

Social Construction for Maintaining Local Wisdom: Study of Kajang Community, South Sulawesi, Indonesia

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Abstract

The Kajang people are known for their lives based on traditional values, traditional beliefs, and distinctive local wisdom. They are here to preserve traditions amidst the blows of globalization. With this local wisdom, researchers are interested in analyzing the social construction of the Kajang traditional community to maintain their local wisdom. This research used a qualitative approach through participant observation, in-depth interviews, and data analysis using grounded theory analysis techniques. The research results show that the Kajang indigenous community faced challenges in maintaining their local wisdom amidst social changes and external influences. However, with its social construction, it maintained local wisdom through externalization, objectivation, and internalization processes. With this social construction approach, the Kajang traditional community can show resilience and initiative to preserve local wisdom and strengthen social ties between community members. This research will not only provide new insights into the local wisdom of the Kajang people in efforts to preserve culture, community development, and policy development in Indonesia.

Suku Kajang dikenal dengan kehidupan mereka yang berlandaskan pada nilai-nilai tradisional, kepercayaan tradisional, dan kearifan lokal yang khas. Mereka hadir untuk melestarikan tradisi di tengah terpaan arus globalisasi. Dengan kearifan lokal tersebut, peneliti tertarik untuk menganalisis konstruksi sosial masyarakat adat Kajang dalam mempertahankan kearifan lokalnya. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif melalui observasi partisipan, wawancara mendalam, dan analisis data dengan teknik analisis grounded theory. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa masyarakat adat Kajang menghadapi tantangan dalam mempertahankan kearifan lokalnya di tengah perubahan sosial dan pengaruh dari luar. Namun, dengan konstruksi sosial yang dimilikinya, masyarakat adat Kajang mampu mempertahankan kearifan lokal melalui proses eksternalisasi, objektivasi, dan internalisasi. Dengan pendekatan konstruksi sosial ini, masyarakat adat Kajang dapat menunjukkan ketangguhan dan inisiatif untuk mempertahankan kearifan lokal dan memperkuat ikatan sosial antar anggota masyarakat. Penelitian ini tidak hanya akan memberikan wawasan baru mengenai kearifan lokal masyarakat Kajang dalam upaya pelestarian budaya, pengembangan masyarakat, dan pengembangan kebijakan di Indonesia.

Keywords: diversity; Kajang indigenous people; local values; local wisdom; social construction

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Introduction

Social construction refers to the idea that social reality, including norms, values, identities, and institutions, is actively shaped by human social interactions (Berger and Luckmann 2023). This view emphasizes that many aspects of social life, such as perceptions of gender, religious beliefs, moral values, and even concepts of truth and justice, are not natural phenomena that exist but result from interactions, interpretations, and shared understanding within the public (Berger and Luckmann 2023). Social construction is a statement of belief, a claim, and a point of view that consciousness and interpersonal relations are taught by culture and society (Gergen 2022). For example, the social construction of gender suggests the 'appropriate' roles, behaviors, and attributes for men and women. These are not determined by nature but by cultural, historical, and power factors. Likewise, concepts such as race, social class, and even mental illness are all products of social construction. Social construction also includes resistance to changes that may damage or threaten their values and traditions. They will maintain their traditional identities and practices in response to external pressures, such as urbanization, modernization, or foreign culture invasion (Takwim 2021). Therefore, social construction views social reality as dynamic (not static or fixed) or something that continues to change and can be influenced by human actions.

Social construction is closely related to nature and the surrounding environment among indigenous communities. Their beliefs and practices center around nature and maintaining ecosystem balance. As such, sustainability and harmony between humans and nature are crucial for indigenous peoples

(Takwim 2021). In this context, humans' relationship with nature is shaped by a selection of real and unreal phenomena that form local wisdom. These include ideas or knowledge, customary norms, cultural values, equipment, and activities developed into educational content communicated and disseminated within the community. It becomes a guideline or frame of reference for viewing, understanding, identifying environmental issues, and choosing the most appropriate mitigation strategies (Takwim 2021).

Many researchers had done studies on social construction, for example Awaru (2020), Ngangi (2011), and Pandie et al. (2021). The three researchers found that social construction is very influential in all of social processes. Awaru (2020) found the social construction in the patterns of parent's sexual education among Bus-Makasar families, Ngangi (2011) found the values of social construction in social realities, and Pandie et al. (2021) found the social construction among the Christian community in Desa Oelaba toward social realities of Muslim Bajo ethnic.

