

Contested Cultural Space: The Utilization of *Jathilan* Events for Anti-Drug Campaign in Bantul Indonesia

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Abstract

This research explores the contested cultural space that emerges from the use of the traditional Javanese art performance, "*Jathilan*," as a medium for anti-drug campaigns in Bantul Regency, Indonesia. *Jathilan*, deeply embedded with ritualistic and symbolic cultural meanings, is utilized by the National Narcotics Agency (BNN) and the Tourism Office of Bantul Regency by leveraging the event's large public attendance to disseminate anti-drug messages through banners, speeches and side activities. Using a qualitative case study approach, this research combines field observations and interviews with performers, campaign organizers, and local audiences. The findings reveal that the cultural space of *Jathilan* becomes a site of contestation between traditional cultural values and the objectives of modern public health campaigns. A communicative dissonance emerges, as the anti-drug messages conflict with local perceptions and practices associated with *Jathilan*, such as possession rituals and alcohol consumption. This study highlights the importance of cultural context sensitivity in designing effective public communication strategies that accommodate local values to foster acceptance and reduce resistance. The findings contribute to critical discourse on the intersection of traditional culture and modern communication and open avenues for discussing cultural politics within public health campaigns.

Keywords: contested cultural spaces, *Jathilan*, anti-drug campaign, communicative dissonance, cultural context sensitivity, public health communication

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Introduction

Substance abuse remains a critical issue in Indonesia, affecting both urban and regional areas. Data from Badan Narkotika Nasional Republik Indonesia (2023) shows that 1.73% of the population aged 15–64 reported drug use within the past year, equivalent to 173 per 10,000 residents. Badan Narkotika Nasional Republik Indonesia (2025) release a drug reports that recorded 46,784 narcotics-related criminal cases, with the highest concentrations in Jakarta, East Java, North Sumatra, West Java, and South Sulawesi. Additionally, 457 regions were categorized as high-risk and 8,813 as vigilant in 2025 indicating persistent vulnerabilities to drug-related problems (Badan Narkotika Nasional Republik Indonesia, 2025).

To respond to these challenges, the National Narcotics Board of Republic of Indonesia, known as BNN has intensified its Communication, Information, and Education (KIE) initiatives within the P4GN program (P4GN means Prevention and Eradication of Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking). In 2025, Badan Narkotika Nasional Republik Indonesia reported 10,739 KIE activities involving 1,909,766 participants, with concentrations in East Java, Central Java, West Java, Bali, and the Special Region of Yogyakarta (DIY). Another 11,694 information dissemination activities were carried out through print, broadcast, digital, and conventional media. Additional BNN priorities include family-based resilience training, life skills development, youth peer-group formation, and the annual establishment of recovery agents and anti-narcotics activists (Badan Narkotika Nasional Republik Indonesia, 2025).

Within DIY, three district-level BNN units operate in Sleman, Yogyakarta City, and Bantul. This study focuses on the P4GN communication activities in Bantul Regency. According to Badan Pusat Statistik Kabupaten Bantul (2025), Bantul Regency has a total population of 980,269 people and covers an area of approximately 511.71 km². Drug-related cases in Bantul remain relatively high. Humas Polres Bantul (2025) reports that in this first semester, the Bantul Resort Police Drug Investigation Unit recorded 69 drug-related cases involving 73 suspects, consisting of 29 dealers and 44 users. The cases included 16 narcotics cases, 24 psychotropic cases, and 29 cases involving dangerous drugs.

Mitigation measures emphasize outreach and public education. In 2024, BNN Bantul carried out 207 outreach and awareness activities, reaching 34,365 participants from multiple community sectors (Bantul Regency National Narcotics Board, 2024). Uniquely, BNN Bantul supplements conventional outreach with community-based and cultural approaches, actively integrating anti-drug messages into festivals, carnivals, sports events, car-free days, music shows, and traditional art performances such as *Jathilan*. Such contextual communication is essential for message acceptance, as messages resonate more when tailored to the audience's cultural references and lived experiences (Kreuter & Wray, 2003). Tailored communication increases personalization and relevance (Hawkins et al., 2008), while culture-centered strategies ensure that messages align with the values of diverse audiences and contribute to public trust-building (Airhihenbuwa et al., 2020). Without an effective contextual strategy, public-information campaigns risk being ignored or rejected.

