

Research Paper

# Revitalization of *Manjapuik Marapulai* Tradition in Minangkabau Marriage Customs

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## ABSTRACT

The paper describes the perspective of *manjapuik marapulai* (literally ‘to pick a bride-groom up’) tradition and the attempts to revitalize such tradition which is mainly found in Pariaman regency and becomes an oral tradition that requires indigenous actors who have indigenous knowledge and expertise in speaking and in using indigenous language. The actors are considered customary actors (or *pelaku adat*) who, in this case, deliver custom speech or tribute (*pasambahan* or *pidato adat*) which is aimed at declaring the intention and the purposes of the tradition. The research method is qualitative descriptive and attempted to obtain the necessary information from informants with observation techniques and in-depth interviews. The results show that since the actors’ existence is lack of appreciation today, the tradition undergoes significant changes; therefore, a model of revitalization to the tradition has been created and is hopefully accepted by local communities. In practice, the revitalization is carried out in three stages, namely: the revival of interest, the applicable management, and the transmitting. The first refers to the ways to socialize the *manjapuik marapulai* oral tradition in educational institutions, such as schools, academies, institutes, and universities. The second is carried out by re-functioning the *manjapuik marapulai*’s traditional processes and by forming the youth organizations. Management can also be done by holding training and promotion, and by involving young people in a series of events. The last may cover the radio and TV broadcasting in local television, the advertisement to stimulate cultural appreciation, and the inventory. It is suggested that Pariaman should have proficient and capable actors because the core of the tradition is the actors themselves.

**Keywords:** *Manjapuik marapulai*, revitalization, *pasambahan*, customary actors

## INTRODUCTION

*Minangkabau* customs (or *adat Minangkabau*) regulate the community order and adjust the interaction among tribes in *anagari* (region or area), which are adapted to the local *nagari* culture. The customs are determined by mutual agreements among parties, such as *panghulu* (*adat* leaders who have appellation), *ninik mamak* (a group of *adat* functionaries chosen from tribes), *alim ulama* (honorable people who have sufficient Islamic

knowledge), *cadiak pandai* (smart people who have extensive knowledge), *bundo kanduang* (women who lead families), and *pemuda* (youth); they are adaptable to the current era and are tied by the basic ethics of the *Minangkabau* customs and by the Islamic teachings.

In *Minangkabau* there are two types of customs; the first refers to the one which no body can change it at any time, therefore, it is called *nan indak lakang dek paneh nan indak lapuak dek hujan; dibubuik indaknyo*

*layua dianjak indaknyo mati* (it is neither easily cracked by heat, nor obsolete by rain; when being transformed, it is not withered and when being revoked, it is not perish). The customs primarily comprise all regulations in the form of a variety of customs, for example marriage customs, wedding ceremony among others, relating to methods of rearing the *silaturahmi* (friendship), taking care of communication, maintaining integration, and making socialization among community members of a *nagari*. The second is termed *adaik nan babuhua sintak* (customs that are not bound to defunct) and this is actually meant by tradition; because it is not permanently bound so it can be changed when necessary by the agreements made by *penghulu*, *ninik mamak*, *alim ulama*, *cadiak pandai*, *bundo kanduang*, and youth. Minangkabau is famous for its strong philosophy of *adaik basandi syarak, syarak basandi Kitabullah* (customs are based on shar'i; shar'i is based on Al Qur'an the Holy Book). All the teachings in the customs are dynamic and creative.

The philosophy of *adaik nan sabana adaik* (customs that become the real customs), which refer to the obligation that Minangkabau people must be Moslems, cannot be replaced (or it is adopted forever) and they would lose their Minangkabau identity when they leave Islam. Thus, in the procession of traditional wedding ceremony, Islam becomes the main foundation for marriage contracts. The Minangkabau community is one of the largest matrilineal societies in the world after India. Amir (2011: 9) argued the matrilineal kinship system has three dominant elements, namely: a) maternal lineage, b) marriage must be with another group (or with outside the group) known as matrilineal exogamy, and c) mother holds the central role in education, wealth security, and family welfare. In principle, the Minangkabau people, especially those living in Sungai Geringging subdistrict, Pariaman regency, still maintain their traditions compared to other Minangkabau sub-ethnic groups. People in the sub-district remain to preserve

the *manjapuik marapulai* tradition which is considered successful in maintaining local people's life from the past to the present and from the past generation to the present generation.

However, as time goes by, the tradition undergoes eroded; this is due to the increasing number of people who no longer consider that *adat* is a must. Moreover, Minangkabau youths leave their hometowns to find work for their survival (this is called *budaya merantau* [the culture of migration]). As a result, they have different ideas on their *adat* which is no longer considered important and necessary. The integration of Minangkabau people with other ethnicities, such as Malays, Mandailing, Angkola, Javanese among others by a mixed marriage cause a mixture of customs which are based on the agreement among them. The situation shifts the meaning of *adat*.

