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Negotiating brotherhood: Habitus, capital, and the transformation of *Orang Basudara*

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study explores the concept and praxis of *Orang Basudara* (Brotherhood/Sisterhood) in Malukan culture by employing Pierre Bourdieu's theory of practice as the main analytical framework. It examines how *habitus*, symbolic capital, and symbolic power shape, reproduce, and transform the social solidarity embedded in *Orang Basudara* amid processes of modernization and globalization. Through a qualitative socio-historical approach, data were analyzed to understand how social structures and cultural dispositions interact within everyday practices in Maluku. The findings reveal that *Orang Basudara* is a dynamic product of the dialectical relationship between historical structures and human agency. This study identifies tensions between traditional communal values and contemporary individualistic tendencies influenced by global capitalism. The uniqueness of this article lies in developing a new Bourdieusian-relational framework that integrates *habitus* transformation with the concept of cultural negotiation, offering an innovative lens to explain how local solidarity practices adapt to social change. Hence, *Orang Basudara* is not a static moral ideal but an evolving field of social interaction that continuously negotiates between local wisdom and modern social forces.

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Introduction

The concept of *Orang Basudara* (brother-/sisterhood) constitutes the foundation of the sociocultural ethos of the Malukan people that reinforces the values of brotherhood across religions and ethnicities. This ethos shapes relational traditions between communities through a long historical experience, involving the dynamics of colonialism and post-colonialism, the dialectic of religious missions, cultural exchange, and the struggle to maintain social cohesion amid complex diversity (Bartels 1977, 2017; Gaspersz and Souisa 2023: 43). The social structure of Maluku has seen significant changes as a result of industrialization and globalization during the past few decades (Kadir, 2009, 2013). Socio-economic mobility, urbanization, globalization of values, and the traumatic impact of the 1999-2005 social conflict have brought serious challenges to the survival of the *Orang Basudara habitus* as an integrative pattern of social praxis (Gaspersz, 2021; Kadir, 2019). In this context, there is a shift in people's social disposition from traditional collectivist orientation towards individualism, ideological segregation, and fragmentation of community solidarity. Therefore, to understand the social dynamics of modern Maluku, a thorough analysis of *Orang Basudara*'s resistance, *habitus* alteration, and even reconstruction is required.

The significance of this study rests on the presupposition that *Orang Basudara* is not just a cultural concept but a vital social capital for maintaining sociocultural harmony in Maluku with a long history of pluralism and conflict. Identity polarization and social conflict have the potential to turn into a devastating sociopolitical disaster if the waning of these solidarity principles is not foreseen. In addition, understanding the transformation of *Orang Basudara*'s praxis contributes to reconciliation efforts, peace-keeping, and the formulation of public policies based on local wisdom in Maluku and other multicultural regions in Indonesia. By developing a sociological analytical model based on Pierre Bourdieu's praxis theory, this study offers academic utility by providing a method that can be applied to examine *habitus* dynamics in various cultural contexts that experience the consequences of modernity. It is necessary to criticize the existing techniques and models of research on *Orang Basudara* because they rely heavily on traditional cultural-anthropological approaches without critically connecting them to theories of social praxis and the dynamics of the contemporary power field (Pattipeilohy, 2016; Tahamata, Tampake, & Supratikno, 2024; Tubaka, 2023).

Scientific research on how *Orang Basudara* customs are changing in response to the forces of globalization and modernization is still lacking. Instead of analyzing how shifts in social praxis structures and new power dynamics have shaped modern solidarity patterns, several earlier studies have concentrated more on the descriptive elements of *pela* and *gandong* rituals (Bartels, 2017; Gaspersz & Souisa, 2019; Wakano, Lapele, Prihono, & Ndayizeye, 2025). There is currently relatively little information on how well traditional *habitus* can withstand or adjust to the influx of global values, identity fragmentation, and the conversion of social capital into contemporary commercial capital (Ernas, 2025; Kelihu, 2025a; Pelupessy, 2025). This gap must be closed to develop a new cultural strategy grounded in a critical awareness of the social development of Maluku culture today.

This study uses Bourdieu's theoretical framework, specifically the theories of *habitus*, capital, and social field, to examine the idea and practice of *Orang Basudara* in Malukan

culture (Bourdieu, 2002). Specifically, this research aims to: [1] Examine how the *habitus* of *Orang Basudara* is formed through the historical-sociological construction of Maluku society; [2] Scrutinize the shift and transformation of *Orang Basudara habitus* due to the dynamics of modernization and globalization; [3] Identify forms of revitalization or adaptation of *Orang Basudara* praxis in the contemporary context; [4] Fill the gap in academic literature by developing a relational analysis of the transformation of social solidarity based on local wisdom.

Method

This research employs a qualitative approach grounded in Bourdieu's theory of practice, aiming to explore the dynamics of *habitus*, symbolic capital, and symbolic power within the *Orang Basudara* praxis in contemporary Maluku society. It is designed as a qualitative socio-historical inquiry, emphasizing interpretive understanding (*verstehen*) of cultural meanings and social practices rather than statistical generalization (Creswell, 2007).