Traditional arts offer promising potential as communication channels because of their mass appeal and strong emotional bonds with local communities. Previous research demonstrated how the *Rodat Walisongo* performance was used to promote religious moderation due to its closeness to the community (Alfandi & Warsiyah, 2024), and how *Reyog* performances mobilized collective participation (Stiawan & Trilaksana, 2016). One traditional art deeply embedded in Yogyakarta's cultural landscape, including Bantul, is *Jathilan*.

Figure 1*Jathilan Dancers Are Performing (Researcher's Documentation)*

Jathilan is a Javanese folk performance rich in spiritual, symbolic, and social meanings. Dancers ride woven bamboo horses (*jaran kepong*) and move to gamelan rhythms until entering a trance state (*ndadi*), believed to be possession by spirits, ancestors, or supernatural beings (Tucker, 2011). The trance is often expressed through extreme acts such as eating glass or enduring sharp objects without injury. A *pawang* or *dalang* mediates the spirit world and ensures the safety of performers (Christensen, 2013).

Figure 2*Some Extreme Acts While the Performers Are Believed to Be Possessed by Spirits or Supernatural Beings (Elemental Productions, (2019), TikTok. (2023), Infopublik, (2025))*

The *ndadi* phenomenon is rooted in Javanese cosmology, which emphasizes balance between the visible (*alam kasatmata*) and invisible (*alam halus*) realms. Although the trance element is a subject of public debate, praised by some and criticized by others for its mystical elements (Haliemah & Kertamukti, 2017), *Jathilan* remains a significant cultural inheritance. Originating from pre-Islamic animistic traditions, it merges ritual and aesthetics (Tucker, 2011) and historically appears in ceremonies such as weddings, circumcisions, and village cleansing rituals (Christensen, 2013). Yet over time, entertainment value increasingly dominates its contemporary performance.

Figure 3

One of the Dancers Is Entering a Trance State (ndadi), Believed to Be Possession by Spirits, Ancestors, or Supernatural Beings (Researcher's Documentation)



In Bantul, traditional arts including *Jathilan* fall under the responsibility of the Bantul Cultural Office, which provides support in the form of costumes, stages, and financial assistance. BNN collaborates with the Bantul Tourism Office to use *Jathilan* performances as platforms for anti-drug campaigns, capitalizing on their large audiences. Campaign strategies include placing banners, delivering speeches, and organizing supporting activities around the performance area. This approach illustrates a communication strategy that “piggybacks” on existing cultural events with established mass bases. Consequently, *Jathilan* functions not only as artistic expression and communal recreation but also as a space where public health narratives are introduced to the community.

Figure 4

Anti-Drugs Campaign by National Narcotics Board in Jathilan Event



Source: Researcher's Documentation

However, tension emerges when BNN inserts modern public-health messages into a culturally sacred and spiritually charged performance space. *Jathilan*, traditionally grounded in rituals of

collective spirituality, encounters rational, data-based messages about the dangers of drugs and state-led health governance. This meeting brings forth two distinct regimes of meaning: one rooted in embodied, sensory, and spiritual experience; the other in modernity, logic, and biopolitical regulation. The *Jathilan* arena thus becomes an intersection where the state's narrative of "*healthy living without drugs*" interacts with local mystical practices. Although the state seeks to harness the cultural appeal of *Jathilan* to disseminate its message, the community simultaneously maintains its own cultural meanings and spiritual attachments. This raises critical questions: Is *Jathilan* being co-opted as a tool for state messaging, or is the state merely riding on an autonomous cultural ritual that persists independently?

This phenomenon marks the emergence of a new interaction space between traditional culture and modern health initiatives, a process described in cultural communication studies as hybridization or cross-pollination of meaning (Pieterse, 2009). *Jathilan* serves as a pivotal cultural platform where the local community's deep, symbolic, and ritualistic traditions meet the state's modern, instrumental agenda (i.e., anti-drug campaigns focused on regulation and public health improvement). Because *Jathilan* is organically integrated into daily life, it offers the government a powerful, credible avenue for message dissemination; however, this intersection introduces a tension where the secular, disciplinary goals of the state are interpreted through the audience's deeply held, spiritual, and symbolic cultural lens, making the communication process a form of complex cultural negotiation rather than simple delivery. Audiences are not passive recipients; they can negotiate, reinterpret, or even reject the messages depending on their cultural frameworks (Hall, 1980). Thus, using traditional arts in communication campaigns must be understood not simply as message delivery but as a practice of cultural politics involving negotiation between state interests and local meanings.

