

**A STUDY OF MATRILINEAL KIN RELATIONS IN  
CONTEMPORARY MINANGKABAU  
SOCIETY OF WEST SUMATRA**

**By  
AFRIZAL**

**Submitted in fulfilment  
of the requirement for the degree of  
Master of Arts  
in the  
Department of Sociology  
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences**

**University of Tasmania  
February 1996**

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other higher degree or graduate diploma in any tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by any other person, except when due reference is made in the text of this thesis.

Afrizal

## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my lovely wife and my daughter who allowed their husband and father to pursue a higher degree in a foreign country and who patiently waited for him to complete his study. This thesis is also dedicated to my parents who made it possible.

## ABSTRACT

For a period, it was argued by analysts that as society develops wider kin relations are weakened, while ties within a nuclear family are strengthened. In the case of matrilineal kinship systems, it was argued that economic change, which involves movement towards a capitalist economy, weakens the matrilineal descent group and transforms it.

Recently, analysts in the field of family and kinship argue that despite economic and demographic changes, kinship continues to be important in providing a support network. Kin remain a source of economic and social support when people face economic and social difficulty.

This thesis examines kin relations in contemporary Minangkabau matrilineal society of West Sumatra, Indonesia. It studies kinship as providing networks of support. The main question addressed in this thesis is: Are kin ties weakening in contemporary Minangkabau society? The extent to which members of matrilineal kin groups who live in both rural and urban areas exchange financial, labour and social support with each other is examined. Kin relationships such as that between a mother's brother and his sister's children are examined, and views of social responsibilities between a range of kin are also analysed.

The research findings show that although Minangkabau have undergone significant economic and demographic changes, ties within matrilineal kin groups are still strong. The members of matrilineal kin groups continue to exchange financial and labour support and mother's brothers are still involved in organising marriages and in the

socialisation of their sisters' children. However, the thesis also raises the problems of limitations to the provision of care and support, and relates kin-based support to the lack of alternatives in this social setting.

The findings also reveal that it is very important to take account of both male and female roles within a kin group when examining kin relations rather than to over emphasise the role of men.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my deepest gratitude to my principal supervisor, Dr. Nerida Cook for her sustained efforts in providing criticism and comments on the numerous drafts of each chapter of this thesis. I know that it was very hard for her to read each draft because of the difficulties of writing a thesis in a language other than one's own. I appreciate very much her patience in reading the drafts and assisting with the English. I also thank Dr. Peter Gunn for his critical comments on the draft of the thesis.

I wish to acknowledge assistance provided by my friends who helped me to conduct in-depth and structured interviews. I also thank very much my respondents and my informants for their co-operation during the interviews.

I would also like to record my appreciation of the support provided by AusAid in the form of a scholarship and assistance. I also wish to express my thanks to the staff of the International Student Office for their support during the period of my study.

## **A NOTE ON TRANSLATION**

In this thesis I have regularly used Minangkabau words for basic concepts used to express ideas of kinship organisation, relationships among members of kin groups, and property and inheritance. The English version of these concepts is not a direct translation of the Minangkabau but an attempt to convey their meaning as precisely as possible in English. A glossary of Minangkabau terms can be found on page 161.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

Sociologists have predicted the weakening of kin ties as a result of economic and demographic changes, especially those associated with modern societies. Theorists have also supposed that matrilineal kinship systems in particular are likely to be eroded and transformed as a result of incorporation into the capitalist economy. This thesis examines matrilineal kin relations in contemporary Minangkabau society. It investigates the extent to which Minangkabau maintain strong ties with members of their matrilineal descent groups in order to see whether the widely predicted decline of matrilineal kin ties under modern urban capitalist conditions is true among people whose matrilineal kinship system is a source of pride and intrinsic to their ethnic identity. Attention is paid to the relationship between the members of the matrilineal kin groups of *paruik* and *mande*, rather than to corporate action of kin groups or to the relationship between kin groups. The relationship between the members of the kin groups is examined in terms of both the exchange of financial and social support practised by kin group members, and the degree of sense of responsibility for each other's welfare that they hold.

Most analysts tend to emphasise the relationship between 'mother's brother' and 'sister's children' in analysing kin relations in Minangkabau society. This approach, however, neglects the importance of the relationship between parents and offspring, between siblings, and neglects the role of women within matrilineal kin groups. This thesis overcomes these limitations by examining relationships among all members of the matrilineal kin group, and by widening the focus on the



nature of kinship ties.

The approach explored in this thesis is that of kinship providing networks of support for individual members of kin groups. As a result, exchanges of financial, labour and social forms of support among members of matrilineal kin groups are here examined as the primary focus of analysis.

Although kinship provides networks of support, there are individuals who are not in a position to receive adequate support from their kin group members. This thesis also explains this issue and proposes possible solutions for alternatives in such cases.

To investigate whether Minangkabau maintain strong ties with members of their matrilineal kin groups, Minangkabau living in both rural and urban areas of West Sumatra were studied. The rural research was carried out in villages which are situated in the core area of Minangkabau culture. The urban people studied were living in Padang city, the capital city of West Sumatra province. All of the urban respondents and informants were those who had out-migrated from rural settlements in the original core Minangkabau area.

In following sections of this chapter, readers are introduced to Minangkabau society. In the first section the territory, population and kinship system of Minangkabau society are outlined. Furthermore, in this section, the efforts of Minangkabau to preserve their culture, including their kinship system will be discussed. In the second section of this chapter economic and demographic changes taking place in Minangkabau society are discussed. The aim of this section is to provide readers with information about the degree of economic change, urbanisation and out-migration taking place in contemporary Minangkabau society. It is these kinds of changes which analysts argue

are usually responsible for eroding kin ties and breaking down matrilineal descent groups. The final section will then outline the structure of the remainder of the thesis.

### **Introduction to Minangkabau Society**

The Minangkabau constitute one of approximately 140 ethnic groups found in Indonesia (see Kato 1982: 19).<sup>1</sup> This ethnic group inhabits the province of West Sumatra. Kato (1982:20) estimates that about 91% of West Sumatra's population is ethnically Minangkabau, and according to the 1990 population census there were almost four million people living in West Sumatra (Sumatra Barat Dalam Angka 1991). On the basis of Kato's calculation, therefore, we can estimate that the Minangkabau population of West Sumatra is likely to number around 3,600,000 people.

According to traditional accounts, a boat bringing a group of people led by Maharadja Diradja landed on the summit of Merapi mountain. After the sea receded, Maharadja Diradja and his group descended and established a settlement at the foot of the Merapi mountain. This settlement developed as the very first *nagari* (village), called Pariangan, and it is from this settlement that the people believe their society spread throughout West Sumatra.

Areas under the sphere of influence of Minangkabau culture are divided into two kinds, known as *darek* (heartland) and *rantau* (areas of

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<sup>1</sup> Some estimates of the number of ethnic groups to be found in Indonesia go as high as 300. As Hildred Geertz has pointed out, 'The number of ethnic groups enumerated depends on how they are classified' (cited in Kato 1982: 19).

out-migrant settlement). The area known as *darek* consists of three *luhak* (sub-districts): *luhak* Agam, *luhak* 50 Koto and *luhak* Tanah Datar. Although the names of these three *luhak* now are the names of *kabupaten* (government administrative sub-districts i.e. *kabupaten* Agam, *kabupaten* 50 Kota and *kabupaten* Tanah Datar), the areas of the *luhak* recognised by Minangkabau are not identical with those of the *kabupaten* established by the Indonesian government. For example, some parts of *luhak* 50 Koto administratively belong to the *kabupaten* Tanah Datar, Solok and Sawah Lunto Sijunjung (see Radjab 1969:10-11 for areas of each of the *luhak*). The *luhak* are still recognised by Minangkabau people despite more recent administrative designations. *Rantau* refers to areas where those migrating out of the heartland have settled, and consists of two parts; *rantau pesisir* situated along the west coast of West Sumatra, and *rantau hilir* situated on the eastern side of the *darek*.

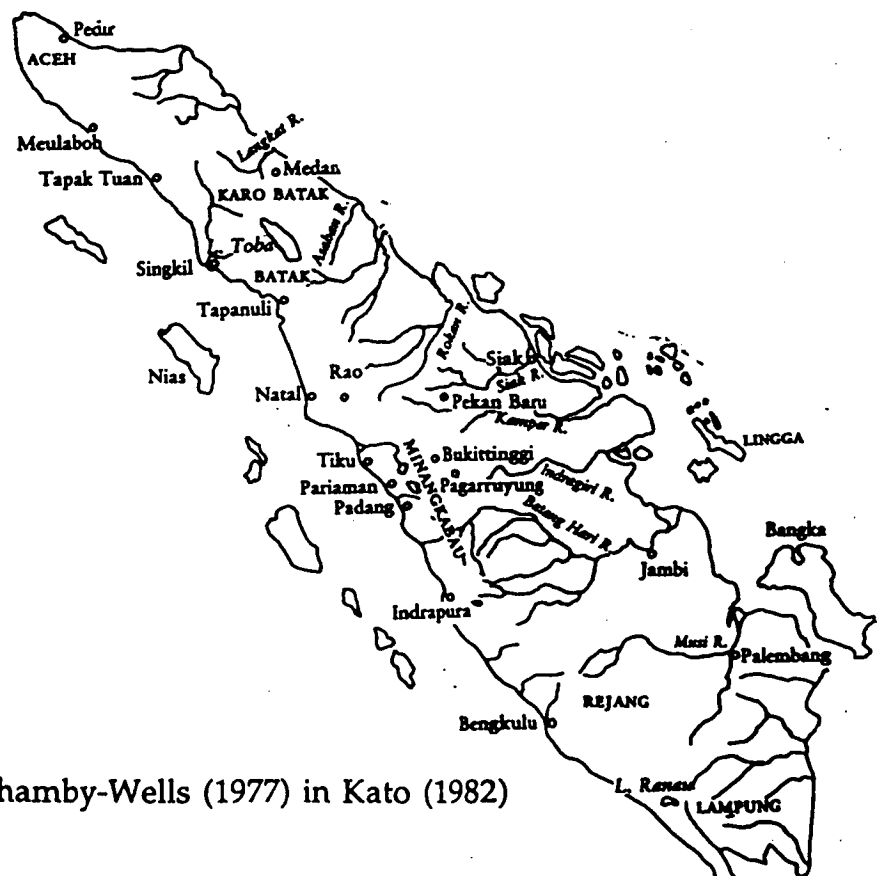
The social significance of the distinction between *darek* and *rantau* is that it is commonly believed in Minangkabau society that the influence of Minangkabau culture is stronger in the *darek* than in the *rantau*. The *darek* is regarded as the origin of Minangkabau culture, while the people who live in the *rantau* and who originally migrated from the *darek* are regarded as a source of cultural change. As a Minangkabau saying says, *adaik manurun, agamo* (or *syarak*) *mandaki* (culture comes from the *darek*, religion comes from the *rantau*). One indication of the difference between the *darek* and the *rantau* is that *rumah gadang*, the Minangkabau matrilineal long house, was rarely found in the *rantau*.

## MAP OF INDONESIA



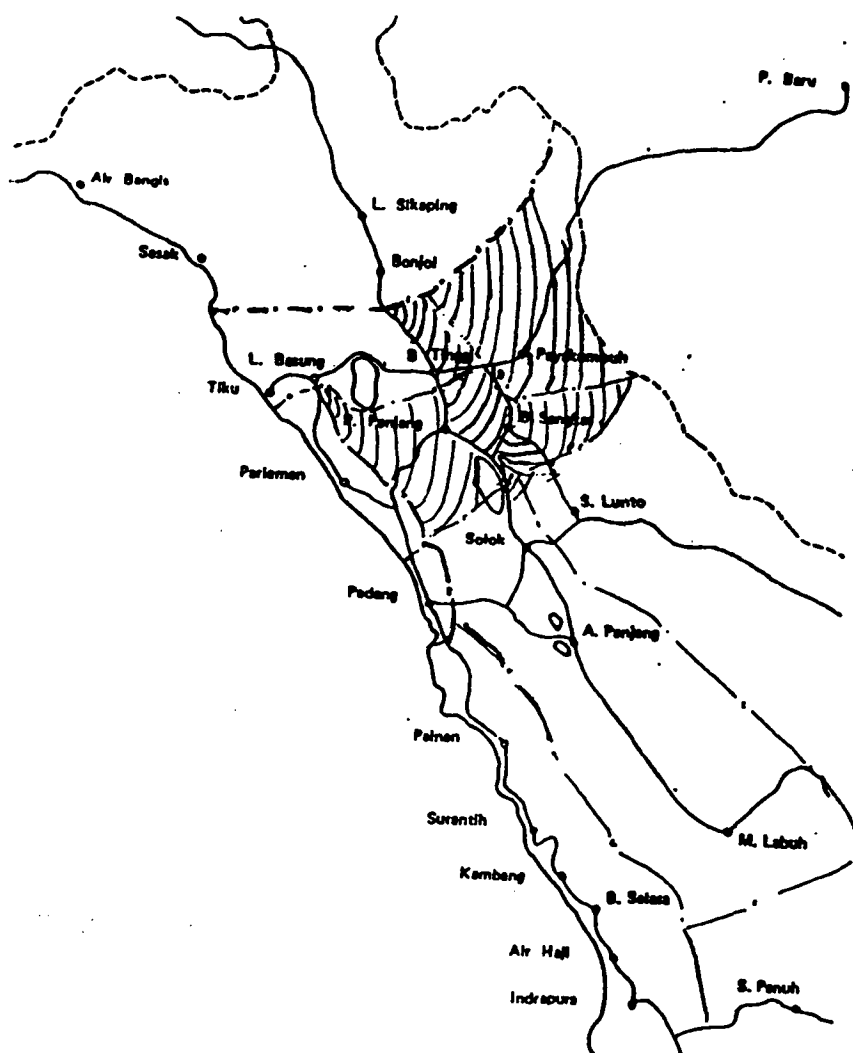
Source: Sumatra Barat Dalam Angka (1991)

## MAP OF SUMATRA



Source: Kathirithamby-Wells (1977) in Kato (1982)

# MAP OF WEST SUMATRA



)))= Luhak or Darek

Source: Modified Naim (1984)

Minangkabau society is unique among the ethnic groups found in Indonesia because of its matrilineal kinship system. Any person in this ethnic group belongs to given kin groups, *suku*, *payuang*, *paruik* and *mande*,<sup>2</sup> in which affiliation is through the mother's kin group rather than the father's kin group. This affiliation has several important consequences.

Formerly, in some cases in living memory in the early twentieth century, four generations of a kin group lived in one *rumah gadang*, a long house consisting of many rooms, each room allocated to a married kinswoman within the kin group. Besides a unit of residence, the occupants of a *rumah gadang* formed a unit of production as well as a unit of consumption (Kato 1982:55-56, Loeb 1972:101).

Additionally, property such as land is owned collectively by members of a kin group rather than individually. Individual members of a kin group only have utilisation rights over the property. This right is given more often to kinswomen than kinsmen, and the kin group's property is inherited matrilineally.

Minangkabau people are proud of their culture. They strive to preserve the distinctiveness of their culture. According to Kato,

Minangkabau have for a long time remained an enigma, a tangle of paradoxes to the outsider: ardent believers in patrilineally-oriented Islam yet tenacious followers of matriliney, well educated and enterprising yet upholding a seemingly archaic tradition, highly mobile and centrifugal in habit yet maintaining a strong sense of ethnic identity (1982:11).

Yet, contrary to the assumption of some analysts, this does not mean that Minangkabau reject change. Rather they seem to allow changes as long as they are not concerned with the principal features of their culture.

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<sup>2</sup> A full explanation of the meaning of these concepts is presented in Chapter Four. In general a *suku* is a matrilineal clan, *payuang* is matrilineage and *paruik* and *mande* are matrilineal sub-lineages of decreasing scale.

The Minangkabau call their distinctive cultural complex *adat*, which is further classified into *adat nan sabana adat* and *adat nan diadatkan* (*adat* which is truly *adat* and *adat* which has been made *adat*). The *adat nan sabana adat* is conceptualised as eternal. It is *ndak lapuak dek hujan, ndak lakang ndek paneh* (neither made rotten by rain nor dried by heat). By contrast, *adat nan diadatkan* is contextual. It changes depending upon conditions. This way of classifying *adat* allows the Minangkabau to select which elements of *adat* should be preserved and which are allowed to be changed.

However, it is not clear which elements of *adat* are classified as *adat nan sabana adat* and which as *adat nan diadatkan*. It is my impression that what Minangkabau classify as *adat nan sabana adat* includes: *adat sako* and *pusako* (the rules of inheritance), *adat ba panghulu* (the tradition of having a kin group leader), *adat ba suku* (the tradition of having a clan) and *adat ba dunsanak* (a culture of strong solidarity with fellow members of one's kin group). These elements of *adat* express the identity of Minangkabau identity, and are those that Minangkabau strive to preserve.

Minangkabau society probably began to convert to Islam around the beginning of the sixteenth century (Dobbin 1974: 324). However, the teachings of Islam were sometimes observed to be practised less than strictly among Minangkabau even centuries after their conversion. For example, until 1761 Minangkabau living in the *darek* areas were still described as 'mostly pagan'. They did not observe the common Islamic practices of five daily prayers and fasting (see Dobbin 1974:327).

By the late eighteenth century the first religious revival, led by Tuanku Nan Tua, arose in the *darek* areas, but this mostly consisted of expounding Islamic teachings to help the Minangkabau understand

Islam better (Dobbin 1974:328). The second Islamic movement, called the modernist movement, took place soon after this first movement, and had a significant impact on Minangkabau culture.

The Islamic modernist movement spread its influence among the Minangkabau in the beginning of the nineteenth century. The aim of this movement was the Islamisation of all aspects of life in Minangkabau society. The modernists claimed that the traditional practices were against those of Islam. This movement brought about civil war (the *padri* wars), which ended in 1837. The movement succeeded in strengthening the force of Islam and increasing its influence on Minangkabau life. This movement was also successful in redefining *adat*. However, the movement did not alter the social structure of Minangkabau society (Abdullah 1971:1-6).

As a result of the modernist movement, Minangkabau now accept Islam while at the same time also preserving their culture. To accommodate Islam, *adat* is redefined in such a way that it is subordinated to Islam. *Adat* has been redefined, as suggested in the attitude *adat basandi syarak, syarak basandi kitabullah* (culture is based on religion, and religion is based on the Quran). However, this applies only to *adat nan diadatkan*. *Adat nan sabana adat* continues to be organised according to tradition. In other words, this highest classification of culture is not organised according to Islam (Abdullah 1971:6).

In the case of inheritance, for example, Minangkabau people accept the inheritance rules of Islam, *faraid*, which are individually oriented, in the sense that property can be divided among the heirs patrilineally, and sons receive more than daughters (see Benda-Beckmann 1979:200-202 for detailed explanations of the *faraid*), while at the same time they also



preserve matrilineal principles of inheritance. Minangkabau distinguish three kinds of inheritance; *harato pusako* (ancestral property), *sako* (the title of the chief of a kin group), and *harato pancaharian* (acquired property) (Thomas 1981:85-92). *Harato pusako* and *sako* continue to be inherited according to Minangkabau cultural rules, while *harato pancaharian* is inherited according to Islamic precepts.<sup>3</sup>

In addition to preserving their patterns of inheritance, Minangkabau people also strive to preserve the role and significance of their *panghulu*. For example, although weddings are organised in accordance with the teachings of Islam, the role of the *panghulu* in the wedding ceremony remains. In order that a man and a woman can be married, they have first to go through the Islamic *akad nikah*, a ceremony of marriage agreement performed by the bride and bridegroom in the presence of an *angku kali* (a man who is officially appointed to organise *akad nikah*). It is a bride's father who makes the marriage agreement with the bridegroom, even if the bride's father is divorced from the bride's mother. If the bride's father cannot be present for whatever reason, her father's brother should replace him. However, before performing *akad nikah*, an individual requires formal permission to marry from his/her *panghulu*. Moreover, it is thought that someone who is eligible to be an *angku kali* should already be a *panghulu*.

Preservation of the importance of *panghulu* can be seen in another, more substantial context, which was the enactment by the Indonesian government of 'Law No. 5 of 1979 on Village Administration'. The aim of this law was to standardise the form and functioning of local administration throughout Indonesia (see Kato

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<sup>3</sup> For further information on inheritance of *harato pusako* and acquired property see Benda-Beckmann 1979.

1989:91-92). This village law ended the role of the *nagari* as the lowest unit of government administration in West Sumatra.

Prior to the implementation of the law in 1979, the *nagari* had its own political and judicial apparatus (Kato 1982:41). A *nagari* was governed by *panghulu* (Benda-Beckmann 1979:58, Dobbin 1974:321). The *panghulu* 'had the most authority and influence in the *negeri*<sup>4</sup> and it was this *penghulu*<sup>5</sup> who settled disputes arising in the *negeri*, either by himself within his own *suku* or within the *rapat penghulu* (council),<sup>6</sup> (Dobbin 1974:322). After 1979, the *nagari* ceased as a unit of government administration in West Sumatra. It was divided into independent *desa*, which comprise the lowest government unit according to the new law and are governed by *perangkat desa*, i.e. the *desa* head and his/her staff.

The *desa* head is elected for an eight-year term. The election committee is chaired by the *camat*, the head of the sub-sub-district. The prerequisites for a *desa* head are no longer rooted in *adat* but now are formally based on age and education (Kato 1989:108).

Worrying that the disappearance of *nagari* as administrative unit and division of a *nagari* into independent *desa* administratively could affect *adat*, the Minangkabau voiced their concerns to local government. This resulted in the maintenance of the *panghulu*'s authority in Minangkabau society. In 1983 the local government launched Provincial Regulation No. 13. This law recognises and maintains the *nagari* as an integrated unit, in the sense that a *nagari* is recognised as a unit of *adat*. As a unit of *adat*, a *nagari* is governed by a *Kerapatan Adat Nagari*, (*Nagari adat* Council), which consists of all the *panghulu* in the *nagari*

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<sup>4</sup> *Negeri* is the Indonesian word for *nagari*.

<sup>5</sup> *Penghulu* is the Indonesian word for *panghulu*.

<sup>6</sup> A *nagari* council comprises of the representative of each *suku* within the *nagari*. Usually, a *nagari* consists of at least four *suku*.

(Kato 1989:96-97).

Thus, although national government standardised the village administration throughout Indonesia, for Minangkabau society this law has been adjusted to accommodate the strong desire among Minangkabau to preserve their culture. As a result, *panghulu* remain functional in Minangkabau society. *Adat* matters such as solving disputes about land, selling land and organising marriage are still in the hands of *panghulu*.

Additionally, it seems that having a *panghulu* has a symbolic meaning for Minangkabau; it is a part of their identity as Minangkabau and therefore culturally still important. Recently, many high ranking government officials and wealthy individuals have been appointed as *panghulu*, even though they do not live in their home village. In addition, the ceremony of formally appointing a new *panghulu* is still alive. It is becoming a trend in Minangkabau society to invite local government officials to attend this celebration. Furthermore, most of the kin group members who live in out-migrant areas come back to their home village to attend the ceremony of appointing their new *panghulu*.

Preserving Minangkabau *adat* is also now achieved through formal education. Since 1994 Minangkabau *adat* has been taught in primary and junior high schools in West Sumatra. This *adat* course, which is part of the local content of the curriculum, outlines the kinship system and political organisation of the Minangkabau.<sup>7</sup>

Another example of the strong determination of Minangkabau society to preserve its culture was a course in *adat* for adults held by a *Kerapatan Adat Nagari* (*nagari* council) of *nagari* Koto nan ampek of Payakumbuh city. This discussed the management of ancestral property,

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<sup>7</sup> See Kurikulum Muatan Lokal Propinsi Sumatra Barat, Sekolah Lanjutan Tingkat Pertama 1994.

the role of *panghulu*, and the norms of relationships within a kin group. Those attending this course were people who lived in and originated from *nagari* Koto nan ampek and some teachers who were teaching Minangkabau *adat* in primary and junior high schools within *nagari* Koto nan ampek.<sup>8</sup>

Significantly, *nagari* Koto nan ampek is situated in Payakumbuh city, one of the urban municipalities of West Sumatra. This tells us that the wish to preserve Minangkabau culture is even held by urban people.

The brief discussion above shows the extent to which Minangkabau are attempting to preserve core features of their culture as one way to maintain their identity as Minangkabau. This thesis examines the extent to which the Minangkabau are preserving one such feature, *adat ba dunsanak* (the culture of strong solidarity with fellow kin group members) in their contemporary ways of life.

### Economic and Demographic Development

The Minangkabau have been involved in commercial activities for a long time, and gold was the product that first introduced this society to commerce. As Dobbin says '(t)he gold found in the interior of their country had given the Minangkabau value to the outside world as trading partners from at least the eleventh century' (1977:2). However, gold trading seems to have been most significant during the seventeenth century. At this time, the demand for Minangkabau gold was insatiable. The Dutch were keen to obtain Minangkabau gold to be used as a means of exchange for pepper and spices in their Asian trade, because they found it difficult to pay for those products with money (Dobbin 1974:2).

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<sup>8</sup> The course was held at the time of my research. I attended the course on one occasion.

Minangkabau gold was exchanged for clothes and salt (Dobbin 1974:20). However, gold was only panned in some areas of *luhak tanah datar* (Dobbin 1974:7-9).

In addition to gold, Minangkabau also grew pepper for commercial production from the seventeenth century on, although its cultivation was limited to *rantau pesisir* areas (Kathirithamby-Wells 1976:67-71). However, as with the case of gold, pepper did not contribute much to the development of the Minangkabau economy. By contrast, coffee does seem to have had a significant role in the Minangkabau economy in the past.

Despite their long tradition of commercial activities, the beginning of the spread of a money economy in Minangkabau society was closely linked to coffee cultivation at the beginning of the nineteenth century (Kato 1982:104). Coffee cultivation stimulated trade throughout Minangkabau society both internally and externally (Dobbin 1974:24). Coinciding with the spread of coffee cultivation, money as a means of exchange was introduced, replacing barter at the beginning of the nineteenth century (Dobbin 1974:24-25). Thus, coffee cultivation introduced the Minangkabau people to the money economy by providing people with a flow of cash (Kato 1982:104).

The penetration of the money economy into Minangkabau society was accelerated in the years after 1908, when the colonial government introduced money taxes (Abdullah 1971:8). These taxes hastened the development of the money economy by forcing people to earn money. Although people still grew rice for their own consumption, they increasingly grew cash crops to meet their financial needs (Schrieke 1955:98-106).

Additionally, soon after the introduction of money taxes

Minangkabau encountered money lending. In 1911, the colonial government introduced the people's credit system, which was 'a network of village banks under the jurisdiction of *adat* authorities'. The banks had spread to most administrative levels of Minangkabau society by 1916 (Abdullah 1971:9).

These economic changes were assisted by circulating markets which were invented at the end of the nineteenth century. Every *nagari* held its own market days once or twice a week. Rotating market days were also held at the district level (Abdullah 1971:9).

However, Minangkabau society did not develop large scale economic activities (Kahn 1980:12). Gold declined seriously as a commodity from around 1780 due to a drying up of the supply (Dobbin 1977:16). Although the traditional textile industry was revived in 1934 in Minangkabau society, it did not last long. It declined again after 1937 when it was overtaken by competition from textiles made in Java (Oki 1979:150). Similarly, coffee cultivation, which was also a very important product for the Minangkabau at the beginning of the nineteenth century, has also declined.

Agriculture is still organised individually and on a small scale (Kahn 1980:12), and appears to be dominated by rice cultivation, which is predominantly for subsistence. Of 424,098 hectares of food crop yields recorded in 1991, 88.3% were rice (Sumatra Barat Dalam Angka 1991). Plantations also remain limited and small in scale. For example there are only 151,271 hectares of such plantation crops as rubber (45,961 hectares), coconut (56,072 hectares), cassia-bark (12,504 hectares), cloves (7,375 hectares), sugar cane (7,562 hectares), tobacco (595 hectares), coffee (16,104 hectares) and gambier (5,098 hectares).

Additionally, until 1990 there were only 112 large or medium-size

industrial companies throughout West Sumatra (Sumatra Barat Dalam Angka 1991). Neighbouring provinces of Riau, Jambi and North Sumatra have a different economic structure from that of West Sumatra. These regions are dominated by large scale plantations such as rubber and palm. The province of Riau is even rich with petroleum industries.

If we look at rice yield, the province of West Sumatra is the seventh highest rice cultivation area of the twenty-seven provinces of Indonesia and the third highest of the eight provinces of Sumatra. However, in terms of foreign trade West Sumatra is only eighteenth in Indonesia and is the second lowest in Sumatra. Similarly it has a middle position both within Indonesia and in Sumatra in terms of per capita gross regional domestic product: (Sumatra Barat Dalam Angka 1991). Thus, West Sumatra's economy is one of the lowest placed provincial economies in Indonesia.

However, this does not mean that Minangkabau society has fewer welfare resources than elsewhere in Indonesia. If we use the percentage of population living in poverty as an indicator of welfare, it appears that Minangkabau society is one of the most prosperous in Indonesia. The percentage of the Minangkabau population categorised as poor is the second lowest in Indonesia after the population of Jambi. West Sumatra has only 7.0% of its population categorised as poor compared to 23%-40% of the populations of Java and Bali, 15%-27% of the population of Kalimantan, 27%-55% of the populations of Sulawesi and 25%-47% of the populations of provinces situated in the eastern part of Indonesia (see Hill 1994:110-111).

