

Minangkabau Women's Cultural Adaptation Strategy in Inter-Ethnic Marriage

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Abstract: In marriage, the two ethnic cultures of each individual will often meet to maintain the harmony of the family and to prevent the conflict of women in the dominant role. This research question is about how the role of Minangkabau women is to handle various forms of conflict that may arise due to cultural differences in a marriage. The couple had the process of adapting to the cultural values of the partner's origin to each other. The data collection methods include in-depth interviews and observations by interviewing 23 Minangkabau women from other ethnic groups. The Minangkabau women make six strategies to perpetuate their household: 1). The Minangkabau woman chooses a Javanese male to serve as her husband. 2). The Minangkabau woman has independence in determining her partner because it meets during the wander. 3). After marriage, the Minangkabau woman will bring her husband to live in the West Sumatra area. 4). Most Minangkabau women like husbands who want to contribute to the wishes of their wives. 5). The language used after marriage is the Minangkabau language. 6). Minangkabau culture is dominant and applied in children's foster patterns. This article concludes that cultural constructions have given directions for Minangkabau women to defend their families while preventing vulnerable conflicts in interethnic marriages.

Keywords: Minangkabau Womens, Interethnic Marriage

Abstrak: Dalam pernikahan antar etnis kedua budaya dari masing-masing individu akan sering bertemu, untuk menjaga keharmonisan keluarga dan mencegah konflik perempuan memiliki peranan yang dominan. Pertanyaan penelitian ini adalah bagaimana peran perempuan minangkabau menangani berbagai macam bentuk konflik yang mungkin akan timbul karena perbedaan budaya dalam suatu perkawinan. Pasangan suami istri saling melakukan proses adaptasi terhadap nilai-nilai kultural dari daerah asal pasangannya hingga saling berkesesuaian satu sama lain. Metode pengumpulan data meliputi wawancara mendalam dan observasi dengan mewawancarai 23 perempuan Minangkabau yang bersuamikan etnis lain. Terdapat enam strategi yang dilakukan perempuan minangkabau untuk bisa melanggengkan rumah tangganya yaitu: 1). Perempuan Minangkabau memilih laki-laki Jawa untuk dijadikan suami. 2). Perempuan Minangkabau memiliki kemandirian dalam menentukan pasangan karena bertemu saat merantau. 3). Setelah menikah perempuan Minangkabau akan membawa suaminya tinggal di daerah Sumatera Barat. 4). Mayoritas perempuan Minangkabau menyukai suami yang mau mengalah terhadap keinginan istri. 5). Bahasa yang digunakan setelah menikah adalah bahasa Minangkabau. 6). Budaya Minangkabau dominan diterapkan dalam pola asuh anak. Artikel ini menyimpulkan bahwa konstruksi budaya telah memberi arahan bagi perempuaun Minangkabau dalam mempertahankan keluarganya sekaligus mencegah konflik yang rentan dalam perkawinan antar etnis.

Kata Kunci: Perempuan Minangkabau, Perkawinan Antar etnis

Introduction

Women have a lot of potential that must be developed and this opportunity is the same as an opportunity for a man. The nature of a woman is an advantage that needs to be explored in order to realize the integrity of a nation that respects its culture. In general, in Indonesian society, the division of labor between men and women describes the role of women. The initial basis of this sex division of labor is undoubtedly related to the different roles of men and women in the reproductive function. In society represents the role that is displayed by a woman. Analysis of women's roles can be carried out from the perspective of their position in dealing with indirect (domestic) productive work and direct or public productive work. (Inawati, 2014) argues that women are an integral part of the integrity of a nation (society) who have rights and obligations as human beings. So by nature, women are human beings who have the dignity of honesty and loyalty.