Christensen (2013) describes *Jathilan* as "*an open but contested space of different interpretations and readings.*" While Schlehe (2017) argues that cultural rituals form arenas of resistance, negotiation, and affirmation. Within this context, the *Jathilan* stage can be read as a site of symbolic politics where the community simultaneously performs cultural identity and negotiates its position amid pressures of modernity, religion, and state regulation. This research aims to examine how modern public-health messages interact with, challenge, or are reinterpreted through the traditional symbolic order embedded in *Jathilan*.

Research Question

How does the utilization of *Jathilan* performances by the Bantul Regency BNN as an anti-narcotics campaign medium form a contested cultural space?

Objective

To analyze how the anti-narcotics campaign implemented by the Bantul Regency National Narcotic Boards (BNN) through *Jathilan* performances shapes a contested cultural space, by examining the dynamics of interaction, the negotiation of meaning, and the hybridization between modern public health messages and the ritual, symbolic, and spiritual values of the local community.

Theoretical Framework

This research aims to analyze the clash and negotiation of meaning between the state discourse (the BNN anti-narcotics campaign) and local ritualistic values (the *Jathilan* traditional art).

This theoretical framework is constructed upon three core pillars: Public Communication as the context of action, Social Practice Theory as a lens for interpreting cultural structures and symbolic capital, and the Encoding/Decoding Model as an analytical tool for audience reception.

The BNN campaign activities conducted within the *Jathilan* arena are understood as a form of planned Public Communication, defined as a systematic effort to influence the behavior and perceptions of a broad audience regarding a specific issue (Rice & Atkin, 2004). In this context, BNN's Public Communication serves as an instrument of social regulation, seeking to instill modern health values based on rationality, data, and prevention.

This campaign employs a strategy of message insertion into a local cultural context, utilizing the popularity and emotional resonance of the *Jathilan* art form as a communication medium. In this manner, the state's anti-narcotics message is inserted into a cultural space that already holds significant social and spiritual legitimacy. However, this action generates symbolic tension because the state's rational and functional message interacts with an arena rich in ritualistic and spiritual meaning. This point marks the beginning of the process of contestation and negotiation of meaning. The BNN campaign within the local cultural space can be interpreted as an effort at symbolic persuasion, a process through which the state seeks to gain social acceptance for its modern discourse by leveraging community cultural practices. This process may be interpreted as subtle and persuasive form of ideological dominance, where state values (rationality, social order, modern health) are embedded within a traditional folk vessel without direct coercion.

To explain this dynamic, the research employs Pierre Bourdieu's Social Practice Theory. Bourdieu emphasizes the dialectic between habitus and the field as a structural mechanism in social action (Munafi, 2021). The *Jathilan* performance can be understood as a cultural field, a structured social space where different forms of capital (rational, spiritual, and symbolic) compete for legitimacy. In this field, BNN introduces the state's rational capital (authority, health data, regulation), which confronts the local spiritual-cultural capital (sacrality, trance, and ritual value). The clash of these two forms of capital reflects the encounter between the *modern rational habitus* and the *traditional spiritual habitus*. The resulting symbolic tension is not merely a contradiction of message content but a struggle between worldviews: between modern rationality and local spirituality.

To trace how the BNN message is received and interpreted by the community, the research utilizes Hall's Encoding/Decoding Model (Hall, 1980). Hall views communication as a "*structured-in-dominance*" process but one that still allows space for the audience to actively interpret the message. The audience (decoder) can receive the encoded message in one of three positions:

1. Dominant-Hegemonic Position: The BNN message is accepted fully and without reservation.
2. Negotiated Position: The audience accepts the BNN message but bargains with it by retaining the contradictory ritualistic meanings of *Jathilan* (e.g., still valuing the *ndadi* process). This Negotiated Position is primary indicator of cultural contestation.
3. Oppositional Position: The audience rejects the BNN message because it is perceived as disruptive to the ritual.

Overall, the BNN anti-narcotics campaign is conceptualized as a form of rational-modern public communication entering a local cultural field governed by traditional habitus and

meaning systems. This process creates an arena of symbolic contestation where local communities are not passive recipients but actors who actively interpret and negotiate the message according to their values, experiences, and cultural dispositions.