In addition, the percentage of people who engage in agriculture-related work is decreasing in West Sumatra. In 1986 62.11% of West Sumatra's population were recorded as farmers. This percentage was

down to 56.41% by 1991. Most people who engage in non agriculture-related work engage in small scale individual self-employment, mostly in trading, or work as government employees (Sumatra Barat Dalam Angka 1992). It seems that the decline in the proportion of people employed in the agricultural sector is related to the high degree of urbanisation of Minangkabau society, as I will show below.

### Out-migration and Urbanisation

In addition to the uniqueness of its matrilineal kinship system, the Minangkabau ethnic group is also famous for its strong tradition of out-migration. Minangkabau out-migrate to cities both within and beyond West Sumatra. There is consensus that the present out-migration phenomenon is rooted far back in the history of geographical mobility amongst Minangkabau.

Some have speculated that this geographical mobility has been occurring since the sixth century CE (Naim 1984:66). Originally, the aim was to seek new land for agriculture (Kato 1982:88), since there was a shortage of rice fields in the *darek*. Although the *darek* was a fertile area, agricultural intensification was not practised among Minangkabau (Kato 1982:74). On the other hand, the extension of agricultural areas was difficult, because most of the *darek* areas consisted of mountains, hills and valleys (Naim 1984:230). Yet, the *darek* was highly populated (Kato 1982:73-74).<sup>9</sup> So agriculture, which mainly consisted of rice cultivation, was insufficient to support the population. Instead of intensification of agriculture, Minangkabau tended to seek new land as a solution to their

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<sup>9</sup> This is Kato's estimation based on the fact that by 1930 Minangkabau was the largest ethnic group found on Sumatra. The Batak, which was the second largest ethnic group on Sumatra, had only two-thirds of the Minangkabau population.



economic problem (Kato 1982:75).

This geographical mobility stimulated by agricultural needs was the pattern of migration before the late seventeenth century. At this time Minangkabau people left their villages to move either to areas within what is today recognised as West Sumatra or to areas around the border between West Sumatra and the Riau and Jambi provinces (Kato 1982:86-87).

Migration stimulated by non agricultural activities began in the late seventeenth century (Kato 1982:87), but little is known about the magnitude and the destinations used between the seventeenth and the beginning of the twentieth century.

Since the early twentieth century, destinations for out-migration have been cities both within and beyond West Sumatra (Naim 1984:77). By 1930 the most popular destinations for out-migration were cities and towns situated in provinces surrounding West Sumatra, especially in Jambi, Riau and North Sumatra. More than 52% of out-migrants lived in these three regions at that time. They composed a significant percentage of these regions' population. By 1930, some 43% of Jambi's population (Murad 1980:41), and about 13%-25% of the urban population in North Sumatra were ethnically Minangkabau, as were 65% of Pekanbaru's population by 1971 (Naim 1984:98-103).

However, Jakarta has become the most important destination for Minangkabau out-migrants since the 1950s (Naim 1982:117). By 1971 some 25% of Minangkabau out-migrants were going to Jakarta (Murad 1980:52). Unfortunately, the number of Minangkabau out-migrants to Jakarta since 1971 is not known, because the national population census does not record the ethnic background of the population in a region. The reason why Jakarta has become a more important out-migration

destination is, perhaps, that it is more developed than other cities, potentially providing more economic opportunities. Besides Jakarta, Minangkabau also increasingly out-migrate to other areas such as Lampung and most parts of Java. Small numbers of Minangkabau also out-migrate to urban areas in the eastern part of Indonesia (Naim 1984:139-144).

Most Minangkabau out-migrants engage in retail trading, production, and as operators and labourers (Murad 1980:84). Only a small proportion of them are government employees (Naim 1984:100).

The number of out-migrants continues to increase. In 1930, 11% of the Minangkabau population lived outside of West Sumatra. Naim estimates that in 1971 44% of the Minangkabau population were living outside West Sumatra (1984:33). In addition, migration from rural areas to cities within West Sumatra is also high. By 1971 about 25% to 26% of migrants from rural areas of West Sumatra migrated to cities within the province (see Kato 1982:135).

Moreover, the sex composition of out-migrants has also changed. Early on urban out-migrants were individual men. Those who were married left their wives and children at home in the village. These out-migrants often returned to their home village. Since 1960 this pattern of out-migration has changed. Married men now tend to bring their wives and children with them to the cities, and to live in the city permanently. The rapid growth of urban centres, and better prospects of jobs in cities are responsible for this change in the out-migration pattern (Kato 1982:150-153).

As a result, the number of female out-migrants has increased. The ratio of women to men among those who migrated to Jakarta in 1930 was 52 to 100, while by 1971 it was 78 to 100 (Castles as cited by Kato 1982:147).

This trend also applies in other cities. For example, by 1971 the sex ratio of out-migrants was 117.6 males per 100 females in cities other than Jakarta (Murad, 1980:66).

Kato explains the increasing number of women out-migrants as being due to married men taking their wives and children with them. In addition to accompanying husbands, however, women themselves are increasingly migrating alone: some 26% of women out-migrants fall into this category (see Kato 1982:148).

Minangkabau society is also famous because of the strong ties out-migrants maintain with their home village. For example, the out-migrants of a given *nagari*<sup>10</sup> usually form an organisation, called *organisasi kampung* (*nagari* organisation) in cities. The aim of this organisation is to strengthen the solidarity among people who come from the same *nagari*. Furthermore, out-migrants are also a source of financial support for their *nagari*'s development. Recently, out-migrants, led by the out-migrants living in Jakarta who occupied high rank in government, established a super-*nagari*-organisation, called GEBU Minang,<sup>11</sup> for all Minangkabau out-migrants throughout Indonesia. The aim of this organisation is to develop home village-based solidarity among out-migrants in order to help development in West Sumatra.

Why do high numbers of Minangkabau out-migrate from rural areas to cities both within and outside of West Sumatra? Since little research has been carried out, we have a limited understanding of the causes of out-migration in this society. So far, Mochtar Naim's book titled *Merantau Pola Migrasi Suku Minangkabau* is the main source of interpretation on this subject.

<sup>10</sup> Although since 1982, the lowest government administrative unit in West Sumatra was no longer the *nagari*, out-migrants still identify themselves with their *nagari* rather than with their *desa*.

<sup>11</sup> GEBU Minang stands for *Gerakan Seribu Minang* ('Minang one thousand' movement).

Naim argues that economic and social factors are the most significant causes of the high rate of Minangkabau out-migration. By social factors he means factors related to the matrilineal kinship system (1984:227-284). According to Naim, economic factors deal with the condition of the rural economy, where existing sources of economic livelihood cannot support the Minangkabau population. Since the main source of economic livelihood, rice fields, is limited, people have to leave their home village to seek new economic opportunities (1984:239-246).

However, to Naim, economic hardship is not a necessary reason for people to leave their home village, and in itself cannot explain the high rate of Minangkabau out-migration. Economic factors work when combined with social factors, in fact the kinship system. He argues that it is the matrilineal system that encourages Minangkabau to move.

However, Naim's depiction of Minangkabau matrilineal kinship is not accurate in its male-focused interpretation. According to him, the Minangkabau matrilineal system fails to provide a strong position for a man either in his kin group and in his immediate family both in terms of authority and property ownership. Out-migration, to Naim, is a response to the way Minangkabau culture treats a man by not allowing him control of his family or ownership of land. It is the solution chosen by a man in that he can exercise power and possess property in cities (1984: 271-284).

A man in Minangkabau society does exercise authority, not over his immediate family, but in his own kin group, particularly in relation to his sister's children. As far as property ownership is concerned, in this society, neither men nor women own property as individuals. The property is owned by the kin group, meaning that both male and female

members of a kin group own it. In fact, in Minangkabau society the pattern of property ownership favours men in that they can utilise either their own kin group's property or that of their wife's kin group (see Chapter Four).

Thus, the argument that the matrilineal system causes the high rate of out-migration in Minangkabau society is less than convincing. Naim relies heavily on a cultural-psychological approach without evidence. We need more research into the causes of this phenomenon. I believe it is important to examine the process of institutionalisation of out-migration. The combination of a strong and long-established tradition of trading, along with diminishing economic prospects in home villages, may be the main reasons for out-migration. Kinship may be an important factor, but not in the sense argued by Naim. It may facilitate out-migration by providing networks for members of the kin group, as has been found elsewhere (eg William (1983), Choldin (1973)).

Urbanisation in West Sumatra has increased. In 1971 only 18.24% of West Sumatra's population lived in urban areas (Biro Pusat Statistik Jakarta 1974), yet this percentage had risen to 22.76% by 1991<sup>12</sup> (Sumatra Barat Dalam Angka 1991).

In sum, although the Minangkabau economy has not developed large scale economic activities, the society has undergone significant change economically and demographically. The percentage of the population engaged in agriculture is decreasing, and out-migration and

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<sup>12</sup> In fact, the percentage of West Sumatra's urban population is actually higher than 22.76%. The population of two large urban areas, Batusangkar and Pariaman and the population of three growing urban areas, Painan, Lubuk Sikaping and Lubuk Basung are included as rural populations in provincial figures. This happens because the Sumatra Barat Dalam Angka classifies the population of West Sumatra into the population of *kabupaten* and the population of municipalities. The five urban areas mentioned above are not municipalities, but they are the capitals of the *kabupaten*. Unfortunately, population data for those urban areas are not available.

urbanisation are both increasing. The combination of these two forces has reduced the significance of matrilineal property in Minangkabau society. According to analysts this is responsible for breaking down the matrilineal descent group (see Chapter Two).

### **The Structure of the Thesis**


This thesis consists of seven chapters. Chapter One has introduced readers to Minangkabau society: its structure, territory, population, kinship system and the efforts of the people to preserve their culture. This chapter has also discussed economic and demographic developments in this society, in order to highlight the social change?

In Chapter Two, the literature on change in family and kinship are reviewed and evaluated in order to show their practical relevance to the Minangkabau case. Chapter Three outlines the research methods used in this study.

The research findings are mainly discussed in Chapters Four, Five and Six. Chapter Four analyses kin relations in contemporary agricultural Minangkabau society. In this chapter, the structure of kin relations is analysed. References to former practices are made in order to reveal to what extent present practices differ from those of the past. Chapter Five deals with the relationship between urban dwellers and members of their kin group. This chapter analyses the effects of out-migration and urbanisation on ties between kin group members in Minangkabau society. Chapter Six seeks to explain why members of matrilineal kin groups still exchange financial and labour support with each other in contemporary Minangkabau society.

As the final chapter, Chapter Seven summarises the research

conclusions. It discusses implications of the research findings for our understanding of Minangkabau society and for sociological studies of family and kinship in general.



## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW: CHANGE OR CONTINUITY OF KIN TIES

The issue of change in kinship is one area which has consistently attracted the attention of sociologists. It is an essential part of sociologists' account of the development of society. It was once argued that as societies develop, kinship changes. The larger kin is assumed to lose its significance, and to be replaced by the smallest unit, the nuclear family. This smallest unit of kinship is assumed to fit with urbanised and industrialised society. Recently, this theory has been challenged by research showing that ties within the kin group do not disappear and that social interaction, financial and labour assistance among members of the kin group continue to occur. In order to assess the relative merits of each view, these conflicting arguments will be outlined and discussed.

#### **The Weakening of Kin Ties**

For a period it was argued that kin networks disintegrate as society develops. This argument was launched by classical sociologists such as Durkheim, Simmel, Tonnies and Mannheim (Sussman and Burchinal 1979:8). This argument was supported by contemporary sociologists, such as Parsons. According to him, the 'transition to modernity entailed the break-up of kin groups and the emergence of a family system in which nuclear family members are released from wider kin obligations' (see Elliot 1986:36). Under these conditions, according to Parsons, the nuclear family tended to become isolated from the kin group (1955:10). Although Parsons does not say that all ties between the nuclear family and wider



kin are broken, he does suggest that the ties with kin are weakened (1955:11). Like Parsons, Smelser also argues that kin ties weaken as society develops (1973: 273).

Like Parsons and Smelser, Goode (1970) also argues that the kinship system changes in the direction of the disintegration of kin ties. Unlike Parsons, he prefers to use the concept of the conjugal family to name the emerging family. To him, the characteristic of the conjugal family is

the relative exclusion of a wide range of affinal and blood relatives from its everyday affairs: there is no great extension of the kin network. Thus, the couple cannot count on a large number of kin folk for help, just as these kin cannot call upon the couple for service. Neither couple nor kinfolk have many rights with respect to the other, and so the reciprocal obligations are few (Goode 1970:8).

Thus, Goode emphasises the orientation of the family towards intensifying solidarity within the smallest unit, the conjugal unit, and weakening solidarity of the larger kin group. In effect Goode appears to share the view of Parsons.

It seems that what these theorists mean by the isolation of the nuclear family from wider kin is that rights, duties, and obligations are confined within the nuclear family. As Parsons (1951:186) points out, 'the most stringent kinship obligations [are] to the conjugal family of procreation, isolating [these] in a relative sense from wider kinship units'. Goode (1964:110) argues along similar lines.

### **Causes of Weakening of Kin Ties**

There are two main factors that are posited responsible for the break down of kin ties. Firstly, economic development ceases some of

functions of kinship (Parsons 1955:9, Smelser 1973: 272). This is caused by processes of 'structural differentiation', which is the 'establishment of more specialised and more autonomous social units' (Smelser 1973:269). One important dimension of this is differentiation of economic activities. In agricultural society, it is argued, the economy is embedded in kinship. This means that a kinship unit is both a unit of production and of consumption. As society develops economic activities are removed from the realm of kinship. As a result, the economy becomes a specialised area (Smelser, 1973:272).

That separation of economic activities from kinship units deprives kinship of its previous economic function. Since it no longer functions as a unit of production, kinship itself becomes a specialised area of life. It specialises in emotional gratification and socialisation (Smelser 1973:273).

According to analysts, the implication of the separation of economy and kinship is that ties between people and their kin are weakened (Parsons in Elliot 1986:36, Smelser 1973:273). Under these conditions, the nuclear family is thought to be independent of larger kin and dependent upon itself economically. According to Parsons, 'a newly married couple will "stand on their own feet", supporting themselves from their own earnings' (1955:51).

In addition to the loss of economic function of the kinship, the loss of kinship functions in other areas, such as protection, is also thought to be responsible for breaking down of kin ties. Under this condition, kin are thought not to be important as sources of support, because people find help from other sources. According to Ogburn,

[t]raditionally, the family protected members from harm and provided them with economic security through childhood, in time of injury, illness, and unemployment, and in old age. In

recent decades, much of this protective activity has been assumed by public organisations and by the state. In health care, for example, physicians, hospitals, accident insurance, hospitalisation insurance, and workman's compensation have tended to replace family nursing care (Ogburn in Leslie 1982:218).

The existence of non kinship-based agencies that take over kinship functions is also highlighted by Farmer (1979:16-17), who argues that

this situation was to some extent resolved by extra-familial specialised agencies, first charitable and later statutory which gradually took over the protective function of the family. Thus today we look to the police to protect life and property. To protect the individual against social hazards a variety of services is provided by voluntary organisations, in addition to the whole apparatus of the welfare state, with its provision for all contingencies 'from the cradle to the grave', as Beveridge put it.

She adds that

the social security scheme tempers the harshness of unemployment, accident, death, disaster, and other misfortune. The health service, with its hospitals, homes, and various community organisations, cares for the sick, the handicapped, the old and the mentally ill (1979:171).

The second factor thought to be responsible for the weakening of kin ties is geographical mobility. For example, Smelser (1966:115) argues that

[o]ne consequence of the removal of economic activities from the family setting ... is the individualisation and isolation of the nuclear family. If the family has to move about through the labour market, it cannot afford to carry all its relatives with it or even to maintain close, diffuse ties with extended kin. Thus, connections with collateral kinsmen begin to erode ... .

Linton also argues that geographical mobility loosens kin ties. As he says, modern means of transportation make it easy for considerable geographical mobility, and as a result ties with the kin group are severed (1971:63). Goode (1970:12) and Parsons (1955:51) also emphasise the

importance of geographical mobility weakening kin ties.

The theory of the disintegration of the kin is based on an over-emphasis of the function of the nuclear/conjugal family in society. The proponents of this theory argue that the nuclear family/conjugal family fits with the demands of the modern economy which requires people to move to where jobs are available (Parsons 1955, Goode 1970). The strong solidarity of a larger kin group is seen as an obstacle to these demands of the modern economy (Parsons 1955, Goode 1970, Linton 1971), and it tends to discourage entrepreneurial activity as Wolf (in Nafziger 1969:26) suggests:

The joint or extended family system provides another example of institutions deterring economic growth .... The joint family ... involves a system of shared rights and obligations encompassing a large number of near and distant relatives. One characteristic of these relationships is that the individual family member receives the right of support and security from the group in return for the obligation to share his wealth to provide support and security for other members of the group. Where an individual member of the group contemplates a wealth increasing activity, e.g., through investment in a productive asset that will yield future returns, he must bear all the costs associated therewith. Such costs are not a levy on the group since they are not essential to the individual's support or security. However, the fruit or return from his investment are subject to sharing among the other members of the extended family. Because of the differentiation between responsible and benefiting economic units, what may appear objectively to be strong incentives to invest are not subjectively so regarded by potential entrepreneurs.

However, analysts have tended to pay less attention to the welfare function of kinship. They have tended to pay much attention to its economic and reproductive functions. Kinship does not only have economic and reproductive functions, but also provides welfare. Furthermore, the proponents of the theory of the disintegration of kinship tend to overemphasise face-to-face interaction and co-residence or proximity as prerequisites for kinship to function.

## Kinship as Providing Support Networks

Analysts discussed above tend to emphasise people's dependence on their kin for jobs or means of living as an indicator of cohesion of kin. They neglect kin providing support other than providing jobs.

More recently, analysts have developed arguments that kinship provides networks of support for people (see Sussman and Burchinal 1979, Litwak and Szelenyi 1969). According to Litwak and Szelenyi, kin provide a supplementary resource to the nuclear family (1969:469). Kin are a 'source of aid and service when members families or individuals are in personal difficulty, in time of disaster and crisis' (Sussman and Burchinal 1979:17). As a result, kin can protect relatives from committing wrongdoing (Martin 1978:38), and can 'provide the basis for redistributing a substantial amount of resources in line with the needs and capabilities of the generations as they pass through the life cycle' (Kendig et al. 1992:8).

The idea of strong solidarity within a kin group discouraging entrepreneurial activity seems to exaggerate the negative dimensions of the kin group. In his study in Nigeria for example, Nafziger found that strong ties within a kin group are economically functional in the sense that the kin group helps individuals to establish firms, although the solidarity within a kin group requires people to share the income they earn and this may be an obstacle for the expansion of the business (1969:32-33).

The idea of the independence of the nuclear family cannot be applied equally to all segments of society. 'Regional, ethnic, ... (and) socio-economic status differences' all affect kin ties (Sussman and Burchinal 1979:9). For example, because lower class people have limited

financial resources they may not provide financial support to their relatives, but they may provide labour support and 'sharing what financial resources are available at the time of crisis' (Sussman and Burchinal 1979:9). Martin's argument can be used to support this idea. He argues that the kin group is an important mechanism for assuring basic needs among lower socio-economic groups such as Black Americans (1978:100).

Litwak and Szelenyi (1969:469) also emphasise that the nuclear family often cannot handle crucial problems by itself, so that kin are important as a source of support for the nuclear family.

Geographical mobility does not always make it difficult for kinship to provide a network of support (Litwak 1960:386-387). Loss of face-to-face contact does not necessitate severing of kin ties (Litwak and Szelenyi 1969:468). According to these authors, modern technology helps people who live far away from their relatives to maintain ties with their kin group.

The general point is that modern means of communication - the telephone, car, and air plane - have made it increasingly easy for families and individuals to communicate with each other, even though not living within immediate geographical proximity of each other. Furthermore, our monetary economy (essential to a technologically advanced society) requires the use of money as a general means to most goals. Money can be easily and quickly transmitted, making it possible for kinship units to exchange aid over great distances (1969:468).

To sum up, it seems that all the scholars, both those who support the argument that economic and demographic changes weaken kin ties and those who oppose it, share the same idea that the nuclear family emerges as society changes. However, there is disagreement concerning whether members of a nuclear family have only weak ties with their wider kin. Those who suggest there is loosening of ties with wider kin

tend to stress the importance of the nuclear family. They assume that since people are independent of their kin in terms of living arrangements, and are geographically distant from their relatives, that their ties with their kin are weakening. Others point out that this view emphasises face-to-face contact as the basis for kin ties and neglects the function of kindred as a buffer zone of support in cases where the nuclear family cannot support itself.

I try to show below that instead of disintegration, there is evidence that wider kin remain important for urban people in that financial and social forms of support are still exchanged among members of larger kin groups.

### **Evidence of Kinship Providing Support Networks**

Many researchers challenge the argument that with urbanisation and industrialisation comes the disintegration of the kindred. Research findings since 1950 have shown that ties with kin groups are still maintained and that kin groups are still important as a source of financial and social support. Much of this research has been done in the same urbanised industrialised areas (mostly in Western Europe and America), which gave rise to the earlier and opposite view.

In their study of kin ties in Bethnal Green, East London, Young and Willmott found that contact with relatives outside of the elementary family was still maintained. Individuals had frequent contact with their parents and their siblings (1962:77). Ties with distant relatives were also still maintained. For example, distant relatives were invited to weddings and attended the festivities. Distant relatives also attended family funerals (Young and Willmott 1962:85). In addition, economic

assistance and help with looking for jobs also occurred between distant relatives, especially among the working class (Young and Willmott 1962:94).

Many studies in America also show that ties with wider kin still occur. People still see their extra-familial relatives frequently. Moreover, relatives are also reported as an important source of care in sickness, child care, financial assistance and help with household tasks, especially among female kin (see Goode 1970:71-74).

Sussman and Burchinal support these findings. They argue that mutual aid and social activities occur among kin relations, especially between parents and their married children's families (1979:13), and elderly people are still cared for by their kin (1979:15).

On the basis of a comparative study of seven advanced industrialised nations, Hollinger and Haller (1990:117) also found that relatives are mentioned as an important source of support for individuals with household tasks and help in sickness.

However, after reviewing existing literature about kin support networks in America, Adam (1970) argues that although ties with relatives are maintained, these mainly concern ties with closest relatives. As he writes,

[m]utual aid is ordinarily restricted to the relations between parent and their offspring. If there are three generations of adults still living, the aid more often flows from the middle generation to the other two - though the aged grandparents frequently reciprocate in various ways (1970:583).

This argument is also put forward by Sussman and Burchinal, who say

[t]he exchange of aid among families flows in several directions, from parents to children and vice versa, among siblings and less frequently, from distant relatives. However, financial assistance generally appears to flow from parents to children (1979:13).



Thus, urban dwellers still maintain strong ties with members of their extended kin who are still seen as an important source of financial and social support.

As far as geographical distance is concerned, it seems that support that requires the physical proximity of supporters is difficult to achieve. However, the importance of kin as a source of support remains. For example, Young and Willmott found that geographical mobility weakens labour assistance among kin in matters such as help with household tasks in cases of illness. They found that neighbours become more important in these cases. Nevertheless, financial assistance from relatives still occurs, especially in cases of emergency, in that married children who live far away from their parents sought financial assistance from their parents when they faced financial difficulty (1962:138-139).

Hollinger and Haller support Young and Willmott's findings. They also found that in matters such as care in sickness geographical distance affects care provision :

Fifty-three percent of respondents in all countries who live within a distance of 15 minutes to their mother's house name her as the person they would turn to in at least one of these two situations (illness and help in the house). If they live at a distance of more than one hour, the proportion is only 11 percent in the cumulated data set (1990:117).

Nevertheless, Hollinger and Haller also found that in other aspects such as assistance with emotional problems and important decisions geographical distance is not so relevant (1990:117).

In her study in Negeri Sembilan in Malaysia, Stivens also found that although Minangkabau moved to live in cities, they still maintained close ties with their relatives remaining in home villages. She found that grandmothers who live in home villages often act as child carers for their grandchildren in the village while the children's

parents are away in the city (1981:186). Epstein (1981) in his study of a Zambian city reports that people there maintain ties with their kin group, even though they now live in urban areas. The ties among siblings are strong. He found that the siblings provide 'accommodation and help when they first arrived in town and while they were seeking a job and house of their own' (1981:221). However, neither Stivens nor Epstein tell us to what extent out-migrants exchange labour support such as care in sickness with their relatives.

According to Rosenberg et al. (1973:53-54), although geographical distance may weaken kin ties, it does not have an effect on patterns of kin ties, in the sense that people are more likely to have stronger ties with their genealogically closer relatives such as offspring, parents and siblings than with their distant relatives. Following Rosenberg's argument one would expect to find that urban dwellers tend to have stronger ties with their parents and siblings than with other relatives.

It can thus be concluded that urban dwellers still maintain strong ties with their kin in that visiting, care and financial support are exchanged, and that geographical mobility does not weaken the importance of kin as a source of support. However, it appears that experts tend to pay attention to ties between parents and their offspring and between siblings, and pay less attention to ties within larger kin groups. As a result, the evidence about persistence of kin ties among urban people is mostly about people's ties with their parents, children and siblings; there is less information about the extent to which urban people maintain ties with members of their larger kin group such as grandparents, uncles, aunts and cousins. Do urban Minangkabau tend to maintain stronger ties with their parents, children and siblings than with their other relatives such as *mamak* (mother's brother),

*kamanakan*, (sister's children), aunts and cousins?

In Minangkabau society the important kin group that functions as a unit of support consists of people who have ties over four generations: two generations above Ego plus Ego's generation and one generation below Ego. This kin group is called *paruik*. The *paruik* members share a house and property. In addition, one of the important relationships within a *paruik* is the *mamak-kamanakan* dyad. A *mamak* is an important source of financial support for his *kamanakan* and is responsible for organising the marriages of his *kamanakan*. Examining to what extent Minangkabau people who live in cities maintain ties with their *paruik* relatives provides us with information on the extent to which urban people maintain ties with members of their larger kin group. This is the subject of investigation in this thesis.

### **The Disintegration of Matrilineal Descent Groups**

In the above sections issues of change and persistence of kin ties have been discussed, but only in so far as they deal with general kinship systems. In this section the discussion focuses on how kinship analysts account for change in matrilineal descent groups in particular.

Analysts argue that the integration of the matrilineal descent group relies on the importance of matrilineal property for economic livelihood. Under this circumstance the relationship between the maternal uncle and maternal nephew is strong. The uncle tends to hold authority over his nephew, for the nephew is his heir. The nephew tends to have close ties with his maternal uncle for he is dependent on property under the control of members of his matrilineal group (Fox 1964:97-114, Gough 1961:595-596).

Besides being a factor which integrates men with members of their kin group, the importance of the matrilineal property is also argued as a factor which strengthens a married woman's tie to her kin group, since at marriage she remains with her kin group, while her husband visits her. This perspective seems to suggest that under this way of organising property a married man has a weak position economically over his wife or over his wife's relatives. According to Gough, this results in his weak power over her, measured by his inability to bring his wife with him (1961:565).

The capitalist economy reduces the significance of matrilineal property for economic livelihood and enhances the importance of individual property (Gough 1961:640, Quale 1988:266-267). As a result, the matrilineal system loses its mode of integration and therefore dissolves (Gough 1961:631-652, Quale 1988:260-261). According to Gough, '(r)ecent literature has accumulated evidence to show that under economic change brought about by contact with western industrial nations, matrilineal descent groups gradually disintegrate' (1961:631).

Analysts argue that the matrilineal descent group changes in two directions. Firstly, the capitalist economy causes the disintegration of matrilineal descent groups into nuclear families which are relatively independent from larger kin groups with which they retain only weak ties. According to Gough,

the elementary family eventually emerges as the key kinship group with respect to residence, economic cooperation, legal responsibility, and socialisation, with a narrow range of interpersonal kinship relationships spreading outward from it bilaterally and linking it with other elementary families (1961:631).

Secondly, the matrilineal descent group will move towards a more patrilineal form indicated by increasing the father's/husband's authority

over his children/wife, the tendency for wives to move to live with their husbands and for married men to bequeath their property to their children rather than to their matrilineal kin group (see Quale 1988:266-268).

However, these analysts tend to view matrilineal kinship from a male perspective, and consequently pay too much attention to the relationship between maternal uncle and maternal nephew. The women's role within kin groups tends to be neglected. The relationship between kinsmen and kinswomen is reduced to the issue of authority. Women are seen as objects of control by men and 'as the means of biological reproduction of the descent unit'. On the other hand, the relationship between kinsmen is explained in terms of co-operation (Prindiville 1985:32).

Furthermore, this way of analysing kinship tends to assume the superiority of patrilineal systems over matrilineal ones (Prindiville 1985:30). Matrilineal kinship is regarded as a fragile institution, because there is no coherence between the line of descent and the line of authority. This supposedly creates a problem of control for men who must exercise authority within both their matrilineage and their immediate family. On the other hand, patrilineality is stronger because the line of authority and the line of descent are fixed. In this case, men have no problem exercising their authority both over their immediate family and their kin group (see Fox, 1967:114).

Recent studies on Minangkabau society show that to some extent the matrilineal descent group has survived despite incorporation into the capitalist economy. I will now discuss these studies.

