

TRADITION BAKAR BATU: BINDING PAPUAN DIASPORA IDENTITY IN URBAN AREAS: A CASE STUDY OF JAKARTA, BOGOR, DEPOK, AND BEKASI

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Abstract

The tradition Bakar Batu (stone burning) is a cultural ritual that has a deep meaning for the Papuan people, not only as a traditional way of cooking but also as a unifying medium and cultural identity guardian. This study aims to analyze how the tradition of bakar batu plays a role in maintaining the cultural identity of Papuan migrants in urban areas such as Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, and Bekasi, (Jabodebek), and examine the dynamics of the implementation of the tradition in the urban context. The research uses a qualitative approach with ethnographic methods, involving participatory observation and in-depth interviews with Papuan migrants. The results show that the tradition of stone burning functions as: (1) binding solidarity among communities in the diaspora, (2) a means of intergenerational transmission of cultural values, (3) a symbol of resistance to the erosion of cultural identity, and (4) a medium for negotiating identity in urban space. The adaptation of traditional implementation in the urban context reflects the cultural resilience of Papuan migrants in maintaining their cultural identity. This research contributes to the understanding of the role of tradition in maintaining social cohesion and cultural identity of urban communities.

Keywords: Bakar Batu, Cultural Identity, Papuan Migrants, Urban, Tradition, Urbanisation, Cultural Adaptation, Ethnography

INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of urbanization and intensified population mobility in the modern era brings its challenges to the preservation of traditional cultural values. Amid strong modernization, urban communities, especially migrants, often face a dilemma between adapting to the new environment and maintaining their cultural identity. In this context, the bakar batu tradition as one of the Papuan cultural heritages is interesting to study, especially regarding its role in maintaining the cultural identity of Papuan migrants in urban areas such as Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, and Bekasi, (Jabodebek).

The tradition Bakar Batu is one of the rich and unique cultural heritages of the Papuan people, especially the Dani tribe. This ritual not only serves as a cooking method but also as a means to strengthen social relations and maintain cultural identity. In the overseas context, especially in Jabodebek, this tradition plays an important role in maintaining the identity of Papuan communities separated from their homeland.

Overseas often brings challenges for individuals in maintaining their cultural identity. Jakarta, as a center of urbanization, offers a diverse and dynamic environment, where many Papuan migrants adapt to a new life. However, amid these changes, the Burning Stone Tradition remains an important symbol that reminds them of their cultural roots and ancestral values. The ritual is usually performed on important occasions, such as births, weddings, or thanksgiving for the harvest, thus becoming a moment of community gathering and strengthening solidarity between members.

This research aims to analyze how the Burning Stone Tradition functions as a guardian of the cultural identity of Papuan migrants in Jabodebek. Using a qualitative approach and ethnographic method, this research will explore the implementation of the tradition in an urban context and the social dynamics that accompany it.

The results of the research are expected to provide in-depth insights into the role of tradition in maintaining social cohesion and cultural identity of urban communities. In addition, this research will also contribute to a broader understanding of cultural adaptation in the context of globalization and increasing urbanization. Thus, the Burning Stone Tradition is not just a cooking ritual but also a representation of the cultural resilience of Papuan society amidst the challenges of modernity.

The phenomenon of Papuan migrants in Jabodebek is interesting to study because it reflects the complex dynamics between tradition and modernity. Muslim (2019) highlights how the bakar batu tradition is able to create harmony in a multicultural context, as well as a strong identity marker for the Papuan community. This is in line with the findings of Makatita and Islamy (2022) who revealed the integration of local cultural values with the dynamics of modern life in the practice of the tradition of stone burning.

The aspect of education and cultural preservation is also an important dimension in this study. Budiarti (2017) identified the potential of bakar batu culture in learning, showing how this tradition can be a valuable source of learning. This is reinforced by Laelaem (2018) who examines the utilization of the bakar batu tradition as a learning resource in improving student learning activeness.

