

The Coexistence between Matrilineal Family Structures and the Religious Order of the Minangkabau Community

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Abstract

Minangkabau customary law has always been quite open to be integrated with new elements. From the influences of Hinduism, Buddhism, and the colonial period, it is Islam that has spurred the lifestyle of the matrilineal community to date. The encounter creates the term 'adat bersendi syarak, syarak bersendi kitabullah', which clearly shows the marriage between the old elements and the new ones. It does not stop there, social change continues to occur in-line with the existence of globalization influence. In the continuing social change, the Minangkabau society still have the will to preserve its core elements. This research was conducted at Nagari Maninjau and Nagari Sungai Batang. Each population is a family group consisting a father, a mother, and at least one child aged 10-19 years. This study uses a simple quantitative method, the summation of 106 family sets of respondents, being further analyzed qualitatively. The pioneer in the effort of cultural preservation is the urban area. If judged in terms of the loyalty to introduce culture to the next generation, family configuration of Minang father+Minang mother and non-Minang father+Minang mother fulfill the criteria. Data shows that there is no significant role of an uncle in terms of cultural inheritance, because the other central role is acted by a mamak pusako.

Keywords: *cultural inheritance, exogamous marriage, family communication, Hofstede, Minangkabau*

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Introduction

The Minangkabau matrilineal society has attracted the attention of many researchers from all over the world because of its uniqueness. The existence of Minangkabau culture is not only in the West Sumatra region, because it also exists in parts of Riau, the Northern part of Bengkulu, the Western part of Jambi, the North-West region of North Sumatra, South-West Aceh, and also in Negeri Sembilan Malaysia (Munir 2013). The coexistence of the matrilineal family structure with its inheritance system of the maternal lineage on the one hand, and the Islamic way of life on the other, have attracted these researchers. But most research only wants to focus on one element of community life. This illustrates the complexity of the Minangkabau matrilineal culture which has been carried out since the days of our ancestors.

The core values of the Minangkabau adat have long been compiled by traditional leaders, one of which is written in the *alam takambang jadi guru* teaching book. In it there are various rules, manners, and habits of the Minangkabau people. This book was rewritten by Navis in 1984. The Minangkabau community upholds the teachings that come from the *alam takambang jadi guru* book, which is the standard of assessment that applies in the community from the past until now. One of the teachings is about local laws, written and unwritten. If the unwritten law is still faithfully adhered by its citizens, then it becomes a powerful view of life and as a unifying tool for this tribe (Navis 1984).

Awe (2010) explains that maintaining tradition means creating stability. If it is not maintained well, it can cause a shift in social practice or even can potentially cause damage in the cultural environment that has long been existed. The science of communication is systematically directed to the success of development as a means of changing people's behavior these days (Aminah *et al* 2014).

This study intends to highlight the core value of Minangkabau custom, which have not changed from time to time. At least it has been recognized by the predecessors as the identity of the Minangkabau people that always need to be maintained at all time. One effort to defend it is to pass it on to the next generation. Social change cannot be dammed, but the change

should not erode the self-identity of Minangkabau people. Therefore it is necessary to carry out inheritance efforts.

This research revives the popularity of the Hofstede (2010) concept in portraying the cultural dimensions of today's Minangkabau people. Catalin (2012) argues that most of the criticisms directed to Hofstede's concept is about the frequency of Hofstede's discussion about cultural differences, not similarities. Catalin also criticized Hofstede's model for producing the same score between eastern and western countries.

Certain changes in Hofstede's framework were proposed by some researchers so that the concept could still be applied without allowing ecological errors occur at the level of individual analysis (Grenness 2012). Another major weakness in Hofstede's framework is that it is very functional and quantitative also focuses on measuring phenomena that should not be quantified (Dimitrov 2014). Some other studies have even lost their relevance to the period of existence of Hofstede's framework because changes have been made after changes to Hofstede's doctrine (Minkov and Hofstede 2011).

This research is one of those that makes these changes. The formulation of the problems to be resolved through this research are: (1) what kind of area is better prepared to pass on the values of Minangkabau culture, (2) what type of family typology is appropriate to serve as a model for inheriting Minangkabau cultural values, and (3) which core values are to be maintained and ideal to be inherited. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to (1) find areas that are ready to pass on the value of Minangkabau culture, (2) analyze various family typologies that can be the model for the purpose of inheriting cultural values, and (3) examine the core values that are to be maintained and inherited.