## The Minangkabau Matrilineal System

### Property Ownership

In Minangkabau society property such as land is owned by the kin group rather than by the individual. The individual has utilisation rights only. This property is called *harato pusako*, ancestral property. The *harato pusako* is managed by *mamak* (at least these who are *panghulu* or *tungganai*).<sup>1</sup> According to *adat*, customary law, the *harato pusako* should be utilised for the benefit of a kin group as whole rather than for the benefit of individual members. This property should be pawned or sold only for reasons concerning the whole kin group rather than an individual member, and the consent of kin group members is required. There are four circumstances under which ancestral property can be pawned or sold. These are: to provide finance for a family graveyard; the wedding ceremony of a daughter of the family; a *panghulu*'s formal installation; or preserving the family house from decay. The pawning or selling of the property should be under the supervision of *mamak*.

Schrieke argues that the capitalist economy brought about changes in land tenure in Minangkabau society. He says that the restriction on the pledging of ancestral property has been relaxed, and land is increasingly disposed of for personal reasons other than those permitted by customary law, *adat* (1955:108). This argument is supported by Oki who says that '[i]n the densely populated and commercial centres of Agam, merchants often pawned their family land to provide commercial capital' (1977:125). The capitalist economy is thought not only to lead to relaxation of the land tenure system in Minangkabau society, but also to

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<sup>1</sup> *Panghulu* is the leader of a *payuang* and *tungganai* is the leader of a *paruik* (see Chapter Four).

alter the very nature of the way in which people acquire property (Benda-Beckmann 1979: 286).

Since property is owned by the kin group rather than by an individual, the individual member of a kin group has utilisation rights over the property only. Utilisation rights over the property can be gained in one of three ways. The first of these is *gangam bauntuak* (handful for use), which is given to married kinswomen who already have dependents. The recipients of *gangam bauntuak* have the exclusive right to use and to consume the products of the property. It may appear that the *gangam bauntuak* property tends to become the individual property of the holders, but this is only while they are alive. The recipients pass this property onto their own children (both sexes in the sense that both have utilisation rights over the property) rather than to other children in a kin group, but on their death it will be allocated among members of the *paruik* once again. This property, then, tends to become the ancestral property of the recipient's descendants (see Benda-Beckmann 1979:155-160). The second form of access to land is *dapatan*, temporary utilisation rights. Via this means an individual member is allocated a piece of land for their personal use. The difference between *dapatan* property and *gangam bauntuak* is that the authority over *dapatan* property is not in the hands of the *dapatan* recipient, whereas in the case of *gangam bauntuak* it is (see Benda-Beckmann 1979:160). The *gangam bauntuak* and *dapatan* recipients are women (see Benda-Beckmann 1979:155-160). Thirdly, married kinsmen may also receive a piece of land for temporary use. This land is called *pambaoan* (Benda-Beckmann 1979:161).

According to Benda-Beckmann, these three ways of obtaining property in Minangkabau society have lost their significance as a result

of capitalism (1979: 286). He found that obtaining land through 'contract of pawning and transfer of pawning' is becoming increasingly significant (1979:286).

According to Schrieke ancestral property also tends to change to become individual property as a result of commercialisation of that property. As he writes 'in some *nagaris* (such as Air Dingin and Solok) all the family land has been done away with and has been transformed into self-earned land as a consequence of pledging' (1955:110).

However, according to Oki, although the restriction upon land disposition has been relaxed, the land does not become individually owned, because the selling of land is very rare (1977:265). Kahn reports that property in the form of land in Sungai Puar of *Kabupaten Agam* is still owned by the kin group (1980: 26). Thomas also reports that land in *nagari* Gurun, Batusangkar is still owned by the kin group rather by individuals. He found that of 625 pieces of land, including gardens and rice fields, only 4.32% were held individually (1981:92).

The persistence of kin group based land tenure in Minangkabau society is not restricted to rural areas but occurs in urban areas as well. In his study of land ownership in Padang, the capital city of West Sumatra, in 1970, Hans-Dieter Evers reveals that matrilineally owned land still persists both in the centre and in peripheral areas of the city (1986:138-143). Although the push to sell the land has been increasing recently, with the result that many hectares of kin group land have been sold for housing, offices, schools and industries, most residential areas for native dwellers of Padang city are still ancestral property.<sup>2</sup> A similar tendency is

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<sup>2</sup> This information was obtained when I worked as a consultant for Padang Water Enterprise in Padang.



also found in Payakumbuh city.<sup>3</sup>

Schrieke seems to exaggerate the impact of pledging on transformation of land ownership. It is true that in some cases people cannot redeem the pawned land for a while, but it does not mean that they lose their ownership over the land. For example, people often repawn the same piece of land several times, a process referred to as *mandalami*, ('to deepen') (see Oki 1977:124). Although after being subject to *mandalami* three times a piece of land may be regarded as sold, this is only in the sense that the owner is unlikely to be able to redeem it. The original owners do not lose their rights completely over the land, because they still hold the right to regain it (Oki 1977:124) by returning the money loaned, and offspring as well as descendants of a given kin group may be able to regain the land in this way.

However, there is also disagreement concerning which kin groups own property in the form of land in contemporary Minangkabau society. According to some, the property is increasingly divided between *mande* (the kin group composed of a married woman and her dependent children) and, therefore, it is the *mande* which owns the property. As a result of this, *payuang* (the larger kin group which is led by a *panghulu*) and *paruik* (the kin group led by a *tungganai*) have lost their significance as corporate groups (Benda-Beckmann 1979, Kato 1978).

According to Kahn, larger kin groups such as *payuang* still own property in the form of land in Minangkabau society. For him, this happens because capitalism has not developed in the rural economy. Subsistence oriented economy continues in rural areas, especially in the rice cultivation sector. He argues that this results from the policies of the

Dutch, since although the colonial government introduced the system of

<sup>3</sup> This information was obtained by interview with a *panghulu* and the chief of a *Kerapatan Adat Nagari* (Adat council) of *Nagari Koto Nan Ampek*.

forced cultivation in West Sumatra, at the same time the government prevented the emergence of indigenous commercial farming. This resulted in continuation of subsistence farming in local Minangkabau communities (Kahn 1980:163-171).

According to Kahn, the post independent government's economic policy as well as hyper-inflation in the mid-1960s continued the dominance of the subsistence sector in rural Minangkabau society, with the result that 'the peasant economy of areas like Minangkabau is dominated by individually owned and operated enterprise, and by the existence of a highly important subsistence sector' (1980:199).

Oki's findings can be used to support Kahn's interpretation. He also argued that the persistence of kin group owned property in Minangkabau society is the result of underdevelopment of the capitalist economy in rural areas. The economy continues to be subsistence oriented (1977:266). Nevertheless, for Oki, the failure of agrarian law and land tax action, that may have resulted in relaxation of land tenure in Minangkabau society at the time of the Dutch, is also responsible for the relative stability of land tenure in contemporary Minangkabau society (1977:266-267).

Perhaps both analysts are correct for different reasons. First, it is possible that the development of capitalism is uneven in Minangkabau society. The land is perhaps increasingly divided in areas in which the capitalist economy is more developed than the areas in which the capitalist economy is less developed. Secondly, population density and the demand for land as a basis of livelihood is perhaps also different from region to region. In areas in which population is denser and in which demand for land is higher the property is perhaps more likely to be divided than in areas where the population is scarcer and the

demand for land is lower. In addition, even though the land may be divided among *mande*, this is only temporary. As a given *mande* develops into a *paruik*, as a result of the growth of the *mande*'s population, the property may not be divided into newly established *mande*. As a result, after several generations the property is owned again by a larger kin group, the *paruik*. As Oki argues,

[o]nce the land was inherited over several generations, it became again purely communal land of each of the segmented family branches. Thus, a temporary or seeming fragmentation of family land almost always resulted in the formation of new family communal land. Of course the area of family land would become smaller (1977:138).

Certainly, whatever the reason for maintenance of kin group owned land, matrilineal property is still important to Minangkabau in rural areas as a basis of livelihood. As Kahn points out,

[i]n spite of its declining importance as a mode of subsistence, subsistence agriculture remains an important feature of village life. Blacksmiths, seamstresses, traders and others spend some of their time working the land. Many owe their position to income derived from cash cropping, to a lump sum of cash obtained from pawning or selling land, or to the advantage that is gained from the fact that a proportion of their subsistence is derived from rice cultivation (1980:58).

### **Property Inheritance**

Property inheritance patterns are thought to have changed in Minangkabau society. There are reports of the increasing practice of father-to-children property inheritance (Schrieke 1955:118-119, Kato 1982: 183, Oki 1977:121, Benda-Beckmann 1979:335-343). However, this trend applies only to a father's individually owned property: that which he purchases himself. Ancestral property inheritance patterns remain the same, inherited in the female line (Kato 1982:205).

Nevertheless, although the father's individually owned property is inherited by his children, this does not mean that the inheritance pattern in Minangkabau society is moving from matrilineal to patrilineal principles (Benda-Beckmann 1979:373). Individual property such as land and houses tend to pass to daughters rather than sons (see Kato 1982:207). Although it may happen that a son inherits his father's individual property, most probably in the case where a father has no daughters, this property then is 'likely to be given to daughters alone in the grandchildren's generation (counted from the original owner of the property) and from then on to their daughters following the female line' (see Kato 1982:207).

In addition, the status of property as individual property only applies in the hands of the first holder. At the death of the holder the property will no longer be considered individual property. Its status changes to *harato pusako randah*, low ancestral property (Kato 1982:206). After several generations this *harato pusako randah* will become *harato pusako tinggi*, high ancestral property (Kato 1982:206-207). When property reaches this status it is inherited matrilineally. So, the increasing practice of father to children inheritance does not necessarily lead the Minangkabau matrilineal system into patriliney in terms of property inheritance, because this property becomes ancestral property. Benda-Beckmann argues that

the recent change in the inheritance law from *kamanakan* to the children does not, as such, greatly affect the system ... Whether *harato pancaharian* becomes *harato pusako* in the man's *jurai* [kin group] or in his children's *jurai*, is irrelevant for the system; what matters is that it becomes *harato pusako*, and as such follows the continuity outlined by matrilineal *pusako* inheritance after its short patrilineal interlude (1979:377).

However, while this applies to individually owned property in

the form of land and houses, it seems that the inheritance of individually owned property such as entrepreneurial businesses tends to have different consequences. Although we do not have many cases here to show the pattern of inheritance of entrepreneurial businesses, information about five cases of inheritance of entrepreneurial businesses in the field of trading at least provides a clue about tendencies in the inheritance of individually owned property other than land and houses. In all five business cases, it was found sons were more likely to inherit the entrepreneurial businesses than daughters. The reasons stated for this are that the sons have more economic responsibility to their immediate family than daughters, and that sons are more likely to engage in trading businesses than daughters.

It seems that this reflects the existence of the idea that a man has to have more economic responsibility to his immediate family than a woman, although in reality women also contribute to fulfil their immediate families' economic needs. Parents seem to encourage their daughters not to work as merchants, but in paid employment such as teachers, government employees, etc.

As a result, inheritance of individually owned property in the form of entrepreneurial businesses may differ from the inheritance of property in the form of land and houses which are inherited by daughters and after several generations become matrilineal property. It appears more likely that entrepreneurial business property comes to be inherited patrilineally.

## Kin Ties

In previous sections it was shown that matrilineal descent groups still survive as social entities in rural areas, although there is disagreement concerning which kinship group remains the corporate land-owning group. Nevertheless, property is still owned by and inherited within kin groups. This section focuses on how experts account for the effect of capitalism on kin relations in Minangkabau society.

There is agreement that the capitalist economy has made the nuclear family more important in Minangkabau society. As Benda-Beckmann writes, it is as if this is a new state of affairs in which

Minangkabau men and women act quite individualistically and manage property affairs for their own interest and for benefit of their closest kin, their children in particular ... Women definitely prefer their own children to their sister's children ... Women, too are much more attached to their conjugal family than before (1979:362).

According to Kato, the emergence of the nuclear family is as a result of the importance of a man's individually owned property as the basis of livelihood. In this he assumes a wife becomes dependent on her husband's income (1978:9). Benda-Beckmann (1979) also emphasises the importance of individual property as a factor for the emergence of the nuclear family, but for a different reason. He argues that people tend to invest their individual earnings in building individual houses in order to avoid having the property being owned by the whole kin group. Benda-Beckmann does not explain why men tend to do this. He may believe this manifestation of individualisation of property is a result of capitalism. To Benda-Beckmann, the tendency to build a separate house encourages the increasing attachment of people to their nuclear family

(1979:367).

The attachment to the nuclear family and separate dwelling units is seen as evidence of the disintegration of larger matrilineal descent groups (Benda-Beckmann 1979:362-368). According to Oki, the attachment to the nuclear family weakens matrilineal kin group ties since the 'father-child-relationship becomes more and more important, at the expense of [the maternal] uncle-nephew and [the maternal] uncle-niece relationship' (1977:263). The same argument was also presented by Schrieke who emphasises the weakening of kin group ties as a result of strengthening of the nuclear family (1955:119). Even earlier Josselin de Jong had argued that kin group ties in Minangkabau society were weakening (1952:116-118).

It is argued here that while it is true that the nuclear family is becoming more identifiable in Minangkabau society, its importance is limited to its being an economic and residential unit. As Kato argues, 'nuclearization does not apply to other aspects of the family system' (1982: 240). He adds:

Although the father-child relationship is now decisive in the disposition of individually earned property, the matrilineal principle in the inheritance of ancestral property is still intact. ... The *mamak* continues to wield authority in the sphere of the descent group. A man's obligations have not shrunk to the small circle of the nuclear family (1982:240).

In addition, the argument that kin ties in Minangkabau society have weakened as a result of the emergence of the nuclear family seems to be as the result of the analysts' focus on property ownership, inheritance and exercise of authority. Analysts pay less attention to the role of kinship as supplying support networks. People may own property individually and pass on the property to their children, they may work independently of their kin group, and they may not be dependent upon

their kin group for selection of a marriage partner; but they may still provide financial and labour support to their relatives as well as seeking such support from them.

It was argued earlier that the kin group can be an important source of financial and social support. Kinship provides networks of support for people especially when a nuclear family cannot support itself. Therefore, to know whether matrilineal kin group solidarity is weakening attention should also be paid to the extent to which members of matrilineal kin groups exchange financial and labour support with each other.

Recently, Kato (1982) did examine the mutual support provided by the members of kin groups in his investigation of kin ties in contemporary Minangkabau society, but he mainly concentrated on the relationship between *mamak* and *kamanakan*.<sup>4</sup> He did not pay attention to the relationship among all parties within a kin group.

As discussed in Chapter One, rates of out-migration and urbanisation are high in Minangkabau society. This means some members of a kin group are independent of the kin group for their economic livelihood and geographically distant from other members of the kin group. However, little is known about to what extent out-migration and urbanisation affect kin ties in Minangkabau society. Kato does discuss this issue, but as mentioned earlier he mainly concentrates on the relationship between *mamak* and *kamanakan*. The extent to which Minangkabau out-migrants provide support to members of their kin group also appears in Naim's study of *Merantau Pola Migrasi Suku Minangkabau* (1984), but his study specifies neither which kin group nor which categories of relatives the out-migrants continue to have strong

<sup>4</sup> In literature about Minangkabau society, *mamak* is translated as maternal uncle, while *kamanakan* is translated as sister's children. This translation, however, is not always appropriate. The meaning of these terms is discussed in detail in Chapter Four.



ties with. The extent to which urban people provide support to their fellow kin has also been studied by Saleh et al. (1992): but this study only discusses the relationship between parents and their offspring.

Additionally, it appears that most studies about Minangkabau kinship pay most attention to the relationship between kinsmen: the relationships between *mamak* and *kamanakan*, and between fathers and children. Women's roles in kinship tend to be neglected. Therefore, a study about a wide range of kin relations in contemporary Minangkabau society, incorporating the role played by women, is needed.

This study attempts to redress the lack of research of this kind in Minangkabau society. In doing so it focuses on examining the extent to which kin ties are weakening in Minangkabau society as a result of economic change and urbanisation. Kin ties, in this study, are measured by the amount of exchange of financial and social support practised by the members within a kin group, and the degree of sense of duty and obligation they hold towards each other. This thesis, therefore, is not concerned with corporate action by or on behalf of specified matrilineal kin groups, but between individuals within kin groups.

As far as sociological endeavour is concerned, family/kinship studies have mostly been conducted in Western Europe and North America where welfare states are well developed. Less research has been done in developing countries where welfare states are not well developed, and, therefore, people rely on their kin for support. Moreover, most studies in this area have also been conducted in patrilineal and bilateral kinship systems. Little research has been undertaken in matrilineal kinship systems such as that found in Minangkabau society. This study, therefore contributes to the area of family/kinship studies in sociology and furthers understanding of

Minangkabau society.

### CHAPTER THREE

#### RESEARCH METHODS

The research for this thesis was carried out in both rural and urban areas of Minangkabau society between early July 1994 and the end of November 1994, with a further period of field work in July and August 1995.

#### Rural Research

The research conducted in rural areas aimed to investigate the features of support between members of kin groups. In the agricultural sector of Minangkabau society members of a kin group live close to each other and are relatively dependent upon their kin group for their means of living. This research explored who provides what and to whom, and the extent of the support between kin which exists in the contemporary agricultural sector of Minangkabau society.

The rural areas chosen were those in which the majority of people engage in agricultural work and where matrilineal property is still important as the basis of livelihood. Since the most important matrilineal property providing economic livelihood in Minangkabau society is rice fields, the areas chosen were those in which rice cultivation plays a significant role. Furthermore, the chosen rural areas were those which are parts of the *darek* sector of Minangkabau society, because, as mentioned earlier, the *darek* is thought to be the core area of Minangkabau culture and therefore the influence of *adat* is supposedly stronger there. The selected rural areas were also those in which the geographical mobility of the population is low. Accordingly, most kin

group members live close to each other.

Two villages, Sungai Talang Barat of *Kecamatan* Guguk and Perumpung of *Kecamatan* Payakumbuh, both of *Kabupaten* 50 Kota, were selected. These two villages comply with the two criteria mentioned above. In 1994, most of their population were farmers. Only 4.1% of Sungai Talang Barat's population were merchants, 1.3% were government employees and 0.1% were carpenters according to information from the village head's office. Similar figures apply in Perumpung as well. Even among the people who were reported to have non-agriculture related work, almost all of them to some extent engage in agriculture, in that they still spent part of their time cultivating rice fields or gardens. In addition, less than 2% of both village populations engaged in out-migration.

Sungai Talang Barat is situated about 20 km from the capital city of *Kabupaten* 50 Kota, Payakumbuh. Most people visit the capital city on Sunday, which is the market day of Payakumbuh. On this day there is public transport, by mini bus, available. Perumpung is closer to Payakumbuh city, about 9 km from the capital, and public transport is available every day to and from the city.

In both villages rice cultivation is very important. People mostly grow rice twice a year, in irrigated rice fields, for their own consumption. People do sell some of their rice, but only in two circumstances; if the rice harvest exceeds their requirements, or if they need money and they cannot find financial help from other sources

Table 3. 1                      Agricultural Land in Sungai Talang Barat  
and in Perumpung

	Sungai Talang Barat hectares	Perumpung hectares
Rice field	234	115
Garden	326	70

Source: Village Heads' Offices of Sungai Talang Barat and  
Perumpung

Individuals cultivate cash crops both in gardens and in rice fields on a small scale, about 0.5 hectares per cultivator. Most people grow corn, and in Sungai Talang Barat many people also grow coffee in their gardens on a small scale.

In addition to rice cultivation and the production of cash crops, people also grow coconuts, mostly around their house, both for their own consumption and for sale. Some people also raise one or two cows and goats and several chickens. In Perumpung people raise chickens as a business. According to informants, all of these are important sources of cash income.

Rice fields and gardens here are owned by the kin group rather than by individuals. Occasionally a small piece of rice field is sold, but only to other inhabitants of the village. However, this rice field will eventually become ancestral property once again.

### Urban Research

The urban study aimed to make possible an account of the extent of changes occurring to relations between kin in Minangkabau society as

a result of geographical mobility and the independence of individuals from their kin group in terms of their basic economic livelihood. For this, out-migrants from Minangkabau villages who currently live in Padang city, the capital of West Sumatra, were studied.

Padang city was selected as it is the biggest urban centre in West Sumatra and the economic, governmental and educational centre for the province. Most of the large scale industries, hotels, dealers for automotive and electronic products and banks serving West Sumatra's population are located in this city. As far as government institutions are concerned, all of the government offices at the provincial level are found in Padang city. Universities and colleges are also situated here. As a result, it can be expected that Padang residents live in an urban culture.

The respondents and informants were out-migrants who came from the core areas of Minangkabau matrilineal system. They came from villages of *Kabupaten Agam*, *Kabupaten 50 Kota* and *Kabupaten* of Tanah Datar. They lived in two *kelurahan* in Padang: Belanti Timur of *Kecamatan Padang Utara* and Nanggalo Siteba of *Kecamatan Nanggalo*.

### **Research Methods, Respondents and Informants**

The ties between individuals and their relatives in both their *mande* and their *paruik* were examined. Particularly, this study investigated the ties between parents and offspring, siblings, grandparents and grandchildren, *mamak* and *kamanakan*, individuals and their maternal aunts and maternal cousins.

The unit of analysis is the individual rather than the kin group itself. This means that information was collected by asking to what extent an individual delivered support to members of their kin group as well as

to what extent he or she received that support from their kin group members. For example, an individual was asked to what extent he/she delivered support to his/her parents, siblings, grandparents, *kamanakan*, *mamak*, maternal aunts and maternal cousins, as well as to what extent those categories of kin provided support to him/her. This way of studying kin relations allows researchers to account for gender differences in kin support networks (Rosenberg et al. 1973:8-9).

The research incorporated both surveys and in-depth interviews. The survey utilised structured interviews. The in-depth interviews were conducted both to explore issues which were not covered by structured interviews as well as to probe certain patterns of events. These two ways of obtaining data were applied in both rural and urban areas.

The rural survey was carried out in Sungai Talang Barat village. There were 50 people interviewed, 25 women and 25 men. The median age was 40, and all respondents were married.

The multi-stage technique of selecting respondents in the rural area was followed. First of all, on the basis of population records supplied by the village administrative office (*kantor kepala desa*), the population was differentiated according to age, whether parents were still alive or not, and the geographical origin of spouse. The targeted population consisted of people aged between 35 to 45, whose parents were still alive, and whose spouse came from the Sungai Talang Barat village. Then the filtered population was divided into men and women. Using both husband and wife in a single family as respondents was avoided, but otherwise respondents were randomly selected. All of the women and the men fitting the criteria were listed. All odd-numbered respondents were selected, e.g the first, the third, the fifth etc. The interviewed women and men thus constituted half of the total population who fitted

the research criteria. The majority of respondents have low levels of formal education, having only completed primary school.

Table. 3. 2 Education of Rural Respondents

(in %)	
n : 50	
Level of Education	
Primary school (SD)	84
Junior High School (SLTP)	12
Senior High School (SLTA)	4
University or College	0
Total	100

The in-depth interviews were carried out in order to investigate matters such as the role of the *mamak*; ways of organising marriages including the *mamak*'s role; property ownership; the commercialisation of land; and attitudes toward kin group members. On attitudes towards kin group members, information about the sense of obligations and duties that members of kin groups have towards each other was obtained. The information related not only to the present, but also referred to past phenomena. Examples of informants' experiences in childhood were collected in order to compare contemporary phenomena with those in the past. Informants were *panghulu*, village administrative officials and ordinary villagers. The in-depth interviews on these issues were conducted both in Sungai Talang Barat and in Perumpung.

Additionally, it was realised that the structured interviews could suggest that the *paruik* relatives do not provide support to each other,



because a certain percentage of respondents say they received and provided economic and labour support from and to their closer *mande* relatives rather than involving *paruik* kin. This could occur simply because the majority of people in rural areas have parents, siblings and children who are available to provide whatever support is needed. Therefore, it was important to investigate a group of people who do not have *mande* relatives to extend the structured interview information. For this reason, an in-depth study was carried out in Perumpung village. The target population were elderly people without children or siblings. Attention focused on their residence patterns, their sources of financial support, and the organisation of their everyday activities such as cooking, washing clothes, purchasing things and organising care for when they become ill. Sixteen elderly people, whose ages were between 70 to 80, were studied. Most of them were women.

In the urban part of the study, 100 people were interviewed: 50 women and 50 men. All of them were married and the median age was forty.

The multi-stage process of selecting respondents was applied to urban people as well, but random sampling principles could not be used to select urban respondents because there was no record of the origin of the residents of the *kelurahan*. It was hoped to be able to study a group of people coming from the same village, but no data was available to allow me to do so. The *organisasi kampung* (the organisation of people who come from the same village) appear not to have the addresses of their members. I was provided with several names and addresses, but the people had already moved. Therefore, it was decided to select respondents purposively.

First of all, the survey was localised in two *kecamatan*: where the

respective *Kecamatan* heads' offices were contacted for two reasons. First, permission was sought to conduct field research and gather information. Secondly, information was sought on which *kelurahan* out-migrants mostly lived in. Then, the *Kantor kelurahan* (heads' offices) were contacted for the same reasons.

The next step involved snowball sampling to locate respondents using several criteria. They must be married, be aged between 35 and 45, and they must come from the core areas of Minangkabau culture.

As in the rural sample, the choice was made not to interview both husband and wife in the same family for purposes of accounting for women's and men's ties with their kin group. This means that if a wife was interviewed her husband was not and vice versa.

The urban respondents appear to have higher education and to be wealthier than those in rural areas, and most of them were employees and merchants.

Table 3.3 Education of Urban Respondents

(in %)

n : 100

Level of Education

1. Primary school (SD)	:	2
2. Junior High School (SLTP)	:	14
3. Senior High School (SLTA)	:	44
4. University or College	:	38

Table 3. 4            Occupation of Urban Respondents  
(in %)  
n : 100

Occupation	
Government and Private	
Institution Employees	51
Merchants	25
Housekeeping	24
Total	100

Table 3. 5            Income of Urban Respondents  
(in %)  
n : 88\*

Income	
Low	20. 5
Middle	53. 4
High	26. 1
Total	100

\*Note: 24% of female respondents did not work.

Information was gained by both structured and in-depth interviews. In-depth interviews were conducted with friends, with people I met in bus stations and at the market. The information collected concerned their experiences with their relatives and their knowledge about other people's experiences with their relatives. Additionally there were about fifteen people were interviewed in some depth concerning their ideas about kinship obligations.

## Measurements

Kin relations are complex. Analysts use various indicators such as residential propinquity, frequency of kin interaction, subjective closeness and mutual aid to measure kin ties (see Sussman and Burchinal 1979, Young and Willmott 1957, Jayakody et al, 1993, Mark and McInahan, 1993, Walker and Pratt, 1991). Many analysts classify forms of support into two: instrumental and emotional (or psychological). Instrumental support covers child care, transportation, repairs to home or car, shopping, indoor tasks such as making beds, money management, meal preparation and cleaning up, personal tasks such as feeding, bathing, providing financial aid, and arranging other services. Emotional support includes activities which make someone happy (see Mark and McInahan, 1993, Walker and Pratt, 1991).

It is argued here that classifying help and support into instrumental and psychological can be misleading, because in many cases instrumental support overlaps psychological support. For example, when a person visits or gives some money to a sick person, it is psychological as well as instrumental, because the giver makes the invalid happy as well.

The different kinds of support are best categorised as input of labour and as input of financial resources. This means that certain kinds of help and support are labour-based in nature, while others are financial.

Analysts tend to examine whether kinship provides networks of financial and labour support when people are in need; for example when people face financial difficulty, need help for household tasks or are frail (for example see Jayakody et al, 1993, Mark and McInahan, 1993, Walker

and Pratt, 1991, Hollinger and Haller 1990). I would agree on this way as one approach to measure kin ties. If people do not obtain support from or provide support to their relatives, it is probably because they do not need support. Therefore, we have to look at situations where people need support. People who face this circumstance may receive support from non-kin-based sources, but if kinship acts to provide a source of support in a given society, it is relatives who first provide help or it is from relatives people seek support first.

Since the indicators used by the above researchers are used to measure the support network in an industrialised social setting, especially America, not all of the indicators will be applicable to Minangkabau society. Accordingly, adjustment will be made to suit the latter case.

The indicators to be used in this thesis are therefore those of financial and labour assistance. These indicators are assumed to be a manifestation of the sense of duty and obligation members of kin groups have towards each other. In addition, the involvement of relatives in organising marriages as well as in socialising children is also examined. This is particularly used to measure the ties between *mamak* and *kamanakan*, because in Minangkabau society a *mamak* is supposed to be responsible for organising the marriages of his *kamanakan* and is involved in the socialisation of his *kamanakan*.

### **Financial Assistance**

There are two categories of financial support utilised in this thesis. First is financial assistance for specific purposes such as: providing education expenses such as school fees and books; clothes; lending

money; money for medication and money for wedding celebrations. In addition, financial support also includes providing money to relatives for unspecified purposes. This latter category of financial support is problematic for interpretation. Can small amounts of money once or twice a year or every *idil fitri* (celebration of the end of fasting month) be considered support? It is argued here that this kind of giving money to relatives perhaps indicates ties but not support. Giving money in ways that are considered indicative of support, regardless of the amount, here includes when the money is given every month or every two-three months or more than five times a year. In other words, providing money as a token is not considered as support.

### **Labour Assistance**

Labour support concerns the provision of labour assistance to relatives when they suffer from serious illness or frailty. This includes activities for elderly and sick relatives such as accompanying them to see a doctor, preparing meals, feeding, bathing and washing clothes for them.

### **Child Care**

Child care includes assistance to relatives in looking after a baby other than that usually provided by the baby's parents: e. g. grandparents looking after a married daughters child.

