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The Survival of The Basing Arts of The Kajang Community in Global Challenges

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This article describes traditional arts dealing with global challenges. Globalization that makes it easy for everyone to express entertainment arts is a serious threat to Basing's traditional arts. The slowness of adaptation and regeneration further distances Basing's art from everyday life. The people of Kajang are trying to maintain it, but recently they have faced many obstacles. The mechanism that is still maintained is the relation of traditional art to the ritual of prayer for death. The purpose of this paper is to explain the relationship between traditional art and rituals for the death and the constraints to inherit the art. This research used qualitative data that collected and analyzed based on village monograph, participant observations, and interviews. The observation is carried out during the Basing art performance at the death prayer ritual. The interviews were conducted on several people which proportionally representing social roles, including traditional community leaders, village government bureaucrats, teachers, youth art activists, village elders, and artists. The research found that restriction to the customary areas is only able to control people's behavior based on customary values and norms, but is not able to force residents to develop the Basing arts. However, the inheritance of arts faces obstacles because the people of Kajang are not able to carry out cadre of artists as successors and reinforcers of the existence of Basing art.

Keywords: global challenges, traditional arts, artistic inheritance, art survival

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INTRODUCTION

The resilience of local culture is an evidence of the community's response to global challenges. The impacts of global challenges are changing social and cultural fabrics as society has felt over the past century. At that time, the invention of modern technology, such as steamships, trains, telegraphs, and telephones, was the beginning of global interactions that transformed society ([Mckeown, 2007](#)). At the beginning of this century, the acceleration of distribution and mobility supported by open access to information has changed the social order more complex than the previous century. Experts share a common view that globalization is a series of processes that bring about transformation ([Featherstone, 1990](#), [Held, et al. 1999](#); [Lieber & Weisberg, 2002](#); [Van Der Bly, 2007](#)).

The effects of globalization give rise to a global cultural phenomenon that erodes the ability of people to maintain the originality of local culture. Traditional ties loosen as new technological devices and innovations creep into people's daily lives. This reality is experienced by Basing art, which is increasingly unpopular in its own social environment. Therefore, the Kajang community anticipates by limiting the customary area and non-customary area. The Kajang indigenous people who live in customary areas have managed to maintain their local cultural identity. However, this regional restriction does not guarantee the strengthening of Basing arts, which tends to remain stagnant.

The Kajang indigenous people face obstacles to the inheritance of arts and have not yet a solution to overcome them. To maintain its existence, Basing art only relies on the relationship with the death prayer ritual. Other potentials that exist have not been able to be used optimally. The Kajang community in Tanah Towa village is indeed unique compared to other villages around it. Several researchers ([Usop, 1985](#); [Rössler, 1990](#); [Hasyim, et al., 2008](#); [Akib, 2008](#); [Satriani, 2017](#); [Sarkawi, et al., 2020](#)) have conducted studies on the Kajang community. The results of the study can be classified into three discussions, including the relationship between humans and God, humans and humans, and lastly humans and nature.

The study that was overlooked and not discussed at all was the protection of the Kajang community against traditional arts. The community has a local wisdom mechanism, but also faces obstacles to strengthening Basing art in the midst of a change convergence wave. This void of information relates

to the existence of Basing art in a contradictory condition that seems to have died. However, Basing art still doing performances even though the frequency is low only when invited to accompany the death prayer ritual.

The basic assumption of this article is that globalization effects to the instability of traditional arts. So, the main problem of this article is why the people of Kajang find it difficult to optimally strengthen traditional arts? Are the obstacles faced recently caused by increasingly open access to information? What is the relationship between the ritual of prayer for death and the art of Basing. This paper intended to explain efforts the Kajang to maintain their traditional arts. In addition, this article explains the obstacles to maintaining traditional arts in the midst of global challenges. Furthermore, it also explains the relationship between traditional arts and traditional rituals in a society that is changing due to the acceleration of information technology.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Global challenges have impact on all levels and functions of social organizations, thus requiring a variety of conceptual, normative and institutional solutions ([Swart, 2014](#); [Burke, 2017](#); [Salmon et al., 2020](#)). Another important solution is the development of new world governance to improve collective organizational management ([Hortal, 2012](#)). A scientific approach is needed to answer global challenges that are systemic, interrelated, and mutually reinforcing ([Zorkin, 2018](#)). On the other hand, [Erk \(2021\)](#) states that a realistic way of understanding, explaining, and overcoming global challenges is to think in terms of scientific differences from a cross-disciplinary perspective that is integrated, interconnected, and complex.

