



A Journal of Culture, English Language, Teaching & Literature

ISSN 1414-3320 (Print), ISSN 2502-4914 (Online)

Vol. 22 No.1; June 2022

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Cultural Values Revitalization: A Post-Conflict Peace Building Effort in Ambon City

¹Yulita Titik Sunarimahingsih, ²B. Tyas Susanti, and
³Y. Trihoni Nalesti Dewi

^{1,2}Architecture Department, Faculty of Architecture and Design,
Soegijapranata Catholic, Semarang, Indonesia

³Law Department, Faculty of Law and Communication, Soegijapranata
Catholic University, Semarang, Indonesia

¹yulita@unika.ac.id, ²tyas@unika.ac.id, and ³trihoni@unika.ac.id

Received: 28-11-2019

Accepted: 10-06-2022

Published: 30-06-2022

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¹Yulita Titik Sunarimahingsih, ²B. Tyas Susanti, and ³Y. Trihoni Nalesti Dewi

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^{1,2}Architecture Department, Faculty of Architecture and Design, Soegijapranata Catholic, Semarang, Indonesia

³Law Department, Faculty of Law and Communication, Soegijapranata Catholic University, Semarang, Indonesia

Abstract: Ambon has experienced a social disaster in the form of a conflict that occurred in 1999-2004. Many attempts were made to overcome it. Basically, the Ambonese people have unique traditions and cultural symbols that can be a means of uniting them, but small emotional flareups still appear which cause further friction and conflict, therefore revitalizing the local cultural values is important. The revitalization of Ambonese cultural values and traditional symbols is important. Currently, the gap in communication and understanding of noble values, local wisdom, and the meaning of cultural symbols is the main obstacle in efforts to use it for reconciliation. This research reports the aim of finding a strategy for revitalizing cultural values and cultural symbols in Ambon, as one way to promote sustainable peace and rebuild Ambon's identity as a city that is full of local philosophy and cultural wisdom. The method used is a qualitative method with post-disaster management analysis. The research finds that a revitalization process strategy for reconciliation can be done by means of (1) Building integration of local wisdom and culture in public space, and (2) internalizing the local values and the marking of cultural symbols.

Key words: revitalization, culture values, post conflict, social disaster

Abstrak: Ambon telah mengalami bencana sosial berupa konflik yang terjadi pada tahun 1999-2004. Banyak upaya dilakukan untuk mengatasi. Pada dasarnya masyarakat Ambon memiliki tradisi unik dan symbol-symbol budaya yang mampu menjadi sarana untuk menyatukan mereka, namun masih muncul letupan-letupan kecil yang menimbulkan gesekan dan konflik lanjutan, oleh karena itu revitalisasi nilai-nilai budaya menjadi penting. Revitalisasi nilai-nilai budaya dan symbol adat menjadi penting. Saat ini, kesenjangan komunikasi dan pemahaman pada nilai-nilai luhur, kearifan local dan pemaknaan terhadap symbol budaya menjadi kendala utama dalam Upaya pemanfaatannya untuk rekonsiliasi. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah menemukan strategi revitalisasi nilai-nilai budaya dan simbol-simbol budaya di Ambon, sebagai salah satu cara untuk mempromosikan perdamaian yang berkelanjutan dan membangun kembali identitas Ambon sebagai kota yang penuh dengan filosofi dan kearifan budaya lokal. Metoda yang digunakan adalah metoda kualitatif dengan analisis manajemen pasca bencana. Hasil yang ditemukan; strategi proses revitalisasi Nilai untuk rekonsiliasi dapat dilakukan dengan cara; (1) Membangun integrasi dari kearifan dan budaya lokal di ruang publik; (2) Internalisasi Nilai dan sistem penandaan simbol budaya

Kata kunci: revitalisasi, nilai budaya, pasca konflik, bencana sosial

INTRODUCTION

A disaster is an incident or a series of happening that may be caused by various factors, either natural or unnatural factors. A disaster can be categorized into three types, i.e. natural disaster, unnatural disaster, and social disaster. Ambon is a region that experienced a social disaster that is a social conflict among community groups, especially between the years of 1999 and 2004. Although various attempts had been done in order to overcome this social conflict, minor conflicts still happened beyond 2004. For example, the Ambon riot of November 11, 2011 and the Pattimura riot, which ended by the May-15-2012 clash, become evidence that trust among plural Ambonese is not fully recovered yet. The stereotyped view of one religious group towards another religious group as well as small problems among them can start a dispute causing attacks, killings, religion-building combustion, and others. Despite the peaceful condition now occurring in Ambon, the potential latent future conflict might happen.

