

# Minangkabau Cultural Identity: History And Development

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## Abstract

*This paper delves into the historical trajectory and development of the ABS-SBK philosophy, which serves as the cornerstone of the cultural identity of the Minangkabau community. ABS-SBK, an acronym for Adaik Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah, represents a fundamental principle guiding the lives of the Minangkabau people, highlighting the significance of harmonizing customary traditions (adaik) with the teachings of Islam (syarak). The research methodology employed in this study is qualitative, utilizing interviews and document analysis drawing from ethnographic literature and historical sources. The aim of this discourse is to offer a comprehensive understanding of the formation of ABS-SBK as a core of cultural identity within the Minangkabau community, by examining its historical origins, socio-religious dimensions, and contemporary implications.*

**Keywords:** Cultural Identity, Minangkabau, Abs-Sbk Development

## INTRODUCTION

The cultural identity of a society is a reflection of its deep-rooted history, traditions, and values cherished by its members. Among the diverse ethnic groups in Indonesia, the Minangkabau community is renowned for its rich culture and distinctive local wisdom. At the core of Minangkabau cultural identity lies the philosophy of Adaik Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah (ABS-SBK), which emphasizes a harmonious fusion of traditional customs and Islamic teachings. ABS-SBK underscores the ethos of adherence to customs (adaik) aligned with Islamic law (syaria), with Sharia rooted in the teachings of the Quran as the primary source of guidance in life.

This paper explores the history and evolution of ABS-SBK as the foundation of Minangkabau cultural identity. Through comprehensive analysis, we aim to comprehend how ABS-SBK has molded the identity of the Minangkabau people and its relevance amidst contemporary challenges.

## DEFINITION OF TERMS

Cultural identity encompasses a shared sense of commonality and self-sameness among a group of people. According to the Malaysian Malay Literature Reference Center (PRMP), cultural identity primarily revolves around human life within the context of social existence (socio-cultural), manifesting as unique and distinctive aspects such as customs, language, culture, and religion. These elements form the essence of an individual's or a nation's personality.

ABS-SBK, an abbreviation of Adaik Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah, represents a life philosophy at the core of the Minangkabau people's cultural identity. ABS-SBK underscores the integration of cultural customs with the principles of Islamic teachings. This philosophy has undergone an extensive maturation process, culminating in the belief that customary practices and Islamic law are inseparable components (Prayitno in Abidin et al, 2019).

"Alam Minangkabau," in its usual and narrow interpretation, may be understood as the geographical region of Minangkabau. However, within this context, it carries a different connotation beyond geographical boundaries of West Sumatra Province, but this one is encapsulating cultural significance. This distinction arises from the presence of the Minangkabau tribe and culture, and on the other side, there is no West Sumatra tribe and culture (Mansoer, 1970).

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Merantau. It defines as the voluntary departure of individuals or groups from their hometown for various purposes such as seeking livelihood, gaining experience, or pursuing education, often with the intention of returning home (Naim, 1979:2).

## **RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

Explaining the historical development of the ABS-SBK philosophy as a guiding principle for the Minangkabau community.

Analyzing the evolution of various dimensions of ABS-SBK as the bedrock of Minangkabau cultural identity.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The literature review is a crucial aspect of research, serving as a vital tool for reviewing existing knowledge within the specific field under investigation. It aids researchers in comprehending the current state of research, pinpointing areas of knowledge deficit, and crafting pertinent research questions. Presented below is a literature review encompassing significant information pertinent to the study topic.

## **UNDERSTANDING THE MINANGKABAU**

As an ethnic group, the Minangkabau are part of the Malay nation and share similarities with other Malay tribes across the archipelago. Therefore, in terms of facial features and appearance, there is generally no discernible difference between the Minangkabau and other Malays. However, it is the distinct cultural characteristics or cultural identity of each ethnic group that sets them apart (Mohamed Anwar Omar Din, 2011:15).

Originally, the Minangkabau people inhabited the highlands of central Sumatra Island, formerly known as the Province of Central Sumatra. However, after Indonesia gained independence in 1946, the government divided the Central Sumatra Province into three provinces: West Sumatra Province, Riau Province, and Jambi Province. Presently, West Sumatra Province is primarily recognized as the homeland of the Minangkabau people (Asnan, 2006:129).