The study draws on both primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews and participant observation conducted from February to March 2025 on Ambon Island, specifically in the villages of Wakal, Hitumesing, and Rumahtiga, which represent historically intertwined Muslim-Christian communities. A total of 22 key informants participated, consisting of ten community elders (adat leaders and religious figures), six local youth activists, and six women leaders who are actively involved in interreligious and cultural activities. Informants were selected through purposive and snowball sampling to ensure diverse yet relevant perspectives on *Orang Basudara* practices.

Secondary data included archival materials, church and mosque documents, government reports, and relevant academic studies on Maluku's sociocultural and religious history. These sources were used to contextualize the historical evolution of the *Orang Basudara* ethos and to trace structural transformations across different historical periods.

Data collection employed several complementary techniques: (1) semi-structured interviews averaging 60-90 minutes each, recorded with consent and transcribed verbatim; (2) participant observation of communal rituals (*pela* and *gandong* ceremonies, interfaith gatherings, and traditional cooperation activities such as *masohi*); and (3) documentary analysis of local regulations, historical manuscripts, and cultural archives.

The analysis followed an iterative coding process involving three main steps: [1] open coding to identify emerging themes from interview transcripts and field notes; [2] axial coding to connect categories with Bourdieu's key concepts (*habitus*, field, capital); and [3] selective coding to construct a coherent interpretive model of the transformation of *Orang Basudara* within the changing social field. To ensure validity and reliability, the research employed triangulation across data sources (interviews, observations, and documents) and methodological triangulation through cross-verification of narratives between Muslim and Christian informants. In addition, member checking was conducted by presenting the preliminary findings to selected participants for feedback and validation of interpretation.

Results and Discussion

The historical formation of Orang Basudara and its habitus

The concept of *Orang Basudara* emerged from the long history of social, economic, and religious interactions in the Maluku archipelago since the pre-colonial era. Intervillage relationships through the *pela* and *gandong* systems became the main frameworks for interethnic and interreligious solidarity (Bartels, 2017; Gaspersz, 2021). These traditions function as social structures that bind local communities through mutual cooperation, deliberation, and symbolic exchange. In Pierre Bourdieu's theoretical framework, such practices construct a collective *habitus*, a historically transmitted disposition continually reproduced through action (Bourdieu, 2002). Thus, *Orang Basudara* is not merely a moral value but a system of social dispositions institutionalized in the daily life of Maluku people. The theoretical contribution of this article lies in understanding *Orang Basudara* as a form of solidarity *habitus* emerging from the dialectic between history, structure, and praxis.

During the Portuguese and Dutch colonial periods, the social structure of Maluku underwent a profound transformation due to missionary expansion and the development of the spice trade (Chauvel, 1990). Colonialism introduced social differentiation based on religion and political loyalty, forming the basis of symbolic hierarchies within society (Andaya, 1993). Yet, behind such domination, the *Orang Basudara* practice served as a cultural space of resistance that maintained equality and kinship among groups. The *pela* and *gandong* rituals became arenas where social equality was performed through symbols and actions. Bourdieu's notion of field becomes relevant: *Orang Basudara* functions as a social arena where symbolic and cultural capitals are negotiated (Bourdieu, 1991). Hence, the Malukan *habitus* was formed through practices of resistance that simultaneously reproduced and contested colonial structures.

The *gandong* tradition, literally meaning "womb," represents a symbolic kinship that transcends biological and religious boundaries. This relationship was reinforced through sacred covenants accompanied by customary oaths, betel-nut ceremonies, and symbolic blood sacrifices (Gaspersz & Souisa, 2023). Such practices produced symbolic capital in the form of honor and trust, functioning to maintain social cohesion. Through *habitus*, these values became embodied as an unconscious tendency to act according to communal principles. Bourdieu (2002) emphasizes that *habitus* generates a logic of practice that is not always conscious but deeply determines social action. Therefore, the solidarity of *Orang Basudara* is the product of the internalization of symbolic values within Maluku's social structures.

The social shifts caused by urbanization and modern education in the early twentieth century also affected the reproduction of the *Orang Basudara habitus*. Modernization introduced bureaucratic rationality that often conflicted with traditional communal values. In this context, younger generations in Maluku began developing new, more individualistic dispositions while still rooted in solidarity values (Ernas, 2025). This phenomenon shows that *habitus* is not static but always open to transformation through interactions with new social structures (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990b).

