

## Overseas Media and the Rebuilding of West Sumatra: A Preliminary Study of Aneka Minang 1972-1973

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### Abstrak

Peran dan eksistensi media massa, terutama jenis media massa cetak, dalam proses dan upaya memulihkan dan membangun kembali daerah Sumatera Barat pada masa awal Orde Baru sangat penting. Media massa-media massa dimaksud tidak hanya yang eksis di Sumatera Barat, tetapi juga yang terbit di daerah perantauan. Di antara media massa yang diterbitkan dan dikelola para diaspora (perantau) asal Minangkabau tersebut adalah majalah Aneka Minang. Majalah bernuansa etnik Minangkabau yang terbit di Jakarta ini tidak hanya beredar di wilayah perantauan, khususnya Pulau Jawa, tetapi juga daerah Sumatera Barat sendiri. Dengan menggunakan metode penelitian sejarah, yakni heuristik (pengumpulan sumber), kritik (ekstern dan intern), interpretasi dan historiografi (penulisan sejarah). Hasil penelitian mengungkapkan peran signifikan majalah Aneka Minang sebagai media massa orang Minangkabau yang diterbitkan di wilayah rantau dalam membantu program pemulihan dan pembangunan kembali Sumatera Barat pasca terpuruk akibat pergolakan politik Pemerintahan Revolusioner Republik Indonesia (PRRI) dan transisi bergejolak antara masa rezim Orde Lama (Demokrasi Terpimpin) ke Orde Baru di wilayah itu.

**Kata kunci:** media, aneka minang, pembangunan kembali, sumatera barat.

### Abstract

*The role and existence of the mass media, especially the print media, in the process and efforts to restore and rebuild the West Sumatra region in the early days of the New Order was very important. The mass media in question are not only those that exist in West Sumatra, but also those published in overseas areas. Among the mass media published and managed by the diaspora (migrants) from Minangkabau is Aneka Minang magazine. This ethnic Minangkabau magazine published in Jakarta is not only circulated in overseas areas, especially Java, but also in West Sumatra itself. By using historical research methods, namely heuristics (source collection), criticism (external and internal), interpretation and historiography (historical writing). The research results reveal the significant role of Aneka Minang magazine as a mass media of Minangkabau people published in overseas areas in assisting the recovery and rebuilding program of West Sumatra after being devastated by the political upheaval of the Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Indonesia (PRRI) and the turbulent transition between the Old Order (Guided Democracy) regime to the New Order in the region.*

**Keywords:** media, aneka minang, rebuilding, west sumatra.

### INTRODUCTION

West Sumatra faced significant challenges during the early New Order period (Ghoshal, 1979). The region not only had to navigate the multidimensional transition from the Old Order (also known as “Guided Democracy”) to the New Order

but also had to address a myriad of lingering issues from previous eras, such as infrastructure damage, chaotic bureaucracy, and psychological trauma experienced by the local population and civil servants due to political pressure and

various hardships during the pre-New Order period (Zed, 1997).

The aftermath of the G30S (30 September Movement) coup in 1965, which implicated the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) as the “accused” and even the “convicted,” did not immediately resolve the region’s diverse problems. Although the 30 September Movement and the PKI were successfully suppressed by the military, and the supporting forces of the “Old Order” regime were sidelined from the historical stage, the general socio-political conditions in West Sumatra did not change drastically. The dominant group in the region post-G30S were those who had been in power since the suppression of the PRRI (Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Indonesia) Rebellion in the late 1950s and early 1960s, a dark and traumatic episode for the people of West Sumatra and the Minangkabau ethnic group in general (Kahin, 2005).

The situation in the region slightly improved when the civilian ruler at the provincial government level of West Sumatra was a native Minangkabau. The appointment of Harun Al Rasyid Zain, a Minang native born in Jakarta and raised in Surabaya, East Java, during this national political transition period seemed to be a “game-changer” in the course of West Sumatra’s history. Although he initially felt the humanitarian task was very heavy, Harun Zain gradually became

a regional leader capable of and intent on playing the role of mediator or bridge between the local community and the central government, which was dominated by the military, particularly the army. He became the spokesperson for the region, but at the same time, he was also considered the “mouthpiece” of the central government (Israr, 2024).

