



The Ethnohistorical Trajectory of the Banda Ely Diaspora in Ternate: Memory, Migration, and Cultural Transformation

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A B S T R A C T

This study traces the ethnohistorical trajectory of the Banda Ely diaspora in Ternate by emphasizing the interconnectedness of collective memory, lived experience, migration, and processes of cultural transformation. Using an ethnographic approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews with 15 key informants and analyzed through the stages of heuristics, source criticism, interpretation, and historiography. The findings show that memories of the ancestral exodus from Banda to Kei serve as a foundation of identity as well as a source of sociocultural resilience for the community in Ternate. Migration across spaces and generations not only shaped economic and social adaptation, but also generated dynamic identity negotiations within Ternate's multiethnic context. The cultural transformations occurring in language, ritual practices, and social structure reflect the Banda Ely community's ability to maintain core elements of their identity while responding to external change. Cultural transformation is not merely a process of alteration, but a survival strategy that enables a minority group to remain present and relevant in a new environment.

A. INTRODUCTION

Studies on the Banda Ely diaspora in Ternate are still rarely situated within an analytical framework that connects collective memory, migration experiences, and processes of cultural transformation. Most previous research has focused either on the historical aspects of displacement or on the sociocultural conditions of the community in isolation. In fact, the interpretation of the past—whether through oral narratives, traumatic memories, or genealogical knowledge—plays a crucial role in shaping the cultural identity of diaspora communities. Therefore, the central question of this study is: how do the Banda Ely community's historical

memories of their origins and migration shape their cultural practices and social relations in Ternate? Academically, this study offers a contribution by positioning the ethnohistorical trajectory of the diaspora not merely as a record of the past, but as a framework for understanding the dynamics of identity and cultural change within an island society context. Its relevance becomes even more significant given the need to understand how small communities in Maluku manage collective memory to negotiate their position within a broader social landscape (Steenbergen, 2016).

To understand the context of the formation of the Banda Ely diaspora, the colonial history of the Banda Islands is indeed important. However, in this study it is

not used as an extensive introduction, but rather as a background that clarifies how colonial violence, depopulation, and forced relocation produced patterns of mobility that eventually shaped diaspora networks across various regions of Maluku (Sturtevant, 1966).

Within this framework, the focus of the research is not on historical chronology but on how the Banda Ely community in Ternate sustains their origin narratives, restructures traditions, and adapts their ethnohistorical practices. This article examines how memory is transmitted across generations, how migration is re-enacted through cultural symbols, and how transformation unfolds through interactions with the local Ternate society. This approach fills the gap in previous studies that have not integrated the dimensions of memory, mobility, and cultural change as an interconnected analytical trajectory (Greene & Rau, 2018).

The Banda Ely community is part of the broader Malukan ethnic groups with deep historical roots in the Banda Islands. The large-scale migration that began in the 17th century – mainly due to the brutal colonial policies of the Dutch in Banda Neira – led this community to disperse across various regions, including Ternate in North Maluku. Amid the urban and multicultural setting of Ternate, the Banda Ely community has formed a cultural enclave that is particularly compelling for diaspora studies (Dao et al., 2018). Their diaspora in Ternate demonstrates a complex interaction between the preservation of ancestral cultural heritage and adaptation to the local social and cultural structures.

The phenomenon of diaspora is not only related to physical displacement but also involves complex social and cultural changes. On one hand, the Banda Ely community strives to preserve cultural heritage such as language, customary practices, and religious traditions. On the other hand, they also face pressures to adapt to the dominant culture and the local socio-economic realities. This dynamic reflects that cultural identity is not static, but continuously negotiated within a multicultural social context (Justicio & Gunawan, 2025).

Banda Ely community lives alongside various local and migrant ethnic groups, resulting in intensive social, economic, and cultural interactions. Changes in the city's economic structure, educational mobility, and the influence of modernization have created new forms of adaptation in their social life (Van Fraassen, 1990). However, the extent to which these changes affect their cultural identity, patterns of social relations, and customary practices remains insufficiently mapped.

Although the history of the Banda diaspora has been widely studied, most research continues to focus on the seventeenth-century colonial tragedy, the spice trade, and the establishment of Banda communities in Kei (Hanna, 1978). Studies that specifically examine the social transformation of the Banda Ely community in Ternate are still limited, particularly those exploring how they

negotiate their diaspora identity within a contemporary urban context. This gap represents a significant research area that requires further investigation.

