

Selective Adaptation Under Globalization: Cultural Resistance and the Maintenance of Pasang Ri Kajang in the Kajang Indigenous Community, South Sulawesi

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Abstract

Globalization is often described as a homogenizing force, yet indigenous communities actively interpret and regulate external influences through their own cultural logics. This article examines how the Ammatoa Kajang community of South Sulawesi maintains Pasang Ri Kajang while negotiating pressures from schooling, markets, religion, tourism, and communication technologies. Drawing on anthropological theories of globalization, adaptation, and cultural resistance—particularly Appadurai’s cultural flows, Sahlins’ indigenization of modernity, Steward’s cultural ecology, Scott’s everyday resistance, Barth’s ethnic boundaries, and Lamont and Molnár’s social boundary framework—this study conceptualizes Kajang resilience through two mechanisms: boundary work and Pasang-based moral filtering. Based on qualitative fieldwork in Tana Toa Village, including non-participant observation, unstructured interviews, and documentation, the article shows that the inner–outer spatial division functions as a moral and institutional infrastructure. External elements are not simply accepted or rejected; they are evaluated according to kamase-masea, ecological restraint, honesty, humility, and communal solidarity. Practices considered useful but morally risky are relocated to the outer domain, while the inner customary domain remains protected as a low-tech, ethically regulated space. The study contributes to sociological and anthropological debates on globalization and indigenous resilience by demonstrating that cultural resistance is not isolation from change, but an organized process of selective adaptation rooted in Pasang Ri Kajang.

Keywords

Ammatoa Kajang; boundary work; cultural resistance; globalization; moral filtering; Pasang Ri Kajang; selective adaptation

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INTRODUCTION

Across Indonesia, customary communities confront a central paradox of globalization: expanding markets, state programs, schooling, tourism, and digital communication promise inclusion and mobility, while simultaneously unsettling the moral and ecological orders through which communities reproduce collective life. The Ammatoa Kajang community in South Sulawesi offers an important case for understanding this paradox because it does not respond to globalization through complete isolation or uncritical assimilation. Instead, the community negotiates external influences through *Pasang Ri Kajang*, an orally transmitted normative order that regulates relations among humans, nature, ancestors, and the unseen world. For clarity, Kajang in this article refers to the Ammatoa Kajang indigenous community in South Sulawesi, not the urban locality of Kajang in Malaysia (Wong et al., 2014).

Anthropological theories of globalization help clarify why such negotiation should not be understood as passive adjustment. (Appadurai, 1996) argues that globalization operates through multiple cultural flows—people, media, technology, ideas, and finance—that are interpreted differently across local contexts. (Sahlins, 1999) similarly shows that communities often “indigenize” modernity by translating external influences into existing cultural categories. From this perspective, adaptation is not equivalent to assimilation. Adaptation is a culturally mediated process in which communities selectively adopt, modify, spatially restrict, or reject external elements according to their own moral and social logic.

The Kajang case also requires theories of cultural ecology and cultural resistance. (Steward, 1955) cultural ecology emphasizes that adaptation is shaped by the relationship between cultural institutions and the environment. This is particularly relevant because *Pasang Ri Kajang* connects moral life with forest protection, simplicity, and ecological restraint. Meanwhile, (Scott, 1976a, 1985) work on moral economy and everyday resistance suggests that resistance does not

always appear as open confrontation; it may take the form of routine refusals, collective discipline, and moral evaluations of change. (Abu-Lughod, 1990; Ortner, 1995) further remind us that resistance must be read in relation to cultural meanings and power relations embedded in everyday life.

In this article, cultural resistance refers to the Kajang community’s organized effort to maintain the authority of *Pasang Ri Kajang* while negotiating global pressures. It does not mean rejecting all external elements. Rather, resistance appears through selective adaptation: schooling, markets, religious interaction, tourism, and communication technologies may be accepted when they serve practical needs, but they are modified or restricted when they threaten *kamase-masea*, ecological balance, honesty, humility, or communal solidarity.