Through the Encoding/Decoding framework, this research seeks to uncover the mechanism of meaning negotiation occurring within the *Jathilan* cultural field, specifically how the Bantul community interprets the anti-narcotics message within their framework of spirituality, sacrality, and ritualistic practices. This analysis demonstrates that public health campaigns are not merely a matter of message delivery but an ideological meeting ground between state rationality and local spirituality.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative case study approach to examine the use of *Jathilan* performances by the Bantul Regency BNN as an anti-narcotics campaign medium. A case study design is appropriate because it enables an in-depth exploration of a phenomenon situated within its real-life cultural context, particularly when the boundaries between the event and its environment are indistinct. As emphasized by Yin (2014) and Baxter and Jack (2008), this approach is suitable for investigating complex contemporary phenomena and answering “how” and “why” questions.

The research was conducted in Bantul Regency, focusing on *Jathilan* performance arenas utilized in the campaign. Participants comprised BNN officials who articulated campaign strategies, *Jathilan* artists who provided cultural and participatory perspectives, and community members who offered insights into the reception or resistance to campaign messages.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with key informants, participant observation during *Jathilan* performances, and documentation of BNN reports, media coverage, and campaign materials. Data analysis followed Miles and Huberman’s (1994) interactive model involving concurrent processes of data reduction, data display, and conclusion verification. This cyclical and iterative approach aligns with Creswell’s (2000) description of qualitative data analysis as a process of reducing, organizing, and interpreting data to construct meaningful representations of the phenomenon.

To strengthen validity, the study employed source and methodological triangulation, member checking to confirm interpretive accuracy, and prolonged field engagement to deepen contextual understanding. Through these methodological strategies, the research aims to provide a comprehensive account of how *Jathilan* is mobilized as a communication medium and how its cultural space mediates encounters between local traditions and modern public health agendas.

Results

The collaboration between the National Narcotics Board (BNN) and the *Jathilan* art form in Bantul stemmed from an inherent issue within the Bantul cultural sphere, particularly *Jathilan* performances, which are often associated with the consumption of alcohol or drugs. Some groups reportedly consume alcohol or spirits as a stimulant or performance-enhancing substance before performing. The Bantul Regency BNN (BNNK), having established formal cooperation through an MoU with the Bantul Cultural Office, leveraged various art platforms

for the anti-narcotics campaign, including *Jathilan*. The primary objectives of BNN are internally, to educate the artists to prevent substance abuse; and externally, to inform the broader audience about the dangers of drugs.

Table 1
Interview Findings: Bantul Regency BNN Officials

Category	Finding (Summary)	Key Insight
Delivery Method	Education conducted through socialization, Q&A sessions, door prizes, and the use of Javanese language and poetry (<i>pantun</i>) to foster rapport.	Strategic cultural adaptation for effective encoding.
Message Effectiveness	Rated as “fairly effective” (Arfin), but “less than optimal” due to short duration and the audience’s primary focus on the performance (Nanda, Ikamadita).	Instrumental dilemma: context hinders cognitive absorption.
Field Challenges	Presence of hidden resistance from artists who still use illicit substances but do not express it directly.	Indicates subtle symbolic tension and lack of full behavioral adoption.
Culture-Message Relationship	No perceived conflict between the BNN message and cultural values; both run harmoniously side-by-side.	BNNs perspective of perceived harmony, potentially ignoring underlying tension.

Note. Respondents: Arfin Munajah, Nanda Paramita, Ikamadita Hati Andalina.