This study seeks to address this gap by examining how the Banda Ely community experiences social transformation from both historical and contemporary perspectives. Moreover, this research contributes to diaspora studies in Indonesia, particularly concerning how small diaspora communities preserve their culture and identity while continually adapting to social change. Academically, this study is expected to enrich the understanding of the relationships among colonial history, forced migration, and identity formation within the context of contemporary Indonesian society.

The tragedy of Banda reflects the dark side of the spice euphoria that is so glorified in global history. Behind the wealth and glory achieved by European powers through spices lies the blood and tears of the indigenous people who were systematically destroyed. Banda is one of the most vivid examples of how global economic power can destroy local civilizations in a short period of time (Mu'jizah et al., 2022). This event also serves as a reminder that colonialism is not just a matter of exploration and trade, but also structural violence that leaves long-lasting scars in the history of nations around the world, including Indonesia.

The Banda Ely community is part of the Maluku ethnic group, which has strong historical roots in the Banda Islands. Mass migration since the 17th century, mainly due to the brutal Dutch colonial policies in Banda Neira, caused this community to spread to various regions, including North Maluku Ternate. Amidst the urban and multicultural life of Ternate, the Banda Ely community has formed a cultural enclave that is interesting to study, especially in the context of diaspora (Sarjiyanto & Purnamasari, 2023). Their diaspora in Ternate shows complex interactions between the preservation of ancestral culture and adaptation to local social and cultural structures.

The phenomenon of diaspora is not only related to physical migration, but also involves complex social and cultural changes (Hägerdal, 2024). On the one hand, the Banda Ely community strives to preserve its cultural heritage, such as language, customs, and religious traditions. On the other hand, they also face pressure to adapt to the dominant culture and local socio-economic realities.

Like the Banda Ely community that has settled in Ternate City, this community now numbers around 500 people. Their lives blend harmoniously with the local community, demonstrating strong social integration. The Banda Ely community that migrated to Ternate generally chose a scattered settlement pattern, especially in the South Ternate area (Chauvel, 2008). They did not form an exclusive settlement, but mingled in various sub-districts

such as Mangga Dua, Bastiong, Kayu Merah Pantai, Kalumata, Fitu, Gambesi, Ngidi (South Ternate).

Amid these processes of change, the identity of the Banda Ely community continues to be constructed and negotiated. According to Henri Tajfel, group identity is formed through categorization, identification, and social comparison (Tajfel, 1981), enabling them to maintain their distinctive characteristics as “Banda people.” Meanwhile, Berger and Luckmann explain that identity is a social construction formed through the processes of externalization, objectivation, and internalization (Berger & Luckmann, 2016). Therefore, the identity of the Banda Ely as both “Banda people” and “residents of Ternate” is continually reshaped through everyday experiences and social interactions.

B. METHOD

This study employs an ethnohistorical approach to as formulated by William C. Sturtevant, which integrates historical and anthropological analysis to understand the past from the perspective of the communities that experienced it (Sturtevant, 1966). Within this framework, data are drawn not only from written archives but also from collective memory, cultural practices, social structures, and the oral traditions of the community.

The study involves 15 key informants selected through purposive sampling based on their involvement in traditional activities, their knowledge of community history, and their social roles within the Banda Ely group. The small sample size is considered adequate in the context of ethnographic research, as its primary focus is narrative depth rather than statistical representation. These ten informants provide a sufficient diversity of perspectives to achieve data saturation, where patterns of information begin to repeat and no significant new findings emerge. Data were collected through three primary techniques: In-depth interviews, conducted semi-structurally to explore personal experiences, historical memories, and informants’ interpretations of social change. Participant observation, carried out during ritual events, community gatherings, and daily interactions to understand cultural practices and social relations. Archival and document searches, including local historical records, old photographs, and migration documents, to link field findings with historical contexts.

The application of this approach in the study of the Banda Ely diaspora rests on three major categories of sources. First, oral traditions, obtained through in-depth interviews with traditional elders and families of Banda migrant descendants, which record narratives of forced displacement, adaptation, and identity transformation (Dodgson, 2017). Second, Dutch colonial archives, used to trace depopulation policies in the Banda Islands in the early seventeenth century and critically examined through an *against-the-grain* reading to uncover colonial bias and

illuminate the experiences of groups marginalized in official records (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Third, ethnographic observations, including rituals, language use, settlement patterns, and the social-clan structure that reflect traces of historical memory in the everyday life of the Banda Ely community in Ternate (Miles et al., 2014).