In the context of cultural identity, the tradition of stone burning has a strategic role as an identity marker that distinguishes the Papuan community from other community groups. Dute (2022) analyzed how the integration of Islam and culture is reflected in the practice of the bakar batu tradition, showing the flexibility of this tradition in adapting to various socio-religious contexts. Meanwhile, Islamy and Makatita (2022) highlighted aspects of religious moderation manifested in the bakar batu tradition of the Dani Muslim community.

The significance of this research lies in several aspects. Firstly, it fills a gap in the study of the role of tradition in the modern urban context, particularly concerning efforts to maintain cultural identity. Secondly, this research provides a new perspective on how traditions can adapt and survive in an urban context without losing their cultural essence. Third, the findings of this research can contribute to a better understanding of the dynamics of cultural identity in the context of multicultural urban society.

Elas (2019) emphasizes the uniqueness of the bakar batu tradition as a cultural tourism attraction, showing the economic and cultural potential that can be developed. This is in line with cultural preservation efforts studied by Herningsih (2018) in the context of Papuan government policy. Both perspectives show how the bakar batu tradition can be a valuable cultural asset in the context of sustainable development.

Nipur et al. (2022) in their study of the ritual of stone burning in the Dani tribe revealed the complexity of the meaning and function of this tradition in the socio-cultural life

of the Papuan people. This finding was reinforced by Karyadi and Khasanah (2020) who analyzed the bakar batu culture as a reflection of Pancasila ideology in early childhood education, showing the relevance of traditional values to the broader Indonesian context.

This research also considers legal and regulatory aspects related to the implementation of the bakar batu tradition in urban areas. Harefa and Agustina (2024) examine the tradition of stone burning from the perspective of the new Criminal Code, providing a basis for understanding the legal aspects of the implementation of this tradition in the context of national law. This is important considering that the implementation of traditions in urban areas often intersects with various urban regulations.

The sociological dimension of the tradition is also reflected in the study of Nurkotib et al, (2022) which analyses the meaning of this tradition in an ethnographic context. The study revealed how the tradition of stone burning became a medium for building and maintaining social ties within the community. This is in line with the findings of Makatita et al. (2022) who examined the values of Islamic cosmopolitanism in the bakar batu tradition.

Gobai et al. (2024) in their research on cultural preservation efforts in the tradition of bakar batu among university students showed how the younger generation of Papua endeavored to maintain and adapt this tradition in the context of modern life. This is an important indicator of the sustainability of the tradition from the perspective of the younger generation.

Based on these studies, this research aims to analyze the role of the bakar batu tradition in maintaining the cultural identity of Papuan migrants in Jabodebek. Specifically, this research will examine: (1) the dynamics of the implementation of the bakar batu tradition in an urban context, (2) the function of tradition in maintaining the social cohesion of the nomad community, (3) the process of transmitting cultural values through the bakar batu tradition, and (4) tradition adaptation strategies in facing the challenges of modernity.

This research uses a qualitative approach with ethnographic methods, enabling a deep understanding of the meaning and function of the bakar batu tradition in the lives of Papuan migrants. Through participatory observation and in-depth interviews, this research seeks to reveal the complexity of the relationship between tradition, identity, and modernity in the context of urban life.

The results of this study are expected to make theoretical and practical contributions to the study of cultural anthropology, especially related to the role of tradition in maintaining cultural identity in a modern urban context. The research findings can also serve as input for policymakers in formulating cultural preservation strategies that are adaptive to the dynamics of urban life.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The Burning Stone Tradition in Urban Contexts and Modernity

The tradition of stone burning has undergone various adaptations in the modern urban context. Muslim (2019) revealed that this tradition is able to create harmony in a multicultural environment while still maintaining its function as a marker of Papuan community identity. In line with this, Makatita and Islamy (2022) demonstrated the dynamic integration between local cultural values and modern life in the implementation of the bakar batu tradition.

Educational Value and Cultural Preservation

The educational dimension of the bakar batu tradition has been the focus of several studies. Budiarti (2017) identified the potential of this tradition as a valuable learning resource, while Laelaem (2018) further explored its utilization in improving student learning activeness. The cultural preservation aspect is also discussed by Herningsih (2018) who examines the Papuan government's policy to preserve this tradition.