Various adjustment efforts to the new political style were undertaken by the local elite under the leadership of Harun Zain. These adjustments aimed not only to support the creation of national stability for the recovery of the country’s economy, which had been battered since the Old Order era, but also to facilitate the recovery and reconstruction agenda of West Sumatra itself. The region’s decline was perceived as more severe and multidimensional compared to other regions, primarily due to the involvement of (the majority of) its people in the resistance against the central government at the end of the previous decade (Amal, 1985).

One crucial dimension in the efforts to recover and rebuild West Sumatra during the early New Order era was the support of mass media, both those published in West Sumatra and in the diaspora of the Minangkabau people. The role of media published outside West Sumatra was equally significant compared to those published in the Minangkabau homeland. The managers and readership

of these media were primarily Minangkabau people living outside West Sumatra, especially in Jakarta and its surroundings, which was one of the main concentrations of Minangkabau migrants on the island of Java (Asnan, 2006).

Among the ethnically-themed media was *Aneka Minang*, a magazine published in Jakarta. This biweekly magazine first appeared in January 1972. From its inception, *Aneka Minang* declared its mission to contribute to the development of West Sumatra. Its motto was “Thinking Nationally for Regional Development.” Governor Harun Zain and several other Minang figures appreciated the magazine’s presence and hoped it would continue to enlighten the Minang community as part of efforts to aid regional recovery and development.

## **METHOD**

The method used in this research is the historical method, which consists of four stages: heuristics (source/data collection), criticism, interpretation, and historiography (Syamsuddin, 2007). In searching and extracting sources, the author prioritizes documentary materials as primary sources, which are supported by secondary sources.

The primary materials studied include the *Aneka Minang* magazine collection from 1972 to early 1973. *Aneka Minang* is the focus of this research, as well as contemporary media collections

such as *Semangat*, *Singgalang*, *Aman Makmur*, *Minangkabau*, *Haluan*, and *Varia Minang*. These media were published in Padang (West Sumatra) and Jakarta.

Secondary sources consist of books that discuss West Sumatra in the pre- and early New Order period, including the role of the local press in the dynamics of development in the region. Among the books (secondary materials) are by Zed (Zed, 1997), Pandoe (2001), Kahin (2005), Rais (2019), Sastera (2022).

After the materials were found, source criticism was conducted. Source criticism includes internal and external criticism. External criticism begins with distinguishing valid sources and less valid sources. Internal criticism is done by re-examining existing sources. Interpretation includes not only interpretation but also analysis, in the sense of looking for logical connections between research questions and available data. The final stage is historiography, which is the writing of the overall research results (Sjamsuddin, 2007).

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Local Press in the Early New Order**

After the suppression of the September 30 Movement and the effective rise to power of the New Order actors, the press life in this region began to flourish and become vibrant again. There were genuinely new local presses, but there were also presses that had previously been published. These

media outlets existed by following the political style of the new regime. New media in the form of newspapers included Singgalang and Semangat, while older media that were republished included Aman Makmur and Haluan (Navis, 1987).

The contribution of the local press in helping to elevate the role and prestige of West Sumatra on the national stage was by highlighting the uniqueness of Minangkabau culture, history, and customs. Thus, the mass media helped in the efforts of regional recovery and development, which was the vision of the regional head at that time. These mass media were not only published in West Sumatra but also in the diaspora, especially in Jakarta (Bagindo, 2008).

For instance, Singgalang newspaper was a new paper that began publication in 1968. Its initial motto when it was still a weekly was “Hiburan, Budaya dan Ilmu Pengetahuan” (Entertainment, Culture, and Science) which later changed to “Building Self-Esteem for National Progress” when it became a daily. This media was developed by several local journalists, namely Nasrul Siddik, Salius Sutan Sati, Nazif Basir, and Basril Djabar (Yusra, 2016). These four names were clearly listed at the bottom of the large logo and motto of this newspaper. In its first edition, Singgalang provided an introductory note explaining why they were present in the midst of the West Sumatran community.

The main driving force is our dedication to the world of journalism. This is our field of work, an idealism driven by the passion to actively contribute to the development of this region according to our respective fields, and the awareness that the people of West Sumatra still need reading materials in the form of broader thoughts, information, and opinions (Singgalang, 1968).

Several writers and local figures also contributed articles to this newspaper on cultural, economic, and regional development issues. Among these writers were Anwar Sutan Saidi, Abrar, AA Navis, and Mochtar Naim. The first name mentioned is a nationalist entrepreneur, founder of Bank Nasional, a bank that has existed since the pre-independence era.