### **Organising Marriage for Sister's children**

Helping to organise the marriage of relatives is used in the

account of the ties between *mamak* and *kamanakan*, for organising a *kamanakan*'s marriage is supposed to be the duty of a *mamak* in Minangkabau society. Organising a *kamanakan*'s marriage deals with contacting the bridegroom's relatives; informing kin group members of the marriage; organising a meeting (*baiyo iyo*) between members of the kin group; and organising the wedding celebration.

### **Monitoring and Advising of Sister's children**

Monitoring and advising are an expected form of involvement by the *mamak* (mother's brother) in the upbringing of their *kamanakan* (sister's children). Monitoring includes keeping an eye on the *kamanakan*'s activities, such as observing how the *kamanakan* spend their spare time, with whom they are friendly, and listening to what comments people make about the *kamanakan*. Advising includes informing *kamanakan* when they commit wrongdoing or reminding them what is expected of them.

At the beginning of this research project a *mamak*'s involvement in monitoring and advising their *kamanakan* was classified into: very often, often, sometimes, rarely and never. However, during the testing of the structured interview, respondents complained about this form of classification. They said that monitoring and advising *kamanakan* cannot be classified into very often, often and so on, because, to them, these activities should be done when the *mamak* recognise that their *kamanakan* do not do things properly. As a result, the original scale was abandoned; it became simply positive and negative.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### KIN RELATIONS IN CONTEMPORARY AGRICULTURAL MINANGKABAU SOCIETY

This chapter discusses the features of kin relations among rural Minangkabau. The aim of this chapter is to examine ties among members of matrilineal kin groups in agricultural Minangkabau society.

Kin relations are closely linked to kinship organisation in Minangkabau society. Kinship groups define from whom someone may seek and obtain support, and to whom one is obliged to deliver support. Therefore, in order to analyse kin relations it is very important to discuss the kinship organisation found in Minangkabau society.

Patterns of residence are also closely linked to kin relations in Minangkabau society. Patterns of residence affect 'where people may exercise their rights as community members and where and by whom they may be asked to make contributions, in the form of money or labour' (Benda-Beckmann 1979:107).

Finally, kin relations in this society are closely linked to property ownership. Property in the form of land is a very important mechanism of welfare in this society and therefore indicates the strength of ties between members of matrilineal kin groups. Consequently, account must be taken of the mode of property ownership in order to reveal the ties between members within kin groups in Minangkabau society.

#### Kinship Groups

Researchers on the Minangkabau matrilineal system differ on the terms used to name kin groups. According to Radjab, Minangkabau kinship groups consist of *suku*, *kampung*, *jurai*, *paruik*, and *mande*



(1969:16). However, to Naim, the Minangkabau kinship groups comprise of *suku*, *paruik* and *mande* (1984:19). Pak finds differently. She reveals that the Minangkabau kinship group consist of *suku*, *kaum*, *paruik* and *mande* (1986:73-91). Thomas lists *Suku*, *Kampuang*, *Payuang*, *Paruik* and *Kaum* (1981:68-84).

However, there is widespread agreement concerning the largest unit of the kin group, the *suku*. The variation occurs in the naming of the sub-divisions of a *suku*. According to Naim (1984:19) and Josselin de Jong (1952:49), the variance is due to inhabitants of different regions using different terms to name the same thing. Besides that, the way in which researchers interpret what the informants say seems also to contribute to this lack of agreement. This is especially so with the concept *kampuang*. According to Minangkabau, the *kampuang* may refer to both kinship group and 'home'. As a kinship unit it refers to a sub-division of a *suku* which is headed by a *panghulu*.<sup>1</sup> As 'home', it refers to the place where a person's *rumah gadang* was established as well as to a person's place of origin.

The concept of *jurai* has an imprecise meaning. It is often used to refer to consanguineal ties rather than to a particular division of a kin group (Naim 1984:19). My informants appear to support Naim's interpretation in the sense that the *jurai* refers to the existence of ties rather than to a particular division of a kin group.

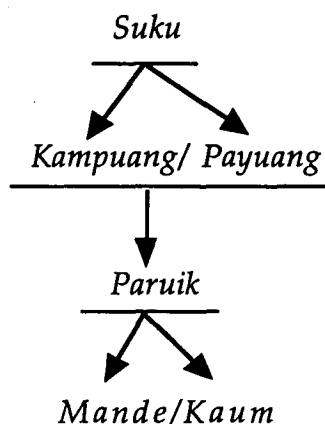
In many cases *payuang* and *kampuang* mean the same thing, that is a sub-division of *suku* headed by a *panghulu*. The same thing is true of *mande* and *kaum*. They refer to the smallest kin group, although the terms are conceptually different. The term *kaum* is used to distinguish the *kamanakan* who have inheritance rights both to property and to

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<sup>1</sup> A *panghulu* is also called a *datuak* or a *niniek mamak*.

*panghuluship* from those who do not.<sup>2</sup>

On this basis, it is argued that the kinship groups in the Minangkabau matrilineal system are best hierarchised as follows



The *suku* is a group of related lineages which have a common unknown ancestry. It consists of several *kampung/payuang*, groups headed by a *panghulu*. The *kampung/payuang* in turn comprises of several *paruik*, each of which is a group of people that would formerly have shared a *rumah gadang* and which is headed by a *tungganai*. This *paruik* consists of a number of *mande*, each of which consists of a mother and her married and unmarried children (Pak 1986:74, Kato 1982:43).

Affiliation to any of these kinship groups is through the mother's line. This means that one belongs to one's mother's *suku*, *payuang*, *paruik* and *mande* rather than to those of one's father. This means a Minangkabau individual is more attached to his/her mother's relatives than to his/her father's relatives. The father's relatives are recognised as

<sup>2</sup> People who come from other villages or other regions to a given village are naturalised through affiliating to one of the *payuang*. Affiliating to one of the *payuang* means affiliating to one of the *suku*, matriclans. However, these people are not recognised as *kaum*. Therefore, they do not have inheritance rights.

*keluarga bapak* or *dunsanak bapak* (father's relatives), while mother's relatives are recognised as *keluarga awak* or *dunsanak awak* (my relatives).

It is not uncommon in Minangkabau society for people to not know their father's relatives well. Many people tend to know well only their father's parents and father's siblings. People rarely know members of their father's *paruik*.

The father's relatives are called *bako*. The *bako*'s obligations to an individual are usually limited to those involved in ceremonies of the life cycle (Thomas 1981:121-123). For example, in time of *kikah* (initiation) of an infant, the *bako* is obliged to provide a gift to the child. In Perumpung, the *bako* is obliged to give a piece of mattress and clothes to the baby. In some cases such as in Perumpung, the *bako* grants a piece of rice field (or coconut trees or a goat or a cow, depending on the ability of the *bako*) to their *anak panca* (the children of the male members of a kin group) when the *anak panca* is married. A father's relatives tend not to be involved in the daily life an individual. For this, the matrilineal kinship groups are very important.

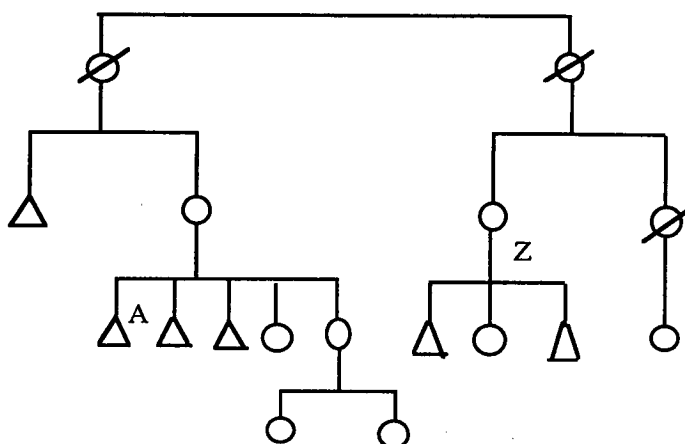
### Functional Kinship Groups

The kin group units which are important for organising daily affairs, in the Minangkabau matrilineal system, are *paruik* and *mande* (Radjab 1969:24-25, Pak 1986:74-76, Josselin de Jong 1952:11).

The *paruik* is a kin group consisting of people who have kin ties over three or four generations, two generations above Ego and one generation below Ego (Pak 1986:76, Radjab 1969: 24, Kato 1982:44-45). Since membership in the *paruik* is through the mother, the size of the

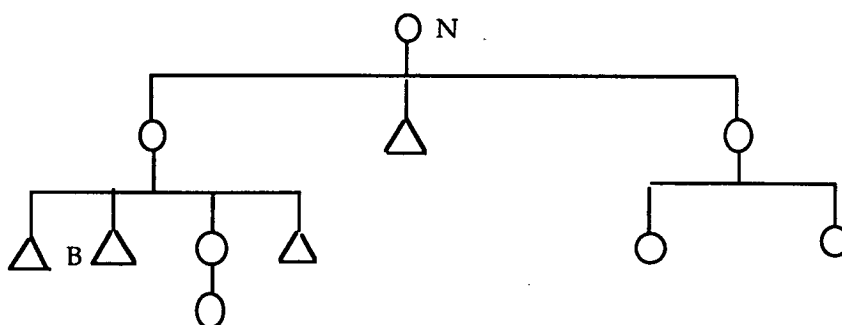
*paruik* and the number of its members are really dependent upon the number of daughters who grow up and bear children. In many cases, the *paruik* has fewer female kin and, therefore, does not have breadth and does not have so many members. Two of the informants' *paruik* shown below are good examples:

Diagram 4. 1. Members of Informant A's *paruik*<sup>3</sup>



There are only fourteen persons in A's *paruik*. It consists of mother, a maternal uncle, siblings, nieces, a classificatory maternal aunt and classificatory maternal cousins.

Diagram 4. 2. Members of Informant B's *paruik*



<sup>3</sup> As diagram 4. 1 shows, a *paruik* can include quite a few people when there are a number of sisters with children in the grandparental generation. In the rare cases where a *paruik* is this extensive, an individual such as Z could be referred to by A as a maternal aunt. However, in practice such classificatory kinship occurs so rarely it has not been included in this analysis.

Informant B's *paruik* consists of only eleven people, including grandmother, mother, a maternal aunt, a maternal uncle, siblings, a niece and maternal cousins. This happens because N does not have a sister. I found that the majority of *paruik* in Sungai Talang Barat and Perumpung happen to be like the latter example. Pak (1986:76) even found that the *paruik* in Biaro commonly consists of three generations only, that is, a mother with her sisters, their several married and unmarried daughters and the children of the daughters. Mother's brothers and married sons should also be included in this list, because they are also members of the *paruik*.

The *paruik* owns ancestral property such as rice fields and gardens (Pak 1986:76, Oki 1977:17, Murad, 1980:13). Rights of use and inheritance of this property are held by *paruik* relatives. Within the *paruik* the *mande*, a married woman and her unmarried children, is the holder of the utilisation rights of that property (Pak 1986:76). However, in Sungai Talang Barat and Perumpung a married man may also hold utilisation rights to his *paruik*'s ancestral property. This is indicated by the fact that 20% of married men in Sungai Talang Barat utilise their *paruik*'s property. The same figure was also found in Perumpung village. Kahn also found that married men sometimes utilise their kin group's property to establish their trading business (1980:54).

A *paruik* formerly shared a *rumah gadang*. As a consequence of an uxori-local pattern of residence following marriage the *rumah gadang* was for kinswomen. The *rumah gadang* consists of many *bilik* (rooms). Each *bilik* was allocated to a married kinswoman who lived in it with her husband and her children.

Besides being a unit of co-residence, the *paruik* was also a unit of production and consumption. The members of *paruik*, both men and

women and including married men, worked together on the kin group land. The produce, usually rice, was kept in one place, called *lumbuang* (small granaries) (see also Kato 1982:55-56). The female members of the *paruik* cooked together and all members of the *paruik* ate together as well (Loeb 1972:101).

Since the *paruik* and the *mande* kin groups are functional kinship groups in Minangkabau society to organise everyday life activities, this thesis investigates the relationship between individual members of these kin groups to examine ties between matrikin in contemporary Minangkabau society. Further, since in many cases the *paruik* consists of only parents, siblings, grandparents, maternal uncles, sister's children, maternal aunts and maternal cousins, this thesis therefore analyses the relationship between parents and offspring, siblings, grandparents and grandchildren, *mamak* and *kamanakan*, maternal nieces/nephews and maternal aunts, and between cousins.

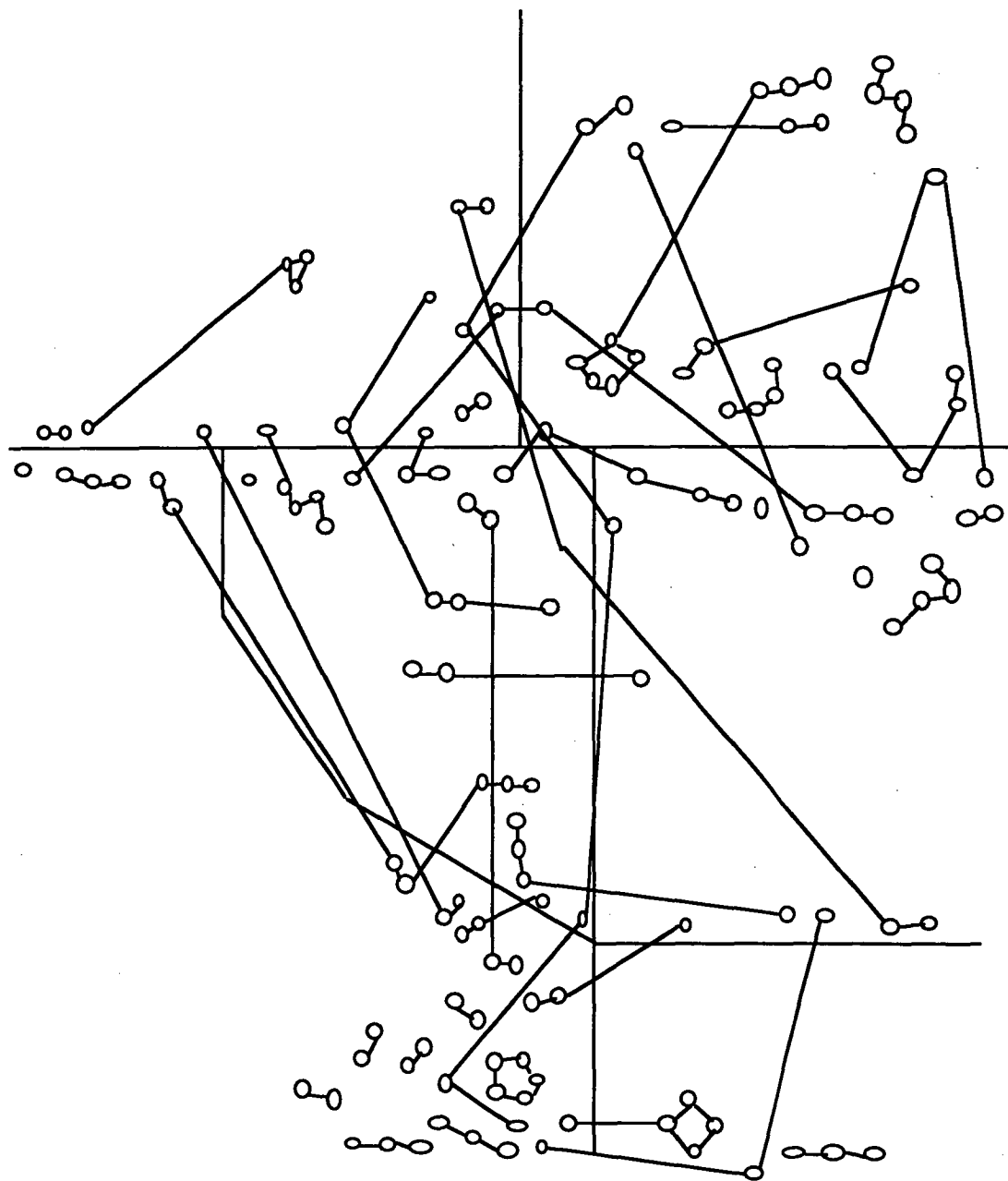
Today the use of the *rumah gadang* has declined and the *paruik* has collapsed as a unit of production and consumption. Married daughters, their husbands and their unmarried children now tend to form separate households in that they live in separate houses and organise production and consumption separately from each other. Some sixty percent of the respondents' households are nuclear households, and 64% of house construction is financed solely by the married couple. Does the breakdown of the *rumah gadang* as a unit of dwelling and as a unit of production and consumption indicate the breakdown of kin ties?

Some scholars argue that the breakdown of the *rumah gadang* as a co-residential unit indicates the breakdown of kin ties (for example see Schrieke 1955:117, Josselin de Jong 1952:117-118). This is not necessarily the case. Attention should be paid to kin relations rather than simply to

place of residence or to household membership. I will show in the following sections that evidence indicates continuing close ties among members of a *paruik* despite their separate households.

Although the members of the *paruik* now tend to live in separate houses, the houses are located close to each other and houses are still located on kin group property. Married couples, after several years of marriage, tend to build a separate house or a hut on the wife's kin group's land. This can be seen from the housing maps below that show the locations of the houses of members of a kin group in Sungai Talang Barat and Perumpung.

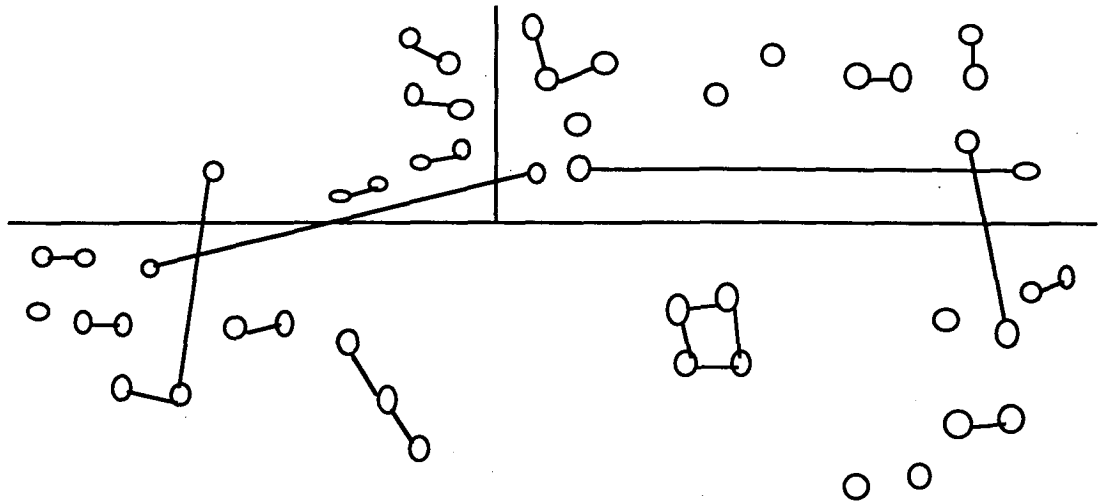
Diagram 4. 3. Location of the Houses of Members of *Paruik* in Perumpung



Note: ○—○ indicates the location of the houses of *paruik* members  
 ○ indicates *paruik* members living in one house only



Diagram 4. 4. Location of the Houses of Members of *Paruik* in a *dusun*<sup>4</sup> in Sungai Talang Barat



Note: ○—○ indicates the location of the houses of *paruik* members

○ indicates *paruik* members live in only one house

It is often argued that the *mamak-kamanakan* relationship is the most important relationship in Minangkabau society. Most of the literature about this society emphasises the importance of the *mamak* and the *kamanakan* relationship. For example Kato argues '[t]he essence of Minangkabau matriliney is above all concentrated in the two-generation relation of *mamak* and *kamanakan*' (1982:60), although in his footnote he indicates that the mother's role should also be taken into account. It is argued in this thesis that the *mamak-kamanakan* relationship is only one among several relationships among members of *paruik*. Because of the importance of this issue in analysis of Minangkabau society, the relationship between *mamak* and *kamanakan* is given much attention here.

<sup>4</sup> A *dusun* is a sub-division of *desa*.

### The *Mamak-kamanakan* Relationship

According to scholars, *mamak* (maternal uncles) are supposed to be responsible economically and socially for their *kamanakan* (sister's children), in the absence of a father in Minangkabau society (Radjab 1969:24, Josselin de Jong: 1952:11, Kato 1982:60, Naim 1984:19). However, it is not really clear to what extent the *mamak* has an economic responsibility for their *kamanakan*. Does it mean that the *mamak* has responsibility to meet the needs of their *kamanakan* in dealing with matters such as food, clothes, education expenses, and so on? Moreover, it is also not clear how the *mamak* carries out those responsibilities. Do they work for the sake of their *kamanakan*? Scholars have paid too little attention to these matters. It is argued in this thesis that the *mamak* plays an important role within his matrilineal kin group, but he is not a prime provider for his *kamanakan*.

The term *mamak* itself in the Minangkabau matrilineal system refers to the actual mother's brother as well as to leaders of *kampung*/*payuang* kin groups, *panghulu* and *tungganai* respectively. In turn, the concept of *kamanakan* refers to the actual sister's children as well as to all members of the *payuang* or the *paruik* in relation to their kin group leader. For example, someone calls his/her actual mother's brother and his/her *panghulu/tungganai* '*mamak*..' A man calls his actual sister's children '*kamanakan*', and a *panghulu/tungganai* refers to his kin group members in this way also. So the avunculate may effectively include the relationship between the *panghulu*/the *tungganai* as kin group leaders and their members as well as to the relationship between the actual mother's brother and the actual sister's children (see also Benda-Beckmann 1979, Navis 1984, Kato 1982). The actual mother's

brother is called *mamak kanduang*, while the actual sister's children are called *kamanakan kanduang*.

Much of the literature on the Minangkabau matrilineal system fails to distinguish these separate uses of the term in discussing the relationship between the *mamak* and the *kamanakan* (for example see Benda-Beckmann 1979, Kato 1982, Navis 1984), although they recognise that a difference exists. In particular instances in their work one cannot determine clearly which is being discussed; the role of the *panghulu/tungganai* or the role of the actual mother's brother. It appears that the literature on the subject of the role of the *mamak* mostly talks about the role of the *panghulu/tungganai* (for example, see Benda-Beckmann 1979, Navis 1984, Oki 1977, Kato 1982). This happens in part because the people themselves do not distinguish between different *mamak* when talking about the relationship between *mamak* and *kamanakan*.<sup>5</sup>

It is argued here that it is very important to differentiate between the *mamak* which refers to the *panghulu/tungganai* and that which refers to the actual mother's brother, because much that concerns the *mamak's* economic and social responsibility to their *kamanakan* refers to the role of *panghulu/tungganai* as kin group leaders rather than to the role of *mamak kanduang*, as I show below.

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<sup>5</sup> This was evident in my interviews when I asked people about the *mamak's* obligations to their *kamanakan*. Most of my informants, to my knowledge, talked about the role of *panghulu*. When I asked them about which category of *mamak* they were referring to, they answered that what they told me related the role of *panghulu*.

### **Ties Between *Panghulu/tungganai* and his *Kamanakan***

*Panghulu* and *tungganai* are not differentiated here, because the attention is paid to their role as *mamak* instead of their role as *panghulu* or *tungganai per se*. Besides that, in some areas the responsibility for control of land has been assumed by the *paruik* and therefore the *tungganai* holds authority over the land there while in other places, the *payuang* still organises the land and therefore the *panghulu* exercises authority.

The *panghulu/tungganai* have several responsibilities towards their *kamanakan*. Firstly, they have economic responsibilities towards their *kamanakan* (Radjab 1969:24, Kato 1982:45). My informants say that the economic responsibility of the *mamak* towards their *kamanakan* means that they are responsible for allocating ancestral property to all their *kamanakan*, especially married women, in order that the *kamanakan* have land to work with. This supports Benda-Beckmann's findings that '[t]he *mamak* is further responsible for the distribution of property within the group, and he must act for the group in transactions over *kaum*-property' (1979:187). So, when analysts say *panghulu* have the responsibility to feed and to provide clothes to their *kamanakan* they probably mean that since *panghulu/tungganai* hold formal authority over land, it is their responsibility to utilise the land for the benefit of their *kamanakan*.

Both in Sungai Talang Barat and in Perumpung an in-marrying man has closer ties with his immediate family today than was the case before. He passes on his acquired property to this children rather to his *kamanakan*, and participates in meeting the economic needs of his immediate family. However, this does not weaken the relationship

between *mamak* and *kamanakan*. In Minangkabau, a father/husband has different areas of influence from that of *mamak*. His influence is limited to his immediate family's affairs, while the *mamak's* influence is concerned with kin group matters. The *mamak* in both villages still tends to play important roles within *paruik* and *payuang*, while the in-marrying man's influence is still limited to his immediate family's affairs.

The *mamak* (*panghulu/tungganai*) is still involved in managing utilisation of ancestral property both in Sungai Talang Barat and Perumpung villages. This is indicated by the involvement of *mamak* (*panghulu/tungganai*) in allocating ancestral property to members of a kin group and in pawning or selling of land.

In terms of utilisation rights, the land is divided up among various *mande*. The person who organises the distribution of land to *mande* is the *panghulu/tungganai*. A married woman who needs a piece of land first of all looks at the possibility of using a portion of the land that has been allocated to her *mande*. In cases where the land is not large enough, she will ask her *mamak* to find a piece of land for her. If there is land available, the *mamak* will find it for her. What often occurs is that a needy person talks to a member of another *mande* of a given *paruik* directly to ask for the land, and it often happens that that individual will give up the land if she does not need it.

Once a piece of land has been allocated to a *mande*, offspring within the *mande* have the right to utilise the land without asking permission from the *mamak* or other members of the *paruik*. This means that once the land is allocated to a *mande* the *mande* has the autonomous right to cultivate it and to reallocate it among member offspring.

However, under certain circumstances a *mamak* may make a new decision. For example, this may occur when a holder and her offspring have another source of income that is better than exploiting the land. In other words, they are not dependent upon that land. In this case, if there are members of another *mande* who need the land, the *mamak* may ask the former to surrender the land to the needy relative. But in reality such a decision often causes disputes among members of a *paruik*.

In addition, in rural areas the land is an important source of economic security. When people need money to build a house, to fund their children's education, or to finance social celebrations they will often seek to use the land to raise money by pawning or selling the land.<sup>6</sup>

Those who want to pawn a piece of land first of all talk to their *tungganai/panghulu* to state their intention. Usually, they strive to persuade him to allow them to do so. The *mamak* then discusses the matter with other members of the *paruik*. After being permitted by the *mamak*, the people may pawn the land. There are people who pawn the land without asking their *mamak's* consent, but this activity is against customary law and often creates disputes among members of a *paruik/payuang*.

*Panghulu* or *tungganai* is also involved in organising marriages for their *kamanakan*. All of the 50 rural respondents in this study said that their marriages and their children's marriages were partly organised by *panghulu/tungganai*. The role of the *panghulu/tungganai* in organising marriage for his *kamanakan* is best illustrated by referring to steps of organising marriage practised by Minangkabau people.<sup>7</sup>

The first step occurs when parents make a decision about the

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<sup>6</sup> People prefer to pawn the land rather than to sell it.

<sup>7</sup> There is variation in the steps of organising marriage in different places in Minangkabau society. The practice described here is the case of organising marriage in *Kabupaten 50 Kota*.

necessity that their son or daughter be married. The siblings are involved in this discussion. We can say that this discussion is at *mande* level. Then, the mother talks to the child's *mamak* (*tungganai*).

After that, the matter should be discussed with *paruik* members, because their economic and labour support are needed to organise the marriage successfully. It is the *tungganai* who has responsibility to inform all of the *paruik* members, and to invite them to *baiyo-iyoy*, a meeting among *paruik* relatives. The *tungganai* is also the person who leads this meeting.

Beyond that, the matter needs the involvement of *payuang* members. Therefore, its leader should be contacted. It is the *tungganai* who again is responsible for informing the *panghulu*. On this level, the matter becomes the responsibility of both *panghulu* and *tungganai*.

In addition, the *panghulu/tungganai* is still involved in maintaining order in his kin group. Some 75% of the respondents said that their *panghulu* or *tungganai* were involved in solving their problems when they have disputes with their fellow kin group members. Such disputes are mostly concerned with land. Concerning disputes within marriage, 40% of the respondents, mostly women, say they consult their *panghulu/tungganai* when they have a problem with their marriage. It is the *panghulu/tungganai* who should attempt to reunite a female *kamanakan* when she and her husband are separated.

In sum, the *panghulu/tungganai* plays an important role within their respective kin groups. Each leader manages the use of ancestral property, helps to solve disputes among his *kamanakan*, and helps to organise the marriages of his *kamanakan*.

The following section will examine the relationship between *mamak kanduang*, actual mother's brother, and *kamanakan kanduang*,

actual sister's children.

### **Ties Between *Mamak Kandung* and *Kamanakan Kandung***

The tie between the *mamak kandung*, actual mother's brother, and the *kamanakan kandung*, actual sister's children, can be understood from answers to questions asked in the survey regarding the extent to which the *mamak* supports his *kamanakan* financially, the extent to which the *mamak* makes decisions concerning the *kamanakan*, and the extent to which the *mamak* monitors and advises the *kamanakan*.

It appears that the *mamak kandung* are not the primary sources of financial support for the *kamanakan kandung*, but they do provide some support to their *kamanakan kandung*. Fewer than 40% of *mamak kandung* reported providing financial support for education expenses and clothes for their *kamanakan kandung* (Tables 4. 1).