Meanwhile, research on local wisdom has been done, for example, by Luciani and Malihah (2020), Manoby et al. (2021), and Wibowo et al. (2012). A study by Luciani and Malihah (2020) found that local wisdom represents a form of environmental knowledge embedded in a community's daily life, rooted in ancestral values passed down through religion, culture, and rituals. This wisdom manifests in various ways, including knowledge, customary norms, cultural values, practices, and tools that assist communities in managing their environment. In addition to investing in human resources to enhance population welfare, conserving customs, culture, and local knowledge is crucial

to preserving life values (Manoby et al. 2021). Local knowledge of environmental management has been passed down through generations, shaping behaviors that reflect their adaptability to their environment, positively impacting environmental sustainability (Wibowo et al. 2012).

Studies on the Kajang people were done by Rahman et al. (2019), who found that the Kajang people have customary laws as a governance system that offers a distinct way of life from other cultures. This example of local wisdom emerges from their contact with the surrounding environment (Tilaar 2000). In addition to the customary law, the community also has local wisdom for other aspects of life, covering knowledge, beliefs, understanding, conventions, and ethical principles to regulate their daily lives (Syarif et al. 2016).

The novelty of his study is that it tried to explore the basic values of the Kajang indigenous people, which are demonstrated through their adherence to traditional practices in agriculture, forestry, handicrafts, and traditional medicine. They also uphold traditional ceremonies and rituals as a tribute to their ancestors and nature. Their sustainable natural resource management system is grounded in values such as cooperation, social justice, and environmental sustainability (Yuliana et al. 2021). These local cultural values serve as a vital source of inspiration for cultivating enthusiasm and indigenous knowledge, enabling the community to adapt to various changes, both internal and external (Takwim 2021).

The Kajang people, especially those living in the *Ammatoa* Kajang customary area, uphold their local wisdom with the utmost respect. They live in one of the areas in Indonesia with

the strongest cultural integrity. Accordingly, they successfully resist globalization and maintain their local culture. In doing so, they organize themselves in a structured social system led by a tribal chief or traditional leader, *Arumponne* or *Ammatoa*, responsible for maintaining customs and traditions and resolving problems.

The Kajang people's local wisdom is a rich cultural heritage encompassing various aspects of life, value systems, and unique traditional practices. In other words, the local wisdom reflects a holistic view of life, where every element is regulated and maintained to preserve the values inherited from their ancestors. In terms of ethnic roots, they are part of the Bugis ethnic group and are known for their unique, well-preserved culture. With such a strong customary system and highly respected values, the Kajang indigenous people offer an example of how local communities can maintain and strengthen their identity amid rapid social change.

The Kajang community's local wisdom plays a crucial role in understanding, preserving, and guiding the community through the changes brought by globalization. For the Kajang people, this wisdom reflects a deep connection with nature and cultural heritage, shaping values integral to their daily lives. Their active efforts to preserve and protect these traditions contribute to the community's unique identity and cultural richness. Furthermore, their traditional knowledge, aimed at improving the local environment, is a key component of this wisdom, highlighting its relevance and importance in sustaining both culture and nature.

The Kajang traditional community actively engages in sustainable local economic development, community empowerment, education,

and collaboration with external parties while preserving local wisdom. By maintaining their cultural identity, the Kajang Indigenous People contribute to building a life that is both sustainable and harmonious with their environment.

Research into the social construction of the Kajang indigenous community deepens our understanding of their way of life and provides valuable insights into preserving cultural and environmental diversity at local, national, and global levels. By maintaining their wisdom and cultural identity, the Kajang people can effectively address the challenges of modernization and globalization. Ensuring the survival and transmission of their local wisdom to future generations is crucial.

This study explores how the Kajang indigenous community maintains its cultural identity and local wisdom. The focus will be on: 1) what does the Kajang indigenous community hold the basic values; 2) what are the traditions of the Kajang indigenous community for

maintaining local wisdom; 3. what are the impacts of the availability of basic values and the tradition practices in Kajang indigenous community toward the local wisdom.

These questions are based on assumptions that basic values held by community, and traditional practices will impact on local wisdom.

This study employs a qualitative and phenomenological approach to explore the Kajang social construction. The data source is ten informants selected based on specific criteria set by the researcher according to this research need. The ten informants are as included in the Table 1.

Information was gathered through in-depth interviews, documentation studies, and observation. This research took over a three-month period to comprehensively understand the Kajang indigenous community's social construction and maintenance of local wisdom. Substantively, the data analysis applied the social construction theory (Henderson 1991).

