Orahua and *Daro-Daro*: Representation of the Cultural Identity of Nias People of North Sumatra, Indonesia

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Abstract

Orahua is an oral tradition in the form of traditional deliberations of Nias people, while *daro-daro* is a stone chair of architectural works from the megalithic era where the oral tradition of *orahua is held.* The existence of *orahua* and *daro-daro* is weakening as the authority of indigenous governments declines in the face of a formal system of government strengthened by the state. This research examines the survival and change of the existence of *orahua* and *daro-daro*.

It employs a qualitative approach as a research methodology. Data collection involves observations of the traditional event and in-depth interviews of the participants.

It is noted that *orahua* and *daro-daro* is diminishing as a practice due to various factors. Efforts to preserve *orahua* are carried out by adapting in line with socio-cultural changes that occur. The community maintains the exclusivity of *daro-daro* as a historical architectural work while maintaining its sacredness as a place for *carrying out orahua* rituals. Preservation of *orahua* depends on the tradition to continue to function amid leadership dualisms. It is also noted that *orahua* and *daro-daro* represent the cultural identity of the Nias people and the survival of *orahua* and *daro-daro* supports the preservation of the cultural identity of the Nias people.

Keywords: Ancient architecture, existence, function, customary deliberation

Introduction

Nias people in Hilinawalo Batusalawa Village made *orahua* the highest arbiter of law in their lives for about 500 years. *Orahua* is an open forum that discusses all village problems and decides how to handle them in South Nias (Bu'ulolo, 2020). In the past, *orahua* had very strong authority as a customary consultative institution and the traditional court that had the right to determine punishments for violators of village customs (Ama Fuji, traditional leader of Hilinawalo Batusalawa Village, interviewed on November 10, 2022).

Journal of the International Society for the Study of Vernacular Settlements [eISSN:2738-2222]
From Historical Vernacular to Contemporary Settlements

149

One of the Villages considered to still maintain *orahua* in their lives, is Hilinawalo Fau Village known as Hilinawalo Batusalawa. In this village, there is an open "space" in the courtyard of the king's house (*ewali omo sebua*) to carry out or practice the oral tradition of *orahua.* In the courtyard, there are menhir stones relics of the megalithic age in the form of chairs called *daro-daro* for *orahua* actors to negotiate. The stone chairs were arranged around an arena that became the center of deliberation.

The development of politics and governance of the Indonesian government gave rise to new rules that put forward a formal government system determined by the government. This condition is strengthened by the establishment of a village government headed by a village head. This change has an impact on the existence of customary government.

However, villagers still adhere to the convention of the ancestors; that the holder of power is the customary government and *orahua* is the highest source of law. However, the government has strengthened formal governance through village heads. This condition creates a contestation between the formal and customary governments. Although the conflicts occur subtly, occasionally they give rise to quite heated conflicts.

Indeed, the situation that has lasted for the past 10 years presents a dualism of power that confuses society. On the one hand, people do not want any change in the legal arrangements in their villages. On the other hand, the power of formal government supported by the central government is inevitable.

Along with the changes that occur, it is alleged that *orahua* will be increasingly marginalized because its power as a holder of legal authority has weakened. In addition, it is feared that *daro-daro* will turn into a space for the other activities that do not adhere to the customs. How can *orahua* and *daro-daro* survive amid changes that marginalize their existence?

Orahua is a tradition that is integrated into the life of the Nias people of Hilinawalo Batusalawa Village and passed down from generation to generation (Ama Wita, traditional leader of Hilinawalo Batusalawa Village, interviewed on 11 November 2022). Tradition is a cultural space that is a womb where learning to live, behave, and interpret the reality of the heritage is received in sayings, *gurindam*, proverbs, and arts breathing the teachings of living well and living happily (Sutrisno, 2008).

Orahua, as an oral tradition has a strong connection with *the daro-daro.* The existence of *orahua* makes the village community maintain *the daro-daro* located in the king's yard as a place of deliberation and housing is on the right and left of the village.

It shows how tradition, by guaranteeing that the fundamental values of the group can be articulated and upheld in a residential environment, can bridge the evolution and transformation of communal culture (Mahira et al., 2023). Oral traditions can indeed be an early milestone in tracing or reconstructing the history and culture of a nation.

Oral traditions are very important in maintaining the cultural identity of a nation and preserving local wisdom owned by the local community (Supriatin, 2012). In the context of national identity, oral traditions play an important role in preserving and strengthening the cultural identity of a nation. This paper examines the issue of oral traditions in managing affairs of the villages and the conflicts that arise with the formal government structures.

Its objectives are:
1. To identify the way of existence and the changes of *orahua* and *daro-daro* in the life of Nias people in Hilinawalo Batusalawa Village.
2. To establish the relationship between *orahua* and *daro-daro* with the socio-cultural life of the supporting community in Hilinawalo Batusalawa Village.