Table 4. 1      Financial Support from *Mamak Kandung* to  
*Kamanakan Kandung*

	Respondents from their <i>Mamak</i>  n: 50	Respondents to their <i>Kamanakan</i>  n:25* (in %)	Respondents' children from the children's <i>mamak</i>  n: 50
Requirement			
Clothes	32.4	32	30.3
School fees	32.4	20	19.5
Books	9.2	16	10.1

\*Note: This is only male respondents.



It also appears that the *mamak kanduang* are not prime decision-makers concerning their *kamanakan* either. This can be seen from the example of decisions about marriage and education<sup>8</sup> (see Table 4. 2).

Table 4. 2 *Mamak Kanduang* Who Made Decisions Concerning  
*Kamanakan's* education and *Kamanakan's* marriage  
( in % )

Respondents Who Made Decision for their <i>Kamanakan</i>	<i>Mamak</i> of Respondents' children Who Made Decision for Respondents' children
n : 25	n : 50
Education 16	21
Marriage 20	12

This, however, does not indicate the weakening of *mamak kanduang* authority over his *kamanakan kanduang*, because in Minangkabau society decisions are made by *musyawarah*, consensus. The opinions of all of the kin group members are required before a decision is made. From the point of view of *mamak*, all of the respondents mentioned that their *kamanakan's* parents always consult them when decisions concerning their *kamanakan* are to be made.<sup>9</sup>

The *mamak kanduang* are involved in the socialisation of their *kamanakan kanduang*. This is indicated by the data gathered concerning the involvement of the *mamak* in advising and monitoring the friendships of the *kamanakan*. This role includes many duties such as

<sup>8</sup> Decisions about marriage includes when someone has to get married and to whom, and decisions about education includes which school and which subjects someone has to choose.

<sup>9</sup> It is usually the *kamanakan's* mother who consults in this way.

advising *kamanakan* to learn to read the Quran, to pray, and to be well behaved. This also includes the *mamak* telling his *kamanakan* not to do wrong or to stop unacceptable behaviour. Monitoring includes keeping informed of friendships including keeping an eye on whom the *kamanakan* has as close friends and whether the *kamanakan* already has a sexual partner or not.

The findings reveal that in this area the *mamak's* role is obvious. Some 94.5% of the respondents said they were advised by their *mamak*, while 95.1% said their *mamak* helped monitor their friendships when they were young. Today *mamak kanduang* continue to participate in bringing up their *kamanakan kanduang*. All respondents in this category said that they were involved in monitoring and providing advice to their *kamanakan*.

In sum, *mamak* are still important supporters of their *kamanakan* economically and socially in contemporary Minangkabau society. They participate in the organisation of their *kamanakan's* marriages and in solving disputes that involve their *kamanakan*. They are engaged in monitoring and advising their *kamanakan*. The *mamak* also provide economic support to their *kamanakan*, even though they are not the prime source of such support.

The fact that a *mamak kanduang* is not a prime provider for his *kamanakan kanduang* does not necessarily indicate the weakening of the relationship between *mamak* and *kamanakan* in contemporary Minangkabau society. It seems that this was also the case in the past. My informants told me that even when they were young their *mamak kanduang* were not the prime providers for items such as food, clothes and school fees. This raises the question of who are exactly the prime providers for children in Minangkabau society and leads us to take

account of the role of father and mother in the immediate family. In most literature about Minangkabau society their role is discussed in relation to authority and property ownership. Less attention has been given to their contribution in meeting the economic and social needs of their children.

### **Father's and Mother's Role in their Immediate Family**

In the Minangkabau matrilineal system, to talk about the role of a father/husband is to talk about the role of *urang sumando* (an in-marriage man) in his immediate family. This role must be related to the discussion of patterns of residence of married men in Minangkabau society. This is the key to interpreting the father's role in his immediate family, as I will show below.

As far as the residence pattern of a married man is concerned, there are conflicting findings. According to some (see Naim 1984:21, Radjab 1969:50, Josselin de Jong 1952:10-11), it is natalocal or duolocal, which means that the married man visits his wife at night time to play a reproductive role, while spending the day time at his kin group's house. In this view he does not participate in fulfilling the economic needs of his wife and his children. Others argue (Thomas, 1981:59) that the residence pattern of a married man is uxorilocal, which means that at marriage a man stays at his wife's kin group's house. My informants seem to support Thomas's interpretation. I interviewed approximately 15 elderly people of around 60 to 70 years old, in both Sungai Talang Barat and Perumpung. They told me that their fathers slept and ate at their houses rather than at their fathers' kin group houses.

According to Thomas (1981:58),

different authors or perhaps different informants have given

different interpretations of what is essentially the same residence behaviour. Given that an uxorilocal man may often be away from his wife's house, and given that he maintains ties with his MDG [kin group: my interpretation] household, uxorilocality looks very much like natallocality. And given that a natallocal man may often visit his wife, habitually night after night by most accounts, and eat at her house on at least some occasions, natallocality looks rather like uxorilocality.

It has been noted that 'these discussions of Minangkabau residence are usually concerned only with post-marital eating and sleeping arrangements' (Benda-Beckmann 1979:107). Benda-Beckmann argues (1979:107) that residence rules have an effect on 'where people may exercise their rights as community members and where and by whom they may be asked to make contributions, in the form of money or labour'. He identifies three kinds of residence that should be differentiated in order for the concept to have any value for the analysis of Minangkabau social organisation:

1. Domestic residence: the location of domestic activities such as eating, sleeping, the education of young children.
2. Political residence: the localisation of a person's political rights and duties as a community member.
3. Economic residence: the localisation of a person's labour and other economic activities (1979:107).

On the basis of this, Benda-Beckmann, like Thomas, argues that the domestic residence of a man after marriage is uxorilocal in that the husband sleeps and eats in the house of his wife. Although a married couple may not always be in the wife's mother's house, since the newly built house is located somewhere on the wife's kin group's property it therefore belongs to the wife, and the residence is still categorised as uxorilocal (1979:108-109).

In contrast to domestic residence, the political residence of a man after marriage is in his kin group's house (Benda-Beckmann 1979:111). This means that at marriage a man has authority in his own kin group

rather than in his wife's kin group.

On the basis of the idea that the domestic pattern of residence of a married man in Minangkabau society is uxorilocal, the in-marrying man appears to participate economically in his wife's kin group. He participates in providing for the economic needs of his wife and his children (Benda-Beckmann 1979:84-85, Thomas 1973:115). Although Kato argues that an *urang sumando* only plays a reproductive role in his immediate family, he does say that he helps his wife with cultivating the wife's land (1982:57).

Since the early twentieth century fathers have been reported to provide economic support to their children (Josselin de Jong 1952:115-116), but analysts assume this is indicative of a change in the roles of an in-marrying man in Minangkabau society. This assumption is despite how little is known about this aspect of the father's role prior to the twentieth century. This may be an indication of the original dynamic of the Minangkabau matrilineal system for 'the custom of a son receiving goods from his father (as inheritance or as a present) is not only a recent development, but one recognised by adat' (Josselin de Jong 1952:116).

The roles of a husband seem to change in line with the duration of marriage. In the early stage of marriage, an in-marrying man is not obliged to provide for his immediate family, but when a married couple has a child, the husband is expected to contribute economically and socially to the welfare of his wife and his children (Radjab 1969:53). This is indicated by the saying *anak dipangku, kamanakan dibimbiang* (children are held, *kamanakan* are led by the arm). The demands on a father/husband might not have been high in the past for economic needs were basic. In this case, the contribution of the father/husband perhaps was limited.

In Sungai Talang Barat and Perumpung an in-marrying man lives at his wife's house, and participates in meeting the economic needs of his immediate family. Sixty percent of male respondents utilise their wife's ancestral property to this end. According to the informants, this is not a new trend for when they were young their father lived with their mother and participated in meeting their economic needs in the same way.

A man who marries his *mamak's* daughter or his father's niece may have a different relationship with his immediate family and with his spouse's relatives from one who does not, but unfortunately specific information on this was not obtained in this study.

Besides the father, the mother also helps to meet her immediate family's needs. Unfortunately, there are no historical records about the extent to which mothers participated in meeting their immediate families' economic needs in the past. Yet a careful reading of the literature about Minangkabau society suggests that mothers did contribute in this way. In 1927 Loeb found that women participated in fulfilling their family's economic needs, and in fact describes women as the main cultivators of the land (Loeb 1972:101-100). This is supported by Pak's findings. She reveals that a mother is an important provider for her immediate family. She finds that

[t]he general opinion is that a Minangkabau woman will never ask her husband for money to buy something for the expense of the family. Many women said that they would feel embarrassed (*malu*) to do so. Even nowadays when a man has a regular income, his wife will not ask him for money. In different villages as well as in the city, women said that if a husband gave his wife a part of his salary, which most men do, she would accept it, if he did not, she would not ask for it (1986:494).

Pak adds:

most people who went to school in the early 1950's or earlier told us that their school fee was paid by their mother. Many of them said that their mother sold fried bananas (*pisang goreng*) or some other kinds of cooked food to earn money for their education (1986:494-495).

In Sungai Talang Barat and Perumpung mothers contribute to the economic support of their immediate families. Women participate in cultivating rice fields or gardens. They are usually involved in planting, weeding and harvesting. They also sell their labour, in addition to the income that is derived from their own land. Women weed rice fields for payment in these villages. Actually most women work in these villages as is also true for other Minangkabau villages. A woman may work together with her husband to cultivate their own land or sell her labour as a farm labourer. This is in spite of the fact that when asked about their occupation most women say that they are housekeepers.

In sum, this section shows that both fathers and mothers participate in meeting their immediate family's economic needs. They, and not the children's *mamak*, are actually the important or central source of financial support for their children.

### **Ties Between *Paruik* Members**

In the above sections, it was shown that *mamak-kamanakan* ties are still strong. This section will examine ties between other members within the *paruik*. The relationship between *mamak* and *kamanakan* will be considered again to compare it with the relationship of other members of the *paruik*.

The findings show that the *paruik* is the group within which people seek support when they are in need. In addition to parents, people tend to receive both financial and labour support from their *paruik* relatives. Siblings, grandparents, *mamak*, *kamanakan* and maternal aunts are important sources of support.

Examining to what extent people receive from and provide financial support to their fellow *paruik* relatives shows that parents, offspring, siblings, grandparents, *mamak* and maternal aunts are important sources of support, as shown in Table 4. 3.

Table 4. 3 Respondents Who Received Financial Support From Members of their *Paruik*

Members of <i>paruik</i>	(in %)							
	Requirement							
	female				male			
	n : 25				n : 25			
fees	School	Clothes for wedding	Capital	Money fees	School	Clothes for	Capital	Money wedding
Parents	100	100	8	100	100	100	0	100
Brother	17.4	21.7	0	30	15	5	10	70
Sister	28.6	14.3	21.4	28.6	33.3	27.3	13.6	77.3
Grand- parents	28.6	28.6	0	0	12	16	0	0
<i>Mamak</i>	32.4	32.4	8	40	35.5	30.7	0	33.3
Maternal aunts	8.4	8.4	0	0	30.4	15.2	0	0
Maternal cousins	9.2	0	0	8.2	0	0	0	0

Table 4. 3 shows that there is a difference between kinswomen and kinsmen with regard to financial support, but it does not necessarily indicate gender differences in this regard. This seems to be due to the



different needs and capabilities of both the respondents and the relatives in question. For example, in one case the data show that the respondents are more likely to provide and receive financial support to and from their fellow kinswomen, but in other cases they are more likely to provide it to their fellow kinsmen; Table 4. 4 shows that male respondents are more likely to provide financial support to their maternal aunts than female respondents, but the female respondents are also more likely to provide financial support to their brothers and to their *mamak* .

The extent to which the respondents themselves provided economic support to their members of *paruik* supports the findings in Table 4. 3 (Table 4. 4).

Table 4. 4 Respondents Who Provided Financial Support to their *Paruik* Members in Last Two Years

	(in %)	
Members of <i>paruik</i>	Female n : 25	Male n : 25
Parents	90.5	82.6
Brothers	21.7	10
Sisters	7.1	5
Grandparents*	0	0
<i>Mamak</i>	28.6	14.3
Maternal aunts	20	30
Maternal cousins	28.6	27.3

\*Note : None of the respondents had grandparents still living

The tendency for fewer people to receive and provide financial support from and to their siblings, grandparents, *mamak*, maternal aunts

and maternal cousins for items such as school fees, clothes, capital and money for general purposes does not necessarily indicate the weakening of kin ties. The necessity for an individual member of the *paruik* to be supported and the ability of the relatives to deliver support are the factors that influence the realisation of support. Individuals tend to provide support to their kin group members when they are in need. For example, when people suffer from serious illness they tend to receive both financial support and labour support from their *paruik* relatives.

Table 4. 5 Respondents Who Experienced Long Illness and Who Received Financial Support From their *Paruik* Members

Members of <i>paruik</i>	(in %)	
	Female n : 6	Male n : 9
Parents	66.7	66.7
Brother	66.6	88.9
Sisters	50	33.3
Grandparents*	0	0
<i>Mamak</i>	0	33.3
Maternal aunts	16.7	55.6
Maternal cousins	33.3	11.1

Table 4. 6 Respondents Who Experienced Long Illness and Who Received Labour Support From their *Paruik* Members  
( in % )

Members of *paruik*

		Female		Male		
		n : 6		n : 9		
Activities						
	seeing doctor:	preparing : meal	washing : clothes	seeing doctor:	preparing : meal	washing clothes
Parents	83.3	100	83.3	33.3	44.4	44.4
Brother	66.7	0	0	40.2	0	0
Sister	50	50	50	30.5	15.2	20.2
Maternal						
aunts	16.7	0	0	10.1	33.3	0

Table 4. 7 Respondents Who Provided Labour Support for their *Paruik* Relatives Who Suffered from Serious Illness  
( in % )

Members of *paruik*

	Female				Male			
	Activities							
	seeing: doctor	preparing : meal	washing : clothes	n	seeing doctor:	preparing : meal	washing clothes	n
Parents	100	100	87.5	8	100	12.5	0	8
Siblings	80	80	60	10	87.5	0	0	16
<i>Mamak</i>	0	25	0	4	100	0	0	3
Maternal aunts	25	50	50	5	100	0	0	2
Maternal cousins	0	0	0	3	33.3	0	0	3

The fact that the male respondents tend to receive less labour support from their matrilineal kin suggests that they may receive such support from their wives and children. Some experts report that married men who suffer from serious illness are taken back to their own relative's house for nursing in Minangkabau society (for example Radjab in Kato 1982:58). It seems that this is not commonly practised in Sungai Talang Barat and Perumpung.

Although the findings show that people tend to receive support more from their parents, offspring and siblings than other relatives, it should not be assumed that the ties among members of *paruik* are therefore weak. The *paruik* relatives are a reserve of supporters. They become important when the *mande* relatives are not available or cannot provide support.

The in-depth study with sixteen elderly people who have no daughters or granddaughter shows that the *paruik* relatives tend to look after needy fellow *paruik* members when *mande* relatives are absent or are men. All of the sixteen elderly people concerned have their own income from the rice fields over which they have utilisation rights. The rice field is utilised by their relatives, and in return the elderly receive part of the product. Apart from this they organise their daily needs for themselves. However, in the case of sickness they receive support from their *paruik* members, especially female members. Maternal aunts and cousins are important in this case. This can be seen from three cases.<sup>10</sup>

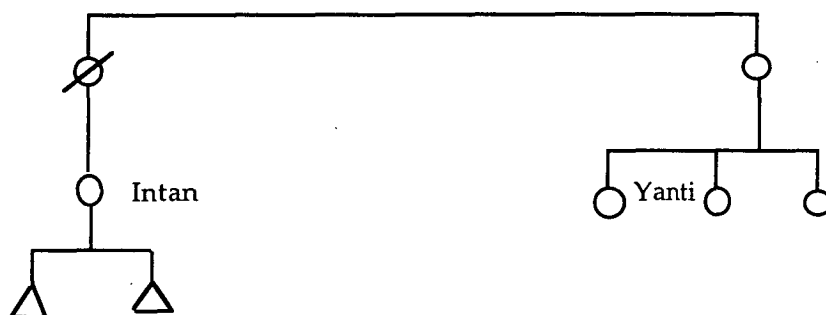
1. Intan is an old woman aged 80 years. She has two married sons but has neither a daughter nor sister. She lives alone at her house, but close to some members of her own relatives. She organises food and washing

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<sup>10</sup> Throughout this thesis pseudonyms are used to refer to all persons discussed as individuals.

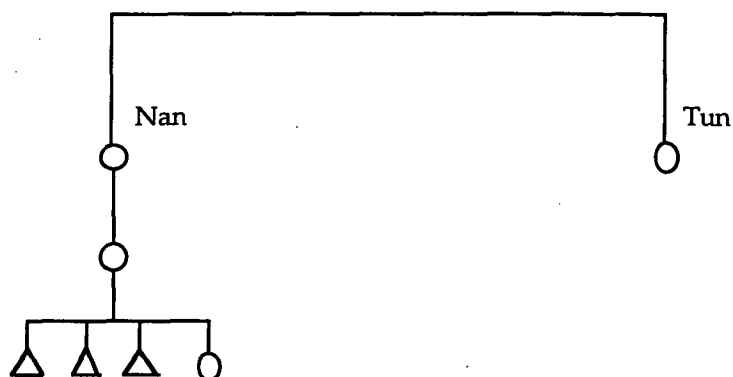
herself. The money for her daily requirements come from her rice field. She does not cultivate the rice field herself; this is performed by her sons. Her sons give her half of the rice produced in the field. Therefore, her sons do not actually support Intan financially. When she needs money, she sells the rice. Usually, old people's economic needs are very basic in this village. When Intan became ill she was looked after by Yanti, who is her maternal cousin. Yanti prepared food and washed her clothes. When Intan became seriously ill, Yanti moved her to her house.

Diagram 4.5 The Relationship between Intan and the Person Who Looked After Her



2. Nan is a 79 year-old woman. She lives in her own house but close to other members of her kin group. She only has a daughter, who lives with her own children in the national capital, Jakarta. Nan's financial support comes from her daughter, who sends money to her monthly. Like Intan, Nan organises her daily affairs for herself. When she became ill, she received help with preparing food and doing the laundry from Tun, who is her maternal aunt. The diagram below shows the relationship between Nan and the persons who help her.

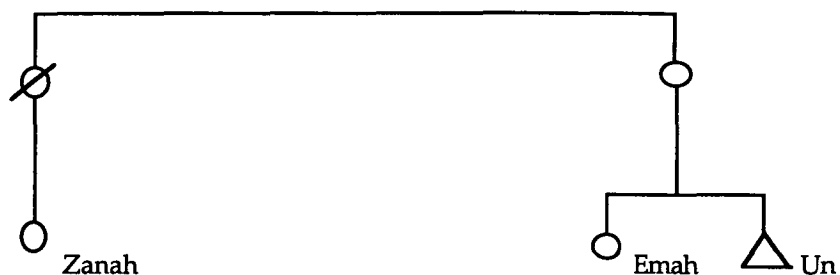
Diagram 4.6 The Relationship Between Nan and the persons  
Who Looked After Her



All of Nan's relatives live near her house. Geographically, Ijah and her daughters are Nan's closest female relatives who are available, and Tun is Nan's second closest female relative.

3. Zanah is a 75 year-old woman. She does not have children. Her husband died ten years ago. Her house is close to one of the members of her kin group, who looked after her when she became ill. She organises things such as purchasing and preparing food, washing and cleaning her house herself. Her financial income comes from two sources; from her rice field, which is cultivated by a non-kinsman, and from Un who is one of her maternal cousins. When she became ill she was looked after by Emah, who is also her maternal cousin.

Diagram 4.7 The Relationship Between Zanah and the People Who Looked After Her



Like elderly people who do not have children or siblings and who are looked after by maternal aunts or classificatory grandchildren, orphans and children whose parents are divorced and whose mother or father cannot support them for whatever reason tend to obtain support from their grandparents and maternal aunts.

Thus, the research findings show that the *mande* relatives are the first priority, in the sense that these relatives are first of all supported, and from them people who are in need seek support. In cases where there are no children, parents, or siblings to provide support (eg. because they do not exist, have migrated away or are too poor) other members of the *paruik* work to replace them, although wealth as well as proximity of residence influence who exactly provides the economic and the labour support.

However, it seems that since considerable importance is attached to the *mande*, often a clash of priorities occurs. When someone has *mande* relatives who need to be cared for, while at the same time there are other *paruik* members who also need assistance, a person is more likely to care for his/her *mande* relatives.

Additionally, strong solidarity among members of kin groups is also indicated by members' willingness to allow their fellow *paruik*

relatives to dispose of kin group property to finance their needs. For example, 8 years ago Yona, who was a truck driver, killed a man while driving his truck. In order to prevent Yona being jailed, members of his *paruik* allowed his mother to pawn several areas of rice land. It is common in Sungai Talang Barat and Perumpung for ancestral property to be pawned for building a new house, repairing a house, or wedding celebrations of *paruik* members.

### **Gender and Kin Relations In Minangkabau Society**

As mentioned earlier both kinsmen and kinswomen provide financial support to their kin group and receive it from their kin group. However, there is a difference as far as care support is concerned. Kinswomen are more likely to perform household tasks and provide child care than are kinsmen (see Table 4. 6 and 4. 7).

The in-depth study with sixteen elderly people, three of whose cases have been presented above, reveals that it is kinswomen who provide intensive care for elderly people. As we saw, these needy elderly people were looked after in their carer's house when they needed intensive care. So, like married men whose obligations are diffused outside of their immediate family, as *mamak*, as brother, as son etc., married women's obligations are also diffused outside of their immediate family. As daughter, as sister, as granddaughter, as *etek* (maternal aunt) a woman has obligations to provide both financial and labour support to members of her kin group.

The matrilineal pattern of residence makes the tie of a married woman stronger to her own kin than to her husband's, as I will show below.



### **Ties Between a Married Woman and her Kin and that of her Husband**

A woman who marries her *mamak's* son or her father's *nephew* may have a different relationship with her spouse's relatives from one who does not, but unfortunately specific information on this was not obtained in this study.

In previous sections it was shown that the ties among members of *paruik* are still strong. It was shown that kinswomen are the most important source for provision of support. Furthermore, in Minangkabau society, there are stronger ties between a married woman and her own relatives than there are with her husband's relatives. She tends to receive labour support for household tasks from her own relatives rather than from those of her husband. Some 95% of the respondents said they received child care support from the wife's relatives, especially the wife's mother rather than those of the husband (N : 50). The wife's relatives are also more likely to provide labour support, other than child care, than the husband's relatives. For example, when a wife is pregnant or has just borne a child, it is her relatives who help with household chores.

In addition, a married woman is responsible for looking after her own parents rather than her parents-in law. Examining to what extent a married woman provides support to her own parents and to her parents-in-law when they are ill suggests that the married woman is more likely to deliver support to her own parents than to her parents-in-law.

Table 4.8 Married Women Who Provided Labour Support  
For Sick Relatives of Both Sides  
(in %)

Activities	Parents	Parents-in-law
	n: 14	n: 10
Seeing doctor	100	40
Preparing meal	87	60
Washing clothes	87.5	50
Bathing	87.5	0
Making bed	87.5	0

The husband's parents are cared for by the husband's sisters. But, what happens when the husband does not have a sister? Does his wife do the work?

The in-depth study of elderly people who do not have a daughter or a granddaughter but who have a married son suggests that these elderly people tend to receive support both from their daughter-in-law and their fellow *paruik* members. However, when these people need intensive care, they tend to be looked after by their *paruik* relatives in the respective *paruik* member's house. There are cases where elderly people who do not have a daughter or a granddaughter are cared for in their daughter-in-law's house, but this happens when the daughter-in-law's parents do not need to be cared for there.

## Conclusion

This chapter has shown that changes have occurred to the relationships between members of *paruik*. In rural areas the *paruik* has ceased as a unit of residence, production and consumption. In this it has been replaced by *mande*. In other words, a household in contemporary Minangkabau society consists of the members of one *mande* rather than the members of a *paruik*. The relationship between an in-marrying man and his immediate family is also changed. However, ties between the members of the *paraik* are still strong.

Ownership of land is still shared by the members of a *paruik*. Although a married couple tend to build a separate house and finance the house construction jointly, the house is still located on the wife's kin group's land. The members of the *paraik* also tend to support each other economically and socially. The relationship of a married woman to the members of her matrilineal kin group is also still stronger than the relationship to her husband's relatives.

The close tie between an in-marrying man and his immediate family does not weaken *mamak-kamanakan* ties. The influence of the in-marrying man is still limited to his immediate family's matters. The kin group's matters such as organising marriages, managing ancestral property and solving disputes between members of a *paruik* are still in the hands of the *mamak*. Furthermore, although the in-marrying man passes on his acquired property to his children rather than to his *kamanakan*, he still tends to provide financial support to, and is involved in the socialisation of his *kamanakan*.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN URBAN MINANGKABAU AND MEMBERS OF THEIR KIN GROUP

This chapter examines ties between city dwellers and their kin group where urban residents both live far from their kin, and do not depend on them for access to land in order to make their living. The relationship between out-migrants who lived in Padang city and members of their kin groups will be analysed to reveal to what extent these factors affect kin ties in Minangkabau society.

It was shown in Chapter Four that relatives in a *paruik* are united by matrilineal property as well as by residence. They are called *urang saharato*, people of a property. They communally own property and communally inherit the property. They are dependent upon their kin group in terms of their means of living because the land upon which individuals gain their livelihood is owned by the kin group.

Members of *paruik* also live close to each other. In former times they shared a house, known among the Minangkabau as *rumah gadang*, which 'gave material expression to genealogical unity' (Schrieke 1955:117). Although the use of the *rumah gadang* has declined, relatives of a *paruik* still live side by side in rural areas occupying their matrilineal land.

There is an increasing tendency for Minangkabau people to live far away from members of their kin group, and to be independent of them in means of living. Geographical separation occurs because of the high geographical mobility among Minangkabau. As shown in Chapter One, this high geographical mobility is part of the migration that has

possibly been a feature of their history since the sixth century, and has led to high levels of migration from rural areas to cities both within West Sumatra and beyond. The population of Padang, the capital city of West Sumatra, grew much more than that in other cities in West Sumatra (Table 5. 1), indicating its comparative popularity as a destination for out-migrants within West Sumatra.

Table 5. 1. The Growth of Urban Population in West Sumatra From 1920-1992

City	Years				
	1920	1930	1961	1971	1992
1. Padang	38,169	52,054	143,699	196,618	667,788
2. Bukittingi	5,004	14,567	51,456	64,356	86,733
3. P. Panjang	6,842	9,609	25,521	30,699	39,443
4. Payakumbuh	5,121	5,914	21,031	63,402+	93,415
5. Solok	1,965	6,214	8,909	24,769	45,309
6. S. Lunto	14,353	15,146	12,276	12,426	15,667

Sources : 1920-1971 extracted from Naim 1984:179

1992 *Sumatra Barat Dalam Angka* 1992 (West Sumatra Facts and Figures 1992)

Concomitant with migration is the decreasing importance of matrilineal property as the basis of economic welfare. Out-migrants in urban areas have sources of income independent of matrilineal property. They engage in waged labour and forms of self-employment such as trading. As the out-migrants have sources of income independent of matrilineal property, they are no longer dependent on their kin group for their livelihood.

Data for this chapter are derived from two sources; structured

interviews and in-depth interviews. The structured interview data are based on respondents' answers on questions about the extent to which they deliver financial support and labour support to their relatives as well as the extent to which they themselves and their children receive such support from their relatives. In addition, the extent to which a *mamak* is involved in the socialisation of and organising marriages for his *kamanakan* is also investigated to take account of the ties between a *mamak* and his *kamanakan*. In-depth interviews were also conducted to obtain detailed information about cases of people who receive and provide support from and to members of their matrilineal kin groups. Other researchers' findings will also be utilised to support the argument.

### **The Importance of Kin for Urban Dwellers**

I have limited data to show the importance of kin for urban dwellers. The data are only concerned with sources of support people have when they need help for household tasks and financial difficulty, so the following discussion must be understood in this context.

Members of the kin group are an important source of support for urban dwellers when they need help for household tasks such as cooking, clothes washing, ironing, house cleaning and child care. Some 72.9% of urban dwellers rely on their relatives to help them with such activities, while only 27.1% of them employ a house servant (N=74) (Rosyidi 1994:24).

Although the urban dwellers tend to borrow money from banks and cooperatives in their workplace, they also tend to seek support from members of their kin groups. Of 56 cases of survey respondents facing financial difficulty, 67.9% of them borrowed money from banks or

cooperatives in their workplace, but 66.1% of them also sought support from relatives, and only 32.1% of them sought help from friends.

Thus, kin are very important as a source of support for urban residents. In the following sections the ties of the urban dwellers with each member of their matrilineal kin groups will be examined.

### **Ties Between Parents and Offspring**

In this section, the ties between urban dwellers and their parents are discussed. It was shown in Chapter Four that in agricultural Minangkabau society offspring are important supporters of parents both economically and socially. A married daughter is more likely to receive labour support from her parents, especially her mother, than from her husband's parents. It is a daughter who cares for parents rather than a son.

The aim of this section is to examine to what extent urban dwellers maintain strong ties with their parents. The ties between parents and children are indicated in this study by frequency of contact, and degree of financial and labour support exchanged between out-migrant offspring and their parents.

No distinction is made here between whether the offspring themselves initiate the contact with their parents or whether the parents do. In other words, having contact with parents may refer to either the offspring themselves visiting their parents or being visited by parents.