Religious and Social Dimensions

The integration of religious values in the bakar batu tradition has been researched by several scholars. Dute (2022) analyzed how this tradition adapts to the socio-religious context, especially in Muslim communities. Islamy and Makatita (2022) deepen this study by highlighting the aspects of religious moderation manifested in the bakar batu tradition in the Dani Muslim community.

Economic and Tourism Potential

Elas (2019) identified the potential of the bakar batu tradition as a cultural tourism attraction, showing how it can contribute to local economic development. This shows how cultural traditions can be utilized as sustainable development assets.

Legal Aspects and Cultural Resilience

Harefa and Agustina (2024) provide a legal perspective by examining the bakar batu tradition in the context of the new Criminal Code. Gobai et al. (2024) added a youth dimension by examining cultural preservation efforts among university students.

Social Values and Cosmopolitanism

Nurkotib et al. (2022) analyzed the meaning of the bakar batu tradition from an ethnographic perspective, emphasizing its role in building social ties. Makatita et al. (2022) extended this understanding by examining the values of Islamic cosmopolitanism in the tradition.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with ethnographic methods to gain an in-depth understanding of the meaning and function of the tradition of stone burning in the lives of Papuan migrants in Jabodebek. The choice of this approach is based on the need to explore and understand socio-cultural phenomena holistically, taking into account the context and dynamics that surround it in a modern urban setting.

The research location covers Jakarta and its surrounding areas, including DKI Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, and Bekasi (Jabodebek). The selection of this location was based on the consideration that the area is a center of urbanization with a significant concentration of Papuan migrants. The research was conducted over six months, providing adequate time for comprehensive data collection and in-depth analysis.

The selection of informants was conducted through a combination of purposive sampling and snowball sampling techniques, involving a total of 25 informants consisting of Papuan community leaders, and younger and older migrants. The criteria for selecting informants included a minimum stay of two years in the Jabodetabek area, active involvement in community activities, and experience in the implementation of the bakar batu tradition. The diversity of informants' backgrounds allows researchers to obtain diverse perspectives on the phenomenon under study.

Data collection was conducted through three main techniques: participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. In participatory observation, researchers were directly involved in various activities of the bakar batu tradition, observing

the process of preparation, implementation, social interaction, the use of symbols and cultural artifacts, and the adaptation of traditions in the urban context. In-depth interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner to explore personal experiences, perceptions, challenges, and adaptation strategies for maintaining the tradition. Documentation supplemented the data with photos, videos, field notes, and related documents.

Data analysis used the Miles and Huberman interactive model, which includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The analysis process was conducted simultaneously with data collection, allowing the researcher to deepen the exploration of aspects that were interesting or required further clarification. The collected data was organized around key themes and interpreted to identify meaningful patterns.

Data validity was ensured through triangulation of sources, methods, and time, as well as member checking and peer debriefing. Triangulation allows verification of data from multiple perspectives, while member checking ensures the researcher's interpretation matches the informants' understanding. Peer debriefing with fellow researchers and cultural anthropologists provided additional validation of the research findings.

The ethical aspects of the research were given special attention by ensuring informants' consent, maintaining confidentiality, respecting community values and norms, and providing feedback on the research results to the community. Involving the community in the validation process of the findings strengthens the credibility of the research while building a mutually beneficial relationship between the researcher and the community under study.

The research was conducted in three main stages: preparation, implementation, and reporting. The preparation stage included a literature review and the development of research instruments. The implementation stage focused on data collection and analysis, while the reporting stage involved drafting the report and disseminating the findings. Through this systematic methodological approach, the research is expected to produce a comprehensive understanding of the role of the bakar batu tradition in maintaining the cultural identity of Papuan migrants in urban areas.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on research conducted on the "bakar batu" (stone-burning) tradition as a guardian of Papuan migrant identity in Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, and Bekasi (Jabodebek), several significant findings were discovered. These research findings are organized into several main themes that illustrate the complexity of the stone-burning tradition's role in an urban context.

