

# SOLIDARITY AND ART FORM ON MINANGKABAU DEATH RITUALS

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**Abstract:** This study is aimed to uncover the solidarity and art form found on Minangkabau death rituals. Solidarity is as a form of relationship that binds each individual in society, that was based on moral feelings and beliefs held. Solidarity on Minangkabau death rituals could be seen in a thick way, which is as the collective awareness of the social community in each villages. On Minangkabau people there are various kinds of death rituals, which gave birth to the same sense of togetherness and responsibility, so that there was a very close bond with each other. Art symbols in the form of lamentations, singing, motion, music, and appearance are contained in various Minangkabau death rituals

**Keywords:** *Solidarity, Art, Death Ritual, Minangkabau*

Minangkabau is a cultural area consisting of *nagari*, which is characterized by language and custom. The culture system adopted is a matrilineal kinship system, where kinship goes beyond the maternal lineage and has a very strong culture, characterized by thick Islamic teachings. Before the inclusion of Islam the Minangkabau people first embraced animism, dynamism, Hinduism and Buddhism. Phase by phase of the beliefs and religions embraced, there are various forms of death rituals in the *nagari* community in Minangkabau such as the *bakajian* ritual, *mangapiang kayu*, *bailau*, and *ratok bawak*, and the song of *Shalawat Makah*.

## Ritual

"Rituals are a form of ceremony or celebration that relates to several religious beliefs, characterized by special characteristics, which give the rise to noble respect, in the sense of a sacred experience".<sup>3</sup> That experience includes everything that is made or used by humans to express their relationship with the highest. Relationships or encounters, nature is not something ordinary or general, but something that is special or special, so that humans make appropriate ways to carry out the meeting. From the ways that are made, there are some forms of ritual that are found in religion or custom. Rituals - rituals in religion and custom as media communicate vertically between humans and "above", and horizontally between humans and humans themselves. The purpose of the ritual is the maintenance and preservation of sacredness. Besides that ritual is an action that strengthens the relationship between the perpetrator and the sacred object, and strengthens the group solidarity which creates a sense of security and mental.

One of ritual forms is the death ritual. The Minangkabau death ritual custom is a final offering to the deceased. The ritual of death is not only a custom in Minangkabau society but also an obligation for all people in the world. Rituals of death for Muslims consist of, rituals of bathing bodies, rituals of covering bodies, rituals of consecrating dead bodies, rituals of delivering bodies to graves, rituals of burial, *ta'ziah* rituals and commemoration rituals. In particular ritual forms in each region are different -different, in accordance with the customs and religion adopted, as well as the rituals found in Minangkabau.

## Solidarity

Solidarity is a feeling or expression in a group formed by mutual interests. According to Durkheim, solidarity has two types, namely mechanical solidarity and organic solidarity. Mechanical solidarity is created because of the similarities between members of society, while

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<sup>3</sup>. Sumandiyo Hadi. Seni dalam Ritual Agama.(Yayasan Untuk Tndonesia, Yogyakarta, 2006).h 29-30

organic solidarity is formed because of differences between community members. The existence of differences causes each member of society to depend on one another.<sup>4</sup>

Solidarity is a collective awareness, fosters a sense of social solidarity, strengthens the bonds that emerge. As stated by Emiel Durkheim that solidarity is a moral phenomenon. The elements of integration and solidarity are equality of religion, language, economy, mutual determination / cooperation, experience, action and common life.<sup>5</sup>

### Art Form

The presence of art cannot be separated from society, both primitive, traditional, modern and court environment. Art as a medium of expression, relating to the community and being a support for the continuity of custom that exists in the community, as conveyed by Edi Sedyawati:

"The art is coming from the community, the effort to develop traditional arts in the ethnic environment makes art a necessity for the people. Each ethnic area has its own custom, and this custom makes the main reason for the implementation of dance, both of which are used for religious characteristics or worldly needs, which are always associated with their customs."<sup>6</sup>

Art is one of the cultural supports, and develops according to the conditions of the culture itself. Minangkabau has various forms of art such as dance, music, fine arts, literary arts, and so on. These arts have a function as a communication medium in various rituals of death, which are poured through symbols, such as singing with up and down tones, spoken language, motion, and ritual supporting objects.