It appears that out-migrants tend to have less frequent contact with their parents than rural people do (Table 5. 2).

Table 5.2 Comparison Between Rural and Urban People  
Concerning Frequency of Contact Between Offspring  
and Parents in Last Two Years

( in % )							
Rural n : 50				Urban n : 100			
Frequency							
Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Total	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Total
91.3	4.3	4.3	100	63.0	13.0	24.0	100

This is probably because in rural areas parents and offspring live close to each other. Although there is a tendency for a newly married couple to live in a separate house, the married couple's house is very close to that of the wife's parents. Village endogamy is also responsible for the closeness of residence between a married son and his parents, so it is very easy for them to meet each other on a daily basis. Unlike rural residents, out-migrants live far away from their parents. Visiting is the most popular means of contacting relatives. Both telephoning and mailing are not yet significantly utilised means of contacting relatives. Only 2% of out-migrants say that they have contacted or been contacted by relatives by telephone, and 5% use mail. Such communication technology, particularly the telephone, is still a luxury for Minangkabau as it is for most Indonesians in general. Only 0.46% of West Sumatra's population has a telephone connection (Sumatra Barat Dalam Angka 1991, special calculation). As a result, some out-migrants seem not to have many occasions to meet their parents.

It is probable that the further away the offspring migrate, the less frequent is their contact with their parents. The fact that 63% of out-migrants have frequent contact with their parents is due to the fact that



the parents often visit them. The means of transportation, such as passenger buses, which are available to anywhere in West Sumatra today, help the parents to visit their offspring.

However, the fact that so many out-migrants have frequent contact with their parents does suggest that the urban dwellers retain strong ties with their parents. This is supported by the rate of exchange of financial and labour support between out-migrants and their parents, as I will show below.

It appears that the economic ties between out-migrants and their parents are strong. This is indicated by the fact that 73% of out-migrants say that they provide financial support to their parents for daily needs. In addition, 67% of out-migrants also provide financial support to their parents for clothes. The tendency for out-migrants to provide financial support to their parents is also indicated by the extent to which they provide financial support for medical expenses. Of the 22 cases where the parents were mentioned to have experienced serious sickness, 81.1% of them were supported financially by the out-migrants. Furthermore, 14% of the out-migrants provide financial support to parents to pay taxes for their house and land, and 10% of them provide money to parents for the *haj* (pilgrimage to Mecca). These findings correspond with those of others. For example, Saleh et al. found that offspring are the most important source of income for the elderly (1992: 39).

In addition to out-migrants' support for their parents, they also receive financial support from their parents: 20% of out-migrants received this for medical costs (N= 35) and 23.2% received it when they faced other financial difficulty.

Out-migrants also look after their parents when the parents need

intensive care. For example, some 40.9% of out-migrants helped their parents to visit a doctor. They also helped their ill parents with household tasks such as cooking (40.9%), laundry (62.5%), and 50% helped with bathing and making their parents' bed.<sup>1</sup>

Parents are very important sources of child care support for out-migrants, particularly mothers. Seventy percent of out-migrants received child care support from parents.

Stronger ties between a married woman and her own relatives rather than with her husband's relatives are also found among urban dwellers. The out-migrants are more likely to receive support from the wife's mother rather than from the husband's mother. The wife's mother is also more likely to deliver labour support other than child care than is the husband's mother. For, example, when a wife is pregnant or after bearing a child, it is her relatives who help with preparing food and washing. I observed many cases where the husband went to the home village to ask for help from his wife's parents when the wife was ill or during pregnancy.

As with rural people, a married woman out-migrant is also more likely to provide care to her own parents than she is to her husband's parents. This can be seen from data about the extent to which married women out-migrants provide care to both their own parents and their husband's parents when they suffered from serious illness (Table 5. 3).

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<sup>1</sup> I do not have data about out-migrants' parents who cannot organise things such as cooking, bathing, making beds and washing clothes for themselves because of age, because all respondents say that their parents are still able to do such things if they are healthy.

Table 5.3. Married Women Out-migrants Who Provided Labour  
Support to their Own Parents and to their Husband's Parents  
(in%)

Activities	Parents	Parents-in-law
	n: 26	n: 21
Seeing doctor	75	23.8
Preparing meal	75	0
Washing clothes	62.5	0
Bathing	50	0
Making bed	50	0

As in rural areas, gender difference does not affect the extent to which urban dwellers provide financial support to their parents. Although there are some differences, these differences are not marked: 79% of female respondents as opposed to 66.2% of male respondents provide financial support for general purposes; and 75% of female respondents in contrast with 70.1% of male respondents supply money for medical expenses. This seems to be linked to both children's income and parents' income as well as the availability of support from other siblings. Among female respondents 87.5%, and among males 81.8% said that their parents do have an income. This should be understood in relation to the fact that most of the respondents' parents live in the home village. As shown in Chapter Four the elderly in rural areas have their own income from the rice fields allocated to them and from other garden produce, so it is probable that some parents do not need financial support from their children.

However, gender difference does affect the extent to which the

urban dwellers provide labour support to their parents. The female out-migrants are much more likely to provide care to their parents than are male out-migrants (see Table 5. 4).

Table 5.4 Male Out-Migrants' and Female Out-Migrants' Labour Support to their Parents When the Parents Suffered From Serious Illness

(in %)

Activities	Male Out-Migrants	Female Out-Migrants
Cooking	21.4	75.5
Washing clothes	0	62.5
Bathing	0	50
Making bed	0	50

Moreover, when the parents need intensive care, and when they need to be brought to their offspring's place of residence in the city, they are more likely to stay with their daughters than their sons. I found many cases of elderly parents needing intensive care as well as sick parents living with their daughters in Padang, although they also have sons in that city.

The Minangkabau case is different from that of Ghana where in Ghana society it is sons who tend to provide financial support to their elderly parents rather daughters (Caldwell 1966: 18).

What these findings indicate is that the relationship between parents and their offspring remains strong, even though Minangkabau are highly urbanised. Geographical distance does not weaken married individuals' ties with their parents. Both married son and married daughter out-migrants continue to provide financial support and care to

their parents. As in agricultural Minangkabau society, a daughter out-migrant participates in looking after her parents. In many cases daughter out-migrants go back to their home village to look after their parents, or bring their ailing parents with them to the city.

In addition, it seems that the practice of having a daughter rather than a son look after parents, as well as the tendency for a married couple to obtain labour support from the wife's mother rather than the husband's mother, is found among urban dwellers.

However, the persistence of mother-daughter ties in terms of care does not necessarily show the continuity of the Minangkabau matrilineal system itself, because this pattern is also found in other societies that are not categorised as matrilineal systems. For example, the tendency for a married daughter rather than a married son to look after elderly parents, and for a wife's parents to provide labour support in sickness, childbirth and child care, and so on is reported to occur to both in patrilineal and bilateral systems (see Sweetser 1974:343-344, Peletz 1994:13).

The reason for the strength of ties between daughters and mothers in terms of labour support for household tasks is because of the domestic role of women. Household tasks such as care of needy relatives and child care fall to women rather than men (see Stivens 1981: 180-181). This is why married daughters look after their parents and why parents who need intensive care reside with their married daughters rather than their married sons.

The fact that a married woman is more likely to receive labour support for household tasks from her mother than from her mother-in-law is perhaps also explained in the same way. This means that the mother-in-law has also has a duty to provide support for her daughter.

Thus, it seems that although Minangkabau who live in the city tend to have neolocal patterns of residence, closer ties remain between a married woman and members of her own kin group than to those of her husband.

### **Sibling Ties**

In agricultural Minangkabau society the ties among siblings are strong. Siblings are the second most important source of financial and labour support for an individual after parents. This means that when parents are not able to provide enough financial and labour support to their children, siblings tend to take on the obligation. Only if siblings are not capable of supporting each other do other relatives provide support.

In this section the relationship between urban dwellers and their siblings is examined. The question to be answered is: do urban dwellers maintain strong ties with their siblings?

First of all, let us see the frequency of contact between out-migrants and their siblings. It appears that more of them have less frequent contact with their siblings while few have frequent contact. Forty-nine percent of out-migrants maintain frequent contact with their siblings, while 30% claim contact sometimes and 21% have rare contact.

The findings suggest that the siblings who live at a distance from each other are less likely to deliver support that requires the physical presence of the supporters for some time (such as providing household tasks for sick siblings). This contrasts with the situation found in agricultural Minangkabau society, where, as shown in Chapter Four, labour exchange support in terms of providing care during illness among sisters and from sisters to brothers is common. However, siblings as a

network of support remain.

Sixty percent of out-migrants do say that they accompany their siblings to see medical doctors for treatment.<sup>2</sup> This possibly indicates that the out-migrants' siblings come to Padang to have medical treatment, and they probably stay at the out-migrants' house. The out-migrants then accompany them to the doctor.

Furthermore, economic ties between out-migrants and their siblings are strong. Seventy percent of out-migrants delivered financial support to their siblings for one or two purposes such as capital for investment, school fees, clothes, monetary loans and money to marry. When the percentage of the out-migrants who provide financial support for each of those items is considered, it can be concluded such support is high (Table 5. 5).

Table 5. 5 Out-Migrants Who Provided Financial Support to their Siblings

	(in %)
	n: 100
Purpose	
Capital <sup>3</sup>	15
School fees	36
Clothes	43
Loaning money	32
Money for wedding	33

The degree of financial support between out-migrants and their siblings is also indicated by the financial support they provide to their

<sup>2</sup> It often occurs in West Sumatra that people from village or from towns and even from other cities come to Padang to have medical treatment because of the scarcity of qualified medical doctors who are available in other areas. In Padang, a relative's house is a common place to stay on such a visit.

<sup>3</sup> Capital refers to large loans to assist the establishment of a business, while money loan refers to small amounts of money to meet daily needs.

siblings when the siblings suffer from serious illness. Sixty percent of out-migrants provided financial support in the 35 cases where their siblings suffered from serious illness.

Respondents themselves also received financial assistance from their siblings. Of the 56 respondents who reported experiencing financial difficulty, 35.7% received support from their siblings, and of 35 cases where out-migrants suffered from serious illness 20% received financial support from their siblings.

Siblings become important supporters for an individual when parents cannot provide enough support for him/her. Siblings of both sexes can be prime providers for an individual in this circumstance. For example, Andi, a 33 year-old married man with one child, was a main supporter for his siblings. Andi's parents could not finance the education of his two siblings. Andi himself obtained modest financial support from his parents when he studied. However, when he finished his study from a university in Padang his parents' economic situation became worse. Soon after leaving university Andi became a government employee, and since then took over his parents' duty to support his siblings. Andi's siblings at the time of the study were students of a university in Padang.

Like Andi, Yeni, a 34 year old woman school teacher with two children, was also a prime provider for her youngest brother. However, unlike Andi, Yeni looked after her younger brother because she wants her mother, who had looked after her four children since she was divorced by her husband, to retire from farming. She believes her mother is too old to work as a farmer.

The strong ties among siblings seems to be a general tendency. It is found in other developing societies which are not categorised as matrilineal as well. Peletz argues that sibling ties are very strong in



Malaysia, especially among sisters and between sisters and brothers (1994:14-19).

In sum, although out-migrants and their siblings tend to have less frequent contact and tend not to provide care support, economic ties between them are strong. Financial support for school fees, clothes, lending money, money for medical treatment and money for weddings are all commonly provided.

### **Ties Between Grandchildren and Grandparents**

I lack quantitative data about the relationship between out-migrants and their grandparents because most of my survey respondents no longer have grandparents. The small number who still have grandparents living at least gives us some clue as to what the relationship between out-migrants and their grandparents looks like. There was no case in the survey where grandparents lived with out-migrants. The grandparents were said to live at home in the village with a daughter or one of their granddaughters.

Contact between out-migrants and their grandparents is infrequent. Only 18% of out-migrants with living grandparents said they had frequent contact with their grandparents, while 75% said that they rarely had such contact (N=23). The lower frequency of contact between the out-migrants and their grandparents as compared to their parents and other relatives is probably due to the fact that it is the out-migrants' relatives who often visit them rather than the other way around. The grandparents probably are often not able to travel to see their grandchildren. The out-migrants would see their grandparents when they go back home to the village to celebrate *idil fitri*.

When grandparents suffered from serious illness, only 12.5% of the out-migrants said that they made the grandparents' bed, none provided support for other household tasks (N= 16). Does this small percentage of labour support to sick grandparents reveal weakening ties between out-migrants and their grandparents? It is very difficult to find a straightforward answer to this question since it is possible the grandparents receive support from their daughters or their other granddaughters, making it unnecessary for the out-migrant grandchildren to care for their grandparents. As shown in Chapter Four among rural Minangkabau, it is a daughter who takes care of her elderly parents. Only if such a daughter is not available does a granddaughter perform this support function.

Even though out-migrants have little contact with their grandparents the fact that they still recognise their kin ties is indicated by the extent to which they both provide financial support for their grandparents for medical treatment and see their grandparents when they become ill. While 61.1% claim to provide financial support for their grandparents' medical treatment, 68.8% say that they see their grandparents when the latter become ill.

Thus, the ties between out-migrants and their grandparents can still be considered in that a majority of out-migrants with grandparents provide financial support and visit their grandparents in times of illness.

#### ***Urang Sumando, in-Marrying man, and in his Immediate Family***

This section examines the argument that the strength of father-child ties erodes *mamak-kamanakan* ties in Minangkabau society (for example see Oki 1977:263, Abdullah 1971:10). This argument is not borne out by the findings of this study. In the section on *mamak* and

*kamanakan* below I will show that although a married man has strong economic and social ties with his wife and his children, his ties with his *kamanakan* are still strong. Before examining ties between urban dwellers and their *kamanakan*, however, the features of an *urang sumando*'s economic and social participation in his immediate family are discussed to reveal the strength of his ties to his immediate family.

First of all, a husband in urban areas appears to be an important financial source for his immediate family. In another study ninety percent of husbands are thought to contribute towards the economic needs of their immediate family (Rosyidi 1994:16). In this study a husband is the principle financial provider of the family house. Although the majority of houses are financed jointly by both husband and wife, the husband is said to contribute more than the wife. The house is reported to belong to the wife's kin group in only one case. Wives' relatives are not reported to contribute financially to a family house (Table 5.6), so husbands are seen as largely providing housing.

Table 5. 6 The Financial Source of House Construction

	(in %)
Sources	n : 100
1. Husband alone	19
2. Wife + husband	80
3. Wife's kin group	1
Total	100

The strength of an *urang sumando*'s attachment to his children is

also indicated by the tendency of fathers to leave their acquired property to their children. Sa'danoer's study of inheritance in Padang and in 21 villages between 1878 to 1970, found that children inherited the individual property of their fathers in 48% of cases between 1878 - 1919. Between 1920 - 1944 this rate rose to 60%, and further to 65% between 1945 - 1959. Between 1960 - 1970, the individual property of a father was inherited by his children in 74% of cases (Sa'danoer in Kato 1982: 184).

In addition to the economic contribution of an *urang sumando* to his immediate family, researchers have found that the *urang sumando* also participates in socialising his children and in domestic tasks. For example, Rosyidi (1994:18) reports that a father participates in teaching his children how to clean the house and house yard, and to store clothes<sup>4</sup> (Table 5. 7). It appears that a father is more likely to teach his children how to clean the house and house yard than is a mother, even though the mother is ordinarily more likely to perform these tasks.

Table 5. 7 Parents Who Teach Children to Perform Household Tasks

Tasks	(in %)		
	Mother n : 108	Father n : 101	Neither
Cleaning house	31.1	36.8	32.1
Cleaning house yard	31.1	37.3	31.6
Storing clothes	40.2	30.1	29.1

Source : Rosyidi 1994:18

Moreover Rosyidi found a father/husband is sometimes also

<sup>4</sup> Storing clothes refers to changing the clothes after getting back from school and putting them in the right place.

involved in doing domestic activities such as cooking and taking care of a young baby, although the mother is usually responsible for these (Table 5. 8 and Table 5. 9).

Table 5. 8 Husband's Participation in Taking Care of Baby  
(in %)  
n : 102

Tasks	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never
Preparing food	1	2.8	51.2	45
Feeding baby	1.4	5.3	74.6	18.7
Preparing instant milk	1	7.6	78.5	12.9
Preparing instant milk and feeding baby at night	1.4	9.1	76.1	13.4
Taking baby for immunisation	2.9	10	62.2	24.9
Playing with baby	3.3	28.7	65.1	2.9
Changing baby's clothes	2.4	14.8	76.1	6.7
Cutting baby's hair and nails	2.9	16.7	73.2	7.2
Washing baby	6.2	11.5	74.2	8.1

Source: Rosyidi 1994: 20

Table 5.9 Participation of Husband in Doing Household Tasks  
(in %)

Tasks	n : 205
Cooking	62.7
Dish washing	58.9
Clothes washing	48.6
Ironing	34.9
House cleaning	27
Yard cleaning	70.8
Bed making	23

Source: Rosyidi 1994: 22

In sum, these findings suggest that the *urang sumando* participates both economically and socially in his immediate family's affairs, and these can be seen to indicate the strength of his ties with his immediate family. However, these findings do not necessarily indicate changes in the Minangkabau matrilineal system, because the *urang sumando* also participates economically and socially in his immediate family in agricultural Minangkabau society (see Chapter Four).

Although Josselin de Jong argues that a father providing school fees for his children and helping to raise his children is a twentieth century trend in Minangkabau society (1952:116), this assumes that the father did little or nothing prior to the twentieth century, and there is little evidence to support this assumption. This is because researchers on Minangkabau society appear to have been preoccupied with inheritance patterns and authority. As a result, less attention was paid to what an *urang sumando* did for his immediate family.

What is perhaps new is the magnitude and importance of a father's economic and social support for his immediate family. This

suggests that the significance of economic and social participation of the *urang sumando* in his immediate family is greater in the city than in the village.

Nevertheless, it is not argued here that a wife and children are therefore dependent economically and socially on a husband/father, because large numbers of wives work. For example 58% of my male respondents' wives work and 67.2% of Rosyidi's female respondents contribute to the economy of their immediate family (Rosyidi 1994:16). Furthermore, a wife as well as children may receive economic and labour support from her relatives in cases of need. What is clear is that an *urang sumando* actively participates economically and socially in his immediate family. I will now show that this does not weaken *mamak-kamanakan* ties in Minangkabau society.

#### **Ties Between Mamak and Kamanakan:**

##### ***Panghulu/tungganai* and his *Kamanakan***

There appears to be a decline in the economic support by *panghulu/tungganai* of their *kamanakan*. Since the livelihood of out-migrants is independent of matrilineal property, their *mamak's* (*panghulu/tungganai*) economic contribution to them ceases. Urban dwellers do not need their kin group leader to find a piece of land as the basis of their economic welfare. The lack of importance of matrilineal property as the basis of economic welfare appears to affect only the *panghulu's/tungganai's* economic relationship with their *kamanakan* rather than the economic relationship between *mamak kanduang* and *kamanakan kanduang*. This will be discussed later.

The *panghulu/tungganai* tends not to be involved in his out-

migrant *kamanakan*'s immediate family's affairs. Such leaders are mentioned as the primary consultant solving disputes between husband and wife in only 16% of cases in the city, while they were involved in 40% of cases in rural areas. No *panghulu/tungganai* is mentioned as involved in solving disputes between parents and children.

Nevertheless, *kamanakan* who live in the city do involve their *panghulu/tungganai* in solving their problems. Seventy-one percent of out-migrants say that they had asked for help from their *panghulu/tungganai* to solve a problem (N= 100) and this mostly seems to concern land. Eighty-five percent of the respondents who say they involved their *mamak* in solving their problems specify that the main problem for which they need their *mamak*'s help concerned disputes between themselves and their fellow kin group members about ancestral property.

It appears that out-migrants are still as interested in their matrilineage's property as are people living in rural areas. Minangkabau out-migrants often travel great distances to return to their village because of land disputes. Their consent is required if land should be sold or pawned. This means that separation from one's kin group does not by any means sever one's relationship with ancestral property in Minangkabau society.<sup>5</sup>

The *panghulu/tungganai* is also still involved in organising the marriage of his *kamanakan*. Ninety percent of respondents reported that their *panghulu/tungganai* helped them to organise their marriage (N = 100). In most cases, this probably occurred when they were living in rural areas, because most of the respondents (72%) say that they grew up in

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<sup>5</sup> It is very difficult to purchase a piece of land, mainly ancestral land, in Minangkabau society, because the consent of all kin group members is required, even although they live in different places. Migration aggravates this situation because it is essential to ask those relatives who have migrated out.



their home village, and most of them have lived in Padang for less than 20 years. A better indicator, therefore, is the respondents' children's marriages, where 76.9% were partly organised by the *mamak* (N=75). This seems to occur because many out-migrants still organise their children's marriages back in their home villages rather than in the city.

The findings do suggest that the involvement of the *panghulu/tungganai* in organising marriage for their urban-dwelling *kamanakan* is less than in rural areas. It seems that it is not living in the city itself that decreases the *panghulu/tungganai's* role in organising marriage for their *kamanakan*, because among native urban dwellers in Minangkabau society *panghulu/tungganai* are still the important organisers for marriage. For example, a *panghulu* told me that the marriages of members of his *payuang* are still partly organised by their *mamak*.

It seems that geographical distance is an important factor explaining why some marriages in the city were not partly organised by their *panghulu/tungganai*. Chapter Four showed that the reason *panghulu/tungganai* partly organise a marriage in agricultural Minangkabau society is that processes of marriage require labour support from members of *paruik* and *payuang*. The members of *paruik* and *payuang* will provide labour support if they are formally involved in the marriage. Although members of *paruik* help each other in daily affairs, they need a formal invitation in the case of a ceremony such as marriage. Otherwise they will not support the ceremony. It is said: *kamalangan baamburan, kagambiraan baimbauan*; see people when they are in sadness such as death and serious illness and invite people when you hold ceremonies. The way to involve *paruik* and *payuang* relatives is to involve them in the early processes of marriage, called *baioyo-iyo*,

which involves a meeting among relatives to discuss what to do, how to do it and who will do what. It is a *tungganai's* and a *panghulu's* task to involve relatives by inviting them to the *baiyo-iyo*, and to lead the meeting of all the *paruik* and the *payuang* members.

People who organise their children's marriages in the city are unlikely to get labour support from their relatives, because the relatives live far away. Accordingly, it is not necessary to have *baiyo-iyo* with the *paruik* relatives and *payuang* relatives. As a result, there are no activities that require the involvement of a *tungganai* and *panghulu*.

This does not mean that out-migrants who hold their children's marriages in cities do not involve their *paruik* members. Informants told me that mothers or sisters as well as brothers visit the relatives to inform them about the marriage. However, the active participation of the relatives is not needed, so it is up to them to decide whether or not to attend the ceremony.

The above findings suggest that if more and more out-migrants hold marriages in the city rather than in their home village, fewer and fewer marriages will be organised by *panghulu/tungganai*.

### ***Mamak Kanduang and Kamanakan Kanduang***

The strength of ties between *mamak kanduang* and *kamanakan kanduang* are indicated by the extent to which the *mamak kanduang* provides financial support to his *kamanakan*, and the extent to which the *mamak kanduang* is involved in overseeing his *kamanakan* and providing advice to his *kamanakan*. In addition to the data derived from respondents' answers to these questions, data are also derived from the respondents' answers to the question regarding the extent to which

their children received support from the children's *mamak kanduang*.

It appears that *mamak* do provide economic support to their *kamanakan kanduang*. This is indicated by the clothes and education expenses support supplied by *mamak kanduang* to *kamanakan* (Table 5. 10).

Table 5. 10      *Mamak Kanduang Who Supported their Kamanakan Kanduang Financially for Clothes, School Fees and Books*

	(in %)		
	Out-migrants From their <i>Mamak</i>	Out-migrants to their <i>Kamanakan</i>	Out-migrants' children from Children's <i>Mamak</i>
	n : 100 <sup>6</sup>	n : 50	n:90 <sup>7</sup>
Outlay			
Clothes	26	28	24.4
School fees	25	18	16.5
Books	20.5	18	12.1

Table 5. 10 only shows the percentage of *mamak* who support their *kamanakan* for each of the items. If we look at the extent to which financial support is provided for one or two of those items, it appears that 38% of respondents provided financial support to their *kamanakan* and 30% of respondents' children received it from the children's *mamak*. This means that there are *mamak* who do not provide school fees support, but do for clothes and other items. Kato (1982:163) even found

<sup>6</sup> Both female and male respondents.

<sup>7</sup> Children of both male and female respondents.

that 73% of his out-migrant respondents delivered financial support to their *kamanakan*. This raises the question of whether my survey's findings and those of Kato are at odds. It seems not, because the financial support from a *mamak kanduang* to his *kamanakan* is influenced by the *mamak's* income as well as the parents' income. I found that the *mamak kanduang* is less likely to supply economic support to *kamanakan* with middle and high income parents. It is therefore possible that Kato's respondents were high and middle income people and the parents of his respondents' *kamanakan* had low incomes.

I lack quantitatively significant data concerning the relationship between *mamak kanduang's* income as well as *kamanakan kanduang's* parents' income and economic support by *mamak kanduang* to their *kamanakan*, because in my survey the number of respondents who support their *kamanakan* economically is so small. Nevertheless this small number at least shows us that both the *mamak's* income and that of the parents do have an impact on the *mamak's* economic support to their *kamanakan*.

The data show that when the *mamak kanduang* has high income and when the *kamanakan's* parents have low income, economic support from the *mamak kanduang* to the *kamanakan* is more likely to be provided (Table 5. 11). Of 13 cases where *mamak kanduang* delivered clothes support to their *kamanakan*, in most cases the *mamak* had a middle or a high income and the parents had a low income. Only in 7.7% of cases did both the *mamak kanduang* and the *kamanakan's* parents have a low income, and only 7.1% of cases occurred where the *mamak kanduang* had a high income while the *kamanakan's* parents had a middle range income.

Table 5. 11 *Mamak Kandung's* income, the *Kamanakan's* parents' income<sup>8</sup> and the *Mamak Kandung's* Economic Support to *Kamanakan* (Case of clothes)<sup>9</sup>

Parents' income	(in %)		
	n: 13		
	<i>Mamak kanduang's</i> income		
	low	middle	high
Low	7.7	53.8	30.8
Middle	0	0	7.1
High	0	0	0

Furthermore, the difference between the percentage of respondents who provided financial support to their *kamanakan* and the percentage of their children who received the same support from the children's *mamak kanduang* (as shown in Table 5. 10) appear to be closely linked to income as well, in that most of the respondents have a sufficient income and are capable of supporting their children. Sixty-nine percent of respondents are categorised as middle and high income.

A *mamak kanduang* can bring his *kamanakan kanduang* to live with him and be fully responsible for their economic needs if they are in need and if the *mamak* is capable of doing so. For example, Nasri, a 56 year-old married man with no children looked after three of his orphaned *kamanakan kanduang*. He was fully responsible for their economic needs, such as education expenses, meals and clothes. Another example is Pakiah. This 50 year-old married man with four adult

<sup>8</sup> The *kamanakan's* parents' income was sought from the respondents. It is possible that the respondents do not know about the income of his *kamanakan's* parents. Therefore, the question was phrased not in terms of the amount of income, but parents' education, place of work, length of working and position in office. If the parents were self-employed, a further question was asked the scale of business. Then, the answers were converted into level of income based on normal income of a person in such a position.

<sup>9</sup> The case of clothes is chosen because these are most often provided by *mamak*.

children looked after one of his *kamanakan kanduang*, whose parents were divorced. Pakiah supported his *kamanakan* financially to establish a business.

The strength of the economic support between *mamak kanduang* and *kamanakan kanduang* is also indicated by *kamanakan's* financial support to their *mamak*. Among out-migrants 15.9% provided financial support to their *mamak kanduang* to cost their daily needs, and of 19 cases where *mamak kanduang* were reported suffering from serious illness, 52.6% were supported by out-migrant *kamanakan* financially.

What these findings suggest is that although one finds a small percentage of *mamak kanduang* providing financial support to their *kamanakan* and a small percentage of *kamanakan* receiving such support from their *mamak kanduang*, this does not necessarily indicate the weakening of economic ties between *mamak kanduang* and *kamanakan*. Such statistics should be read in their context. For some it is not necessary to support their *kamanakan* financially, because their *kamanakan's* parents are capable of doing so, while others may need the financial support from their *mamak kanduang*, but the *mamak kanduang* is too poor to support his *kamanakan*. Income must be taken into account in the fullest interpretation of these figures.

The idea that the strength of father-children ties weakens *mamak-kamanakan's* ties, as argued by Oki (1977:263) and Abdullah (1971:10) seems to arise from an inaccurate depiction of the nature of the *mamak's* economic responsibilities to their *kamanakan*. It was shown in Chapter Four that in rural Minangkabau society the *mamak* is not a prime provider for the *kamanakan*. The idea that the *mamak* has economic responsibility for his *kamanakan* only refers to the kin group leader's obligation to kin group members: and this also only refers to

guaranteeing that kin group members, especially married women, each have a piece of land to work.

The *mamak kanduang* also tends to be involved in socialising his *kamanakan kanduang*. The *mamak kanduang* are involved in monitoring their *kamanakan's* friendships and advising the *mamak kanduang* (Table 5. 12).