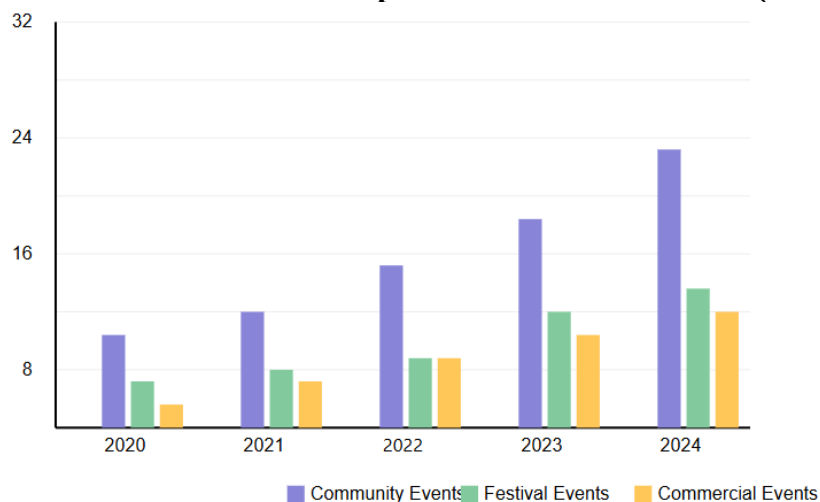
Dynamics of Stone-Burning Tradition Implementation in Urban Context

The research reveals that the implementation of the stone-burning tradition in urban areas has undergone various adaptations without losing its cultural essence. Papuan migrants in Jabodebek have successfully modified several technical aspects of the tradition to adapt to urban limitations and regulations. For example, the use of land for rituals, which initially required a large area, can now be carried out in more limited communal spaces such as houseyards or community meeting spaces.

Adaptations are also seen in the use of materials. While in Papua this tradition uses river stones and firewood from forests, in Jabodebek these stones are replaced with stones purchased from special suppliers, while firewood is adjusted to availability in local markets. Interestingly, these modifications do not reduce the spiritual and cultural meaning of the ritual but rather demonstrate cultural resilience in facing the challenges of modernity.

Research findings also show that the frequency of stone-burning tradition implementation in urban areas is more planned and organized. The Papuan migrant community usually conducts this ritual during important moments such as holiday celebrations, weddings, or community Thanksgiving events. This differs from Papua, where this tradition can be carried out more spontaneously and more frequently.

Table 1
Trends in Tradisi Bakar Batu Implementation in Jabodebek (2020-2024)