Theoretical Basis and the Review of Literature

Research related to *orahua* have been conducted by Bu'ulolo (2020) and Syahrul (2023). Bu'ulolo has pointed out that *the orahu* or *orahua* tradition emphasizes solidarity and wise decision making which are very important aspects in the life system of the Nias people. It is in this open forum that all village issues are discussed, and it decides how to deal with them. In the ancient times, *orahua* was used as a court to determine punishments to the violators of

Journal of the International Society for the Study of Vernacular Settlements [eISSN:2738-2222]
From Historical Vernacular to Contemporary Settlements

150

village customs (Bu'ulolo, 2020). Syahrul concludes that the ability of indigenous consultation systems to operate as a negotiating platform has been limited because of changes made to the formal governance system and the limited transfer of customary consulting values. The survival strategies of indigenous consultative assemblies, such as *orahua* and *adaik density*, have not only historical significance but play an important role in shaping the culture and social order of the country, even today (Syahrul et al., 2023).

According to Bu'ulolo, the role and function *of orahua* in the past along with the local wisdom contained in the oral traditions. Syahrul shows that they also possess survival strategies. The important role of *orahua* is in the country's culture and social order.

Functions of cultural activities cannot be separated from the culture at large and its context. Indeed, a folklore or any oral traditions of a community can be fully understood only through a deep knowledge of the culture of the people who possess it. People do not give importance to the origin of their folklore sources. What is more important is their functions in their lives (Hutomo, 1993).

Oral traditions are used as sources of knowledge and wisdom born in the form of proverbs and others. They have an important role in making people more civilized and cultured (Ong & Hartley, 2013). According to Tulius, people use oral traditions as sources of information that can explain problems that arise in their daily lives (Tulius, 2012; 2020). That is, oral traditions express problems of life accompanied by solutions conveyed connotatively through works of art.

Moral values in oral traditions carry the controlling functions of human behavior. This level illustrates the functions of oral traditions as a means of character education based on local knowledge and wisdom. This is carried out through the internalization of good personality values to everyone in a community (Bauman, 1986).

Orahua is an oral tradition that revolves around language, while *daro-daro* is an artifact of historical heritage. Some experts suggest that the relationship of objects to the language studied by ethnographic experts succeed in showing the space of meaning for objects and revealing the reason for the importance of these objects in a society. This indicates the ability of objects to convey meanings, much like language. Hodder (1994) further says that various cultural artifacts have been created as tools for the transformation of society. This process then changes the function of the artifacts that make up the social relationships.

Examining material culture as something created helps with a greater understanding of social structures and larger systemic dimensions, such as social imbalances and differences, as well as human actions, emotions, and their meanings. An object used in a cultural performance can indicate something or establish social meaning. These objects can represent a broader social discourse related to the norms and values held by groups with their various social institutions (Woodward, 2007).

Regarding the relationship between language, objects, and meaning, Hodder further says that symbols attached to an object have a different dimension of meaning from language although symbols are often arbitrary as same as language. Object symbols have an abstract dimension of meaning based on patterns of relationships and patterns of application in the user society (Hodder, 1994).

In this context, this study examines the survival of *orahua* and *daro-daro* by reviewing the efforts made to survive the factors that influence that survival, the changes that occur, and their relation to cultural identity. In other words, this research seeks to explain the conditions of existence of *orahua* and *daro-daro* in the present which are hit by social, political, economic, and cultural changes. Another essential thing is to know the function of the two elements of Nias culture in socio-cultural life.

Research Methodology

This research uses an ethnographic approach (Bilsland & Siebert, 2024; Jones-Hooker & Tyndall, 2023; Mukred et al., 2024; Ritter et al., 2023). It conducts in-depth observations and interviews that consider the community and cultural systems at the research site. data is obtained by the socio-cultural conditions of the community and also from empirical experience.

Journal of the International Society for the Study of Vernacular Settlements [eISSN:2738-2222]
From Historical Vernacular to Contemporary Settlements

151

Research was conducted in Hilinawalo Batusalawa Village, South Nias, North Sumatra. This village is an old village about 500 years old. As an old village, Hilinawalo Batusalawa has historical relics that show the culture and civilization of the village in the past.

Data collection was carried out by

(1) Direct observations of the respondents in their daily activities,

(2) Interviews with resource persons from formal government leaders, traditional leaders, youth, mothers, and other community members, and

(3) Focus Group Discussions (FGD), with resource persons who have expertise or experience related to local language inheritance and language situation at the research locus. This was conducted to complement and verify Data obtained.

Research informants are formal government leaders (village heads and village secretaries), traditional leaders (*si'ulu, si'ila, sanemali*, etc.), youth, mothers, and other community members.

The researchers were the main instruments who used observation guides, interview guidelines, and DKT guidelines. The process of data analysis includes data reduction, data categorization, data synthesis, data analysis, and interpretation and ends with the formulation of conclusions.