Geographically, West Sumatra Province currently spans an area of 42,012.89 km<sup>2</sup>, with a coastline facing the Indian Ocean. The population totals 5.53 million people, with the majority being Minangkabau. Due to the Minangkabau tradition of migration, known as merantau or venturing outside West Sumatra, the estimated number of Minangkabau people living outside the province is nearly equal to those residing within it. However, precise data is not yet available (BPS-Sumbar, 2019).

## **THE ORIGINS OF THE MINANGKABAU PEOPLE**

This aspect has long been shrouded in mystery in Minangkabau history, particularly preceding the arrival of Islam. Various accounts suggest descent from Iskandar Zulkarnain, yet the veracity of this claim is disputed by certain historians (Tuah, 1976: 37-40), (A. Samad Ahmad, 2014:22), (Ahmat Adam, 2012:113-115). Historical narratives concerning the origins of the Malay people, including the Minangkabau, often reflect Western orientalist perspectives. Particularly through migration theories positing the Malay people as part of or originating from Austronesia (Haziyah Hussin, 2004:15-38), (Belwood, 2007:105-106), (de Jong, 1952: 19-20).

However, a recent theory proposed by Oppenheimer (1999) has introduced a fresh discourse on the origins of the Malays. Oppenheimer posits Southeast Asia, including the Minangkabau region, as the cradle of early human civilization. Notably, Oppenheimer, renowned for his contributions in medicine and tropical diseases, has also made significant strides in genetics and human prehistory.

Another theory by Santos (2010: 9-22) suggests that Indonesia serves as the true location of the lost Eden. Santos' study, characterized by bold conclusions and supported by data dating back tens of thousands of years in the region, has sparked new discourse. Santos, a scientist with expertise in climatology, geology, nuclear physics, as well as history and folklore, presents a multidisciplinary perspective.

Adding to the discourse, the discovery of modern human tooth fossils by Westaway et al (2017) in the heartland of Minangkabau territory, West Sumatra, has sent shockwaves through the international archaeological

community. These archaeological findings, dating between 73,000 to 63,000 years old, challenge established migration theories and suggest an early human presence in the area.

In light of Oppenheimer and Santos' theories, coupled with the discoveries of Westaway et al, there emerges a compelling challenge to traditional migration theories posited by earlier orientalists. It appears increasingly plausible that the Malays have inhabited the region since ancient times, challenging notions of external origins.

## **THE ORIGIN OF THE NAME “MINANGKABAU”**

The etymology of the term 'Minangkabau' remains a historical enigma yet to be fully deciphered. According to Zuber Usman in Manggis (1971:40-41), the name Minangkabau is derived from the phrase "menang-kerbau," signifying victory in buffalo fights between the Minangkabau and the Kingdom of Majapahit of Java. However, Purbatjaraka, also recorded in Manggis, suggests a different origin, positing that the name originates from "Minanga Kabawa" (Minanga Tamwan), denoting the confluence of two rivers, as the Minangkabau's ancestral homeland lies between these waterways.

Van der Tuuk in Nasrun (1957:19) asserts that the name Minangkabau stems from "Pinang Khabu," meaning native land. Joustra (1920:41-44) similarly suggests that it originates from "Phinang Khabu," also signifying native land. Conversely, Mohamad Hussein Nainar in Azrial (2017:18-42) proposes an alternative theory, suggesting that the name derives from "Menon Cobos," meaning noble land. Additionally, according to Sutan Muhammad Zain, as noted in Azrial's records, the term originates from "Binanga Kanvar," indicating the mouth of the Kampar River. There is even speculation that it may originate from "Mina Kambwa," meaning Land of the Dragon Pillar or Land of the Heavenly Pillar. However, the most commonly referenced origin of the name Minangkabau is "Manang Kabau," associated with the aforementioned buffalo fighting.

Recently, the narrative surrounding buffalo fighting has also been refuted by Thaib (2017), the heir to the Pagaruyung Kingdom, who asserts that the name Minangkabau actually derives from "Mukminan Kanabawiah," signifying a country or kingdom with a social system akin to the time of the Prophet Muhammad. Nevertheless, Rais Yatim (2016) casts doubt on Thaib's assertion, citing previous research indicating the antiquity of the Minangkabau predating the arrival of Islam. Even during the Hindu/Buddhist era, the name Minangkabau is said to have been in use.