By integrating these three sources, this study seeks to construct a more balanced historical reconstruction between archival materials and community voices. The ethnohistorical approach enables the researcher to capture the relationships among memory, migration, and the formation of diaspora identity while avoiding excessive reliance on colonial narratives. Through this methodological strategy, the research produces a more vivid, contextual, and representative understanding of the historical trajectory and cultural dynamics of the Banda Ely community in Ternate.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Historical Trauma and The Origins of The Diaspora

The foundation of the Banda Ely diaspora identity in Ternate is rooted in traumatic memories of the destruction of the Banda region by the Dutch in 1621. This event is remembered as a “massacre,” “expulsion,” or “great flight.” The expressions differ across families, but the underlying meaning remains the same: a displacement triggered by structural violence and the colonial monopoly over nutmeg.

Long before the arrival of the VOC, the Banda Ely people had already embraced Islam and lived within a diversity that had developed over hundreds of years. The Wandan identity remained strongly attached wherever this community moved. The collective memory of dignity as “anak Wandan” serves as a source of resistance against oppression. The *onatan* identity is inherited as a principle that they must never be subjugated. Trauma (Salamudin Uar, Interview, 2 December 2025), the history of expulsion, warfare, and colonial upheavals pushed the ancestors of the Wandan (Banda Ely) to leave their homeland in order to protect future generations. Migration was not merely to preserve religion—since all Wandan (Banda Ely) were already Muslims at that time—but also to safeguard the continuity of their ethnic group and ancestral heritage (Ellen, 2019).

These memories are reproduced not only through oral stories but also through family rituals, ancestral markers, and genealogical references that consistently link lineage to the Banda survivors. This historical trauma has become an identity resource that binds the community together while also serving as a tool to assert their distinction from other migrant groups in Ternate (Anthony Reid, 1993). The memory functions not merely as an origin history but also as a moral legitimacy for group identity and as a symbol of communal solidarity. The Banda Ely community, as noted by

(Nomay & Warwefubun, 2022), migrated not simply out of fear of Dutch colonial forces but migrated to preserve their faith and lineage. The people of Banda Ely were willing to abandon their comfort in order to protect their beliefs. They understood that land can be seized, houses can be burned, but as long as the spirit of struggle remains alive, the pursuit of truth will never be extinguished.

Collective memory is expressed through symbolic phrases such as *"We are the descendants of those who ran in the night."* This expression refers to a critical moment when their ancestors had to flee under the cover of darkness after recognizing the signal fire that marked danger and chaos. At that time, parents immediately carried their children away from the center of the blaze to save them. This means their ancestors chose to escape due to the massacres and expulsions carried out by the Dutch at the time. From this escape began the origins of the Banda Ely lineage that continues to the present.

From an anthropological perspective, this expression is not merely a story of flight but a marker of meaning transmitted across generations to explain the origins of the community. In that critical moment, when the ancestors fled amidst the rising flames signaling the violence and expulsions by the Dutch, the choice to escape at night became a historical turning point remembered as the beginning of their diaspora. Through this memory, the Banda Ely community constructs a collective understanding of themselves as descendants of survivors—those who succeeded in preserving their existence. Thus, the flight becomes not only a historical record but also a cultural identity framework, signifying that their presence today is born from resilience, courage, and the enduring memory of their ancestors embodied in this symbolic expression.

The term *Banda* itself derives from the word *Bandar*, which refers to a maritime trading stop or harbor where ships anchored—such as Bandar Aceh, Bandar Lampung, Bandar Gresik, and Bandar Neira. Over time, the word *Bandar* underwent a shift in usage, becoming *Banda*, the term used today (Samad Umarella et al., 2020). This is closely related to the spread of religion along commercial routes at the time, particularly targeting coastal cities and maritime trading ports (M. Adnan Amal, 2010).

In the *Nagarakretagama* written by Empu Prapanca in 1365, the term *Wandan* is used to refer to Banda (Anggara et al., 2024). As early as the first century CE, Chinese sources referred to Banda as *Wen-Tan*, a Chinese dialectal form of the word *Banda*. Among the Kei people, Banda (Wandan) is called *Wadan*, adjusted to the Kei language dialect. Meanwhile, the Wandan (Banda Ely) people themselves use the term *Wandan*, which originally derives from the word *fukardan*, later transformed through synonymic change.