Findings and Discussion

Nias Island is located off the West coast of North Sumatra. The indigenous ethnic group that inhabits the island is called the Nias people who are known as *ono noha* "children of man". Nias Island is divided into five administrative regions, one of which is South Nias Regency with the center of the Teluk Dalam government. The majority of South Nias population is *ono niha* which is the dominant ethnic group on Nias Island.

Nias people have a unique culture and are different from other regions in Indonesia. Some of the cultures of the Nias people that are inherited from ancestors and become part of daily life until now include the culture of war and weapons-making, traditional marriage, megalithic culture, and traditional architecture. Nias people have the ritual practice of death which becomes a religious tool to maintain traditional values on the one hand and a legitimate tool to improve social status and cohesion in society.

According to Alfarisy that Nias has a rich oral tradition that includes epic history, narratives, proverbs, myths, beliefs, performances, ceremonies, dances, songs, ceremonies/rituals, stone jumping, and traditional deliberations 'orahua' (Alfarisy et al., 2021). *Orahua* traditional deliberations are considered traditions that have the highest socio-political power.

Orahua was initiated by the founder of *banua* (village) Hilinawalo Batusalawa. The purpose of the formation of *orahua is* so that all problems that occur in the village can be resolved together. Thus, it can be said that *orahua* departs from a high sense of community and solidarity. The Hilinawalo Batusalawa community makes *orahua* a traditional convention that the entire community must obey.

The oral tradition of *orahua* was born, grew, and developed in the life of Nias people hundreds of years ago. *Orahua* is the highest decision-holder and has strong decision-making authority. Nias people rely on *orahua* to solve problems and seek agreement. For many years *orahua* functioned strongly in the past and still exists today.

Survival of the *Orahua* Oral Tradition and the Changes Occurred

Orahua is an oral tradition that reflects traditional democracy in the form of customary deliberations that are still maintained today in Hilinawalo Batusawa Village. The traditional deliberations were carried out by village officials consisting of *si'ulu, si'ila*, and *sanemali*, and attended by the village community. *Orahua* serves as a forum for deliberation to reach agreements, solve problems, and determine attitudes toward an event or problem.

The practice of the *orahua* traditional community is part of the customs of the local community. This practice is usually done by gathering with family or local communities. Customary deliberation is part of solving problems from one party to another. Customary

Journal of the International Society for the Study of Vernacular Settlements [eISSN:2738-2222]
From Historical Vernacular to Contemporary Settlements

152

deliberations always provide solutions as a middle ground for many people. By deliberation, the community is more confident in the decisions and solutions set (Suprianto, 2021).

This culture of indigenous deliberation has a role as a bridge to unite indigenous peoples into a unified whole in forming positive bonds, through harmonious family relationships. Traditional deliberations depart from a sense of kinship and togetherness. They agreed on a stipulation that things would be easier and lighter if negotiated together (Pratiwi & Sunarso, 2018).

Orahua is also called *orahua mbanua* and is usually performed at ewali *sawolo* or *ewali orahua* (the courtyard in front of the house of the most influential nobleman or *balö ji'ulu* (Bu'ulolo, 2020). *Orahua mbanua* is followed by *si'ulu* (nobles), *si'ila* (traditional leaders), and *ono mbanua* (the whole community).

Orahua customary deliberations begin with a notice delivered by a person called *an ofasi* (the person in charge of delivering announcements). *Ofasi* went around the village telling all residents that Hilinawalo Batusalawa would carry out the traditional *orahua* deliberations. At the appointed time, ordinary people (*ono mbanua*) are present in advance around the *daro-daro* (stone chairs in the courtyard of the king's house). The traditional leaders *of the si'ulu and si'ila* were picked up by the troops who escorted them to the *daro-daro.* These traditional leaders occupy stones according to their position and function in custom or village structure (if *orahua* is attended by the village head and village officials). The general public, the younger generation, and women are either taking a position at the back or simply following from afar.

Deliberation was opened by *the si'ulu* (the supreme leader who was a descendant of the king), and the *si'ila* (nobles). If *the si'ulu* is unable to attend, it can be replaced by *the oldest si'ila*.

Orahua in Hilinawalo discusses various problems in the lives of rural people. Starting from the history of the village to current issues, such as BLT (direct cash transfer). *The si'ulu* or *orahua* leader conveys the points to be discussed, after which the *si'ila* take turns expressing opinions or arguments. The language used in *orahua* oration is different from everyday language. A language classified as a higher language by conveying ancient parables. The ability to speak is complemented by the ability to regulate speech intonation. At certain times in his speech, *si'ulu* and *si'ila* direct their bodies and speeches to *the sanema li* who sits at a distance (opposite) the traditional leaders. *Sanema li* will respond with a long shout with a distinctive rhythm, namely "*Eeeee... yes, yes... ya iya ho*" or "*Yaaaaa iya wa hoo*".

