

# CULTURAL HERITAGE AND SOCIAL IDENTITY: A MINANGKABAU CASE<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

The culture is created by mankind, and it is only mankind that able to create the culture. The cultural heritage is is the product of culture in the past which still remain up to the present moment, and it may be in the form of material object, behavior (activity), or something in the form of idea of the cultural proponent. As a product of the past, the cultural heritage has accomodated, saved the manner, behavior, and the way of thinking of the people in the past. Particularly in Minangkabau there so many cultural heritages are still found now either pre-historical ones of Hinduism-Buddhism, Islamic, or colonial ones. Such a cultural heritage has reflected the identity of Minangkabau people which are tribal, matrilineal, religious, democratic, and tending to migrate.

Key world: *culture, cultural heritage, social identity, Minangkabau*

## A. Mankind as A Culture Creator

In the teaching of any religion, especially Islam, it treats mankind as a prime creature having something better in comparition to the other creatures so that the mankind is detined to become the ruler (caliph) on earth. If compared to the creature of animal, physically, the mankind shares some structural similarities as well as need of living. If an animal has legs, hands, body, head, eyes, nose, ears, heart, liver, so the man kind has them too. If an animal has instinc, and brain, therefore, the mankind has them, too. However, there is someting that an animal does not share as a mankind does that is the ratio.it is the ration that make a mankind better than other creature.. it is with the

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ratio that a mankind is able to think and be creative as an asset to create the culture. The animals do not have the ratio that make them not able to create culture as mankinds do.<sup>3</sup>

## **B. Cultural Concept**

A cultural concept may be narrowly meant and may also be broadly meant. In a narrow sense, the culture is only related to the art matter. This understanding goes among limited men of culture. In a dialogue of culture, they often commonly discuss the matter of art either the modern one or the traditional one. Say, for example, dances of ballet, *tango*, *salsa*, *randai*, *kerawitan*, *wayang gamelan*, and so on.<sup>4</sup> In fact, the culture itself contains a quite broad understanding. Koentjaraningrat has broadly meant the culture as “any works of attempt, effort, and willingness of mankind which is connuously learned, and inherited from generation to generation. Therefore, factually, the culture itself contains a very broad understanding. If it is discussed further, the culture truly involves the element of attempt, and effort, and willingness of mankind. It means any culture created will involve the power, and strength of mankind. Thus the force (*daya*) will be followed by the involvement of strength that is the willingness of mankind. Later on, the attempt (*upaya*) is also followed with the willingness of mankind whis may be meant as a channel of mankind’s creativity to create something to fulfill his need of living. The force (*daya*) is actually a reflection of the muscular involvement of mankind, and attempt (*upaya*) is something that reflects the involvement of mind, and the mankind’s willingness, whereas willingness (*karsa*) is something that involves both brain and ration (mind and thaought of mankind). Therefore, it can be said that the culture is the result of mankind’s creativity.

As a product of mankind’s activity, the culture can be the result of discovery of someone (individu that later on becomes a model of the other person, *actor bast model*) or the discovery of a group (a groups of individu, agent becoming the creature of discovery and change maker of culture), and it could also be a result of cultural acculturation. Either individual or as a result of cultural acculturation, the culture will

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<sup>3</sup> Manusia ditempatkan sebagai makhluk berfikir, *animal rationale*. Mengenai konsep animal rational ini lihat Beerling, R.F, *Filsafat Dewasa Ini*. Terj. Hasan Amin. Djakarta: P.N. Balai Pustaka. 1966, hal. 7.; lihat juga Soetriono & Rita Hanafie, *Filsafat Ilmu dan Metodologi Penelitian*. Yogyakarta: Penerbit Andi. 2007, hal. 144; dan Surajiyo. *Ilmu Filsafat Suatu Pengantar*. Jakarta: Bumi Aksara. 2005.

go through a selectional process beforehand among the community of its proponent. It means that the new cultural elements found individually or collectively, and the ones obtained from the process of acculturation will be tested among the society if such a new cultural element fits the people and facilitates their living or not. If it fits, and facilitates their living, therefore, they will collectively support the new cultural element that the element will develop well but if it does not fit them thus the people collectively refute them in such a way that makes it extinct. Eventually, in such a process the culture is as the result of collective selection and common consensus of the supporting society of the culture.