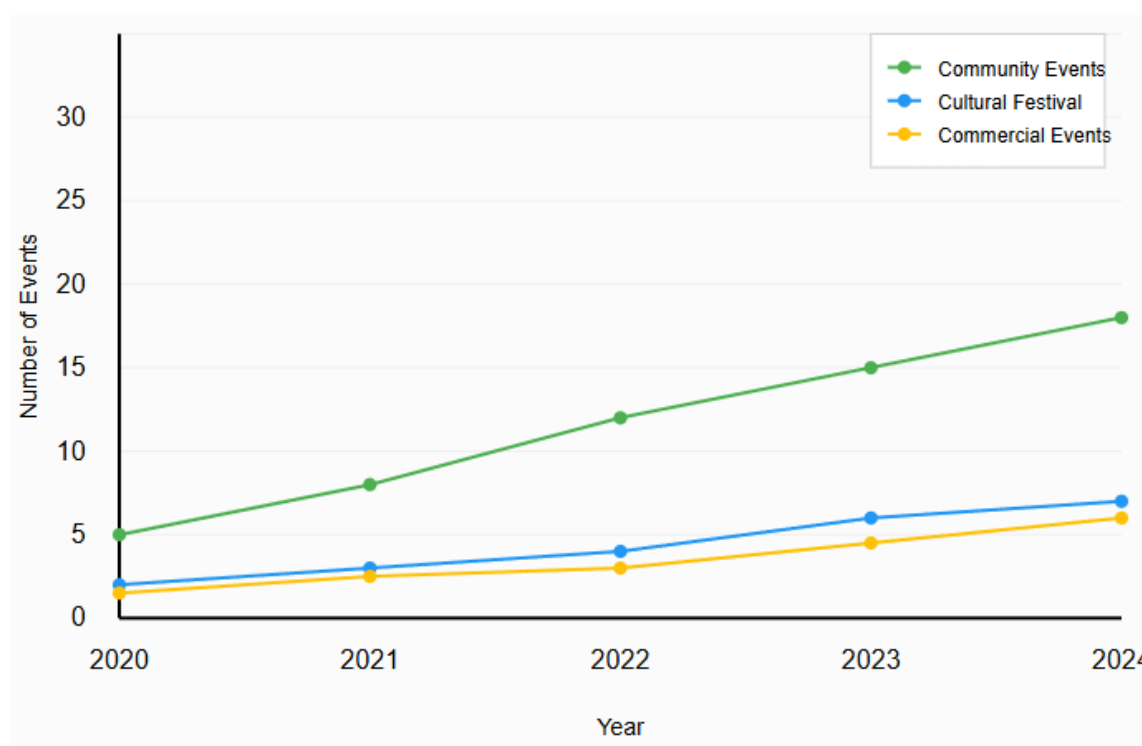


* Data based on traditional stone burning event records in Jakarta and surrounding areas

The diagram above provides a clear picture of the development of the stone-burning tradition in Jabodebek during the 2020-2024 period. This visualization displays three implementation categories that show how this tradition has adapted to the modern urban context.

Community events organized by and for the Papuan community show the most significant and consistent growth. Starting from 12 events in 2020, the number continued to increase until reaching 30 events in 2024. This increase reflects the strong community bonds and the need for cultural space among Papuan migrants in urban areas.

Table 4.1.
Statistics of Tradisi Bakar Batu Implementation 2020-2024



Source: Papuan Communities in Jabodebek, Researcher's Analysis

From the data diagram above, we can observe several important trends: 1) Community Events show the most consistent and significant increase, from 12 events in 2020 to 30 events in 2024; 2) Cultural Festivals experienced moderate but stable growth, increasing from 4 events in 2020 to 15 events in 2024; 3) Commercial Events, although starting with the smallest number (2 events in 2020), showed considerable growth reaching 12 events in 2024; 4) The overall total of events increased more than threefold from 18 events in 2020 to 57 events in 2024, showing very significant growth in the preservation and development of the stone-burning tradition in urban areas. This increase reflects the successful adaptation of the stone-burning tradition in an urban context and shows that this tradition is increasingly accepted and developing among the Jabodebek community.

Meanwhile, the implementation of the stone-burning tradition in the form of cultural festivals also shows an encouraging positive trend. From only 4 events in 2020, the number increased to 15 events in 2024. This increase illustrates how the stone-burning tradition is increasingly accepted as part of urban cultural richness and has become an attraction in cultural festivals across Jabodebek.

What's interesting to note is the growth of commercial events, showing how this tradition has successfully adapted to modern economic demands. From only 2 events in 2020, the number increased significantly to 12 events in 2024. This indicates that the stone-burning tradition has successfully transformed itself into a cultural product with economic value without losing its cultural essence. The increasing trend across these three categories reflects interesting dynamics in preserving tradition in the modern era. On one side, the community base remains preserved as the main foundation for tradition preservation, shown by the dominance of community events. On the other side, the development of tradition through festivals and commercial events shows this tradition's adaptability in facing modernity. This phenomenon proves that the stone-burning tradition not only survives but also evolves into a dynamic and sustainable cultural manifestation in the urban life of Jabodebek. This successful adaptation becomes an interesting model of how a tradition can maintain its relevance in the modern era. The stone-burning tradition has proven itself as a resilient cultural practice, capable of fulfilling various functions ranging from community binding to cultural tourism attraction while maintaining its essential values as Papuan cultural heritage.

