

Hybridity Between Shi'ite, Sunni and Minangkabau Cultures at the Tabuik Performance in Pariaman, West Sumatra

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Abstract

The paper is discussing the process and hybridity within the Tabuik performance in Pariaman, West Sumatra. Elements in Shi'ite, Sunni, and Minangkabau cultures contribute to the form of *Tabuik* performance. It originally began as a Shi'ite rite meant to commemorate the death of Husain. The current Tabuik performance has shifted from its original form and purpose so that it has now turned into the distinctive performance of Pariaman society. The ritual entered Pariaman culture during the British occupation in Sumatra at the beginning of the nineteenth century and was brought by the British soldiers of the Sipahi ethnicity and of Shi'ite Islam faith. The acceptance and hybridization for the ritual by the Pariaman people have developed for a long time and are sometimes conflicting in terms of teachings, forms (artifacts), performance, and aim of the ritual. The Pariaman society are predominantly Sunni Muslims and culturally Minangkabau; therefore, several parts of the Shi'ite ritual are rejected, corrected, and added with new elements which are more suitable to Sunni teaching. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the incorporation of several elements of Minangkabau culture was very critical in Tabuik performance. Elements of Minangkabau culture (*adat*, customary tradition) are symbolically represented and include the customary social institution within the Minangkabau society.

Keywords: *Tabuik* performance, hybridity, Shi'ite, Sunni, and Minangkabau.

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1. Introduction

As an old city in the west coast of West Sumatra province, Pariaman was once an outstanding port city. In his journey along the western part of Sumatra island between 1512-1515, Tomé Pires noted that Pariaman, Tiku, and Barus were prominent port cities. Annually two or three ships from Gujarat stopped by the city to trade gold and textiles (Cortesão, ed., 1944). As time went by, from the eighteenth to the first half of the twentieth century, Pariaman was getting more open and receptive to external influences and innovation; immigrants from China, India [Keling/Kaliang], Netherlands, Arab, Aceh, Bengkulu, Bugis, Nias, and Batak began to settle down in the city while the native Pariamanese of Minangkabau ethnicity were the dominant people (Kato, 2006). Therefore, the Pariaman society was heterogeneous and the Pariaman city was distinctively cosmopolitan. The circumstances have been different since the Indonesia's independence, particularly for the last four decades; the settlers began to migrate out of Pariaman due to the situation in which Pariaman port was no longer visited by trading ships.

Interaction with people from other nations contributes to the dispersion of foreign cultures to Pariaman, particularly those of Arab and Islamic India. Several genres of traditional performing arts and rituals of the foreign cultures grow in Pariaman and soon become a part of the local tradition. One of the remaining cultural legacies that can still be encountered today is the *Tabut* performance which in Minangkabau local dialect is dubbed *Tabuik*. The ritual dated back to the early nineteenth century and is still performed today in Pariaman.

Tabuik performing arts receive cultural influence from Shi'ite Islam. The Shi'ite adherents perform the ritual to pay tribute to Husain who was killed in the Battle of Karbala in 680 (61 AH) (Brockelmann, 1956). The Shi'ites consider Husain as a noble figure and regard him an *imam*, meaning a person of magnificent spiritual quality in Islamic perspective. The Shi'ites regard *imam* as the highest leader and designate only one *imam* for a period (Ansary, 2012). Some even maintain that an imam receives divine revelation and is secured against sin and err and therefore his death should be commemorated to be a primary ritual; something that's also performed by Shi'ite adherents in the Middle East and in other regions with Shi'ite culture. The ritual's form and content highlight grief and sorrow.

In Pariaman, this ritual is in hybridization with Minangkabau culture and belief held by the Pariaman society, ie. Syattariyah *tariqah* (sufism/mysticism order) of the Sunni Islam. The hybridization process is supposedly in a conflict: there occurred rejection and correction of several elements of the ritual but then they are accepted and local culture is furthermore incorporated into them. It's a reality that Shi'ite and Sunni ideologies are often conflicting so that it takes a very long time for both of them to be able to accept one another and together contribute to the Pariaman cultural tradition. In addition, the Pariaman society also has a worship

tradition in which they pay a visit to the tomb of deceased local Muslim notables but it's not meant to be a splendid and glorious celebration. The process in which a Shi'ite ritual is accepted by Pariaman society living with Minangkabau culture so that eventually the ritual becomes their own cultural performance is a phenomenon of religious teaching and culture. How does the acceptance of a Shi'ite ritual by Pariaman people occur? The hybridity phenomenon in the case of *Tabuik* performance is very interesting to discuss.