2. Migration Motivations and Trajectories

The migration trajectory of the Wandan (Banda Ely) community is not singular but formed through layered and successive movements. The first wave of displacement occurred as an urgent response to Dutch aggression, when small Banda groups chose to migrate to Seram, Kei, and various regions in Maluku and North Maluku, including Tidore and Ternate. Interviews indicate that migration was not linear but recurrent and followed family-based strategies. As explained by Marwan,

"Our ancestors first migrated from the Banda Islands to Kei. When the situation was considered relatively safe, some remained there temporarily while others moved on to Ternate for economic and educational purposes."

Upon arriving in Ternate, the existing *soa* (clan) structures provided social space for the Banda Ely community to reorganize their lives. Through this support, they were able to establish new settlements and expand economic, social, and customary networks that later became the foundation for the community's continuity up to the present.

The subsequent waves of migration were more structured, making use of kinship networks, trade relations, and political protection offered by the Sultanates of Ternate and Tidore, which since the seventeenth century had opened sociopolitical space for groups categorized as "foreigners" (*soa-soa pendatang*). Migration to Ternate was therefore not only an effort to seek safety but also a strategy to expand economic networks and strengthen family status within the wider Maluku and North Maluku region (Andaya, 1993).

The movement of parts of the Wandan (Banda Ely) community to Ternate did not occur without deep underlying reasons. One major motivation was the desire to improve their quality of life. Amid limited access and opportunities in their place of origin, many individuals and families viewed Ternate as a city of promise—whether for employment, education, or social mobility (Krause, 2021). Education, in particular, became a significant factor: many young people from Wandan (Banda Ely) migrated to Ternate to pursue higher levels of schooling (Abd Mutolib Onoly, Interview, 13 July 2025). These intercultural encounters formed new dynamics; however, the Wandan (Banda Ely) identity remained resilient as a strong minority community.

By the 1960s, shifts began to occur: some families continued to marry within the Wandan (Banda Ely) community, while others opened up to intermarriage outside the group, bringing changes to patterns of cultural and linguistic transmission (Salamudin Uar, Interview, 2 December 2025).

Migration among the Wandan (Banda Ely) is understood not merely as geographic movement but as a culturally meaningful process. From an anthropological perspective, the decision to leave their homeland

represents a collective response to historical pressures, shifting social environments, and aspirations for a more dignified life. Migration thus reflects a conscious effort by the Wandan (Banda Ely) community to shape their own future. Motivations for migration emerge from a blend of traumatic memories, hopes for safer living spaces, and the desire to expand economic and social networks.

Therefore, the migration trajectory of the Wandan (Banda Ely) demonstrates their adaptive strategies in moving, settling, and constructing new identities without severing their cultural roots. Migration becomes not only a physical journey but also a process of social and symbolic transformation that reinforces the resilience, creativity, and vitality of the Wandan (Banda Ely) people.

3. Cultural Preservation (Language, Rituals, and Solidarity Values)

The migration of the Banda Ely people cannot be understood as a sign of defeat; rather, it reflects a strong maritime culture and a long-established orientation toward mobility that existed long before Dutch colonialism reached Banda. As noted by (Karttinen, 2019), the Banda Ely community had long been agents of religious dissemination, cultural exchange, agricultural traditions, seafaring practices, and nutmeg cultivation techniques across surrounding islands prior to the arrival of the VOC. Thus, their mobility carried with it a cultural package that continues to endure.

One of the central pillars of cultural preservation is the Wandan (Banda Ely) language. Efforts to maintain the language are carried out through highly consistent domestic mechanisms. According to Mbetai Onoly (Interview, 14 July 2025), Wandan is used as the primary language of communication at home, both between parents and children, to instill early affection and pride toward the mother tongue. This is reinforced by Muruna Onoly (Interview, 15 July 2025), who explains that the language is also used in customary ceremonies, family gatherings, and daily interactions, ensuring that children not only hear but actively use Wandan in various social contexts. These practices demonstrate that language preservation begins in the household, which functions as the central site for the reproduction of linguistic identity.

Although living in a multiethnic environment such as Ternate, the Wandan community continues to maintain core cultural elements through ritual spaces, communal gatherings, and traditional social structures. Wandan remains present within the family sphere and is used fully in certain ritual contexts, even though its use among younger generations has declined due to the dominance of majority languages in urban areas.