### **C. Three Forms and Cultural Cybernetics**

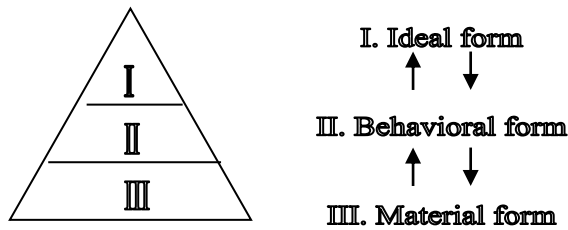
Koentjaraningrat stated that the culture preserves three forms. The first form is the ideal one. This one is in a very abstract form, invisible, untouchable, odorless, untasted, and unaudible. It means it is unobservable to the senses (eyes, skin, nose, tongue). This form works as a way of thinking, norms, laws, and the like. It only exists in the mind of mankind, if someone would like to learn it only in the form of oral tradition or in the form of written works of the people supporting the culture such as (folklore, *kaba*, *tambo*, novel, et cetera). The second one is in the form of behavior, the social activity of the people supporting the culture. Usually this one is in the form of motion, behavior, patterned activities done by almost all or better part of the culture proponent, say, for example, the rites of adat, religion, et cetera. The third the entity of culture in the form of material, that is the most concrete one of the culture which are visible, touchable, and tastable. Therefore it may be taken photograph for it is tangibly concrete.<sup>5</sup>

The all three forms will be involved in a culturally cybernetic culture that is a "conditioning-conditioned" relationship a cultural form whose bottom up and top down level in a cultural pyramid. The form of ideal culture is on the top of the pyramid of the culture that will condition the form of the following culture (see the following diagram). Finally, the culture in ideal form is very important in defining such a cybernetics.

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<sup>4</sup> Alfian. Politik, *Kebudayaan dan Manusia Indonesia*. Jakarta: LP3ES. (1980: hal. 2).

<sup>5</sup> Koentjaraningrat. *Kebudayaan Mentalitas dan Pembangunan*. Jakarta: Gramedia.



Remarks:

The form of culture I will condition of the form of culture II,

The form of culture II will condition the form of culture III;

Reversely, the form of culture III will be conditioned by cultural form II,  
and the form of culture II will be conditioned by the form of culture I.

From such a cybernatic relationship, truly the cultural heritage may be used as devise the see the people supporting the culture. The cultural heritage is the activity tract record that is the fosilization of behavior. It may reflect the social wisdom of its society, the discourse and its historicity character, and eventually the cultural heritage will reflect the identity of its supporting society.

As it is analyzed further, actually, the cultural heritage is really broad, not just limited to material form. It may exist in those three forms. However, essentially true, the cultural heritage is absolutely limited. Not all of the culture in the past can be preserved up tp the moment, among which not all of them and it is only a small of which may be found for some of which whose position is not identified. A part of the cultural heritage found, only a small part of which is understood..

Furthermore, it is only a few protected under legitimate regulation and laws. Actually, the cultural heritage is importantly necessary to be preserved for it is truly limited.