2. Research Method

The material object of the study is *Tabuik* performance in the West Sumatran city of Pariaman. The aspect to be discussed is the hybridity within the performance. The study employed qualitative method while data gathering used historical ethnography approach. As a part of the ethnography approach, I tried to mingle more closely with the performers of *Tabuik* to try to explore their experiences and views as well as learn how they identify and understand *Tabuik* in the past as well as in the present. The study was conducted naturally and involved dialogues without I trying to set up a certain situation. The main instrument of the study was myself and this was done to obtain data directly from the informants. Historical approach is employed to understand the acceptance and hybridity process in the performance; how the Shi'ite ritual elements as the main object assimilate with Sunni teaching and Minangkabau culture.

3. Result And Discussion

3.1. How *Tabuik* Entered Pariaman

The way Shi'ite influence entered Indonesia, according to Snouck Hurgronje as quoted in Margaret Kartomi, occurred in two waves. The first wave occurred around the fourteenth century, supposedly due to the fact that the *Ali Hanafiyah* tale about the death of Husain and Hasan had been translated into Malay by then. The story was still in the form of a literary work and had not emerged into *Tabut* festival. Second wave of the entry of Shi'ite influence to Sumatra supposedly happened by the end of the seventeenth century when Britain brought Indian Sepoy soldiers (Sipahi/Cipai people from Tamil) in an attempt to control the Sumatran west coast and occupy their fort in Bengkulu. However, the time when *Tabut* developed into the Sumatran *Tabut* was probably at the beginning of the eighteenth century (Kartomi, 1986; 2012). Meanwhile, according to Azra (2000), "*Tabut (Tabuik)* ritual tradition entered West Sumatran coast in the period between 1750-1825. He also explained that *Tabut* is brought by the Britain soldiers from Sipahi, India, who were adherents to Shi'ite Islam." *Tabut* in its many versions can also be found in other regions in West Sumatra, ie. Padang, Maninjau, Padangpanjang, Solok, Painan, as well as in Aceh, ie. Pidie, Banda Aceh, Meulaboh, Trumon, and Singkil. However, the only surviving rituals today are *Tabuik* in Pariaman and *Tabut/tabut* in Bengkulu.

It's generally acknowledged among Pariaman people that *Tabuik* entered the city after British occupation in Sumatra. The administrative capital of the British Colonial government in Sumatra was Bengkulu while Padang was the central British colonial government in West Sumatra. *Tabuik* entered Pariaman after the British handed over Bengkulu (Sumatra) to the Dutch in exchange for the Singapore and Malacca, under the Treaty of London on March 17, 1824 between the United Kingdom and the Netherlands. The treaty implied that the British colony had to leave Bengkulu. The condition brought a wide implication upon the Sipahi people as they were no longer employed as a part of the British military. They were free to return to India or to settle down in Bengkulu. Some of them did return to India, some others stayed in Bengkulu, and the rest of them joined merchant ships. One of the prominent trading ports at the time was Pariaman, so they arrived in Pariaman and settled down in the city (Sjarifoedin, 2011).

In another version, Margaret Kartomi mentioned that *Tabut* came from India and was brought to Bengkulu by Imam Senggolo, a muslim leader prominent by the name of Syekh Burhanuddin. From Bengkulu, *Tabut* was brought to Pariaman by a muslim figure by the name of Kadar Ali. Similar opinion is also stated by Amir Sjarifoeddin that Imam Kadar Ali was a Sipahi/Cipai/Sepooy leader who was an adherent of Shi'ite Islam bringing *Tabuik* to Pariaman.

Sjarifoedin asserted that the Sipahi people was well-accepted by the Pariaman people due to the fact that almost all Pariaman people were also adherents of Islam. Furthermore, they mingled with Pariaman people both in social and cultural sense. After settling down in Pariaman, their custom of performing the *Tabut* ritual was also carried out in Pariaman. What they did received the attention of the local Pariaman people who eventually followed the *Tabut* ritual. However, even to the present day, Kadar Ali as the figure who brought *Tabuik* to Pariaman is not quite recognized in the city; many don't even know him. Generally, the Pariaman people only recognize that *Tabuik* came from Bengkulu.

