



Maa Ledungga Expression of Social Resistance Through the Preservation of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Gorontalo Province

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the masterplan planning of Maa Ledungga Rice Harvest Art Festival in South Huntu Village, Bone Bolango Regency, Gorontalo. This festival is a response to modernization and land use change that threatens local agrarian traditions. Through revitalization by the Huntu Art District community, the festival functions as a harvest gratitude ritual and a space for cultural expression and strengthening of community identity. The research used literature study, participatory observation, and narrative analysis to understand the role of cultural narratives and community participation as a strategy of social resistance and culture-based creative economic development. The results show that the festival strengthens social solidarity, builds networks between farmers, artists, MSMEs and youth, and creates new economic opportunities. The festival is also a model of cultural heritage management that is relevant to contemporary needs and strengthens food security and green open spaces through the creative economy. The findings contribute to the study of culture-based creative economy and recommendations for the government and creative industry players in cultural preservation and sustainable local economic development.

Keywords: Maa Ledungga, Rice Harvest Art Festival, Social Resistance, Cultural Heritage Preservation.

INTRODUCTION

The increasingly intense pressures of modernization, such as land conversion and changes in economic structure, have placed agrarian traditions in various regions in a vulnerable position. Cultural heritage that has been a buffer for the identity and solidarity of rural communities is slowly being pushed out by the flow of cultural uniformity and the demands of rapid development. In this context, the Huntu Art Distrik (Hardisk) community in South Huntu Village, Bone Bolango Regency, Gorontalo Province, present a creative response through the revitalization of the *Maa Ledungga* agrarian celebration. This activity not only functions as a ritual of gratitude for the success of the rice harvest, but also as a space for cultural expression and social resistance to external pressure that threaten the sustainability of traditional lifestyle.

Maa Ledungga has evolved from a hereditary tradition to an important medium for strengthening collective identity and maintaining the living space of agrarian communities. Through Hartdisk's creative and

participatory repackaging, *Maa Ledungga* has emerged as an inclusive and relevant cultural event for the younger generation, while opening a space for dialogue between generations. This ritual also maintains agrarian spiritual values that have been passed down from generation to generation and represents a form of real resistance to land conversion and shifts in traditional production patterns. Thus, *Maa Ledungga* is not only maintained as a cultural heritage, but also as an adaptive social strategy to face contemporary challenges.

However, there is a significant lack of studies on the role of narrative in agrarian festivals such as *Maa Ledungga* as a tool of social resistance as well as creative economic empowerment. Narratives and cultural practices in this activity have the potential to be an effective strategy to negotiate identity, fight for rights to agrarian space, and build a new economic ecosystem based on local strengths. This narrative approach is in line with the concept of narrative strategy in cultural heritage studies, where heritage is not only passed on passively, but processed into active narratives that

strengthen social solidarity and community cultural resilience.

METHOD

Qualitative research method is a research approach based on the philosophy of post-positivism, which is used to examine objects in natural conditions (real conditions, not set or experimental conditions) where the researcher acts as the key instrument. The descriptive approach is a type of research design commonly used to study natural research object or phenomena in real setting, not manipulated as in experiments (Sugiyono, 2015).

Interviews

Research on the *Maa Ledungga* Festival as an expression of social resistance and preservation of intangible cultural heritage in Gorontalo was conducted through interviews and literature review. Interviews were conducted with key informants, including community leaders, artists, and organizers of the Huntu Art District who are directly involved in the planning and implementation of the *Maa Ledungga* Festival. These informants provided insights into the narrative construction, mechanisms of community participation, and the socio-economic impacts of the festival on local communities.

Literature Review

A literature review was also conducted to supplement and validate field data with previous research. The literature review included academic journals, books, and credible online sources related to intangible cultural heritage, social resistance, creative economy, and the role of cultural festivals in community empowerment. This method ensured that the findings were grounded in established theoretical frameworks and contextualized within broader academic discourse.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Maa Ledungga as an Intangible Cultural Heritage Tradition

Maa Ledungga is an art and cultural event organized periodically by the Hartdisk community in South Huntu Village, Bone Bolango Regency, Gorontalo Province. Etymologically, the term *Maa Ledungga* means "has arrived" or "has come", which refers to the sacred moment when the rice harvest season arrives - an important event in the agrarian calendar of the Gorontalo community (Hartdisk, 2020).