Factually, in Indonesia, the cultural heritage is already preserved under the State Regulation. However, it impresses that it tends to protect the tangible objects. Regulation no. 5 the year of 1992 , then revised to Regulation No. 11 the year of 2010 is obviously aimed to preserved the form of tangible objects. In the Regulation it is stipulated that the object of cultural heritage is also preserved. <sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Benda Cagar Budaya sebetulnya merupakan terjemahan dari “*Monument*” dalam “*Monumen Ordinantie*” yang dikeluarkan oleh kolonial Belanda pada tahun 1931 berdasarkan stbl. 235. Uka

Actually, the cultural heritage is the object in the form of the cultural entity. However, such an understanding called cultural heritage here in the paper is much broader than just a man-made objects. In the sense of the cultural heritage, beside the man-made objects, it also includes the other natural objects though it is not man-made ones but is presumed to have a close relationship with the life of man-kind.

In the Regulation of Republic of Indonesia No. 11/2010 it is stipulated that the Cultural Heritage is:

1. The heritage of culture in the form of tangible objects such as objects of Cultural heritage, preserved buildings, Structure of Cultural Heritage, Cultural Heritage Sites, and the area of Cultural Heritage either on the ground and/or in the water which is necessary to be preserved due to having important values for history, knowledge, education, religion, and/or culture through binding process
2. Natural objects and/or man-made objects either mobile or fixed in the form of unit or group and the parts or the remains having a close relationship to the culture and the history of humsn development.
3. The structure of Cultural Heritage is an established structure made of natural objects or man-made objects to fill up the need of walled room and/or room without wall and roof.
4. Structure of cultural heritage is an established structure made of natural object and/or man-made objects to fill up the need of room for activity which is united to the nature, facility and infrastructure as to accommodate human necessity.
5. The sites of Cultural Heritage is a place located either on the ground or in the water having cultural heritage, the building of Cultural Heritage and/or the Structure of Cultural Heritage as a product of human activity or the evidence of event occurring in the past.
6. The area of cultural heritage is a unit of geographical space having two or more cultural heritage sites whose location is close to each other and/or it shows a characteristic space.

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Tjandrasamita menyatakan “*Munument ordinantie*” tersebut yang berlandaskan hukum Kolonial Belanda, jelas tidak sesuai lagi dengan jiwa semangat zaman kemerdekaan saat ini. Lihat Uka Tjandrasasmita. “ Tinjauan tentang Hak dan Kewajiban Orang dalam Upaya Perlindungan dan Pelestarian Benda Cagar Budaya Berdasarkan Undang-Undang No. 5 Th. 1992 LN. No.27 TLN. No. 3470”.

In the Article 5 Regulation no 11/2010 it is stipulated that object, building, or structure possibly be proposed as the object of cultural heritage, building of cultural heritage, or structure of cultural heritage as it fulfill the criteria of being:

- a. 50 (fifty years) old;
- b. Representing the style period at least 50 (fifty years) old;
- c. Having particular significance for history, knowledge; and
- d. Having cultural value for national personality empowerment.

The regulation obviously pays attention on the cultural. Thus, how about the cultural heritage in the form of both mobility and activity such as traditional rites, dances, let alone a culture in the form of idea such as norms, laws, rules, or the character of cultural thinking.

### **C. The Case of Minangkabau Cultural Heritage and Social Identity**

In the previous research, I and M. Nur (2010) on heritage of history in West Sumatra concluded that based upon the discourse of the history, the heritage of culture in Minangkabau may start since neolithic-megalithic, Hinduism-Budhism, Islamic, and colonial eras.<sup>7</sup> The cultural heritage might be in the form of *menhir* and *stone cheirs* having appeared since the neoloihtic-megalithic,<sup>8</sup> inscription of Hinduism-Budhism eras, mosques, *surau* (small mosques), traditional hall appearing in the period of Islam, and then forts, governmental offices in the period of colonialism.<sup>9</sup> Thousands of the

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<sup>7</sup> M. Nur & Herwandi, "Manajemen Pengelolaan Sumberdaya Budaya: Mencari Model yang Tak Merusak Nilai" *Laporan Penelitian Hibah Strategis*, Unand. 2009.