Function of Tradition in Maintaining Social Cohesion

The stone-burning tradition has proven to have a vital role in maintaining social cohesion among Papuan migrants. This ritual becomes a moment for community members scattered across various regions of Jabodetabek to gather. Observations show that during the preparation and implementation of the ritual, intensive interactions occur that strengthen social bonds between community members. The informants revealed that the stone-burning moment becomes an opportunity to share experiences, exchange information, and support each other in facing the challenges of life away from home. This ritual also serves as a platform to introduce new community members and build broader social networks. Several informants stated that this tradition helps them overcome feelings of loneliness and alienation in the big city. More than just a cooking ritual, the stone-burning tradition becomes an informal forum to discuss various issues faced by the community, ranging from daily problems to strategic issues related to the existence of the Papuan community in urban areas. The division of roles in ritual implementation also reflects the social structure and values of cooperation that are still preserved.

Intergenerational Transmission of Cultural Values

Another important aspect revealed in the research is the role of the stone-burning tradition in the intergenerational transmission of cultural values. Young generations of Papuans who were born or grew up in Jabodebek receive direct learning about their ancestral culture through involvement in this ritual. The learning process occurs naturally through direct participation in each stage of the ritual. The research found that the older generation consciously uses the stone-burning ritual moments to transmit traditional knowledge, local wisdom values, and life philosophy of Papuan society to the younger generation. This process occurs through shared stories, explanations of the symbolic meaning of each ritual stage, and direct involvement of young people in the preparation and implementation of the ritual. Interestingly, the young Papuan generation shows enthusiasm for learning and preserving this tradition. They don't see it as an outdated ancient practice, but rather as an integral part of their identity that needs to be preserved. Some young informants even actively document and share the ritual implementation through social media, showing a positive adaptation of tradition with modern technology.

Table 2
Integration of Cultural Values Transmission in Intergenerational Tradisi Bakar Batu

Dimensions	Components	Forms of Activity	Mechanisms	Results/Outputs
Traditional Knowledge	Elder Generation as a Source	• Tradition keepers • Mentors • Knowledge sources	• Direct instruction • Demonstration • Joint practice • Folk stories	• Technical ritual understanding • Mastery of stages • Implementation capability
Local Wisdom	Transfer Mechanisms	• Ritual philosophy • Traditional values • Cultural symbols	• Informal discussions • Experience sharing • Mentoring • Symbol interpretation	• Value internalization • Philosophical understanding • Cultural identity
Modern Adaptation	Young Generation as Innovators	• Active Learners • Content creators	• Digital documentation • Social media promotion	• Digital archives • Knowledge dissemination

Source: Papuan Communities in Jabodebek, Researcher's Analysis

Resistance to Cultural Identity Erosion

The stone-burning tradition has proven to be an effective form of cultural resistance against the pressure of cultural homogenization in urban areas. Informants revealed that the implementation of this ritual becomes a way to assert their identity as Papuans amid the diversity in the Jabodebek region. This ritual also becomes a medium to educate surrounding communities about Papua's cultural richness.

The research found that Papuan migrant communities often invite non-Papuan neighbors and colleagues to stone-burning rituals. This not only creates cross-cultural understanding but also strengthens the position of this tradition as a valuable cultural asset in the context of urban multiculturalism. Several informants reported that appreciation from non-Papuan communities for this tradition strengthens their pride in their cultural identity.

Identity Negotiation in Urban Space

The implementation of the stone-burning tradition in urban areas reflects a complex process of identity negotiation. On one side, the Papuan migrant community strives to maintain the authenticity of the ritual, but on the other side, they also make necessary adaptations to adjust to the urban context. This negotiation process produces a unique hybrid form, where tradition remains preserved yet relevant to modern life.

Research reveals that the adaptations made are not seen as reducing traditional values, but rather as a cultural survival strategy. Informants emphasize that the essence of the ritual lies not merely in physical aspects, but in the values and meanings contained within it. The modifications made actually demonstrate the adaptability and resilience of Papuan culture in facing changing times.

