

Talempong Agung: Representation of Aesthetic Symbols and Power in the Batagak Pangulu Ceremony at Sariak Village Agam District

Annita Wahyuni¹, Andar Indra Sastra²
^{1,2}Indonesian Arts Institute of Padang Panjang, Indonesia



DOI : <https://doi.org/10.61796/ejlhss.v1i11.1079>



Sections Info

Article history:

Submitted: November 26, 2024
Final Revised: November 26, 2024
Accepted: November 28, 2024
Published: November 28, 2024

Keywords:

Talempong aguang
Aesthetic and power symbol
Batagak pangulu ceremony

ABSTRACT

Objective: This study aims to examine the role of Talempong Agung in the Batagak Pangulu Ceremony in Nagari Sariak, Agam Regency, focusing on its function as an aesthetic symbol and its representation of power within the social structure of the community. **Method:** A qualitative approach was employed, utilizing field research to gather data. Primary data sources involved three main groups: Penghulu (Niniek Mamak), Talempong players, and the community. **Results:** The findings reveal that Talempong Agung serves as an aesthetic symbol representing harmony, beauty, and societal prosperity in the Batagak Pangulu ceremony. Additionally, it functions as a symbol of power, reflecting authority and hierarchical positions in the community's social structure. The instrument also significantly influences the community's understanding of social and cultural structures, reinforcing awareness of social hierarchies and cultural values embedded within traditional ceremonies. **Novelty:** This study highlights the dual role of Talempong Agung as both an aesthetic and power symbol, emphasizing its critical impact on shaping social and cultural awareness in Nagari Sariak's traditional ceremonies.

INTRODUCTION

The Batagak Pangulu ceremony in Nagari Sariak, Agam Regency, is a tradition rich in aesthetic and power symbolism, reflecting the cultural and social values of the Minangkabau people. In this context, Batagak Pangulu not only functions as a ceremonial inauguration of a leader, but also as a medium to express the cultural identity and social strength of the community. This ceremony involves various elements, including art, rituals, and symbols that have deep meaning for the community.

First of all, it is important to understand that Batagak Pangulu is a procession that has several important stages, namely planning, preparation, and implementation. Each stage contains deep meaning and serves to strengthen the social and cultural structure of the community. According to Fauzi and Kumalasari, this ceremony is not only a formal event, but also a way to pass on cultural values to the next generation [1]. This is in line with research conducted by Wulandari and Nelisa, which shows that this ceremony contains customary knowledge that is important for the local community [2].

In the context of aesthetics, artistic elements play a very important role in Batagak Pangulu. The Alang Sunti Pangulu dance, for example, is a form of artistic expression that depicts moral lessons and leadership values that a Pangulu must have [3]. In addition, the use of traditional musical instruments such as talempong is also an integral part of this ceremony, where the talempong pacik functions to add to the atmosphere and

provide a distinctive feel to the procession [4]. Through art, people can express their gratitude, hopes and aspirations towards the newly inaugurated leader.

The symbolism in Batagak Pangulu is also very strong. The clothes worn by Pangulu, for example, not only serve as a marker of social status, but also reflect a rich cultural identity. Anwar et al. explain that Pangulu clothing consists of various elements that have their own meanings, such as sash, keris, and sarung, which all symbolize power and honor [5]. In this case, clothing becomes a visual symbol of the power and legitimacy of a leader in society.

Furthermore, this ceremony also serves as a means to strengthen social cohesion among members of society. Through participation in Batagak Pangulu, the community not only celebrates the inauguration of a new leader, but also strengthens relationships between community members. Mita et al. emphasized that the social function of this ceremony is to maintain and foster the social structure of society, as well as strengthen the bonds of brotherhood among them [6]. Thus, Batagak Pangulu serves as a bridge connecting individuals with their communities and traditions.

In addition, Batagak Pangulu also reflects important educational values in society. Sandora points out that this tradition contains educational values about leadership, cooperation, and manners, all of which are very relevant in the context of people's daily lives [7]. Thus, this ceremony not only functions as a ritual, but also as a tool to educate and shape the character of the community.