Two concepts organize the analysis: boundary work and moral filtering. Boundary work refers to the social process through which a community defines, maintains, and enforces distinctions between what belongs inside and outside its cultural and moral order (Gieryn, 1983; Lamont & Molnár, 2002). Although Gieryn originally developed the concept in science studies, this article extends it to the context of indigenous cultural governance. In Kajang, boundary work is visible in the distinction between the inner customary domain (*Ilalang Embayya*) and the outer settlement (*pantarang Embayya*), as well as in rules concerning dress, mobility, infrastructure, technology, and interaction with outsiders.

Moral filtering refers to the evaluative process through which external practices, objects, technologies, and ideas are assessed according to the moral principles of *Pasang Ri Kajang*. These principles include *kamase-masea* or simplicity, ecological restraint, honesty, humility, respect for elders and customary authority, and communal solidarity. Through moral filtering, an external element may be accepted, modified, assigned to the outer domain, or rejected depending on whether it strengthens or threatens the Kajang moral order. Thus, the morality discussed in this article refers specifically to

Pasang-based morality, not to an abstract moral concept detached from the title.

Previous studies on the Ammatoa Kajang community have discussed environmental conservation, ritual symbolism, customary authority, education, material culture, tourism, cultural arts, and communication technology (Alvira et al., 2024; Bungatang & I., 2024; Hafid et al., 2023; Ni'ma Tuljanna et al., 2023; Samidi & Husain, 2023; Sartika et al., 2024; Zelfia et al., 2024). However, these studies often treat each domain separately and do not sufficiently explain the mechanism through which Pasang Ri Kajang coordinates adaptation across different arenas of globalization. This article addresses that gap by arguing that Kajang resilience is produced through the combined operation of Pasang-based moral filtering and boundary work.

This study contributes to sociological and anthropological debates on communities in transition by showing how local wisdom functions as an adaptive mechanism in negotiating globalization. The research question is: How does the Ammatoa Kajang community enact selective adaptation under globalization while maintaining Pasang Ri Kajang, and what moral, spatial, and institutional mechanisms sustain this cultural resistance?

The argument unfolds in three steps. First, the article explains the qualitative fieldwork approach and the analytic strategy used to trace moral evaluations in everyday practices. Second, it describes Pasang Ri Kajang and the inner-outer spatial order as the cultural baseline for determining acceptable change. Third, it analyzes how boundary work and moral filtering operate across religion, economy, social life, education, and communication technologies.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach to examine how the Ammatoa Kajang community negotiates globalization while maintaining Pasang Ri Kajang. The qualitative design was selected because the research focuses on meanings, moral evaluations, everyday practices, and

customary rules rather than numerical measurement.

The research was conducted in Tana Toa Village, Kajang District, Bulukumba Regency, South Sulawesi. This location was selected because it is the central customary territory of the Ammatoa Kajang community and contains a clear distinction between the inner customary domain and the outer settlement. This spatial distinction is important because the article analyzes how external influences are regulated through place-based customary rules.

Informants were selected through purposive sampling. The criteria included individuals who understood Pasang Ri Kajang, were actively involved in customary life, and had direct experience with social changes in the fields of religion, education, markets, tourism, and communication technology. The informants consisted of customary leaders, hamlet heads, farmers, weavers, youth, and community members. A total of 15 informants participated in this study.

Fieldwork was conducted from May to July 2025. Interviews lasted approximately 45–90 minutes, depending on the informants' roles, experiences, and availability. In addition to interviews, non-participant observation was conducted for one to two weeks to document everyday life practices, social interactions, customary activities, and community responses to external influences.

Data were collected through non-participant observation, unstructured interviews, and documentation. Non-participant observation focused on everyday practices such as the use of black clothing, patterns of mobility between the inner and outer domains, restrictions on electricity and mobile phones, farming and weaving activities, religious practices, communal cooperation, and interactions with outsiders. The researcher observed these practices without directly intervening in community activities.

Unstructured interviews were used to allow informants to explain their experiences and interpretations in their own terms. The interviews explored several themes: the meaning of Pasang Ri Kajang, reasons for

accepting or rejecting external influences, attitudes toward schooling and technology, economic engagement with outsiders, religious practices, and the role of Ammatoa and customary authority in regulating change. This technique was appropriate because it enabled the researcher to follow the direction of informants' explanations while still focusing on the central problem of selective adaptation.