According to Faturrahman (2008), since the seventeenth century, Pariaman society had been followers of Syattariyah sufism (misticism) order (*tariqah*). Ulakan, one of the villages in Pariaman at that time was the central of Tariqah Syattariyah in Minangkabau led by Syekh Burhanuddin. Tariqah Syattariyah is a part of Sunni school of thought; its religious rites and fiqh jurisprudence follow Sunni school of thought. The tradition of mystical teaching, according to Azra, generally becomes religious practice deep-rooted among Sunni Islam

adherents. It seems that Sjarifoedin hasn't fully grasped the idea that Pariaman society are Sunni Muslims with entirely different religious practices from Shi'ite Muslim. How is it possible that they immediately embraced a Shi'ite ritual as a part of their own? Followers of Syattariyah mysticism order typically accept a religious ritual only after the ritual is confirmed and performed by their teachers. Obedience to teachers' (*Syekh* and *tuanku*) law and order is a prescriptive doctrine within the sufism brotherhood. Viewing Sjarifoedin's opinion, probably the *Tabuik* celebration only applied to certain Sipahi ethnic community because prior to Kadar Ali's presence in the city, people from Southern India had settled down in Pariaman. They had accustomed themselves and mingled with Pariaman (Minangkabau) people who called them tribe/family Keling or *Urang Kaling*. They had lived in a settlement between the present-day village Lohong and Karan Aur; the settlement is now dubbed Kampung Kaling/ Kampung Keling from which the Keling community has spread to different regions in West Sumatra: Padang, Bukittinggi, Padangpanjang, Solok, and Payakumbuh.

However, it's quite a different case with the native Pariaman people of Minangkabau ethnicity that perhaps can't be directly involved in the Shi'ite ritual. In the early nineteenth century (1803-1837), throughout Minangkabau there occurred the Padri movement which then evolved into Padri War initiated by Wahabi Muslims who were determined to purge Islam of teachings considered deviant or heretical (Dobbin, 2008; Kahin, 2008; Grave., 2007; Hadler, 2010). The Padri Movement in Minangkabau is the biggest and harshest Islamic purification movement ever in Southeast Asia. Even though the Padri Movement was centered in inland Minangkabau, its impacts apparently affected coastal regions including Pariaman. Notes on *Tabuik* performance in Pariaman from its beginning to the end of the nineteenth century don't give much discussion on the ritual. According to some oral contribution from several public figures and owners of *Tabuik* in Pariaman, apparently *Tabuik* was only celebrated once around the period and it was performed with the Kampung Perak-based *Tabuik Pasa* in Pariaman.

3.2. Hybridity Between Shi'ite, Sunni, and Minangkabau Cultures

In the seventeenth century, Pariaman society was predominantly Sunni Muslims following Syafi'i school of thought and Syattariyah mysticism order. The reformer and the figure behind the spread of the religion was Syekh Burhanuddin. He had continued his learning on Islam in Aceh with his teacher Abdur Rauf al-Sinkil. He returned to Minangkabau by the mid-seventeenth century and started spreading Islamic teaching there. The method by which he sought to spread Islam was based in a *surau* or a little mosque as the centre to learn and spread the Islamic teachings. In performing his mission, he had been assisted by four colleagues who happened to be his pupils. Those pupils who were considered in a full grasp of the knowledge of Islam and were regarded able to teach it were called *Tuanku* (a kind of religious teacher) and were entitled to build a *surau* and admit new pupils (Samad, 2003).

Syekh Burhanuddin chose Ulakan as the centre of Islamic teaching and spreading. Ulakan is a village situated in the coast of Indonesian Ocean, around 15 km south of Pariaman. Nowadays the village has transformed into a small town. Syekh Burhanuddin used a persuasive approach in spreading Islam (Duski Samad, 2003: 38). He didn't force Pariaman people to enter Islam due to the fact that many people by then in Pariaman were adherents of Hindu, Buddhism, and idol worshippers and only a few were adherents of Islam. The approach done by Syekh Burhanuddin touched many people in Pariaman and therefore they were interested and eventually converted to Islam. The Syattariyah sufism order became the dominant preference in Pariaman.