Table 2
Interview Findings: Art Performers

Category	Finding (Summary)	Key Insight
Campaign Support	All respondents showed a positive and supportive attitude , viewing the activity as beneficial education for the community and performers.	Formal acceptance of the state’s agenda.
Meaning of <i>Jathilan</i>	Diversified meanings: Entertainment/cultural preservation; deep philosophy; spiritual/social function; medium for <i>dakwah</i> (preaching) since Sunan Kalijaga’s era.	Recognition of the art form’s complex spiritual and historical capital.
Campaign Impact on Meaning	Contrasting views: Does not change meaning but strengthens educational value; changes meaning to become more modern; adds educational and social awareness value.	Reveals the beginning of negotiated meaning among cultural agents.
BNN Message’s Influence on Performance	Does not disrupt the main performance or ritual (Ardan, Rakyan, Andrian). Adds educational sessions (quizzes, door prizes, drug explanations) (Aji, Fajar). The <i>Pawang</i> (shaman/leader) emphasizes that the BNN message must be brief and non-dominating (Andrian).	Conscious boundary maintenance by the cultural gatekeepers.
Balance of Tradition and Modernity	Strategies for message insertion: Beginning/end of the event; mid-performance ; integrated into songs (<i>tembang</i>) with health themes.	Practical strategies for hybridization and reducing friction.
Greatest Perceived Change	Increased awareness of drug dangers, improved ability to discern good from bad, and greater knowledge of BNN’s role within the arts community.	Positive <i>habitus</i> change resulting from the campaign.

Note. Respondents: Ardan Syailendra, Muhammad Aji Pangestu, Rakyan Wahyu Pradana, Fajar Septiawan, Andrian Eka Yulianto

Table 3*Interview Findings: Jathilan Audience*

Category	Finding (Summary)	Key Insight
Overall Impression	Performance is rated as interesting and educational , successfully combining entertainment and social messages.	Positive initial reception.
Message Comprehension	Easily understood (Ardan, Fariz) or quite easy (Teuku).	Effective encoding at the surface level.
Message Acceptance	Generally received positively (agree and support the BNN campaign).	Indicative of the Dominant/Negotiated Position in reception.
Feeling towards Message Integration	Blended/Integrated (Fariz); Slightly piggybacking but non-disruptive (Ardan); Tends to piggyback (Teuku).	Perception of message as an external element <i>juxtaposed</i> onto the ritual, not fully <i>incorporated</i> .
Erosion of Sacrality	All three respondents felt the campaign element slightly reduced the sacrality of the <i>Jathilan</i> ritual, but it was accepted as reasonable for education.	Direct evidence of symbolic tension and negotiation between the sacred and the profane.
Propriety of Using <i>Jathilan</i> for Campaigns	Appropriate (Ardan, Fariz) as it educates the public; Less appropriate (Teuku) as it risks altering the cultural essence.	Clear indicator of contested meaning in the Encoding/Decoding Model.

Note. Respondents: Ardan Syailendra, Teuku Iqbal Adiansyah, Fariz Sandyka Narotama

Discussion

1. Symbolic Negotiation and Contestation of Meaning in the *Jathilan* Cultural Field

The collaboration between the (BNN) and the *Jathilan* art form is a public communication phenomenon rich in social and symbolic dynamics. This program represents a forced encounter between the state's instrumental authority, grounded in modern rationality, and a traditional cultural field driven by spirituality, *habitus*, and symbolism. This analysis aims to unpack the layers of meaning negotiation occurring among the three key actors: BNN (as the state agent), Art Performers (as cultural agents), and the Audience (as message recipients).

a. Jathilan as a Strategic Field for Public Communication and the Instrumental Dilemma

The Bantul Regency National Narcotics Board's initiative to enter the *Jathilan* field did not arise in a vacuum but from a substantial issue: the association of art performances in Bantul, particularly *Jathilan*, with the use of alcohol or drugs, often considered "*performance enhancer*." The Head of BNNK Bantul, Arfin Munajah, explicitly stated this concern: "*Art performers, including Jathilan performers around here, are often associated with the misuse of alcohol and illicit drugs which are considered stimulant or 'doping'. So, we want to be present there not just to educate.*"

Figure 5*A Staff From National Narcotics Boards Giving Anti-Drugs Campaign in Jathilan's Event*

Source: Researcher's Documentation

Through the MoU with the Bantul Cultural Office, BNNK formally gained legitimacy to insert anti-narcotics prevention messages into various art platforms. *Jathilan* was chosen as a strategic medium due to its large crowds, its reach to communities often missed by formal campaigns, and its high social appeal.

b. Message Encoding Strategy: Adaptation and Acculturation

BNNK Bantul recognizes that the effectiveness of the state's instrumental message prevention, health, and social order, must depend on its ability to acculturate to the local context. The communication strategy implemented by BNNK includes brief socialization, Q&A sessions with *doorprizes*, banner usage, and crucially, linguistic tailoring.