Socially, the Wandan (Banda Ely) people are known for being adaptive while still upholding their communal values. Their friendly, open, and respectful disposition has facilitated their acceptance within Ternate

society. As explained by Arman (Interview, 13 July 2025), they do not position themselves as isolated newcomers but actively participate in social and community activities, fostering harmonious relations grounded in mutual respect and solidarity.

Customary rituals and life-cycle ceremonies continue to play a major role as spaces for the reproduction of collective memory and the strengthening of identity. Solidarity values—especially the principle of *gotong royong*—remain an integral part of communal life. Fox (1980) observes that solidarity forms the core of social structures in island societies, and within Banda Ely this solidarity endures despite the individualistic tendencies brought by modernity (Rumra, Interview, 26 June 2025). The continued presence of *gotong royong*, customary deliberation, and traditional ceremonies indicates resistance to social fragmentation.

Traditional institutions also remain respected, such as the *kepala soa* and customary leaders, who now coexist with more formal village governance structures. This coexistence reveals adaptive processes that do not erase traditional systems but instead produce a complementary duality.

The cultural resilience of the Wandan people rests on the belief that ancestral practices are a highly valued heritage that must be preserved and transmitted (Knaap, 2021). Cultural mechanisms such as endogamy, the use of Wandan in ritual contexts, the creation of *mas adat*, and other traditional crafts function as essential channels for the reproduction of culture across generations. Thus, cultural preservation is not merely about maintaining tradition but about sustaining the social networks and moral values that support the continuity of the Wandan (Banda Ely) community amid the pressures of modernity.

4. Adaptation and Social Mobility in Ternate

Within the social context of Ternate, the Wandan (Banda Ely) community demonstrates flexible patterns of adaptation. They integrate into the *soa* structure, follow local customary norms, and participate actively in urban economic activities. This adaptation does not occur as a form of total assimilation, but rather as a dual strategy: maintaining their ancestral identity while simultaneously opening pathways for new socio-economic opportunities. The younger generation (H. Geertz & M. MacDonald) of Wandan (Banda Ely) has experienced significant social mobility through education, bureaucratic professions, and the commercial sector (Marcus, 2013). Extended family structures and inter-island kinship networks continue to serve as vital social capital supporting their upward mobility.

Upon arriving in Ternate, the Banda people brought with them their rich cultural heritage—language, customs, music, dance, and value systems. Living alongside Ternate, Tidore, Makian, Galela, Sanana,

Javanese, and Bugis communities required a process of cultural adjustment. This adaptation unfolded gradually.

First, language and communication: Early generations continued to use the Banda language, but over time Ternate Malay became dominant, especially in social interactions and education. Nonetheless, several Banda terms and vocabulary remain preserved in family contexts and ceremonial settings.

Second, dress and cuisine: Clothing styles and culinary traditions blended with local practices, although certain traditional dishes prepared during customary festivities continue to be preserved as strong cultural markers.

Third, religion and ritual practices: The Banda community in Ternate is predominantly Muslim and has adopted various local religious practices. Even so, they maintain rituals such as *cuci negeri* or *pela gandong*, which have been adapted within the framework of local Islam.

Amidst social change, the Wandan (Banda Ely) community continues to uphold deeply rooted social values inherited from their ancestors, such as *tosonan*, the principle of mutual assistance. They also retain Kei cultural traditions like *yellim* (collective assistance in ceremonies, social activities, and religious events)—a spirit of cooperation and mutual support evident in daily life (Anwar Onoli, Interview, 16 June 2025). These traditions are visible when community members work together to build houses, cultivate gardens, or support one another, reflecting compassion, unity, and solidarity that remain foundational to Banda Ely social life (Ogburn, 1964).

Initially, the Wandan (Banda Ely) people were known primarily as fishermen and nutmeg farmers, reflecting their origins in the Banda Islands. However, changing economic and social structures in Ternate have reshaped their social roles:

1. Social mobility: Many younger Banda generations now pursue higher education and work as civil servants, teachers, entrepreneurs, and even local politicians (Marus, Interview, 25 June 2025), indicating rising social mobility and integration into Ternate's modern social structure.
2. Gender roles: Traditionally, Banda women were largely confined to domestic roles. Today, Wandan (Banda Ely) women in Ternate participate actively in economic activities, community organizations, and education. They also play key roles in cultural preservation through arts and women's associations.
3. Dual identity: Banda people in Ternate now possess a dual cultural identity—they are both Wandan (Banda Ely) and residents of Ternate. This layered identity enriches their experience as a diaspora community capable of maintaining cultural roots while building harmony with their new environment.