Tabel 1.
Tabel of Informants

| No. | Name | Position |
|-----|--------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 | <i>Ammatoa</i> | Traditional head |
| 2 | Anrongta | Traditional mother |
| 3 | Karaeng Kajang | Traditional vice |
| 4 | Karaeng Ilau | Traditional vice |
| 5 | Karaeng Tambangang | Traditional vice |
| 6 | Galla Puto | Traditional leader |
| 7 | Galla Anjuru | Traditional leader |
| 8 | Galla Pantama | Traditional leader |
| 9 | Galla Kajang | Customary leader |
| 10 | Galla Lombo | Head of Tana Towa Village |

Source: Primary data

The data analysis involved several steps: data reduction, data presentation, and concluding. The following criteria were applied to ensure the validity of the research: internal validation (credibility), dependability, and confirmability (Satori and Komariah 2010). Researchers made detailed notes to aid in a deeper understanding of the data. During the analysis, they described, classified, and interpreted the findings (Creswell and Creswell 2018). Data was cross-checked between transcripts and documents to ensure consistency. Any discrepancies were discussed until a consensus was reached on the data and themes (Hasyim et al. 2023).

Harmony and Simple as the Main Principles of Kajang Community

The Kajang indigenous people of Bulukumba Regency are a community deeply committed to their traditions and predominantly speak *Konjo*. They are divided into two main groups: the *Tana Kamase-masea Ammatoa* and the *Tana Mahayya Ammatoa*. The *Tana Kamase-masea Ammatoa* community adheres closely to the traditional beliefs passed down through generations, often adopting new ideas slowly or rejecting them altogether. This approach reflects their commitment to preserving their ancestral heritage while maintaining their unique cultural identity. Among the tribes of South Sulawesi, the *Ammatoa* community is notable for its distinctive cultural value system, which emphasizes restraint and adherence to traditional ways, setting them apart from modern lifestyles.

These indigenous people live and survive traditionally and humbly of life (Kajang: *Kamase-masea*) (Hijjang 2014). They believe that is the way of life that was done and ordered

by their ancestors (Kajang: *Boheta*) to be carried out by the next generation, so it has been a tradition for generations, as can be seen in the *Ammatoa* customary area today. As *Ammatoa*'s statement said that:

"Ammentenku nu kamase-mase, a'ccidongko nu kamase-mase, a'dakkako nu kamase-mase. A'meako nu kamase-mase". It means: "Stand you are simple, sit you are simple, walk you are simple, speak you are simple."

The *Ammatoa* indigenous community does not care about worldly life but always devotes itself to *Turie Ara'na* (God). Restricting themselves to modern things does not mean they are closed, but it means that they are careful and selective. Outsiders consider this kind of attitude as taboo and "underdeveloped" (socially, economically, educationally, medically). However, within customary frameworks, norms are developed and evolve within indigenous communities, each with a unique problem-solving approach (Risfaisal et al. 2022).

Galla Lombo states:

"Devotion to *Turie Ara'na* is reflected in our action. We respect nature because nature is His creation. We do not cut down trees carelessly, do not take anything excessively, and live in simplicity. These are all forms of gratitude and obedience to *Turie Ara'na*'s orders. Every little action, such as planting or protecting the forest, we consider as worship and there are also special rules that are applied in the daily lives of the Kajang indigenous people, which are termed *Pasang*, namely the prohibition against being greedy or living luxuriously."

Solving problems in the Kajang customary community by prioritizing common interests, meaning that shared interests are more important than individual interests. Therefore, if the indigenous people of Kajang commit a violation against *Pasang*, they will be subject to

sanctions, both in the form of fines and social sanctions. The implementation of the teachings of the tide is proven in everyday life by the Kajang tribe by applying the principle of a simple life that is neither extravagant nor deprived. The traditional lifestyle is preserved despite significant changes outside the customary territory. The people within the customary area consistently adhere to *Pasang* as their way of life, even though those outside the customary area continue to follow the mainstream way of life (Rahmayani, Nadjib, and Kahar 2017).

In the Kajang tribal community, traditional stakeholders' role is vital, especially when the indigenous people hold traditional events such as traditional parties, enforcing traditional rules, and death ceremonies. *Ammatoa* leads the Kajang tribal traditional stakeholders as the traditional head of the Kajang tribe (Surtikanti, Syulasmis, and Ramdhani 2017).

Ammatoa plays an important role in maintaining the balance between tradition, spirituality, and human relations with nature amidst the challenges of modernization faced by the Kajang indigenous community. In carrying out their duties, *Ammatoa* is assisted by traditional stakeholders appointed directly by *Ammatoa*, as illustrated in Figure 1.