## **THE MINANGKABAU LANGUAGE**

The Minangkabau people possess their own language, known as the bahasa Minangkabau or Minangkabau language, believed to originate from the Austronesian language family (Adelaar, 1992). For the Minangkabau, language serves not only as a means of communication, but also embodies values and norms. When speaking the language, it's not merely about selecting appropriate words for the situation but also considering the social norms and values embedded in each word. Thus, language functions as a tool for conveying the socio-cultural values and teachings they uphold (Maryelliwati & Rahmat, 2016:20).

This perspective is further supported by Dahrizal (2018) who asserts that in Minangkabau culture, language holds the status of pusako (heritage). This implies that neglecting or abandoning the native language by the current Minangkabau's younger generation would result in the loss of their cultural identity.

## **MATRILINEAL AND MERANTAU CULTURE.**

According to Andaya (2008:88), the Minangkabau are renowned for their unique customs, notably as the largest adherents of the matrilineal system globally. This system dictates descent and property inheritance through the mother's lineage. Additionally, the practice of merantau (self-migration or wandering) is another distinctive characteristic of Minangkabau society, wherein individuals carry their culture and traditions to new places or overseas lands. These two features, matrilineal culture and merantau, serve to distinguish the Minangkabau tribe from other Malay communities.

Within the matrilineal culture, Minangkabau women hold a revered position. Referred to as Bundo Kandung or Birth Mother, they are highly respected. Hermayulis (2008:79 – 90) asserts that in Minangkabau traditional law, women not only determine descendants but also govern the Rumah Gadang (Minangkabau Traditional

House), an ancestral home passed down through the female lineage. Besides being custodians of inheritance, these women also manage and safeguard the family's economic ventures. Consequently, Minangkabau women are expected to embody several characteristics, including honesty, patience, intelligence, affection, and unwavering adherence to truth.

In Minangkabau culture, merantau has evolved into a social institution deeply ingrained within the community's way of life (Naim, 1979:2)

## **ISLAM AND MINANGKABAU CUSTOMS**

The Minangkabau people are recognized for their staunch adherence to Islam, wherein Islamic customs and religious practices are seamlessly integrated into their cultural fabric. This integration reflects the essence of the ABS-SBK philosophy.

Dobbin (1983:119) posits that Islam spread swiftly in Minangkabau due to its compatibility with the existing traditional structure. As elucidated by Zed (2013), this compatibility stems from the close relationship between custom and sharia (Islamic law), resulting in the establishment of a comprehensive legal system. The Minangkabau social structure mirrors this synthesis, evident in leadership roles and value systems. The Minangkabau's natural philosophy, embodied in the principle of alam takambang jadi guru (learning from natural phenomena), aligns with Islamic teachings that advocate learning from nature as a source of wisdom. This integration is reflected in customary law, which draws from Islamic teachings, culminating in the renowned social doctrine: Adat Basandi Syarak - Syarak Basandi Kitabullah (ABS-SBK).

Nasroen (1957: 23-30) asserts that there exists no conflict between custom and religion in the lives of the Minangkabau. They harmoniously coexist with Islamic teachings while also upholding their cultural traditions. It appears that the ancient Minangkabau ancestors astutely observed nature's provisions as a foundational source of their cultural practices, a notion reinforced by the presence of numerous Quranic verses referencing nature. As these elements are complementary rather than conflicting, they have become deeply integrated into the lives of the people. The coalescence of custom and religion strengthens their positions within Minangkabau society, enabling both to be observed and adhered to.

This exemplifies the robust relationship between traditional culture and the Islamic religion in Minangkabau, shaping the character and cultural identity of the Minangkabau people into something truly unique.

## **HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF ABS-SBK**

According to Takari in Chatra (2019), the ABS-SBK philosophy serves as the foundational concept of Minangkabau or in general as the Malay cultural identity. However, it is the Minangkabau people who exhibit the utmost loyalty and apprehension towards the preservation of this philosophy within their culture. This philosophy emerged subsequent to the introduction of Islam into Minangkabau, profoundly influencing the lives of its people.

This article further delves into the historical genesis of the ABS-SBK philosophy, as well as its ramifications on the socio-political structure of Minangkabau society.