Ambon has traditions and cultural symbols with high cultural values considered unifiers for people in Ambon (Preis & Mustea, 2013). During a conflict, cultural symbols become an important factor either in the spread of violation or in the seeking of peace. The lack of tribute to cultural symbols can worsen the surrounding conflict, widen the dispute, trigger hatred, and increase the rejection of other beliefs and cultures. Symbols often become a target of attack intentionally used in a systematic attempt to attack the enemy's identity. Besides, during a conflict in Ambon, inculcating noble values contained in traditions and cultural symbols is not delivered to the next generation.

Revitalization of cultural values is an attempt to bring culture to life and to strengthen the cultural values in society. cultural value revitalization is a need in Ambon in order to create sustainable peace. The urgent aspect to be applied in Ambon regarding cultural value revitalization concerns the preservation of cultural heritage and the application of cultural values in everyday life. Next, the aim of this research is to find out arevitalization strategy for cultural values and cultural symbols in Ambon as one way to promote sustainable peace as well as to rebuild Ambon's identity as a city full of philosophy and local cultural wisdom.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Revitalization of values is an attempt to bring culture to life and to strengthen the cultural values in the society or group. This is often conducted when those values are considered faded or ignored, and so there should be an attempt to recover and re-promote those values.

Basically, the revitalization of cultural values is a process. Sudrajat (2020) attempted to revitalize cultural values (Javanese culture) in the teaching-learning process at Banguntapan Junior High School in Bantul through *Petruk Strategy* (modeling, empowering, teaching, reinforcing, making unique, and comprehensive model). In this attempt, the school management implemented some values, such as *satriya* (brave), *prasaja* (simple), *setya budaya* (goodness), and (sincerity), in its education system. Tosida et al. (2019) conducted a revitalization of the local culture of batik developed in the society using the Capacity Building approach to batik entrepreneurs. There are, however, some phases applied in the process of revitalization, i.e. rearrangement of current facilities, supervision management training, and cooperation.

A conflict in Ambon is one of the social disaster forms. Therefore, the revitalization of cultural values in order to create post-conflict peace in Ambon can be done using post-conflict management risk approach. post-conflict management is a kind of improvement and recovery of all aspects in which the main target is to recover the situation and or to normalize the condition (Paidy, 2012). It can be said that post-conflict management is stressed on the recovery. In this reported research, there are some aspects that can be used as a starting point in the attempt at social disaster recovery, one of which starts from the local society culture.

METHOD

A. Type of Research and Research Subject

This research was a qualitative research. The gathering data technique was conducted through an observation intended to pay close attention to the empirical phenomenon related to cultural symbols and local wisdom of *Negeri* society; through an in-depth interview conducted to reveal unseen things during observation and to gain deeper comprehension; and through a relevant literature study. The analysis method and discussion used post-conflict management approach, with the following research objects: cosmology and local wisdom of *Negeri* society in Ambon city, as well as symbols and cultural objects of *Negeri*.

B. Research Procedure

The steps of the research were the identification and analysis of the existing cultural value potential covering cosmology, and local wisdom of the society, as well as the cultural symbol of *Negeri*. Next, the assessment was conducted using post-conflict management approach. Some steps needed to be done during post-conflict management were analyzing potential aspects triggering future conflicts, formulating a gap, and determining a strategy for cultural value revitalization (Kementrian PUPR, 2017)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

A. Conflict Triggers and Gap Analysis

1. Settlement segregation in an urban area

Since the safety factor has not been normally reached, segregated life during the conflict and the beginning of post-conflict become a solution to survive and build a life in Ambon city. Each group builds its own community with its own exclusive religious identity. With this kind of religion-identity-group-based settlement separation, it is very likely that there will be religion-based fanaticism. This condition may lead to future conflicts caused by small frictions among group members. Basically, settlement separation has been conducted since a long time ago. This is shown by the existence of Muslim Negeri, i.e. *Negeri Laha*, *Batu Merah*, and others; and Christian Negeri, such as *Negeri Kilang*, *Hutumuri*, etc. However, people get along well and work together because they are attached to *Pela Gandong* tradition (*Pela Gandong* is one of the Ambonese traditions in which people take an oath to establish brotherhood). Nonetheless, during the conflict and the beginning of post-conflict, separation is obvious and it is not only the youth of the negeri, but also almost all people choose to live segregatedly

