

## **INDONESIA-MALAYSIA CULTURAL NETWORK OF MINANGKABAU DIASPORA: A PRELIMINARY FINDING**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This article assesses social and cultural network between Indonesia and Malaysia through the Minangkabau diaspora in Malaysia within the context of cultural change. Qualitative method used in this study includes the observation of the Minangkabau cultural changes, then the documentary studies to explore the historical information regarding Minangkabau diaspora in Malaysia and its impact to the matrilineal kinship system. The unstructured interview also used to interview the second, third or fourth generation of Minangkabau diaspora, and the new migrant Minangkabau. This paper introduces the concept of “patrilinealization” and “nuclear-familization” that influence to the cultural change among the third or fourth generation of Minangkabau diaspora. These factors have made them uprooted from their cultural roots; however, some are practicing the hybrid culture. Although this paper shows about the social and cultural changes of Minangkabau in Malaysia, the potency of social and cultural networks remains potential as they still utilizing their network for cultural and economic purposes. The network between the diasporic communities in Malaysia has a positive potency to develop cultural community network in the region.

**Keywords:** Minangkabau; cultural network; diaspora; Malaysia; Indonesia

## **JARINGAN BUDAYA INDONESIA-MALAYSIA MELALUI PERANTAUAN MINANGKABAU: DAPATAN AWAL**

### **ABSTRAK**

Kertas kerja ini mengkaji jaringan sosial dan budaya antara Indonesia dengan Malaysia melalui diaspora Minangkabau di Malaysia dalam konteks perubahan kebudayaan. Metode kajian qualitative yang digunakan dalam kajian ini meliputi pemerhatian terhadap perubahan kebudayaan Minangkabau. Kajian dokumen juga digunakan untuk menjelaskan sejarah diaspora Minangkabau di Malaysia dan kesannya terhadap system kerabat matrilineal. Kemudian, temu bual secara tidak terstruktur juga dilakukan kepada keturunan diaspora Minangkabau generasi ke tiga atau ke empat. Kertas kerja ini memperkenalkan konsep “*patrilinealisation*” dan “*nuclear-familisation*” yang berpengaruh terhadap perubahan budaya dalam kalangan generasi ketiga atau keempat Minangkabau diaspora. Faktor ini telah membuat mereka tercabut daripada akar budaya mereka. Walau bagaimanapun, masih ada yang mengamalkan budaya hibrid. Meskipun kertas kerja ini menunjukkan tentang perubahan sosial dan budaya Minangkabau di Malaysia, jaringan sosial dan kebudayaan masih wujud kerana mereka masih menggunakan jaringan mereka untuk kepentingan ekonomi. Jaringan antara masyarakat diaspora di Malaysia mempunyai potensi positif untuk membina hubungan komuniti budaya di rantau ini.

**Kata kunci:** Minangkabau; jaringan budaya; diaspora; Malaysia; Indonesia

## INTRODUCTION

The Minangkabau community in Malaysia is one of the Malay ethnic groups in Malaysia as Malaysia is a multicultural society, comprises of three major ethnic groups, Malay, Chinese and Indian. The Minangkabau culture has attracted many researcher due to the matrilineal system that co-existence with the dominant patrilineal system. The matrilineal family system and inheritance regulation is on one side, and an Islamic way of life which stress the patrilineal system on the other side. The patrilineal system which is more dominant than the matrilineal one, to a great extent has influenced the new generation of Minangkabau diaspora. How the matrilineal kinship system is maintained by the Minangkabau diaspora within the context of social and cultural change and socio economic network? This question is important to understand the phenomena of people to people economic networking based on cultural identity between Minangkabau community in Malaysia and Indonesia.

This study focuses on the Minangkabau who have been *merantau* (out-migrated) from their heartland of Minangkabau in West Sumatera using their network in Malaysia. *Merantau* has become cultural practice among Minangkabau young males to show their strength and independent. The root word of *merantau* is *rantau* which generally means shoreline (*pasisir*), in specific term for the Minangkabau people *merantau* has come to mean “go beyond the shoreline” from wherever they came to settle outside the *darek*, or heartland of the Minangkabau in the interior highlands.

The adherence of Minangkabau people to the matrilineal system is a hallmark and the most distinctive of the ethnic Minangkabau. The Minangkabau people took the descendant line (*nasab*) according to matrilineal descent. The matrilineal kinship system can also be found in America, the Hopi Indian (Schlegel, 1984:44), in China, Mosuo society (Mattison, 2010:159-176), in Africa, Akan society living around Lake Nyasa and Ghana (Awusabo-Asare, K, 1990), in India, Meghalaya society (Nongbri, T, 2003), Indonesia, Minangkabau society in West Sumatra (Taufik Abdullah, 1977), and Malaysia, Minangkabau society in Negeri Sembilan (Azizah Kasim, 1988). The last two of Minangkabau could be said that they are the twin of matrilineal society in Southeast Asia separated by two post-colonial states of Indonesia and Malaysia.

The matrilineal Muslims of Minangkabau diaspora in Malaysia is important to be studied, especially to examine social and cultural change of Minangkabau tradition among the young generation in social and cultural context of Malaysia as they distanced by the post-colonial states of Indonesia and Malaysia. The secondly, is to examine the potential cultural network between Minangkabau diaspora in Malaysia-Indonesia within the context of socio-cultural changes. These aspect are important to study through qualitative research involves secondary resources from published books and articles. This paper also based on the observation of the Minangkabau diaspora networks from West Sumatra that already settled in Kuala Lumpur for economy activities. In addition some information used in this paper also based on the interview to the individuals of the third or fourth generation of Minangkabau that have become Malaysian citizens.

## THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF MINANGKABAU NETWORK IN MALAYSIA

The diaspora of Minangkabau in Malaysia can be traced back historically that they are originally come from the West Sumatera and settled in Negeri Sembilan (One of Malaysian states). Winstedt (1934) noted that the arrival of the Minangkabau to the Malay Peninsula occurred after the conquest of Melaka by the Portuguese in 1511. But according to Newbold (1834), the Minangkabau people from Sumatra had actually arrived much earlier than what Winstedt noted, which was 12<sup>th</sup> century of A.D. This ethnic group moved in to Malaya at the height of the

Mallacan Sultanate, and maintains the *Adat Perpatih* of matrilineal kinships system in Negeri Sembilan (Guillick. J, 2003). Those two twin communities remain maintain strong cultural network up to today. This cultural ties can be traced back from an old Negeri Sembilan stanza (Aidul Fitriaciada Azhari, 2014: 119) as can be seen as:

*Beraja ka-Johor;*  
*Bertali ka-Siak;*  
*Bertuan ka-Menangkabau;*  
*Sultan Besar di-negeri Seri Menanti;*  
*Pertuan Muda di-negeri Rembau*

Our suzerain is Johor;  
We have ties with Siak;  
Menangkabau is our master;  
Our highest local chief is the Ruler of Seri Menanti;  
Our second local chief is Yamtuan Muda of Rembau.

This stanza shows the ancient cultural and political network between Negeri Sembilan, Johor, Siak (now located in Riau Province, Indonesia), and Minangkabau (now West Sumatra, Indonesia). An *Adat Perpatih practice* is a decision making based on a consensus (*muafakat*) democracy within a tiered-representative. *Yang di-Pertuan Besar* as a ruler should be elected by the *Undangs* or ‘Law givers’, that is the title of the superior *adat* chief in the *luak* of Sungei Ujong, Jelebu, Johol and Rembau as an elective monarch system (Siddik, 1975:110; Hooker, 1970: 7; Aidul Fitriaciada Azhari, 2014:119). The *Adat Perpatih* functioned between the period of 1790s to 1870s as the customary law to regulate the succession of the king of Negeri Sembilan as well as to regulate about the matrilineal customary law (Azizah Kasim, 1988; Aidul Fitriaciada Azhari, 2014: 119)

The main features of the Minangkabau community in Malaysia and Indonesia are believe with the idea of *adat basandi syarak, syarak basandi Kitabullah* as a result of the agreement between Padri movement and Adat. Jeffrey Hadler (2008: 986) notes that when the Tuanku Imam Bonjol restored the traditional political status quo by constraining religious authority to matters of shariah and allowing customary leaders to judge social issues, he only proclaimed that “*adat basandi syarak*” (custom based on shariah). In fact, a Dutch administrator reported in 1837 the wide-spread acceptance of the formula, “*Adat barsan di Sarak dan Sarak barsan di Adat,*” which affirms that both shariah (Islamic law) and local custom are mutually constituted and salutary (Francis in Hadler, 2008: 986).

Moreover, there is faithfulness to the matrilineal system and a strong tendency to *merantau*. In the assessment process of *merantau* to other culture the Minangkabau individuals tend to think that the world is belongs to Allah (God), wherever they travel, there will be source of life given by Allah as long as they work hard and follow the Islamic teaching. Minangkabau society has also some functional philosophy of life that supports their *merantau* cultural practice, namely “*alam takambang jadi guru*” or the nature become teacher. Navis (1986) pointed out that this concept offer a guidance the people when they confronted by the forces of nature. More than that Minangkabau people also have a way of life of “*dimaa bumi dipijak disinan langik dijunjuang*” (where the earth is stepped, there is the sky to be uphold). This is important for the people of Minangkabau who are migrate out from their homeland and facing various challenges in their new places.

The two philosophical discourses explained above are the manifestation of the collective will of a society, and also the selection of a variety of epistemology, as well as the guide of an action in the new social and cultural environments. The *merantau* tradition and its supporting

philosophical ideas have become their cultural practices that has pattern of meanings inherited historically and embodied in symbols by which humans communicate, preserve, and develop their knowledge of life and attitudes towards life.

These philosophical ideas clearly demonstrate their understanding of the dialogic interaction between nature and human being as well as between human to human interactions. The word “bumi” means the place where they live and “*langik*” or sky that symbolises culture, value, and norms. This means everywhere they settled, they will respect the existing culture, value and norms. This is because they believe that the environment where they live will become their teacher of life value. Those two ideas have become their spirit for *merantau* because they believe that they will be able to learn and adjust to the natural and social environments where they migrate.

The political and economic condition in the Malay-Indonesian archipelago between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries contributed further to the phenomenon of voluntary and forced movements of *merantau* (Andaya B.W and Andaya L, 1982: 71-72). The Minangkabau Diaspora in Negeri Sembilan maintained close contact with their original villages as well as the Minangkabau royal family as to preserve their matrilineal kinships system. (Hooker, 2003: 84). The cultural network between Minangkabau in Negeri Sembilan and in West Sumatra to a great extent functioned to facilitate the out-migrants to move into Malaya regardless the colonial government had tight control over the border between the British and the Dutch territory. Cultural and political connection created important network that remain functioned up to the early period of post-independence of Indonesia and Malaya, as Indonesia experienced internal conflict between the government of Indonesia and *Pemerintah Revolusioner Republik Indonesia*, (Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Indonesia) a rebel group based in West Sumatra in 1958-1961 (Kahin A and Kahin G.McT, 1997; Kahin, 2005).