The increasing advance of hardware and software systems is able to provide new hope after the current global challenges ([Dorin et al., 2020](#)). Innovation needs to be prioritized in this regard ([Confalone, 2014](#); [Eizagirre, 2016](#)). Contemporary artistic practice combines traditional artistic media with new artistic media ([Melkozernov & Sorensen, 2020](#)). In the midst of today's global challenges, the artists make use arts as medium of communicating their thoughts ([Melkozernov & Sorensen, 2020](#)). Related to this, [Penprase \(2021\)](#) mentions that liberal arts are one way to solve global challenges. Thus, alternatives and innovations can make traditional arts survive in the midst of global challenges.

[McKerrell \(2014\)](#) defines traditional arts as a set of practices, materials, performances, and sources of art that refer to the sense of indigenous and authenticity of an ethnic group. [McKerrell \(2014\)](#) also states that traditional arts are the result of cultural policies in the places where the arts live. Traditional art is also in the form of what is imagined, then adjusted by the perpetrator ([Vermeeren & de Kloet, 2019](#)). Art actors must adapt to the trends of the times, change old ideas, and take advantage of digital technology ([Zhao & Jin, 2021](#)). Technology should not be ruled out because it is a new medium and method of development ([Zhao & Jin, 2021](#)). New innovations in this kind of art are an effort to awaken traditional arts through changing patterns of creation, participation, and cultural consumption among the people ([Vermeeren & de Kloet, 2019](#)). Traditional People appreciate traditional arts, which actually cultural heritage, because of its esthetique quality ([Yuan et al., 2018](#)).

Cultural commodification due to the demands of the tourism industry has become a necessity for marginalized traditional arts in the current era of globalization ([Irianto & Laksono, 2017](#)). In their study, Irianto & Laksono (2017) found that (a) the marginalization of traditional arts in the form of cultural commodification has become a new necessity in the era of the global economy and the development of the tourism industry; (b) to accommodate the demands for commodification of culture is to create traditional arts that are imitative to meet the quality standards of the tourism industry. [McKerrell \(2014\)](#) says that commodification with the commercialization of traditional arts is fully compatible with practices and authentic creative transmissions.

The survival of traditional arts is part of cultural reproduction. The theory of cultural reproduction shows that a relationship is basically formed by cultural differences rooted in social class ([de Moll & Betz, 2016](#)). Bourdieu reviewed social and cultural reproduction with more focus on the role of cultural capital ([Dumais, 2015](#)). In this regard, Bourdieu also focused on 'how ordinary media practices play into spatial (re)encoding processes' ([Tissot, 2018](#); [Trinch & Snajdr, 2017](#); [Wacquant, 2018](#); [Jansson, 2019](#); [Lindell et al., 2021](#)). Bourdieu wanted to overcome the dualism of structure and agency and think about practice in a truly relational way ([de Moll & Betz, 2016](#)). Basically, the socio-cultural reproduction of society is a form of response to changes that occur in society ([Damiani et al., 2020](#)). Support from outsiders becomes a form of legitimacy for cultural reproduction ([Rossolatos, 2015](#)).

METHODS

Data collection: location, time, observation, participation, and interviews

This article uses qualitative data collected from field research in Tanah Towa village, Kajang sub-district, Bulukumba district, South Sulawesi province. Tanah Towa village is divided into two areas, namely Kajang Dalam (Sobbu, Benteng, Pangi, Bongkina, Kuncio, Luraya, and Balambina) and Kajang Luar (Balagana and Jannaya) (Figure 1). The first field research data collection was in August 2020 and the second one in May 2021. The data were in the form of documents, observations, participation, and interviews. The obstacle experienced in the data collection process is the Covid 19 pandemic. Researchers must follow health prerequisites, such as rapid tests, medical check-up, masks, and social distancing. However, these obstacles could be overcome during the data collection process.