Documentation was used to complement observation and interview data. The documents included academic articles, reports, field notes, and written materials related to Kajang culture, Pasang Ri Kajang, customary governance, education, ecology, and technology. These materials were used to provide historical and conceptual context, not as substitutes for field data.

The data were analyzed thematically. First, observation notes, interview transcripts, and relevant documents were grouped into five domains of social change: religion, economy, social networks, education, and communication technology. Second, the researcher identified recurring moral criteria in the data, such as *kamase-masea* (simplicity), ecological restraint, honesty, humility, respect for customary authority, and communal solidarity. Third, these themes were interpreted using the concepts of boundary work and moral filtering grounded in Pasang Ri Kajang.

To improve the credibility of the research findings, data triangulation was used by comparing information obtained through observation, interviews, and documentation. Ethical considerations were addressed by using role-based identities rather than informants' full names in order to protect participants' privacy and confidentiality.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Boundary Work and Moral Filtering: An Analytical Lens

Rather than treating globalization as a linear force that either dissolves or preserves tradition, this section reads Kajang responses as an active process of social boundary-making. Building on scholarship on bound-

dary work (Gieryn, 1983; Lamont & Molnár, 2002), we conceptualize Kajang customary authority as continuously defining what counts as legitimate practice inside the customary domain and what must remain outside. These boundaries are not only symbolic (identity labels) but also spatial and interactional: they are enacted through dress codes, rules of mobility, and restrictions on infrastructures such as electricity and mobile phones. This framing shows how technologies of communication reshape the public-private interface and how a customary community re-orders that interface to protect a moral-social world.

We call this filtering process moral filtering: external objects, practices, and ideas are evaluated against core principles of Pasang Ri Kajang—simplicity (*kamase-masea*), ecological restraint, honesty, and communal solidarity. The outcome is neither wholesale resistance nor uncritical adoption, but selective adaptation. In practice, moral filtering operates as a mechanism that aligns daily decisions (e.g., schooling, market trade, religious observance, and communication) with the community's collective moral economy (Scott, 1976b; Thompson, 1971). Table 1 summarizes how moral filtering and boundary work coordinate adaptation across key domains and, importantly, how these domains are linked through the maintenance of a bounded customary public sphere.

Conceptually, moral filtering and boundary work unfold through a recurring sequence. First, an external practice is identified as potentially relevant (for example a school requirement, a market opportunity, or a communication device). Second, it is evaluated through Pasang criteria: does it threaten simplicity, ecological restraint, honesty, or solidarity? Third, if it is not rejected outright, it is localized—assigned to an appropriate space and set of interaction rules, often by moving the practice to the outer domain. Finally, it is enforced through social monitoring and customary authority, so that individual choices do not accumulate into collective moral drift. This sequence helps the analysis move from description to

Table 1. Moral filtering and boundary work across domains in the Kajang community

Domain	External pressure	Boundary rule/practice	Moral criterion (Pasang)	Adaptive outcome
Religion	Standardized Islamic practice and external religious authority	Customary interpretation of Islam aligned with ancestral teachings; ritual practice negotiated by Ammatoa	Inner sincerity, simplicity, communal harmony	Islam practiced in locally articulated form; outward conformity moderated
Economy	Market integration, tourism, modern inputs	Selective uptake of tools/inputs outside the inner domain; communal norms regulate consumption displays	Sufficiency and ecological restraint	Traditional production persists; market participation framed as livelihood not status
Social networks	Increased mobility and interaction with outsiders	Mutual cooperation and communal work remain obligatory; outsiders engaged through controlled interfaces	Solidarity and honesty	Networks expand without dissolving in-group obligations
Education	Formal schooling and state curriculum	Schooling accepted mainly outside inner domain; customary pedagogy remains primary for moral formation	Respect for elders/custom and humility	Education used instrumentally; identity maintained through dress and practice
Communication technology	Mobile phones, internet, electricity, media flows	Technologies restricted in the inner domain; use tolerated in outer areas for practical needs	Protection of tranquility and relational order	Digital access is spatially and morally gated; public/private boundaries stabilized

mechanism, clarifying how different arenas of change remain coordinated under globalization.