In the early 19 century, as Christine Dobbin (1983) notes that the Islamic revivalism namely Padri inspired by Wahhabi movement in Mecca that sought for the purification of the Islamic teaching. They wanted to eliminate societal problems such as smoking tobacco, opium smoking, gambling and general unlawful behaviour according to the Islamic teaching. The influence of Padri movement in West Sumatra had become very prominent as they control the political economy aspect in *pasisir* area. This Islamic revivalism stimulated conflict between the *Paderi* movement and the people of *Darek* (heartland of Minangkabau) led by the Pagaruyung leader. This situation led the wave of forced migration from West Sumatra to other places, included Malaysia as they already had social network there, although Malaysia was under the British control.

The Padri ensured the canons of the al-Quran were strictly observed. Accordingly, all Minangkabau customs allegedly in conflict with the al-Quran and had to be abolished. The Minangkabau people resist against this kind of attempt and bloody conflict could not be avoided. Some people fled from this conflict situation and the rest people were fighting for their heartland help by the Dutch. Although the Dutch army defeated Padri the tense remain there and finally in this period the relationship between *adat* and religion was reformulated become *adat basandi sarak, sarak basandi kitabullah* (Dobbin, 1983).

The 19 century wave of Minangkabau diaspora that happened in 1830 as the effect of Padri war in 1803-1838 used the existing cultural network in Malaysia. Then, the next wave of *merantau* was happened in 1958-1961 as a result of military conflict between PRRI (*Pemerintahan Revolusioner Republik Indonesia*) based in West Sumatra with the Indonesian army. Hadler notes that by the defeat of the PRRI in the middle of 1961, the Minangkabau patriotism was destroyed. This struggle against the government of Indonesia perceived by the central government as the defeat of Javanism and communism. Minangkabau people left West

Sumatra for Jakarta and Medan and this had caused the Padang restaurant boomed (Hadler, 2008:1000). They also fled from West Sumatra to Malaysia as they had cultural network in this new independent country.

The number of Minangkabau people involve in diaspora each year continues to grow, According to Mochtar Naim (1979), even in 1971 the out migrant from Minangkabau area to other places has reached 50 % of the population (Mochtar Naim, 1979: 30-33). Barbara Watson Andaya and Barnard Timothy note that the diaspora of Minangkabau in Malaysia are continue to play a significant role in the political, military, and intellectual (Andaya B.W, 2001; Barnard, 2001).

Since the Indonesia and Malaysia have become post-colonial states there are many more Minangkabau people who have migrated to Malaysia since the 1960s. This *merantau* activity among the Minangkabau in the heartland of West Sumatra to Malaysia remain continue in the millennium era for economic reason as Malaysia shows better economic growth than Indonesia. These groups from Indonesia, are classed by the Malaysian authorities as *pendatang haram* ('illegal migrants'). As the resentment of this naming which was considered as analog with pig as haram in Islamic law, then the term of *pendatang haram* changed into *Pekerja Asing Tanpa Izin* (PATI) or undocumented migrant workers. The term of "*pendatang*" often used by the opposition party dominated by the Chinese ethnic to invoke that the *Bangsa Melayu* in Malaysia are also migrant from other country as the Chinese and Indian ethnic. This political discourse is usually to attack the ruling party which is dominated by Malay ethnic that often rise the issue of ethnicity in politics under the concept of *Ketuanan Melayu* (Malay primacy). The issue of migrant workers, also often used by the opposition party to blame the government that they legalize the illegal immigrants as the ruling party political strategy to win the elections to maintain its power and political hegemony.

In the millennium, where the border of the state between Malaysia and Indonesia had been established since their independence from their colonial master, the migration of the people from Minangkabau remain continue. In post-colonial context the Minangkabau migrant are not only settled in Negeri Sembilan state, but also other states, especially Johor, Selangor, and Kuala Lumpur. Malaysia's significant economic development in recent decades, between 1990s-2000s, has stimulated many Indonesian laborers as well as white-collar workers to migrate there. Many Minangkabau migrants in Malaysia have intermarried with local Malay women by which the Minangkabau men adjusted themselves into the patrilineal culture. The integration between Malay and Minangkabau societies to a great extent moderate the political sentiment between Indonesia and Malaysia that often fluctuate in public discourses on culture, sports, and the economy. However, the role of the cultural network in Malaysia remained function to assist the diaspora from Minangkabau. For example, in Negeri Sembilan there is an association of Minangkabau community namely *Persatuan Ikatan Kebajikan Masyarakat Minangkabau Negeri Sembilan* and in Johor is *Persatuan Kebajikan Anak Minang Negeri Johor*.