The arrival of European missionaries brought a dual impact on Malukan society: spiritual modernization through education and social fragmentation through religious conversion (Aritonang & Steenbrink, 2008). The Protestant Church of Maluku (GPM), then, became a new arena for articulating

moral and social ethics that modified the collective *habitus* of Christian communities. Meanwhile, Muslim communities in the Leihitu and Haruku peninsulas affirmed a localized Islamic tradition blended with customary values (Gaspersz, 2016). The interaction between these communities created a symbolic field where the *Orang Basudara* practice was reproduced across religious boundaries. Such interreligious practices reveal the dynamics of a field of power involving symbolic exchange, moral legitimacy, and social capital (Bourdieu, 1991).

Dutch colonialism introduced an administrative order that positioned Maluku society within a patron-client political system and a monopolistic spice economy (Chauvel, 1990). Local solidarity practices often became vehicles of resistance against colonial economic and political domination. The *pela-gandong* ceremony was not merely a symbolic ritual but a form of political communication containing messages of cultural resistance (Gaspersz & Souisa, 2020). Through such mechanisms, communities built social capital functioning as a collective shield against external power. Bourdieu refers to this as a strategy of reproduction through resistance, the ability of *habitus* to sustain itself under structural inequality (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990b).

The encounter between Islam and Christianity in Maluku did not merely produce identity boundaries but also created spaces of cultural hybridity that enriched social practices (Bartels, 2017; Gaspersz & Souisa, 2023). Rituals such as *panas pela* and *panas gandong* provided arenas where universal values of brotherhood were enacted through joint participation. Within these rituals, each group negotiated its symbolic position to gain recognition and honor within the community (Bourdieu, 1991). This phenomenon demonstrates how the field of cultural practice operates through the logic of mutual symbolic exchange. The *habitus* shaped through interreligious experiences was then transmitted as a collective social structure. Hence, *Orang Basudara* evolved into an ethical paradigm transcending theological and ethnic boundaries.

Although colonialism sought to impose social hierarchies based on race and religion, the *Orang Basudara habitus* remained a mediating space between domination and resistance. Here operates what Bourdieu (1991) calls symbolic power, a power that functions through recognition and legitimacy. In Maluku's context, brotherhood symbols such as *masohi* and *badati* served as instruments for negotiating power relations peacefully. These practices show that power is not only repressive but also negotiable through symbolic actions acknowledged by all parties. Therefore, *Orang Basudara* functions as a social mechanism that transforms relations of domination into relations of mutual recognition. Theoretically, this underscores the role of symbolic capital in maintaining social equilibrium within hierarchical structures.

After Indonesian independence, *Orang Basudara* values became vital social capital for shaping national identity in Maluku (Ruhulessin, 2005). In this context, churches and mosques functioned as moral institutions, instilling a civic *habitus* grounded in local solidarity. However, the institutionalization of these values also introduced new challenges as traditional solidarity confronted modern politics and state bureaucracy. This phenomenon reveals the tension between a communal *habitus* and the political field governed by the logic of power and interest (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Nevertheless, local social practices demonstrate Maluku society's adaptive capacity to negotiate these two logics. This reinforces the argument that *Orang Basudara*

serves as a flexible social resource both structurally and symbolically.

The involvement of local actors in conflict mediation and peace rituals demonstrates that *Orang Basudara* functions as a cultural field where social legitimacy is at stake. Customary leaders, religious figures, and youth serve as agents articulating solidarity values through collective action (Takaria, 2015). Through their participation, symbolic capital in the form of public trust is gained and maintained as social capital. As Bourdieu argues, symbolic legitimacy endures only insofar as it is recognized within social practice (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Therefore, the history of *Orang Basudara* provides empirical evidence that the reproduction of solidarity values always depends on agents and their social contexts. Here lies the empirical contribution of this article: demonstrating how the solidarity *habitus* is reproduced through historical actors and practices in Maluku.

Colonial and later post-independence modern education played a crucial role in reproducing *Orang Basudara* values through formal institutions. Schools in Maluku, since the early twentieth century, become arenas where the solidarity *habitus* encountered the competitive *habitus* introduced by Western education systems (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990a). Nonetheless, in many regions, the collective ethos persisted because education was also used to reinforce cooperation and interreligious tolerance. Teachers, pastors, and imams often acted as agents re-embedding the *hidop orang basudara* (living as brothers and sisters) values amid social modernization (Ruhulessin, 2019; Tubaka, 2023). This demonstrates how educational institutions serve as a field of reproduction in which the symbolic capital of solidarity is converted into new forms of cultural capital. Thus, modernity did not erase the *Orang Basudara habitus* but reshaped it in line with emerging social structures.

Family and customary communities also play a major role in transmitting the *habitus* of brotherhood across generations. In social practice, children are taught to address people from other villages as "*saudara gandong*" or "*saudarapela*," marking a symbolic attachment that transcends genealogical boundaries (Iwamony, Gaspersz, & Souisa, 2019). Such forms of interaction instill cognitive and affective dispositions to accept difference as part of social structure. Bourdieu terms this embodied history, a history that lives within the body and everyday actions (Gorton & Gorton, 2015). In this way, the family becomes a crucial locus for the internalization of *Orang Basudara* values as an ethical system rooted in historical experience. Oral traditions, origin narratives, and ancestral myths function as cultural capital reinforcing collective awareness of kinship. Through this cultural transmission, the solidarity *habitus* achieves continuity within Maluku's ever-changing social space.