Maa Ledungga was first held in May 2018; the second edition took place in December 2019; the third edition in October 2022; and in late April to early May 2025, the festival was organized in various strategic

locations, including Ka Mi'u Rice Mill, Ka Jami Rice Mill, and Huntu area. Ka Jami, and the Huntu Art District (Editorial, 2025). The event combines art exhibitions-both by local and national artists-cultural discussions, art performances, and a bazaar of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) products.

Overall, *Maa Ledungga* can be considered as an intangible cultural heritage. First, through oral narratives about the "arrival" of harvest time, the oral traditions and expressions of the Gorontalo people are preserved. Second, a series of performing arts-traditional dances and local music-affirm *Maa Ledungga's* status as a performing art. Third, the procession of traditional rituals from *Moo Mulayadu* to the thanksgiving ceremony held after the rice harvest shows the customs and celebratory rites intertwined in the life of an agrarian community. Fourth, reflections on local agronomic knowledge and wisdom in reading nature's signs-as a response to climate changes and ecological challenges-underline the dimensions of knowledge about nature and the universe. Fifth, the creation of art installations from rice straw and local handicraft products highlights traditional skills passed down through generations.

As an intangible cultural heritage laboratory, *Maa Ledungga* has a strategic role in strengthening the identity and solidarity of Gorontalo's agrarian communities. This tradition serves as an adaptive platform for social, environmental and economic dynamics, as well as a space for creative innovation that supports inclusive and sustainable local development. Intergenerational interactions in rituals, performances, and MSME markets create a sustainable path of cultural inheritance and strengthen the community's position in the face of contemporary social-ecological changes. Through collaboration between artists and communities, *Maa Ledungga* also gives voice to marginalized and social-ecological issues, making it a cultural event that not only celebrates the rice harvest, but also nurtures human values and social justice in the lives of Gorontalo people.

The narrative behind *Maa Ledungga*: Reflections on Social, Ecological, and Humanitarian Resistance

The *Maa Ledungga* celebration in Gorontalo is a cultural event that not only marks the arrival of the harvest season, but also a space for reflection on the various challenges faced by agrarian communities. In the fourth celebration of *Maa Ledungga* raised the theme "Suaka" as a response to the complexity of social, environmental and humanitarian issues that are increasingly evident in the lives of farmers and other living beings. This theme was born from concerns over the impact of climate change, the threat of crop failure, and land grabbing that erodes the living space of the

community and the ecosystem more broadly. In this context, *Maa Ledungga* is not only an agrarian celebration, but also a place for collective criticism and reflection on ecological and social justice.

The meaning of "Maa Ledungga"-which means "it has come" or "it has arrived"- symbolizes the anticipated arrival of the harvest season, as well as marking the arrival of new challenges for farmers. At this year's celebration, the nuances of emotion and anxiety seemed to color every series of events. Not only farmers, but also various other entities such as women, children, and the environment also became subjects that were voiced through works of art. The collaboration between local and national artists in the art exhibition strengthens the message that this celebration is a shared property, representing the diversity of voices and experiences of the Gorontalo community. The works on display, including the facades created by Gorontalo artists, explicitly raise marginal issues such as the criminalization of farmers, gender-based violence, and social inequality that still occur in Indonesia (LipuNaratif, 2025).



Figure 1. Shandi Igrisa & Yayat Gokilz's work,
(Documentation: Mita Yantu, 2025)

The theme of "Sanctuary" carried in *Maa Ledungga* 2025 also offers reflective questions about who actually needs protection in the midst of the crisis. Through artworks, discussions, and traditional rituals, artists and communities are invited to rethink human relations with nature and fellow living beings in a more just and sustainable manner. This exhibition is a space for collective contemplation, where each work not only conveys an aesthetic message, but also a social-ecological critique that is relevant to contemporary conditions.

Furthermore, *Maa Ledungga* is a tangible proof of the power of local culture in responding to global challenges. This activity is managed independently by the community, without dependence on the government, thus emphasizing the spirit of independence and community solidarity. The participation of various parties-from farmers, artists, to the general public-

creates an inclusive dialog space, strengthens social networks, and broadens the horizon of thinking about the importance of preserving traditions and the environment. Thus, *Maa Ledungga* not only maintains Gorontalo's cultural heritage, but also becomes a social laboratory that facilitates innovation, resistance, and new hope for a more just and sustainable future.