<sup>8</sup>Herwandi "Limopuluah Kota Luhak Nan Tuo: Menhir, Jejak Budaya Minangkabau Membalik Paradigma Tradisional", dalam *Jurnal Penelitian Univ. Andalas*. September 2003. Lihat juga, "*Dari Borobono ke Tambo Rueh Buku: Penelusuran awal tentang Tulisan Minangkabau*" dalam International Seminar on Retrospection, Reposition, and Revitalisastion of Minangkabau Culture in Multicultures and Globalization Era. 2004; Herwandi, "Memahami Batu Kariman: Arca Menhir Bertulisan Arab Melayu" *Laporan Penelitian*, dibiayai Puslit UNAND (1998); Herwandi, "Pola Hias Masa Megalitik di Limapuluh Koto: Menggali Akar Budaya Pola Hias Minangkabau". *Laporan Penelitian*, dibiayai Puslit UNAND, 1998. Herwandi, "Temuan Arkeologi Baru: Ratusan Menhir di Talago Gunung" dalam *Harian Singgalang* 1984.

<sup>9</sup> Bangunan masa kolonial banyak dijumpai di Kota Sawahlunto, Bukittinggi, dan Padang. Andi Asoka, dkk. *Sawahlunto Dulu, Kini, dan Eseok Menyongsong Kota Wisata Tambang yang Berbudaya*. Padang: PSH dan Pemda Sawahlunto. 2005. Lihat juga, Zulqayyim, *Bukittinggi Tempo Dulu*. Padang: Pusat Studi Humaniora. Lihat juga Teguh Hidayat dan Dasrul Aswad. "bangunan-bangunan Kolonial di Bukittinggi" dalam *Buletin Arkeologi Amoghapasa*, Suaka Peninggalan Sejarah dan Purbakala Provisnsi Sumbar dan Riau. No. 6/III/Maret 1997. Hal.42.

cultural heritage found in Minangkabau just a small parts of them are formally preserved under the government regulations those are Provincial.<sup>10</sup>

Obviously, such cultural heritages reflect the social identity and the historicity character of Minangkabau, as can be seen in Table I below.

Tabel. 1.  
Cultural Heritage Objects and Identity Reflection Minangkabu People

No.	Material Cultural Heritage	Period	Identity Reflection
1	Menhir, stone chairs, <i>balai batu sandaran</i> , symbol	Neolithic-megalithic	egalitarian, tribal, demokratic, religious, matrilineal, historicity characters
2	Inscription and Statue	Hindu-Buddha	Religious, historicity characters
3	Mosque, <i>surau</i> , <i>balai adat</i> (Adat hall), Traditional house	Islam	religious (Islamism), demokratic, migrating
3	Colonial forth, office, building, and jail	colonial	historicity characters

It can be seen from the Table above that the Minangkabau Cultural Heritage has appeared at the end of pre-historic period that is at neolithic-megalithic periods such as menhir, stone chairs, and leaning stone. Such cultural heritages mostly found in the Regencies of Limapuluh Koto, Tanah Datar, and several territories in the center of Minangkabau. As a heritage of neolithic-megalithic periods, it clearly reflected the social identity of its era, the character of the era. As it is known that neolithic-megalithic society is an agricultural society living under the religious, egalitarian, communal, and tribal, and tend to be democratic. In my previous paper (2004), I also stated that actually the neolithic-megalithic society in the Regency of Limapuluh Koto has embraced matrilineal pattern that is following the motheral line. This could be seen in the tradition inheriting all of the cultural heritage (the tradition properties) to the motheral parentage.<sup>11</sup> Up to the moment, the cultural heritage is likely still coloring the identity of Minangkabau people known as matrilineal society, tribal, egalitarian, democratic, and religious.

In the territory of both Tanah Datar and Darmasraya one might find several inscriptions inherited by Adityawarman approximately 14th century in Minangkabau.