Thus, the historical formation of *Orang Basudara* demonstrates a synthesis between social structure and symbolic consciousness. This solidarity *habitus* emerged from the dialectic between material conditions, power structures, and the religio-cultural experiences of Malukan society (Bourdieu, 2002; Gaspersz, 2021). The historical process produced a value system with high social-reproductive power because it was rooted in collective experience. Theoretically, this broadens the understanding of *habitus* as a mediating space between subjectivity and social objectivity (Bourdieu, 1986). Empirically, *Orang Basudara* shows how communities convert historical experience into a sustained ethos of solidarity. Therefore, this cultural heritage is not merely a relic of the past but a living social mechanism that continually adapts to change.

Erosion and resilience of Orang Basudara after 1999-2005

The social conflict that struck Maluku between 1999 and 2005 marked a major turning point in the region's socio-cultural history. The violence that lasted for more than six years shattered the foundations of social solidarity built through the *Orang Basudara* practice for centuries (Al Qurtuby & Wilson, 2016). Many villages once bound by *pela-gandong* relations were divided due to religion- and politics-based violence. In this situation, the solidarity *habitus* fell into crisis, as the social structures supporting it were drastically altered (Gaspersz, 2021). Yet amid the devastation, new forms of social resilience emerged, rooted in collective memories of brotherhood. This condition reveals the dialectic between the erosion and reproduction of *habitus* in a post-conflict context.

The social breakdown caused by the conflict revealed how the local field of power underwent restructuring. New actors, politicians, the military, and religious leaders sought to claim symbolic capital to gain social legitimacy (Kadir, 2013). In Bourdieu's logic, this situation demonstrates a struggle over the field of power, shifting authority from traditional elders and local leaders to formal elites (Bourdieu, 1991). Consequently, *Orang Basudara* practices lost part of their symbolic efficacy as their space for negotiation was reduced by political interests. Yet, at the grassroots level, communities sustained their solidarity through informal networks rooted in custom and religious rituals (Gaspersz & Souisa, 2023). This phenomenon shows that *habitus* may undergo dislocation without disappearance; it adapts through subtler forms of praxis.

The erosion of solidarity was evident in the spatial and social segregation of post-conflict Ambon. Many formerly plural villages and neighborhoods became religiously homogeneous, creating new boundaries that weakened intercommunal interaction (Pariela, 2008). In Bourdieu's theoretical frame, this segregation produced a new *field* governed by the logic of symbolic exclusion, where old forms of social capital lost their currency. Communities no longer shared the same public spaces, and thus the communal *habitus* lost its arena of expression. Yet outside these formal structures, some communities maintained micro-practices of solidarity, such as economic cooperation and cross-religious social initiatives. This shows that even amid disintegration, the *Orang Basudara habitus* retains adaptive power through continuous micro-level practices.

Collective trauma resulting from violence also reshaped the emotional structure of community *habitus*. Fear, suspicion, and loss created symbolic distance between communities that once coexisted (Al Qurtuby, 2013). In this situation, the reproduction of the solidarity *habitus* was obstructed because *doxa* – the unconscious beliefs guiding social action – was replaced by a doxa of fear. However, several community leaders and religious figures played vital roles in reconstructing peace narratives. Through interfaith dialogues, reconciliation rituals, and shared social activities, they worked to restore trust as symbolic capital (Gaspersz & Souisa, 2019). These efforts demonstrate that the reconstruction of *habitus* requires symbolic interventions engaging both emotional and cultural dimensions.

Although the 1999-2005 conflict marked a phase of erosion, the post-conflict period revealed strong potential for social resilience. Reconciliation processes involving *panas pela* and *panas gandong* rituals became crucial mechanisms for restoring intercommunal relations (Trijono, Azca, Susdinarjanti, Cahyono, & Qodir, 2004). In these rituals, brotherhood values were re-enacted as

forms of *symbolic re-legitimation* of a broken social order. This aligns with Bourdieu's notion that symbols possess the power to "make reality" when collectively recognized (Sward, 1997). When both sides recited oaths of brotherhood, they not only recalled the past but also created a new social structure. Thus, peace rituals serve as spaces where *habitus* is reproduced through renewed symbolic agreements.

Post-conflict *habitus* reconstruction was also shaped by the roles of women and youth. Women's groups, for instance, became key agents in rebuilding interreligious networks through economic and social activities (Gaspersz, 2023a). They employed *masohi* values as the basis for new collaborations in food production, joint markets, and small-business training. Such activities represent performative symbolic practices, transforming values into action and solidarity into form of social-economic cooperations (Bourdieu, 2002). Meanwhile, youth created digital platforms and community media to strengthen peace narratives. This illustrates that the resilience of the *Orang Basudara habitus* evolves through social innovations responsive to changing contexts.

