THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL

GENDER RELATIONS AND NETWORKS IN A WEST SUMATRAN MINANGKABAU VILLAGE

being a Thesis submitted for the Degree of PhD

in the University of Hull

by

Carol Elizabeth Davis, BA (Hons)

July 1994

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study was financed by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). My fieldwork in Indonesia was sponsored by *Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia* (LIPI). A grant from Erasmus enabled me to undertake three months' library research in the Netherlands.

I am indebted to my supervisor, Mr Lewis Hill, in the Centre for South-East Asian Studies, for his constant support before, during, and following my fieldwork and for the many hours he has set aside to read my work. My thesis has benefitted immensely from our frequent and lengthy discussions, which I have greatly enjoyed and valued. His confidence in my ability has been one of the motivating forces throughout my academic life at the University of Hull. My thanks also to Professor Sandra Wallman and Dr David Booth of the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology, for their support.

During my visit to the Netherlands, I was able to discuss my research proposal with several academics: Dr Franz and Dr Keebet von Benda-Beckmann, Professor Reimar Schefold, Dr Jur van Goor, Dr Elsbeth Locher-Scholten, Dr Karen Slaats, Jet Bakels, Magdia Villareal, and Dr Janet Rodenburg and members of the Working Group on Indonesian Women (WIVS) at the University of Leiden. The encouraging and stimulating discussions with them all helped me to consolidate my research objectives.

My fieldwork could not have been undertaken without the support of my academic sponsor in Indonesia, Professor Abdul Aziz Saleh of *Universitas* Andalas in Padang. I am particularly grateful to him, his wife, Ibu Saleh, and his family for inviting me to stay with them on arrival in Sumatra and on occasional visits during my fieldwork. As an inexperienced researcher when I first arrived, my adjustment to a different culture and to new experiences was facilitated through their kindness and concern. My thanks also to the staff of *Pusat Dokumentasi dan Informasi Kebudayaan Minangkabau* for their enthusiasm and their efforts to further my awareness of Minangkabau culture.

The inhabitants of Salimpaung, their relations in Pekanbaru and the market traders in *Balai Jumat* are too many to name individually but a special mention should be made to a few. Amak Murni, with whom I lived for ten months welcomed me in to her home and very soon made me feel like one of the family. Special thanks must go to her, her mother, Nenek Jariah, her sister Adang Upik and her husband Pak Adang, her brother, Mamak Sudirman, and other members of her family, especially Etek Rosmi and her daughter, Ia, with whom I established a strong relationship and, I hope, a lasting friendship. My thanks also to Lindah, Amak Mariaman, Kakak Ita and Abang Saipul, Amak Suma, Etek Ramlah, Kakak Dai, Abang Buyung, Kakak Yanti, Abang Edi, Kakak Nen and Kakak Rahmah. I feel privileged to have been a part of Amak's family and a member of the Salimpaung community. Although my stay was only short, my memories will remain with me for many years to come.

Returning from fieldwork necessitated a re-adjustment to Western life which, at times, proved difficult. The understanding and support from family and friends helped enormously. Since my return from fieldwork, I have lived with Su, Jon, Ben and Sam Gowdey. Not only have they given me unrelenting encouragement and support towards the final production of this thesis - loaning their computers, offering advice and assistance with maps, photographs and kinship charts (not to mention calmly dealing with last minute hiccups!) - they have also treated me as a part of their family. Many hours have been spent reading and debating my

thesis with Su who has always managed to fire my enthusiasm at times when I felt I had nothing of import to record. The support I received from my sister, Pam Harris, and from Michelle Wood was also particularly significant - they helped me to believe in myself and in my ability to continue. My thanks also to Jackie Romoff, Roslyn Lynch and Angela Robinson.

Throughout my university life, I have been blessed with strong support from my family, in particular my mother, Margaret Davis. Her selfless attitude towards my studies, her unfailing belief in my ability, her interest in my research and her willingness to spend hours reading and discussing my thesis, have given me both direction and motivation to carry on, at times when that seemed impossible. It is to her that I owe the greatest personal debt.

GENDER RELATIONS AND NETWORKS IN A WEST SUMATRAN MINANGKABAU VILLAGE

CONTENTS **Page**

Acknowledgements i

List of Maps ix

List of Tables ix

List of Kinship Charts x

List of Figures x

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION 1

The Male-centred Classic Model of Matriliny and its Primacy in Minangkabau Analyses 2

Thesis Objective 4

Network Analysis 5

Network Analysis and the Female Perspective 5

A Cautionary Note 6

Methodology 7

Weaknesses in Methodology 18

The Presentation 21

CHAPTER 2: GENDER RELATIONS AND NETWORK ANALYSIS

Introduction 25

The Anthropology of Gender

A Brief History 26

Postmodernism and Feminist Anthropology 28

Gender in South-East Asia 29

An Introduction to the Anthropology of Minangkabau Gender 30

The Male-centred Model of Matrilineal Kinship and the Feminist Challenge

The Classic Model of Matriliny 32

Minangkabau Kinship 36

The Focus on Male-male Relations and its Effects on Minangkabau Data 38

An Alternative Model of Matriliny 42

Summary 51

Network Analysis 51

Women's Networks 62

Women and Kinship Networks 64

Women and Residential Networks 65

Women and Occupational Networks 65

Minangkabau Networks 66

Summary 70

CHAPTER 3: SALIMPAUNG: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC SKETCH