The matrilineal culture in West Sumatra is a culture that is thick with nuances of emancipation and feminist teachings. Women are heirlooms for a family so that their existence gets a very respectable position for the community. Minang culture is also full of Muslim culture and teachings so that religious cultural values influence people's thinking patterns a lot Minangkabau. Marriage in Minangkabau is regulated by *syarak* (Islamic teaching) and *adat* (customary) (Anisa et al., 2021). Marriage according to *syarak* alone (called marriage hanging) is considered unfinished. There are several types of marriage that are known in the Minangkabau community tradition, namely: Marriage within the tribe/nagari. This is the preferred form of marriage in Minangkabau. However, what is ideal is marriage between the closest families, such as: marrying *mamak's* son (going home *ka mamak*) or marrying father's *kamanakan* (going home *ka bako*). Out-of-tribe marriages mean marrying non-Minangkabau people. Marriage with women from outside the Minangkabau tribe is not liked because it can damage the traditional structure. The child will have no tribe. On the other hand, marriage with men outside the Minangkabau tribe is not a problem, because it does not damage the traditional structure and the child still has the ethnicity of his mother (Ariani, 2015).

There are also forbidden marriages (abstinence marriages), namely marriages that are prohibited by Islamic law, such as marrying mothers, fathers, brothers, children of one's mother and father, and others. In addition, marriages that damage the customary system, namely marrying people who are related by blood according to the mother's line, people of the same class, or people of the same ethnic group. As for marriages that are

prohibited to maintain social harmony, such as marrying people who have been divorced by relatives, combining women who are related, marrying stepchildren of siblings, or marrying people who are engaged (Ariani, 2015).

Many problems will arise in a marriage, but when two people from two different cultures get married, the problems that may arise can be many, ranging from simple problems such as what food to eat, where to live, culture from whose area will be used in child care. Apart from differences in language and food tastes, there are also differences in norms in society (Davis, 1996). In everyday life, the Minangkabau people use a lot of customs, especially those related to the way of life and the norms of people's lives. The disclosure is usually in the form of proverbs, talibuns, mantras and other expressions. (Ariyani, 2013). The other option becomes more complicated, when the couple faces different gender roles, in dealing with conflicts, expressing emotions, values, social behavior, parenting patterns, relationships with extended families of both parties, and many other problems in marriage, but communication is an important part of the relationship. The main key in facing these challenges is to be able to find mutually beneficial decisions for both parties (Novianti, 2018).

Minangkabau women are unique in maintaining their marriage, especially if the husband is from a different ethnicity. This article aims to examine the role of Minangkabau women in maintaining inter-ethnic marriages. The question of this research is how the role of Minangkabau women in dealing with various forms of conflict that may arise due to cultural differences in a marriage. Several articles related to inter-ethnic marriage (Benazir Bona Pratamawaty, 2017) (Pramudito, 2017) (Hidayati, 2017) stated that husband and wife carry out a process of adaptation to each other's cultural values from their partner's area of origin so that they are mutually compatible with each other.

Minangkabau women are usually not trained enough to be able to appear in public by the adat system. This is because the structure in Minangkabau is accustomed to prioritizing the opinions of the penghulu, ninik mamak, and the top positions in adat structures, which are mostly men, to appear in public. Minangkabau women generally leave things outside their domestic power to men, especially in matters of public speaking or formal forums. Adat burdens women with the value of "raso jo pareso" (shame) so that they are not trained enough to speak in public which contains both men and women (Ariesta, 2014).

The role of Minangkabau women in dealing with various kinds of conflicts that may arise in inter-ethnic marriages is needed, because women are the center of a marriage that takes care of all household needs. It is important to know what Minangkabau women are capable of doing because it is not easy to accept other cultures that are different. So this study aims to find out how the role of Minangkabau women in maintaining inter-ethnic marriages that have cultural differences between husband and wife.

Method

This study uses a qualitative method with data collection through interviews with 23 Minangkabau women who are married to men from other ethnicities. In addition to interviews, researchers also conducted observations and documentation to obtain in-depth results of studies related to inter-ethnic marriage problems in the Minangkabau women's tradition which adheres to a matrilineal pattern. The limitations of the study in this study only examine a number of Minangkabau women who carry out inter-ethnic marriages in Kanagarian Sungai Buluh. So this study aims to obtain the results of an in-depth, holistic and comprehensive study related to inter-ethnic marriages of Minangkabau women in Kanagarian Sungai Buluh. This research is presented through a description and reporting the views expressed by the informants in this case the research informants.

