



# Nagari Boundary Conflict in West Sumatera: A Case Study of Nagari Sumpur and Bungo Tanjung

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## Abstract

Communal land boundary conflict between Nagari Sumpur and Bungo Tanjung has been occurring for more than 100 years. Certainly, the conflict that occurs at communal land border reaches a crisis point that leads to aggression such as murder, theft of farm products, coercion lease relationship which exacerbates social relationship. The aims of this research are to identify the guidelines of each Nagari regarding communal land ownership in the boundary region. This case study was carried out through the collection of relevant documents and in depth interviews with the Nagari community leaders and selected members of the communities. This research found that the source of conflict was revealed from the differences of guidelines on the demarcation of Nagari boundaries where the Nagari Sumpur adhering to the Dutch topographic map of 1896, while Nagari Bungo Tanjung is guided by traditional historiography, namely *warih dijawek tutur nan ditarimo*. Both of these guidelines overlap indigenous territories and taking portions of each Nagari thus leading to conflict when both sides were fighting for their customary land rights.

*Keywords* : Nagari, boundary, conflict, ulayat land, tradisional historiography.

## 1. Introduction

This research explores about construction of border territory area on 12th-century and it's dynamic until now. On 12th-century border territory is construct base on agreement head of Culture by using natural symbol that has function as identity or *genealogis territorial*. The arrival of Dutch on 12th-century, change half of function area by domain of land. To build up new area and publishing topography map by Dutch. After Indonesia get freedom, the topography map still used as guidance even though many people are pretend the border territory as historiography traditional.

This condition make border of area become two, first base on topography map that make by Dutch and historiography traditional. This is make area also separate into three, first area only use historiography traditional as border communal land and administration border of the area. Second, area use historiography traditional as border of communal land and topography map as administration border of the area. Third, the area is use topography map as guidance border communal land and topography map as administration border of the area. These findings propose a hypothesis that if there are two areas which harmonious there is no conflict will arise. On the other hand, when two area is not harmonious the conflict will arise because of the people will pretend this land as social and economical assets.

Sumpur and Bungo Tanjung are of examples which have the problem. They did not same in history and the differences of understanding in territory. Sumpur is use topography map that was made by Dutch on 1896 and it is believed and suitable to historiography traditional that inherited. While Bungo Tanjung is refuse topography map because is not suitable to the historiography traditional that inherited.

## 2. Result and discussion : the chronology of conflicts

Based on field and literature research (May 2009) about two Nagari that were involved in ulayat land disputes, Nagari Sumpur and Nagari Bungo Tanjung situated on the Tanah Datar area, West Sumatra Province, I discovered that one of the main reasons for the conflict was the different perception parties have on ulayat land ownership and borders as based on the *pepatah: aur baririk, parit nan tararantang*.

This *pepatah* is understood as the border between the ulayah land of the two adjacent Nagari Sumpur and Nagari Bungo Tanjung.<sup>2</sup> *Aur baririk* means spiky bamboo, which

<sup>2</sup> Nagari Sumpur and Nagari Bungo Tanjung are part of two different districts, namely Batipuh and Batipuh Selatan. The people in Nagari Sumpur belong to a different governance system than those of Nagari Bungo Tanjung. Nagari Sumpur originates from the governance system Bodi Caniago while Nagari Bungo Tanjung's governance system is Koto Piliang. Nagari Sumpur is situated on the western shore of Danau Singkarak while Nagari Bungo Tanjung is located in the mountains surrounding Danau Singkarak.

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was purposefully planted by the ancestors to indicate the boundary of authority and ownership of these ulayat lands. This bamboo usually has three shoots so that the line that connects the three shoots is called *aur nan baririk* (bamboo shoots in formation). Planting the bamboo not being enough, both ancestors of the two Nagari also agreed to dig a ditch in the ground in which they dug iron to designate the ulayat border. This agreement was made place around 1800. Since then, the *penghulu* of the two Nagari tried to orally socialize the next *pepatah*: *tutur nan dijawab, waris nan ditarimo* (the spoken word is reciprocated, the inheritance is received in acceptance).

When the Dutch colonizers arrived in Indonesia, they issued an occupation map of the area in the interests of Dutch rule on which the Nagari borders were indicated<sup>1</sup>. According to Kerapatan Adat Nagari (KAN) Sumpur, witnessed by the assistance resident of Luhak Batipoeuh X Koto on 20 October 20<sup>h</sup>, 1896, the two Nagari (Nagari Sumpur and Nagari Bungo) agreed with the map the Dutch produced, based on “*aur baririk parit nan tarantang*”. Sumpur is convinced that this is the first written proof and therefore forms the ground for the validity of the ulayat land borders between the two Nagari.