New public spaces in Ambon, such as cultural festivals, interfaith dialogues, and art forums, have become key venues for reconstructing post-conflict *habitus*. Through music, dance, and traditional food celebrations, people rediscovered symbolic ways to celebrate togetherness once lost. These activities create what Bourdieu terms a cultural field of reconciliation, a symbolic arena where differences are negotiated through aesthetic expression (Bourdieu, 2002; Sward, 1997). Cultural performance serves as a performative symbolic practice capable of transforming social relations through collective emotional experiences. In this sense, aesthetics becomes a means of social reconciliation that transcends formal political logic. This phenomenon shows that art and culture are crucial media for the symbolic resilience of *Orang Basudara*.

Religious institutions also played a pivotal role in restoring Maluku's symbolic capital. The Protestant Church of Maluku (GPM) and the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) collaborated to establish interfaith peace forums and leadership training programs (Gaspersz, Maspaitella, & Takaria, 2015). This collaboration represents a collective strategy combining spiritual capital and social capital within a single arena of praxis. In Bourdieu's framework, these initiatives illustrate the synergistic relationship between the religious field and the social field, producing effects of *habitus* reproduction (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). The *habitus* formed through this interaction is reflexive, open to critique, and resistant to exclusive symbolic domination. Thus, religion functions not as a source of division but as a transformative instrument for social renewal.

However, this recovery process was not without tensions. On one hand, reconciliation discourse was often used by political elites to gain symbolic capital through peace rhetoric (Kelihu, 2025b). On the other hand, grassroots communities demanded more substantive social justice and economic recovery. In Bourdieu's terms, this represents a struggle over *doxa*, where the meaning of "peace" is contested between structural interests and the needs of social praxis (Gorton & Gorton, 2015). This tension reveals the limits of formal symbolism without genuine structural transformation. Therefore, the true resilience of *Orang Basudara* depends on the community's capacity to integrate social justice into every form of reconciliation. Thus, solidarity is reproduced not only symbolically but also materially and institutionally.

Collective memory plays a vital role in the process of social healing in Maluku. Narratives of the past – ancestral legends and *pela-gandong* stories – were used to reaffirm a shared identity after division. Bourdieu emphasizes that social memory is part of *habitus*; it lives through language, gesture, and repeated ritual (Mander, 1987). Through shared narratives, communities restore a sense of historical continuity disrupted by violence. Thus, memory functions as a temporal form of symbolic capital reinforcing intergenerational social cohesion. The revitalization of collective memory forms the foundation for rebuilding trust, as a shared past provides legitimacy for a shared future.

In the post-conflict context, a new generation emerged, forming a digital solidarity *habitus*. Through social media, young communities created alternative narratives of peace and inclusive Malukan identity (Brauchler, 2003; Ernas, 2025). This phenomenon reflects a shift in the field, from traditional ritual arenas to digital spaces, where symbols and values are negotiated through networked communication. According to Bourdieu, such shifts do not erase the old *habitus* but expand the field in which it operates (Bourdieu, 2002). The digital generation modifies *Orang Basudara* values into a networked identity connecting Maluku's diaspora worldwide. Solidarity is no longer geographically confined but becomes a transnational *habitus*, reinforcing the meaning of "brotherhood across spaces."

Symbolic violence and the aestheticization of brotherhood

In the post-conflict context of Maluku, violence does not always appear in physical form but also operates through symbolic mechanisms that shape social consciousness. Bourdieu defines symbolic violence as a form of domination that works through recognition and consent rather than direct coercion (Bourdieu, 1991; Rogers & Sward, 1999). In the Maluku case, this violence manifests when cultural and religious symbols are used to reinforce social hierarchies and political legitimacy. For example, the use of "peace" narratives by certain elites sometimes serves to mask ongoing structural inequalities (Kelihu, 2025a). Thus, peace symbolism can become a subtle yet effective instrument of power. Analyzing symbolic violence is therefore crucial to understanding the aestheticization of brotherhood in Maluku.

Brotherhood symbols such as *Orang Basudara* are often reproduced through media, ceremonies, and art, yet in some cases, their meanings are diluted. When these symbols are invoked without critical reflection, they risk becoming moral slogans devoid of transformative power. In Bourdieu's terms, this constitutes misrecognition, a mistaken recognition of the hidden power embedded in symbols (Rogers & Sward, 1999). The aestheticization of solidarity can thus become an arena where cultural power is exercised unconsciously. For instance, in post-conflict cultural festivals, *Orang Basudara* values are frequently displayed as a public spectacle but not always accompanied by genuine social equality. Therefore, the aestheticization of brotherhood must be read critically as both a strategy of domination and an opportunity for social reconstruction.