Table 5. 12 *Mamak Kanduang* Involved in Monitoring and Advising *Kamanakan Kanduang*

	(in %)	
	Out-migrant <i>mamak</i>	Out-migrants' children's <i>mamak</i>
	n: 50	n: 100
Requirement		
Advising*	75	70
Monitoring	55.7	40

\*Note: Suggestions include telling *kamanakan* to learn how to read Quran, to pray, to study hard and to honour parents. This also include advising *kamanakan* if *mamak* recognise that the *kamanakan* have committed wrongdoing.

However, there is a difference concerning the way in which *mamak* out-migrants monitor and advise their *kamanakan* compared with those in rural areas. In agricultural Minangkabau society the way in which a *mamak kanduang* oversees the upbringing of his *kamanakan* is what people call '*mandanga-dangaan*'. This includes hearing what people say about the *kamanakan*, observing how the *kamanakan* spend their spare time, and prohibiting the *kamanakan* from doing anything that according to their *mamak* is inappropriate. Among out-migrants, the *mamak kanduang* simply inquires from the *kamanakan's* parents and their relatives about these things.

Furthermore, the data suggest that the *mamak kanduang* is less likely to be involved in overseeing how his *kamanakan* is behaving than simply providing advice. This possibly reflects the fact that overseeing behaviour requires the *mamak kanduang* to inquire of the *kamanakan's* parents and others about such things as their *kamanakan's* friends, how the *kamanakan* spends their spare time, and whether *kamanakan* has maintained appropriate distance from members of the opposite sex. It is probable that *mamak kanduang* who live far away from their relatives are less likely to be able to do these. Unlike supervising behaviour, advising can be done by the *mamak* when the *kamanakan* visit him as well as when he visits his sister(s) and, therefore, his *kamanakan*.

We can summarise the relationship in terms of providing help and support between *mamak* and *kamanakan* among non-landed Minangkabau people and those geographically distant from each other as follows.

Gough argues that changes in the economy which make matrilineal property unimportant for economic welfare brings about the disintegration of matrilineal kin groups (Gough 1961:631-652). As far as ties between *mamak* and *kamanakan* in Minangkabau matrilineal kin groups is concerned, it only applies in fact to the economic ties between a kin group leader and his members. It does not apply to the economic ties between *mamak* and *kamanakan* in general. It has been shown in Chapter Four that it is the *panghulu's/tungganai's* economic responsibility to his *kamanakan* that is embedded in matrilineal property in agricultural Minangkabau society, rather than a feature of the *mamak kanduang-kamanakan kanduang* relationship. Therefore, matrilineal property only affects economic ties between *panghulu/tungganai* and



their *kamanakan* rather than the economic ties between *mamak kanduang* and *kamanakan kanduang*. The economic ties between *mamak kanduang* and the *kamanakan kanduang* remain strong despite the move from dependence on land. It is true that a father tends to pass on his acquired property to his children (Benda-Beckmann 1979, Kato 1982, Oki 77), but this does not necessarily indicate the loosening of economic ties between *mamak* and *kamanakan*, because the *mamak* still provides financial support to his *kamanakan* if necessary, and if he can afford to do so, and the *mamak* continues to be involved in organising marriages for his out-migrant *kamanakan*, and in monitoring and advising them.

### **Ties Between Out-Migrants and their Maternal Aunts and Maternal Cousins**

In Chapter Four, it was shown that an individual's ties with their maternal aunts is strong. Maternal aunts are also an important source of financial and labour support for someone in agricultural Minangkabau society. This also occurs between maternal cousins.

This section examines to what extent changes occur to ties between out migrants and their maternal aunts and maternal cousins as a result of alternative economic livelihood and geographical distance.

It appears that the out-migrants tend to have less frequent contact with these relatives once they have migrated (Table 5. 13).

Table 5.13 Frequency of Contact Between Out-migrants and their *Paruik* Relatives in Last Two Years

	(in %)		
	n : 100		
	Frequency		
	Often	Sometimes	Rarely
Maternal aunts	28	15	57
Maternal cousins	32	28	40

As with siblings, grandparents and *mamak*, out-migrants tend not to be involved in caring for maternal aunts and cousins. They also seem not to seek labour support for household tasks from either maternal aunts or maternal cousins.

However, urban people do exchange financial support with both their maternal aunts and maternal cousins, particularly in times of crisis. When asked about providing financial support to *paruik* members for unspecific purposes (including lending money), 11% of respondents had had done so for maternal aunts and 8% for maternal cousins (N= 100), and 14.7% of out-migrants who had experienced financial difficulty received support from their maternal aunts (N= 56). Moreover, 40% of urban people provided economic support to their maternal aunts (N= 20), and 33.3% to their maternal cousins (N=10) when they were ill.

The strength of the ties between out-migrants and their maternal aunts and maternal cousins is also indicated by the fact that they do visit each other in cases of serious illness (see Table 5. 14).

Table 5. 14 Visiting Ill *Paruik* Relatives <sup>10</sup>

	Respondents Visit Ill Relatives* (in %) n : 35	Respondents visited by Relatives when Ill
Maternal aunts	45.7	100
Maternal cousins	54.3	80

\*Note : n for maternal aunts is 20 and for maternal cousins is 10

It is useful to note other researchers' findings concerning the ties between out-migrants and their relatives, although the researchers do not identify the category of relatives to whom the out-migrants provide help. At least their findings show us that out-migrants are a source of support for their relatives.

Naim found that out-migrants are a source of assistance for newly arrived relatives from the home village, providing them with accommodation and help them with looking for jobs (1984: 180-181).

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<sup>10</sup> The difference between the percentage of respondents who were visited by relatives and those who visited relatives probably reflects the fact that respondents have several maternal uncles, maternal aunts and maternal cousins. At least one individual from these categories of relatives visited them when they were ill.

Table 5. 15 People Who Were First Visited, Who Provided Accommodation and Who Helped with Looking for Job As Mentioned by Migrants

Relationship	(in %)		
	n: 427		
	First to be Visited	Provide Accommodation	Help with Looking for Job
Maternal uncles	13	13	11
Parents	5	5	6
Relatives	52	48	35
People who came from the same village	14	14	5
Friends	15	19	20
Others	1	1	23
Total	100	100	100

Source : Naim 1984: 181

Moreover, Naim found many out-migrants send money to their relatives who live in home villages (1982:222).

Table 5. 16 Frequency of Out-Migrants Sending Money to Home Village

Age	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Total
Above 40	40	18	42	100
30-40	32	21	47	100
Below	20	25	55	100

Source : Naim 1984:222

In sum, the ties between out-migrants and their maternal aunts and maternal cousins still appear strong as indicated by the financial support exchanged between them and the fact that they still visit each other in cases of serious illness.

### Conclusion

This chapter has shown that urbanisation to some extent changes the patterns and the contents of the relationship between the members of a *paraik*. Social contact tends to be rare between urban dwellers and their relatives. Support that is required physical closeness is also affected. The relationship between *mamak* and *kamanakan* is also changed. The economic ties between the *mamak* and *kamanakan* that is based on ancestroal property ceased. Consequently, the economic relationship between urban dwellers and their *panghulu* and *tangganal* has declined. The involvement of the *mamak kanduang* in socialisation of his *kamanakan* is to some degree also changed. However, the relationship between the urban Minangkabau and their relatives is not by any means weak.

A *Mamak* still plays important roles in urban people's life. A *Mamak kanduang* is still an important source of financial support for his *kamanakan kanduang*. The *mamak* is also still involved in organising marriages of the *kamanakan*.

The stronger ties between a married woman and the members of her matrilineal kin group than with her husband's relatives and the patterns of mother-daughter labour support are still maintained. The urban woman still tends to provide and obtain labour support from her own relatives rather than from her husband's. Parents also tend to live with their married daughter rather than with their married son.

Many scholars argue that individualisation or property tends to make Minangkabau individualistic and that this individualisation tends to weaken kin ties in Minangkabau society (see Schrieke 1955:114-121, Naim 1982:85, Benda-Beckmann 1979:362-364). As far as kinship groups providing networks of support are concerned, this study shows that this is not yet the case.

In the following chapter an attempt will be made to analyse why members of *paruik* still exchange financial and labour support in contemporary Minangkabau society. In order to do this, attitudes towards members of the *paruik* will be examined, and the availability of non-kinship-based support will be analysed.

## CHAPTER SIX

### KINSHIP IN CONTEMPORARY MINANGKABAU SOCIETY

The aim of this chapter is to discuss the findings presented in Chapters Four and Five. The main question addressed in this chapter is: why do members of matrilineal kin groups still provide support to each other in contemporary Minangkabau society? In trying to come to grips with this question, I wish to suggest that there are two factors that seem to contribute to this phenomenon. Firstly, there is the sense of duty, obligation and solidarity within kin groups felt by Minangkabau. Secondly, the lack of availability of support outside of kin seems also to contribute to the fact that kinship is still the main source of support in this society. In this case we have to look at to what extent people may get support outside of kinship when they are in need.

The sense of duty and obligation still extends beyond the nuclear family in contemporary Minangkabau society. Additionally, the idea of solidarity in providing support to needy kin is still strongly held by members within the *paruik*. The unavailability of support outside of kinship reinforces the sense of duty, obligation and solidarity among members of a kin group. It is kinship which provides networks of support for people when they are in need.

This chapter will be divided into three main sections. The first section will outline the nature of the sense of duty, obligation and solidarity within a kin group in contemporary Minangkabau society; section two will discuss kinship as a network of support; while the last section will evaluate the positive and negative aspects of kinship-based

welfare in Minangkabau society.

### **Duty, Obligation and Solidarity Within the Kin Group in Contemporary Minangkabau Society**

First of all let us discuss the nature of the sense of duty, obligation and solidarity within kin groups in contemporary agricultural Minangkabau society. It seems that the nuclear family tends to be important as an economic and residential unit. Structurally this nuclear family is integrated into a matrilineal kin group. It is true that people may live separately from their kin group and organise production and consumption independently of their kin group, but it seems that economically and socially people are still dependent to some extent upon their kin group.

As has been discussed in Chapters Two and Four, land in rural areas is still owned by a kin group, the *paruik*. Individual members of this kin group only have utilisation rights over the land. Any decision concerning ancestral property, for example the decision to sell and to pawn ancestral property, must be made by all adult kin group members. It is necessary to have letters of sale or pawning signed by all adult members of a kin group and by the kin group leader.

Furthermore, people utilise kin group property to finance their everyday affairs. They may for example pay for children's education expenses, weddings and house building by this means when they do not have other sources. Most rural people and even native dwellers of cities such as Payakumbuh and Padang locate their houses on their kin group's land.

Besides having obligations to provide support to one's elementary



family, people also seem to have obligations to provide support to members of their *mande*.. As one informant says '*kito tantu punyo tangguang jawab ka anak jo bini, tapi disampiang itu, kito juo punyo tangguang jawab ka urangtuo jo sudaro*' (of course, we have obligations to our children and our wives, but we also have obligations to our parents and to our siblings). Someone who does not provide financial and social support to their needy kin group while he/she is able to do so is categorised as a bad person. As one informant pointed out '*salah apobilo anak indak maabehkan urangtuo, salah apobilo kakak indak mambantu adiak atau adiak indak mambantu kakak nan dalam barado dalam kesulitan*' (it is bad when a son or a daughter does not support their needy parents; it is bad when one does not provide support to one's siblings). Sometimes people have to sacrifice their time, energy and money in order to provide support to members of their *mande*. The obligations to provide support to a kin group applies to both sons and daughters. However, as far as physical care is concerned daughters or sisters are more likely to be obliged to do this than sons.

People say of *paruik* relatives that *urang saino samalu*: they are shamed and offended together. My informants interpreted this as meaning that *paruik* relatives have to help each other; that the difficulty of one *paruik* member is the difficulty of a whole *paruik*. This means that besides having obligations to provide support to one's elementary family and one's *mande* relatives, one also has obligations to provide support to *paruik* relatives.

Nevertheless, the nature of obligation to *paruik* relatives seems to be different from that towards *mande* relatives. Economic obligations towards *paruik* relatives deal with utilisation of ancestral property. For example, in Minangkabau society *mamak* are supposed to have

obligations to their *kamanakan* besides having obligations to their children. However, a *mamak* is not obliged to use his earnings to support his *kamanakan*. As my informants say, '*kamanakan dibimbiang jo harato pusako, anak dipangku jo harato pancaharian*' (*kamanakan* are led by ancestral property, while children are held by earning). This means that a married man does not work for both his children and his *kamanakan*. As was shown in Chapter Four, his economic obligation to his *kamanakan* requires a *mamak* to allocate kin group property to his *kamanakan* as well as to protect this property.

According to Benda-Beckmann, this interpretation refers to a new phenomenon in Minangkabau society (1979:363), but it seems that the matrilineal property-base of *mamak*'s economic obligation to their *kamanakan* is a longstanding one. Before the penetration of a money economy, individual earnings were not significant in Minangkabau society (Kato 1982:168-169). Most men were propertyless. Married men either helped their wives to cultivate the wife's rice field and garden, or helped their own kin group to cultivate their kin group's land. As was pointed out in Chapter Four, it is questionable whether *mamak* fed their *kamanakan*. My informants told me that during the period they shared a house with *paruik* members in a *rumah gadang*, all members of the *paruik* worked together to cultivate the rice fields and gardens. They also ate together. The utilisation of the centrally stored rice was managed by the eldest woman in the house. Therefore, it seems that it was not the *mamak* who fed their *kamanakan* in the past, but rather all inhabitants of the house worked together to fulfil their needs, and women contributed much towards the *paruik* economy. Accordingly, a man's individual earnings seem to strengthen a married man's ties with his immediate family, but do not necessarily weaken his ties with his kin

group.

The same seems to apply to any *paruik* member's obligations to other *paruik* relatives. This obligation means that any *paruik* member should allow the kin group's property to be sold or pawned if there is a *paruik* relative in need. For example, a *paruik* member should allow his/her fellow *paruik* members to sell or pawn ancestral property when they do not have other funds to organise their children's wedding, to buy children's medication or even to build a house.

Thus, it seems that kinship-based welfare in agricultural Minangkabau society is based upon matrilineal property which provides economic security. Since the property is owned by the kin group rather than by individuals, every person has a plot of land to work with, a place to stand a house or hut, a source of money in time of hardship, etc. An example of how matrilineal property provides economic security for people is shown in the case of Uca, a 72 year-old widower. He has no children, and his wife died ten years ago. Uca has neither sister nor brother. Usually, in agricultural Minangkabau society, upon divorce or when a wife dies, a man should leave the house they lived in. In the case of a wife dying, if a man has a daughter(s) and he is already old and does not remarry, he usually lives with a daughter. In this case, Uca had to leave his wife's house and had no right to utilise his wife's kin group's property. The place for him to seek support was within his kin group (*pulang baliak ka kampuang*). Thanks to matrilineally owned property to which he had rights, Uca put up a hut on his kin group's property and utilised his kin group's property to earn a living by cutting grass on the property for sale.

Nevertheless, it is not suggested that *paruik* relatives do not provide economic and labour support to each other beyond allocating

ancestral property and allowing this property to be used by needy *paruik* relatives. Chapter Four has shown that a *mamak* is an important source of economic and labour support for his *kamanakan*; maternal aunts and maternal cousins are also a source of support; and many elderly people who do not have children or siblings are looked after by their *paruik* relatives when they need care. However, it seems that it is not a recognised duty or obligation to provide economic and labour support to such *paruik* members. In contrast to relationships with one's immediate family and *mande* relatives, where people may sacrifice their time, energy and money, people tend to be reluctant to provide economic and labour support to their *paruik* relatives if this will require a lot of these resources. Moreover, people tend not to provide labour and economic support to their *paruik* relatives when they have *mande* relatives who are in need. As one informant expressed it, '*ambo baru mambantu etek atau anak etek atau mamak kalau ambo bisa mambantu, nan jaleh ambo mandahulukan anak bini, urangtuo dan adiak-adiak*' (I will help my maternal aunts or my maternal cousin or my maternal uncle if I can help, but for sure I do this first for my children, my wife, my parents and my siblings).

It seems that it is a feeling of being a part of a kin group, a feeling that one is 'part of them, and they are part of me' that leads people to provide economic and labour support to their *paruik* relatives. This confirms Epstein's argument that 'kinship is also a matter of sentiment and feeling' (1981:193). The sense of belonging brings about solidarity within a kin group, expressed in the often-used words '*kan awak nan dakek ka inyo*' (we are who his/her closest relatives) to refer to members in this group. This solidarity leads people to provide social and economic support to their fellow *paruik* members.

Minangkabau say that the necessity to provide support to *paruik* relatives can be categorised as *sunat* according to Islamic law. *Sunat* means that it is not sinful to do or not to do certain things, but one is rewarded according to whether one does it or does not do it. In general terms it is regarded as morally admirable to provide support to *paruik* relatives.

It seems that urbanisation has not affected kin relations in Minangkabau society as far as kinship as a source of support is concerned. The sense of duty and obligation are strong in a *mande*, and even the solidarity among members of *paruik* is still high. Even though urban people tend to receive less labour support from their kin group and tend to provide less of that support to their kin group, the idea that members of a kin group should support each other is still strongly held.

Although urban people live far away from their kin group and are independent of them economically, they still feel they have an obligation to their *mande* relatives of parents and siblings as well as to their immediate family. They still think that it is the children's duty to look after elderly parents. As with people in rural areas, urban people also say that it is bad when someone does not care for their parents as well as their siblings. One urban informant explained, '*walaupun awak tinggal di rantau, tanggung jawab ka urangtuo jo ka adiak-adiak indak buliah lupu*' (although we live away, we cannot forget our obligations to our parents as well as to our siblings).

Thus, we need to be skeptical of analysts' accounts concerning kinship change, especially about duty and obligation within a kin group, when they argue that family duty and obligation are limited to the nuclear family in urban areas and that relationships beyond nuclear families are weak, in the sense that it is not an obligation to provide

support to kin outside of the nuclear family. The limitation of duty and obligation to spouses and their children, supposedly observable in Western society (See Goode 1964:51, 110, Parsons 1955 186, 1951:120-121), is not the case in Minangkabau society. It is hard to say that the first loyalty of the urban Minangkabau people is to their nuclear family as Parsons (1955:186) says, because of the fact that the urban Minangkabau people appear willing to sacrifice their time, energy and money in order to provide support to their kin.

Many urban people have to take family leave to go back to their home village to see their sick parents and siblings. For example, Anna, a 40 year-old married woman and her sister Anni, a 35 year-old married woman, both leave their husbands, their children and their jobs in the city for a couple of weeks at a time to look after their sick elderly mother. They told me that their elderly mother often becomes ill, and that, since their mother does not want to live with one of them in the city because she does not feel comfortable living there, they were willing to return to their village to look after her.

The same thing is apparent in the cases of As and Mar. This 35 year-old mother of three children, and 31 year-old working woman with a six month-old baby both went to visit their village to see when their father was ill. Each one stayed about 15 days in the village to provide support for their sick father. They did not necessarily have to go back to their home village since their mother and their other two sisters could look after their sick father. However, it seems that a strong sense of duty to look after parents brought them back to their village.

Individuals even reduce their support to their spouse and children in order to provide support to their kin. For example, Tam is a 37 year-old married man with three children. He left his job as merchant

eight months ago, and consequently cannot provide economic support to his immediate family, because he has to look after his 31 year-old unmarried brother who has been hospitalised for about one year. Although in hospital, the brother needs someone to bathe him, and see to physical needs as well as to provide medicine.

Thus, it is safe to say that urban Minangkabau are loyal both to their immediate family and to their kin group. However, it seems that the system is flexible. People maintain a balance between their loyalty to their nuclear family and to their matrilineal kin group. People seem to avoid neglecting their immediate family in favour of support for their kin group, and vice versa. This is indicated by the rationale for the provision of support. Someone will deliver support when her/his kin is in need and if she/he is capable of doing it. Someone will ask support of his/her kin group if he/she thinks that they are capable of supplying it. In other words, one tends not to ask for help from kin if one thinks that this will cause difficulty for the kin group. Informants often said '*baa awak ka mintak pitiah ka anak, kalau dek inyo se ndak cukui, baa awak kamintak bantu, inyo alah tuo pulo, inyo sakii-sakii pulo, baa awak kamintak bantu, anak-anaknyo banyak*' (how can I ask for money from my offspring, they are poor as well; how can I ask for help, they are already aging; how can I ask for help, she/he is also sick; how can I ask for help, he/she has many children).

As far as relationships with *paruik* relatives are concerned, urban people, like rural people, still have strong solidarity with their *paruik* relatives. Chapter Five has shown that the relationships between out-migrants and their *mamak*, *kamanakan*, grandparents, maternal aunts and maternal cousins are still strong.

The sense of being part of the same matrilineal kin group is still

strongly held among Minangkabau urban people. Like rural people, the sense of being part of the same kin group gives urban people a strong sense of solidarity with their fellow *paruik* members. This strong sense of solidarity leads urban people to provide economic support to their needy *paruik* relatives even though they live far away.

The sense of duty, obligation and strong solidarity within a kin group means the kin group still works as a network of support in contemporary Minangkabau society. Kin are a very important source of support. The relative lack of availability of non-kinship-based support networks reinforces the idea of the necessity of members of a kin group to help each other.

### **Kin As the Main Source of Support**

Kin obligations and solidarity in contemporary Minangkabau society can be classified into potential and real. Potential obligations and solidarity mean that the obligation to provide support to kin group members is held in the mind of every member of a kin group. It is called potential, because it may not be actualised in everyday life, but the idea is still very much present. On the other hand, the actual obligations and solidarity are those realised by any individual member of a kin group.

As discussed above, duty and obligation are diffused to *mande* relatives, in the sense that besides having obligations to one's spouse and one's children, a person also has obligations to his/her parents and to his/her siblings. There is also strong solidarity with other members of the wider kin group. However, in some cases this sense of duty, obligation and solidarity is not realised because it is dependent upon the individual's capability or need. This means that members of a kin group



may not provide economic and social support for each other and may rarely have contact, but it does not necessarily follow that ties are weak. There are two reasons for this.

Firstly, members of a kin group can be self-sufficient economically and socially, and so do not need support from their kin. For example, I found that many old people do not get support from their children and live alone. These old people have their own income from their rice fields and gardens, or, in a few cases, from a pension. It seems that many old people do not want to ask for help from their children if they have a sufficient income. These old people also organise things themselves, because they are able to do that. It seems to me that the idea that a person can manage by him/herself is greatly valued among contemporary Minangkabau. This means that people will only ask for support from their relatives when they cannot cope with a situation or do not have other resources.

Secondly, some people regard themselves as not capable of providing support to their kin: they simply do not have enough money to support their kin. As informants put it *'baa ambo kamambantu urangtuo jo adiak kakak, nan ka ambo makan se ndak cukui'* (I can not support my parents or my siblings because I am poor).

The duty, obligation and solidarity to members of one's kin group will be realised if any member is capable of providing it and if there are kin group members in need. Today it seems that the sense of duty, obligation and solidarity to kin are real in Minangkabau society in both urban and rural areas. One factor that leads to this is that in this society kinship is still important as a source of support for needy people. The availability of support outside of the kinship network is not yet developed.

There are several sources of outside support in contemporary Minangkabau society that can provide support for the elderly and the children, but these sources of support are very limited.

Throughout West Sumatra, there are only two government-sponsored foster homes for elderly people, and there is one more run by a non-government organisation. Together these three institutions have places for only 180 people (Kantor Departemen Sosial Kabupaten 50 Kota). Furthermore, there is a government home care support program for the elderly. Under this program an elderly person is provided support on only one occasion. He/she is provided with forty-five kilograms of rice, two kilograms of mung bean and fifteen eggs (Kantor Departemen Sosial Kabupaten 50 Kota). There were only 55 people who received this aid during the fiscal year of 1994/1995 (Kantor Wilayah Departemen Sosial Propinsi Sumatra Barat). According to one recipient of this program, this government provision lasted only two months.

In addition to sources of support for the elderly available outside of kinship networks, there are institutions that provide support for children. There are about forty-two foster institutions for children throughout West Sumatra, forty of which are non-government institutions, only two of which are government institutions (Kantor Wilayah Departemen Sosial Propinsi Sumatra Barat). There were only a total of about 710 children looked after by these institutions during the fiscal year of 1994/1995 (Kantor Wilayah Departemen Sosial Propinsi Sumatra Barat 1995).

It seems that the foster institutions for children limit their work to looking after children who are over the age of seven, and who are orphans. This is because the aim of these institutions is to send their charges to school. Moreover, the children who are chosen are those who

have potential to be educated. So, this means that not all needy children can be provided for by such children's institutions.

In addition to these institutions there are other non-kinship-based sources of support. There is a pension for elderly people, widows and widowers, but this is only for government employees, and widows and widowers of government employees. Furthermore, government employees and their families are provided with health insurance. However, it does not cover all medical costs.

Thus, existing sources of support outside of kinship are very limited in Minangkabau society. Students have to pay for their education. Recently, a national government policy has been introduced to provide free tuition for primary school students, but the students still have to pay about Rp 500-to Rp 700 (about Aud \$ 50 cent) a month to their school in fees requested informally by school staff to supplement government funding. They also have to pay when they enrol in junior high school, senior high school, college and university. Students at high school and university also have to pay tuition fees in cash. Moreover, primary school, junior high school and high school students have to buy uniforms, shoes, books, pencils, and so on. So, education is an expense at all levels.

Moreover, there are no child care centres in the whole of West Sumatra, and house servants who can help working mothers to look after their children are hard to find. Most people cannot hire a house servant, not because they cannot afford it,<sup>1</sup> but because few people are willing to work as servants.

Consequently, the main place for people to seek support when they are in need is their kin group. People do not leave their children

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<sup>1</sup> House servants are comparatively inexpensive in Indonesia. Their wages about Rp 30,000 to Rp 50,000 per month which is about Aud \$ 18.75 to Aud \$31.25 a month.

with neighbours, but only with kin. This means that kin are still important as a source of support in contemporary Minangkabau society. People who need support seek help from their children, parents or siblings. When they cannot get support from these relatives for whatever reason they turn to their *mamak*, to their *kamanakan*, and so on.

Out-migration does not reduce the kin support network in contemporary Minangkabau society. Means of transportation and money transfer help people to maintain strong ties with their relatives.

### **Positive and Negative Aspects of Kinship as a Source of Support**

This section tries to evaluate the positive and negative dimensions of kinship-based welfare in contemporary Minangkabau society. What kinship can do and what it cannot do are the main questions discussed in this section. Further, this section discusses the implications of the research findings for welfare in contemporary Minangkabau society and Indonesia in general.

The existence of a kinship network as a source of support in contemporary Minangkabau society protects vulnerable people such as the elderly, orphans, divorced women, unemployed persons and invalids from economic and social insecurity. Elderly people who cannot support themselves come to their children for help. In the majority of cases such elderly people receive support from their children. Out-migration does not stop children providing support to their parents. When the children are not available for whatever reason, the elderly seek support from their sisters and brothers, and so on. The same thing also happens in the case of orphans and others. A child may still go to school even though his/her parents cannot afford it. Brothers and sisters

or his/her *mamak* or *etek* will help him/her.

However, kinship has limitations as the main source of support in contemporary Minangkabau society. Firstly, as was discussed earlier, although duty and obligation extend beyond the nuclear family, they reach only to members of one's *mande*. People tend to think that it is not their duty and obligation to support their *kamanakan*, *mamak*, maternal aunts and maternal cousins. The implication of this is that it is only among *mande* relatives that one can really rely on seeking support. As informants say, '*indak takah bantuan anak doh, indak takah bantuan dunsanak kanduang doh, indak takah bantuan urangtuo doh* (it is not like support that is provided by one's own children, siblings or parents). People appear to be willing to provide support to their fellow *paruik* members if this does not drain their economic resources or does not take much of their time. As a result, only *paruik* members on a good income are willing to provide economic support to their fellow *paruik* if this involves much money, and *paruik* relatives seem to be reluctant to provide time-consuming care support to needy fellow *paruik* members.

Accordingly, vulnerable people such as frail elderly people who do not have children, siblings or grandchildren seem to face difficulty in seeking support. The Social Affairs Department categorises these elderly as *lanjut usia terlantar* (elderly for whom no one provides care). That people tend to look after their own elderly parents and grandparents ahead of their fellow *paruik* members supported by the fact that 70 percent of the elderly who were looked after by foster home of Tresna Werdha Sabai Nan Aluih Sicincin in 1992 were people who did not have children (Saleh 1992:40).

As has already been shown, there are gender differences in the care of kin in Minangkabau society. A daughter is the most important care

provider for the elderly. As a result, people who do not have a daughter tend to find it difficult to find this supportive care. Although they may have other close relatives such as a sister(s), in many cases the sister has already reached old age as well. The gendered dimension of caring is indicated by the finding that most of the elderly who were looked after by Tresna Werdha Sabai Nan Aluih Sicincin foster home and Sasana Tresna Werdha Jasa Ibu Lakung foster home who had children, in fact had only son(s).

In addition, kinship-based welfare may cause social and economic burdens for the support providers since it may be costly. As was discussed earlier, many children are required to sacrifice their time, employment and money in order to provide support to their kin. Out-migration seems to increase the social and economic burden for support providers since elderly parents tend to be reluctant to live with their children in the city. This means their children have to send money regularly to their parents if their parents do not have their own source of income, and the children have to leave their job, spouse and children in the city to return to their home village to look after their parents. So, although kinship works as a unit of support, it causes economic and social burdens for support providers (Allan 1985:130). Some people cannot afford to provide support to their kin or they cannot provide support very well.