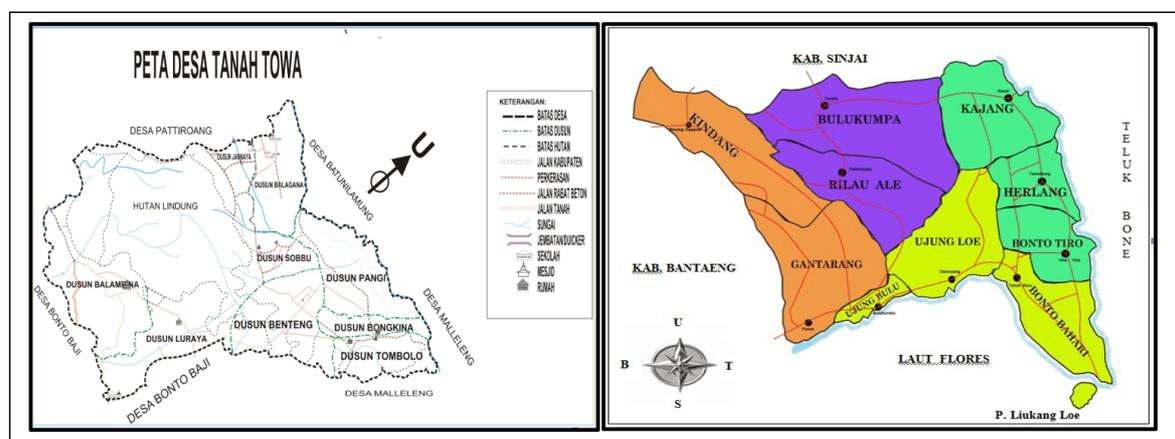


Figure 1: Bulukumba Regency Map which shows the location of Kajang District and Tanah Towa Village

(Source : Tanah Towa Village's profile in 2019)

Observations focused on behavioral practices, such as clothing, house forms, interactions in the market, and ritual ceremonies, to determine the standard of values and norms. Specific and detailed observations were directed at Basing's art, including forms and instruments, stage sets, clothing, and body movements. In addition, data collection was done through participatory action by being involved in death prayer rituals and performing arts. Interviews were conducted on several people proportionally representing social roles, including traditional leaders, village government leaders, teachers, youth, residents, and artists. The types of questions were distinguished based on the classification of general questions for all informants and different specific questions for each informant. The results of the general question interviews were classified based on similarities and differences in information. Specific questions were intended for in-depth information. Data collection was assisted by local youth who have a higher education background. The goal is to facilitate the approach to the indigenous people of Tanah Towa Kajang.

Data Collection and Data Analysis Strategy

There are several strategies in collecting data in the field: (1) gathering information related to Basing art and death prayer rituals; (2) participate in death prayer rituals and traditional art performances. Participation aimed to establish familiarity with the community, especially informants and to understand cycles, rites, and traditional arts. Data analysis focused on (1) changing community conditions, death prayer rituals, the Basing art form, and the obstacles, (2) analysis of the preservation of Basing art, the relationship between Basing art and death prayer rituals; (3) a model for the development of traditional arts.

I analyze data collected in this article by using content and context analysis. Content analysis is important to find answer of the relation between ritual for death and the Basing. While context analysis is useful to know ability of the Kajang to maintain their traditional arts. The following procedures of analyzing data followed the analysis model of Matthew B. Miles and A. Michel Huberman (1992); namely data collection, data reduction, data presentation. I presented data analysis in analytical-descriptive presentation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Tanah Towa villagers: conditions, polarization, reproduction of local culture

Global challenges are the cause of changes in social and cultural order. The Kajang community

anticipates this radically through the limitation of customary areas (Kajang Dalam, *Ilalang Embayya*) and non-customs (Kajang Luar, *Ipantarang Embayya*) which shows that there is polarization. On the other hand, the community seeks to protect local resources for the purpose of reproducing local culture. The people of Tanah Towa village, especially the customary area, only want the sustainable propagation of values and customary norms even though they are limited in their own local environment (Ruddin, interview, May 2021).

The Kajang community is spread over the geographical scope of the Kajang district covering an area of 126.18 km². The topography of the area consists of plains, hills, and coasts. These different land contours are for settlements (17 villages and 2 sub-districts), rice fields, cultivation, plantations, and forests. Tanah Towa village covering an area of 729 hectares is bordered and connected to other villages (Figure 1). The semi-productive residential land around the house is planted with coconut, pepper and cloves. Productive lands that produce food and commodities are rice fields 7.13%, fields 28.39%, plantations 17.14%, and forests 45.40% (Table 1).