Kajang Moral Order and the Inner–Outer Domain

The Ammatoa Kajang are an indigenous community in South Sulawesi whose everyday life is organized around Pasang Ri Kajang—oral injunctions that regulate relations among humans, nature, and the unseen world (Bungatang & I., 2024; Elfira et al., 2024; Ichwan et al., 2021; Kamaluddin & Mustolehudin, 2020a, 2020b). Pasang is not treated as “heritage” alone, but as a living moral constitution that guides what counts as proper conduct, legitimate authority, and acceptable change.

Two normative ideas are especially central. First is *kamase-masea*, the moral requirement to live simply and avoid excess. Second is the sacrality of the forest as the

ecological foundation of life. Together, these ideas shape consumption, dress (notably the black clothing that signals humility and unity), housing styles, and ritual obligations, and they anchor a moral economy in which social worth is measured through restraint and reciprocity rather than accumulation (Scott, 1976b; Thompson, 1971).

These principles are reinforced through everyday material discipline. Restrictions on infrastructures—such as electricity and other technological installations in the inner domain—are commonly justified not only as “tradition” but as a way to preserve calm, prevent excessive exploitation of resources, and keep attention oriented toward nature and communal obligations. Forest protection, in this moral frame, is less a matter of state conservation than a publicly accountable ethical duty. By embedding environmental restraint in spatial and material rules, Kajang turns what could be a private

belief into a collective governance arrangement, echoing arguments that Kajang local wisdom operates simultaneously as cultural identity and ecological management (Bungatang & I., 2024; Elfira et al., 2023; Kamaluddin & Mustolehudin, 2020a)

This moral order is also spatialized. Residents commonly differentiate an inner customary domain (Ilalang Embayya) from an outer settlement (Ipantarang Embayya). The inner domain functions as a protected customary public sphere where Pasang is enforced more strictly, while the outer domain operates as an interface for encounters with outsiders, state institutions, markets, schools, and media. The spatial boundary therefore doubles as a public/private boundary: it regulates which practices and technologies are acceptable inside the customary sphere and which must be kept outside (Musfirawati, 2021)

Customary authority—symbolized by Ammatoa and supported by other leaders—performs boundary work by continually defining which practices can be domesticated without eroding Pasang obligations. Boundary work is not only discursive (statements about what is allowed) but also material and interactional: it is enacted through rules of mobility, restrictions on infrastructure, and everyday monitoring of behavior. In this sense, cultural “resistance” is produced through ongoing acts of classification and enforcement rather than through isolation alone (Gieryn, 1983; Lamont & Molnár, 2002)

With this baseline in view, the following analysis treats Kajang engagement with globalization as moral filtering: external objects, practices, and ideas are evaluated against Pasang criteria and then accepted, modified, or rejected. The next section shows how this filtering mechanism operates across religion, economy, social networks, education, and communication technologies, and how these domains are coordinated through the maintenance of bounded customary public and private orders.

Selective Adaptation under Globalization: Moral Filtering across Domains **Religious Life: Customary Islam and Moral Boundaries**

In religious life, Kajang adaptation is not a simple opposition between “tradition” and “orthodoxy.” Most residents identify as Muslims, yet religious legitimacy is filtered through Pasang Ri Kajang: practices are valued insofar as they sustain humility, communal harmony, and ecological restraint. This produces a locally articulated form of Islam in which inner sincerity and ethical conduct are emphasized over visible ritual performance (Musfirawati, 2021).

One hamlet head described this orientation as a matter of prioritizing substance over display:

“Ammatoa are Muslims, but they do not perform the five daily prayers in full. Even so, they maintain a spiritual connection with God and pray for the community to be blessed.” (Hamlet head, interview)

This statement illustrates moral filtering at work. Islamic identity is not rejected; rather, it is reinterpreted through customary criteria so that religious life does not become a pathway for moral hierarchy, status competition, or practices seen as disruptive to *kamase-masea*. The relevant boundary is not simply between “Islam” and “custom,” but between forms of religious practice considered compatible with Pasang and those considered morally risky. Comparable dynamics have been reported in other Indonesian contexts where Islamic practice is negotiated through local traditions, such as Islam Kalang in Java (Sulaiman, 2018), but the Kajang case is distinctive in how this negotiation is stabilized by spatial domain boundaries and Ammatoa’s customary authority.