Literature review

For some people, custom is understood as a part of culture that can be completely changed. However, some believe that there are still parts that cannot be changed. This research underlies its findings using a term developed by Frederick Errington. He explained that Minangkabau

customs had core elements and peripheral elements. *“The peripheral elements can usually be allowed to change as long as the core elements remain fundamentally the same”* (Errington 1984).

In a society that is experiencing social change, it is necessary to know which elements are changing (the peripheral elements), and which elements do not change (the core elements). Referring to Abdullah’s research (1966), from the beginning Minangkabau customary laws were quite open to integrating with new elements. When new elements meet with indigenous customs, then customs can change so that new provisions emerge that accommodate both elements, the new and the old ones (Stark 2013).

Since the inception of various influences of new elements such as the inclusion of the teachings of Hinduism, Buddhism, and the influence of the colonial period, it is Islam’s religious teaching that have influenced the lifestyle of the Minangkabau matrilineal society to this day. *“Islam did not begin the conversion of Minangkabau by addressing itself to structural problems. At the early stage of the process, Islam was basically ‘anti-structure’ if adat could be taken to represent structure”* (Abdullah, 1985).

Stark (2013) interpreted this sentence from Abdullah as: an ordinary structure (in this case is *adat*/custom) meets something contradictory, which is called anti-structure (in this case Islam). This combination produces a new structure consisting both elements. The meaning of the word “structure” delivered by Abdullah (1985) is every phase in human life, such as childhood, adulthood, marriage. The meeting between structure and anti-structure creates the term *adat basandi syarak, syarak basandi kitabullah*, which clearly shows the ‘marriage’ between old elements and new ones.

Social change continues to occur which is characterized by the inclusion of more recent elements, namely ‘globalization’. The community again experienced changes in various aspects of their lives. In the ongoing social change, there is still a determination to maintain the core value of its culture among the Minangkabau community. Changes have been realized by traditional leaders so that they have

set certain limits and classifications about which components are allowed to change and which ones are not. Therefore, Minangkabau people divide *adat*/customs into four categories (Navis 1984), those are: (1) *adat nan sabana adat*. This custom is commonly expressed in proverbs, saying that natural law is the philosophy of human life, (2) *adat istiadat*. This is the habit that applies in the general public, such as ceremonials or social behavior, which if done properly it will be considered good, and if not done properly, it is still considered okay, (3) *adat nan diadatkan*. This is the local law that still applies, such as the laws of *luhak* and *rantau*, also the twenty four laws, and (4) *adat nan teradatkan*. This is a regulation that was born from consensus or the consensus of the people who use it.

In his research, Abdullah (1966) found that in Minangkabau conflict were not only recognized, but also institutionalized in the ongoing *adat* system. Conflict is seen as something that is dialectically important for achieving integration in the society. Therefore, internal conflict is a process of natural transition within the Minangkabau community when adjusting to new influences that come from outside the culture. *“The value of Minangkabau culture and the accompanying wisdom is based on faith in Islam, and there is nothing among the practices are contrary to Islamic rules”* (Franzia *et al* 2015).

Methodology

This research begins with a quantitative method and then being analyzed qualitatively. Therefore, in addition to conducting surveys through distributing questionnaires to respondents, in-depth interviews were also conducted with several key informants to get some insight about their views, about the core values of Minangkabau culture. The location of the research is chosen through clustering the West Sumatra region. The community could represent the true application of Minangkabau culture.

Tanjung Raya sub-district is chosen not only because of the limited research resources, but also because this area has a Maninjau Lake tourism attraction. Therefore, researchers can see perceptions of the cultural core values from

people being exposed to tourism activities (the semi-urban areas), and people living in remote areas (the rural areas). So, the location of the study converged on two *nagari*/villages, namely Nagari Maninjau as a representation of semi-urban area, and Nagari Sungai Batang which has many remote areas (*orong*/sub-village). Each *orong* is located at the foot of a hill and is inhabited by only a few families (representing rural area).