Introduction 72

The Village of Salimpaung

Salimpaung as a Part of West Sumatra 72

Nagari Salimpaung 73

Daily Life in Salimpaung 79

A Typical Day in Salimpaung 81

Greetings 84

Agriculture in Salimpaung 86

Minangkabau Social Organisation

Introductory Comments 94

Minangkabau Adat 95

Matrilineal Descent Groups 98

Ancestral Property 101

The Minangkabau Life Cycle

Childhood 106

Marriage 109

Adulthood 112

Summary 116

CHAPTER 4: NETWORKS, EXCHANGES AND LIFE CYCLE RITUALS

Introduction 117

Minangkabau Life Cycle Rituals 119

Marriage 120

Batimbang Tando 121

Baralek 127

Manjapuik Marapulai 136

Manampuh 141

Mantan Pamili 143

Manjalang 145

Other Visits between the Two Families 145

Pregnancy, Birth and Childhood 146

Tujuh Bulan 146

Maliek Anak 149

Mambadak Anak 150

Ikah 150

Jemput Anak 150

Sunat Rasul 150

Khataman Al-Quran 151

Death 151

Manjanguak 153

Mandoa 154

Food Exchanges and the Religious Calendar 155

Bulan Puasa 155

Hari Raya Haji 156

Analysis 157

Marriage as an Alliance Between Two Descent Groups 158

Mutual Help in Consanguineal and Affinal Networks 162

Consanguineal and Affinal Relations: Participants in Life Cycle Celebrations 168

Food Symbolism 172

Food, Hospitality, Cultural Etiquette and Communication 172

Food as an Expression of Trust 175

Food and Adat 177

Food, the Life Cycle and Networks 177

Food as a Symbol of Kinship Ties 179

Gift Exchange and the Principle of Reciprocity 181

Female and Male Actors and Gender Interaction 186

Summary 190

CHAPTER 5: MINANGKABAU MARKET NETWORKS

Introduction 194

The Market as an Area of Study 195

Previous Studies on Markets 195

The Minangkabau Market

The Historical Dimension 199

The Contemporary Context 201

***Balai Jumat* (Salimpaung's Friday Market):**

Salimpaung and the Local Market Cycle 204

Salimpaung Market: Its History and Organisation 206

The Typical Market Day 210

Actors in the Market 212

Regular Traders 212

Profile of the Regular Trader 216

Following the Market Cycle 219

Ad hoc Traders 221

Export Traders 222

Customers 224

The Socialisers 225

Communication Networks and Trade

Interaction between Traders 226

Interaction between Traders and Suppliers 227

Interaction between Traders and Customers 230

Trading as a Way of Life 234

The Information Network: The Trader's Perspective 236

Interaction between Customers 238

Gender Interaction in the Marketplace 245

Summary: Markets and Communication Networks 247

CHAPTER 6: MIGRATION AND NETWORKS

Introduction 252

The Incidence of Minangkabau Migration 254

Migrants' Destinations 255

Male Migrant Occupations 257

Female Migrant Occupations 258

Reasons for Migration 259

The Consequences of Migration 261

Minangkabau Migrant Associations 265

Gebu Minang 268

Salimpaung Migrants

Life in the Migrant Area 269

Outmigration from Salimpaung 270

Communication between Rantau and Village 278

Ira's Network 282

Migration and Network Analysis 290

Conclusion 296

CHAPTER 7: GENDERED NETWORKS IN MINANGKABAU

Introduction 298

The Gendered Perspective and Contemporary Minangkabau Studies 300

Network Analysis 308

Gendered Networks 314

The Minangkabau Woman 315

Male and Female Roles 317

Complementarity 324

Gendered Networks and the Minangkabau: Future Research 326

GLOSSARY 328

BIBLIOGRAPHY 333

LIST OF MAPS

Map		Page
1	Indonesia	xi
2	Sumatra	xii
3	Salimpaung and the Padang Highlands	xiii
4	Salimpaung and the Local Market Circuit	205

LIST OF TABLES

Table		
2.1	Occupations of Women (married and unmarried) Residents of Limo Suku	39
2.2	Occupations of Women (married and unmarried) Residents of Salimpaung	40
5.1	Percentage of Traders by Gender and Commodity	213
5.2	Number and Percentage of Traders according to the Number of Years they have been Trading in Salimpaung Market	218
5.3	Percentage of Traders by Number of Times they Trade per Week	219
5.4	Number and Percentage of Salimpaung Traders who Follow the Local Market Cycle	220
5.5	Number and Percentage of Female Customers by Average Number of Market Visits per Week	225
6.1	Age at First Migration by Gender	272
6.2	Migrants' Occupations by Gender	273
6.3	Salimpaung Migrants' Destinations	274
6.4	Frequency of Migrants' Visit Home	277
6.5	Frequency of Mothers' Visits to the *Rantau*	278