Thus, although the members of kin groups provide support to each other in contemporary Minangkabau society, this does not necessarily solve the problem of welfare, especially when quality of support is taken into account. It is suggested by findings in this thesis that the combination of kinship-based welfare and sources of support outside of kinship would be a better solution for Minangkabau society.

The most important people to be protected are frail elderly people

who do not have daughters. This is because of the time-consuming care required by these people. Based on survey findings in Sungai Talang Barat and Perumpung village and interviews at two institutions for the elderly, it is reasonable to argue that there are many frail elderly people, especially women, who have neither sisters nor children. In many cases their sisters are already elderly as well. If we look at figures for the number of people over the age of 65 recorded in 1990, where there were 66,288 people who were between the age of 65-69, 53,861 aged between 70-74, and 55,086 people whose age was above 75 (Biro Pusat Statistik 1992), it is evident that quite a large number of frail elderly people are to be found in West Sumatra. Some of them perhaps do not have children and have elderly sisters as possible carers. Moreover, there is a tendency for the numbers of elderly people in West Sumatra to be increasing. This can be seen from statistics which were recorded in 1971 and 1990 as shown in Table 6.1 below.

Table 6. 1. Number of Elderly People in West Sumatra Recorded in 1971 and 1990

Age group	1971	1990
65-69	32,426	66,288
70-74	39,949	53,861
75 +	41,431	55,086

Sources: 1971= Sumatra Barat Dalam Angka 1971  
1990 = Biro Pusat Statistik 1992

So, it is becoming increasingly important to develop ways of caring for these people.

The government of the Republic of Indonesia already has a welfare program for the elderly, but as has been indicated earlier, this program has limitations. There is only a limited number of elderly people (and children) who can be looked after by government sponsored institutions. The home care provision supplied by government has little practical benefit, in that it reaches only a small number of people, and lasts only for about two months. It seems that the government of the Republic of Indonesia cannot afford to provide support to the majority of needy people. Therefore, care for vulnerable elderly people is reliant on community-based support networks.

There are two ways this could be applied. Firstly, community-based foster institutions should be developed in West Sumatra. Local communities should be encouraged to establish these to provide basic needs such as food, clothing and accommodation to vulnerable elderly people.

These institutions need not cost much. They require volunteers to be managers of the institutions but need not employ people to help the elderly. The elderly people could be encouraged to help themselves. They could cook for themselves, wash their own clothes and make their own beds. They could also be encouraged to help other elderly who are too weak to organise these things.

One example of such an institution is the foster home of Sasana Tresna Werdha Jasa Ibu Lakung. This institution which has been established since 1981, is situated in *Kelurahan* Situjuh Batur of *Kecamatan* Luhak of Payakumbuh city. At the time of this study there were 24 people, mostly women from neighbouring areas, looked after here.

Finance for the institutions can be derived from three sources.



First funds can be collected from the recipient's kin group. Members of a kin group whose relatives are cared for by the institutions could be encouraged to contribute some money. Second, Minangkabau out-migrants are well known to have strong solidarity towards their home village. It is well known in Minangkabau society that out-migrants are an important source of financial support for village developments, mostly at present concerning religious development such as building mosques. Out-migrants could be urged to contribute some money towards these institutions. Thirdly, the government has launched many programs to help poor people to improve their income. These programs can be integrated with the foster institutions, in that the institutions are part of these programs.

Second, this study shows that *paruik* relatives do provide care to fellow relatives who need intensive care. However, as shown, *paruik* members tend not to be willing to spend much of their money and time on this. This situation is worse if the fellow *paruik* members providing care are poor. As a result, elderly people who are cared for by their fellow *paruik* members seem to receive minimum care.

Accordingly, in order to utilise the kin group as sources of care for elderly people, the relatives who provide care for their fellow *paruik* members should be given incentives. However, this alternative is only likely to work among relatives who live close to each other. This means it would most suit rural people and native city dwellers.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### CONCLUSION

This thesis has examined matrilineal kin relations in contemporary Minangkabau society. It focused on the relationship between the members of *mande*, a kin group consisting of a mother and her unmarried children, and of *paruik*, a kin group consisting of people who have ties over three or four generations, rather than being about what these groups do as groups or what individuals do as members representing those groups.

The ties between the members of *mande* and *paruik* were examined in terms of both the amount of financial and social support exchanged between members of these kin groups, and the degree to which these kin group members feel responsible for each other's welfare. The measurement of the strength of kin ties in this thesis was not simply a quantitative matter, nor simply just based on normative understandings of those relationships, but also revealed how the relationships are continuing to be used to express relatedness by provision of needs under different circumstances.

The argument that the capitalist economy weakens kin ties is not supported by the research findings presented in this thesis. Examining kin relations in contemporary Minangkabau society suggests that the ties are still very much in evidence, even though some of them have changed either their content or their form as a result of economic development.

Economic development does affect the form and content of social relations between the members of a *paruik*. The *paruik* has ceased as a unit of residence, production and consumption. In these aspects it has

been replaced by the *mande*. However my research has shown that the members of the *paruik* still maintain strong ties with each other, and that these ties are utilised in a number of ways.

The nature of ties between individuals and their *mande* kin differs from the ties between individuals with their *paruik* kin. The sense of duty and obligation as such tends to be limited to *mande* relatives. By contrast, what makes individuals also feel some responsibility for the wellbeing of their fellow *paruik* relatives is their sense of being fellow members of the same kin group.

Offspring, both daughters and sons, are an important source of support for parents. In turn, parents, particularly mothers, are an important source of support for married women. In addition, siblings, *mamak* and maternal aunts are also important sources of support, particularly financial support, for a Minangkabau individual.

An in-marrying man has closer ties with his wife and his children today than was probably the case before. He is an important breadwinner in his immediate family, and passes on his acquired property to his children rather than to his *kamanakan*. However, the relationship between *mamak* and *kamanakan* in contemporary Minangkabau society is not weak.

An in-marrying man is recognised by *adat* (Minangkabau custom) to have authority in his immediate family, while a *mamak*'s authority is concerned with kin group affairs. As a proverb says, *kakuasaan bapak salingka rumah, kakuasaan mamak salingka kampung* (a father's authority is around the house, while a *mamak*'s authority is around the kin group). The influence of an in-marrying man found in contemporary Minangkabau society is still limited to his immediate family's affairs, while matters that deal with a kin group as a whole, and

thus any individual as a member of that kin group, are still in the hands of a *mamak*.

Furthermore, the strength of the attachment of a married man to his wife and his children found in contemporary Minangkabau society does not by any means indicate the weakening of his kin ties to his own matrikin, for although he tends to pass on his individual property to his children, and to be responsible economically and socially for his wife and children, he also tends to provide financial and labour support to members of his own kin group.

A kinswoman's ties with her husband's relatives remain weak. Although a married woman tends to form a separate household from other members of her kin group, the pattern of residence is still largely matrilocal in that, in rural areas and among native dwellers of a city, the house tends to be located on her kin group's land, and in the case of neolocal residence it is her relatives who move to live with her rather than her husband's kin. Moreover, she tends to obtain support with such tasks as child care and household chores more often from her own matrikin than from her husband's kin.

Migration from rural to urban areas does affect both the form and content of social relationships between the members of a *paruik*. Face to face interaction and labour support exchanges tend to be reduced.

However, the economic and social ties between urban dwellers and their fellow *paruik* relatives are still strong. Urban offspring, both daughters and sons, are important sources of support for parents, and in turn, parents, particularly mothers, are an important source of support for a married woman. In addition, siblings, *mamak* and maternal aunts are also important sources of support, particularly financial support. Visiting sick relatives and providing financial support for sick relatives

are also widely practised by urban Minangkabau. Furthermore, urban dwellers provide help for their relatives coming to the city.

The *mamak-kamanakan* relationship has also changed to some degree, including in its economic aspects. In rural areas, the *mamak's* economic support of his *kamanakan* links to both ancestral property and earning, but among urban dwellers, the ancestral property-based support a *mamak* supplies his *kamanakan* seems to have ceased, while earning becomes the most important source of a *mamak's* support. Therefore, the economic relationship between urban dwellers and their *panghulu/tungganai* also tends to have declined.

From the point of view of children, there is scope for recognising the increased influence of fathers in families no longer solely reliant on agriculture for their living. However, a *mamak* continues to play a role in one's life in general, and, especially, one continues to have economic benefits from the relationship between *mamak kanduang* and *kamanakan kanduang* in cases of economic need.

According to Kahn, the scholars' claim that the capitalist economy has led to the disintegration of Minangkabau matrilineal descent groups is based on an inaccurate depiction of the history of Minangkabau society, in which kin relations were really different from those of today prior to the engagement of this society in the capitalist economy (Kahn 1976: 79). However, overemphasis on the role of *mamak* and neglecting the role of women within kin groups also contribute to this inaccuracy.

The argument about the weakening of kin ties as a result of economic and demographic changes cannot be applied to every society. The degree to which a given society has developed strong kin ties through its history influences the degree to which kin ties in a society are affected by economic and demographic changes (see Hollinger and Haller

1990:120-121). In Minangkabau society ties within the matrilineal group are strong: members of matrilineal groups share property such as houses and land, and they have a kin group leader. These strong ties continue even when people engage in new economic activities or live in cities.

This study suggests that we should not only look at household composition to reveal changes in family and kinship, but we should also look at the cultural significance of ties between members of a kin group, and the extent to which financial and social support are exchanged among kin.

This study's findings suggest that understanding the matrilineal kinship system from an androcentric perspective, and reduction of the relationship within matrilineal kin groups to the relationship between maternal uncle and maternal nephew, both tend to be misleading. Studying kin relations in the Minangkabau matrilineal system by examining kinship as providing networks of support suggests that the reduction of the structure of Minangkabau matrilineal kin group into the relationship between *mamak* and *kamanakan* neglects the importance of the relationship between parents and children, the relationship between siblings, and the role of mother, maternal aunts and sisters. Both kinswomen and kinsmen play important roles within a kin group. As with kinsmen, kinswomen are active participants within a kin group. They are not simply subject to kinsmen's activities. Therefore, it is very important to take account of both female and male roles within a kin group to analyse kin relations in a given society. Both should be considered as active players within a kin group.

In sum, economic development and urbanisation change something of the form and contents of social relationships between members of a *paruik*, but they do not erode the ties between these

matrilineal kin group members.

## GLOSSARY

<i>Adat</i>	Custom, tradition, law
<i>Adat badunsanak</i>	The strong solidarity within a kin group
<i>Adat bapanghulu</i>	The tradition of having a kin group leader
<i>Adat basuku</i>	The tradition of having a matri-clan
<i>Adat nan diadatkan</i>	Lower levels of <i>adat</i> that are flexible and adaptable
<i>Adat nan sabana adat</i>	A higher level of <i>adat</i> which is not thought to be subject to change
<i>Adat sako and pusako</i>	The rules of inheritance
<i>Akad nikah</i>	An Islamic ceremony of marriage agreement performed by the bride and bridegroom in the presence of the official <i>Angku kali</i>
<i>Angku kali</i>	A man who is officially appointed to organise <i>Akad nikah</i>
<i>Baiyo-iyó</i>	Meeting within a group of relatives to plan a wedding and allocate tasks to be performed
<i>Bilik</i>	Room of a <i>rumah gadang</i> . Each married woman in a kin group is allocated one to live in with her husband and children
<i>Camat</i>	The head of a sub-sub-district
<i>Dapatan</i>	A portion of ancestral property for



	which utilisation rights are allocated to a married woman
<i>Darek</i>	Heartland, or core culture areas believed to be the original site of Minangkabau society
<i>Desa</i>	The lowest unit of government administration - sometimes termed 'village'
<i>Etek</i>	Maternal aunt
<i>Faraid</i>	The Islamic inheritance law
<i>Ganggam Bantuak</i>	Mechanism by which a kinswoman is granted ownership for a portion of kin group land
<i>Harato pancaharian</i>	Acquired property
<i>Harato pusako randah</i>	Individual property which is in the hands of the first heirs
<i>Harato pusako tinggi</i>	Ancestral property or inherited individual property which is classified as kin group property
<i>Kabupaten</i>	Sub-district
<i>Kamanakan</i>	A man's sister's children; members of kin group from a kin group leader's point of view
<i>Kamanakan kanduang</i>	A man's sister's children
<i>Kaum</i>	Matrilineal descent group which consists of a mother and her unmarried children who have inheritance rights

<i>Kecamatan</i>	Sub-sub-district
<i>Kerapatan Adat Nagari</i>	<i>Nagari</i> council that consists of all <i>panghulu</i> in a <i>nagari</i>
<i>Luhak</i>	Culturally recognised sub-district in the original site of Minangkabau society
<i>Mamak</i>	Mother's brothers; kin group's leaders
<i>Mamak kanduang</i>	Mother's brothers (maternal uncle)
<i>Mande</i>	Matrilineal descent group which has one mother, more specifically the group defined by a married woman and her unmarried and married children
<i>Nagari</i>	Traditional administration unit and the lowest cultural territorial unit
<i>Pambaoan</i>	The property which is granted by a matrilineal kin group to a married male members of the group
<i>Panghulu</i>	A leader of a <i>payuang</i> , a sub-division of a matrilineage
<i>Paruik</i>	Matrilineal descent group which consists of people who have ties spanning three or four generations and who formerly resided together in a <i>rumah gadang</i>
<i>Payuang</i>	A sub-division of matrilineage which is headed by a <i>panghulu</i>
<i>Rumah gadang</i>	A traditional long house inhabited by the members of a <i>paruik</i>

<i>Suku</i>	Matri-clan, the largest recognised matrilineal descent group
<i>Tungganai</i>	A head of a sub-division of matrilineage, the <i>paruik</i>
<i>Rantau</i>	Areas to which Minangkabau have migrated to live from original <i>darek</i> (heartland)
<i>Urang sumando</i>	'An in-marrying man', the term used to describe the position of husband in the Minangkabau matrilineal system

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## APPENDICES

### STRUCTURED INTERVIEW<sup>1</sup>

a. rural

b. urban

#### I. About your self

1. What is your Sex?

a. male

b. female

2. How old are you?

a. 30 - 35 years

b. 36 - 41 years

c. 42 - 47 years

d. above 48 years

**The questions no. 3 to no. 5 are only for rural respondents**

3. Have you utilised some part of your kin group's land?

a. yes

b. no

4. Have you utilised some part of your spouse's kin group's land?

a. yes

b. no

5. Is the land that you have cultivated your individual land?

a. yes

b. no

**The questions no. 6 to no. 7 are only for urban respondents**

6. Where did you grow up?

a. in my parents' village

b. in this city

c. elsewhere

7. How long have you been living in Padang?

a. 1-3 years

b. 3-5 years

c. 6-8

d. 9-11

e. 12 and +

**Questions no. 8 to the end are for both categories of respondents**

<sup>1</sup> This is the translation of the structured interview that was written in Indonesian.

8. What is your highest level of education?

- |                       |                        |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| a. primary school     | b. junior high school  |
| c. senior high school | d. college/ university |

9. What is your occupation?

- a. public employee or private employee
- b. merchant
- c. farmer
- e. house keeping
- d. other .....

10. What is your monthly income<sup>2</sup> ?

- |                              |                              |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| a. <Rp. 100, 000             | b. Rp. 100, 000 - 200, 000   |
| c. >Rp. 200,000 - Rp.300,000 | d. >Rp. 300,000 - Rp 400,000 |
| e. >Rp. 400,000 - Rp 500,000 | f. >Rp. 500,000              |

11. What is your spouse's occupation?

- a. public employee or private employee
- b. merchant
- c. farmer
- e. house keeping
- d. other .....

12. What is her/his monthly income?

- |                              |                             |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| a. <Rp. 100,000              | b. Rp. 100, 000 - 200,000   |
| c. >Rp 200,000 - Rp. 300,000 | d. >Rp 300,000 - Rp 400,000 |
| e. >Rp 400,000 - Rp. 500,000 | f. >Rp. 500,000             |

---

<sup>2</sup> In Indonesia wages are paid monthly, and people tend to be more familiar with monthly income than annual. Investigating non wage-workers' income is difficult because they do not have fixed monthly payment. In this research, the monthly income of farmers was obtained by accumulating all earnings from different produce that they sold during a year. This was then divided by twelve months. In case of merchants and porters, their monthly income was derived from their daily earning.

## II. House Ownership and Relatives Who Live With Respondents

13. What is the status of the ownership of the house you live in?

- a. individual house
- b. ancestral property
- c. rent

14. (If answered a), Who financed the house construction?

- a. my self
- b. my self and my spouse
- c. my self+ my spouse+ my relatives
- d. my self+my spouse +my spouse's relatives
- e. c+d

15. Do you have relatives who live with you?

- a. yes
- b. no

16. (If answered a), Whose relatives are they?

- a. my relatives
- b. my spouse's relatives
- c. my spouse's relatives and my relatives

## III. Relationship With Relatives

### III. 1. Relationship with parents

17. Are your parents still alive?

- a. yes
- b. no

If yes, go to the following questions

18. Where do they live?

- a. in their home village
- b. elsewhere
- c. somewhere in Padang
- d. in this house

19. How often did you have contact with your parents in the last two years?

- a. almost every day
- b. 2-3 days a week
- c. 1 X a week
- d. 1 X two week
- e. 1 X a month
- f. 1 X 2 months
- g. 2 X a year

20. How did you have contact with your parents?

- a. visiting  
c. telephoning
- b. by letter

21. Who initiated contact?

- a. myself
- b. parents

22. Do your parents have their own income, from a pension or other sources?

- a. yes
- b. no

23. Are your parents able to organise things, e.g cooking, washing, for themselves?

- a. yes
- b. no

**If no, go to question no. 24, and if yes go directly to question no. 25**

24. Have you helped them with the activities below?

a= yes, b = no

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| 1. meal preparation: cooking, presentation and purchasing food | a | b |
| 2. feeding   | a | b |
| 3. bathing   | a | b |
| 4. washing clothes   | a | b |

25. Did you provide financial support to your parents in the last two years?

- a. yes
- b. no

26. Did you provide financial support for the following?

a= yes, b= no

- |                                      |   |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|
| 1. fund for pilgrimage to Mecca      | a | b |
| 2. payment for land and building tax | a | b |
| 3. clothes                           | a | b |

27. Were your parents ever so seriously ill that they could not help themselves?

(This question refers to the period after the respondent had married. In the case of urban respondents, it refers to the period after respondents had moved to town).

a. yes

b. no

**If yes go to question no. 28, and if no go directly to question no. 29**

**28. When they were ill did you support them with matters below?**

a=yes, b=no

- |                         |   |   |
|-------------------------|---|---|
| 1. money for medication | a | b |
| 2. seeing doctors       | a | b |
| 3. preparing meal       | a | b |
| 4. washing clothes      | a | b |
| 5. bathing              | a | b |
| 6. making bed           | a | b |

**29. Were your spouse's parents ever so seriously ill that they could not help themselves?**

(For urban respondents, this refers to after the respondents had moved to town).

a. yes

b. no

c. don't know

**If yes, go to question no 30, if no go directly to question no. 31**

**30. Did you support them with matters below when they were ill?**

a=yes, b=no

- |                         |   |   |
|-------------------------|---|---|
| 1. money for medication | a | b |
| 2. seeing doctors       | a | b |
| c. preparing meal       | a | b |
| d. washing clothes      | a | b |
| e. bathing              | a | b |
| f. making bed           | a | b |

### **III. 2. Relationship with Siblings**

**31. Do you have a brother or a sister?**

a. yes

b. no

**If yes, answer the following questions.**

32. How often do you have contact with your siblings?

- |                     |                   |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| a. almost every day | b. 2-3 day a week |
| c. 1 X a week       | d. 1 X two week   |
| e. 1 X a month      | f. 1 X 2 months   |
| g. 2 X a year       |                   |

- |             |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. sisters  | a | b | c | d | e | f | g |
| 2. brothers | a | b | c | d | e | f | g |

33. Have you supported your siblings with matters below?

a=yes, b=no

- |                         | sisters |   | brothers |   |
|-------------------------|---------|---|----------|---|
| 1. looking for job      | a       | b | a        | b |
| 2. capital <sup>3</sup> | a       | b | a        | b |
| 3. school fees          | a       | b | a        | b |
| 4. clothes              | a       | b | a        | b |
| 5. loaning money        | a       | b | a        | b |
| 6. money for wedding    | a       | b | a        | b |

34. Were they ever so seriously ill that they could not help themselves?

(This question refers to the period after the respondent had married. In the case of urban respondents, it refers to the period after respondents had moved to town).

a. yes

b. no

c. don't know

If yes, go questions no. 35 to 36, and if no, go directly to question 37

35. Did you see them when they were ill?

a= yes, b= no

- |             |   |   |
|-------------|---|---|
| 1. sisters  | a | b |
| 2. brothers | a | b |

36. Did you support them with matters below when they were ill?

a= yes, b=no

<sup>3</sup> Capital is a large amount of money for establishing a business.

	sisters		brothers	
1. money for medication	a	b	a	b
2. seeing doctors/other medication	a	b	a	b
3. preparing meal	a	b	a	b
4. washing clothes	a	b	a	b
5. bathing	a	b	a	b
7. making bed	a	b	a	b

#### IV. Relationship With other Relatives

37. How often did you have contact with the relatives listed below in the last two years?

a. almost every day	b. 2-3 day a week						
c. 1 X a week	d. 1 X two week						
e. 1 X a month	f. 1 X 2 months						
g. 2 X a year							
1. grandparents	a	b	c	d	e	f	g
2. <i>mamak</i>	a	b	c	d	e	f	g
3. maternal aunts	a	b	c	d	e	f	g
4. maternal cousins	a	b	c	d	e	f	g

38. How did you have contact with them?

a=visiting, b=letters, c=telephoning

1. grandparents	a	b	c
2. <i>mamak</i>	a	b	c
3. maternal aunts	a	b	c
4. maternal cousins	a	b	c

39. Did you provide financial support to your relatives below in last two years?

a=yes, b=no

1. grandparents	a	b
2. <i>mamak</i>	a	b
3. maternal aunts	a	b
4. maternal cousins	a	b

40. Were your relatives listed below so seriously ill that they could not help themselves?

(This question refers to the period after the respondent had married. In the case of urban respondents, it refers to the period after respondents had moved to town).

a=yes, b=no, c don't know

1. grandparents	a	b	c
2. <i>mamak</i>	a	b	c
3. maternal aunts	a	b	c
4. maternal cousins	a	b	c

41. Did you visit them when they were ill?

a=yes, b=no

1. grandparents	a	b
2. <i>mamak</i>	a	b
3. maternal aunts	a	b
4. maternal cousins	a	b

42. Did you support them with matters below when they were ill?

- |                         |                    |
|-------------------------|--------------------|
| a. money for medication | b. seeing doctors  |
| c. preparing meal       | d. washing clothes |
| e. bathing              | f. making bed      |

1. grandparents	a	b	c	d	e	f
2. <i>mamak</i>	a	b	c	d	e	f
3. maternal aunts	a	b	c	d	e	f
4. maternal cousins	a	b	c	d	e	f

## V. Support Received by Respondents From Their Relatives

43. Do you receive child care support from relatives?

- |        |       |
|--------|-------|
| a. yes | b. no |
|--------|-------|



44. If yes, which category of relatives?

- |            |             |
|------------|-------------|
| a. parents | b. siblings |
| c. aunts   | d. cousins  |

45. Whose relatives are they?

- |         |                          |
|---------|--------------------------|
| a. mine | b. my spouse's relatives |
|---------|--------------------------|

46. Were you ever so seriously ill hat you could not help yourself?

(This question refers to the period after the respondent had married. In the case of urban respondents, it refers to the period after respondents had moved to town).

- |        |       |
|--------|-------|
| a. yes | b. no |
|--------|-------|

If yes, go to questions 47 to 52, if not go directly to question no. 51

47. Did you receive support from your parents with matters below when you were ill?

a=yes, b=no

- |                         |   |   |
|-------------------------|---|---|
| 1. money for medication | a | b |
| 2. seeing doctors       | a | b |
| 3. preparing meal       | a | b |
| 4. washing clothes      | a | b |
| 5. bathing              | a | b |
| 6. making bed           | a | b |

48. Did you receive support from your siblings with matters below when you were ill?

a= yes, b=no

- |                         |         |   |          |   |
|-------------------------|---------|---|----------|---|
|                         | sisters |   | brothers |   |
| 1. money for medication | a       | b | a        | b |
| 2. seeing doctors       | a       | b | a        | b |
| 3. preparing meal       | a       | b | a        | b |
| 4. washing clothes      | a       | b | a        | b |
| 5. bathing              | a       | b | a        | b |
| 6. making bed           | a       | b | a        | b |

49. Did you receive support from your *mamak* with matters below when you were ill?

a= yes, b=no

- |                         |   |   |
|-------------------------|---|---|
| 1. money for medication | a | b |
| 2. seeing doctors       | a | b |
| 3. preparing meal       | a | b |
| 4. washing clothes      | a | b |
| 5. bathing              | a | b |
| 6. making bed           | a | b |

50. Did you receive support from your grandparents with matters below when you were ill?

a= yes, b=no

- |                         |   |   |
|-------------------------|---|---|
| 1. money for medication | a | b |
| 2. seeing doctors       | a | b |
| 3. preparing meal       | a | b |
| 4. washing clothes      | a | b |
| 5. bathing              | a | b |
| 6. making bed           | a | b |

51. Did you receive support from your maternal aunts with matters below when you were ill?

a= yes, b=no

- |                         |   |   |
|-------------------------|---|---|
| 1. money for medication | a | b |
| 2. seeing doctors       | a | b |
| 3. preparing meal       | a | b |
| 4. washing clothes      | a | b |
| 5. bathing              | a | b |
| 6. making bed           | a | b |

52. Did you receive support from your maternal cousins with matters below when you were ill?

a= yes, b=no

- |                         |   |   |
|-------------------------|---|---|
| 1. money for medication | a | b |
| 2. seeing doctors       | a | b |
| 3. preparing meal       | a | b |
| 4. washing clothes      | a | b |
| 5. bathing              | a | b |
| 6. making bed           | a | b |

53. Have you ever experienced financial difficulty?

a. yes                      b. no

If yes, From whom or where do you seek support?

a= yes, b= no

1. parents	a	b
2. brothers	a	b
3. sisters	a	b
4. grandparents	a	b
5. <i>mamak</i>	a	b
5. maternal aunts	a	b
6. maternal cousins	a	b
7. banks	a	b
8. cooperative in work place	a	b
9. friends	a	b

54. Did you obtain financial support from your relatives below for your wedding?

a= yes, b= no

1. parents	a	b
2. brothers	a	b
3. sisters	a	b
4. grandparents	a	b
5. <i>mamak</i>	a	b
6. maternal aunts	a	b
7. maternal cousins	a	b

## VI. The *Mamak-kamanakan* Relationship

### VI. 1. Relationship with *panghulu/tungganai*

55. Did you have ever disputes with your spouse?

a. yes

b. no

If yes, go to question no. 53, if no, go directly to question no. 54

56. Did you ask for help from your *panghulu/tungganai* to solve it?

a. yes

b. no

57. Did you have disputes with your children?

a. yes

b. no

If yes, go to questions 55, if no, go directly to question no. 56

58. Did you ask for help from your *panghulu/tungganai* to solve it?

a. yes

b. no

59. Did you ask help from your *panghulu/tungganai* with matters other than the above?

a. yes

b. no

**If yes, go to questions no. 57, if not go directly to question 58**

60. Please list them?

a.....

b.....

c.....

d.....

61. Did your *panghulu/tungganai* organise your marriage?

a. yes

b. no

62. Were the marriages of your children organised by the children's *panghulu/tungganai*?

a. yes

b. no

63. Did your *panghulu/tungganai* help you with the matters below?

a=yes, b=no

1. capital

a

b

2. looking for job

a

b

## VI. 2. *Mamak kanduang* and *kamanakan kanduang*

64. Did your *mamak* support you with the matters below?

a=yes, b=no

1. school fees

a

b

2. clothes

a

b

3. capital

a

b

4. looking for job

a

b

- |                 |   |   |
|-----------------|---|---|
| 5. job training | a | b |
| 6. school books | a | b |

65. Have you ever been advised by your *mamak*?

- a. yes                      b. no

**Respondents to his *kamanakan*. (This is for male respondents)**

66. Do you have *kamanakan kanduang*?

- a. yes                      b. no

**If yes, answer the following questions**

67. Have you provided the support listed below to your *kamanakan kanduang*?

a= yes, b=no

- |                 |   |   |
|-----------------|---|---|
| 1. clothes      | a | b |
| 2. school fees  | a | b |
| 3. school books | a | b |

68. Have you been involved in advising your *kamanakan* ?

- a. yes                      b. no

69. Have you been involved in monitoring your *kamanakan* 's friendships?

- a. yes                      b. no

70. Did you make decisions concerning your *kamanakan* in the following matters?

a=yes, b=no

- |              |   |   |
|--------------|---|---|
| a. education | a | b |
| b. marriage  | a | b |

71. Were you consulted by the parents of your *kamanakan* for the following?

a=yes, b=no

- |                                      |   |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|
| 1. your <i>kamanakan's</i> education | a | b |
| 2. your <i>kamanakan's</i> marriage  | a | b |

**The following questions are for all respondents**

72. Have your children's *mamak* provided support to your children for the following?

a=yes, b=no

- |                 |   |   |
|-----------------|---|---|
| 1. clothes      | a | b |
| 2. school fee   | a | b |
| 3. school books | a | b |

73. Have your children's *mamak* been involved in advising your children?

a. yes                      b. no

74. Have your children's *mamak* been involved in monitoring your children's friendship?

a. yes                      b. no