## **MINANGKABAU DIASPORA AND THEIR CULTURAL CHANGE**

The matrilineal kinship system of Minangkabau in the context of the increasing horizontal mobility due to economy factor and the dominant patrilineal social structure must face the challenges of cultural adjustment historically. According James Fox (1995), the contributory factors of *merantau* for the Austronesian-speaking societies included Minangkabau people was conditioned by the overpopulation, conflict, new economic opportunities, and the importance on precedence in defining social differentiation or hierarchy. According to Tsuyoshi Kato (1982: 22,29-31), in early nineteenth century the village

segmentation due to the over population and unavailability of agricultural land in the heartland of West Sumatra were the dominant factors that made the Minangkabau people migrate. Kato's research team found local stories that the Minangkabau people migrate out from the heartland in West Sumatra reaching out Seremban, Serawak, Brunei, South Sulawesi, Sulu Archipelago of the Philippines (Kato, 1997: 617). Social tension due to some several factors seems solved through the *Merantau* from the heartland of Minangkabau. Taufik Abdullah (1984:192-3) notes that *merantau* has become essential to the survival of matrilineality, because it function to release the tension caused by overpopulation that may threaten the matrilineal principles in the inheritance of land in the *darek*. However, the matrilineal practices amongst the *merantau* people are weakened as they settled within the patrilineal society (Andaya, 2008).

R.J Chadwick (1991: 47-82) suggested different point of view in understanding the *merantau* phenomena. He argues that rather than understanding the push on men from within nagari it could be better if we consider the pull on them from the rantau. More than that he is also suggested to observe the push of their respective spouses from within the nagari. This point of view allow us to treat the Minangkabau diaspora as social capital in the network that connect *rantau* male and the female in nagari. This will lead us to the understanding on how the Minangkabau people maintain their matrilineal system through network, although the people in the *rantau* are already mixed with other patrilineal kinship system.

The three aspects of modernity like technoscapes, ethnoscapas, and ideoscapes coined by Arjun Apadurai (1996: 33-34) are useful to explain the social changes in Minangkabau tradition in West Sumatra as well as in *rantau*. The technoscapes aspect can be traced from the modern technology since the colonial era, like train that need rail way, car and buses that need road, ship that need harbour, and plain that need airport have facilitated every person to make contact with other people from different cultures. The aspect of ethnoscapas, can be observed from the opening of the vast social relations of Minangkabau community with social world outside West Sumatra. This has driven the Minangkabau culture to acculturate with other cultures and ethnics as the consequences of the increasing number of people mobility from various places to the Minangkabau cultural area. Those two aspects influence the economic, political, educational orientation and reasons (ideoscapas) that have caused the Minangkabau people are able to adapt to the new value system in different cultural context.

The technoscapes, ethnoscapas, and ideoscapes factors have led to the change in imagining the social boundary among the Minangkabau society. The mobility of people due to the modern transportation facilities and increasingly sophisticated means of communication has spawned a new outlook in dealing with traditional customs. The meaning of Minangkabau social boundary has become deterritorialized, which means the territory of the customary law has become insignificant in the recent socio-political context. The customary law not only reinterpreted, but sometimes left out for reasons already outdated. Most Minangkabau individuals who are *merantau* tend to marry with other people from different culture. Some cultural aspects to a great extent remain function in their heartland of Minangkabau in West Sumatra, but has eroded in the *rantau* of Malaysia socio-cultural context, as can be seen below:

“Our family knows that we are originally from Minangkabau, but in Malaysia we are mixed and integrated with patrilineal society so we have to adjust and follow the cultural environment, however we still maintain Minangkabau language in our extended family but do not follow the *adat perpatih*” (Personal interview in March 2016 with Nur, third generation of Minangkabau, university student who lives in Seremban).

The third and the next generation of *merantau* individuals in *rantau* have lived within the context of patrilineal socio-cultural environment, and this context has made them do not practice matrilineal kinship system. The informant siblings are married to the local man who is coming

from patrilineal family. Their children are no longer considered as the member of the Minangkabau clan, as they follow the patrilineal system. This is the effect of patrilineal social environment to the third and the next generation. In this situation they already uprooted from their cultural root, although they know about matrilineal culture.

“Yes, I know that there is matrilineal Minangkabau cultural practice but our family do not follow it any longer, because we are living in different cultural context, which is difficult to implement it. However, our extended family in rural areas remain practices some aspects of *adat*, but only the very surface ceremonial aspects, like the wedding ceremony, as Minang identity” (Personal interview in March, 2016 with Yun, fourth generation of Minangkabau, university student who lives in Kuala Lumpur).

Yun information about her family shows that they recognise the matrilineal culture but do not implement it in their life, as her family living in patrilineal cultural environment. Minangkabau diaspora in Malaysia have implemented the patrilineal Islamic teaching more as they already adopt the new socio-cultural environment as *dimaa bumi dipijak, disinan langik dijunjuang*. Another principle that they have to keep in mind as they are in *rantau* that life is dealing with the causality of action or *bakarono bakajadian* as social their awareness. This is to remind them that if they do something they will face the consequence.