Since 1954, the border area has started to develop when people from Bungo Tanjung (Jorong Kapuh) began to settle there and started to use the land for cultivation. Because the population in Bungo Tanjung was denser than that in Sumpur, Sumpur claims that around ten hectare of its ulayat land was rented by farmers from Kapuh which was part of the Bungo Tanjung area<sup>2</sup>. In 1954, Sumpur produced nine rent agreements from nine farmers who used Nagari Sumpur ulayat land. This situation continued over the following years, 1956, 1967, 1987 (renting agreement), 1988, and lastly 1989. There are as many as 13 letters that constitute the second written proof that the land is owned by the adat people from Nagari Sumpur. As stipulated in these written documents, the people who were originally from Jorong Kapuh always paid rent which amounted to ten percent of the total crops which became a source of income for Nagari Sumpur.

After Indonesian Independence on 8 February 1955, Sumpur restated the border separating the ulayat of the two Nagari by a letter from the local government of Tanah Datar or the Temporary Dictum of the Regent/Head of the Tanah Datar Regency number 1 /1955 dated 3 September 1955 concerning the Agreement on the ulayat lands borders between the two Nagari. For Sumpur, this is the third written proof reinforcing the argument that the land being

rented by Jorong Kapuh is truly Nagari Sumpur ulayat property.<sup>3</sup>

In 1989, a group of Kapuh farmers discontinued to pay the rent to Nagari Sumpur. They took this action on the suggestion of the Chairman of the KAN of Bungo Tanjung and of various Datuk. The reason was that the first written proof, the Dutch occupation map was not based on the *pepatah aur baririk parit nan tarantang*. On the map, all the borders between the Nagaris are indicated by straight lines whereas the borders of the ulayat lands follow the curving contours of the hilly land because. It means that the Dutch map cannot possibly be based on *aur baririk parit nan tarantang*. Bungo Tanjung has its own sketch of the map that shows that the land the Kapuh farmers use is actually their own ulayat land. The sketch (which is undated and anonymous) owned by Bungo Tanjung clearly indicates the location of the *aur baririk* their ancestors planted to indicate the border between the ulayat lands. The controversy about the location of the *aur baririk* versus the Dutch map became the origin of the prolonged conflict between the two Nagari.

Bungo Tanjung does not accept the validity of the 13 rental agreements signed by the farmers from Kapuh and Kerapatan Adat Nagari (KAN) based on the argument that they were made under duress (witnesses were still alive) and even their authenticity was questioned since they are not the originals. Below follow excerpts from an interview I had with an interviewee from Bungo Tanjung:

“The rental agreements are invalid because they were made under duress and the *ninik mamak* had not notified the *penghulu kaum*. The land over which money has been paid to Sumpur is Bungo Tanjung’s own ulayat land. From way back, the land was in possession of seven *penghulu* from Nagari Bungo Tanjung. The natural borders that attest that this is Nagari Bungo Tanjung property is the *aur nan baririk, parit nan tarantang*. Up to now, the spiky bamboo is still there and also there are still remains of the ditch that was dug by the earliest *penghulu*. However, some farmers were pressurized and forced to sign the rental agreements.”<sup>4</sup>

The informant related some incidents telling of Kapuh farmers fear each time the Kerapatan Adat Nagari Sumpur came to collect the rent. There were repeated violent incidents such as the murder of a Kapuh farmer in 1922. It was only in 1989 that the farmers dared to follow the suggestion of the Jorong Kapuh representative no longer to pay the rent to Sumpur.

<sup>1</sup> Map 28-29-30-34 and 94, of a Dutch East Indies topographical map made between 1886 and 1896.

<sup>2</sup> The mere fact that Kapuh farmers entered the Sumpur area caused controversies. Sumpur said that the ancestors of the Kapuh farmers were leprosy exiles banned to places high up in the hills and that they ultimately rented Nagari Sumpur land. The Kapuh people deny this and say that their ancestors ordered them to use the ulayat land of their own Nagari, namely Bungo Tanjung.

<sup>3</sup> Photocopies of the map, the nine rent agreements, the letter from Tanah Datar local residence number 1 /1955 dated as 3 September have been analysed for this research and are on file with the author.

<sup>4</sup> Because the conflict is still ongoing, I purposefully hide the identity of my interviewees from both Nagari. The interviews were conducted with these people from Bungo Tanjung on 18 May 2009 at their residence at 14.00 hours.