Traditional stakeholders consist of 26 people with duties and roles regulated in the *Pasang*. They answer to *Ammatoa* and *Lompo Karaeng*. Apart from that, *Ammatoa* also appointed *Anrong* (traditional mother) to assist in traditional ceremonies. *Anrong* consists of *Anrongku Baku' Toaya* or *Anrong Ri Kanangga* (mother on the right), and *Anrongku Baku' Loloa* or *Anrong Ri Kiria* (mother on the left). *Anrong Ada*, or the traditional mother, was not appointed by *Ammatoa's* wife but was instead chosen by *Ammatoa* based on her ability and knowledge of

customs, especially on matters of traditional rituals, *Lompo Karaeng*.

Ammatoa is a traditional leader trusted by the community, so the decisions become applicable law within the Tana Toa village community. The position of the *Ammatoa* as a traditional elder is often higher than that of the village head. The village head's decisions have to agree with the *Ammatoa's*. He is not only a revered member of the community's traditional leadership but also holds the region's highest level of customary law rights.

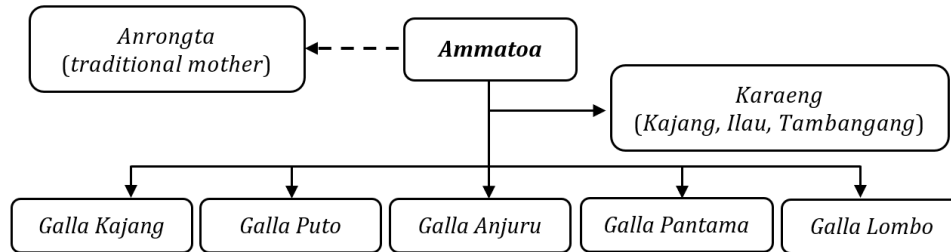
Karaeng Ilau states:

"The leadership of the Kajang indigenous community is carried out by *Ammatoa*. It is very unique and different from other conventional leadership, based on customary values and the *Pasang Ri Kajang* tradition, this leadership emphasizes more on spiritual, moral, and harmony with nature aspects. *Ammatoa* does not only act as an administrative leader, but also as a spiritual leader and guardian of local wisdom. With a collective approach, simplicity, and devotion to *Turie Ara'na*, *Ammatoa* ensures the sustainability of Kajang customary values in the face of the influence of modernity."

Ammatoa leadership is rooted in local wisdom values reflected in *Pasang Ri Kajang*, which maintains social harmony, environmental sustainability, and the cultural identity of the Kajang community amidst the challenges of modernization. This role is crucial to ensure the sustainability of traditions and the welfare of the Kajang community.

In addition to being a traditional leader, *Ammatoa* also has a spiritual role. He is considered an intermediary between humans and nature and ancestors. The Kajang community views *Ammatoa* as having spiritual powers that are able to maintain the balance of nature and social life.

Figure 1
Ammatoa Traditional Institutional Structure



Ammatoa serves as the representative of her people by upholding the legal traditions outlined in the *Pasang Ri Kajang* (unwritten Kajang Law). For instance, the Kajang people's commitment to forest sustainability demonstrates how tenacious they are in upholding social norms in their day-to-day activities by ensuring that all members of society comply with these rules for the sake of harmony and common welfare.

The ways of customary values such as devotion to *Turie Ara'na*, simplicity of life, and harmony with nature are instilled in individuals from an early age, manifested in daily actions and rituals, and finally become a social reality that is considered objective and sacred by the entire community. Is what Berger stated as a social construction (Berger and Luckmann 2023). Through this social construction, the Kajang customary values become a strong and enduring collective identity, protected from external influences, and passed on the next generation.

Local wisdom functions not only as a cultural identity but also as a guide in maintaining environmental sustainability and social balance. Thus, the social construction of the Kajang community shows how devotion to *Turie*

Ara'na and simplicity of life become a strong identity that is preserved and protected from external influences.

The Traditions Oriented toward Conserving Local Wisdom

Some traditions belonging to Kajang indigenous community having the orientation towards preserving local wisdom, including:

Pasang Ri Kajang

Pasang is a collection of values, norms, and life rules passed down from generation to generation in the Kajang indigenous community. *Pasang* contains teachings about how humans should live in harmony with nature and each other. *Pasang* prohibits environmental destruction and teaches simplicity and the importance of living in harmony with nature.