Table 1. Land Area in Tanah Towa Village

No	Land Use	Area (in hectares)
1	Rice Field	52
2	Dry Land (fields, settlements, yards)	207
3	Plantation Land (individual plantation)	125
4	Forest Land	331
5	Public Facilities	14

Source: Processed from the 2019 village profile

Tanah Towa village is unique compared to villages in Kajang sub-district. The villagers claim to be the heirs and successors of the descendants of Bohe Tomme (the first Ammatowa [customary leader] of the Kajang community). Traditional leaders and elders play an important role in protecting customs. The determination of the *Ilalang Embayya* area does not aim to isolate the community, but rejects modern technology that can change local values. Modern infrastructure and technology that are rejected are asphalt roads, machinery (motorcycles, cars, and tractors), footwear (sandals and shoes), information-

communication devices (television and mobile phones), and electricity networks. The local figure considered electrical installation at the Elementary School 351 violated customary regulations because the school is located in *Ilalang Embayya*. Therefore, the headmaster of the school uninstalled the electrical cable and apologized the Ammatoa because of this incident (Sutta and Thamrin, interviews, August 2020).

Houses in traditional areas have earthen floors and wooden planks. The ground floor is used for weaving (Figure 2), pounding rice, and for livestock. The wooden plank floor is 2 meters high as the main residential space which can be expanded when there is a party or traditional ritual. A simple stilt house has 16 pillars (12 poles on the edge and 4 poles in the middle) with an area of 54 m² (6 m x 9 m). The houses are made of wood, bamboo, and thatch leaves. Damaged or weathered poles can be replaced without tearing down the house. Roofs and walls made of clay should not be used because only the dead have roofs and earth walls.



Figure 2: Weaving black sarong
(Source: Personal documentation, 2020)



Figure 3: Shopping at the market wearing a sarong
(Source: Personal documentation, May 2021)

The *Ilalang Embayya* inhabitants are easily recognized by the attributes of black clothing, such as shirts, pants, sarongs, and headbands (headbands). The black sarong is still worn even when they shop at the market (Figure 3). The black sarong is produced by women using traditional looms. One sarong was finished in one month, starting with yarn coloring (mixing indigo leaf sap, stove ash, and lime) and weaving (Figure 2) (Mina, interview, August 2020).

The rejection of infrastructure development and modern technology cannot be stated that the Kajang community is in a marginalized position, but as an action to prevent changes in community behavior and protect local cultural identity. The simplicity of the Kajang community is also reflected in the creativity of traditional arts. Basing art is a ritual that is related to the death prayer ritual.

Basic Art Practices and Inheritance Constraints

Basing art is played by 2 flute players (pabasing) and 2 poetry singers (pakelong) from 20.00 to 03.30 in the morning. Basing performing arts at least once during the death prayer ritual on the first day until the 100th day with a gap of 10 days. Empathy of grief is manifested through material donations and energy assistance. The women provided food, and the men hand-in-hand to widen the floor of "Rumah Pangung" (stage house) floor (Zainuddin, interview, May 2021). Sadness over the accident of death is shared as stated in verse 11 which reads "*mattimburukku manrampangi baji-baji*" (my sadness is well spread) is interpreted as being able to relieve someone's grief (Mansur, interview, May 2021).

The nuances of the death prayer ritual and the Basing art performance took place at the house of Jaja' Rabanan (wife) on the 40th day of the death of Puto' Sakai (husband). At 19.00, the stilt house was filled with more than 50 people sitting on pandan mats, chatting quietly in Konjo language. The atmosphere changed when the pabasing and pakelong who sat opposite each other sounded the flute non-stop. When the flute stops being blown, the nuclear family sits together in a circle in the center of the room on the right and left of the sanro (prayer leader shaman). Steaming incense with a distinctive smell spreads throughout the room as a practice of animist beliefs.

The dimly lit room was lit by bamboo torches attached to the house's poles. This torch, according to Mansur, inspired the creation of the first verse (ancestor) and the fourteenth stanza (Table 2) (Mansur, interview, August 2020). From the ritual

procession, it is known that the Basing art performance is a medium that delivers prayers for death and moral messages for the living (verse 9). In addition, the sound of the flute all night can be comforting and at least prevent family members and those present from falling asleep.

The indigenous people of Kajang have made a tradition of sadness elegantly through the

appearance of Basing performers. Soft sobs cannot be suppressed during a prayer in memory of death (sixth stanza [Table 2]), but the flute and elegy poetry have artistic nuances (Susah, interview, August 2020). Basing art poetry is a moral message from the ancestors of the Kajang community. Here are 14 stanzas complete with Konjo language and figurative words that are understood by the people of Kajang.