The reduced value of the *manjapuik marapulai* tradition, especially the *pasambahan*, can be seen from the less traditional procession; people seem to think of *uang japuik* (the money given to the prospective bridegroom by bride's parents or family). In the past, the *pasambahan* required several representatives at each party and was held in a relatively long time; however, today, only one representative from *anak daro* (bride party) and from *marapulai* (bride-groom party) is allowed to speak in a relatively short time. Therefore, revitalization might become the most effective way to maintain such tradition consistently and continuously.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. Minangkabau Culture

#### 1. Culture

Culture is a way of life that is developed and shared by a group of people and transmitted from generation to generation. Grammatically, the notion of culture is derived from a cultural word that tends to refer to the human mindset. Culture itself is defined as all things related to human sense or mind, so that it can show to

the mindset, behavior and physical work of a group of humans. Culture is also defined as something that will affect the level of knowledge and include the system of ideas or ideas contained in the human mind, so that in everyday life, the culture is abstract. Because it deals to everyday life, culture is closely related to society. Culture in general is a way of life that regulates that every human being understands and understands how they should act, behave, commit and determine attitudes when dealing with others. All these things are related to the way communication or language, customs and habits that occur in the environment.

E.B Taylor (1987) defined culture as the whole behavior that includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, costum, as well as other abilities and habits that humans gain as members of society. Meanwhile, Robert states that "culture is anything that individuals acquire from society including beliefs, customs, artistic norms, eating habits, skills acquired not from their own creativity but rather the inheritance of the past gained through formal or informal education.

Minangkabau is a tribe that populate in West Sumatera, Indonesia. Minangkabau or commonly called as Minang is an ethnic group who speak and respect to the Minangkabau costum and all that is applied in all aspects of life.

Minangkabau culture is a culture owned by the Minangkabau community and thrives throughout the region along the Minangkabau overseas territory. Minangkabau culture can also be said as anything that affects the system of ideas and mindset of ethnic communities who respect to the Minangkabau costum, and relate to the daily life of the community.

## 2. Marriage in Minangkabau customs

With regard to the Minangkabau philosophy, the *adat* and Islam in Minangkabau has brought positive consequences in which Islamic teachings are determined as the basic guidelines that

regulate the life of Minangkabau. One of the most important transitional periods in life is the marriage. The matriloc system in Minangkabau allows the *marapulai* (husband) living in the area around his wife's residence so that he is regarded as a new comer or an honorable guest. Therefore, he is required to be able to get along well with his wife's family. Since he must try hard to adapt to his wife's family, his position is quite dramatic and he is easy to get rid of. Basically, Pariaman traditional wedding procession consists of several stages: *manyilau* (looking for information about the prospective bride-groom), *maminang* (proposal for a marriage), *batimbang tando* (getting engaged), *akad nikah* (marriage contract), *manjapuik* (picking bride-groom up), *baralek* (wedding party), and *manjalang* (visiting bride-groom's parents).

The *manjapuik marapulai* tradition is full of significant elements of orality which is reflecting the rules of oral composition and in an oral environment, it is necessary to retain the rhyme units and the rhythms that can be heard from the expressions, proverbs, or recitation so that the oral heritage remains alive in the memory of the Minangkabau people. The tradition is carried out by members of bride's family, namely *urang sumando* (some men who are tied by marriage relationship like son-in-law, brother-in-law). They bring customary gifts with them, which would be donated to the bride-groom and the gifts might be different contents in different *nagari*. In Pariaman, the gifts consist of *sirih dalam carano* (*sirih* leaves in the container), complete wedding gowns from head to toes, and food. Meanwhile, at the bride-groom's house, the preparations are made to wait for the envoy who would pick the bride-groom up.

When the envoy arrives, they convey their *pasambahan*, which is communicated in indigenous language and consists of figures of speech, regarding to the purpose of their arrival. The *pasambahan* is carried out in stages: (i) declaring the envoy status,

who become the messengers who bring gifts and who request that the gifts would be received, and (ii) telling the envoy's intention/mission. The *manjapuik marapulai* requires a long time because the two parties should respond each other and in this case, both parties would show that the families they represent are not common people but people who hold the *adat* well and understand the *pasambahan*. The essence of *pasambahan* is to pick the *marapulai* up, who would be brought to the *rumah anak daro* (bride's house) and would be juxtaposed in the aisle (*pelaminan*).