Aman Makmur was a media outlet from the Sukarno era that was republished in the early New Order period but only lasted until the end of 1971 due to financial issues. In addition to various local, national, and international news, entertainment, culture, and sports, Aman Makmur also published articles by writers outside its editorial team, including prominent columnists from the capital, such as Rosihan Anwar, Enggak Bahauddin, Muhammad Radjab, and even Mohammad Natsir and Hamka.

Writers from West Sumatra were generally lecturers at Andalas University, and some were members of the technocrat team assisting Governor Harun

Zain, such as Hendra Esmara, Rustian Kamaluddin, Alfian Lains, Syarif Ali, Syahrudin, and Syofyan Asnawi (Hanum, 1991; Israr, 2024).

The re-publication of Haluan in 1970 was not without the recommendation of Pangdam Widodo. This old newspaper, which had ceased publication during the PRRI upheaval, clearly showed its “new” stance, namely supporting the New Order government in the context of West Sumatra’s regional interests. Its motto was “Educating the life of the community for the progress of the nation” (Yusra, 1994).

There is also Semangat (daily newspaper), which was published in Padang starting on February 21, 1972. This newspaper was a metamorphosis of the Angkatan Bersenjata (Padang Edition) newspaper, published by Kodam III/17 August (Regional Military Command) at the beginning of the New Order.

Initially, Semangat was led by Saafroedin Bahar, a Kodam officer and also the Chairman of Golkar West Sumatra (early 1970s). Bahar became its General Leader. At that time, Bahar also served as the Head of Kodam Information (Kapendam). AA Navis served as Deputy General Leader and simultaneously as Editor-in-Chief. The motto of Semangat at that time was “Fostering Faith and Intelligence in the Era of Development” (Sastera, 2022).

### **Aneka Minang Magazine and the (Re) Development of West Sumatra**

Mass media that also contributed to the recovery and development of West Sumatra in the early New Order era included media from Minangkabau people published outside West Sumatra. Despite this, these ethnic media had a national outlook motto (Hamka, 1985).

Minangkabau magazine, for instance, was a print media with serious content. It might be more accurately called a journal, as it appeared once every three months and contained writings in the form of scientific articles. The magazine, published by the Minangkabau Cultural Foundation, had the motto “Cultivating Regional Culture to Develop National Culture.” The articles published here were about Minangkabau culture in a broad sense, as they also discussed economic issues and the development of West Sumatra. Some important names listed in the structure of Minangkabau included Mohammad Hatta as Protector, Harun Zain as Honorary Chairman, Bahder Johan as General Leader, and Amura as Editor-in-Chief. The articles in this magazine were written by several intellectuals from Minangkabau, such as M Nasroen, MD Mansoer, Mochtar Naim, Taufik Abdullah, and several others (Minangkabau, 1973).

Another mass media that frequently highlights the history and culture of the Minangkabau among the Minang diaspora, and which is the focus of this article, is

Aneka Minang. This publication has been in circulation since January 1972 and was later rebranded as *Varia Minang*. The motto of Aneka Minang is “National Thinking for Regional Development.” Upon its initial release, Governor Harun Zain remarked:

“With great pleasure, we welcome the birth of Aneka Minang magazine in the capital, especially because the magazine is intended by its editors to carry the mission of Regional Development, particularly in the field of culture. The presence of Aneka Minang in Indonesian society should broadly introduce the cultural and tourism aspects of West Sumatra. Although Aneka Minang will later prioritize writings about the conditions in West Sumatra specifically, we strongly hope that its leadership and editors will continue to think on the basis of national interests for regional development.” (Aneka Minang, 1972).

It is evident that the mission of Aneka Minang not only prioritizes regional interests but also aligns them with national interests. This is consistent with the mission of the regional government under the leadership of Harun Zain, which serves as a “bridge” between regional and national interests. The magazine, like the mission of the regional head, helps restore the relationship between West Sumatra and the central government and fosters good relations with various ethnic groups across the archipelago.

In its inaugural edition launched in January 1972, Aneka Minang covered many themes related to Minangkabau and West Sumatra. However, this edition featured a cover photo of a painting by Hoerijah Adam, one of the great artists from West Sumatra who passed away on November 10, 1971. This edition also included a historical piece by historian M. Rasjid Manggis on the History of Minangkabau. Subsequently, Aneka Minang also highlighted the emergence of several buildings using “atap bagonjong” architecture in Jakarta, particularly in some Minang restaurants, residential houses, supermarkets, and even nightclubs. The existence of “atap bagonjong” and distinctive Minang carvings in Jakarta can be seen as an expression of the Minang diaspora’s pride in their native culture (Naim, 2003).