## **THE MYSTERY OF ABS-SBK BIRTH DATE**

The ABS-SBK philosophy is believed to have originated through an agreement between traditional leaders and ulama, although the exact details and participants of this historic event remain shrouded in mystery and subject to varying interpretations.

One perspective suggests that the Padri War (1821-1837) initially erupted from a conflict between traditional leaders and ulama but was later resolved with a desire for peace. Following the cessation of hostilities, an agreement known as the Sumpah Satie Bukik Marapalam or "Charter of Marapalam Hill" was purportedly reached around 1840. This event is said to have taken place on Puncak Pato Bukit Marapalam in the Luhak Tanah Datar region (Yulika 2012:2-3). Meanwhile, Rais Yatim (2015:338) estimates the incident occurred circa 1838, however he emphasizes the need for further clarification.

Contrary to these accounts, Abidin (2022:5) disputes the aforementioned years and refers to an interview with Azwar Datuak Mangiang in 1966, a prominent figure at the Regency of Agam, who discussed the matter with Sheikh Sulaiman Ar-Rasuli (1871-1970), also known as Inyaik Canduang. According to Inyaik Canduang, the oath occurred in 1644, long before the Padri movement emerged. This perspective aligns with Mansoer et al (1970:63), indicating Islam's rapid spread after Sultan Alif, the King of Pagaruyung who embraced Islam in the mid-16th century.

Additionally, during Sultan Alif's reign, the power structure divided into two: Raja Ibadat, responsible for Islamic law, and Raja Adat, tasked with preserving Minangkabau customs. Sjafrin Aboe Nain in Muchtar (2011:106) attributes the birth of ABS-SBK to the initiative of Syech Burhanuddin Ulakan, a cleric who convened 12 Penghulu (traditional leaders) from Ulakan. This led to an agreement with the King of Pagaruyung, enacted at "Tanah Rajo" on Marapalam Hill. Muchtar's notes also cite Abdul Manaf's writing on the Tiga Ulama Sumatera, indicating Syech Burhanuddin's involvement in a religious-political movement termed the "Marapalam Agreement" (1686), which birthed the ABS-SBK philosophy.

These diverse perspectives on the history of the Sumpah Satie Bukik Marapalam or the Sacred Oath of Marapalam Hill underscore its enigmatic nature and the various interpretations surrounding its origins.

### **PUBLIC RECOGNITION TOWARD ABS-SBK**

While various perspectives exist regarding the origin of ABS-SBK philosophy, including the individuals associated with its inception, it remains somewhat shrouded in mystery. Nevertheless, Asnan, Yunus, and Erlinda (2022) concur that the Minangkabau people still uphold the belief that the Sacred Oath of Marapalam Hill is an actual historical event. Furthermore, the community regards the Oath, which purportedly gave rise to ABS-SBK, as a significant achievement and a valuable intellectual contribution to the social and cultural fabric of Minangkabau life by their ancestors.

The ABS-SBK philosophy has played a pivotal role in fostering peace and harmony within the lives of the Minangkabau people, a legacy that endures to this day. It enables individuals to adhere steadfastly to Islam while simultaneously embracing their own cultural traditions. Consequently, ABS-SBK continues to be esteemed as not just a philosophical doctrine but also as a way of life, emblematic of the cultural identity of the Minangkabau. Nonetheless, there is an acknowledgment that the general understanding and awareness of this philosophy, along with its associated attitudes and practices, are on the decline, particularly among the younger generation, as noted by Asnan, Yunus, and Erlinda (2022).

### **EVOLUTION OF ABS-SBK IN VARIOUS DIMENSIONS**

The subsequent discourse delves into the various dimensions of ABS-SBK as the foundation of Minangkabau cultural identity. The manifestation of ABS-SBK within the socio-political structure of Minangkabau society encompasses several facets, as elucidated below.

### **PUBLIC RECOGNITION OF THE POSITION OF ULAMA AND TRADITIONAL LEADERS**

From a historical lens, Hamka (1984:10) asserted that the introduction of Islam to Minangkabau heralded a transformation in the governance system of the Kingdom of Pagaruyung. This transformation birthed an institution with three leadership elements known as Rajo Tigo Selo, which allocated religious and traditional elements to their respective domains. These three elements consisted of Rajo Alam, Rajo Adat, and Rajo Ibadat. Additionally, influential and prominent individuals were bestowed positions within another institution termed Basa Ampek Balai. Among the triad of leaders in Rajo Tigo Selo, Rajo Alam who is also known as Yang Dipertuan Basa, held the preeminent position or primus inter pares (Zahari, 2015:168).