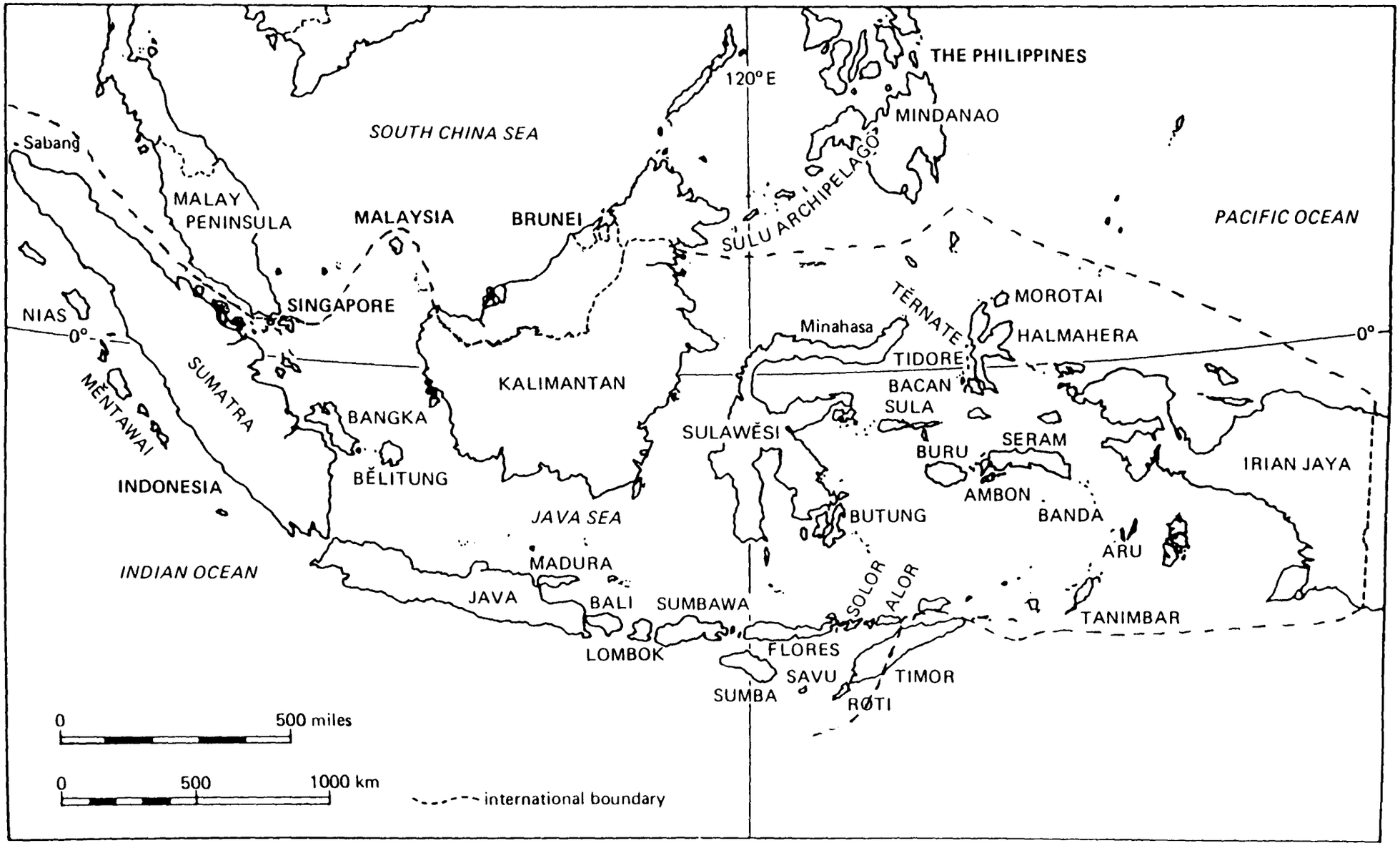
LIST OF KINSHIP CHARTS

Chart		Page
4.1	Participants in the Preparations for the *Batimbang Tando*	122
4.2	Female Helpers during the Female *Batimbang Tando* Rituals	125
4.3	Helpers in the Early Preparations for the *Baralek*	128
4.4	Additional Principal Female Helpers in the Later Preparations for the *Baralek*	131
4.5	Kinship Relationship between Epa and her *Dayang-dayang*	133
4.6	Principal Female Actors in the *Manjapuik Marapulai* Ceremony	137
4.7	Kinship Relationship between the Men who ate the Communal Meal with Buyung	142
4.8	Women who *Mantan Pamili*	144
4.9	Women involved in the *Tujuh Bulan* Ritual	148
4.10	Relationship between Nenek Mariam and 'my' Adoptive Lineage	152
6.1	Ira and her Kin in Pekanbaru	284