*Saya di Malaysia sudah lebih dari 20 tahun, sudah jadi warga negara, Isteri saya orang Jawa. Saya duduk di Beranang, di sana ramai orang Minang, tetapi mereka seperti saya, kawin dengan orang mana-mana, jadi Minangnya sudah campur-campur. Kalau jumpa orang Minang, ya..berbahasa Minang, kalau jumpa orang Jawa berbahasa Jawa. Seharian-hari berbahasa Melayu. Di sini saya pun tidak mengurus anak kemenakan saya, masing-masing orang tua yang mengurus. Saya mengurus anak sendiri saja, tetapi persaudaraan Minang tetap kita jaga sebagai adat. Anak perempuan saya ini kalau menurut adat dia bukan orang Minang lagi, kerana ibunya orang Jawa. Jadi dia tak faham tentang adat Minang. Sekarang dia saya sekolahkan di Surakarta (Jawa Tengah), di pesantren, untuk belajar ilmu agama. Kita tiap tahun berkunjung ke saudara di Bukit Tinggi. Kadang-kadang ada yang mau ikut merantau, tapi biasanya tengok-tengok dulu apa ada kesempatan atau tak di Malaysia. Kalau ada mereka akan datang lagi* (Personal interview with Shahfudin, he moved from Minangkabau to Selangor when he was child. He is a vegetable trader in Selangor. 2 March 2016)

(I've been living in Malaysia for more than 20 years, and have become Malaysian citizen. My wife is Javanese. I stay in Beranang, there are many Minang people, but they are also mixed married like me. So their Minang is already hybrid. If I meet with Minang people, ya.. I speak Minang language, if I meet Javanese, I speak Javanese. In everyday life I speak Malay. Here I do not take care of my niece or nephew, they are taken care by their own parents. I take care of my own children, but we still maintain our Minang extended family as part of *adat*. If we follow the Minang Adat, my daughter is not Minang clan, because her mother is Javanese, so she does not know anything about Minang Adat. Now she is studying in Surakarta (Central Java), study in pesantren (Islamic boarding school) to learn about Islamic teaching. At least once a year we visit Bukit Tinggi. Sometimes, there are some people who want to *merantau* to Malaysia. They

usually will observe first, if there is a chance they will come again)

The causality concept of *bakarono bakajadian* can also be brought in social context. As can be seen from Shahfudin who socialize with different ethnics, tha has made the Minang people in his kampong learn other culture, even they internalize other cultural aspects, as in his family life. The cultural ideas of *dimaa bumi di pijak di siko langik dijunjuang* and *bakarono bakajadian* have formed the ethnic Minangkabau to be adaptable with the socio-cultural environment.

The alignment with the social environmental context shows the ability of Minang people to adapt with social and cultural environment. In this adjustment to the new socio-cultural environment they maintain their language in the extended family but very few in the nuclear family. Language in the context of extended family has become one of the cultural identities they maintain, but some other cultural practices have already been forgotten, as they integrated more to the Malaysian cultural context. The Minangkabau traditions, therefore is held by their people to be not something unchanging, but always dynamics. According to Taufik Abdullah (1972: 179-249) the permanent essence of Minangkabau culture is always in the process of constant changes and the continuous incorporation with outside world into the Minangkabau world view, and dynamism and change are part of their tradition.

The changing of era with all sorts of challenges turned out to also affect the value orientation of Minangkabau society. The values espoused Minangkabau society gradually changed over the times. According to Sairin the traditional values of Minangkabau society is remain respected in general, but not really implemented in everyday life practices (Sairin, 2002). The influence of agricultural modernization and other sector of economy as well as infrastructures have weakened *Adat* law of Minangkabau. Social controls loosened because traditional institutions lose their authority as a result of social and cultural change.

Tan Sri Dr. Rais Yatim, the government advisor of social and cultural affair, stated about the role and function of the adat perpatih in Negeri Sembilan in the launching of his book entitled *Adat: The Legacy of Minangkabau*,

*“Amat penting, pengamal adat mengetahui konstitusinya dalam pengajaran adab dalam adat itu, tetapi malangnya ada Datuk Lembaga Adat di negeri itu tidak dapat memegang prinsipnya, bagaimana tugas itu sepatutnya dijalankan. Misalnya seseorang yang menjadi Undang (Undang Luak di Negeri Sembilan), tanggungjawabnya adalah amat berat. Tetapi sekarang, apabila sudah menjadi Undang, ia nampak seolah-olah cuma hadir dalam majlis utama negeri sedangkan Undang adalah penghulu dan harus bertugas sehingga Lembaga, Buapak, anak buah, suku sakat dan seterusnya. Jika itu tidak dapat dilaksanakan, maka prinsip lama itu mungkin tidak difahami atau tidak menjalankan tugas berkenaan. Jika itu berterusan, maka institusi adat itu dengan sendirinya akan runtuh,”*

(Ainol Amriz Ismail, *Utusan Malaysia*, 10 November 2015)

Rais Yatim statement was addressed to the adat institution of Undang to understand the customary law as the constitution. Without understanding it, the adat institution will collapse. In the patrilineal context which is more dominant than the matrilineal *adat* law the third and the next generation will face a lot of difficulties in the future, because they are uprooted from their matrilineal culture.



A child from Minangkabau's mother who is married to others Malay from patrilineal culture theoretically, can be claimed as a member of matrilineal Minangkabau. But when the child already socialized with patrilineal culture in Malaysia, they themselves do not have understanding about their matrilineal culture. The social identity of the children in this situation do not defined by the Minangkabau culture, but rather by the new cultural environment. The matrilineal society of Minangkabau cannot influence the children cultural practice and this has made the children to a great extent distancing self to the Minangkabau culture. In this situation they experience more living in patrilineal social and cultural context of Malaysia.