Seen through boundary-work theory, the religious field is one arena in which customary leaders protect the autonomy of the inner domain from external claims to define proper religiosity. Boundary work here involves classifying some forms of ritual and instruction as appropriate for the outer interface (where encounters with state institutions and external religious authorities are more frequent), while keeping the inner do-

main oriented toward ethical conduct and collective well-being. This helps explain why religious change in Kajang does not follow a linear path of standardization, even as wider Indonesian society experiences intensified religious publicness.

This religious boundary work also shapes what may become publicly visible and what remains a matter of private ethical discipline. By limiting the public display of religiosity as a basis for social ranking inside the inner domain, Kajang customary Islam keeps religious life tied to everyday moral conduct and collective responsibility rather than to outward performance.

Economic Life: Pragmatic Adoption without Moral Drift

Economic engagement illustrates how Kajang actors participate in wider markets while restricting the moral meanings attached to money and goods. Farming, weaving, and small-scale trading remain central, and modern inputs are evaluated cautiously. Where tools or market practices are adopted, they are framed as means of livelihood rather than as symbols of status. This allows economic adaptation without dissolving *kamase-masea* and the ethic of sufficiency that underpins Kajang social life (Azis et al., 2020).

A weaver described how market access is embraced as an opportunity to sustain traditional skills without changing their cultural meaning:

“These woven products can be marketed directly to buyers from outside. Even so, we are proud of the weaving skills inherited from our ancestors.” (Weaver, interview)

Here, moral filtering operates by separating the economic function of exchange from the cultural function of identity reproduction. Weaving becomes a controlled channel of interaction with outsiders: it generates income, yet it simultaneously reinforces ancestry, skill, and collective pride. Similar patterns of selective openness have been reported in other Indonesian customary communities, where traditional livelihoods are maintained while certain market

practices are domesticated to fit local norms (Nurrohman et al., 2024).

The boundary-work dimension appears in where and how market participation occurs. Transactions, negotiations, and the use of modern tools are more tolerated in the outer domain, where engagement with tourists and external buyers is institutionally expected. In the inner domain, visible consumption and technological intensification remain morally sensitive because they risk transforming the public sphere into a space of competition and display. In this way, economic adaptation is not simply an individual choice but a collectively governed arrangement that protects communal solidarity and ecological restraint (Musfirawati, 2021).

This mechanism also helps explain why globalization does not automatically produce cultural commodification. The same product—such as a woven cloth—can circulate in external markets while remaining anchored to internal moral meanings. What is protected is not exchange per se, but the moral criteria through which exchange is evaluated: modesty, honesty in transactions, and the refusal to let money re-rank persons within the community. These criteria operate as a “moral economy” that limits how far market logics can penetrate social relations (Scott, 1976b).

Ecological commitments further constrain economic change. Because forests are treated as sacred and as the basis of collective survival, economic projects that threaten environmental balance are morally disfavored. This reinforces an adaptive ceiling: innovation is evaluated not only for efficiency but also for its ecological and spiritual consequences. Such evaluation is part of the broader moral filtering process that ties economy to environmental governance rather than treating production as an autonomous sphere (Bungatang & I., 2024).

Tourism and outsider visits intensify the risk of cultural commodification, especially when customary symbols become marketable. Kajang responses again rely on boundary work: economic interaction with visitors is concentrated in spaces and mo-

ments that can be socially managed, while the inner domain remains protected from being turned into a constant spectacle. This resembles broader findings that tourism can reshape indigenous cultural practices when not governed by local authority, but it also shows that commodification is not an inevitable outcome of market contact (Hapsah et al., 2024; Mandjarreki et al., 2023).