The survey results are then processed with a simple addition operation, so that a Likert scale is needed to read the respondent's reaction. The research population is the number of family leaders living in Nagari Sungai Batang and Maninjau. The selection of respondents in both villages were done by cluster sampling. Determination of the number of samples was using the Taro Yamane formula. The precision set is 10% with a confidence level of 95%.

The number of family leaders in Nagari Sungai Batang is around 2000 people and in Nagari Maninjau around 1700 people. The total population of the research is 3700 family leaders which represent the number of existing households. Each respondent consist of one father, one mother, and at least one child aged 10-19 years. The number of sample of 97.37 is added to become 106 in order to get better result.

The validity test using Pearson's product and the reliability of the questionnaire using Cronbach alpha, were conducted in 30 family units other than the respondents. This study conducted a t-test on the domicile, and for the four family typologies anova test was performed. The final data is displayed in cobweb graphical form based on the six cultural dimensions of Hofstede (2010), as below:

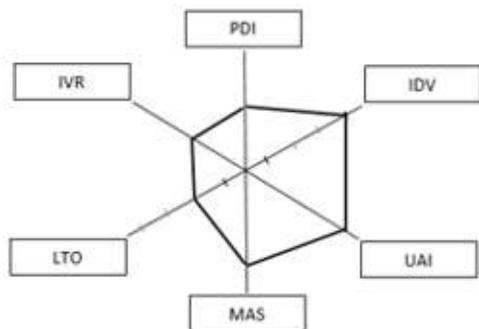


Figure 1 cobweb graph

Hofstede's dimensions: (1) power distance index (PDI), (2) individualism vs collectivism (IDV), (3) uncertainty avoidance index (UAI), (4) masculinity vs femininity (MAS), (5) long- vs short-term orientation (LTO), (6) indulgence vs restraint (IVR).

Results

1. Domicile T Test

From the T test table, it is known that the number of respondents domiciled in the semi-urban area are 54 families and those domiciled in rural area are 52 families. Overall, the average value of rural respondents are greater than the semi-urban respondents. To draw conclusions in testing the hypothesis other than by comparing t value with values in table t, SPSS can also use the Sig value. If Sig>0.05 then Ho is accepted and if Sig<0.05 then Ho is rejected.

The data explains that families in rural areas are happy with the magnitude of the distance between those in power and those without power. They are more individual, more avoiding uncertainty, more masculine, and more long-term oriented, also more restraint when compared to the semi-urban society.

The independent-sample T test table, first tests whether the two groups have the same variant. The hypothesis: Ho: both groups have the same variant, and H1: both groups do not have the same variant. So it is known that all variables have a Sig value>0.05 (H0 accepted). This means that the two data groups have the same variant. The data explains that the rural and semi-urban communities are not significantly different in all respects (PDI, IDV, LTO, IVR, MAS, UAI).

The second independent sample T test table, test whether the two groups have the same average. The hypothesis are H0: both groups have the same perception, and H1: both groups do not have the same perception. On the output it is known that the variable has a Sig (2-tailed) value>0.05, so H0 is rejected. Meaning that the two groups have different perceptions about the PDI, IDV, LTO, IVR variables. Only in the UAI and MAS variables the two groups have the same perception.

2. Anova Test to Four Family Typologies

The typologies are: (1) Minang father + Minang mother, (2) Minang father + non-Minang mother, (3) non-Minang father + Minang mother, (4) non-Minang father + non-Minang mother. From the descriptive table it appears that the non-Minang father + Minang mother had the greatest average perception of PDI, IDV and LTO. Minang father + non-Minang mother had the largest UAI perception rate. Minang father and Minang mother had the greatest MAS perception average. Before continuing the test, keep in mind that one of the assumptions of Anova is that the variance must be the same.

From the test of homogeneity of variance table, it can be seen that the test results show that all six variants of the groups have $\text{Sig} > 0.05$, so the Anova test is valid for testing this relationship. Then to see whether there are differences in perceptions of the four family groups, we see it from the Anova table. From this table $\text{Sig} > 0.05$ is obtained. Thus, at the real level = 0.05 we accept H_0 , so the conclusion obtained is that there is no significant difference in perceptions regarding the four typology groups. If the test results show H_0 failed to be rejected (there are no differences), then further testing (Post Hoc Test) must be done.