Table 2. **Basing Art Poem**

Stanza	Poetry	Meaning
1	<i>cini minjo boya minjo pa'rinrana anjo suloa kunre ni tunu na anjorengan binyara'na bara' ri anja pi sallo'</i>	Look at that, look for it, the flame of the torch, on this side it's burning on the other side
2	<i>ri bangkenna pi dunia na tassa' lalang tu teayya makkusissing Rie' kelong makkusissing</i>	maybe later in the afterlife, at the feet of the world, people only regret when they don't want to ask (learn)
3	<i>kelong napakkusissingan kere'mi mae poko'na patanna kelong punna iya kikussising</i>	This is a song that asks, a song that is asked, where does it come from that has a song
4	<i>pokokna patanna kelong iratejintu sumanjeng ditontonganna cinikko ri kalukua</i>	if he's the one who asks, it's the one with the singing, on the window sill
5	<i>kalongkong tama'ke'noa ilalang mintu pa'mae' tamangminrayya kaddena kaca badanku</i>	Seeing a coconut, a young coconut has not yet heard the contents of the water, inside it is a heart that does not change
6	<i>carammeng batang tubuhku repe'mi kedde na pakua pangu'rangi bulo-bulo tea repe</i>	If my body mirror, my torso mirror, were to break because of memory
7	<i>janjia tea sibokoi talli' lompoo tea ni bedeng-bedengan kedde'na pada ri lino</i>	little bamboos don't want to break,(such as) a promise kept, This great promise can't be ignored
8	<i>pammantangan anjorengang lu'lu'mi ke'de annoranna mole-mole barang lajammeng jakinni</i>	If the place to live in this world is the same as in the hereafter, then the road that is passed over and over again disappears
9	<i>napuliang somberetta mate nibuno na pa'mae'ja sikua kamase-mase makinne, pinruang kamase-mase</i>	maybe we will die (with) generosity, death is temporary, only kindness comes first
10	<i>lalangmakinni ri kamunna kamase-mase rikoko kamase ripanrokoki sikko kamase bongkara to kasiyasi nipituna tunakisse</i>	poor we are, twice poor, in it, we are at the heart of poverty, The poor are wrapped, the poor are also wrapped, tied by poverty, the poor people open it
11	<i>rawanganna jammengngia mattimburukku manrampangi baji-baji tau sombere mallabbang</i>	humiliated again, beneath it death,my sadness is well spread
12	<i>tau mu'mung nibattui coba ki'lampa mitte toi somberekku</i>	good-hearted people are known, quiet (knowledgeable) people are visited, let's try to go see goodness too

- 13 *somberekka minjo nakke*
nacallang tauwa
pakakkalaqna punna sitte rua tallu
kedde' naku sunggu todo'
- 14 *sunggu pada anjo suloa*
lalang ritangnga tanna sala-sala mata

my goodness is insulted by people, laugh when
 you meet two or three people

even if I were rich, just like the lantern inside, in
 the middle, there is no mistaking the eye
 (looking)

Source: Interview and translate Basing art poem, 2021

The relationship between Basing art and the ritual of prayer for death gives hope for survival in the Tanah Towa village community. Basing art depends on the consistency of pakelong and pabasing, but the stagnant phenomenon worries art activists and artists. They uniformly state that there is no planning for the inheritance of arts (Thamrin, Rahman, Zainuddin, Susah, and Mansur, interview, August 2020 and May 2021). Mansur said that his parents acquired his skill in playing the flute, but he doubted that his son would learn to play the flute. He considered that "the obstacle faced lies in the low interest of youth in learning Basing art" (Mansur, interview, August 2020).

The reason why young people are not interested in learning Basing art. First, many people believe that the skill of blowing the flute and singing poetry are skills that are passed down magically. Second, the time of night performances and the long duration of the performances reduce people's interest in learning Basing art. Third, there has been no stimulation and encouragement from the institution in charge of preserving and strengthening Basing art. These various obstacles seem to work normally with the assumption that new artists will present themselves (Mansur, Rahman, Ruddin, Susah, Thamrin, focus group discussion, May 2021).

The thought of inheriting Basing art emerged when the Bulukumba district government was looking for art ambassadors for arts festival activities at the provincial or national level in 2018. The art ambassadors from the Kajang community who were sent were old. From this, the idea emerged that traditional arts should be taught within the scope of formal elementary school education, even outside the curriculum. In addition, the establishment of an art studio for village youth (Thamrin and Ruddin, interview, May 2021). However, the idea of inheriting Basing's art does not manifest itself in one action for various reasons.

Challenges and Adaptations of Basing Art

Dynamic cultures change constantly at different speeds. Communities that are able to maintain local cultural identities are evidence of the rapid response to global challenges. [Erk \(2021\)](#) states that a realistic way to overcome global challenges is to think

beyond scientific differences. Local communities have local wisdom as a mechanism to face global challenges. Protection of local culture is taken by the people of Tanah Towa village through a combination of adaptation, namely anticipatory adaptation and persuasive adaptation.