### Discussion

On the Minangkabau society, there are various forms of death rituals owned by each nagari, such as *bakajian* ritual, wooden *mangapiang* ritual, *bailau* ritual, and *ratok bawak* ritual, the song *Shalawat Makah*. *Bakajian* ritual belongs to the nagari in Pariaman area and has become an identity for the Pariaman society itself. *Bakajian* rituals are usually done for forty days or one hundred days. This ritual is done by reading sacred verses and prayers for the deceased through various forms of artistic expression. The rituals of death are carried out like people do a wedding party by cutting buffaloes, cows or goats to be presented to guests as alms. Nagari people voluntarily come to attend the ritual both in helping in the preparation and in performing rituals.



Picture. 1 dan 2, Picture of Jamba Carried by Mothers (Documentation: <http://tourisminnovator.blogspot.co.id/2015/03/makan-bajamba.html> Accessed October 1, 2016

This ritual was conducted to several days depending on the ability that has a good, both in terms of time and economy. Throughout the time the ritual is carried out, guests come in turn by bringing jamba (food arranged in a bone covered with a food *tudung saji* and *dalamak*). *Dalamak* is a square cloth made of *baldu* cloth, decorated with typical Minangkabau embroidery, which

<sup>4</sup> Nanang Martono. Sosiologi Perubahan Sosial, Perspektif Klasik, Modern, Posmodern. Dan Poskolonial. (Jakarta: PT Raja Grafindo Persada, 2012), h 44.

<sup>5</sup> Kamanto Sunarto, Pengantar Sosiologi (Jakarta, Fakultas ekonomi UI, 2004), h 135.

<sup>6</sup> . Edy Sedyawati. Pengetahuan Elementer Tari dan Beberapa Masalah Tari (Jakarta: Direktorat Kesenian Proyek Pengembangan Kesenian Jakarta Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 1986)h 64-65)

functions as a cover for *jamba*. The food prepared above *dulang* is a variety of dishes from side dishes consisting of meat and fish, and tarts decorated with red and yellow oil paper.

The house where the ritual is conducted is decorated with jellies and Minangkabau ornamental fabrics such as a *tabir* or *tirai*, *jurai* and *langik-langik*, like someone does a party. The form of decoration or equipment in the ritual is like decoration on a *jamba*. This decoration is a symbolic expressive art belonging to art.

During the ritual process, the reading of the *syalawat nabi* continued with sitting and standing positions. Reading of the *syalawat* done in a sitting position is also called the *ratik duduak*. The perpetrators recite a prayer while hitting a *dulang* which is also called a *syalawat dulang*. While the reading of the prayers carried out in a standing position is also called the *ratik tagak*. Throughout the ritual process, the people come to attend the ritual one after another.

Besides that, forms of artistic expression of music (vocals and instruments) can also be seen in the rituals of death found in other areas in Minangkabau such as *barzanji* (*Barzanji* or *berzanji*, one of the rituals of reading life stories and praise of the Prophet Muhammad which was delivered in the form of religious choir songs by adherents of the *Syattariyah* congregation in Minangkabau), *salawat dulang* (vocal art reading *selawat* accompanied by *dulang* / tray made of brass as an instrument), *ratik* (vocal art by reciting *dhikr* by sitting and standing). *Ratik* art is done by standing which is called the *ratik tagak* while sitting is also called the *ratik duduak*. The presentation of the art of *zanji*, *ratik* and shawl is conducted throughout the specified time, starting in the morning until midnight. The community participates in doing *barzanzi* art together. This is because people have the same religious background.

Payakumbuh people have a death warning ritual called the *ratok bawak* ritual. *Ratok bawak* is carried out when a *penghulu* dies. "*Penghulu* has the meaning as the head of the people, as the highest authority to regulate the indigenous people of each village in Minangkabau".<sup>7</sup> The principals play an important role in the lives of indigenous peoples. It can be seen in the Minangkabau proverb which formulates the position and role of the leader as leader, as protector, as judge, and as a foundation of hope in the lives of his people. To respect and to appreciate a deceased person who died, performed a *ratok bawak* ritual.