In a broader context, Batagak Pangulu can also be seen as a reflection of the dynamics of power in Minangkabau society. The Pangulu inauguration process reflects how power and legitimacy are built and maintained in a rich cultural context. Research by Azhari and Asriati shows that the meaning of each element in this ceremony is closely related to how society views leadership and responsibility [3]. In this case, Batagak Pangulu is not just a ceremony, but also an arena where the values of power and leadership are tested and affirmed.

Overall, Batagak Pangulu in Nagari Sariak is a complex representation of aesthetic symbols and power. This ceremony combines various elements of culture, art, and social values that are interrelated, creating an experience rich in meaning for the community. Through Batagak Pangulu, the community not only celebrates a new leader, but also strengthens their cultural identity and passes on important values to future generations. Thus, this ceremony serves as a reflection of the strength and beauty of Minangkabau culture that continues to live and thrive.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach that aims to understand the phenomenon in depth from the perspective of the participants involved, with a focus on the Batagak Pangulu ceremony in Nagari Sariak, Agam Regency. A qualitative approach was chosen because this study focuses on exploring the symbolic meaning, culture, and social relations in the use of Talempong Agung as a symbol of aesthetics and power. This

research is a field research, which means that the data is obtained directly from relevant sources at the research location, namely in Nagari Sariak, Agam Regency.

The main data sources in this study involve three main groups, namely: 1) Penghulu (Niniek Mamak): As a community figure who has in-depth knowledge of customs and traditions, penghulu or niniek mamak have an important role in the implementation of the Batagak Pangulu ceremony. 2) Talempong Players: Individuals who play Talempong Agung in the Batagak Pangulu ceremony will provide insight into the musicality and symbolism of talempong in the event. 3) Community: As part of the social subjects involved or witnessing the ceremony, the Nagari Sariak community will provide perspectives on how they interpret Talempong Agung in the context of their daily lives, as well as how this traditional ceremony shapes and strengthens their social and cultural structures.

Data collection techniques are carried out in several ways as follows: 1. In-Depth Interview: Interview techniques are used to dig up in-depth information from the penghulu, talempong players, and the community. 2) Participant Observation: Researchers will be directly involved in observing the Batagak Pangulu ceremony to observe the use of Talempong Agung and the social interactions that occur in it. 3) Documentation: Researchers will also collect documentation related to the Batagak Pangulu ceremony, such as photos, videos, and audio recordings that record the use of Talempong Agung in the ceremony. The validity of the data in this study was tested using several techniques to ensure the validity and reliability of the research results: 1) Source Triangulation. 2) Method Triangulation. 3) Member Checking. 4) Audit Trail.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. The Form of Aesthetic Symbol Representation in Talempong Agung at the Batagak Pangulu Ceremony in Nagari Sariak, Agam Regency

Talempong Agung in the Batagak Pangulu Ceremony in Nagari Sariak functions not only as a traditional musical instrument, but also as an aesthetic symbol rich in cultural meaning. As an integral part of traditional ceremonies, Talempong Agung represents the harmony between humans, nature, and ancestral spirits in Minangkabau society.

Aesthetically, Talempong Agung produces a melodious sound, which is considered to create a sacred and harmonious atmosphere in the ceremony. The use of Talempong Agung in various stages of the ceremony, such as in the ritual of welcoming a new penghulu, depicts the unity and beauty of Minangkabau culture. The sound produced by the talempong is also considered capable of arousing feelings and creating calm and togetherness among the participants of the ceremony. Therefore, in this context, Talempong Agung is more than just a musical instrument; it is a medium for expressing the values of art, togetherness, and the diversity of Minangkabau culture.

In addition, the physical form of Talempong Agung, which is made of metal and has a distinctive design, also reflects the high artistic skills of the indigenous community.

Each talempong used in ceremonies has distinctive carvings or motifs, depicting local aesthetics that have been passed down from generation to generation. The design and sound produced by Talempong Agung show that this aesthetic symbol is part of a cultural identity that is highly valued by the people of Nagari Sariak.

Talempong Agung, as one of the traditional musical instruments of Minangkabau, has a deep aesthetic symbolic representation in the context of the Batagak Pangulu ceremony in Nagari Sariak, Agam Regency. This ceremony is an important ritual that marks the installation of a traditional leader and involves various cultural elements, including talempong music. In this context, talempong not only functions as a musical instrument, but also as a symbol of cultural and aesthetic identity of the Minangkabau people.