Social Life: Mutual Cooperation and Networked Solidarity

Mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*) is not only a cultural value but a key institution that sustains Kajang personal networks under conditions of increasing mobility and external interaction. Communal work in farming, house building, and ritual preparation reproduces obligations of reciprocity and keeps social ties dense. In the context of globalization, this solidarity functions as a moral filter: participation in collective labor signals adherence to *Pasang*, while excessive individualism is read as moral drift (Syukur et al., 2022).

A farmer in Tanatoa framed mutual cooperation as the practical foundation of unity:

“We highly value mutual cooperation. With mutual cooperation, we can help each other as residents here, and that really strengthens our relationships. It is important for us to stay united and compact in carrying out positive activities.” (Farmer, interview)

This account shows that Kajang social organization continues to privilege relational obligations over individual achievement. Boundary work is visible in how social expectations are enforced: mutual cooperation activities are embedded in the inner domain as a public moral practice, making solidarity not merely a private virtue but a socially monitored commitment. In this way, personal networks remain a site of cultural reproduction even as external influences intensify (Mahdi et al., 2023).

From a mechanism perspective, *gotong royong* stabilizes selective adaptation in other domains as well. Economic engagement is less likely to generate inequality when communal labor and redistribution

norms remain strong, and the moral evaluation of new technologies is debated within dense networks rather than through isolated consumer choice. This helps explain why Kajang adaptation is coordinated: moral filtering is not only an individual judgment but a collective process distributed through everyday interaction.

This finding underscores that globalization is mediated through shifting personal networks. Kajang networks expand through schooling, markets, and migration, but the community maintains a bounded core through obligatory solidarity practices. The result is not network collapse but network layering: a customary network remains central while outer-interface ties are added for pragmatic purposes.

Education: Negotiating Formal Schooling and Customary Pedagogy

Formal schooling is generally accepted, but it is positioned as an outer-interface necessity rather than as the core site of moral formation. Many Kajang families recognize that schooling provides literacy and administrative competence for dealing with the state and wider society, yet customary pedagogy—learning *Pasang*, practicing simplicity, and internalizing ecological ethics—remains the primary foundation of identity. This hierarchy reflects moral filtering: education is embraced for its practical benefits, while its cultural and lifestyle implications are tightly regulated.

A young Kajang man described how schooling is treated as instrumental and morally secondary:

“Even though we received formal education outside, we never forget our culture. In Tanatoa we will still maintain our culture by wearing black clothes. Education is important, but we must not lose our identity and must remain steadfast to the ancestral teachings that were instilled by Ammatoa.” (Youth, interview)

This illustrates how boundary work connects education to identity maintenance. Schooling expands mobility and introduces new forms of knowledge, media, and aspiration, but the community regulates

how these are integrated into everyday life. Visible markers such as dress and the continued authority of Ammatoa and elders signal that formal education does not override customary authority. Studies of other Indonesian customary communities similarly show that education can be negotiated as a tool while cultural reproduction is anchored in local moral frameworks (Ista et al., 2024).

Education is also one pathway through which mass culture and communication technologies enter the community. Schooling often requires interaction with digital platforms, administrative systems, and peer networks beyond Kajang. Rather than allowing these infrastructures to reorganize inner-domain life, Kajang regulation places much of this engagement in the outer domain, thereby maintaining the customary public sphere as a space governed by *Pasang* rather than by institutional or technological demands. This reinforces the argument that the inner-outer boundary functions as a public/private interface in everyday customary governance.

Communication Technologies: Governing the Public-Private Interface

Communication technologies are among the most morally sensitive vectors of globalization because they compress distance and bring mass culture into everyday life. In Kajang, phones, electricity, and digital media are not rejected everywhere; instead, they are governed through spatial boundary rules. The inner customary domain is treated as a low-tech moral space where everyday interaction should remain face-to-face, calm, and oriented to nature, while limited technological use is more tolerated in the outer settlement for practical needs such as coordination, schooling, and economic exchange (Rosidah et al., 2023).