Syekh Burhanuddin passed away at the end of the seventeenth century and was buried in Ulakan. Many of his pupils became a *tuanku* and continued spreading Islam in different regions in Minangkabau. Their method of teaching Islam was still based in *surau*. However, after the death of Syekh Burhanuddin, members of Jamaah Syattariyah under the leadership of *tuankus* began to develop several religious rituals never done previously. One of them was the ritual to pay an annual visit to the tomb of Syekh Burhanuddin every mid Safar (the second month of the Islamic calendar). The ritual is known as *Basafa* which turned into an important ritual and it is even compulsory to the followers of Syattariyah order throughout Minangkabau. Among the followers of the sufism order, there's a common understanding that everyone should be in a deep mystical bond with the teachers/*tuanku* and masters; it's an inward and outward kind of bond. Month Safar was chosen because it was the month Syekh Burhanuddin passed away. The pilgrimage was meant to pay tribute to Syekh Burhanuddin as the figure who had struggled to introduce Islam to Pariaman and, more generally, Minangkabau people. In the pilgrimage, people walk together in a procession, follow a communal teaching on *tariqah*, listen to the reading of the Syekh's biographical life journey, and do a communal *zikir* and *tahlil* reciting. It takes two days to complete the ritual and it starts from the *surau* where the Syekh initially started the teaching and culminates in his tomb. Duski Samad mentioned the entire pilgrimage should be filled with religious deeds: reciting *zikir*, prayer, *tahlil* (*laa ilaha illallaah*), *Salawat Nabi*, and reading the book of *Saraful Anam* (consisting of praise to Prophet Muhammad). They would also do *shalat sunnat Buraha* (Buraha voluntary prayer) which is aimed at Syekh Burhanuddin so that the Syattariyah congregation receives his blessing and protection. Pilgrims come from many regions in Minangkabau and even from outside of West Sumatra. The *zikir* and prayer reciting is done around the cemetery.

The number of the people involved in the congregation reaches hundreds of thousand. The pilgrims celebrate Syekh Burhanuddin as a prominent Muslim figure and teacher. They argue that without him they'd probably never know Islam and be infidel (*kafir*, how non-Muslim people are dubbed by Muslims) eternally.

Visit to the tomb of Syekh Burhanuddin is a ritual to remember the merit and death of an important Muslim notable, prominent for his role in developing Islam. Those people perform the ritual solemnly and never show any grief. The Basafa ritual is initiated and performed by the people of Pariaman related to the death of a Muslim notable. Basafa is still performed to the present day, not only by the people who follow Syattariyah congregation, but also by people from Naqshabandiyah and Sammaniyah sufism order, and even by the general public even though the latter do it with a different aim: religious tour. The Syattariyah congregation, the existence of which dates back to four centuries ago, is regarded as a group of traditional (the old-fashioned) Islam by the moderate group (the youth). The moderate (modernist) Islam group considers Basafa as deviant from Islamic teaching due to its tendency to idolize Syekh Burhanuddin and therefore is inclined to *syirik* (the sin of practicing idolatry). Some even consider the ritual to have an influence from Shi'ite death ritual.

Until the beginning of the nineteenth century, Islam embraced by the Pariaman society was predominated with Syattariyah sufism order despite the fact that several other ethnic groups had lived there and some of the Muslims were of different ethnicity (Cipai/Keling). The Sipahi group was the main supporter for Tabuik performance. From 1826 to the beginning of 1909, the Tabuik was performed with parading only one tabuik. The appearance of tabuik at that time was a square coffin with a pillar and was decorated with various paper and embellishment. The structure of Tabuik performance according to the ritual is as follows: *maambiak tanah* (taking the soil), *manabang batang pisang* (cutting off the banana trunk), *turun panja*, *maradai* (procession to collect donation), *maatam* (grieving procession or lamentation), *maarak jari-jari* (procession to parade the fingers), *maarak saroban* (procession to parade the turban), and eventually parading the tabuik in Muharam 10. The entire ceremony till almost the climax of the ritual should be performed by *rumah tabuik* family (the owner of tabuik). By then, the Shi'ite had a strong influence over Tabuik and it's obvious from their idolation to well-respected Husain and that the performance is about lamentation.



Figure 1: For comparison, an example Tabuik procession at the beginning of the twentieth century in the town of Solok, West Sumatra, Minangkabau culture is not visible element. (Source: Joustra, 1923).