First, the Agung talempong plays an important role in creating a sacred and festive atmosphere during the ceremony. The melody and rhythm produced by the talempong create a profound aesthetic experience for the participants in the ceremony. Research shows that the notation system used to transcribe talempong melodies contains symbols that represent the cultural and aesthetic values of the community [8]. Through this notation, talempong players can convey the messages and meanings contained in each song played, thus strengthening the relationship between music and the socio-cultural context.

Second, Agung's talempong also reflects broader aesthetic values in society. In a study conducted by Yusman and Indrayuda, it was explained that the talempong pacik art, which has similarities with talempong Agung, functions as an important means of cultural inheritance [9]. This shows that this musical instrument not only functions in the context of entertainment, but also as a medium for transmitting values and traditions from generation to generation. In the Batagak Pangulu ceremony, the Agung talempong becomes a symbol of the strength and pride of the community, which is expressed through the beauty of the music produced.

Furthermore, the aesthetics of the Agung talempong can also be seen in terms of its design and physical form. These aesthetic elements contribute to the visual and auditory experience during the ceremony. Research on aesthetics in design shows that harmonious visual elements can enhance the overall experience [10]. In the context of talempong, the shape and color of this musical instrument create a visual appeal that reinforces its symbolic meaning in ceremonies. This is in line with the view that aesthetics is not only limited to visual aspects, but also includes emotional experiences generated through interaction with art [11].

Finally, the Agung talempong in the Batagak Pangulu ceremony also functions as a symbol of collectivity and community identity. Through participation in talempong games, community members demonstrate solidarity and togetherness, which are core values in Minangkabau culture. Research on aesthetics in a social context shows that art can function as a medium for building social relationships and collective identity [12]. In

this case, the Agung talempong is not only a musical instrument, but also a symbol of a community united in shared traditions and values.

Overall, the Agung talempong in the Batagak Pangulu ceremony in Nagari Sariak, Agam Regency is a rich representation of aesthetic symbols. Through its melody, form, and social function, talempong not only contributes to aesthetic experience, but also strengthens cultural identity and community values. Further research into the relationship between music and cultural context may provide deeper insights into the role of talempong in Minangkabau society.

B. The Relationship Between Aesthetic Symbols and Power in the Use of Talempong Agung in the Batagak Pangulu Ceremony in Nagari Sariak, Agam Regency

Talempong Agung in the Batagak Pangulu Ceremony in Nagari Sariak not only functions as an aesthetic symbol, but also has a close connection with the symbol of power in the Minangkabau traditional community. In this ceremony, Talempong Agung is used to mark important moments related to the transfer or confirmation of the power of the penghulu or traditional leader.

Symbolically, the use of Talempong Agung in the Batagak Pangulu ceremony illustrates that the power held by a penghulu or traditional leader cannot be separated from the social and cultural harmony created through art and aesthetics. Talempong Agung becomes a tool that connects power with the noble values of society. When Talempong Agung is struck, the sound it produces is not only a sign of the beginning of the ceremony, but also a form of affirmation of the authority of the new penghulu. Thus, the aesthetic symbol represented by Talempong Agung has a dual function: as a tool of artistic expression as well as a marker of status and authority in the traditional social structure.

Talempong Agung also shows the hierarchical relationship in the Nagari Sariak society. The position and way of playing talempong by traditional leaders or community figures reflects their level of power and status. Thus, the use of Talempong Agung in this ceremony strengthens the relationship between aesthetic symbols and power in Minangkabau culture, where art and power cannot be separated in the process of legitimizing and strengthening social structures.

In the context of the Batagak Pangulu ceremony in Nagari Sariak, Agam Regency, the use of talempong aguang as an aesthetic symbol has a close relationship with power and social legitimacy. Talempong aguang, as a traditional musical instrument, not only functions as musical accompaniment, but also as a symbol of status and power in the social structure of Minangkabau society. In this study, it is important to understand how these symbols operate within the broader context of power.