Ammatoa's statement:

Pasang is our ancestral heritage that teaches us how to live simply and in balance with nature. without *Pasang*, we lose our direction in life. We cannot destroy the forest, we cannot cut down trees carelessly or catch fish without rules. Everything had rules, and that is what kept us safe. This answer shows that how strong the influence of *Pasang* is in shaping the

ethics and behavior of the Kajang indigenous community.”

Pasang is the foundation of values that maintain natural and social sustainability. *Pasang Ri Kajang* contains rules of life that teach people to live in balance with nature, maintain simplicity, and respect their ancestors. Abandoning *Pasang Ri Kajang* will have a major impact on the sustainability of the Kajang community's culture, environment, and social life. Without *Pasang*, the Kajang indigenous community is at risk of losing its identity, destroying the environment that they have been protecting, and experiencing a value crisis that can affect social harmony. *Pasang Ri Kajang* is not only a life guideline but also a fortress that protects local wisdom and the sustainability of the Kajang indigenous community as a unique and independent indigenous community.

Tradition of *Lolo Lobo'*

Lolo Lobo' is a traditional ceremony carried out as a form of respect for nature and ancestral spirits. This ceremony contains prayers and offerings to ask for safety and well-being and expresses gratitude to nature, which has given life. Through *Lolo Lobo'*, the Kajang indigenous people show respect for the environment. According to *Galla Kajang*, *Lolo Lobo'* is a way for the Kajang indigenous people to express gratitude and respect for nature and ancestors (see Figure 2). Through this tradition, we ask for safety, blessings, and well-being from ancestral spirits and maintain balance with nature. In his statement: “We believe that nature has a soul, and if we did not respect nature, we also did not respect life.” This statement shows that *Lolo Lobo'* has a deep spiritual meaning and aims to maintain a cosmic balance between humans, nature, and ancestors. This tradition reminds the Kajang indigenous people to always live in

harmony with nature and respect the environment as an integral part of their lives.

Ignoring the *Lolo Lobo'* tradition can cause the loss of cultural identity, environmental degradation, and a crisis of values in the Kajang indigenous people. The impact can extend to social, environmental, and identity aspects, threatening their local wisdom's sustainability. Without this tradition, the Kajang indigenous people may lose the cultural foothold that has supported their lives.

Black Clothing

Black clothing for the Kajang indigenous people is more than just clothing; it symbolizes simplicity, equality, respect for ancestors, and a strong cultural identity. The black color reflects the values of *Pasang Ri Kajang* that they hold firmly, such as living simply, maintaining equality, and rejecting destructive influences from outside. Through black clothing, the Kajang indigenous people strengthen their ties with ancestral traditions and nature and maintain their identity as a unique and independent indigenous community.

Abandoning black clothing will have a significant impact on the Kajang indigenous people, ranging from the loss of cultural identity, disruption of simplicity, to weakening respect for customs and ancestors. Black clothing is not just a symbol, but an embodiment of the values of life embraced by the Kajang indigenous people. Without black clothing, the Kajang indigenous people risk losing their cultural grip and philosophy of life, which have been a fortress in maintaining local wisdom and the sustainability of their indigenous community amidst the influence of modernization (see Figure 2).

The internalization of these values affect the Kajang individual's perspective on life and the environment around them. They grow up believing that living in harmony with nature and maintaining the balance of the ecosystem is right and sacred. Through internalization, the Kajang customary values are deeply embedded in every member of society, forming a way of life and collective views that are difficult to replace..

Externalization refers to how humans express and create their world through work, culture, and social interaction. Human social interactions always use symbols. This process of using symbols is what Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckman call externalization. These symbols are a form of individual or community externalizing their cultural world. These symbols show the intended form of externalization, whether they accept or reject this social reality. Social behavior shown through customs

and culture shows a process of externalization (Pandie et al. 2021).

Ammatoa plays a role in upholding and exemplifying customary values in the community, strengthening the practice of simple living, and teaching the community to prioritize spiritual values over material ones. This community's traditions and daily behavior are natural manifestations of their values, making externalization a process that makes Kajang customary beliefs visible and felt in their daily lives. It can be understood how the local wisdom of the Kajang Indigenous community is not only an internal aspect of the individual but is an integral part of cultural and social identity expressed through communication, ritual actions, symbols, and interactions with the external environment (Berger and Luckmann 2023).

Figure 2
Lolo Lobo Tradition and Black Cloth of the Kajang Indigenous Community



The *Lolo Lobo*' tradition and black clothing represent the Kajang's resilience and dedication to cultural preservation, providing a rich subject for exploring social values, collective identity, and resistance to external pressures within anthropology and sociology studies.