LIST OF FIGURES

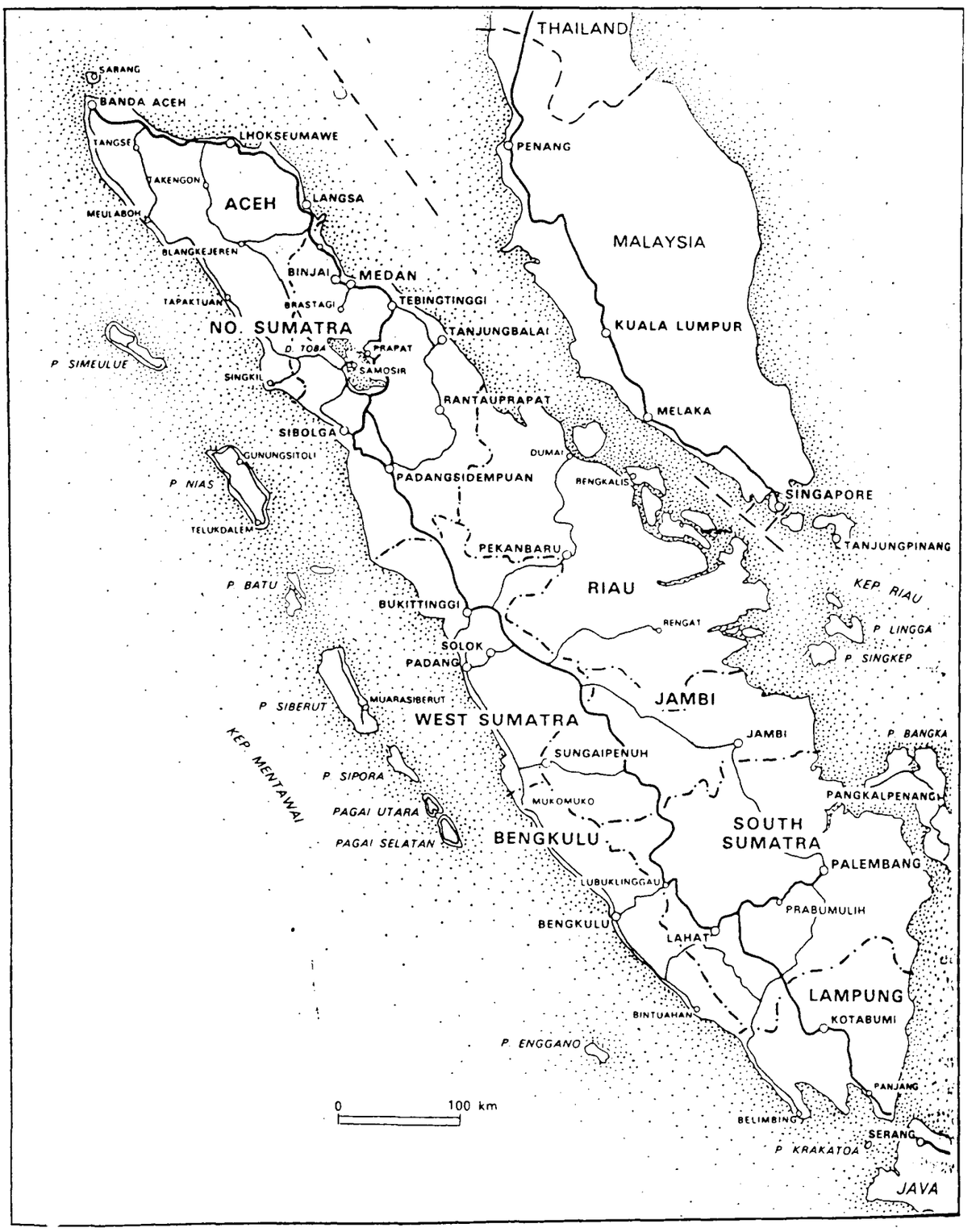
Figure		
6.1	Ira's Network	294

Map 1: Indonesia



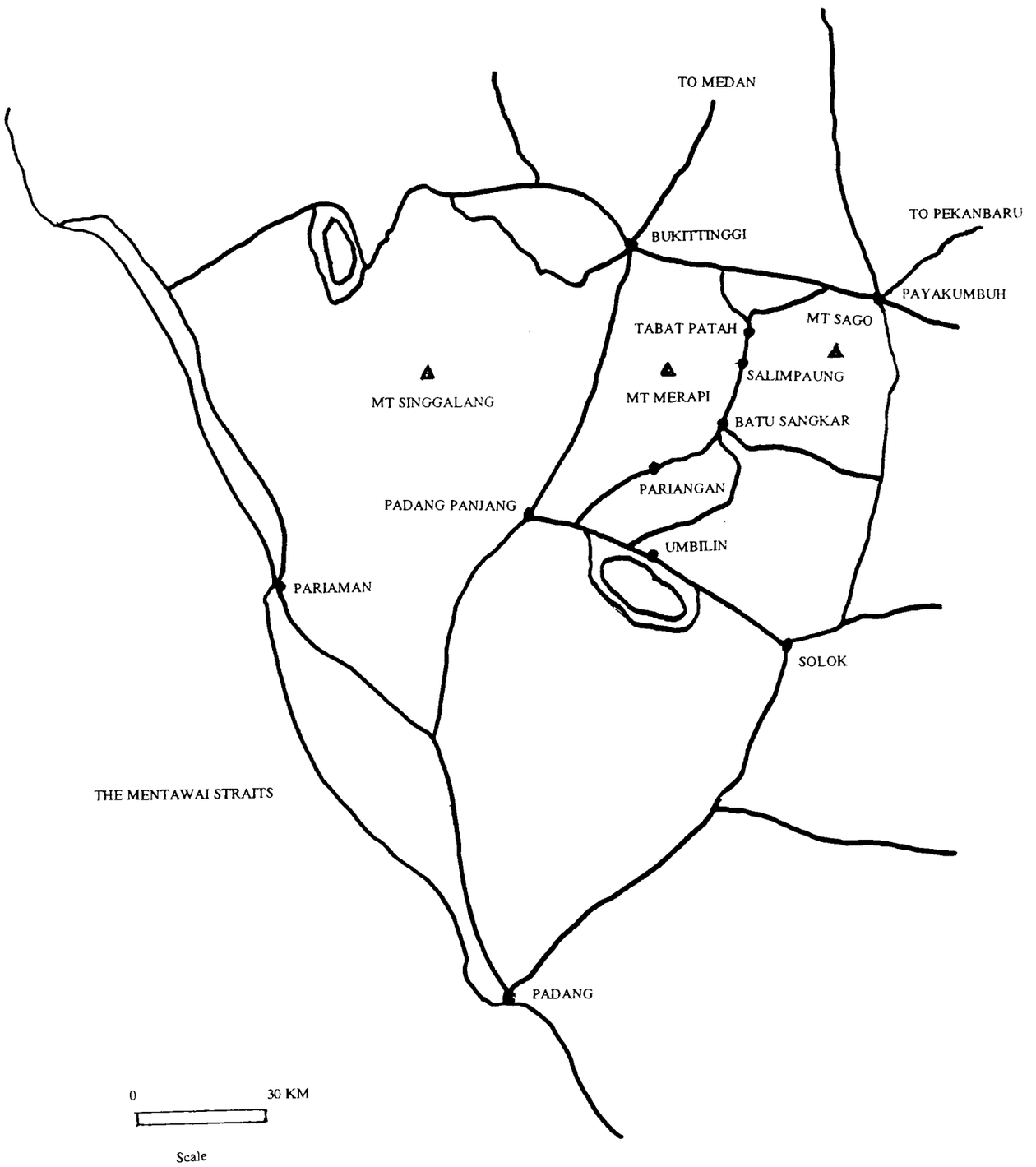
Source: Ricklefs 1993:352

Map 2: Sumatra



Source: Dalton 1988:460

Map 3: Salimpaung and the Padang Highlands





Mount Merapi features in many Minangkabau origin stories and dominates Salimpaung's Western horizon. It is seen here during one of its frequent eruptions

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The Minangkabau, located in the Indonesian province of West Sumatra (see Maps 1 and 2), have been at the centre of many studies in the social sciences. This has led one anthropologist to argue that this society has become "one of the most intensively worked, or even overworked ethnographically" (Clammer 1981:495). This negative comment should not discourage further research, particularly in the light of the great variations in this society and in the theoretical advances in anthropology which have necessitated a re-evaluation of previous data.

Several years after Clammer's review Josselin de Jong, a respected scholar of Minangkabau society, discussed the importance of Minangkabau studies to Indonesian and general anthropology. He offered the following commentary:

> a community which for scores of years has been open to change -- or rather, which has been in the vanguard of economic and social change -- but which has not fallen into the trap of the false dichotomy between, on the one hand, change, modernization, progress, ... and, on the other, tradition, backwardness, feudalism, et cetera. The very fact that it has not unsuccessfully achieved an integration of the new and the traditional, and is aware of the values of both, makes it interesting and important. (1985:19)

As one of the world's largest matrilineal societies, academic interest has focused on its social system within the modern world. Two areas have received particular attention. One is concerned with the apparent contradiction between Minangkabau adherence to both matrilineal *adat* (custom)[1] and patrilineal Islam. The other examines whether matriliny is in decline due to external influences and especially in the context of the Minangkabau's established tradition of migration (F and K von Benda-Beckmann 1988, Gough 1961, Joustra 1920, Kahn 1976,

---

1 The meaning of Minangkabau *adat* is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3.

1980b, Kato 1982, Maretin 1961, Schrieke 1966, Taufik Abdullah 1966, Willinck 1909).

In recent years, and following the growth of feminist anthropology, the matriliny debate has entered a new stage, with a focus on the female perspective often missing from previous accounts. At an empirical level, the need to consider women as well as men has an impact on the collection and interpretation of data on Minangkabau society. At a theoretical level, questions are raised on the accuracy of the 'constant' features put forward in the classic model of matriliny and attention is drawn to the important contribution feminist anthropology has made in the social sciences.