Power in a cultural context is often understood as a social relation that is built through symbolic interaction. Rostiyati explains that power operates in a system of signs or symbols, where these symbols can create hegemony in society [13]. In the Batagak Pangulu ceremony, the talempong aguang functions as a symbol that signifies the status

and legitimacy of the traditional leader, creating a sense of respect and recognition from the community. This is in line with the thoughts of Nuralia and Imadudin who state that symbols of power can be depicted in certain symbols that reflect the cultural values of society [14].

Furthermore, the use of talempong agung in this ceremony also reflects the aesthetic values related to the cultural identity of the Minangkabau people. Each element in the ceremony, including the talempong, has a deep meaning and functions as a medium of communication between the community and the authorities. Malik emphasized that traditional ceremonies are an important means of communication in conveying social and cultural messages, although the focus of his research is on Sundanese traditional wedding ceremonies [15]. In this case, talempong agung is not only a musical instrument, but also a representation of the power and traditions held by traditional leaders.

In a broader context, Afdhal notes that there is adaptation and reinterpretation of customs to accommodate contemporary demands, while maintaining fundamental traditional values [16]. This shows that despite changes in practice, symbols such as the talempong agung remain relevant in asserting the power and cultural identity of the community. Thus, talempong agung not only functions as an aesthetic symbol, but also as a tool to strengthen the power structure in society.

Overall, the relationship between aesthetic symbols and power in the use of talempong agung in the Batagak Pangulu ceremony in Nagari Sariak can be understood as a complex interaction between tradition, identity, and social relations. These symbols serve to assert power and legitimacy within a rich cultural context, where each element has deep meaning and contributes to the maintenance of the cultural values of the community.

C. The Influence of Talempong Agung on Community Understanding of Social and Cultural Structures in Traditional Ceremonies in Nagari Sariak, Agam Regency

Talempong Agung not only plays a role in the aesthetic and power aspects of the Batagak Pangulu ceremony, but also has a significant influence on the community's understanding of the social and cultural structure in Nagari Sariak. In this context, Talempong Agung functions as a link between the older and younger generations, as well as a medium for maintaining and passing on Minangkabau cultural values.

The Nagari Sariak community views Talempong Agung as an important symbol that depicts the depth and richness of their culture. Through the use of Talempong Agung in traditional ceremonies, people are taught to appreciate traditions, arts, and social structures that have existed for a long time. The Batagak Pangulu ceremony, which is colored by the sound of talempong, provides an understanding to the community that the penghulu or traditional leader is not only a figure who leads, but also a guardian and preserver of cultural values.

For the younger generation, Talempong Agung is a means of learning about the importance of appreciating cultural heritage and their role in preserving it. Through understanding how talempong is played in ceremonies, the younger generation can understand the essence of the Minangkabau social structure, where the penghulu or traditional leader has an important role in maintaining harmony and balance in society. In this case, Talempong Agung is not only a musical instrument, but also a means of transmitting social and cultural values that are educational and symbolic.

In addition, the use of Talempong Agung in this ceremony teaches the community about the importance of symbolism in building and maintaining cultural identity. Through the sounds produced by Talempong Agung, the Sariak community can feel the continuity of tradition, which strengthens their understanding of the importance of preserving culture in facing the challenges of the times.

Talempong Agung, a traditional musical instrument from West Sumatra, plays a significant role in shaping the understanding of social structure and cultural practices within the community of Nagari Sariak, Agam Regency. This instrument is not merely a tool for entertainment; it serves as a vital medium for conveying cultural narratives and reinforcing social bonds during traditional ceremonies. The influence of Talempong Agung is evident in various aspects of community life, particularly during customary ceremonies, where music and ritual intertwine to create a cohesive social fabric.

The role of music in cultural ceremonies is well-documented, as it facilitates communication and expression of communal values. The ceremonial use of music fosters a sense of identity and belonging among participants, reinforcing social hierarchies and collective memory [17]. In the context of Nagari Sariak, Talempong Agung is integral to ceremonies that mark significant life events, thereby enhancing the community's understanding of its social structure and cultural heritage.