In its second edition, February 1972, Aneka Minang featured a main theme or “kapalo jamba” on the role of artists from West Sumatra in popularizing the region. Some of the Minang artists mentioned include Nurseha, Asbon, Elly Kasim, Jus Kinantan, Oslan Husein, Ernie Djohan, the music group Orkes Gumarang, and several others. These artists have helped introduce and even popularize West Sumatra through their vocal contributions and artistic works. Through the voices of these musical artists, Minang songs with their distinctive rhythms and lyrics (according to Aneka Minang) have also

been appreciated by non-Minang communities.

In its third edition, *Aneka Minang* featured the topic of horse racing. By highlighting this theme, *Aneka Minang* seemed to emphasize (not just revisit) that horse racing is a popular traditional sport and entertainment among the Minangkabau people in West Sumatra. Additionally, this edition provided various regional news, particularly regarding development initiatives under the leadership of Governor Harun Zain. Among these were updates on investment developments, including the construction of Pasar Raya in the city of Padang. The investments mentioned were not only from the government but also from the private sector. One notable private investment in West Sumatra was in the field of forest product processing. Interestingly, the private capital involved in forestry did not come from Java but from Medan and Makassar.

In its fourth edition, *Aneka Minang* discussed the theme of the Mentawai Islands, which were said to be untouched by development. The Mentawai Islands are indeed an integral part of West Sumatra with significant potential in economic, social, cultural, and other areas, but so far, they seemed to have been overlooked by regional and national development efforts. This edition also covered other themes, such as the development of transportation facilities from West

Sumatra to neighboring southern regions, including Jambi, South Sumatra, Bengkulu, and Lampung. Several bus companies served the mobility of people, goods, and services from West Sumatra to the southern regions of Sumatra, such as ANS, APD, Tunas Bhakti, Batang Hari, and several others. This edition also featured an article by Hamka titled “Sia Bana koh Kito?” (Who Are We Really?), which explored the socio-historical and socio-cultural perspectives of the Minang people, beginning with the issue of the historical entry of Islam into Minangkabau, which had a significant influence on the social and cultural fabric of this ethnic community.

In its tenth edition, *Aneka Minang* featured a special topic on Minangkabau customs by examining and comparing the state of local customs in the past, present, and future. The discussion on this theme included sources such as Hamka, Mohammad Natsir, Bahder Djohan, Taufik Abdullah, Mawardi Yunus, Asmaniar Z. Idris, Syarief Usman, Dt Radjo Malano, and others. Among the views presented was the notion that customs are not inherently unchangeable. The saying “adat tak lekang dek paneh tidak lapuk dek ujan” (not worn by heat, not decayed by rain) is no longer entirely accurate. However, it is agreed that Islam is an inherent part of Minangkabau customs. Among the Minang diaspora, customs are generally less practiced due to different socio-cultural

contexts, but Islam remains a fundamental and guiding principle for them. One example is the family structure, where Minang people outside West Sumatra generally follow the nuclear family pattern.

In the following edition, *Aneka Minang* highlighted “Kapalo Jamba” about Minang contributions to Independence. This edition was in commemoration of the 27th anniversary of Indonesia’s Independence Day. The discussion began with the Minangkabau people’s resistance against the Dutch trading company VOC (Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie) in the 17th century, known in history as the “Minangkabau Resistance.” The next form of contribution was the resistance of West Sumatran ulama against Dutch colonialism during the Padri War in the early 19th century. In the early 20th century, Minang contributions to the independence struggle became even more solid, not only through physical struggle but also intellectual efforts (*Aneka Minang*, 1972).

In its thirteenth edition, *Aneka Minang* explores the lives of the Minangkabau community in major cities outside West Sumatra. The featured title is “Padang and Street Vendors.” This issue delves into the “parasaian” (difficult life) of Minang migrants working in the informal sector, particularly as small traders outside West Sumatra, especially in major cities such as Jakarta, Bandung, Medan, Surabaya, Pekanbaru, Palembang, and

many others. The term “street vendors” refers to small traders with limited capital, operating informally, often as a temporary escape from unemployment or unpromising previous professions, with hopes of becoming traders or engaging in more profitable businesses. However, these street vendors face numerous challenges, including dealing with local government policies that demand orderliness and so on (*Aneka Minang*, 1972).