### 3. *Pasambahan* tribute

The *pasambahan* is commonly available in some kinds of ceremonies, such as death, *pangulu* inauguration, degree award, and wedding, and has fine, high-quality of language which is rich of parables and cultural values. Djamaris (2002: 51) stated that traditional speech is a speech used in traditional ceremonies that are structured, organized, and rhythmic, and associated with *tambo* (history) and origins consisting of intention, respect, signs of greatness, and signs of glory. The *pasambahan* in *manjapuik marapulai* is a traditional speech delivered at a wedding ceremony, that is, when the bride's party comes to the bride-groom's party and intends to ask for his party's permission to pick him up and to bring him to the bride's house. In this situation, there are long dialogues between the spokesmen of the two parties, who speak in turn.

Subsequently, Djamaris (2002: 51) argued that the *pasambahan* has the following structures:

1. The structure of the *pasambahan sipangka* (host) consists of opening words, statements of tribute, submission of intentions, ending tribute, confirmation, and temporary suspension.
2. The structure of *pasambahan sialek* (guest) has the followings: opening of words, statements of tribute, delivery of intentions, affirmations, answers to the

*pasambahan* and ending the *pasambahan*, and adjustment.

*Pasambahan* as a characteristic of Minangkabau society reflects the value that is used as a role model for people's lives which is known as the value of Minangkabau culture. According to Djamaris (2002: 64) the prominent values in *pasambahan* are as follows; (1) the value of humility. This is seen from the beginning of the addition. Spokesman (or spokesperson) the host greeted guests one by one by calling his customary title. This is marked as all the guests valued by the host, (2) the value of deliberation. Deliberation is used to decide on the spearhead who will be the spokesperson and the answers to be submitted by the spearhead, (3) the value of accuracy and accuracy. In this case, an interpreter must be careful and careful in listening to what is conveyed by the interlocutor, (4) the value of obedience and compliance with the applicable customs. In addition, everything that is done must be in accordance with the applicable customs. One of the principal requests can be approved if the request is in accordance with the applicable customs.

*Pasambahan* sebagai ciri masyarakat Minangkabau mencerminkan nilai yang dijadikan sebagai panutan bagi kehidupan masyarakat yang dikenal sebagai nilai budaya Minangkabau. Menurut Djamaris (2002: 64) nilai yang menonjol dalam *pasambahan*, adalah sebagai berikut; (1) nilai kerendahan hati. Ini terlihat dari awal *pasambahan*. Juru *sambah* (juru bicara) tuan rumah menyapa tamu satu persatu dengan menyebut gelar adatnya. Hal ini ditandai sebagai semua tamu dihargai tuan rumah, (2) nilai musyawarah. Musyawarah digunakan untuk memutuskan juru *sambah* yang akan menjadi juru bicara serta jawaban yang akan disampaikan oleh juru *sambah*, (3) nilai ketelitian dan kecermatan. Dalam hal ini, seorang juru *sambah* harus teliti dan cermat dalam mendengarkan yang disampaikan oleh juru *sambah* lawan bicaranya, (4) nilai ketaatan dan kepatuhan terhadap adat yang berlaku. Dalam

*pasambahan* segala sesuatu yang dilakukan harus sesuai dengan adat yang berlaku. Salah satu pokok permintaan dapat disetujui apabila permintaan tersebut sesuai dengan adat yang berlaku.

### **B. Revitalization of *manjapuik marapulai* oral tradition in Pariaman's wedding ceremony**

The oral tradition of wedding ceremony may shift when a community collectively abandons the tradition although it has been descended from old generation. Therefore, efforts to revitalize the tradition is urgent in order community is back to the habits of friendliness. Young generations should be taught how to respect their ancestor's richness and to keep the continuation. The researchers of oral tradition need to create a revitalization model to revive the tradition and the function of the cultural values and norms in the community (Sibarani, 2012: 292). In short, Minangkabau wedding ceremony should be reconditioned or reconceptualized for young generations.

Romaine (1995: 40) argued ten factors for an urgent revitalization:

1. Quantitative strength between the majority and minority groups;
2. Social class;
3. Religious and educational background;
4. Village/community patterns;
5. Loyalty to the homeland or to the land of birth;
6. Degree of similarity between language majority and language minority;
7. Vast area of mixed marriage;
8. Majority and minority attitudes;
9. Government policy on language and language education;
10. Patterns of language use.

Adapted from Whaley (2003), Kinkade (1991), and Wurm (1998), Grenoble and Whaley (2006: 18) proposed categories of language threats:

- 1) *Safe*, a tradition is considered safe when generations still use the tradition in daily life;

- 2) *At risk*, if a tradition is used by people whose numbers are limited in the same area;
- 3) *Disappearance*, the use of customs and culture decreases in the amount of speech, so that the regeneration process of custom and tradition users from one generation to the next decreases and even disappears;
- 4) *Dying*, it is said almost dying if the number of indigenous users and speakers decreases so that they no longer hand down to the next generation;
- 5) *Almost extinct*, only a small number of users speak their language; and
- 6) *Extinct*, if customs and cultures no longer have native speakers, such customs and cultures will become extinct.