Moreover, the cultural significance of Talempong Agung extends beyond mere performance; it embodies the values and beliefs of the community. The music associated with Talempong Agung often conveys messages of respect, gratitude, and communal solidarity, which are essential for maintaining social cohesion. This aligns with findings from other cultural contexts, where music serves as a vehicle for moral and ethical teachings, promoting wise behavior and social responsibility (Lebaka, 2019). The integration of Talempong Agung into community rituals thus not only preserves cultural traditions but also educates community members about their roles within the social hierarchy.

Furthermore, the impact of Talempong Agung on community understanding can be linked to broader themes of cultural identity and continuity. As communities engage with their musical traditions, they reinforce their cultural identity, which is crucial in the face of globalization and cultural homogenization [18]. The preservation and promotion of Talempong Agung within Nagari Sariak serves as a counter-narrative to external influences, allowing the community to assert its unique cultural identity while fostering

intergenerational transmission of knowledge [19]. This dynamic is essential for the community's resilience and adaptability in a rapidly changing world.

In conclusion, Talempong Agung significantly influences the understanding of social structure and cultural practices in Nagari Sariak, Agam Regency. Through its role in traditional ceremonies, it reinforces communal values, educates members about their social roles, and contributes to the preservation of cultural identity. The interplay between music and social structure highlights the importance of traditional practices in fostering community cohesion and continuity.

CONCLUSION

Fundamental Finding : The Talempong Agung in the Batagak Pangulu ceremony serves as both a traditional musical instrument and a symbol of aesthetics and power. Its aesthetic qualities enrich the ceremonial experience, connecting the community to their cultural heritage through sound and shape. Beyond its artistic role, the talempong reflects social status and the authority of a Pangulu, embedding itself into the Minangkabau social structure. **Implication :** This dual role emphasizes the need for preserving such traditions, as they strengthen community understanding of cultural values and social hierarchies. **Limitation :** However, the study is limited to Nagari Sariak, suggesting that the interpretation of talempong may vary across different regions. **Future Research :** Future investigations could explore how talempong's symbolism and role evolve in contemporary ceremonies, ensuring its relevance across generations.

REFERENCES

- [1] R. Fauzi and D. Kumalasari, "Education of National Characters Based on Local Cultural Values in History Learning Through Traditional Philosophy of Minangkabau," in *ICoSSCE 2019*, 2020, pp. 55–61. doi: 10.2991/assehr.k.200130.012.
- [2] W. Wulandari and M. Nelisa, "Kemas Ulang Informasi Indigenous Knowledge tentang Batagak Penghulu di Nagari Lubuk Pandan Kabupaten Padang Pariaman," *Ilmu Inf. Perpust. dan Kearsipan*, vol. 8, no. 1, p. 543, 2019, doi: 10.24036/107486-0934.
- [3] R. Fadri Azhari and A. Asriati, "Makna Tari Alang Suntiang Pangulu Dalam Upacara Batagak Pangulu Di Nagari Padang Laweh Kecamatan Sungai Pua Kabupaten Agam," *J. Sendratasik*, vol. 9, no. 2, p. 25, 2020, doi: 10.24036/jsu.v9i1.109509.
- [4] G. L. Putra, Yurnalis, and Syafniati, "Fungsi Talempong Pacik Dalam Upacara Perkawinan Dan Batagak," *J. Musik Etn. Nusantara*, vol. 3, no. 2, pp. 165–178, 2023.
- [5] R. Anwar, andra indra Sastra, and E. Zebua, "KOTA PADANGPANJANG PROVINSI SUMATERA BARAT Abstrak," *Pakaian Penghulu Di Nagari Gunuang*, vol. 08, no. 02, pp. 332–336, 2019.
- [6] M. Mita, E. Fitriani, and M. H. Hasmira, "Manyanda: Studi Struktural Fungsional Manyanda Di Nagari Talang," *Univ. Negeri Padang*, vol. 2, no. 3, pp. 206–214, 2019.
- [7] L. Sandora, "Nilai-Nilai Pendidikan Dalam Tradisi Batagak Pangulu Di Kabupaten Lima Puluh Kota," *Khazanah*, vol. 11, no. 1, pp. 17–24, 2021, doi: 10.15548/khazanah.v11i1.519.
- [8] A. MK, "Pembelajaran Musik Talempong Unggan Berbasis Literatur," *Ekspresi Seni*, vol. 13,