As a ritual, *this orahua* aims to strengthen the bonds of brotherhood in the family (fahasara dödö si fatifusö) as a form of togetherness celebrating the involvement of the entire extended family in the implementation of religious and familial events. The implementation process consists of several stages, namely *orahua traitifusö, fame'e sumane,* and the implementation of *hölihöli sumane* (Hia & Zega, 2021). It is in this open forum that all village problems are discussed and decided how to handle them (Bu'ulolo, 2020).

As the decision-making authority, *orahua* is felt to have a very strong role and function in the life of the Nias people. However, in this millennial era, the existence of the *orahua oral tradition is* not as strong as in the past. In some villages, *orahua* is no longer implemented. In some other villages, *orahua* is replaced by village deliberations which of course have a different format from *orahua.*

Matters related to the survival of the oral tradition of *orahua* are the efforts of preservation and the factors that influence the efforts of retention. Given the shrinking number of actors in the *orahua* oral tradition*,* it is feared that there will be a weakening of the regional language used in *orahua.* This condition must be overcome by making efforts to maintain the regional language and oral tradition of *orahua* to maintain the continuity and survival of the oral tradition *orahua.*

Journal of the International Society for the Study of Vernacular Settlements [eISSN:2738-2222]
From Historical Vernacular to Contemporary Settlements

153

Fig. 1: Traditional Leaders Doing *Orahua*
Source: Author, 2022

As noted, survival of *orahua* is closely related to the defense efforts carried out in Hilinawalo Batusawa Village. The following are the efforts made in Hilinawalo Batusalawa Village so that *orahua* always functions as a decision-making authority.

The adjustment of the topics discussed. Since the beginning of *the holding of orahua* and finally became a tradition that was carried out from generation to generation, this oral tradition has provisions for problems that are discussed in *orahua* traditional deliberations. Issues discussed include the history of the establishment of *the Banua* (village) of Hilinawalo Batusalawa; customs related to birth, marriage, and death; moral or ethical violations (related to male and female relationships); determination of punishment for perpetrators of crimes (stealing, killing, rape, etc.); and other life problems. In its development, the oral tradition of *orahua* adapted by discussing current matters, such as BLT (direct cash transfer) programs, development programs, and local government policies. The adaptation of the topic or problem discussed allows *orahua* to continue to be carried out in the present.

Adjustment of participant conditions. In the past, *traditional orahua* deliberations were only followed by adult men. Women and children are not allowed to attend *the orahua.* They are allowed to peek only from the grid of the house. Along with the times, there have been changes in the provisions for people who are allowed to attend the implementation of orahua traditional deliberations. Although not involved in decision-making, at least women and children have been allowed to attend the customary deliberations. The shift in provisions has a positive impact on women and children. Women feel more valued and involved in discussing problems or getting the latest information related to their villages. Excellent positive impact is obtained by children. They get the opportunity to hear, learn, and "inherit" the high regional language and local knowledge contained in the oral tradition of *orahua.*

Adjustments to rules or provisions related to punishment or sanctions for crimes or moral violations are carried out in *orahua* by the people of Hilinawalo Bausalawa Village. In ancient times, beheadings, confinement, and customary fines were very heavy to be met by perpetrators of crimes or moral violations. This adjustment of punishment was influenced by the arrival of Christianity to Hilinawalo Batusalawa Village. Beheading and confinement were considered contrary to human rights and considered too severe. Eventually, the punishment was transferred to fines for handing over pigs or gold to traditional leaders and leaders. Penalties in the form of pig or gold fines have decreased in terms of numbers to reduce the burden on the condemned person and his family.

The adjustment of the topics discussed, the provisions of the participants, and the form of punishment/sanctions are orahua adaptations to developments that occur today. The dynamism of *orahua* adapting to the times shows the survivability of this oral tradition. The most obvious form of adaptation is the topic discussed in the *orahua* customary deliberations because it always changes from time to time according to developments that occur.

Journal of the International Society for the Study of Vernacular Settlements [eISSN:2738-2222]
From Historical Vernacular to Contemporary Settlements

154

Introduction to the younger generation. With regular *orahua* deliberations and children being allowed to witness the oral tradition, efforts to introduce the younger generation began. Children witnessed the customary deliberations firsthand. They heard the regional language delivered by traditional leaders. They see gestures when the traditional leader makes a speech conveying his opinion or idea. The experience of seeing directly is a good learning. It makes children self-taught. Gifted children, they can absorb the language, knowledge, and ordinances contained in *orahua*. Introduction to the younger generation is part of the process of passing on the oral tradition of *orahua* to the next generation. It is hoped that the inheritance process will continue in the next activities that forge the younger generation to master *orahua*. Some may not be able to become *si'ulu* or *si'ila* because they are not descendants of kings or nobles, but they can still be part of the oral tradition of *orahua*. The current condition is that the number of generations of coatings that will continue *orahua* is getting smaller. The decrease in *orahua* successors is due to several things, namely (1) the younger generation is not interested, prefers modern activities, (2) travels, seeks a better livelihood in other areas, and (3) is busy with activities or work. In addition, *orahua* skills have not been formally taught in schools, either as local or extracurricular content. In the family or through oral stories is not taught about *orahua*. *Orahua* is practiced in the middle of the village, and the community (including the younger generation) witnesses the implementation of the customary deliberation. That's when they learn *orahua* through observation and memory (Hasanotona Laia, interviewed on November 8, 2022).