Figure 2.

The Atmosphere inside Ka Miu Rice Mill with I Ketut Putrayasa's work entitled *Oryzamorgana*.
(Documetation : Mita Yantu, 2025)

Maa Ledungga in the Context of Creative Economy

In the perspective of creative economy, *Maa Ledungga* functions as a creativity ecosystem that integrates performing arts, cultural traditions, and local entrepreneurial activities. John Howkins (2001) states that the creative economy is born from the development of ideas and creativity in collaborative networks, which is reflected in this event through traditional dance performances, ethnic music, and cultural workshops that involve the active participation of the community and visitors. Pine and Gilmore's (1999) concept of *experience economy* is also relevant, as the celebration provides authentic experiences that encourage direct involvement of participants, thus increasing the economic and emotional value of the event.

Maa Ledungga has evolved from a mere rice harvesting tradition to a vibrant creative economy ecosystem in Gorontalo. *The Maa Ledungga* Rice Harvest Art Party celebration not only features the traditional ritual of *Moo Mulayadu* to harvest thanksgiving, but also becomes a space for collaboration between farmers, artists, MSME players, and the local community. In its implementation, *Maa Ledungga* presents various creative economy activities such as art exhibitions, traditional music and dance performances, local product bazaars, workshops on introduction to local food processing, and craft making. This activity directly opens opportunities for small and medium enterprises to market handicraft products, traditional culinary, and

artworks inspired by local wisdom.

The uniqueness of *Maa Ledungga* lies in the utilization of unconventional spaces, such as rice mills and harvest warehouses, as exhibition and performance locations. This not only strengthens the connection between art, agriculture, and community, but also creates an authentic experience for visitors. Local and national artists involved in the event produce works that reflect social, environmental and humanitarian issues, while elevating Gorontalo's cultural identity to a wider stage. This cross-sector collaboration strengthens *Maa Ledungga's* position as a laboratory of social and economic innovation, where cultural values are processed into value-added products and experiences.

The creative economic impact of *Maa Ledungga* can be seen from the increase in local economic activity during the event. Citizen participation in art markets and exhibitions, as well as community involvement in the production and distribution of art and cultural products, drive community-based economic growth. In addition, the event is also a cultural tourism magnet that attracts visits from outside the region, thus expanding the marketing network and introducing Gorontalo's cultural wealth to the national level. Thus, *Maa Ledungga* not only plays a role in preserving tradition, but also as a driving force for an inclusive and sustainable creative economy in the Gorontalo region.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of the study and analysis that has been carried out, it can be concluded that the *Maa Ledungga* celebration in South Huntu Village, Bone Bolango Regency, Gorontalo, plays a strategic role as a medium of expression of social resistance to the pressure of modernization and conversion of rice fields. Through revitalization carried out by the Huntu Art District community, this festival not only maintains the agrarian and spiritual values of the community, but also actualizes cultural narratives as a means of negotiating identity and rights to the living space of the agrarian community. The active participation of the community, involving farmers, artists, MSME players, and the younger generation, has built a strong social network and created new economic opportunities based on creativity and local wisdom.

The findings of this research confirm that the preservation of intangible cultural heritage through cultural festivals such as *Maa Ledungga* can strengthen social solidarity, expand the space for cross-sector collaboration, and become a model of cultural heritage management that is relevant to contemporary needs. In addition, the festival contributes to the strengthening of food security and the preservation of green open spaces through the integration of culture-based creative economy. The practical implications of this research

provide recommendations to local governments and creative industry players to adopt participatory management models. creative industry actors to adopt participatory management models, strengthen local economic capacity, and support cultural preservation in a sustainable manner.

Thus, *Maa Ledungga* not only functions as a harvest gratitude ritual, but also as an adaptive social strategy that is able to answer the challenges of globalization, cultural homogenization, and spatial changes. This research is expected to enrich the repertoire of culture-based creative economy studies, as well as become a reference in the formulation of cultural heritage preservation policies and inclusive and sustainable local economic development.

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