Discussion and Interpretation

1. The characteristics of Societies in Rural and Sub-Urban Area

In the rural area (Nagari Sungai Batang), people tend to accept the existence of hierarchies and recognize that everyone is naturally in certain positions without questioning. They prefer not to be integrated in a group because in reality they do live apart, far from each other. Therefore, this community is accustomed to the attitude of wanting to minimize a condition that is completely uncertain and unusual. They will slowly change it to get certainty. This is done by implementing several rules, laws and regulations.

This community believes that everything needs to be regulated by strict norms. This rural society prioritizes competition, decisiveness, material, ambition and power. This is an impact of how much they want certainty in getting a source of livelihood. They are more concerned about the future by upholding pragmatic values,

oriented towards the rewards that will be obtained. This includes persistence, future savings and the capacity to adapt to a new situation.

In the semi-urban area (Nagari Maninjau), people don't like hierarchies among individuals. This is due to the diversity of tribes living in this area. No one wants to be the lower tribe compared to others. They live in an integrated manner so that one and another experience quite intense interactions in daily life. This situation is supported by the level of population density in the semi-urban area that tends to be higher than in the rural area. A complete uncertain situation is responded with a mediocre attitude. They are not accustomed to implementing regulations in a domestic nature, so they do not have signs about what should be prioritized and what is not necessary. The current condition where the number of unemployment is increasing due to the poor condition of the Maninjau Lake, does not change people's attitudes about certainty. They tend to adapt with new situations, in the sense that they are easy to switch jobs even though it is not necessarily promising, for example: sometimes they work as a public transportation motorcycle driver.

They prioritize good relationships and quality of life so that they exclude competition and firmness, and are not too interested in having power in the society. This semi-urban society has a tendency to fulfil its satisfaction which is relatively free according to the basic human and natural desires associated with enjoying life and having fun. In the other hand, they appreciate the past and present events, including the accompanying establishment. They also appreciate the tradition so that they often held various traditional rituals in Nagari Maninjau. This is to be the addition to the status of the area as the capital of Tanjung Raya District.

This research proves that fathers and mothers living in semi-urban area (in this case Nagari Maninjau), are more loyal to inherit Minangkabau culture compared to rural area fathers and mothers, Nagari Sungai Batang (Firdaus 2018a).

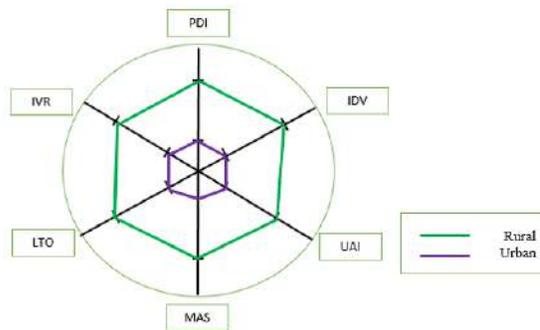


Figure 2 cobweb graph of domicile using Hofstede's dimensions

1) The characteristics of societies according to family typologies

In families with configurations of Minang father and Minang mother (MF+MM), children are taught about the importance of competing in a healthy manner. This type of family is quite strict and introduces that life needs to have enough materials to achieve success. Parents in this configuration teach optimism in work because in the end this attitude can prepare children into a more competitive world. Minang father and Minang mother teach their children about the need to have confidence and respect for others.

Low power distance value shows that this family does not agree with the existence of hierarchies that come naturally. For them, even if hierarchy persists, this is based on achievements. Therefore, children are educated to always excel in any subjects. Togetherness values are always fostered in this family. "Maintaining tradition means creating stability. If not maintained, this condition can cause a shift in social practice or even cause damage in the cultural environment that has existed for so long" (Awe 2010).

The value of solidarity is something that must be maintained by the children, because the more friends they have, the wider the network of friendship that they will get. This situation make parents feel more secure to leave their children in the midst of society because this network will protect their children. This type of family thinks that sustenance has already been arranged, so there is no need to think about it. Low uncertainty avoidance values make this family feel they don't need to be too strict to teaching

their children to have savings. This type of parent allow their children to enjoy life as long as it is still within reasonable limits. They are more flexible in controlling the wishes of children's consumptive attitude because sustenance can be sought later.