Recording and publication in the mass media. The advancement of digital technology has entered Hilinawalo Batusawa Village. This is used to document traditional events, important events, and others. The oral tradition of *orahua* is the object of documentation, both by residents of Hilinawalo Batusalawa Village and outsiders. Researchers and academics from home and abroad documented various interesting things in this village, including the oral tradition of *orahua*. The existence of mass media is used to publish orahua oral traditions. The broadcast of *orahua* on social media introduced the culture and language of the South Nias region, especially in Hilinawalo Batusalawa Village.

Recording and publication in the mass media is a stage of development in intensifying an oral tradition. At this stage, the oral tradition concerned will be better known by the wider community without being bound by space and time. The oral tradition of *orahua* can be watched anywhere and anytime.

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that efforts to maintain regional languages and oral traditions of *orahua* are carried out through adaptation to the latest developments, inheritance to the next generation, and development. A more concise summary of these retention efforts can be seen in the following table.

Table 1: Efforts to Preserve the *Orahua Oral Tradition*

No.	Retention Efforts	Details
1	Adaptation to the latest developments	Adjustment of topics covered
		Adjustment of participant conditions
		Adjustment of punishment/sanction form
2	Inheritance	Introduction to the younger generation
		Training for selected successors
3	Development	Recording
		Publication

Factors influencing efforts to maintain oral traditions are divided into two categories, namely supporting and inhibiting factors. Based on the data obtained in the field, several factors can be stated that influence efforts to maintain the oral tradition of *orahua*.

Supporting factors in efforts to maintain the *orahua* oral tradition in Hilinawalo Batusalawa Village include the following.

Journal of the International Society for the Study of Vernacular Settlements [eISSN:2738-2222]
From Historical Vernacular to Contemporary Settlements

155

1. The support and enthusiasm of traditional leaders to maintain *orahua* in the socio-cultural life of the people of Hilinawalo Batusalawa Village. Traditional leaders (*si'ulu* and *si'ila*) want to maintain the heritage of ancestors that departs from a sense of togetherness, namely traditional deliberation. Traditional leaders formed an art studio that aims to train the younger generation to know and master traditional arts, such as dancing, singing, and traditional music. Studio members are children and adolescents aged 7--15 years. They practice at least once a week. The trainers are performers consisting of folk song singers, dancers (especially war dance), and musicians.

2. *Orahua* not being just an oral tradition but has had several functions in people's lives since hundreds of years ago. *Orahua* carries aesthetic, pragmatic, and ethical functions. Referring to some expert opinions on the function of oral tradition, it can be argued that *orahua* oral tradition functions as a preservation of cultural systems, knowledge, and policy systems, problem revealers, community solidarity, tools of cultural validation, and the integrity of social structures tradition (Agung et al., 2024; Dundes, 1980; Fatmahwati, 2016; Jiyana, 2022; Król et al., 2022; Laskey, 2024; Makgabo & Quintero, 2024; Sugiyama, 2024).

3. The *orahua* functions as a preserver of cultural systems because this tradition contains customs, customary laws, and other traditional conventions that are mutually agreed upon and obeyed by the community. In addition, *orahua* contains cultural elements of the people of Hilinawalo Batusalawa Village. These cultural elements include religious systems and religious ceremonies, social systems and organizations, knowledge systems, languages, arts, livelihood systems, and technology and equipment systems. Preservation of *orahua* means preserving the cultural system of the people of Hilinawalo Batusawawa Village.

4. The function of a knowledge and policy system is seen in the form of *orahua* as customary deliberation. *Orahua* contains local knowledge and policies inherited from ancestors. It is these local knowledge and policies that form the basis for decision-making in the deliberations. The function of *orahua* as a whistleblower of problems is very obvious because this tradition aims to deliberate various problems in their lives. The function as a marker of community solidarity departs from the beginning of *the holding of orahua,* which is a sense of community as communal. Its function as a means of cultural validation is evidenced by the authority that *orahua has* as a decision-maker and the highest decrees. The function as a wholeness of social structure can be seen from the level of society consisting of *si'ulu* (the highest stratum who is a descendant of the king), *si'ila* (community leaders who are descendants of nobles), and ordinary people.