The Male-centred Classic Model of Matriliny and its Primacy in Minangkabau Analyses

The classic and widely used model of matriliny comprises the following elements: first, descent is reckoned through the mother from a common female ancestor; second, inheritance is passed from the mother's brother to the sister's son; third, the brother must therefore have authority over his sisters and their children; fourth, the brother takes an active part in the marriage negotiations between his sister and a prospective husband as the children from the marital union provide the future generations of the brother's matrilineage; finally, the husband should not come between his wife and her brother as this could endanger the bonds between the mother's brother and the sister's son. The interests of matrilineal kinship should always take precedence over concern for the marriage, otherwise the perpetuation of the matrilineage could be threatened (Lewis 1976:269). This model should be seen in the context of Schneider (1961) who had suggested a number of constant features of unilineal descent groups. These are that women are responsible for the care of children; that men exercise authority over women and children in both descent and domestic groups and that

descent group exogamy is practised (1961:6). Schneider's theoretical study of matrilineal principles is therefore based on a comparison with patriliny rather than examining matrilineal features in their own right. His ideas are effectively absorbed into Lewis' model.

The classic model has commonly been employed in studies of Minangkabau matriliny. The tendency has been to focus on male-male relations between the *mamak* (mother's brother) and the *kemanakan* (sister's children), the latter often discussed as if only male children are important. It has been assumed that men have control over the matrilineal extended family, the lineage and the village community through the positions of the *mamak*, the *penghulu* (male leader of a lineage) and the clan chiefs respectively. The brother's responsibility for the material wellbeing of his sister and her children lead to a portrayal of the woman as dependent rather than socially and economically active and, in some cases, autonomous. The overriding consequence is an emphasis on men's activities (especially migration, considered to be primarily a male trait).

In the 1970s, Nancy Tanner (1971, 1974), a pioneer in the study of Minangkabau gender relations, demonstrated the need to consider the relationship between matriliny and female power and authority. Her early work, using matrifocality as the underlying schema, re-interprets some of the previous assumptions made concerning Minangkabau society. In a later article, co-authored with Lyn Thomas (1985), she draws on her extensive ethnographic data to offer new insights into the wider theoretical debate on matrilineal principles. Concurrently, Joanne Prindiville (1985) proposed a re-evaluation of the classic model of matriliny to incorporate the female perspective. She argues that:

> To provide a comprehensive image of the matrilineal structure we must include not only male-male relations and male-female relations seen from a male perspective, but also female-female relations and female-male relations. This project involves first,

> more thoroughly specifying the possible female roles within the structure, and second, exploring the nature of female relations between units ... Putting together the complete picture including both males and females as social actors would require analyzing more closely the mother-in-law/son-in-law, mother/son, and father/daughter relations as well as reinterpreting the brother/sister relation. (1985:33-34)

The ideas in this thesis have been formulated following a consideration of the critique of the classic model of matriliny and the alternative suggestions put forward by feminist writers.

Thesis Objective

This thesis aims to examine female-female relations and female-male relations within the context of one Minangkabau village. Although the primary focus is on the networks of Minangkabau women's social, economic and ritual life, it is intended that the network concept is used as an analytical tool to consider the interactions both between women and between women and men. Such an analysis also allows for an exploration into how female and male roles are both distinct and overlapping.

Within the context of social organisation, network analysis facilitates an examination of women's roles as builders of alliances and therefore mediators between families. Such a study also highlights women's public and less noticeable, yet essential, activities during life cycle celebrations. From an economic and social standpoint, women's networks provide their own households - and perhaps indirectly the whole community - with a safety net in times of crisis by offering reciprocal support. In addition the network system acts as a vehicle for the regular transmission and receipt of information significant in their daily lives.

Network Analysis

The concept of the network and its relevance to the analysis of social relations was first developed by Barnes:

> Each person is, as it were, in touch with a number of other people, some of whom are directly in touch with each other and some of whom are not ... I find it convenient to talk of a social field of this kind as a *network*. The image I have is of a set of points some of which are joined by lines. The points of the image are people, or sometimes groups, and the lines indicate which people interact with each other. (1954:43)

Many anthropologists have used this concept to analyse social relations and communication between individuals (Bott 1957, rev ed 1971), to examine the ways in which norms and values operate within society (Epstein 1969) and to consider social relations between individuals or groups who find themselves in unfamiliar, often urban, settings (Clyde Mitchell 1969).

Network Analysis and the Female Perspective

In recent years, the concept of the network has been used to examine social relations between women, and between women and men. March and Taqqu (1986) argue that in order to understand the position and experiences of women in developing countries, the researcher must look beyond the narrow confines of the household or the family to other areas in which women are active and to extra-domestic and extra-familial relationships which shape women's lives. "Residual dogmas ordaining women's place to be in the home should not blind us to these additional sources of social, political, and economic energy" (March and Taqqu 1986:x).

Recognising these socio-economic networks presents new areas of discussion on authority and influence within the household unit, the descent group and the village. The focus is also drawn away from the concept of male control and from the public/domestic dichotomy in which women are depicted as passive beings dependent on their menfolk and moving only within the domestic sphere.