2. The dilution of life values based on local wisdom

Before the conflict, Ambonese people used to mingle and get along with one another. The more frequently they meet, the closer the bond that they have. Ambonese call it *bakutamang*. *Bakutamang* or more frequently called *batamang* is done deeper, and larger, and becomes institutionalized in Ambonese social life. They show brotherhood within the family and neighborhood life. The social construction of *Batamang* is carried out through kinship and cooperation among those who are different. This is ritualized into visiting habits among them. This visiting habit is called *mangente*. *Mangente* is carried out either at the time of happiness or sadness. Visiting habits and sharing become local wisdom in the life of Ambonese, which they call it *laeng lia laeng* (caring for one another). At the beginning of the formation, Ambonese is open to pluralism. This is related to a base or cultural base of Ambonese people (as part of Mollucas people), that is the *Orang Basudara* culture. Other local wisdom is internalized by Ambonese people, such as *pela* culture, *makan patita*, and others. All local wisdom leads to the philosophy of “*katong samua basudara*” (we are family). “*Katong samua*” contains an integral self-concept of Ambonese people by not differentiating one from another in the context of the religion they believe. “*Katong*” as a reality describes “the feeling of being part of” that is attached since they were

born and that underlies the identity of Ambonese culture (Tontji, 2011). This habit is taught from generation to generation in a family. At present, the people of Ambon are long to have this condition. This is because the young generation is not considered to comprehend the existing culture and values of local wisdom. During the conflict, they were kids. During the conflict and post-conflict, their parents lacked time to teach values of local wisdom. As a consequence, the habit is not fully understood and supported by the youth in Ambon, which results in a decrease in transmitting the tradition, cultural heritage, and cultural values from one generation to another

3. The decrease of sacredness and comprehension of cultural symbol values existing in the Negeri of Ambon City

In Ambon, cultural objects are parts of rich and old heritage, the most prominent ones in *Negeri*. The most important cultural objects in most negeri are *batu alas* and *baileo*. Traditionally, each *Negeri* has its own *batu alas* (*batu asal*). *Batu alas* is a monument that represents the bond between the society and its ancestors (*Tete Nene Moyang*). *Batu alas* is usually located next to a *baileo*, a sacred meeting place where important public policy is discussed and resolved, and later is blessed by the ancestors. Besides having a strong cultural and spiritual meaning, *baileo* represents positive moral values. Communal matters are discussed together in *baileo* with representatives of the society i.e. fishermen, farmers, males, and females. The decision made in *baileo* is usually made through deliberation and consensus by paying attention to the need of each involved party. As a consequence, *baileo* becomes a symbol of democracy, equality, and affection. These symbols, which are symbols of sacred culture, should be protected (Wattimena, 2009). Inculcating cultural objects and noble values toward the youth has been done orally, meaning that their parents or the elders will give insight about noble values in traditions and cultural objects to their children. Due to conflict, parents do not have time to give insight into noble values in their tradition and culture, as well as their cultural symbol objects. This results in loss or a lack of insight into their cultural symbol value and objects. Next, there is a decrease in respect towards cultural symbol objects and their values.

From the problems gathered in the field and from the analysis of future conflict triggers, the main gap lies in communication and

comprehension of noble values, local wisdom, and the interpretation of the cultural symbol.

B. Analysis of Cultural Value and Its Potential

1. The role of local wisdom values in building communication and brotherhood

For the customary society of Moluccas and Ambonese as part of Moluccas society (*Adat Orang Basudara*), local wisdom *Hidop Orang Basudara* is aimed at keeping and strengthening harmony and solidarity. This is the social intelligence of Moluccas society, especially people of Ambon City. Through the local wisdom of *Hidop Orang Basudara* and the people of Ambon City who are multicultural and multiethnic, a new cultural genealogy of Ambonese and *Orang Basudara* in a strong cultural identity is formed.