5. The *orahua* oral tradition can be adapted to changes that occur so that it can adapt from time to time. Adaptations that occur in *orahua* are in the form of adjustments to the topics discussed, adjustments to participant provisions, and adjustments to customary punishment/sanction provisions. The ability of *orahua* to adapt allows this tradition to be modified according to the times. However, a performance of oral tradition cannot avoid change. The difference is that the tradition slowly or quickly absorbs the latest developments. Some are slowly changing, some are changing faster. However, even though there is a change, usually a tradition still retains something characteristic.

6. The geographical factor of Hilinawalo Batusalawa Village which is far from the city center and allows this village to maintain the environment and a traditional lifestyle. The village is located in the interior of South Nias which takes about 4 hours from Gunung Sitoli (the largest city on Nias Island). Judging from the condition of the village, it can be seen that Hilinawalo Batusalawa Village still maintains its tradition by maintaining historical relics that show its history and civilization in the past. People of Hilinawalo Batusalawa Village live in *omo niha* or traditional houses in the form of stilt houses. The houses are lined up on the

Journal of the International Society for the Study of Vernacular Settlements [eISSN:2738-2222]
From Historical Vernacular to Contemporary Settlements

156

right and left sides along the main road of the village. The main road merges with the courtyards of people's houses. Hilinawalo Batusalawa village is located in a separate area from other villages.

Inhibiting factors in efforts to maintain *orahua* oral tradition in Hilinawalo Batusalawa Village include the following.

1. **Economic factors**: Access to education and employment opportunities have an impact on the use of regional languages. Hilinawalo Batusalawa Village does not yet have secondary and higher education facilities. People who want to get a higher education must leave their villages. Likewise, for those who want to get a better job and earn more, they leave the village. They moved to other villages and other districts, and many even left Nias Island. Based on information from informants, residents of Hilinawalo Batusalawa Village continued their higher education in Gunung Sitoli, Medan, and cities in Indonesia, such as Pekanbaru, Padang, Jakarta, Bandung, and Jogjakarta. Job seekers from Hilinawalo Batusalawa Village generally migrate to Riau Province, Riau Islands, West Sumatra, Jakarta, and several cities in Kalimantan. They adapt to others while overseas by using the majority language or national language. This caused them to abandon the vernacular.
2. **Political factors**: The political landscape may influence the existence and development of oral traditions. Government policies that prioritize national culture affect the development of local culture. In addition, political policies that provide freedom in absorbing and implementing global culture affect the existence of local culture. The higher the attitude of the authorities, the stronger the global culture to the niche of the village.
3. **Social factors**: If a community places a high value on cultural preservation, it can take steps to ensure that the culture is taught to the younger generation and used in everyday life. However, if they lack interest in regional culture or have the perception that it is useless, it can degrade the existence of regional culture over time. Thus it can be said that people's attitudes towards their own culture have a great influence on the survival of that culture. An attitude of indifference and neglect with efforts to maintain or preserve regional culture will lead to the extinction of that culture in the future.
4. **Historical and cultural factors**: These two factors play an important role in shaping the development of regional culture. Matters related to historical and cultural factors that influence the existence of regional culture in Hilinawalo Batusalawa Village include traditional practices and customs. The oral tradition of *orahua* is still bound by the rule that the main actors in the practice of traditional deliberation are *si'ulu* and *si'ila. Si'ulu* must be the offspring of kings and *Si'ila* must be of noble descent. That is, those who will lead *orahua* are descendants of kings and nobles so it seems that these two tribes with the highest strata dominate *orahua.*

Daro-Daro: Ancient Architecture Relics of the Megalithic Age

Orahua is performed in the courtyard of the king's house (*ewali omo sebua)* in the form of stones resembling loungers. Archaeologically, the stones are remains from the megalithic period around the 14th century AD. This refers to the results of research conducted by the National Archaeological Research Center, Medan Archaeological Center, and *the Institut de Recherche Pour le Development* (IRD) from France that in some important megalithic sites on zalNias show that Baronadu was inhabited around 576 +- 30 BP, which is about 600 years ago. According to Nata'alui Duha in *The Origin of Nias Society An Interpretation* (2015) his provides evidence that migration with the oldest megalithic tradition on Nias took place around the 14th century AD (Sastri et al., 2023).

Journal of the International Society for the Study of Vernacular Settlements [eISSN:2738-2222]
From Historical Vernacular to Contemporary Settlements

157

Fig. 2: *Daro-Daro*
Source: Author, 2022

The relationship between *orahua* and *daro-daro* is in the form of activities and places of implementation. However, *orahua* can be carried out in other places according to the needs and conditions that occur. According to Bu'ulolo, *orahua* can be done in village meeting halls and to a lesser extent can be done at home (Bu'ulolo, 2020). That is, *orahua* can be held even if it is not in *daro-daro.*

Then, what is the existence *of daro-daro* in the present and has there been a change? *Orahua* in the past was a major event that had a high level of sacredness. In addition, *orahua* is the only cultural activity that has high authority as a decision-maker, legal source, and traditional convention center. As a tradition that plays a very significant role in people's lives, the implementation of *orahua* is only in *daro-daro.*

Orahua and *daro-daro* became sacred cultural elements and held a very important function in the past. *Daro-daro* automatically becomes a privileged place, not only as a historical relic but as a sacred place for holding traditional deliberations.