A Cautionary Note

These theoretical concerns are discussed in relation to my fieldwork site, its immediate surroundings, and various locations in the *rantau* (migrant area) made through my connections with villagers. It is intended that the data collection and analysis would contribute to our knowledge of Minangkabau gender relations. Nevertheless it is recognised that, up to a point, the exercise could not be replicated in another village and reach the same results. This is partly because of the personalised way of obtaining and interpreting data but also because of the range of variations which comprise the common Minangkabau whole. This diversity is manifested in the *adat* saying:

> *lain lubak, lain ikan*
> *lain padang, lain belalang*
> *lain nagari, lain adatnyo*
>
> different pool, different fish
> different field, different grasshopper
> different village, different *adat*

In terms of social organisation, economic resources, physical environment, climate and accessibility, differences between the regions constituting the Minangkabau homeland are readily apparent. This is evident even between neighbouring villages. Some areas for example are very fertile and can support a large population; other village economies rely on the production of handicrafts; alternatively many inhabitants may choose to migrate. There are differences in political structure: some villages adhere to the Koto-Piliang system, an autocratic style of government exercised by a small number of *suku* (matriclan) leaders, others to the Bodi-Caniago system which advocates democracy and equality between lineage heads.[2] There are also localised variations in dialect, architecture, customary dress and life cycle rituals.

---

[2] Prior to the emergence of the modern Indonesian state the village council had more authority. Now, its function is primarily to act as a medium between the government and the village.

Methodology

Fieldwork was conducted in West Sumatra from October 1991 to October 1992. Ten months were spent in Salimpaung, a village in the Minangkabau heartland of the Padang Highlands and *kabupaten* (regency) of Tanah Datar (See Map 3). My research was concentrated in Nan Sambilan, one part of Salimpaung village. Prior to fieldwork, I spent three months in the Netherlands, translating Dutch texts and discussing my ideas with Dutch academics. During this and the other remaining pre-fieldwork period, I developed several areas of interest within the general context of the study of gender relations. I hoped to explore these whilst in the field. Firstly, I wanted to learn more about agricultural practices; in particular whether the introduction of new technology (if indeed there had been any) had led to any changes in the social structure and in gender relations within the village. Secondly, my library research led me to believe that migration had been portrayed as a male domain. Although recent statistics revealed that a growing number of women migrate, this phenomenon had not been studied in depth (Kato 1982, Murad 1980). I therefore wanted to examine the incidence of male and female migration, migrants' lives and the effects of migration on the people who remained in the village. Thirdly, I was interested in the socio-economic importance of markets in the local community and female and male roles therein. Finally, the South-East Asian region was fast becoming a tourist destination. The Indonesian government had instigated an advertising campaign to promote tourism, especially through "Visit Indonesia 1991". On a previous visit to one area of West Sumatra in 1989, I had been surprised by the volume of tourists. This had conflicted with my mental image of the region, based on recollections from personal contacts who had travelled through the province in the recent past. I therefore hoped to find out whether Minangkabau society, and gender relations in particular had been affected by this tourism.



My first encounter with Salimpaung: its border with neighbouring Rao Rao

The Minangkabau inhabit a vast area, 42,297 square kilometres, in Sumatra. In order to facilitate my attempts to find a suitable fieldwork location I had decided before I left Britain that I should concentrate my search in the Minangkabau heartland, an area of approximately 7,000 square kilometres.

With these research and geographical areas in mind, I began to look for a suitable fieldwork location. I decided the best way to approach this was to base myself in one of the three main towns in the heartland (Batu Sangkar, Bukittinggi and Payakumbuh) where buses to outlying regions were frequent. Each day I took a bus to a different rural area and at the destination, I began to walk between villages. As I entered each new village I would seek out the nearest coffee shop, have a drink and converse, in very basic Indonesian language, with any villagers who passed by. At one of these shops, I met Amak Murni, who later became my 'Indonesian mother'. She provided the initial pieces of data about the village of Salimpaung: agriculture played an important part in the local economy; the main crops included rice, peanuts, beans and chillies. There was a rice mill in the village which was used by most of the farmers in the surrounding area. This, I later discovered, together with the replacement of buffalo manure and volcanic ash with chemical fertilisers, and the introduction of new high yield varieties of rice, appeared to represent the local technological developments in agriculture. The village land was insufficient to support all the inhabitants; consequently many people migrated once they reached adulthood. Other villagers worked as traders in the local market circuit which included Salimpaung's weekly market.

On a subsequent visit to Amak Murni, I accompanied her to this local market. It was neither too large to be impersonal (the problem with the larger town markets I had initially considered studying) nor too small to exclude the sale of a wide range of commodities from foodstuffs to household goods and haberdashery.

Hence there was a range of income groups amongst traders. The market was well frequented by villagers (and, as I later discovered, outsiders). This seemed an ideal place for a feasible case study.

The only requisite from my initial research specification which did not seem to be available, was tourism. Although local tourist attractions are only a few kilometres from Salimpaung, the village did not appear to have been affected by the government's tourism promotion and I was told that I was the first Westerner to walk through the village. On my previous visit to West Sumatra, I had been based in Bukittinggi, a town about an hour's bus journey from Salimpaung. Observations then, and compared with those made during this later trip, suggest that Bukittinggi is a fast developing tourist centre. I decided against this location, however, as it did not facilitate the study of the other elements of my research proposal. On balance, and in comparison with the other villages I had visited, Salimpaung seemed to be an appropriate choice. Having sought permission from a number of villagers, local government officials and police, I moved to Salimpaung.