In families with Minang father and non-Minang mother (MF+nMM), children are taught to always be vigilant about uncertain situations through applying various binding regulations at home. Children are taught to be more systematic in thinking and acting because they thus understand the risks that occur if they then live in uncertainty. Like the MF+MM family type, this family also disagree with the hierarchy in society that comes naturally, not on merit. They also teach children about the importance of socializing and having many friends, but not to compete. For this family, life for mutual cooperation needs to be taught to the children so that they do not become selfish throughout their lives. Parents do not strictly teach persistence in life, therefore children are taught to be grateful for whatever sustenance they have gained.

In families with non-Minang father and Minang mother (nMF+MM), children are taught to be adaptable to the environment. They prepare children to be strong in facing the situation as a minority, a situation that might force children to be in the bottom hierarchy. For this reason, this family strongly recommends that children diligently save money to prepare themselves for tomorrow. But because children are also taught how to socialize well, there is a tendency for these families to be happier to see their children not to be confined to strict regulations so they can enjoy their teenage years.

In families with a combination of non-Minang father and non-Minang mother (nMF+nMM), children are taught that if they want to succeed, achievement is needed. Success does not come by itself and social status does not come naturally. Children are taught to always be able to maintain friendship well, prioritizing good relationships with others in order to get the desired quality of life. But on the other hand, children are taught about the importance of learning from their parent's experiences, namely about their failure and success. Parents are freeing children to explore

their interests so that there is a balance between obligations and their rights.

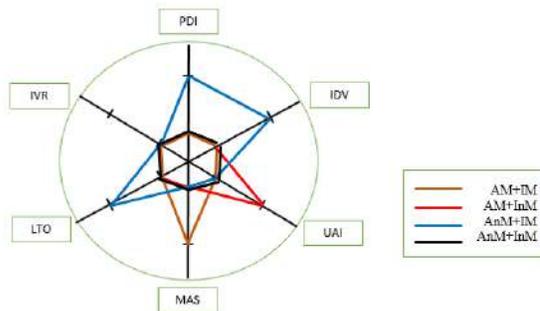


Figure 3 cobweb graph of family typologies using Hofstede's dimensions

In Nagari Maninjau (semi-urban area), most people who have a low power distance index (PDI) are families with the typology of MF+MM, MF+nMM, nMF+nMM. While people who have low collectivism vs individualism (IDV) are families that have typology configurations MF+MM, MF+nMM, and nMF+nMM. Society with low uncertainty avoidance index (UAI) are those with MF+MM, nMS+MM, and nMF+nMM. Whereas the low masculinity vs femininity (MAS) value is owned by MF+nMM, nMF+MM, and nMF+nMM. Low long-term orientation (LTO) are those with MF+MM, MF+nMM, and nMF+nMM. And finally, families with low indulgence vs restraint (IVR) are MF+MM, MF+nMM, nMF+MM, and nMF+nMM.

2) Maintained and Inherited Core Values of Minangkabau Culture

This study highlights families who have mothers from Minang with fathers who also come from Minang (MF+MM) and those from non-Minang (nMF+MM). This is because in the matrilineal culture the role of women occupies a central position. In the case of inheriting material and immaterial values, the maternal lineage determines. Because these two family typologies are Muslims, interviews were also conducted with a non-Islamic family that has a non-Minang father and Minang mother (nMF+MM) to get balanced data.

