effects

Cultural Dimension	Role of AI	Key Mechanisms	Turkey (Institutionally Consolidated Context)	Indonesia (Pluralistic Context)	Sociological Implications
<b>Cultural Authority</b>	Structural mediator shaping legitimacy and visibility of folklore.	Algorithmic recommendation systems, platform logics, engagement metrics.	AI operates within strong state and cultural institutions, reinforcing dominant national interpretations of folklore.	AI functions as a primary gatekeeper, actively organizing visibility and recognition of diverse folkloric narratives.	Cultural authority shifts from human institutions toward algorithmic systems, especially where institutional control is weak.
<b>Collective Identity Formation</b>	Reframing folklore as a digitally mediated identity resource.	AI-assisted circulation, content standardization, audience-driven reinterpretation.	Folklore supports a relatively stable national identity aligned with state narratives.	Folklore becomes a flexible identity marker, reinterpreted across regions, communities, and digital publics.	Identity formation prioritizes symbolic coherence and accessibility over ritual depth and local specificity.
<b>Social Memory Construction</b>	Restructuring how folklore is archived, retrieved, and remembered.	Digitization, algorithmic curation, data-driven classification.	Digital memory reinforces canonical narratives already embedded in national archives.	Digital memory privileges narratives that are more visible, searchable, and algorithmically optimized.	New hierarchies of remembrance emerge, marginalizing less digitized or less popular traditions.
<b>Overall Cultural Effect</b>	Dual impact: preservation and distortion.	Transnational circulation vs. algorithmic bias.	Continuity and reinforcement of established cultural meanings.	Expansion of access alongside increased representational inequality.	AI operates as a sociocultural force embedded in power relations, not as a neutral tool.

Table 2 illustrates how AI-mediated folklore operates within existing power structures, reconfiguring authority, identity, and even memory across differing structure in shaping cultural mediation.

### 3.4. Contribution to Cultural Sociology and Folklore Studies

This study contributes to cultural sociology and folklore studies in several significant ways. First, it extends folklore studies into the domain of AI-mediated cultural analysis, moving beyond traditional concerns with oral transmission and textual preservation to examine how intelligent systems actively participate in the production, circulation, and interpretation of folkloric narratives. By conceptualizing AI as a structural cultural mediator, this study highlights the need for folklore scholarship to engage with digital infrastructures as integral components of contemporary cultural transmission.

Second, this research applies Turkish sociological theory, particularly perspectives on culture, tradition, and institutional mediation within a comparative digital framework. Drawing on the Turkish intellectual tradition that conceptualizes folklore as a foundational element of national culture, the study demonstrates how historically embedded sociological frameworks continue to shape the ways AI interacts with cultural materials. This approach not only enriches comparative folklore research but also situates non-Western sociological theories as analytically productive in the study of digital culture.

Third, the study demonstrates that AI's cultural impact is fundamentally context-dependent, challenging technologically deterministic narratives that portray AI as a uniform force of cultural transformation. Instead, the findings show that AI's sociological effects are mediated by pre-existing social structures, institutional arrangements, and power relations. Cultural authority, modes of governance, and traditions of knowledge production significantly influence whether AI reinforces continuity, enables selective adaptation, or facilitates more transformative reinterpretations of folklore.

Finally, by comparing Turkey and Indonesia, this study underscores the importance of situating AI within culturally specific sociological environments. Such an approach reveals that digital technologies do not erase cultural differences but rather interact with them in uneven and differentiated ways. This insight contributes to broader debates in cultural sociology, media studies, and digital humanities by emphasizing that the future of AI-mediated culture will be shaped not only by technological innovation but also by the social worlds into which these technologies are embedded.

Table 3. Contributions of the Study to Cultural Sociology and Folklore Studies

Area of Contribution	Key Focus	Main Argument / Contribution	Theoretical Significance
AI and Folklore Studies	AI-mediated folklore	AI actively shapes the production, circulation, and interpretation of folklore.	Expands folklore studies into digital cultural analysis.
Turkish Sociological Theory	Culture and institutional mediation	Turkish sociological frameworks continue to shape AI–culture interaction.	Validates non-Western theory in digital culture studies.
Contextual Impact of AI	Mediation vs. determinism	AI’s effects depend on existing social and institutional structures.	Reframes AI as a cultural mediator, not a determinant.
Comparative Analysis	Turkey–Indonesia comparison	AI interacts differently across sociocultural contexts.	Strengthens comparative cultural sociology.
Interdisciplinary Contribution	Sociology, media, and folklore	Integrates folklore studies with AI and media research.	Positions AI as a sociocultural phenomenon.

In brief, Table 3 outlines the main contributions of the study to folklore and cultural sociology, emphasizing the role of AI as a mediator of cultural transmission and sociological meaning.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This study set out to examine how artificial intelligence mediates the production and circulation of folklore in Turkey and Indonesia, and to identify the sociological similarities and differences that characterize AI–folklore interactions across these two contexts. Drawing on cultural sociology and comparative analysis, the findings demonstrate that AI cannot be understood merely as a neutral technological tool but must be conceptualized as a structural cultural mediator embedded within existing social, institutional, and symbolic frameworks.

The analysis shows that AI mediates folklore through identifiable mechanisms of production and circulation, including textual regeneration, translation, narrative standardization, platform-oriented adaptation, and algorithmic visibility. These processes reshape not only how folklore is reproduced and disseminated but also how cultural meaning, legitimacy, and authority are constructed in digital environments. AI-driven systems influence which narratives become visible, how widely they circulate, and which versions acquire cultural dominance, transforming circulation itself into a site of cultural power.

Comparative findings reveal that while Turkey and Indonesia experience similar structural pressures associated with algorithmic mediation, the sociological effects of AI differ significantly due to contrasting institutional configurations and traditions of cultural authority. In Turkey, where folklore has long been embedded within centralized national and institutional frameworks, AI tends to function as a reinterpretative mediator that reinforces continuity while selectively filtering narratives. In Indonesia, by contrast, the pluralistic and decentralized nature of folklore allows AI and digital platforms to assume a more transformative role, acting as primary gatekeepers of cultural visibility and meaning. These differences confirm that AI’s cultural impact is fundamentally context-dependent and shaped by pre-existing social structures rather than determined by technology alone.

By integrating Turkish sociological theory with contemporary debates on AI and digital culture, this study contributes to folklore studies and cultural sociology in several ways. It extends folklore scholarship into the domain of AI-mediated cultural analysis, demonstrates the continued relevance of non-Western sociological frameworks in understanding digital culture, and challenges technologically deterministic narratives by foregrounding mediation, power relations, and institutional context. More broadly, the study underscores that the future of AI-mediated culture will be shaped not only by technological innovation but also by the sociocultural environments into which AI systems are embedded.

While this research is limited by its qualitative scope and reliance on digital and secondary sources, it offers a conceptual foundation for further empirical investigation. Future research may expand this framework by incorporating ethnographic fieldwork, audience reception studies, or longitudinal analysis to explore how communities negotiate AI-mediated folklore over time. Ultimately, understanding AI as a sociocultural mediator is essential for critically engaging with the evolving relationship between tradition, technology, and society in the digital age.

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