The existence of *daro-daro* at this time can be seen in the following table.

Table 2: Daro-Daro meanings

No.	Question Item	Responses		
		Tall	Keep	Low
1	Appreciation	90%	10%	0%
2	Knowledge	84%	13%	3%
3	Maintenance	78%	14%	8%
4	Supervision	83%	12%	5%
5	Awareness	70%	16%	14%
	Sum	405	65	30
	Average percentage	81%	13%	6%

Public appreciation of *daro-daro* in the form of respect for it as a historical heritage of high value. They considered *the daro-daro* as a site of sacred value. This view affects their daily attitude towards *the daro-daro* in the middle of the village. 90% of the people of Hilinawalo Batusalawa Village have high respect for *daro-daro,* 10% have awards in the medium category, and no one looks down upon them. That is, *daro-daro* is highly valued by the villagers. Although times have changed, *daro-daro* has not turned profane so its sacredness is maintained.

The factor causing the high public appreciation for *daro-daro* is good education and teaching from traditional leaders, parents, and adult community members to the generation below. It lasted for generations, for hundreds of years. This good education and teaching help the next generation to understand the value and meaning of *daro-daro* in their lives.

Journal of the International Society for the Study of Vernacular Settlements [eISSN:2738-2222]
From Historical Vernacular to Contemporary Settlements

158

Public knowledge about *daro-daro* includes the history of its establishment or origin, function, and other related matters. Mostly, namely, 84% of the people of Hilinawalo Batusalawa Village know knowledge related to *daro-daro*. According to traditional leaders, most villagers have a high motivation to learn about the history and historical objects in their village. This topic is an interesting topic to talk about in formal meetings, family gatherings, and informal conversations in the tavern or porch of the house. The people in this village are still focused on everything that exists and happens in their village. This is due to the unspoiled village by the internet and social media attacks.

In addition, people who know historical things in Hilinawalo Batusalawa Village are very open and active in sharing their knowledge. This results in the transmission of knowledge going well and continuously.

The preservation of *daro-daro* as a historical relic is dominated by relatively high responses. People have a high respect for ancestral relics, as many as 78% gave responses in the high category. Show that respect by maintaining it. Maintenance is carried out in the form of maintaining its original form, maintaining cleanliness and preservation, and maintaining the physical and aesthetic condition of the historical place.

Surveillance of *daro-daro* received 83% response in the high category. Supervision actions are carried out by playing an active role in maintaining and reporting actions that can damage historical heritage. The villagers voluntarily assist in maintaining the security and sustainability of *the daro-daro*. In recent years, Hilinawalo Batusalawa Village has been quite crowded with domestic and foreign tourists to enjoy historical and cultural tourism. The arrival of outsiders is an important thing that must be considered to maintain the condition of historical heritage to avoid damage.

Awareness of the importance of preserving historical heritage received the lowest response compared to other aspects. Although still relatively high, awareness-raising efforts need to be done by "reminding" the entire community to maintain historical heritage. Consciousness itself comes from the word "conscious", meaning to know, understand, remember, understand, and open his heart and mind to do according to his heart. Awareness means the realization of one's actions. So, awareness is the heart and mind that has been open about what has been done (Sujarwa, 1999). Increased awareness has an impact on understanding the past and present. In addition, awareness of the importance of historical relics helps individuals in the development of empathy and the ability to understand different perspectives.

Cultural Identity

Culture has territorial boundaries marked by symbols used by groups of people. It is in the context of cultural identity of a society or a community is finally formed (Abdullah, 2006; Chan, 2022; Panzera, 2022). Identity is the part of an individual's self-concept derived from knowledge of his membership in a social group, along with the emotional significance attached to it (Duszak, 2002). In the other side, Eisenhart and Johnstone said that identity signifies the result of an identification process in which others intentionally or strategically dichotomy based on their similarities and inequalities (Eisenhart & Johnstone, 2008).

One of the elements of culture that makes up identity is language (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004; Hariyanto et al., 2023; Li, 2024; Nardiati et al., 2023; Nursugiharti et al., 2024; Peltokorpi & Zhang, 2022; Sang, 2023; Woolard, 2020; Zalmansyah et al., 2023). Language is not only a sound, morphological, and syntactic system designed to express a thought, but carries cultural identity and social status, too. Language reflects social conditions and relationships between people (Agha, 2006; Mayor & Bietti, 2024; Paulston, 1986).