For quite a long time, the people of Pariaman was never fully involved in Tabuik performance. It seems that their involvement started at the beginning of the twentieth century. Pariaman people's cultural background and Islam faith they adhere to are the capital resources to blend in a hybridization process with Tabuik performance. Robert Young (1995) mentioned that in technical terms hybrid is a cross between two different species to produce the third one: hybrid. Despite the fact that initially the term hybridization developed from the idea of interspecies grafting and cross-pollination in botany, from the nineteenth to the end of the twentieth century, hybridity became a major discourse on culture.

Along with the process of hybridization, clash and contradiction occurred in terms of ideology and changes in appearance and content of the Tabuik performance. Pariaman people lives with Basafa ritual which has nothing to do with either Husain's ennobled personality or Shi'ite influence. The practice, value internalization, and purpose of Basafa are entirely different from those of Tabuik. Those people are engaged in an intensive cultural dialogue and seek to adjust and reduce the Shi'ite influence in Tabuik, and then to give elements

common in their own religious practices. Pariaman people are never in excessive idolation to Husain in their religious practices. In their perspective, Husain is regarded only as a Muslim figure and the grandson of Prophet Muhammad deserving their respect. They have never before performed a specific rite to commemorate Husain. This is how Sunni Islam understands their relationship with Husain. They also include several elements of Minangkabau culture. In the Minangkabau society at that time, there's a strong bond between customary tradition (*adat*, the ruling on living a social life and cultural engagement in Minangkabau) and Islam. Principles in Islamic teaching should be followed with regard to *adat*: customary practices that disagree with Islam should be eliminated. Public figures, *adat* leaders, religious leaders and *rumah tabuik* family, under the coordination of *rumah tabuik* (*pasa*) around 1908-1909 facilitated a meeting to alter the appearance and interpretation of *Tabuik* according to Minangkabau attitude: "*Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah*," meaning Custom should be based on (Sunni) Islam and Islam should be based on the Holy Qur'an and Hadith of The Prophet. These elements should be represented in the *tabuik* artifact and its performance. According to Nasrul Syam (in Asril Muchtar, 2016; Asril, 2016), the aforementioned meeting resulted in the following resolution:

- (1) That the culture of performing *Tabuik* should be carried out every Muharram 1 to 10 every year and it should maintain its ritual values as previously done.
- (2) *Tabuik*'s physical appearance should be adjusted and applied according to the custom, customary values, and general values among Pariaman society in particular, and Minangkabau in general.
- (3) *Tabuik* is established as a part of Pariaman's culture, apart from elements of any religion (*Tabuik* stands on its own): the celebration is endorsed by the love of Pariaman people toward the descendants of Prophet Muhammad.

The above agreement was established by elements of Pariaman social institution together with the owner of *tabuik*. Influences from Shi'ite theology are no longer included but elements from Sunni teachings, rituals of Syattariyah sufism order, and Minangkabau culture are incorporated; for instance, *zikir* or *tahlil* prayers are by tradition communally recited three to seven days after somebody's death so the same prayer gathering is also done by the end a *Tabuik* ceremony. People gather to recite *zikir* together within three days in the house of *Tabuik* family/owner. The Prophet Muhammad and his descendants, commonly known as *Ahlul Bait*, are understood as holy men and obedient Muslims; therefore, the *Tabuik* celebration is endorsed only by the love to the Prophet's descendants (Hamka, (1974). Such an attitude is quite different from that of a Shi'ite that commemorating Husain is theological and therefore a primary ritual. *Tabuik* performance is elaborated with elements from Minangkabau culture. Those elements are represented symbolically through different ornaments on the *tabuik* artifacts and stages of the performance. The execution of the performance should involve Minangkabau social institutions as done by the Pariaman society. To realize *Tabuik* according to the society's habit, based both on customary tradition and Sunni Islam teaching, Mak Rambai was entrusted as the designer and maker of *tabuik*. In 1910, Mak Rambai who came from Punggung Lading village could make a *tabuik* as expected and it endures to the present day.



Figure 2: *Tabuik* current shape, after the entry of the Minangkabau culture. (Photograph: Asril Muchtar)

The inclusion of elements of Sunni teaching and Mingkabauan culture in *Tabuik* performance shows that a hybridization process takes place. The process of cultural hybridization is mentioned by Homi K. Bhabha (1994)

in *The Location of Culture*; that as a result of colonization, both the colonialist and the colonized can not represent their own culture and language purely because they depend upon one another and this leads to cultural hybridity. A cultural identity is always on the contradictory and ambivalent region or “the third space” so that the claim over a culture’s hierarchy of purity is no longer relevant. The Sipahi people who brought Tabuik to Pariaman were initially the colonialist ever since they had been a part of the British military. Even though they were subsequently no longer a part of the British military, colonialist elements still remained. The Pariaman people are positioned as the colonized. Tabuik as a culture brought in by the colonialist is no longer pure the way it originally was, due to the incorporation of different elements of Minangkabau culture and Syattariyah mysticism order of Sunni teaching. Theological elements of Shi’ite culture in the form of idolation to Husain were eliminated. The Tabuik performance changed into a new culture which Bhabha identifies as the “third space” or an ambivalent culture.