Source: Kajang Community Document.

For the community, simple rules of life, respect for nature, as well as certain rituals and prohibitions are realities that are not only recognized by individuals but also by the community as a whole as a form of objectivation, which makes customary values into “social rules” that have power, so that violations of customary values are considered violations that have a major impact.

This social construction reflects the separation and autonomization of local wisdom from the individuals who created it, forming a distinctive cultural identity maintained from generation to generation. Therefore, it can be emphasized that in social construction theory, objectivation helps strengthen and maintain the practices and social identity of the Kajang indigenous people and provides wider recognition of the community’s social life.

With objectivation, the community collectively recognizes these customary values as guidelines for life that must be lived and respected by each generation. For example, the prohibition on using modern technology or environmental conservation has become a rule accepted as an obligation and has customary sanctions if violated (Pandie et al. 2021). In this way, objectivation ensures that these customary values become part of the social reality of the Kajang community, which continues to be preserved and accepted as the basis of the community’s identity and way of life.

Impact of the Value Held and Traditions Practices Toward the Local Wisdom

Kajang customary community belong to their norms, values, cultural practices, ceremonies, social organizations, and traditional education that oriented toward maintaining and preserving local wisdom.

The values they hold and the traditions practiced shape behavior and actions within a society. Social construction provides insights into how culture and society influence our understanding of consciousness and social interactions. This study reveals that the values of the Kajang indigenous people play a significant role in regional development by enhancing local capacity, expertise, and reputation. Mastery of these cultural values not only fosters a unique identity but also contributes to the development of local wisdom.

There are some advantages resulted from the basic values they held and the traditions practiced by Kalang indigenous community:

Firstly, the local language is well maintained in community life. Language plays a crucial role in shaping attitudes and actions, serving as a practical means for culture to influence individuals. It underscores how culture can impact behavior and perceptions through communication.

Galla Pantama states:

“The local language of the Kajang indigenous community (*Konjo* Language) reflects the outlook on life, knowledge about the environment, and spiritual beliefs of the Kajang community, including concepts that may not be fully translated into other languages. In everyday life, the use of local languages facilitates the teaching of traditional values and influences the attitudes and behavior of the community to remain in accordance with ancestral culture.”

Thus, language becomes an effective means of maintaining social and cultural constructions. Using local languages in everyday communication underscores how culture can influence a person’s perception, actions, and perspective on the world. Through language, the Kajang indigenous people keep their cultural values alive and relevant, ensuring that the next

generation understands and appreciates local wisdom.

Secondly, diversity of cultural and social practices. This diversity allows for a rich tapestry of experiences and beliefs within a single community, highlighting that social constructs can vary widely even within the same cultural framework.

The diversity of cultural and social practices in the Kajang indigenous community shows how dynamic social construction is in a community. The diversity of these practices also reflects that social construction is dynamic and contextual can change or adapt according to social situations, the environment, and interactions between community members.

Galla Pantama states:

“Although the entire Kajang indigenous community practices *Pasang Ri Kajang* as a guideline for life, the Kajang indigenous community has a unique way of carrying out rituals, rules of simplicity, or the *Pasang Ri Kajang* approach to nature conservation.”

The Kajang indigenous people externalize to form their unique social construction and maintain their local wisdom. They express their local wisdom through cultural practices, rituals, and knowledge that have been passed down from generation to generation. Through this externalization, they express and create their unique world with the values, beliefs, and practices that characterize their cultural identity.

As expressed by *Galla Kajang* (*pemangku adat/customary stakeholder*):

“There are cultural practices or rituals held by the Kajang indigenous people when they start building a house, such as the “*pemahar*” ritual, which is a traditional ritual that is carried out when the Kajang Indigenous people want to build a new house. This ritual involves selecting and cutting down considered sacred trees, as

well as a series of ceremonies to clean and ask for blessings from ancestral spirits. *Pemahar* symbolizes the harmonious relationship between humans, nature, and spirits.”

The cultural practices and rituals of the Kajang indigenous people is concentered forms of local wisdom. They do not just belong to cultural entities but also play an important role in maintaining harmonious relations with nature and spirits and strengthening social and spiritual ties within their communities. According to Berger, a tradition does not appear suddenly. Still, tradition is the result of individual experience in the past, which was communicated to other individuals. It has acquired an objective position and become a behavior guide (Samuel 2012).

Thirdly, flexibility, responsivity, and adaptability toward societal norms and values changes demonstrate its relevance and adaptability to different historical and cultural contexts (Ngangi 2011).