Result and Discussion

The Minangkabau community adheres to a matrilineal kinship system, namely kinship that draws lineage according to the mother's line. So a person's tribe in Minangkabau follows his mother's tribe. A woman has a special position in the people. Tribal people cannot marry. The one who controls the inheritance is the mother and the one who binds the family ties of the rumah gadang is the relationship with the inheritance and the *sako* (Davis, 1996). The oldest woman in the clan is called limpapeh or amban puruak. He had the honor of being the ruler of all the wealth of the people. The distribution of property is regulated by him. While the eldest male in the clan is nicknamed tngganai. He served as mamak Kapalo Warih. He only has the power to maintain, cultivate, and develop people's property, but not to use it (Ariyani, 2015).

The family in Minangkabau society is an institution that has its own social structure and system. Family is defined as a group of people who live in one house who

still have kinship/blood relations due to marriage, birth, adoption and so on. A family consisting of father, mother and unmarried children is called the nuclear family. Every individual must crave the realization of a prosperous and happy family. Living in a beautiful house, blessed with harmonious offspring, and living socially humanely. These expectations will arise along with the increasing intensity of individual work in the family and community (Krier, 2000).

In Minangkabau society, the high role and position of women is symbolized by various terms, such as *limpapeh umah nan gadang*, *high sumarak anjuang*, *sumarak kampuang pamenan nagari*, and others. Especially for mothers, the term *bundo kanduang* is used. These terms are not just symbols or flattery but have a deep meaning and responsibility. As stated by Boestami (1993) in Latief (2001) that the order of Minangkabau traditional kinship, in order to ensure the intimate relationship of indigenous peoples, women have a decisive nature, women play a role in many things and are the fulcrum in maintaining balance because in many ways everything negotiated on the women's forum first. In addition, it is women who keep objects or greatness *pusako* and determine the preparation and implementation of traditional ceremonies (Kato, 1978).

The matrilineal social system in Minangkabau was formed based on natural provisions. Naturally the one who conceives, gives birth, breastfeeds, teaches children to speak and educates them is a mother. On the other hand, fathers have very few opportunities to socialize with their children and pay attention to their needs (Krier, 2000). A father is mostly outside the home because he has to earn a living to meet the needs of his wife and children. The consequence that often happens is that children are closer and feel comfortable when they are next to their mother. Natural conditions like this are used as a source in determining a social system in Minangkabau (Ariyani, 2015).

The social system determined based on the natural objective conditions causes this system to become a universal system and is very deeply rooted in Minangkabau society. So that no matter how swift the current of change brought undermining the solidity of his position, he remained strong (De Jong, 2012). For example, the flow of change brought about by modernization or migration. These factors are not able to shift this position, even that is the case on the contrary, these factors made his position even stronger.

Based on this reality, therefore the concern about the weakening of the matrilineal system and that it will be shifted by the patrilineal system need not be a prolonged fear

because this system will still be embraced by the Minangkabau community, as long as there are mothers who maintain their image and nature as women. Although there are many conflicting factors, such as the Islamic religion which tries to contradict the patrilineal system, these factors are not able to shake this existence. Until now the Minangkabau people still adhere to Islam, but in this case there is a balanced accommodation process. On the one hand, the Minangkabau people must carry out the essence of pure Islamic teachings and on the other hand they must maintain the authenticity of their customs and systems (Elfira, 2018).

Women and men are physically different. This results in women and men having different functions in social life, both domestically and publicly. This division of labor has been going on for thousands of years, so people tend to think of it as something natural. Many do not ask anymore whether this kind of division of labor is fair, and who benefits from this kind of division of labor. Women themselves even tend to think that the different roles assigned to women and men are of equal value. The debate about psychological differences between men and women basically revolves around two major theories, namely the theory of nature which assumes that psychological differences between men and women are caused by biological factors, and the second is the theory of nurture which assumes that these differences created by the environment (Djalius, 2010).