Regarding the roles within Basa Ampek Balai, Samad (2003:74) provided a detailed explanation. These roles encompassed: 1) Tuan Titah in Sungai Tarab, his tasks is to oversee the customary and heritage affairs while at the same time served as Prime Minister of the Pagaruyung Kingdom. 2) Datuk Indomo in Saruaso, responsible for matters of defense and security. 3) Tuan Qadhi in Padang Gantiang, primarily focused on religious affairs.

Makhudum in Sumanik, serving as the Treasurer and Minister of Finance. Additionally, Tuan Gadang in Batipuh was appointed as the Supreme Commander of the Kingdom.

The Trisila (Rajo Tigo Selo) leadership concept present at the Pagaruyung Kingdom level is mirrored in the social structure of Nagari through the system namely Tali Tigo Sapilin, Tungku Tigo Sajaringan. This Nagari-level system comprises three leadership elements: ninik mamak (traditional leaders) representing the traditional and custom group, ulama from religious circles, and *cadiak pandai* or intellectuals, selected from the community (Andeska, Dharsono & Martion 2017).

Zahari (2015: 170-171) posited that despite the disappearance of the Rajo Tigo Selo institution following with the demise of the Pagaruyung Kingdom, the Tali Tigo Sapilin, Tungku Tigo Sajaringan framework at the Nagari level continues to exist to fulfill their role and function to this day. This assertion aligns with historian Gusti Asnan's account (2024) regarding the existence of Rajo Tigo Selo and the Kingdom of Pagaruyung .

Historically, the perpetuation of traditional and religious elements, evident in the history of Rajo Tigo Selo and Basa Ampek Balai, validates their enduring role and significance. Moreover, the continuity of the Tali Tigo Sapilin, Tungku Tigo Sajaringan institution at the Nagari level signifies another form of acknowledgment from the community, particularly towards traditional leaders and ulama. And, this serves as a manifestation of recognition from the ABS-SBK perspective.

The pivotal role of these two elements becomes more apparent in the enforcement of Islamic and customary law, along with the evolution that transpires with changing times, elucidated in the ensuing points below.

## **THE USE OF ISLAMIC LAW AND CUSTOM**

The principles embedded in the ABS-SBK philosophy emphasize the importance of aligning local customs in Minangkabau with the principles of the Islamic religion. This alignment is reflected in the socio-political structure through the application of Islamic law in various aspects of daily life, including marriage customs, judicial proceedings, and dispute resolution. Nonetheless, Minangkabau traditional elements persist, albeit evolving in certain respects over the time, as illustrated below:

In terms of marriage, Amin's (2022: 17-28) study reveals that all legal provisions enforced by the Minangkabau people adhere to Islamic law. However, regulations exist prohibiting marriages between certain prospective spouses, which may result in customary sanctions. This demonstrates that the implementation of ABS-SBK in marriage law conforms to established norms, with Minangkabau customs fully aligning with religious precepts and state regulations. Thereby rendering marriages valid and recordable in formal government institutions like the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA).

There are five forms of marriage in Minangkabau customs, including "*kawin pantang*" (taboo marriages), such as marriages between close relatives (cousins) and marriages within the same tribe. In some villages, prohibitions even extend to marriages between individuals from the same village, regardless of differing ethnic backgrounds. However, such prohibitions do not render marriages as haram in Islam; rather, they are deemed "*urf shahih*" (common and well-known), consistent with sharia, and do not contravene Islamic law or nullify obligations in engagement or marriage contracts, aiming to preserve social cohesion (Amin, 2022).

Asmaniar (2018:131–140) elucidates that "*sasuku*" marriages (marriages within the same tribe) in Minangkabau customs, also known as "*kawin pantang*" or "*abstinence marriage*," are proscribed due to the risk of inbreeding and the potential disruption to customary systems.

Why this customary rule and regulation emerged? The historical origins of these issues can be traced back to the early formation of "Nagari" in Minangkabau. It commenced with the "*samande*" family (a family stemming from one birth mother), evolving over several generations. And together with others tribes, until there were at least four "*suku*" or tribes present, at which point a Nagari could be established (Hasanuddin, 2022).