Anticipatory adaptation is manifested in the form of prohibitions and sanctions for violators of customary regulations, while persuasive adaptation is carried out through commitments to harmonize behavior and social actions according to customs. Basing art is not free from the above adaptation barriers. The anticipation of the Tanah Towa village community is not able to frontally reject other cultural elements that have touched the domain of individual tastes. In addition, Basing art is not able to give a strong bargaining position to the community because of the inability to pack monotonous durations and performances.

The existence of traditional arts mainly depends on artists and communities who still believe in the function of Basing art as a complement to the death prayer ritual. This death prayer ritual serves as a binder and savior for Basing art in a changing social environment. However, the reality shows that there are only four artists left (2 pabasing and 2 pakelong) and the constraints of inheritance have put Basing art on the verge of extinction. The relationship between arts, artists, and society forms a mutually supportive model for development (Figure 4).

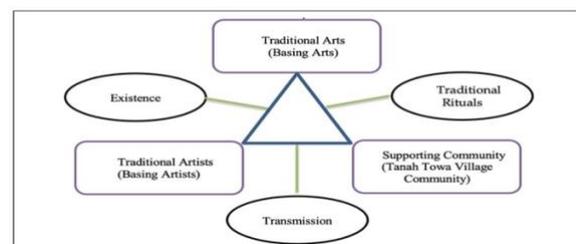


Figure 4: Traditional Art Relationship Scheme
 (Source: Data analysis)

Traditional art is valued for its aesthetic qualities and cultural heritage values ([Yuan, et al., 2018](#)). Respect for aesthetics and cultural heritage is neglected when traditional arts are in crisis. This crisis is not based on the quality of the game and the meaning of the

message, but is caused by a crisis of existence, inheritance, and customary rituals. In the midst of today's global challenges, traditional arts are positioned to engage the relationship between artists, science, and the public ([Melkozernov & Sorensen, 2020](#)). In accordance with this view, the relation scheme between several aspects can support the strengthening of traditional arts (Figure 4).

First, the relationship between traditional arts and artists signifies the existence of art. Traditional art is said to be alive if there are still artists who are able to play musical instruments. Second, the sustainability of traditional arts is disrupted if the artist is not able to pass on his skills to the next generation. The deadlock in the inheritance of Basing arts can seriously disrupt the sustainability of traditional arts. Third, the death prayer ritual as an aspect that conditions traditional arts has the opportunity to be performed. So, the traditional art relation scheme is the creation of an ideal continuity condition involving artists and the public (supporting society) supported by normal standards of inheritance and death prayer rituals.

Characteristics of global challenges in the form of commodification demands. The commodification of culture and the tourism industry can marginalize traditional arts ([Irianto & Laksono, 2017](#)) overriding the categorization of traditional arts. Basing art is actually not much disturbed by the commodification of culture and the tourism industry because the position of Basing art is not only a means of entertainment, but also conveys messages of local values orally. Thus, traditional arts can be classified into 2 categories: profane and ritual traditional arts. Traditional ritual art has no interest in commercialization and commodification packaged to meet the demands of the tourism industry.

CONCLUSION

Traditional arts that function only as entertainment face serious challenges from open access to information. Basing art does not only function as entertainment, but also as a ritual that makes the art able to withstand global challenges. The strong relationship between traditional rituals and traditional arts is a local cultural capital. The existence of traditional art experienced a major shock when its support began to weaken. The cause is not only competition between art genres, but also invisible opponents, namely the inability to adapt and the changing tastes of society. At the technical and implementation level, a model for the development of traditional arts is needed which is built from the context of local wisdom.

The alignment of all elements of the Kajang community in Basing art is the determinant of life or death. From here found a solution to the obstacles to maintaining traditional arts. First, planning the inheritance of traditional arts. Those responsible for the inheritance of traditional arts are artists, community leaders, youth, and local government (village and district). Artists have the right to introduce and teach aspiring artists, especially young people, while community leaders are the guardians of this learning process. Second, the alignment of traditional arts is implemented with village government and local government level policies. Government policy as a supporter of synergy between institutions and traditional arts. Third, active participation in formal education in teaching traditional arts. The local content of the basic education curriculum is adjusted to the characteristics of the regional culture. This is a strategy to maintain traditional arts since childhood through children's art studios.

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