The Kajang community’s ability adapts and rooted flexibility in the interpretation of customary values, allowing for practice changes without changing the core of their norms and beliefs. They can maintain their cultural identity while responding to social and environmental changes by emphasizing core values such as harmony with nature and simple living.

This flexibility also allows their social construction to remain relevant, where changes in customary practices are carried out while maintaining the core values that have been objectified. In this way, the social construction in the Kajang community can last a long time and continue to be inherited, while the community is still able to respond to dynamics and challenges from outside.

Berger further elaborates on this with a theoretical framework involving externalization, objectivation, and internalization (Berger and Luckmann 2023). This framework helps explain how individuals and societies create and maintain social realities. Similarly, Poloma (1994), emphasizes that individuals are both products of and contributors to social institutions, underscoring the dynamic interplay between individuals and their social contexts. The indigenous Kajang people's efforts to preserve local wisdom can be effectively analyzed through these social construction concepts, offering insights into how they maintain and adapt their cultural practices.

Objectivation occurs through institutions that strengthen the local wisdom of the Kajang indigenous people. These institutions may be customs, traditional legal systems, or social or organizational structures that govern their communal life (Alwi et al. 2022). These institutions reflect and protect their local wisdom from external influences that may threaten them. Objectivation refers to the process by which cultural products and human actions become autonomous and separate from the individuals who create them. In the Kajang indigenous people, objectivation occurs when their local wisdom is reflected in the institutions, norms, cultural values, and social structures that are an important part of their identity and daily life.

This is in line with the statement of *Galla Pantama* (customary stakeholder), who stated,

“The cultural norms we hold as the Kajang Indigenous people are norms that include social rules, manners, actions that are considered good or bad, as well as ethics and values that are upheld in everyday life.”

These norms help maintain and strengthen their local wisdom in social interactions. This norm is part of objectivation that reflects the local wisdom of the Kajang indigenous people, such as ecological wisdom in interacting with nature, family values, justice, or simplicity.

The head of Tana Towa Village emphasizes that the Kajang indigenous people continue to uphold their cultural symbols and traditions. For instance, the traditional black clothing worn daily serves as attire and a significant expression of local wisdom. This practice illustrates how individuals within the Kajang community internalize and reinterpret their cultural symbols, transforming objective realities into subjective experiences.

In the social construction of their identity, the Kajang people engage with various cultural symbols, including traditional clothing, musical instruments, and language. According to Awaru (2020), this identification with cultural symbols allows individuals to internalize and embody local wisdom in their everyday lives. The internalization process shapes their identities and influences social practices within the community.

The social construction of the Kajang indigenous people in maintaining local wisdom with a theoretical dialectical scheme regarding externalization, internalization, and objectivation can be seen in Table 2.

In this dialectical framework, externalization involves expressing local wisdom through cultural practices and rituals. It is a way for the Kajang indigenous people to disclose and demonstrate their traditional knowledge and values. On the other hand, internalization encompasses how external influences and changes impact the Kajang community and how they respond to these influences.

Table 2
The Social Construction of the Kajang Indigenous People in Maintaining Local Wisdom

| Theory of Social Construction | Theoretical Analysis in the Context of Local Wisdom of the Kajang Indigenous Community |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Externalization: | <p><i>Cultural practices and rituals of the Kajang indigenous people</i></p> <p>Cultural practices are an externalization of the value and belief system of the Kajang traditional community. They reflect their connection to nature, ancestral spirits, and their origins. The cultural practices of the Kajang Indigenous People reflect the norms, values, and beliefs accepted by this community and shape their collective identity. These cultures and rituals continue to develop and change over time, but they remain the core of a valuable cultural heritage.</p> |
| Objectivation: | <p><i>The dynamics that continue to develop in maintaining local wisdom</i></p> <p>Objectivation refers to the process of how ideas, norms, values, or worldviews that were initially subjective become institutionalized and considered an objective reality in society. The culture and norms of the Kajang indigenous community are not only a subjective reality limited to their own group, but are also recognized as part of a broader objective reality in society and the legal system. This process can have a positive impact on protecting their cultural heritage and their rights as an indigenous group.</p> |
| Internalization: | <p><i>Resistance to influences that conflict with local wisdom</i></p> <p>The Kajang Indigenous People have internalized local values and wisdom as an important part of their identity and use it as a basis for resisting conflicting influences. Resistance to influences that conflict with the local wisdom of the Kajang traditional community becomes stronger because their cultural norms and values become an inseparable part of their identity. This allows them to firmly maintain their local wisdom while facing the challenges of external influences that may threaten their culture and identity.</p> |

Source: Primary Data Analyzed

Objectivation emerges from the interplay between externalization and internalization. This process results in a dynamic social construction that evolves as the Kajang people maintain their local wisdom while engaging with the outside world. Through this ongoing interaction, the community continuously adapts and refines its cultural practices, ensuring its traditions remain relevant and resilient.