Conversely, inter-ethnic marriages have been prohibited among the Minangkabau since the ancient times, a tradition upheld across generations. This prohibition aims to preserve genetic diversity and deter marriages

within excessively close familial ties, reflecting the enduring traditional values and norms of the community (Dewi & Nizam, 2023).

However, with the passage of time, some in Minangkabau have begun to permit kawin sasuku or inter-tribal marriages, citing religious non-prohibition as justification. This marks a departure from traditional values and norms, signaling a shift in societal attitudes (Yustim et al, 2022).

## **LEADERSHIP BASED ON CUSTOM AND RELIGION**

The socio-political structure of Minangkabau society reflects leadership based on custom and religion. This leadership structure remains sustainable to this day. Both parties; ulama and traditional leaders, play a significant role in regulating community life, providing guidance, and resolving various problems. This situation is reflected in the life in Nagari.

In today's context, according to Hasanudin (2024), institutionally in a Nagari, there are institutions such as; Tali Tigo Sapilin, Tungku Tigo Sajarangan filled with three elements representing the Niniak Mamak (traditional figures), Alim Ulama (religious figures), and Cerdik Pandai (scholars or intellectual figures). A Pangulu (custom leader) in Minangkabau is accompanied by three members of his staff, namely Manti (administrative affairs), Malin (religious affairs), and Dubalang (security), who are also selected from among the ninik mamak. This leadership pattern emphasizes the integration of Adat and Religion (Islam) in the life of Minangkabau society, a reflection of the ABS-SBK concept. It is clear that in every institution there are always elements of custom and religion with their respective roles.

The traditional leadership process in Minangkabau starts from the lowest level, namely the family, and continues in stages until it reaches the highest level, known as Pangulu Pucuak. Starting from the family level, several families live together in a Rumah Gadang (traditional house) led by a Tunggana, who is chosen from the mother's brothers, called Mamak. Tunggana represents the members of the family called jurai (one mother's family group consists of three generations). Several jurai then joined to form a tribe (clan), and one of the Tunggana was appointed as Pangulu Kaum, or clan leader. Next, one of the Pangulu Kaum of tribes is selected to become the Pangulu Suku (Tribe Commander). This process continues until a region is formed as Nagari, which consists of at least four tribes. At the Nagari level, one of the tribal leaders is appointed as Pangulu Pucuak, or oldest leader. This system reflects a traditional leadership structure which is tiered and respects hierarchy and authority established from generation to generation (Daud 2024).

However, in facing the demands of modernization and globalization era, the role and function of traditional leadership is now experiencing evolution. Although custom and religion remain important as moral guidelines, today's leaders have adapted to changing times, reflecting the dynamics between cultural heritage and contemporary demands. Factors causing this change, especially in the role of customs in the last few decades include: 1) Shifting role of customary institutions: which initially functioned as social regulators and justice, now more often become symbols of culture and identity. Nevertheless, traditional institutions remain relevant in maintaining traditions and mediating conflicts. 2) Changes in behavior: especially among the younger generation, influenced by globalization, urbanization and technology, causing a decrease in commitment to traditional roles and the intensity of traditional practices. 3) Changes in the role of those Ninik Mamaks: who have experienced changes in caring for their niece's children, now they are more inclined towards individual education and support. Roles in marriage also change to provide more advice and support. Despite the shift, the role of the ninik mamak remains relevant in maintaining customs and traditions (Afdal 2023:119-134).

Initially, the selection and appointment of traditional leaders (batagak panghulu) in Minangkabau is not a simple matter, because it is influenced by the candidate's personal character and disposition which reflects a commitment to high morals and ethics. Integrity, justice and honesty are the main values sought in prospective leaders, to ensure that a candidate is not only able to fulfill leadership duties, but also becomes a moral example for society (Pardede & Simanjuntak, 2022:119–133).

But today, according to Azwar (2021), there has been a shift in the meaning of the position of a Pangulu. There are those who take degrees for personal needs, for example for a political career or for pomp. It cannot also be

denied that there are some of those with the Datuak titles who force themselves to defend their title. In fact, their responsibility towards their people is often neglected. Either because they are busy or because they live far away from their hometown or clan's community. In this case, the position of traditional headman as Pangulu cannot be carried out half-heartedly, it cannot only be for certain things, such as only for marriage matters or pusako (inheritance) matters.