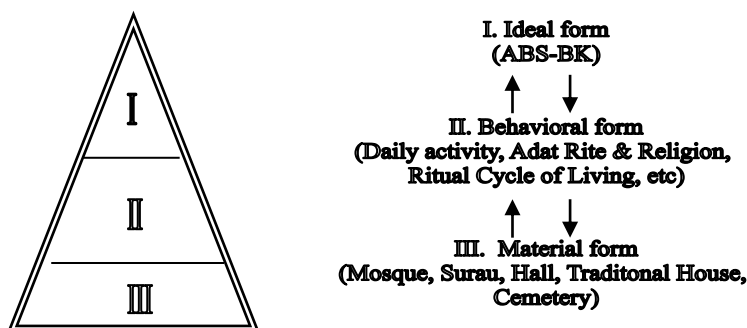
<sup>10</sup> M. Nur & Herwandi, "Manajemen Pengelolaan Sumberdaya Budaya: Mencari Model yang Tak Merusak Nilai" *Laporan Penelitian Hibah Strategis*, Unand. 2009.

<sup>11</sup>Herwandi & Zaiyardam Zubir (eds). *Menggugat Minangkabau*. Padang: Unand Press. 2005.

The heritages have become a historical records and posed Minangkabau that it has been ever under the influence of pernah dipengaruhi oleh ajaran Buddhism teachings developed by Adityawarman.

Furthermore, the cultural heritage of Islamic period could be in the form of mosques, surau, et cetera. Clearly, the cultural heritages show how the people of Minangkabau which is thickly influenced by Islam. In the Minangkabau culture, Islam is an officially formal religion. Even in defining norms and culcure of Minangkabau sounding “*Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah*” ‘Norms are based upon Islamic teaching, The Islamic teaching based upon the holy book’ considering how Islam has instilled every inch of Minangkabau.culture, and Islam is the identity of Minangkabau people at the moment.

If it is understood based upon cultural sybernatics, such as explained formerly, therefore, the culture Minangkabau could be described as follows. On the level of ideal form, there is a base, foundation, and the cultural based is concluded in the definition (*rumusan*) the *adat* stating *Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah* hereinafter abbreviated to (ABS-SBK), is the source of all behavioral patterns seen in daily life activity, in *adat* and religiuos rite, and the rites of living cycle, and so on. Whereas the behavior is complemented with the material culture in the form of *rumah gadang*, mosques, cemeteries, *balai adat* dan *medan nan bapaneh*, and so on. All of them well interweave in a social system of matrilinealistic society which is particularly Minangkabau. All of the cultural objects represent the Minangkabau symbol rooted in the level of clan and *nagari*.





In Minangkabau there goes “adat salingka nagari”. It means the tradition and culture are the social autonomy around the *nagari* (tradisional village in Minangkabau). Therefore, in viewing the cultural root of Minangkabau one must see it up to micro-level that *suku* and *nagari*. It must be seen that a *nagari* is a unit of culture.<sup>12</sup>

#### **D. Closing**

The cultural heritage is a valuable tract records of the past of mankind’s life for it is only a small parts of the past of the heritage reaching us at the moment. The cultural heritage might picture the social identity. From the heritage of the past one can learn the past activity, the social wisdom, and experience of historicity. It could be said that the cultural heritage is the representation of social identity of the people supporting the culture. Therefore it must be preserved.

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<sup>12</sup> Herwandi, “Upaya Pelestarian Benda Cagar Budaya Nagari Minangkabau dalam Mewujudkan Wisata Budaya”. *Makalah* pengantar diskusi dalam “Seminar Sehari Upaya Pelestarian Benda Cagar Budaya Nagari Minangkabau dalam Rangka Mewujudkan Wisata Budaya di Sumatera Barat”, yang diselenggarakan oleh Mhs. KKN-Univ. Andalas, IMAPEMI, dan SP3 di Sungayang, Batusangkar, 30 Agustus 2004.

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## Catatan kaki

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