In order to invalidate Sumpur's written proof, Bungo Tanjung adat figures collected various written statements from other neighbourhood Nagaris, such as Nagari Padang Laweh and Desa Pincuran Tujuh. They stated that Nagari Padang Laweh is the border to the south of Bungo Tanjung, Desa Pincuran in the west, Sumpur in the east and on the north the ulayat land of kaum Bungo Tanjung. The most authoritative statement on this matter came from Desa Pincuran Tujuh. It said that the ulayat land of kaum Jambak borders on Jorong Kapuh, and not on Nagari Sumpur. This statement nullifies Sumpur's authority over the 10 ha. of land occupied by Jorong Kapuh.

### 3. Finding

Focus of the writer in Sumpur and Bungo Tanjung case prove that interventional of Dutch that having communal land and make guidance about border territory make conflict happen around people. This conflict caused by disturbing of function in border territory that includes defense, economic, identity, and constitution. Map was made by Dutch has separate people with its function, so it is give negative impact toward system around people. When this situation is continue, conflict will happen. The people will do violence usually because of the function of border besides *religio magis kosmis* the people toward their territory.

Everyone has different ways to prove their needs. Sumpur's people are more logically while Bungo Tanjung's are traditional in the ways of thinking. Powerful territory is depending on historiography traditional because it is supported by two borders other territories. These territory are named by group of area that having knowledge and custom about their territory in verbal from generation to generation. The area which use map made by Dutch as logically is think as second area. While the areas based on rational and Dutch map, it is prove that they are obey Dutch. Base on that reason, no doubt usually they are underestimated by traditional area.

Sumpur is use topography map since 1896 seems that doubt to clear the conflict by using law constitution because this way is not popular to make the conflict over. Base on culture of Minangkabau is use to over a conflict by discussion or in wise word of Minangkabau "alua jo patuik". The other hand, Bungo tanjung is used to over the conflict by using history as words "*kusuik banang cari ujuang jo pangkanyo*". This is make the conflict is difficult to solve even government as mediator comes to each meetings if areas have meetings.

Contribution this research in development of cultural sociology science is border territory area in Minangkabau. Cultural law regulation is so strong because there are five functions of border; they are as ethnic identity, groups and area bound in genealogic, economic source and *religio magis cosmic*. These functions are use as guidance and the people still hold on it is so the interventions above are not gives much contribution. This research finding a formulation relate to border culture studies that is a bound of genealogic territory around people that make them

maintain they need in border area. Stronger bound make them strong too to maintain, on the other hand weakness of the bound also make them weak to maintain

Actually this research agreed the opinions to arrangement of conflict around people only can be solved by understanding of the people. Arrangement without cultural values will make solving problem process runs slowly. Opinions are suggested by [3, 10, 6, 2, 13, 7]. This research is also agree to opinion of [8] that area interventions from foreign party toward function and symbol of border can cause a conflict.

Other important aspects are motivation that is based on conflict attitude around people. [14] has areas three natural things of people needs they are wealth, power, and values. This also caused by the money rent of land and social relationship, they are natural needs of human. This also relates to [4] the reason antagonism interaction happen because to fill in needs and avoid disappointment.

Practically this research gives contribution to the people who have conflict in Sumpur and Bungo Tanjung. Two areas will get some knowledge, opinions, and feelings from others. It is hope will make them understand each other and forget about their conflict. Then for government as consideration in formulate new rules concern in border.

### 4. Recommendation

The writer recommends three important points. First local rules about basic of local government should add some rules in relation to guidance of border territory in a area when the conflict is arise. Base on Minangkabau words "*kusuik banang, cari ujuang jo pangkanyo*". This means area neighborhood should see their historical aspect of border. By knowing this aspect, they will know who decide the border, symbol that to be used the position and the border itself.

Second, historical aspect important because this is did by four borders in a area they are west, east, north, and south. These areas need to ask the expert in historical aspect in order to comprehend social, political, economical aspect of the area. Seeing border without expert and neighborhoods will make the problem will arise. History can area that border base on topography map, historiography traditional, or both. The result should be in written form and agreed by government and others.

Third, to resolve conflict three members of should include they are people who expert in their field like in Minangkabau called alim ulama, cadiak pandai, and bundo kanduang. Consideration of cadiak pandai and alim ulama still needed even though they are not include directly to communal land. Their opinion is needed in order the peaceful environment among neighborhoods. Minangkabau custom bequeath peaceful value that written in philosophy like togetherness, good things, balance and discussion base on *alua jo patuik*. The conflict can be avoid by remembering the obligation of good relationship with others area and avoid to take others things like in Quran (Al Baqarah 188) and some hadist by our prophet.

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