### **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The approach in the research was descriptive qualitative in which the data was taken from the field. The research was conducted in Padang Pariaman regency, West Sumatera Province and was focusing on the custom actors who were given tasks to pick the bride-groom up from his family. The data sources were both primary and secondary [Lofland and Lofland (1984) in Moleong (2005: 157)]. The primary sources were taken from the custom speakers' statements during the *pasambahan* in *manjapuik marapulai* ceremony. The speakers may include: *panghulu*, *ninik mamak*, *bundo kanduang*, those who have knowledge on Pariaman's customs, and government from tourism sectors. The secondary were obtained from structured and unstructured interviews, and from passive participatory observations.

### **DISCUSSION**

Sibarani (2012: 294) argued that there are three components in the oral tradition revitalization, namely: resurrection or reactivation, management, and inheritance. The first component is intended for oral traditions that have become extinct

or do not function at all in the community; therefore, such traditions should be reactivated. The *manjapuik marapulai* tradition still exists although it is differently carried out, for example from longer period of time in the past to be a relatively shorter time for efficiency today.

With reference to the first component, the revitalization is applied by the following methods:

### **1. Socializing Minangkabau culture in schools**

Education is acceptable for all levels of age, culture, and communities and schools are a kind of systematic efforts which can be used for socializing the Minangkabau traditions for school students. There is a lesson which is called *Budaya Asli Minangkabau* (Minangkabau native culture), or abbreviated as BAM, which is categorized as local-based contents and stresses the importance of Minangkabau proverbs, moral teachings, among others.

### **2. Re-functioning the process of the *manjapuik marapulai* tradition**

The cases in some areas in Pariaman show that people are more concerned with *uang japuik* (money of picking-up) rather than the traditional process of bride-groom picking-up. The change makes the process of *manjapuik marapulai* merely a delivery of money and other demands but does not refer to the traditional process. Therefore, the roles of the local *adat* leaders are to straighten and re-function the changing views.

### **3. Establishing youth organizations**

The youth organizations are intended to instill a spirit of love to Minangkabau culture like *pasambahan* and its procedures. Today, Minangkabau youths do not understand their culture and only focus on education and work. It is hard, then, to imagine if someday the tradition can not be inherited even though the *pasambahan* is required in the traditional events. The youth's roles are important in the training of tradition.

The second component, that is, management, is related to community

demands, especially to people who regulate the oral traditions at this time. Some methods can be applied to revitalize the *manjapuik marapulai* tradition as shown in the followings:

#### **1. Managing the training for youths**

To instill a discipline is difficult, but if there are cooperations among youths, elders, and coaches, the discipline can be sought. During training, the proper time-management would not interfere the participants' school schedules.

#### **2. Public promotion**

People require *pasambahan* tradition and to promote such tradition, competitions must be held and public promotion in relation to the competitions must also be brought into public. Youth organizations must be involved in the traditional events since they are hoped to maintain the continuation of the *adat* tradition.

#### **3. Stimulate youth in the wedding tradition, especially the *manjapuik marapulai*.**

In general, the *manjapuik marapulai* tradition involves elders and the youths prefer sitting outdoors. Such conditions must be changed and youths should also be involved in order they get knowledge from the tradition. When they take part, they learn the procedures and their implementation.

The third component is the inheritance of oral traditions in which the component requires system which is applied by several methods as shown in the followings:

#### **1. Radio broadcasting on customs and culture.**

#### **2. Local TV shows on Questioning customary events through local television media.**

#### **3. Advertisements on how to love Minangkabau culture.**

#### **4. Making inventory**

The points in (1) to (3) are related to inheriting methods that are specifically directed to public who love their cultural richness. The points should be consistently and continuously available. Meanwhile, the

point in (4) is concerned with data recording and data collection which are relevant to *manjapuik marapulai* tradition; the two kinds of data can be properly archived.

## CONCLUSION

The *manjapuik marapulai* tradition is closely related to an understanding of moral values which are based on the traditional teachings in accordance with the Minangkabau philosophy. The revitalization model for such tradition has three components, namely, resurrection or reactivation, management, and inheritance. In connection with the first component, some efforts are to socialize Minangkabau culture in schools, to re-function the process of *manjapuik* tradition, and to form youth organizations. The second component is concerned with providing training for youths, promoting culture among youths and involving them in the cultural real phenomenon in *manjapuik marapulai* tradition. The final component can be carried out by means of radio broadcasting about Minangkabau customs and culture, questions and answers (QA) by radio and TV programs, and spreading advertisements, the calls to love

Minangkabau culture, and conducting inventories.

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