A community member described the rationale for restricting phones in the inner domain as follows:

“Despite the influence of technology, we in Tanatoa still maintain the tranquility of living without technological devices such as mobile phones. We believe that it can disrupt the values of life that we uphold, na-

mely simplicity and the teachings that teach us to stay connected with nature and ancestors.” (Community member, interview)

This practice is a clear instance of boundary work: communication technologies are not evaluated only for their utility but for how they might reorder social relations and the public/private interface. By restricting phones and electricity in the inner domain, Kajang leaders protect a customary public sphere from constant external connectivity and from the transformation of attention, aspiration, and social ranking that often follows digital media exposure. The result resembles patterns described in other Indonesian indigenous communities that negotiate digital technology through customary restrictions, such as the Baduy (Setijadi, 2023), yet the Kajang case highlights a particularly explicit spatial gating that institutionalizes where digital life may occur.

This spatial gating matters because it translates an abstract moral concern into an enforceable social arrangement. Rather than attempting to control every individual device user, the community governs infrastructures and places: digital communication is permitted mainly in the outer interface, while the inner domain remains governed by customary time, embodied presence, and ritual ecology. In (Lamont & Molnár, 2002) terms, the boundary is both symbolic and spatial, and it produces a patterned distribution of practices across space.

From the perspective of moral filtering, the key issue is not whether technology is “modern,” but whether it introduces forms of social interaction that contradict *kamase-masea*. Many digital platforms amplify display, comparison, and rapid circulation of images—features that can intensify status competition and weaken obligations of mutual cooperation. Kajang restriction therefore protects not only identity symbols but also relational infrastructures: the dense personal networks reproduced through communal labor and face-to-face deliberation.

In recent Indonesian scholarship, digital-era change is often discussed in terms

of both opportunities and risks of connectivity, from new forms of community and learning to new exposures, comparisons, and contestations (Rosidah et al., 2023; Triko et al., 2022; Zelfia et al., 2024). The Kajang case shows how a customary community institutionalizes this ambivalence by turning the inner-outer spatial boundary into a communication boundary. Doing so preserves the moral order of the inner domain while still enabling selective participation in the broader digital society through the outer interface.

At the same time, technological boundaries are not simply rigid prohibitions. They are negotiated in relation to practical needs—for example, coordination with relatives outside the customary territory, schooling requirements, or emergency communication. Such negotiation does not contradict boundary work; it is part of it. By allowing limited, purpose-specific use in the outer domain while keeping the inner domain low-tech, Kajang leaders prevent exceptional use from becoming routine normalization and thus maintain the moral distinction between the customary sphere and the outside world.

Discussion: Boundary Work, Public/Private Order, and Cultural Resilience

Across the five domains analyzed, the Kajang case shows that selective adaptation is coordinated by a mechanism that combines moral filtering and boundary work. Moral filtering provides the evaluative criteria—*kamase-masea*, ecological restraint, honesty, and communal solidarity—to judge incoming practices. Boundary work provides enforcement by tying those criteria to places (inner versus outer domain) and to socially monitored routines. Together, these mechanisms produce a re-ordered public/private interface that allows limited engagement with markets, schooling, and communication technologies while preserving a customary moral public sphere.

The key insight is that these domains are not independent. Decisions about phones, schooling, and market exchange are mutually stabilized by the same boundary

arrangement. Table 1 highlights how spatial gating works as an infrastructure for moral filtering: by relocating certain practices to the outer interface, Kajang actors can access resources associated with globalization while preventing them from becoming normative within the inner customary domain.

A potential objection is to read these practices as simple cultural conservatism or as a refusal of modernity. The mechanism-based account offered here suggests a different interpretation. Kajang actors do not reject change as such; they reject pathways of change that would reorganize social ranking, weaken reciprocity, or disrupt ecological balance. Outer-domain engagement with markets, education, and administration is therefore not an anomaly but a structured component of customary governance. Recognizing this selective openness helps avoid both romanticization (treating tradition as static) and reductionism (treating resistance as backwardness), and it clarifies why Kajang adaptation can persist even when external contact increases (Kambo, 2021).

This contributes to boundary-work scholarship by showing that boundary making in indigenous contexts is simultaneously moral and material. Rules about dress, mobility, electricity, and device use translate abstract values into everyday constraints, making boundaries durable under pressure (Gieryn, 1983; Lamont & Molnár, 2002). Boundary work therefore helps explain why Kajang cultural resilience is not a passive inheritance but an active, continuously maintained achievement.