Watloly (2017) and Noor (2016) stated that customary values for customary society of Moluccas and Ambonese as part of Moluccas society (*Adat Orang Basudara*), local wisdom *Hidop Orang Basudara* is aimed at keeping and strengthening harmony and solidarity. This is the social intelligence of Moluccas society, especially people of Ambon City. Through the local wisdom of *Hidop Orang Basudara* and the people of Ambon City who are multicultural and multiethnic, a new cultural genealogy of Ambonese and *Orang Basudara* in a strong cultural identity is formed.

Watloly (2017) and Noor (2016) stated that the customary values of *Orang Basudara* are a noble civilization strategy to prevent and overcome conflicts as well as to build a long-lasting true peace among the customary people of *Orang Basudara*. Therefore, peace becomes a keyword in the customary values of *Orang Basudara*. Review on Customary Society Peace of *Orang Basudara* as shown by Watloly (2017) pointed out that the peace shown by *Orang Basudara* is an achievement that is not only found but should also create and built (cultivated) consistently and continuously. In the philosophy of *Hidop Orang Basudara* there is a peaceful way called *Hidop Baku Bae* (live peacefully) as a form of collective ratio and collective behavior of *Orang Basudara* praised in the mind and natural ethos (origin) of *Orang Basudara*. *Hidop Baku Bae* becomes a symbol system and value power that live and flourish in history, socio-cultural, politics, economics, and so on. It can be said that the term *Hidop*

Baku Bae refers to a process that is sacred, dynamic, and sustainable in order to practice and reconcile conflicted parties. It shows that to prevent and overcome conflict in the customary society, *Orang Basudara* needs obedience in practicing all forms of the local wisdom of *Orang Basudara* as a life manager.

Customary law functions as preventing violence and conflict, realizing peace, and keeping sustainable and autonomous peace in the customary society life of *Orang Basudara*. According to Watloly (2017) *Hidop Baku Bae* has four closely related factors, i.e. (1) the trust level of *Orang Basudara* in their own customary truth; (2) the expression level of *Orang Basudara* in the rules (customary life rules) inspired and made into character or character of living together; (3) the power of interaction level among *Orang Basudara*; and (4) the perception (attitude and perspective) of *Orang Basudara* which is open among *Orang Basudara* and other community is a noble civilization strategy to prevent and overcome conflicts as well as to build a long-lasting true peace among the customary people of *Orang Basudara* (Watloly, 2018). Therefore, peace becomes a keyword in the customary values of *Orang Basudara*.

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character of living together; (3) the power of interaction level among *Orang Basudara*; and (4) the perception (attitude and perspective) of *Orang Basudara* which is open among *Orang Basudara* and other community (Watloly, 2018).

In *Hidop Baku Bae*, society is more and more leaving “selfishness” (“Betaism”) that is characterized by the feeling of suspicion, feud, and trauma. In addition, they get together and hold hands to express their existence, i.e. “*Katong Samua Orang Basudara*” (we are brothers). “Beta” that emerges is not “Beta-ism”, but *Beta Orang Basudara* in a strong self-concept. The results are that traumatic feeling is lowered and people become more involved (deeper) in solidarity, trust, and empathy. Solidarity, trust, and empathy are strong social politeness. Implicitly, the local wisdom of *Hidop Orang Basudara* contains the philosophy of unique peace. The peacefulness of *Orang Basudara* should be internalized as intelligence quotation, intelligence, and moral. *Hidop Baku Bae* (getting along with one another) is not only achieved by avoiding wars (negative peace), but also by building peaceful situation that is cheerful, happy, and true as the reflection of the mind, life melody, as well as natural ethos to others. Peacefulness should be considered as the core of happy life and sharing life. With this peace philosophy, it is hoped that Ambonese is encouraged to be part of *Hidop Orang Basudara* in order to be agents and pioneers of peace in their country and in the world. The young generation of Ambon will always be raised, educated, guided, and directed through the local wisdom of *Hidop Orang Basudara* so that they cannot easily be provoked. Provocation can bother peace and people’s unity as *orang basudara*

2. Customary symbol and cosmology of Ambon society

The customary symbol cannot be separated from the cosmology of *negeri*. Cosmology is the view of natural and social phenomenon as either the big universe or the universe, which people can relate in balance and in harmony (Handoko, 2016). Supeli (2010) stated that cosmology is also related to the cosmos full of supra-natural emotion. Cosmology marks authentic and deep originality, energy, strength, spirit, soul, heart, and mind (Watloly, 2019). In other words, we can say that the cosmology of *negeri* is the way of life and belief towards the natural phenomenon, whether it is visible or non-spiritual which becomes the strength of soul, spirit, heart, and mind of people in the *negeri*. In the *Negeri* societies of Ambon, the cosmology of *negeri* is the priority that should be followed

together as the “culture of harmony”. Therefore, society is hoped to be able to form harmony among people, nature, and values that function as the root of the culture.