The aestheticization of brotherhood in Maluku also occurs through customary rituals and cultural performances formalized by the state and religious institutions. The *panas pela* ceremony, once sacred, is now often packaged as a tourism or cultural diplomacy event (Manuputty et al., 2017). In this process, customary symbols shift function, from media of peace to political and economic commodities. This represents

symbolic commodification, where cultural capital is converted into economic and political capital (Bourdieu, 1986). Yet, on the other hand, this process also opens new public spaces for reinterpreting the social meaning of brotherhood. The dialectic between commercialization and sacredness creates a new aesthetic field for negotiating the meaning of *Orang Basudara*.

Symbolic violence is also evident in the ways communities interpret religious identity after the conflict. Some groups claim moral superiority through certain religious symbols, while others are subordinated within dominant discourses (Al Qurtuby, 2013; Gaspersz, 2005; Kadir, 2013). This situation illustrates what Bourdieu calls structural violence, where social inequalities are legitimized through systems of symbols and language (Bourdieu, 1991; Mander, 1987). For example, the narrative that "true peace comes only through one faith" subtly marginalizes other identities. Such violence is difficult to detect because it operates through norms perceived as "natural" by society. In the Maluku context, analyzing these symbolic practices is essential to distinguish genuine solidarity from manipulated forms of unity.

In the post-conflict aesthetic process, many local artists sought to restore the spiritual meaning of *Orang Basudara* through contemporary art. Music, theatre, and literature became media for critiquing symbolic power and reaffirming authentic values of brotherhood (Tubaka, 2023). These works function as counter-symbolic practices, symbolic acts that resist ideological domination. Through aesthetics, artists create spaces of critical reflection on social wounds and renewed hope. Thus, art becomes not only a representational tool but also a political act promoting symbolic equality. Acciaioli's analysis of the transformation of Indonesian cultural practice into spectacle helps explain how local traditions may be recontextualized within public, political, and aesthetic arenas (Acciaioli, 1985).

In Maluku's social context, symbolic violence also operates through language. Terms such as "Christian village" or "Muslim village" are still commonly used as social markers, even if not always intended as exclusionary (Gaspersz & Souisa, 2023). Yet, such designations unconsciously reinforce social segmentation that limits cross-community interaction. Bourdieu describes language as a tool of symbolic power that shapes social perception and determines who has the right to speak (Warde, 2016). Therefore, the language of peace must be reformulated to reflect genuine inclusivity. Transforming the linguistic structures of society becomes a first step toward a more egalitarian habitus.

Visual representation has become one of the most powerful tools in shaping post-conflict social perception. Posters, murals, documentaries, and digital media displaying *Orang Basudara* symbols help restore the collective imagination of togetherness. Yet these representations are never neutral; they always involve specific aesthetic and ideological choices. Bourdieu argues that aesthetics is an expression of taste, a manifestation of social position within the cultural field (Grenfell, 2010). Thus, every act of aestheticization entails a struggle over who has the authority to represent "peace." This analysis is essential to understanding how visual images of brotherhood can function both as tools of emancipation and as instruments of symbolic domination.

Indented too far of the aestheticization of brotherhood have also arisen from intellectuals and youth activists who highlight the top-down dominance of "peace" narratives. They argue that most post-conflict cultural programs remain controlled by formal institutions and

international donors (Ernas, 2025; Kelihu, 2025a). This reflects external intervention within local symbolic fields, altering the internal logic of praxis (Bourdieu, 2002). Consequently, solidarity becomes a project outcome rather than an organic social consciousness. Yet, on the other hand, grassroots movements are reclaiming the meaning of brotherhood through authentic, non-commercial community activities. These movements represent resistance against dominant institutional aesthetics and homogenizing cultural agendas.

Conversely, aestheticization can also serve to broaden inclusivity and transcend the traditional boundaries between *Salam* (Muslim) and *Sarane* (Christian). Interfaith festivals, joint documentaries, and collaborative art projects demonstrate creative efforts toward reconciliation (Manuputty et al., 2017; Takaria, 2015). This process embodies a transformative aesthetic dynamic, where symbols are used not to dominate but to open spaces for dialogue. It represents symbolic re-signification, the transformation of meaning structures through reflective interaction (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Such collaborative acts indicate that aesthetics can help form a new, more inclusive habitus. Hence, art becomes a social practice that carries the ethics of solidarity into the public realm more equitably.

Yet subtler forms of symbolic violence continue to lurk through unequal access to representational spaces. Not all communities have equal opportunities to express their experiences or memories within formal cultural arenas (Gaspersz, 2023b). Cultural elites or institutions often dominate these spaces, defining the official version of what *Orang Basudara* means. This reflects a form of cultural monopoly that constrains the plurality of social meanings. As a result, aestheticization originally aimed at inclusion can transform into a new mechanism of symbolic exclusion. The challenge ahead is to ensure that post-conflict cultural processes remain democratic and participatory.