At the same time, Kajang filtering resembles the dynamics described in moral economy scholarship, where communities prioritize subsistence security, reciprocity, and relational obligations over accumulation (Scott, 1976b; Thompson, 1971). Globalization is domesticated when it can serve livelihood and coordination needs without undermining the moral commitments that structure social worth and ecological responsibility.

The findings speak directly to how technologies of communication can reshape

the order of public and private life, and how communities may re-stabilize that order. In many settings, phones and social media dissolve spatial distance and render private life publicly visible, intensifying comparison, exposure, and new forms of cultural negotiation (Rosidah et al., 2023; Triko et al., 2022). In Kajang, the public/private boundary is renewed rather than erased: digital connectivity is concentrated in the outer interface, while the inner domain remains oriented toward face-to-face networks, communal labor, and ritual ecology.

Comparatively, studies of other Indonesian customary communities also report selective openness to change, but they often describe this as a cultural attitude or identity statement (Mahbub et al., 2019; Nurrohman et al., 2024). The Kajang case adds a mechanism-based explanation: selective adaptation is produced through moral filtering anchored in *Pasang* and enforced through boundary work. This mechanism helps explain continuity even when contact with outsiders and exposure to mass culture increase.

The mechanism perspective also clarifies variation within and between indigenous communities. Where customary authority is fragmented, or where boundaries cannot be spatially enforced (for example when infrastructures penetrate settlement space), communication technology may reorganize everyday life more quickly, as shown in research on Baduy women's engagement with digital technologies (Setijadi, 2023). Kajang resilience, in contrast, is supported by an institutionalized spatial division that regulates where digital life may occur and under which moral justification.

These results suggest that engagement with Kajang should not treat digital inclusion, schooling, or economic development as purely technical interventions. Policies and programs that ignore moral filtering risk producing conflict, non-compliance, or superficial participation. Recognizing the inner/outer boundary as a legitimate governance arrangement can enable collaboration that respects customary authority while still addressing practical needs such as education

on access and emergency communication.

This study is limited by its focus on the mechanisms visible in qualitative accounts of everyday practice; it does not provide a quantitative estimate of how widespread particular behaviors are across households, nor does it track change longitudinally across generations. Future research could examine generational negotiations more explicitly—especially how youth who study or work outside the customary territory reinterpret *Pasang* in relation to digital media, consumer culture, and religious publicness. Comparative work across other Indonesian and Southeast Asian indigenous communities would also clarify which forms of spatial gating and moral filtering are unique to Kajang and which represent broader patterns of indigenous boundary work under globalization.

CONCLUSION

This article has argued that the Ammatoa Kajang community responds to globalization through selective adaptation coordinated by *Pasang*-based moral filtering and boundary work. *Pasang Ri Kajang* provides the moral criteria for evaluating external influences, while the inner-outer spatial division provides the boundary through which those evaluations are enforced.

The study shows that religion, economy, social networks, education, and communication technology are not separate arenas of change. They are coordinated through the same customary logic: external elements may be accepted when they support livelihood or social needs, but they are modified, spatially restricted, or rejected when they threaten simplicity, ecological restraint, honesty, humility, and communal solidarity.

By clarifying these mechanisms, the article contributes to anthropological and sociological debates on globalization, cultural resistance, and indigenous resilience. The Kajang case demonstrates that maintaining tradition does not require complete isolation. Instead, *Pasang Ri Kajang* remains resilient because the community

actively reorganizes the boundary between customary life and global flows. This finding is relevant to the study of communities in transition in Indonesia and Southeast Asia because it shows that local wisdom can function as an adaptive governance mechanism in the face of contemporary social, economic, and technological change.

DECLARATION OF AI USE

Portions of this manuscript were edited and enhanced using ChatGPT (OpenAI) for language refinement, organization of reviewer-response revisions, and improvement of clarity in the Introduction, Method, and Discussion sections. All content was reviewed, edited, and validated by the author, who takes full responsibility for the final manuscript.

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