Tabuik performance was further elaborated by developing the performance into two stages, namely *Tabuik Pasa* (the original Tabuik) which then evolved into *Tabuik Subarang* (the new Tabuik). The name Tabuik Subarang was given due to the fact that its community dwelled across the river Air Pampan which separated Nagari (village) Pasar Pariaman and Nagari V Koto Air Pampan. So, ever since, the word *subarang*, meaning “across the border”, became so important and remained to this day in Tabuik Subarang. The parading of two tabuiks in the ceremony was performed in 1915. With the presence of two tabuiks, the performance sequences were also expanded and included *bacakak* or a fighting scene among the actors (*anak tabuik*) of Tabuik Pasa and Tabuik Subarang. The fighting scene is never quite well arranged; however, the scene always receives much attention from the audience. The fight is a part of a creative development and is the way Pariaman people interpret the war situation in Karbala.

3.3. Shi’ite Sensitivity in Pariaman Society

The majority of Pariaman people in reality don’t seem to fully grasp the idea of Shi’ite and its teaching. However, it’s probable that they have practiced certain Shi’ite rituals in their everyday life without being aware of it. Let’s have a look at *arba’in* or a memorial service held 40 days after somebody’s death. *Arba’in* is a religious ritual and it comes from Shi’ite culture. Among the people of Pariaman, particularly those of Syattariyah sufism order, *arba’in* is included as a part of their ritual. Related to Tabuik, when discussing whether it is a legacy of Shi’ite culture, majority of the people would dispute fiercely and argue that Tabuik is not a part of Shi’ite culture. The Shi’ite subject becomes a very sensitive issue for them. They can even be so furious if Tabuik is regarded as a part of Shi’ite culture and influence despite the fact that Pariaman society has received a cultural “gift” from the Shi’ite culture. However, until today there doesn’t seem to be any overreaction or the intention to cancel the performance. Religious teachers in Minangkabau, and Pariaman in particular, seem to approve the ceremony and regard it as a part of the cultural reality. According to Sjarifoeddin, Shi’ite ideology finds no place in Minangkabau. There are no group there that claims Shi’ite as its ideology.

Azyumardi Azra recognized that Sunni and Shi’ite ideologies in Indonesia don’t seem to be in fierce conflict. A number of Shi’ite religious practices are even adopted by Sunni adherents. The government once banned Shi’ism to develop in Indonesia because it was regarded deviant from the Sunni Islam adhered by the majority of Muslims in Indonesia. However, certain groups of Shi’ite still grow in the country, particularly since the Iran revolution in 1979. Nowadays it’s very difficult to distinguish between Shi’ite and Sunni groups in Indonesia, as stated by Jalaluddin Rakhmat, a Shi’ite intellectual and leader from Bandung, due to the blending of both groups’ teaching. (Zainuddin and Basyir, 2000). Some of the Shi’ite followers are often involved in Sunni religious practices so that they also understand the Sunni teaching.

4. Conclusion

Tabuik performance represents hybridization between Shi’ite Islam, Sunni Islam, and Minangkabau cultures. Elements of Shi’ite culture is the main basis for Tabuik as it is a Shi’ite ritual legacy of the past. The Sunni Muslims and Syattariyah sufism order contribute to the Tabuik performance by correcting, adjusting, and enriching its content and aim. Minangkabau culture is the cementing and determining factor so that the performance is distinctively Pariaman. Elements of the culture are represented through certain symbols in the Tabuik artifact and Minangkabau customary social institutions. Those three elements are the determining shapers of the performance. However, even now sensitivity for the Shi’ite influence and legacy over Tabuik is hardly accepted by the Pariaman people due to the fact that the performance has hugely shifted from its original appearance so that eventually it becomes the distinctive culture of Pariaman. Moreover, the majority of Pariaman people don’t belong to the Shi’ite ideology.

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