Regarding clerical leadership, in the past in Minangkabau, the role of religious scholars as leaders of the Muslim community was very influential through traditional education such as "Surau." They educated and shaped the behavior and mentality of generations within a normative moral framework. It was this kind of education that was once experienced by prominent figures such as Muhammad Hatta, Hamka, Agus Salim, Syahril, and various other national figures from Minangkabau. The Surau at that time served as a socialization institution and internalized these normative values (Hanani, 2015: 191-202).

However, in today's time, the role of religious scholars, such as preachers and religious teachers, for example in the Nagaris, they tend to be merely as lecturers, or as Friday sermon readers, or Quran reciters in the mosques. Meanwhile, the rapid tide of globalization has shifted the lifestyle patterns of society in various fields such as economics, trade, agriculture, and so on. Social life centered on togetherness has also shifted towards individualism and consumerism. Each person struggles to preserve their own interests. Life becomes self-centered and tends to forget the fate of others (Abidin, 2000).

## **JOINT DECISION MAKING**

The manifestation of ABS-SBK is also evident in the principle of musyawarah untuk mufakat (deliberation for consensus), where significant decisions for society are jointly made by religious and traditional leaders, reflecting the spirit of unity within the community.

According to Fardius (2017:62-72), Minangkabau culture embraces the philosophy of "rajo mufakaek" (king is consensus), signifying that consensus is paramount. This philosophy underscores the importance of deliberation in resolving issues. The significance of deliberation in Minangkabau life is further emphasized through the traditional expression: "bulek aie ka pambuluah, bulek kato jo mupakat, kok bulek lah buliah digolongkan, kok pipiah lah buliah dilayangkan," which translates to mean that agreement is essentially reached through negotiation and consensus. This expression is often heard upon successful resolution of a problem through deliberation and consensus.

Similarly, Hakimi (1991) also highlights that decision-making based on Minangkabau customs follows a democratic process characterized by deliberation and consensus. This approach is encapsulated in the proverb "bajanjang naiak batanggo turun," meaning that everything must follow the path/rules or sequence to proceed orderly towards the truth.

There are two types of deliberation in Minangkabau, first is personnel deliberation, starting at the lowest level, such as within households. Second is representative deliberations, at higher levels such as jurai, clan, tribe, Nagari, Luhak, and rantau in the Minangkabau realm. Representative deliberation involves individuals with authority based on their capacity and expertise in the three main elements of community life: Minangkabau customs, Islamic religion, and general governance.

These individuals known as "tigo tungku sajarangan," and the authority holders above them are referred to as "tigo tali sapilin," namely penghulu/ninik mamak (authority holders in Minangkabau customs), alim ulama (authority holders in the field of Islamic religion), and cadiaik pandai (authority holders in governance or general knowledge) (Abidin et al., 2019:91).

One significant example of deliberation in Minangkabau was the enactment of a law regarding inheritance status. Hamka (2021: xiii) mentions in his book "Adat Minangkabau Menghadapi Revolusi" (Minangkabau Customs Facing Revolution) that it led to a Minangkabau "Cultural Congress" in 1952 in Bukittinggi City, West Sumatra. This congress, attended by traditional figures, ulama, and intellectuals from across Minangkabau, resulted in a crucial joint agreement regarding the division of hereditary inheritance (high inheritance) and parent's joint assets inheritance (low inheritance). The deliberation concluded that low inheritance assets should

be divided according to "faraidh" law or Islamic law, while high inheritance assets remain unchanged and subject to contemporary developments.

"Musyawarah untuk mufakat" or deliberation for consensus is a characteristic of Minangkabau democracy practiced since ancient times. As Hakimy (1994: 5-6) notes, this democratic culture is encapsulated in the Minangkabau proverb "bulek aia ka pambaluah, bulek kato jo mufakat," emphasizing the importance of consensus. Another proverb, "untuang sapakaek, cilako basilang," highlights the significance of discussion to reach agreement and truth.

In Minangkabau tradition, differences of opinion are normal, but what is prohibited is conflict and split. Hence, the deliberation process to achieve consensus precedes decision-making. This characteristic of Minangkabau democracy ensures that decisions and agreements arise from below, reflecting the will of the people (Undri 2014: 29-41).