The main element of orahua oral tradition is the regional language, the South Nias language. The oral tradition of *orahua* uses a special (high) regional language that contains *petatah-petitih*, traditional expressions, traditional knowledge, local wisdom, and traditional literature, such as *pantun* and proverbs. That is, the regional language in the oral tradition of orahua is a language that is closely related to the traditional culture of the local community.

Journal of the International Society for the Study of Vernacular Settlements [eISSN:2738-2222]
From Historical Vernacular to Contemporary Settlements

159

Preserving oral traditions *orahua* automatically contributes to preserving regional languages. In other words, the preservation of the regional language of South Nias can be done through oral tradition *orahua*. Regional languages in the oral tradition are closely related to the culture of the local people. Examining language through the oral traditions of a community means examining the culture and world of that group because language is a medium of conveyance. The concept of identity related to the view that the use of language is not only a cognitive effort but an immanent social effort (Drummond, 2021; Zotzmann & O'Regan, 2016).

The role and function of *orahua* is very strong in the lives of the people of Hilinawalo Village as a form of traditional democracy. This oral tradition became a cultural expression passed down from generation to generation. It contains traditional knowledge, local wisdom, and community personality.

A key feature of *orahua* oral tradition is its role in shaping cultural identity. Identity is a concept created by humans about their characteristics (biologically, socially, culturally, religiously, economically, and so on) to equalize and distinguish, by choosing, accentuating, and ignoring the characteristics of something; a conception that makes an entity definable and distinguishable from others (Simatupang, 2013). In other words, identity can be interpreted as the special characteristics or circumstances of a person who is his identity (Hogg, 2016; Schulte et al., 2020; Wannewitz & Garschagen, 2024).

Through *orahua* is transmitted history, values, beliefs, and patterns of life. Knowledge and insight into such matters reflect the experiences and perspectives of specific cultural groups. This strengthens their ethnic identity.

Based on the results of research, it can be stated that orahua oral tradition shows the cultural identity of the people of Hilinawalo Batusalawa Village because it contains characteristics, values, beliefs, and customs that define their ethnic group. Thus, it can be said that maintaining *orahua* means strengthening the cultural identity of the people of Hilinawalo Batusalawa Village.

The results of this research are in line with what Alfarisy's research that this is not only found that the people of Hilinawalo Batusalawa Village inherited knowledge, local wisdom, language, and various cultural features. It is further explained that *orahua* is a form of human communication that involves the oral transmission of knowledge, art, ideas, and cultural materials from one generation to another. However, *orahua* also represents the cultural identity of the Nias people. This oral tradition is indeed full of material and past cultural events that show the personality of the Nias people. The use of regional languages with traditional expressions and similes also plays a role in showing cultural identity. This research is also in line with Bu'ulolo's research where *orahua* in the past contained local wisdom that shows the character of the Nias people, one of which is the importance of maintaining solidarity and through *orahua* the community can maintain it until now.

This research findings also show that *orahua* binds the unity of the Nias people in Hilinawalo Village with a high emotional bond. Even those who work as government officials who tend to use village meetings for deliberation and refer to formal laws, still position *orahua* as the most respected tradition. *Orahua* reflects the culture and character of Nias people in Hilinawalo Batusawawa Village. In other words, *orahua* is the creativity of the community to present real life in the form of symbolic works of art. Although it is symbolic, the supporting community understands the meaning conveyed and feels a certain function in each performance.

Conclusions

Based on the results of the research, it is concluded that:

- The people of Hilinawalo Batusalawa Village are aware of socio-cultural changes that occur in their lives due to contact with the modern world and other ethnic cultures. The change threatens the existence of *orahua* and *daro-daro* which are classical cultures that of course are different from modern culture. The community tries to maintain *orahua* by adjusting the times, namely adjustments to the topics discussed, changes in participant provisions, and adjustments to rules/provisions for

Journal of the International Society for the Study of Vernacular Settlements [eISSN:2738-2222]
From Historical Vernacular to Contemporary Settlements

160

punishment/sanctions. In addition, they also introduce the younger generation to inherit and publicize the development of this tradition;

- Resilience of *the daro-daro* is supported by the appreciation, knowledge, maintenance, supervision, and awareness of the importance of these historical relics for their socio-cultural life; and
- Survival of *orahua* supports the preservation of regional languages and the strengthening of cultural identity. *Orahua* and *daro-daro* affects the cultural identity of the people of Hilinawalo Batusalawa Village. Thus, it can be said that the weakening of *orahua* and *daro-daro* will make the people of Hilinawalo Batusalawa Village lose their local cultural identity.

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From Historical Vernacular to Contemporary Settlements

161

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Journal of the International Society for the Study of Vernacular Settlements [eISSN:2738-2222]
From Historical Vernacular to Contemporary Settlements

162

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Journal of the International Society for the Study of Vernacular Settlements [eISSN:2738-2222]
From Historical Vernacular to Contemporary Settlements

163