In this social and cultural context, the identity of Minangkabau diaspora is no longer using Minangkabau matrilineal social boundary but rather Malay social context which is follow patrilineal kinship system. It can be seen in three conditions: The *adat basandi sarak, sarak basandi kitabullah* has lost its soul among the diaspora Minangkabau due to the influence of other cultures; The *induk sako* (matrilineal) system in the heartland of Minangkabau has lost its function among the Minangkabau diaspora because their descendant have distanced or uprooted themselves from their cultural root; And the higher rate of disputes over the heirloom land (*harta pusako*) from the matrilineal clan due to the economic pressure in the heartland has made the Minangkabau in rantau do not want to involve in that issue. When those three roots of identity lost its efficacy, the Minangkabau in *rantau* mostly rely on the language they used in everyday life and other ceremonials as their cultural identity. Even, to a great extent the language and the ceremonial aspects they have already mixed or hybrid with the Malay cultural context.

The Increasing level of modern demands and insight of the Minangkabau society in Malaysia has reproduced a critical attitude towards their cultural root. Their critical awareness usually targets in particular to the matrilineal kinship system. For example, social relation between father-son-nephew under the concept of *anak dipangku, kamanakan dibimbiang*) which means as father, he has to take care of his own children equally the same as his sisters' son(s) and especially the daughter(s). This idea is too hard to practice by Minangkabau diaspora in Malaysia as they experience patrilinealization due to the mix married with local Malay and socialise with patrilineal culture more than matrilineal one. More than that, when the customary law is not functioning, the role of mother's brother lost its role in the matrilineal extended family. The consequent of this is "the nuclear-familisation", by which each Minangkabau family are more concern to take care of their own family rather than extended family of *niniak mamak*.

## THE CULTURAL NETWORK AND MINANGKABAU HIBRIDITY

Mochtar Naim notes that *merantau* is the bravery of the productive age of young men, and have high ambitions to take the decision to go out from their heartland of Minangkabau. One must have the courage not only to migrate out of their area, but also to gamble life and compete with others who are already overseas (Mochtar Naim, 1979). The one who successes in rantau usually have higher level of welfare compare to the people who do not out-migrated from their Minangkabau kampong. This is actually a mystification of the *merantau* because people who are in the *rantau* not always success. Very often they just look success just because they can transfer their remittance from Malaysia to their family in their homeland. They usually do not want to go home before success but to be success is taking time, so they used their network in Malaysia to support their struggle.

Due to their length of stay in Malaysia they acculturate with other culture, and it has

strong potency to change the Minangkabau culture in diaspora. Especially when the main motive to migrate was a subtle resistance against the Minangkabau matrilineal system that is not quite in favor to the men, or due to the shortage and conflict of economy resources. In their homeland *Merantau* is actually a process of letting go from the cultural constraints which is deterministic to the individuals politically. Moving out from their own cultures to integrate into the other culture or to the global cultural system necessitates the change of values espoused. However, the cultural root cannot easily be separated away from the sphere where the culture was built, maintained, preserved, or even modified. When a person enters into the system of new or global culture, the local values espoused almost certainly change, as a result of the internalization and the objectification of new culture.

As mentioned at the beginning, that the people who migrate are mostly young men who constitute the essence of productive society. They eventually have great consciousness to change themselves for better quality of life by finding their economy success in the overseas. This condition causes the youths nomads are reluctant to return to their heartland of culture. Suppose they return, usually only for a wedding, and immediately returned to the *rantau* land even by bringing their family members. In fact, they often marry a girl who comes from their area of *merantau*. Based on the observation, there are three types of marriage among the Minangkabau diaspora. Firstly, men and girl are both derived from the Minangkabau. This type of marriage tends to maintain their Minangkabau cultural identity; secondly, only the husband who is from Minangkabau clan and the wife is local woman. This type of marriage tend to acculturate easily with the local patrilineal kinships system, and the mother will teach the children with the local language and cultural identity; Or woman who came from Minangkabau descendant married with local man. This type of marriage also has made the woman more attached with the patrilineal culture although their children can be claimed as Minangkabau clan. However, there is a tendency for the mother to teach their children with Minangkabau language and socialise the children the very surface Minangkabau culture. The result of this socialisation is hybrid identity among the Minangkabau diaspora.

Another example of Minangkabau diaspora in Malaysia, although the father and mother came from Minangkabau but never experienced matrilineal kinship system and has lost their contact with their heartland of Minangkabau they tend to practice the local culture. Moreover, the third generation of this family usually cannot speak Minangkabau language but Malay as they educated in Malay schooling system. Likewise, the council of mother's brothers (*niniak mamak*) cultural role does not function in the cultural context of Malaysia. By which the *niniak mamak* do not have to responsible for his nephew, although culturally the matrilineal system in Minangkabau heartland requires the obligation of this institution. The value and function of *niniak mamak* has changed within the context of time and space.

This shows the social and cultural change in understanding the customary law of Minangkabau society. However, they remain consider themselves as Minangkabau descendant, but without knowing their cultural root. This situation is happening because the family has been busy with their own family business that has made them more focus on nuclear family. In fact, in an interview with the Minangkabau diaspora in Malaysia, said that he strongly opposes the Minangkabau cultural idea that biological father is appointed as the *Datuk Penghulu*, because his father's attention to their children will be reduced. The impact of this resistance in *rantau* socio-cultural context is the integration of the family becoming strong. Biological father is no longer living in his wife's family, but he was the leader of a nuclear family with his wife as their partner. Education of children is no longer the responsibility and under the supervision of *ninik*

*mamak*, but in the hands of their parents in *rantau* of Malaysia. In this condition, the kinship system matrilineal that characterizes the Minangkabau gradually being reviewed as incompatible with the *rantau* cultural and economy context that has made them finally abandoned the matrilineal cultural responsibility.