The cultural adaptation and shifting social roles of the Wandan (Banda Ely) community in Ternate reflect

both cultural resilience and openness to change. They are not merely “foreigners” surviving in a place of displacement; they have become an integral part of Ternate's history and urban development. Their ability to navigate new social environments is not accidental—it is shaped by the historical movement from Banda to Kei, which embedded an ethos of openness, flexibility, and collective vitality. Ethnic identity is preserved without hindering their integration into Ternate's social structure.

Thus, the adaptation and social mobility of the Wandan (Banda Ely) community in Ternate illustrate a dynamic anthropological process shaped by identity, migration experiences, and the creation of new forms of life.

5. Identity Negotiation and Cultural Resilience

The cultural resilience of the Wandan (Banda Ely) community emerges as an ongoing process of identity negotiation amid social, economic, and demographic change. Wandan identity is not preserved through isolation, but through the selective maintenance of cultural elements considered core—such as language, customs, solidarity, and ancestral memory—which continue to be reproduced across generations. These elements function as ethnic markers that reinforce their symbolic boundaries within the multiethnic social landscape of Ternate.

Identity negotiation also gives rise to various challenges. Inter-marriage outside the community, the modernization of traditional crafts that alters their economic value, and the mobility of younger generations to urban centers create pressures on the continuity of certain cultural practices (Rano Madilis, Interview, 29 November 2025). Despite these pressures, the Wandan (Banda Ely) community demonstrates strong adaptive capacity. They continue to perform key rituals, preserve their language in particular contexts, and maintain the memory of ancestral migration as the foundation of their collective identity.

When migration occurs—whether due to economic needs, education, disaster, conflict, or aspirations for a better life—the social and cultural structures of a community inevitably experience transformation. Migration introduces individuals or groups into new environments with different social and cultural systems, leading to processes of adjustment, cultural exchange, and, at times, social tension. The culture of origin may assimilate or even clash with the culture of the destination area, producing a more complex and hybrid identity (De Haas et al., 2019). Acculturation, at its core, is the merging of cultures that occurs through sustained contact between one cultural group and another (BPCB Makassar, 2014).

The identity of Banda Ely in Ternate is not static; it is continually negotiated in response to different social contexts. In domestic spaces, identity is expressed strongly

through language, customs, and ancestral narratives (Fidin Madilis, Interview, 30 November 2025). In urban public spaces, however, this identity may become more fluid or even deliberately muted, especially among younger generations who interact within a modern, multiethnic environment.

The cultural resilience of this community rests on three main pillars:

- a. The preservation of historical memory, continually reinforced through family narratives;
- b. Genealogical cohesion, maintained through recognition of Banda lineage; and
- c. Cultural flexibility, or the ability to adapt to Ternate's social dynamics without losing core identity elements (Xu, 2020).

From an anthropological perspective, the resilience of the Wandan (Banda Ely) community is not a static condition but the result of their capacity to interpret change and adapt without surrendering their core identity. It is this ongoing negotiation between tradition and modernity that enables the Wandan (Banda Ely) to remain a strong, flexible minority group capable of sustaining itself within Ternate's evolving sociocultural landscape up to the present day.

D. CONCLUSION

He migratory journey of the Banda Ely community is a process of identity formation rooted in ancestral memory, ritual practices, and the ability to adapt within new environments. This study affirms the importance of ethnohistory as an approach that integrates written archives, oral narratives, and cultural practices to understand the dynamics of diaspora from the perspective of the historical actors themselves. Diaspora studies show that the experience of the Banda Ely community illustrates that diaspora is not merely physical displacement, but also an ongoing process of preserving memory and negotiating culture. Diaspora becomes a space in which identity is maintained while also being reorganized according to new social contexts. For the Banda Ely community, cultural transformation signifies change that remains anchored in the core of tradition. Transformation is not understood as loss, but as a way to renew language, rituals, and collective memory so that they remain relevant in Ternate without severing ties to the homeland. Thus, transformation becomes a strategy for sustaining identity within the space of diaspora.

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