The *ratok bawak* ritual is performed by the mother and the wives of the *penghulu*, wailing while doing dance movements, such as stomping the feet as tempo. Lamentations and dances are performed on top *bawak* of buffalo skin or, with a round or circular pattern. A sense of solidarity is consciously formed due to the collective awareness of the Bukik Limbuku *nagari* people which has the same customs and culture. The leader is a highly respected leader of the people, so when the *ratok bawak* ritual is performed spontaneously the community is involved in the ritual



Picture 3 and 4. *Ratok Bawak* Rituals  
Nurwani document April 19 2015

*Mangapiang kayu* ritual is a death ritual found in Pitalah area, Padang Panjang. This ritual symbolizes the sincerity of the people who share the grief of the family left behind, such as the Minang proverb (*putiah hati dapek diliek, putiah hati bakaadaan*). After the body was buried, a *mangapiang kayu* ritual was carried out, which was carried out in the morning. After the wood cutting ritual, the guests who arrived continued with the reading of *petitih* or *pasambah* chests in the form of Minang rhymes which were classified into literary art.

<sup>7</sup>. Amir MS.1997:67

When the *mangapiang kayu* ritual is carried out by the family from the husband, the so-called *bako* carries rice complete with side dishes which are brought on top of the *dulang* that has been arranged and decorated. The rice that is brought is called *pambujuak* rice, which will be eaten by guests who come. Usually the rice is brought as a symbol of kinship from the *bako* side. Rice that is brought is rarely eaten by guests, due to grieving conditions. Rice brought will be brought back by the *bako*. Rice prepared above *dulang* is decorated and closed *dalamak* in as a symbol in fine art.

On the fortieth day there will be recitation of degrees or *zikir derajat* by reading seventy thousand *zikir*. On the hundredth day, *berzanji* and *pasambahan* readings were held, in the form of *pamtun-pantun* of Minang.

*Syalawat makah* song which is practiced by the Tabek nagari community, Pariangan Subdistrict, Tanah Datar Regency. In the life of the people, the prayer of *syalawat makah* is not considered as a type of art, but is classified by the community as worship that is rewarded by reward. This reward is intended for the performers of rituals, ritualists, and for someone who has died, even reward for ancestral spirits.

*Shalawat makah* Song is a form of religious culture production of Tabek *nagari* community to present the reading of the Book of *dalil khairat*. The reading is coupled with prayer at the end of the presentation. This activity is presented as a religious ritual, carried out at every ritual of death from a member of the community in the *Tabek nagari*. Noone of the families of the grief of death in the *nagari* were not visited by the people together to hold the readers of the Book of *Dalail Khairat*, which in its context is a prayer service.

In the Kampai Tabu Karambia Solok Nagari community, there is the death ritual of *Bailau*. *Bailau* is conducted for boys died being wandered and his body could not be brought back to the village. The form of the ritual is marked by a cry from the *rumah gadang*. Crying broke out spontaneously after hearing the news of the child being wiped out. Hearing crying and hysterical cries is a sign for the community that there will be *ilau* rituals. Another sign of grief news is to hit the drum with a tight and tight punch. Hearing the sad news, the people spontaneously came to the house of mourning to help in the ritual implementation. Some were in charge of preparing equipment such as beds, cutting banana stems instead of corpses.

Mother cried incessantly lamenting the banana stems while hugging tightly. Lamentations made with up and down voices present a deep sense of concern and sadness. In *Bailau* also accompanied by movements to beat the chest, jerk, clap.

After the people arrived, the *bailau* ritual was moved on the home page. Banana stems as symbols of corpses are placed on top of *bawak* or buffalo skin. The corpse is covered with *datuak* clothes, as an oversize outfit for traditional leaders. Boys when it's time to become leaders of their own families or families.

As long as the mother cries, the *bailau* ritual will continue, in the company of middle-aged mothers. In this ritual there is a *ilau* handyman who will arouse a sense of sadness in his lamentation, accompanied by a moving dancer while surrounding them. This ritual stops when the mother is no longer able to tear.



Picture 5 and 6: Ilau Death Rituals was Done on the Home Page  
(Documentation: Nurwani January 28, 2015)

## Conclusion

The Minangkabau death ritual is very thick with community solidarity in each village, which is born out of collective awareness. The collective awareness of the *nagari* people presents social solidarity, and is able to bind the *nagari* people. The religious and customary equality as a binder of the people in the *nagari* is able to present high solidarity. This can be seen in the ritual of death. Together people express artistic symbols into the rituals of death, such as *ratapan* as literary art, singing as music, motion as a dance, and equipment as a form of art symbol.

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