Custom is connected to the concept of safety, happiness, wealth, peace of life, peace, and the greatness of life in each *Negeri* (Watloly, 2019). In the cities of Ambon custom is applied in state order, such as government order, ceremony or ritual, border, and space order, as well as traditional symbols, either it is visible or invisible. All of them are interconnected with one another, respected, and internalized by the people, so the existing customary symbols in *Negeri* in Ambon do not only play a role as markers but also as formers and controllers for customary people behaviors. This is in accordance with what was said by Tamar (2017, p.22) that cultural values can be used to form behavior and correct biased behavior because cultural values contain a certain power to reconstruct the ethical behavior of the people. As a result, it can be stated that in general cultural values form ethical and social behavior.

The connection between social order and the cosmos creates social behavior of the society expressed in customary ceremonies and the division of territory. In totality perspective as a customary society, in Moluccas customary society the division of territory is commonly described as human anatomy (Maspaitella, 2017, p.79), covering:

- a) *Uru or Ulu* (head to the top middle)
- b) *Hesam hesa / hesam asa* (middle)
- c) Parts of the bed/base (legs to center bottom)

Space cosmology applied in the division of territory/region of customary negeri in Ambon is not far different from the division of territory in Moluccas. The division of the territory covers:

- a) Wetland area (beach), meant as a yard or place to gather *orang-orang basudara*, a place for social activity and social interaction.
- b) Central mainland area, area for settlement.
- c) Mountainous region (upper) called old *Negeri*, which is sacred and used as a place to live (house) of ancestors, the founding fathers of *negeri*.

The bonding between mountains and beaches in customary society in Ambon is very strong. This is reinforced by the traditional symbol of negeri called *batu alas (batu tenong, batu soa, batu pamali)*. The existence of

those stones cannot be separated from the history of the formation of a negeri in Ambon, where their ancestors are believed to come from outside Ambon. Traditionally, the existence of the stones becomes the center of people's spiritual orientation in which they respect them as something sacred. Also, the existence of the stones is used as a symbol and a unifier among those who are in *gandong* union (family)

C. Revitalization Strategy

1. Building integration of local wisdom in a public area

What is meant by building integration is trying to arrange and manage different elements in the separated society, due to a conflict, in order to unify them. Those elements cover social positions, races, ethnicities, religions, languages, habits, value systems, and norms. This integration process is conducted to build trust, empathy, and a sense of belonging that decline among people because of conflicts. Building an integration (reintegration) of *Orang Basudara* is a social process done traditionally; like *Panas Pela* and *gandong* or other customary activities considered sacred to confirm or reunify social relationships of the society in Ambon, as previous *Orang Basudara* society. Self-awareness as a shared community living in full and in harmony in Ambon nature (cosmos) will integrate their together life in a society identity called *Orang Basudara*.

Living in harmony in a *Katong Samua Basudara* integration condition will be a hope and a core of sacred life that are maintained in rituals and social solidarity bonding. In the philosophy of *Orang Basudara*, integration is a sacred life reality. It is the wealth value of *Hidop Orang Basudara* that should be well taken care of and well maintained through various live traditions. The social integration value of *Katong Samua Orang Basudara* is hoped to be embedded in Ambon society as the most valuable wealth and the biggest culture in their soul and mind (Watloly, 2018).

The people of Ambon City, especially post-conflict youth of Ambon, need a public space to build a meeting process and confirmation of *Orang Basudara* life. Public space as a means of inculturation can be understood as 2 (two) matters, i.e. public space and public sphere. Public space means physical space or a place for people to do social activity and interact socially (Sunarimahingsih et al., 2017). Public space as public sphere is a place for democracy meaning it can be used as a society discourse platform, where people can express their opinions, interests,

and needs discursively (Noor, 2016). From this definition, public space is not merely meant as physically geographic meaning that people can get together, but also special or environmental, either physically or non-physically. In addition, it is a place for people to interact face to face and make dialogues both verbally and non-verbally. This kind of space is expected to be a cross-sectoral affiliation for those who gather to solve differences and conflict potentials among them.