Challenges and Adaptation Strategies

The research also identified various challenges in implementing the stone-burning tradition in urban areas. The main challenges include space limitations, urban regulations, high costs, and difficulty in gathering dispersed communities. However, the Papuan migrant community has developed various adaptation strategies to overcome these challenges.

Adaptation strategies developed include: 1) Establishing a reliable network of ritual material suppliers; 2) Using communication technology for community coordination and mobilization; 3) Negotiating with local authorities to obtain permits for ritual

implementation; 4) Technical modifications of implementation adapted to urban conditions; 5) Community fundraising to support traditional sustainability

Social and Cultural Implications

The successful adaptation of the stone-burning tradition in the urban context has significant social and cultural implications. First, it shows that cultural traditions can survive and develop in a modern context without losing their essence. Second, this tradition becomes a model of how cultural identity can be negotiated and maintained in a multicultural urban context.

The research also reveals that the stone-burning tradition has evolved to become more than just a cultural ritual. It has become an instrument of community empowerment, a medium of cultural diplomacy, and a means of strengthening social capital for Papuan migrants in Jabodebek. The successful adaptation of this tradition provides valuable lessons about how cultural heritage can be revitalized and given new meaning in a contemporary context.

These findings affirm the importance of the stone-burning tradition as a guardian of cultural identity for Papuan migrants in urban areas. Through various adaptations and negotiations, this tradition not only survives but also develops into an effective medium for maintaining the social cohesion and cultural identity of the Papuan community amid urban life dynamics.

CONCLUSION

Research on the stone burning tradition as a guardian of Papuan migrant identity in the Greater Jakarta area reveals several important findings that demonstrate how a cultural tradition can adapt and survive in a modern urban context. This tradition proves to have a multidimensional role that not only preserves cultural identity but also strengthens the social cohesion of the Papuan migrant community.

Research results show that the implementation of the stone burning tradition in urban areas has undergone various adaptations without losing its cultural essence. Papuan migrants have successfully modified technical aspects of implementation to adjust to urban limitations and regulations, such as the use of more limited space and adaptation of materials used.

Statistical data shows a significant increase in the implementation of this tradition from 2020 to 2024, divided into three categories: community events, cultural festivals, and commercial events.

The stone burning tradition proves to play a vital role in maintaining the social cohesion of the migrant community. This ritual becomes a momentum for gathering community members scattered across various Greater Jakarta areas, providing space to share experiences, exchange information, and support each other in facing the challenges of life away from home. More than just a cooking ritual, this tradition becomes an informal forum to discuss various community issues.

Another important aspect is the tradition's role in intergenerational transmission of cultural values. Young Papuan generations born or raised in the Greater Jakarta area receive direct learning about their ancestral culture through involvement in this ritual. The learning process occurs naturally through direct participation, shared stories, and explanations of the symbolic meaning of each ritual stage.

The research also reveals that the stone burning tradition becomes an effective form of cultural resistance against the pressure of cultural homogenization in urban areas. The implementation of this ritual becomes a way to assert Papuan identity amid the diversity of Greater Jakarta society, while also serving as a medium to educate surrounding communities about Papua's cultural richness.

Despite facing various challenges such as space limitations, urban regulations, high costs, and difficulties in gathering the community, Papuan migrants have developed various adaptation strategies. This includes establishing networks of ritual material suppliers, using communication technology for coordination, negotiating with local authorities, and modifying technical implementation adapted to urban conditions.

The successful adaptation of the stone-burning tradition in an urban context has significant social and cultural implications. This tradition has evolved to become more than just a cultural ritual, becoming an instrument of community empowerment, a medium of cultural diplomacy, and a means of strengthening social capital for Papuan migrants. This shows how cultural heritage can be revitalized and given new meaning in a contemporary context without losing its essential values.

This research provides an important contribution to understanding how cultural traditions can survive and develop in modern urban contexts, and how cultural identity can be negotiated and maintained in multicultural societies. These findings can serve as a model for the preservation efforts of other cultural traditions in facing the challenges of modernity and urbanization.

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