The aestheticization of brotherhood also serves a therapeutic function for collective healing. Through folk songs, community theatre, and local literature, people express their trauma and convert it into narratives of hope (Manuputty et al., 2017). Within the theory of practice, such aesthetic expression constitutes a form of social catharsis, the transformation of emotion into symbolic, healing action (Bourdieu, 2002). Art enables communities to rearticulate their relationship with the past and envision a shared future. Therefore, aesthetics plays a dual role: it serves as both a space of critique against symbolic violence and a therapeutic process for social wounds. This makes the aestheticization of brotherhood an ethical and reflective social practice.

The analysis of symbolic violence and the aestheticization of brotherhood reveals that they are inseparable: power and beauty are intertwined within the social field. Aesthetics always has the potential to be either an instrument of domination or emancipation, depending on how it is articulated (Bourdieu, 1991). In the Maluku context, the aesthetics of solidarity becomes a battleground of meaning between elites and communities, between official narratives and lived experiences. This understanding expands Bourdieu's concept of field into a multi-dimensional arena where morality, art, and politics intersect. Thus, aesthetics is not merely a matter of taste but also a symbolic struggle over social legitimacy. Reflective awareness of this dynamic is essential for a fair and equitable cultural reconstruction.

Reactualization strategies and political implications

Reactualizing *Orang Basudara* values within Maluku's contemporary socio-political context is essential for sustaining solidarity in an increasingly complex society. Two decades after the conflict, the main challenge is no longer reconciliation but embedding brotherhood values within modern social structures (Gaspersz, 2021). In this sense, *Orang Basudara* must be transformed from a traditional moral ethos into a framework for social praxis and public policy (Ruhulessin, 2019). Bourdieu emphasizes the importance of reflexive practice, a critical awareness of how values function within power fields. Applying this principle allows local solidarity to be repositioned as productive social and political capital. Therefore, *Orang Basudara*'s reactivation must be viewed as both an institutional and cultural process.

Cultural re-actualization means reinterpreting the symbols and practices of *Orang Basudara* to remain relevant for new generations. Rituals such as *masohi*, *panas pela*, and *panas gandong* need to be contextualized into social, educational, and economic initiatives (Amirrachman, 2012; Batmomolin, 2000; Handoko, 2019; Ruhulessin, 2005). This transformation converts symbols into concrete actions that impact daily life. In Bourdieu's framework, this demonstrates the conversion of symbolic capital into social capital that strengthens social integration. Through this approach, tradition is not treated as a static inheritance but as a resource for social innovation. Thus, culture becomes an active arena for renewing interreligious and interethnic solidarity.

At the sociopolitical level, re-actualization requires the involvement of the state and public institutions. Local governments can adopt *Orang Basudara* as a paradigm for social development grounded in local wisdom (Kelihu, 2025a). This approach aligns with Bourdieu's field of power theory, where the state acts as an agent capable of reorganizing power relations through symbolic recognition of local values (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). When public policy institutionalizes brotherhood values as normative principles, the solidarity habitus gains structural legitimacy. However, this must be balanced by participatory mechanisms to avoid cultural romanticization. Hence, the political re-actualization of *Orang Basudara* must balance ethical idealism with bureaucratic realism.

Civil society participation is essential to ensure that *Orang Basudara* values are not co-opted by the state or political elites. Community organizations, customary institutions, and religious groups can act as mediating agents between society and public policy. Within Bourdieu's framework, these actors function as agents managing the distribution of symbolic capital across different social fields. Strengthening their role ensures that solidarity remains an autonomous praxis, free from political manipulation. This form of participation also reflects a reflective habitus aware of its position and role within power structures. Therefore, horizontal collaboration among social actors is key to sustainable re-actualization.

Reactualization strategies also require transformation in citizens' political education. *Orang Basudara* values must be integrated into civic education, not only as moral concepts but as principles of social action. Through reflective curricula, students can understand solidarity as praxis transcending religion and ethnicity. Bourdieu emphasizes that education is a key arena for the reproduction of social values; therefore, it can also serve as a means for transforming political habitus (Bourdieu &

Passeron, 1990a). By embedding the ethics of brotherhood, education becomes an instrument for democratization grounded in social empathy. This re-actualization enables *Orang Basudara* to serve as an ethical framework for inclusive citizenship in Indonesia.

At the level of public policy, *Orang Basudara* values can serve as an alternative paradigm for development based on shared welfare. Social policies emphasizing dialogue, cooperation, and social empathy align with Maluku's ethics of solidarity (Gaspersz, 2023). Bourdieu notes that sustainable social transformation can occur only when there is coherence between objective structures and collective habitus. Therefore, the government must design regulations that enable civic participation in policy planning and implementation. In this way, *Orang Basudara* becomes not merely a moral slogan but a framework for political praxis emphasizing distributive justice. This approach positions local solidarity as an ethical foundation for democratic governance in Maluku.