One of the BNN Counselor Ikamadita Hati Andalina explained this adaptation: “*We adjust to the community's style. Using everyday language, light jokes, and the casual expressions they are familiar with to make the communication feel more relatable and acceptable. The important thing is that the message gets through without sounding condescending.*” This approach is an attempt to encode state rationality into cultural language, a tactic designed to reduce friction and enhance message absorption. Arfin Munajah considers this method “*fairly effective*” in reaching the recipients.

c. Field Contradictions: Time, Focus, and Effectiveness

However, the implementation of this strategy faces a serious instrumental dilemma in the field. Nanda Paramita and Ikamadita noted two main challenges: time constraints and the audience's shifting focus. The brief campaign time, often inserted between or at the beginning/end of the performance, makes the message delivery feel rushed.

Figure 6
The Interaction From Audience During the Campaign



Source: Researcher's Documentation

Nanda Paramita highlights: *“The audience and dancers are more focused on the performance. So the message often comes in the middle, not everyone listens fully.”* In communication theory, this indicates that message effectiveness is determined not only by the quality of the encoding (familiar language) but also by the context and timing of delivery. The BNNK message often remains merely a juxtaposed element on the surface of the ritual, risking failure to achieve the necessary cognitive and behavioral depth.

2. Cultural Boundaries and the Negotiation of Symbolic Violence (Pierre Bourdieu)

This collaboration can be understood as a clash between two distinct social fields: the state field (authority, law, health) versus the cultural field (spirituality, ritual, tradition). BNNK enters the *Jathilan* arena carrying rational capital (legal authority, medical data, modern morality), while the art performers are dominated by spiritual-cultural capital (belief in ritual, value of sacrality, and the *pawang*'s leadership).

Despite the superficial welcome of the program, a practice of Boundary Maintenance is evident among key cultural agents. The *Jathilan Pawang*, Andrian Eka Yulianto, acknowledged formal support but stated that the BNN message *“feels more like an external message (piggybacking), conveyed through banners, door prizes, stickers, and brief campaign announcements.”* This statement is crucial. In the Bourdieusian framework, the state's agenda (BNNK) to redefine a cultural practice into a public health tool constitutes an effort at symbolic violence, a subtle form of power where the dominant value (anti-narcotics rationality) is internalized without conscious awareness by the dominated party (the cultural community).

However, the *Pawang*'s action of setting conditions, that the message be delivered briefly and not disrupt the main procession or ritual, is a form of conscious negotiation to minimize the impact of this symbolic violence. This strategy is at the heart of Boundary Maintenance. As per Durkheim (1995), boundary maintenance is a social mechanism, particularly manifesting in rituals and religious belief systems, to create and periodically reaffirm the distinct lines between the sacred (symbols of society) and the profane (everyday life). This maintenance prevents social disintegration and ensures the continuity and moral power of the Collective Consciousness. In studies on ethnic and cultural boundaries, the concept is defined as the strategic effort of group members to preserve their distinctiveness and identity from being

completely absorbed by a dominant system or value, thereby preventing assimilation (Grobged & Bursell, 2021). The *Pawang* acts as a cultural gatekeeper, ensuring that the spiritual core of *Jathilan* remains outside the reach of rational intervention. He accepts the state's presence (as social utility) but has not accepted the incorporation (full integration) of the modern message into the ritual's core.

3. Practical Resistance and the Trap of the Old Habitus

The greatest ideological gap lies in the issue of the habitus of the art performers. Although cognitively supporting the anti-narcotics campaign, both BNN officials and the *Pawang* (shaman/leader) acknowledge the existence of substantive resistance in the field. This resistance is manifested in the continued practice of using alcohol or spirits as enhancer or doping by some dancers. Habitus, according to Bourdieu, is a system of deeply ingrained dispositions, resistant to instantaneous cognitive change. The habit of consuming alcohol to achieve courage, confidence, or the trance state (*ndadi*) has become part of the practical scheme of specific groups. Those involved in this practice may engage in a dominant decoding verbally, but practically, this old habit constitutes a form of internalized practical opposition.

This challenge reinforces the suggestion from Nanda Paramita, who highlighted the need for a more personalized and sustained approach: "*It would be more effective if we were given special sessions for the performers, not just during the event. Because behavioral change cannot happen through a single performance.*" This underscores that intervention aimed at altering *habitus* must extend beyond the performance stage.