Besides their matrilineal kinship system changes, one thing is quite interesting from this *merantau* phenomena, namely the creation of a new social network. The creation of social networking between the *merantau* people is a manifestation of joint efforts to adjust themselves with the new culture by maintaining their Minangkabau language as cultural identity and cultural bumper if something unexpected is happening, as can be seen from the quotation below:

We moved from Pariaman to Kuala Lumpur because we have our people here. Our people here guarantee that we will not face any problem in Malaysia. Our guarantor has a business network in Jakarta, so some of our people from Pariaman moved to Jakarta, and some of them moved to Kuala Lumpur. Here is closer rather than going to Jakarta (personal interview with Ami, from Minangkabau, a waiter in Padang restaurant and have been living for more than five years in Kuala Lumpur, December, 2015)

The social networking include: firstly, between the Minangkabau diaspora who are settled in Malaysia. This network functions for potential individuals who also have a plan to migrate in Malaysia. The name of the Minangkabau in diaspora that will give them job, social and political protection, and shelter is already well known in their heartland in West Sumatra. This is due to the fate as nomadic solidarity that has developed the value which equally binding them to help each other in *rantau*. Although that this social value remains function, it should also be noted that social networking is usually limited within the same socio-economic stratification or close family members. People who are in the upper social strata will tend to build networks with people from the same layer, as well as those from lower social strata. However, people from the lower strata may recruited by the upper strata to work together with them in business. This value remains unchanged if we compare to Naim's notes on his research about the Minangkabau in other places in Indonesia in 1970s (Mochtar Naim, 1979).

Second, the networks with their hometown usually remain strong and maintain by the first generation of diaspora but not the third generation. Social ties with the heartland of Minangkabau as mentioned in the first point are not something imaginary, but real. If there is a strong network, then it shows that attachment to their cultural root is remains quite strong. Social and cultural relations with the heartland of Minangkabau can be divided into two parts: (a) attachment to the daily life traditions such as the language use, and other non-materials culture; (b) attachment to the soil or the heirloom land (*harta pusako*) which can be characterize as material attachment. This kind of attachment usually manifest as material as well such as the capital mobilization to the area of origin, either for private or public purposes, for example to support in building the mosque, *surau*, or the renovation of the *rumah gadang* (big house) as their matrilineal house. The third generations mostly do not have these kinds of socio-cultural attachment, even their Minangkabau language to some extent already eroded.

The degree of social networks formed by the Minangkabau diaspora and the people in their homeland clearly shows cultural changes. The first is the decline of matrilineal kinship system among the diaspora family. This phenomenon indicates that the locus of cultural change and the increasing complexity of individual interests have created wide cultural distance which led the new cultural idea internalized as their inner value and externalized as their identity. In

this condition, additional identities may have been attached to the individuals Minangkabau diaspora, by which they are no longer just having Minangkabau identity, but also the hybrid one, as can be seen from the hip-hop song's lyrics sing by Waris and Datuk Hattan and composed by DJ Fuzz, hip-hop singers from Negeri Sembilan in the *Anugerah Juara Lagu ke-29 (AJL29)* in Bukit Jalil stadium in 18 January 2015.

Gadis Jolobu

*Ko Jolobak Ko Jolobu  
Tuai Padi Tigo Tangkai  
Kalau Kono Komat Jolobu  
Tak Mati Badan Menghasai  
Gurindam Dulu Dulu Jangan Ponah Dipotikai  
Tak Tahu Tanyo Dulu Jangan Goma Memandai Mandai*

*Kisah Eh Bermulo Mulut Uhang Kampong  
Kisah Ramai Gadis Cantik Kek Jolobu Berkampong  
Uhang Luar Datang Nak Cari'an Joki  
Lain Pulak Jadi Eh Terpikak Nak Buek Bini  
Tapi Silap Kono Komat Sampai Tinggalkan Keluargo  
Kopit Bawah Kotiak Bini Tanggungjawab Lupo  
Omak Ayah Rindu Tapi Dio Buek Bodoh  
Dah Takdo Menyosa Monangih Dopan Kubur*

*Uhang Luar Salah Tafsir Koba Gadih Kito Bahayo  
Lopeh Coghai Semuo Ghoto Jadi Milik Dio  
Jangan Salah Anggap Napo Lobihkan Pompuan  
Sobab Laki Boleh Hidup Kalau Campak Dalam Hutan  
Zaman Dah Boghubah Adat Di Tolan Zaman  
Dan Tak Takdo Mewaghisi Conghito Bertauladan  
Apotah Laie Mengaku Unghang Nogori  
Bilo Tanyo Suku Mano Nak Jawab Pun Tak Ghoti*

*Poie Tanyo Omak Poie Tanya Uwan  
Kok Takdo Kosompatan Boleh Tanyo Kawan Kawan  
Aktiviti Bergurindam Tolah Lonyap Dilupakan  
Sebagai Suatu Waghisan*

*Wak Wak Makan Padi Si Lomang Dalam Buloh  
Kok Dah Dapek Yang Dicari Jangan Terlansung Semayang Suboh  
Ayam Berkokok Umah Ponghulu Itu Tando Haghi Nak Siang  
Kok Dah Dapek Oghang Jolobu Tak Sabar Nunggu Malam Ko Siang*