In local politics, brotherhood values can function as tools for balancing dynamics between patronage and participation. Maluku's political culture is often characterized by strong patron–client relations that can weaken substantive democracy (Kadir, 2022). By positioning *Orang Basudara* as a principle of public ethics, political relationships can shift toward horizontal solidarity rather than vertical domination. Bourdieu describes this as a redistribution of symbolic capital, the transfer of legitimacy from elites to communities (Bourdieu, 2009). Brotherhood-based political practices can foster participatory and accountable leadership models. Thus, *Orang Basudara* has the potential to reform the ethics of power at the local level.

Culturally, re-actualization also requires new narratives connecting the past, present, and future. Stories of ancestors and *gandong* pacts must be retold in languages accessible to the digital generation. This narrative transformation creates symbolic continuity between historical memory and contemporary praxis. Within Bourdieu's framework, this reflects a process of reproduction through reinterpretation, where values are transmitted through new meanings. Thus, *Orang Basudara* becomes not a static myth but a living tradition that continually adapts. This cultural strength ensures that solidarity remains relevant amid changing times.

In the context of national interreligious relations, *Orang Basudara* holds significant potential as a model of public theology and civic ethics. This concept emphasizes brotherhood as the foundation for coexistence amid pluralism, resonating with ideas of social and public theology (Gaspersz, 2009; Sagovsky, 2017). Bourdieu's framework, as elaborated by Rey, helps explain how the religious field may become an arena not only of symbolic competition but also of solidarity production, depending on how religious actors convert symbolic capital into public ethical practice (Rey, 2007). When Maluku's local values are brought into the national public sphere, they enrich Indonesia's discourse on pluralism. Thus, *Orang Basudara* offers a conceptual contribution to developing contextual tolerance policies. This local value demonstrates that peace can grow from cultural roots, not merely from state regulation.

Theoretically, this re-actualization reinforces the understanding that habitus is not a static entity but a dynamic process continually adapting to changes in the social field. *Orang Basudara* as a solidarity habitus illustrates how traditional values can be revitalized through critical reflection and

fair political intervention. Epistemologically, this highlights the dialectical relationship between structure, agency, and symbol in the formation of social meaning. Thus, this study contributes to the development of Bourdieu's theory of practice within island and post-conflict societies. Re-actualization serves as evidence that social theory can be applied productively to interpret local cultural dynamics. Empirically, it demonstrates the endurance of solidarity values in the face of modernity and globalization.

The reactualization of *Orang Basudara* affirms that solidarity is not merely a moral value but also a political, social, and ecological strategy for the future of Maluku and Indonesia. The main contribution of this article is both theoretical and empirical: theoretical in extending Bourdieu's theory of practice to island cultural contexts, and empirical in demonstrating how solidarity can be reproduced within ever-changing social structures. *Orang Basudara* demonstrates that local values can serve as a foundation for reconstructing post-conflict societies that are just and inclusive. Practically, it provides direction for public policy, education, and moral leadership rooted in local wisdom. Thus, *Orang Basudara* belongs not only to history but also stands as a vision of humanity grounded in justice and peace.

Conclusion

This study affirms that the *Orang Basudara* concept is not merely Maluku's cultural heritage but a system of social praxis continually reproduced through the interaction of historical, symbolic, and political structures. Employing Pierre Bourdieu's theory of practice, this research demonstrates that the solidarity habitus emerges through prolonged mediation between tradition, power, and collective experience. *Orang Basudara* functions as a social habitus balancing agency and structure amid rapid social transformation. Its theoretical contribution lies in reinterpreting solidarity as reflective practice rather than mere moral value. Its empirical contribution is evident in concrete evidence of Maluku's social resilience during and after the 1999-2005 conflict. Thus, *Orang Basudara* can be understood as a dynamic and contextually grounded social paradigm.

Nevertheless, this study has several limitations. First, it focuses on the historical and cultural contexts of Ambon and Leihitu, so generalizations to other religions of Maluku should be made coutiously. Second, the qualitative approach prioritizes symbolic interpretation over quantitative measurement, leaving room for interpretive bias. Third, gender and political-economic dimensions were only partially explored, though they significantly affect the reproduction of the solidarity habitus. Hence, future research should expand its scope to digital economies, social ecologies, and youth political participation. In doing so, Bourdieu's theory of practice can be further tested within more complex and interdisciplinary social dynamics.

Based on the findings, several concrete recommendations are proposed. First, for policymakers, *Orang Basudara* values can serve as a paradigm for social development grounded in participation and relational justice. Second, for religious and customary communities, intercommunal forums integrating rituals, arts, and solidarity economies should be developed as forms of interfaith praxis. Third, for educational institutions, multicultural curricula based on reflective habitus should be implemented to instill critical awareness of symbolic power and the ethics of brotherhood. These recommendations reinforce the idea that

local culture can serve as the foundation for sustainable public policy and social transformation. Hence, this research is not merely descriptive but also normative and applicable.

Declaration of Ownership

This article is my original work.

Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest to declare in this article.

Ethical Clearance

This study was approved by the institution.

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