In understanding Berger and Luckman's theory of social construction (2023), the three things stated above, externalization, objectivation, and internalization, must be understood simultaneously and in dialectics. Berger found this concept related to Hegel's thoughts about

thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. Through externalization, society is a human product; through objectivation, humans become a social reality; and through internalization, man is a product of society. If, in this process, one moment is neglected, distortion will occur.

Based on the findings of Rahman et al., (2019) revealed that in the Kajang indigenous community, they hold fast to the principle of maintaining local wisdom from generation to generation. Throughout their lives, the Kajang people practice local wisdom to protect the forest and its biodiversity. The Kajang people's love for the natural environment is always embedded in their minds because they consider

the forest to be like a mother who must be respected and protected. Furthermore, the research findings of Osman et al. (2020) found that the Kajang indigenous community always holds fast to the guidelines of their ancestors to live simply and modestly, with a philosophy of life that places the universe, humans, and forests/environment separately as one unit that preserves and balances the ecosystem.

Contrary to the other findings found that the Kajang indigenous community practices local wisdom to protect the forest and its biodiversity with a social construction approach through the externalization process, ecological values are expressed and used as guidelines for daily behavior. Then, objectivation makes these values into customary rules accepted and respected collectively and seen as a shared obligation. Finally, through internalization, these values are instilled in each individual as part of their identity, making them strong beliefs and passed down across generations. This approach strengthens cultural resilience and environmental sustainability, because local wisdom is understood theoretically and manifested in real actions involving the entire community.

Therefore, the social construction of the Kajang indigenous people's local wisdom is sustained through a dynamic process of externalization, objectivation, and internalization. This dialectical framework explains how their deeply held values, customs, and ecological practices are continually projected outward, solidified into shared cultural reality, and internalized across generations. By externalizing their beliefs through rituals and practices, these customs become objectified as established truths, binding the community together in a shared social reality.

The internalization process ensures that each generation embraces these cultural elements as

personal values, reinforcing the community's identity and continuity. This cyclical process allows the Kajang people to preserve their local wisdom as a vital part of their cultural heritage, adapting to external influences while maintaining the integrity of their traditions. Thus, the social construction of reality theory provides a valuable lens for understanding the resilience and persistence of indigenous wisdom within the Kajang community, highlighting its role as both a personal and communal foundation that anchors their way of life in a rapidly evolving world.

Conclusion

The Kajang indigenous people actively preserve and practice their cultural heritage and traditions to maintain their local wisdom. Their adherence to traditional culture and values is crucial for upholding their community identity. By participating in these traditional practices, they not only uphold their local wisdom but also navigate the challenges posed by modernization, which can threaten the sustainability of their culture. The Kajang community uses externalization by expressing and passing down cultural practices, rituals, and knowledge through generations. This public display and reinforcement of local wisdom are integral to preserving their heritage and ensuring its continued relevance within the community.

In terms of objectivation, the Kajang people demonstrate resilience by resisting external influences that may conflict with their traditional values and beliefs. This resistance is crucial for maintaining their cultural integrity and ensuring that their local wisdom remains untainted by conflicting external pressures. Internalization is reflected in the way the Kajang people incorporate cultural symbols and traditions into their daily lives. Doing so reinforces their identity

and sense of belonging, maintaining a strong connection to their cultural heritage while adapting to external changes. This internalization helps them preserve their local wisdom amidst evolving external circumstances. Together, these concepts support the Kajang indigenous people's efforts to sustain their local wisdom while navigating the challenges of modernization and external influences.

This research aims to offer deeper insights and practical solutions for preserving the local wisdom of the Kajang indigenous people. The findings of this study are expected to contribute valuable knowledge to efforts focused on safeguarding the cultural heritage of the Kajang community and other indigenous groups across Indonesia. Additionally, the study could explore power dynamics within the Kajang Indigenous community, examining aspects such as governance, leadership, gender, and intergenerational relationships. Understanding how power influences the social construction and preservation of local wisdom will provide a clearer picture of the complexities within indigenous societies and their interactions with external forces.[]

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