The term of *gadis jolobu* (Jelebu girl) is actually related to the stereotype of Jelebu Minangkabau girl according to the Malay boy's point of view who does not understand the matrilineal kinship system of Minangkabau in Negeri Sembilan. This stereotype has made the Malay boy are hesitate to marry the Minangkabau girl, because they think that marrying her means all of his wealth and belonging has to be surrendered to the woman's family line and he has to live under the arm pit of wife. In fact he will only become their *sumando* (the respected guest in Minangkabau clan) who do not have any cultural role in Minangkabau community. This

misunderstanding about Minangkabau matrilineal culture has led to stereotype this culture by other Malay. This song explains that people in Negeri Sembilan remain practicing their matrilineal kinship system, although that some of the young generation do not know this kind of cultural practice, due to the cultural change in their surrounding cultural environment.

The song quoted above also pointed to the diminish of *gurindam* understanding in modern life Malay people that has led the people outside Negeri Sembilan do not understand the cultural root that connect Negeri Sembilan and Siak in historical term. This song gives message to the outsiders need to have understanding on Minangkabau culture by asking to the person who knows about it. This song is not only shows the cultural conflict or misunderstanding between Minangkabau diaspora in Malaysia who are practicing matrilineal kinship system and the Malay who are following the patrilineal kinship system. But also shows that the Minangkabau community in Negeri Sembilan has cultural network with people in the region, especially, Siak and West Sumatra. Furthermore, this hip hop song borrowed from modern genre of American pop culture combined with the Minangkabau cultural idea and Islamic identity. This shows the hybridity of Minangkabau diaspora culture.

Historically the diaspora phenomenon is a latent factor that has an impact on social, cultural, and political structural change of Minangkabau (de Jong, 1977; Oki Akira, 1977). According to Azyumardi Azra (1988: 22) Minangkabau people's religious transformation can be traced back from *surau* traditional Islamic education. The construction to the Islamization of Minangkabau society is done through *surau* which managed to change the paradigm of Minangkabau society. Islamic tradition and Islamic science managed to open the horizons of the Minangkabau so as to unite the modern notion of the social world.

Ediwar et al (2010: 227-249) found that *surau* in the heartland of Minangkabau community also function to develop the esthetical skill of the children based on Islamic teaching. This means that *surau* is not only function for praying but also a place for singing about Islamic teaching in Halaqah Tradition. The Minangkabau diaspora in Malaysia do not use *surau* for the same purpose as they were before migrated to Malaysia. The third and fourth generation already modernized and adopt the new genre of song from the media. At this point, the transition to a modern Minangkabau society is inevitable as the hip-hop song's lyrics which also incorporated the Islamic and cultural elements into to their modern lives.

Nevertheless, Minangkabau culture is not a rigid entity that isolates them, but it has the ability to negotiate with the new cultural conditions. Basically it is the principle of negotiation that has become the Minangkabau idea and value they use as a model of cultural practices in *rantau*, which also contribute to the formation of sub Minangkabau culture which shows the hybridity between Minangkabau and the new environment cultural context. This shows that in modern era Minangkabau figures in diasporic world also play important role as an agent of meaningful hybridity cultural expression. This hybridity also shows the openness of the Minangkabau culture in accumulating social and cultural capitals from the new cultural environment and network in the region and beyond.

## CONCLUSION

The cultural network between Minangkabau community in Malaysia and Indonesia has actually already existed long before the colonial time. Social and cultural change due to the development from colonial to the post-colonial state only affecting to the Minangkabau social structure, but the cultural network remain existing. The territorial demarcation between Malaya and East

Indies by the British and the Dutch found its continuation in post-colonial states of Malaysia and Indonesia do not influence the people to people networking. The cultural networks of Minangkabau diaspora in Malaysia remain continue up to the very recent era, regardless of the fluctuation of Indonesia-Malaysia relationships politically. This is because they feel that the existing network and the Minangkabau community in Malaysia has made them feels like in their cultural area, although they are not practicing their matrilineal culture. The shows that cultural identity as Minangkabau remains function to maintain their cultural ties beyond the cultural change they experienced and political situation.

The Minangkabau diaspora to some extent have adjusted with the dominant patrilineal culture in Malaysia and this adjustment mostly work from the mix marriage with the local Malay practicing patrilineal kinship system. The mix marriage between Minangkabau individuals with Malay, to a great extent, influence to the social and cultural changes. They also experiences of patrilinealization and nuclear-familization in Malaysia, by which have made the third and fourth generation of Minangkabau diaspora uprooted from matrilineal culture.

Social and cultural changes among the Minangkabau diaspora in Malaysia are inevitable as they have to adjust themselves with the patrilineal culture. This has made some of the new generation of Minangkabau diaspora in Malaysia do not really know and practice the Minangkabau culture. However, some of them remain practicing the Minangkabau language as their cultural identity. This cultural identity, although it is very surface level, remain function as a signifier of Minangkabau identity that may easily connect with the people from Minangkabau cultural background. The social and cultural change they experienced do not influence their cultural and social networks. Because the potency of cultural networking is relay on cultural identities, like Minangkabau language, and the similarity of home town of their matrilineal ancestor, although they are not practicing the *adat perpatih* or matrilineal customary law.

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