- no. 1, 2011, doi: <https://doi.org/10.26887/ekse.v13i1.189>.
- [9] A. F. Yusman and Indrayuda, "Talempong Pacik Dalam Kehidupan Masyarakat Nagari Bungo Tanjung: Studi Tentang Pola Dan Bentuk Pewarisan," *Gorga J. Seni Rupa*, vol. 8, no. 2, p. 409, 2019, doi: 10.24114/gr.v8i2.15732.
- [10] K. N. D. Putri, I. W. B. Ika, and I. M. J. Waisnawa, "Eksplorasi Estetika, Fungsi, Dan Warna Pada Kursi Dengan Konsep Merak," *J. Vastukara J. Desain Inter. Budaya, dan Lingkungan. Terbangun*, vol. 2, no. 2, pp. 212–222, 2022, doi: 10.59997/vastukara.v2i2.1755.
- [11] G. A. N. Wulanda, "Penerapan Teori Bentuk Estetik Dewitt H. Parker Sebagai Paradigma dalam Ranah Apresiasi Musik," *Grenek Music J.*, vol. 12, no. 1, p. 65, 2023, doi: 10.24114/grenek.v12i1.45313.
- [12] S. Salayanti and Sarwanto, "Esensi dan Eksistensi Ruang Pertunjukan Ritual Benjang Dengan Konsep Rasa Sahrdaya," *J. Rupa*, vol. 6, no. 2, p. 73, 2021, doi: 10.25124/rupa.v6i2.3797.
- [13] A. Rostiyati, "Wacana Kekuasaan Dalam Upacara Siraman Dan Ngalungsur Geni Di Desa Dangieng Garut," *Patanjala J. Hist. Cult. Res.*, vol. 12, no. 2, p. 277, 2020, doi: 10.30959/patanjala.v12i2.645.
- [14] L. Nuralia and I. Imadudin, "Simbol Kuasa Dan Nilai Budaya Masyarakat Perkebunan Sedep Di Kabupaten Bandung," *Patanjala J. Hist. Cult. Res.*, vol. 12, no. 2, p. 177, 2020, doi: 10.30959/patanjala.v12i2.641.
- [15] A. A. Malik, E. N. Hopipah, A. Gunawan, and A. H. M. Sidik, "Pesan Komunikasi Dalam Upacara Adat Pernikahan Sunda (Studi Etnografi Desa Rancakalong Kecamatan Rancakalong Kabupaten Sumedang) Asep Abdul Malik , Eva Nur Hopipah , Aji Gunawan , Asep Hilmi Muhamad Sidik Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) Sunan Gunung Dj," *JSIM J. Ilmu Sos. dan Pendidik.*, vol. 4, no. 4, pp. 387–406, 2023.
- [16] Afdhal, "an Examination of Traditional Customs in Minangkabau Leadership Tradition: Continuity and Changes in the Modern Era," *Publicus J. Adm. Publik*, vol. 1, no. 2, pp. 119–134, 2023, doi: 10.30598/publicusvol1iss2p119-134.
- [17] I. Prayoga and M. Situmorang, "Communication Activities at the Mangongkal Holi Ceremony," in *Proceeding of International Conference on Business, Economics, Social Sciences, and Humanities*, 2023, pp. 434–437. doi: 10.34010/icobest.v1i.70.
- [18] M. K, "The Role of Musical Instruments in the Globalization of Musi," *Comunicar*, vol. 17, no. 34, pp. 83–89, 2010, doi: <https://doi.org/10.3916/c34-2010-02-08>.
- [19] R. Borunda and A. Murray, "The Wisdom of and Science behind Indigenous Cultural Practices," *Genealogy*, vol. 3, no. 1, p. 6, 2019, doi: 10.3390/genealogy3010006.

***Annita Wahyuni (Corresponding Author)**

Indonesian Arts Institute of Padang Panjang, Indonesia

Email: annitawahyuni06@gmail.com

Andar Indra Sastra

Indonesian Arts Institute of Padang Panjang, Indonesia

Email: andarstipp@gmail.com