Public space is not considered as a melting pot which means groups or individuals will sacrifice its/his own identity in order to be melted down into a new identity, but the space is hoped to facilitate the assimilation. The concept of public space close to the character of Ambon society is building a public space as a space for (Tampa) *Bakumpul Orang Basudara*. The *Bakumpul Orang Basudara* space gives a strong cosmological inspiration so people can understand and accept public space as the cosmos home for *Orang Basudara*. With the philosophy of *Orang Basudara*, public space will make people see the object of public space subjectively as a home and yard of *Katong Orang Basudara*, so the building of *Orang Basudara* consolidation is strong and firm.

The management of public space with the philosophy of place (*tampa*) *bakumpul Basudara* will involve people in the management and utilization of public space effectively and efficiently. As a result, the existence of public space in Ambon becomes relevant that is as the main requirement for dynamizing and motivating people's life more constructively. In this case, social problems can be easily overcome. On the other side, the development and management of public space using the philosophy of *Tampa Bakumpul Orang Basudara* will bring a strong sense of ethics and moral. This will create a strong cultural situation that leads human beings to always be ethical, proper, and reasonable in *Atoran Hidop Orang Basudara*.

2. Internalization of value and marking system of cultural symbol

Attempts to raise self-awareness in order to preserve values can be done since the early stage and from the smallest scope that is family. Process of inculcating of this value is called internalization. According to Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (Dedikbud,1989), internalization is a process of appreciation, deepening, and in-depth mastery through construction, guidance, and so on. Meanwhile, Koentjaraningrat (1982) stated that internalization is a long process of someone's life i.e from birth

until death, that is when wish, desire, and emotion are inculcated into his personality.

So far, the inheriting of cultural values has been done orally, and this makes it depend mostly on the parents or the elders. The process of inheriting values becomes harder when information access through the visual world is very open. Uncontrolled information flow from outside can cause the fading of values implanted since the early stage. Consequently, appreciation towards cultural values changes and traditional values are fading or even gone. Inculcating values and building of personality can be done from the smallest unit, i.e. family, to the biggest unit that is society. In inculcating both Ambonese values and culture, the role of parents becomes crucial. In the process of internalization, the inheriting of values and traditions should be continuously done in everyday practice. The decisive factor is not only the family but also the neighborhood. From an early stage, children should be taught about Ambonese cultural values, among others those related to opinion and trust towards Ambonese culture, the cosmology of negeri, life values like serenity, etc. The inculcating of values should be done at an early stage so that the comprehension of the values is internalized in the life of the people. Next, it is hoped that the internalization process of value can be part of the attempts to reach the preservation and revitalization of cultural values.

Inculcating cultural values in the early stage can be done by (1) inserting the material of culture and its meaning in Primary School local content materials, (2) involving children and teenagers to participate in customary ceremonies. (3) giving infographic marks on cultural objects so that the young generation understands the values of the cultural objects, (4) giving facilities for discussions on their culture, such as public space that can be used for *kewil* (the culture of getting together to talk about important issues)

CONCLUSION

Noble culture and its values have values that can unite the Ambonese people as one brother. These values are trusted, respected, and supported by the society as seen from its local wisdom, such as the philosophy of *Katong Samua Basudara*, *Hidop Bae*, and some existing activities and rituals, like *masohi*, *makan patita*, *angkat pela*, and others. Customary symbol objects or culture like

Baileo and Batu Alas, are the Ambonese life center of *Katong Samua Basudara*. Therefore, both customary symbol objects and their values should be maintained and preserved. The increase of awareness of the importance of continuous cultural objects and cultural symbol preservation can be done when the people of Negeri are able to comprehend and understand the significance of the values. Allowing the youth in each cultural activity, inserting cultural values in the local content of the teaching-learning process (formal education), and facilitating *kewil* culture (informal) will help the creation of value internalization on the youth of *Negeri*. On the other hand, the involvement of stakeholders are also needed. With internalized values, Ambon is hoped to be able to rebuild its identity as a plural society that loves peace (*Katong Samua Basudara*) and that is wise in responding to a certain situation, based on their culture.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This journal article is a part of the PDUPT research result supported by Kemenristekdikti. Thank you

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