4. Stratification of Meaning: Message Reception in Three Layers (Stuart Hall)

The analysis of BNN message reception through Stuart Hall's Encoding/Decoding Model reveals a stratification of meaning that varies among the Art Performers, the *Pawang*, and the Audience.

a. Dominant Reading: Social Utility and Educational Value

The group engaging in the Dominant Reading are those who fully accept the BNN message without resistance. This largely includes the audience and younger performers. Ardan Syailendra and Fariz Sandyka Narotama, for instance, deem the performance "*entertaining and educational,*" while Fajar Septiawan agrees that *Jathilan* fundamentally carries a mission of conveying messages to society. This group perceives the anti-narcotics message as adding value (economic/social) to the performance, slightly shifting the performance's meaning to become more modern.

b. Pragmatic Negotiation and Proactive Cultural Encoding

The most common form of reception is Pragmatic Negotiation (Negotiated Reading), which, however, includes initiatives that transcend simple negotiation. Actors in this group accept the state message but adapt it to fit the ritual context. Proactive Cultural Encoding: Aji Pangestu (Art Performer) not only sees this as modernization (*Changes the meaning to become more modern* but insists it must be *tidied up in the performance sequence*), but also takes a proactive initiative. He plans to create new songs, poetry, and performance concepts centered on moral and personal health, which will be performed independently (without BNN presence). This

initiative is a shift from merely accepting the message to internalization and Proactive Cultural Encoding.

Rakyan Wahyu Pradana emphasizes: “*As long as it does not disrupt the main procession, and the campaign/socialization duration is not too long, we as organizers do not object.*” Fajar Septiawan affirms: “*The ndadi session, offerings, and various specific rituals must remain... As long as BNN does not interfere with that part, it will not be a problem.*”

Aji Pangestu’s initiative proves that the *Jathilan* community is capable of becoming an active agent that not only sets the rhythm and boundaries of intervention (Boundary Maintenance), but also appropriates the message to maintain the spiritual integrity of their culture while internalizing modern values (utility).

c. Practical Opposition: Silent Resistance

As discussed in the *Habitus* section, Practical Opposition (Oppositional Reading) emerges not as verbal refusal, but as behavioral rejection. Performers who maintain the habit of consuming alcohol before performing demonstrate that the BNN message, though cognitively accepted, is rejected at the practical level. This is the most covert resistance, difficult for BNN to detect due to the “*hidden resistance from performers who still use illicit substances but do not express it directly,*” as acknowledged by BNN officials.

d. The Central Paradox: Social Utility vs. Symbolic Cost

The dynamics of this collaboration culminate in a central paradox: the state intervention, which brings social utility, must be paid for with a symbolic cost. Social Utility is evident through the increased awareness of drug dangers, the ability to discern good from bad, and enhanced knowledge of BNN’s role in the arts community, as acknowledged by the performers. However, the Symbolic Cost is the erosion of spiritual capital within the *Jathilan* field. The sharpest difference in meaning emerges among the audience:

- a. Fariz Sandyka Narotama felt the message was “*integrated and blended.*”
- b. Ardan Syailendra felt the message was “*slightly piggybacking but non-disruptive.*”
- c. Teuku Iqbal Adiansyah explicitly stated the performance was “*tending to piggyback*” and felt the campaign element reduced the sacrality of the *Jathilan* ritual.

This assessment indicates that the *Jathilan* field, rich with a magical and ritual aura, becomes more functional when used as a communication medium. The symbolic distance determines the form of decoding: the *Pawang* engages in strict negotiation to maintain boundaries (conscious of symbolic violence), while the proactive initiative from the performer (Aji Pangestu) shows the potential for authentic incorporation.

In summary, the collaboration between BNN and the *Jathilan* art form in Bantul is a rich case study. Its success lies in the ability of state public communication to penetrate a cultural space with effective adaptation. However, the challenge is symbolic sensitivity, how BNN can operate without overstepping the boundaries set by the tradition’s custodians. Communication effectiveness in the cultural field depends on the respect for local *habitus*, symbols, and spirit. The anti-narcotics message is accepted as truth, but the manner of its reception is stratified, ranging from full acceptance, strict symbolic negotiation, to profound practical resistance. *Jathilan* proves itself not merely a stage for dance, but an arena where the state and society interact, negotiate, and maintain a balance of meaning. As emphasized by the *Pawang*, Andrian

Eka Yulianto: “*BNN may enter, but Jathilan must remain Jathilan. Do not lose its spirit. If the message is conveyed respectfully, we will certainly help.*” This statement serves as a strong conclusion, affirming that effective public communication in Indonesia must proceed together with respect for local cultural spirituality and autonomy.