Continuing and delving deeper into the main theme of the previous edition, the fourteenth edition of this magazine addresses the more macro theme of the Minangkabau people’s “tradition” of migration. In this year-end edition (1972), *Aneka Minang* examines the Minangkabau migration culture from historical, cultural, social, and economic perspectives. To strengthen and deepen the discussion, competent and relevant sources such as Mochtar Naim, Zuber Usman, Ali Hanafiah, Bahder Djohan, and several others are featured.

In the fifteenth edition, January 1973, *Aneka Minang* highlights the magazine’s first anniversary. This edition features a message from Minang community leader in Jakarta, Mohammad Hatta, who expressed amazement that *Aneka Minang* had been published for a year and received positive feedback from its readers. Governor Harun Zain also provided his testimony, appreciating the

achievement of Aneka Minang's first anniversary and hoping that the ethnically nuanced magazine would continue to benefit many parties.

One of the mediums that has made the Minangkabau people stand out in modern Indonesian history is their involvement in the press. In its seventeenth edition, Aneka Minang features the theme "Minang Journalism: From Then to the Present Generation." During the independence movement and the early years of independence, for example, Aneka Minang discusses the roles of Minang journalists in the national press scene, such as Djamaluddin Adinegoro, Rosihan Anwar, Enggak Bahauddin, Mara Karma, and others. In Sumatra itself, many local press figures come from the Minang ethnic group, whether in Medan, Padang, or other areas. According to Kompas leader Jacob Oetama, quoted by Aneka Minang, the prominent role of journalists from West Sumatra in the national press is due to the Minangkabau people's proficiency in using the Indonesian language (Aneka Minang, 1973).

Not only in the world of writing, but the Minang people's contribution is also significant in the history of Indonesian cinema. At one time, the Minangkabau people even seemed to "dominate" the Indonesian cinema world, especially when viewed from the proportion of the population of this ethnic group. In this

context, Aneka Minang, in its twentieth edition in 1973, raised this theme, as it also included efforts to restore the Minangkabau community's confidence that they have a glorious past that cannot be underestimated. The cover of this edition was titled "Orang Padang in Cinema" (Aneka Minang, 1973).

In 1973, Aneka Minang transformed into Varia Minang. The management remained more or less the same, still led by Nazief Basir and Marwan Zain, headquartered in Jakarta (Varia Minang, 1973). Like Aneka Minang, the editions presented by Varia Minang seemed to continue what its predecessor had started. Reviews about the Minang community in the diaspora and West Sumatra were always its main offerings. It not only highlighted positive dimensions but also addressed the shortcomings and weaknesses of the Minangkabau community and region itself.

## CONCLUSION

The above description shows that the role of the press or mass media greatly assisted the recovery process of West Sumatra during the early New Order period. The press in question was not only those published or based in the region but also in the diaspora, particularly in Jakarta. Several Minang ethnic media were published by migrants from this region in Jakarta in the early 1970s, including the magazine Aneka Minang.

This media was managed by people (journalists) from West Sumatra, especially in Jakarta. The reviews presented, the news highlighted, and the editorial choices varied, but all remained within the framework of aiding the recovery and development of West Sumatra. For example, showcasing the historical achievements of the Minang people was intended not only to recall the group's own historicity but also to serve as a medium that radiates wisdom and life lessons. These two dimensions relate to efforts to rebuild the confidence of the ethnic group that had been lost after the significant political upheaval a decade earlier.

However, this media also reminded the challenges and even threats faced by the people and region of West Sumatra amidst various changes, especially at the national level. Modernization in various aspects of life at that time could threaten various facets of Minang and West Sumatran life, including politics, economy, society, and culture. When *Aneka Minang* raised the theme of tradition facing the changes of the times, for example, the main goal was to awaken local cultural actors to be prepared for all possibilities and to anticipate so that these changes would not cause negative impacts or excesses.

Thus, the presence of these two magazines was a form of attention from Minang migrant journalists to the

dynamics of regional and ethnic development in facing various ongoing changes, in this context, the challenges of change in the early New Order period. In this way, these media have participated and contributed immaterially to the development of West Sumatra, even though the lifespan of such media did not last long.

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