- 1) **In an Islamic Minang father and Minang mother family (MF+MM)** – This family type applies good manners at all times. For example, if the father comes home from work, the child greets and prepares him a drink. The norms of courtesy are taught and derived from good or bad instincts in society and are based on the provisions of Islam. The four words/*kato nan ampek* (*kato mandaki, kato manurun, kato malereng, dan kato mandata*) are taught in the family because of its practicality and being easily understood by children. Parents instill strong religious values to their children, such as prayer and fasting. Especially for girls, it is recommended to use the hijab as early as possible.
- 2) **In an Islamic non-Minang father and Minang mother family (nMF+MM)** – father and mother teach good manners according to what they have learned from both different cultural backgrounds. The value invested is that boys and girls must share responsibilities for whatever they do. Another value that is primarily invested is to respect older people, as older people also should respect the younger, both in words and deeds. The four words/*kato nan ampek* are still taught to children as a manifestation of family adaptation to their current living environment.
- 3) **In a non-Islamic non-Minang father and Minang mother family (nMF+MM)** – father and mother teach about the etiquette of the local community so that children are more easily accepted in association to the community and at school. The implementation of the four words/*kato nan ampek* is considered logical enough to be taught to their children because it contains universal good values. Good value besides being planted based on local customs, also from the religion adopted by both parents.

Minangkabau identity has been formed by nature and culture. Human life must reflect on the perfection of natural orchestration that works complementary (Firdaus 2018b). This is the core value of the Minangkabau matrilineal culture which is the essence of *adat nan sabana adat*. Human and nature need each other because each

doesn't have the perfect ability to survive. Like nature, humans have different roles in life. Therefore, they must be seen as equal, as the proverb: *tagak samo tinggi, duduak samo randah* (standing at the same height, sitting at the same low). The difference in function does not necessarily lead to different judgements. A proverb: *nan buto paambuiah lasuang, nan pakak palapeh badia, nan lumpuah paunyi rumah, nan kuaik pambao baban, nan binguang disuruah-suruah, nan cadiak lawan barundiang* (the blindman blows the wistle, the deafman shoots the gun, the paralyzed man stays at home, the strongman carry goods, the stupid man to be commanded, the smart man is the negotiator). According to the dignity of one's function, there are also differences, some are farmers, porters, traders, scholars, teachers, and so on.

Socio-psychologically, human abilities are not the same. In nature, there are various types of trees that have various fruits with different shapes and flavors. But of course the fruit we like is the one that has a delicious and sweet taste. Likewise with humans, differentiating views on humans is determined by their achievements in trying to be noble, famous, smart, or rich.

In order to obtain good and valuable results really depends on the situation and condition. As an example given by nature, from the same species the same fruit will be produced, but the weight and quality of the delicacy will not always be the same. However, every trees need fertilizer and good processing. The essence of Minangkabau matrilineal teachings are learning from the nature. It essentially teaches children to always excel in any fields they are engaged in. It is the ideal value of Minangkabau culture to be passed on to the younger generation who are millennial generations.

Conclusions

This research raised the popularity of Hofstede's concept to analyze three issues, and concluded it as follows: (1) a region that has the potential to becoming the pioneer in the effort of preserving local culture through inheritance of Minangkabau cultural values is Nagari Maninjau, as the semi-urban area. This is because this semi-urban area has low LTO scores. People with low LTO tend to teach their children about

past and present events because most of their children can respect tradition. Here, the community is also more concerned with good relationships and they are happy to hold socialization activities. They believe that a good relationship will result in a better quality of life. They do not want to accept hierarchies in the society that appear naturally. Parents teach the children that if they want to lead or master something, children must have qualified achievements and skills. Besides that, children must also have a high concern of others, (2) the family typology that is suitable to be used as a model in an effort to pass on Minangkabau cultural values is the configuration of MF+MM and nMF+MM. The reason is because the role of mothers occupy a central role in matrilineal culture. In the case of inheriting material and immaterial values, the mother's lineage determines. The role of a *mamak tungganai*/uncle/the mother's brother, as an important actor in educating children is not significantly found in the study site, (3) the core values of Minangkabau culture that are maintained and ideal to be inherited are those reflecting on the perfection of natural orchestration that works complementary. They need each other because they don't have perfect human abilities. In Nagari Maninjau, it is evident that the erosion of Minangkabau culture has been going on for a long time. The value of goodness and glory has referred to the order of the teachings of Islam, it is (almost) not based on Minangkabau traditional teachings anymore. The essence of Minangkabau matrilineal teachings about learning from nature reflects on the expectation for children to excel in any field they are engaged in, and refers to the orderly system that works in nature. Not enough to be a mediocre person in an era full of competition like today. This is the ideal value of Minangkabau culture to be passed on to the younger generations.

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