Because of the large role and responsibility placed on women's shoulders in preserving matrilineal Minangkabau customs and culture, the focus is on *bundo kanduang* or mothers, who are described as ideal women or mothers, authoritative, wise, being an example for children and the weak (Rasyimah & Yunanda, 2022). Based on 23 Minangkabau female informants who married other ethnicities, it was found that the majority of Minangkabau women married with Javanese ethnicity 11 people, married with Batak ethnicity 5 people, married with Nias ethnicity 1 person, married with Sundanese ethnicity 1 person, married with ethnic Dayak 1 people, married to 1 person of Mandailing ethnicity, 1 person married to Malay ethnicity, and 1 person married to a foreigner. This means that Minangkabau women choose 8 ethnic groups as their partners. Only 7 women met their partners in the Minangkabau area while the other 15 women met their partners in the rantau area. This means that inter-ethnic marriages have a chance if the women migrate and choose a partner based on their own wishes. In addition, 19 out of 23 couples after marriage choose to settle in the West Sumatra area so that the culture used dominates Minangkabau culture (Pangulu et al., 2022).

This is in accordance with the Minangkabau custom that it is the husband who comes to the wife's family and lives with them. It was found that 10 couples were dominated by the wife's wishes, 7 couples were dominated by their husbands, while the other 6 couples both agreed to fulfill their wishes. This shows that the majority of Minangkabau women have husbands who succumb to wife domination. A total of 13 couples use the Minangkabau language in their daily household, 5 couples use the husband's regional language and 5 other couples use Indonesian. This shows that Minangkabau women dominate and husbands succumb to using wife's language. In terms of parenting, 18 couples applied the culture from the wife's side, namely Minangkabau culture, 4 couples applied the culture from the husband's area and 1 couple chose to use the culture from both parties.

Marriage is not only limited to a relationship that is continuity between husband and wife but also involves families from each party with different ethnicities, cultures and backgrounds. Although wife culture from Minangkabau dominates marriage, Friska (Friska Berliana Pakpahan, 2013) reveals that in order to maintain family harmony and to prevent conflict, some women tend to be careful when communicating and choose to remain silent. Because for them passive attitude is considered wiser than causing friction. Sri (Hidayati, 2017) said that in terms of cultural adjustment in a marriage, women have better abilities than men. Both husband and wife still have to adjust to each other's culture. However, Santa (Lorita Simamora, 2017) argues that there is a unique relationship in inter-ethnic marriages because each party forces itself to accept patterns and styles of communication, dialect, language, including communication behavior to perpetuate their marriage. As is the case with marriages between Minangkabau women and men from other ethnicities, in the end Minangkabau culture from the wife's side is more dominantly applied in the household (Anisa et al., 2021).

The key in cross-cultural marriage is the ability to adjust to a partner, here lies the important role of communication. Cross-cultural marriages require adaptation to each other's characters and cultural backgrounds. The use of language in communication between partners becomes very important. The differences in values and norms brought by each party in a cross-cultural marriage require a long discussion for the unity of their vision and mission in building a family (Kato, 1978). This of course will affect the decisions they will make regarding the future of their children. The differences that exist in cross-cultural marriages have the potential for conflict that can affect a marital relationship.

However, this really depends on how cross-cultural marriage couples react to it. Communication and interaction are two things that are interrelated and influential in the life of a household, especially for couples with very different cultural backgrounds. (Benazir Bona Pratamawaty, 2017).

Conclusion

The ability of Minangkabau women to maintain their marriages is inseparable from Minangkabau culture, namely the matrilineal system. This system requires Minangkabau women to be independent, strong, strong, and elegant as the main figure in the household who takes care of all their daily needs. In fact, Minangkabau women are not only able to maintain marriages of different ethnicities but are also able to exert influence. Out of 23 Minangkabau women who are married to other ethnicities, couples who choose to live and apply their wife's local culture are more dominant than couples who live in their husbands' areas.

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