For the Minangkabau, democracy involves intellectual debates leading to consensus-based decision-making. Leadership in Minangkabau communities prioritizes virtue and wisdom, which is still in practice today, guided by unified traditional and religious values encapsulated in the proverb "Adaik Basandi Syara', Syara' Basandi Kitabullah" (ABS-SBK). Decision-making in Minangkabau continues to follow a democratic system led by leaders (Fitriani 2023).

### **ABS-SBK CREATES SUSTAINABLE PEACE**

The principles embodied in the ABS-SBK philosophy, as the foundational cultural identity of Minangkabau, have long served as the cornerstone for fostering enduring peace within society. These principles promote tolerance, mutual respect, and collaboration among diverse societal groups, thereby enhancing social stability and harmony.

Abidin (2016) articulated that the establishment of a secure and tranquil life in Minangkabau is anchored in the values and norms of local customs and the Islamic faith, as encapsulated in the ABS-SBK philosophy. Customs and Sharia in Minangkabau are regarded as the bastions of life in both the worldly realm and the hereafter, as reflected in the traditional adage: "kasudahan adaik ka balairung, kasudahan syarak ka akhiraek" (the culmination of custom leads to the balairung, the culmination of religion leads to the afterlife). Moreover, the ABS-SBK philosophy has engendered a cultured society and given rise to a distinguished generation, earning Minangkabau renown as a breeding ground for exemplary figures and leaders, including scholars and socio-political luminaries active both domestically and internationally.

However, numerous studies indicate that Minangkabau cultural values are gradually diminishing over the time, attributed partly to the influence of globalization and the limited incorporation of local culture in the educational curriculum. Research further underscores the adverse effects of globalization on students' attitudes and behavioral patterns rooted in Minangkabau cultural values. While highlighting the positive correlation between local cultural factors in education and the preservation of Minangkabau cultural ethos (Anwar, Aziz, & Susanti, 2019).

Presently, the Minangkabau community grapples with fundamental challenges, including the erosion of cultural identity, waning spirit of collective solidarity, and diminishing commitment to religious values. These internal vulnerabilities within customary law communities are compounded by unchecked liberties. Hence, there is a pressing need to cultivate a generation that embraces its cultural heritage, encompassing geographical, demographic, historical, social, economic, civilizational, and cultural aspects in alignment with collective consciousness. Furthermore, elucidating the role and significance of traditional stakeholders (niniak mamak) in fostering a traditional and religiously devout society is imperative. Islamic teachings underscore the importance of exalting Allah the Almighty, expressing gratitude for His blessings, and nurturing fraternal relations among fellow believers (Abidin, 2019).

## CONCLUSION

Based on the foregoing information, several key conclusions can be drawn. Firstly, within a historical context, the ABS-SBK philosophy serving as the cornerstone of Minangkabau cultural identity, emerged subsequent to the advent of Islam in the region. Prior to its inception, the society adhered to traditional adages that echoed harmony and societal norms. The precise genesis of ABS-SBK remains a subject of debate. While some attribute its origin to the Padri War (1821-1837), others contend that it arose from the "Sacred Oath of Marapalam Hill" in 1840. Divergent perspectives even suggest its occurrence in 1644 or during the 17th century under the influence of Sheikh Burhanuddin. Despite these disparities, the Minangkabau people maintain a steadfast belief in the significance of the Marapalam Hill incident as a pivotal cultural event. ABS-SBK has served as an unequivocal moral and cultural bedrock, fostering peace within the community.

Secondly, the evolution observed in the implementation of ABS-SBK reflects shifts in the socio-political landscape, decision-making processes, leadership dynamics, and the maintenance of peace in Minangkabau. While the recognition of ulama (religious scholars) and traditional leaders remains paramount, their roles have undergone adaptation over time. Both Islamic and customary laws have evolved to suit contemporary exigencies, yet leadership rooted in tradition and religion has upheld its integrity. The principles of deliberation and consensus serve as vital pillars for decision-making processes, while the values espoused by ABS-SBK fortify peace through the promotion of tolerance and cooperation. Although persistent challenges may continue to test these values, the evolutionary trajectory of ABS-SBK signifies the Minangkabau people's adeptness at adaptation while preserving their cultural distinctiveness and spiritual essence.

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