Conclusion

The collaboration between the Bantul Regency BNN (BNNK) and the *Jathilan* art form represents a case study of a public communication intervention that successfully achieved Social Utility (increased anti-narcotics awareness) through an adaptive strategy (encoding messages in local language). However, this success is balanced by two major challenges: Symbolic Cost and Habitus Resistance.

1. Negotiation of Cultural Boundaries and Proactive Encoding: The *Pawang* and performers demonstrated rigorous Boundary Maintenance (Pragmatic Negotiation). Yet, initiatives by performers such as Aji Pangestu to create new songs on moral health indicate the potential for Proactive Cultural Encoding, where the state’s rational message begins to be internalized and re-presented through the language of *Jathilan* itself, independent of BNN’s physical presence.
2. The Trap of Habitus: The persistent “hidden resistance” from some performers who continue to use illicit substances as performance *doping or enhancer* suggests that communication messages that are merely juxtaposition (surface insertion) are incapable of changing deep-seated *habitus* that is resistant to instant cognitive change.

Overall, this collaboration is a functional compromise that positions *Jathilan* as an arena of contestation of meaning. The anti-narcotics message is accepted as a moral and rational truth, but long-term success in changing behavior requires an approach that extends beyond the performance stage.

Recommendations

To enhance program effectiveness and minimize symbolic costs while overcoming habitus resistance, the following recommendations are directed at the relevant stakeholders:

For BNN Bantul (National Narcotic Boards as the State Agent)

1. Sustainable and Personal Approach (Habitus Change): BNN needs to transition from brief mass socialization (juxtaposition) to specialized, sustainable, and incorporative (blended) development programs. The focus should be on closed workshops or discussions for performers, as suggested by respondents, aimed at altering *habitus* and providing safe and healthy “*doping*” alternatives (e.g., intensive physical training, meditation, or breathing techniques).
2. Symbolic Encoding Innovation (Song Creation Collaboration): Build an anti-narcotics narrative that integrates with the philosophy of *Jathilan*. BNNK should support and facilitate the initiative of performers like Aji Pangestu to create new *Tembang* (Javanese songs) that explicitly narrate the struggle against “*poison*” (a symbol for narcotics). This is the best method to achieve authentic incorporation of the message.
3. Strengthen the Pawang’s Modality: Formally recognize and reward *Jathilan Pawangs* as Cultural Anti-Narcotics Agents. By reinforcing the *Pawang*’s respected authority in the eyes of the dancers, BNNK can leverage this authority to instill anti-narcotics discipline from within (internal policing), rather than externally (the state).

For Jathilan Performers and Pawangs (Cultural Agents)

1. Integrate Messages into Ritual Text (Following Aji Pangestu): Voluntarily integrate anti-narcotics values into the group's *paugeran* (rules) and *ubarampé* (ritual paraphernalia). Other groups are advised to emulate the initiative of creating new songs about moral health (Aji Pangestu), making a commitment to be drug-free part of the pre-performance vows or rituals (utilizing Durkheim's Sacred/Profane dichotomy).
2. Maintain Spiritual Integrity: Remain consistent in asserting Boundary Maintenance against profane interventions. The *Pawang* must clearly define which parts of the performance must not be disturbed so that the sacrality value of *Jathilan* is preserved for the audience engaging in the Negotiated Reading.

For the Bantul Cultural Office

Cultural Office must function as a bridge between BNN's rationality and *Jathilan's* spirituality, ensuring the continuity of habitus training programs, and providing incentives (economic capital) focused on *Jathilan* groups that are proven to be drug-free, thereby strengthening the positive Dominant Reading and Negotiated Reading.

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Declaration of Generative AI and AI-Assisted Technologies in the Writing Process

The author declares that **Gemini AI** was used in the preparation of this manuscript **solely for minor linguistic refinement**, including grammar correction and small sentence-level adjustments to improve clarity. The software was not used to conduct analysis, create substantive content or draw conclusions. The intellectual content, interpretations and conclusions presented in this manuscript are entirely the author's own.

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