I lived with Amak Murni. Her mother, Nenek Jariah, alternated between Amak Murni's and her other daughter's houses. Our neighbours were close female kin: Amak Murni's sister and her husband (their children had grown up and left home), and Nenek Jariah's sister's daughter and her family (a teenage son and a seven year old daughter). Also nearby were other families of the same lineage who were constant callers at our home, as we were frequent visitors to theirs. Other lineage members from Amak Murni's clan lived close by, as well as the mill owner and his family. A successful businessman owning the mill and the village wood and paint store, he had bought some ancestral rice land from Amak Murni's clan in order to build a large and expensive house near the mill.

Amak Murni was a middle-aged, recent widow whose husband had been a lower rank civil servant. Her six children, aged between 33 and 19, had all migrated. She traded from a small shop borrowed from a relative, and sold a range of inexpensive goods from cigarettes and sweets to cooking oil and soap; the most expensive sale item was a packet of cigarettes. Her shop was popular with children en route home from school and with workers and visitors to the mill situated opposite her shop. Although she enjoyed a fairly steady business her cash flow did not allow her to purchase goods in bulk and necessitated her bi-weekly (and sometimes more frequent) visits to local markets. She always went to the Monday market at Tabat Patah and the Friday market at Salimpaung, and often to either Wednesday's Sungai Tarab or Thursday's Batu Sangkar markets. I regularly accompanied her on these trips and felt that this gave some legitimacy to my initial presence in the markets.

I became Amak's adopted daughter and, after an initial settling in period, felt that I was treated as part of her wider matrilineal group by the other members as well as those outside the clan. Amak and her immediate kin group became not only my closest friends and substitute family but also reliable and interested informants. Although they recognised I was ultimately only a temporary villager, I was nevertheless expected to fulfil the obligations of a female member of the matrilineal group: visiting sick relatives, helping older members of the group with small chores such as collecting water, and assisting in lineage members' life cycle celebrations (preparing food, informing kin and serving visitors) as well as attending these and other rituals of more distant kin. The data for the chapter on life cycle rituals and the networks surrounding them are therefore taken from the occasions when the matrilineage's female and male consanguines or affines were celebrating a new stage in their lives.

I spent the first few weeks concentrating on improving my Indonesian and learning the Minangkabau dialect as well as attempting to adjust to the constraints of a new and very different culture. I was treated, especially initially, as if I was a young unmarried Minangkabau woman and was advised not to socialise with young unmarried men without a chaperone. I encountered problems when I wanted to visit the nearby town to collect post or do other chores. It was rare for a young unmarried woman to leave the village unaccompanied and it was not altogether acceptable for me to do so. Although I tried hard to adapt to local customs, I felt it was important to retain some part of my identity and I continued to make these occasional trips. The Minangkabau are generally a tolerant people, with open minds and a willingness to consider alternative customs. Hence with time, and assured that my English mother would not disapprove, they accepted my trips away. Learning different manners and customs often proved to be a painful, highly frustrating and embarrassing process but in retrospect it helped me to understand the ways in which children are socialised into the Minangkabau way of life. As time went by, I gradually became aware of the meanings behind certain gestures or behaviour.

I felt the need to devote time and considerable effort to the task of integrating into the culture and establishing myself, as much as was reasonally practicable, as a member of the local community. In this way I hoped that reciprocal feelings of trust could be established with at least some of the inhabitants of Salimpaung. From this foundation, I began to develop deeper relationships with a number of people, some of whom later became key informants.

While my language ability was still weak, I engaged in the kind of participant observation activities which need a minimal understanding of the language. As a means of getting a 'feel' for the villagers' way of life, I worked in the rice fields, helping to transplant rice seedlings to the main field, to check the water

supply in the early stages of rice production, to apply fertiliser to the rice plants and to harvest. I also helped in the harvest of peanut and chilli crops and visited the jungled outskirts of the village to collect bananas and coffee.

I began to visit Salimpaung and nearby Tabat Patah markets every market day to observe activities and to talk to traders and customers. I hoped that this informal involvement would allow me some degree of integration and would facilitate my acceptance by actors in the marketplace when I wished to begin more detailed and structured fieldwork. Two months after my arrival in Salimpaung, I began to make a map of the market based on the number and gender of traders, their commodities and the type of selling unit they occupied. By this time, and for the rest of my fieldwork, I tended to spend most of the day at the market. I also made occasional visits to the other markets in the local circuit.

The following month, I conducted a survey of 224 traders (all the traders in the market except for a small proportion who refused to participate). I began with a small pilot study and, having revised some of the questions and shortened the length of the questionnaire, then undertook the full-scale survey over a period of several weeks. The survey was designed to collect basic data on trading activities such as the other markets traders frequented, the length of time they had been trading in Salimpaung, and their other economic activities, if appropriate.

This was followed by a survey of customers in the market, again conducted over several weeks, based on random selection although within a strict gender division. Having made an approximate headcount of customers at various times of the day on a number of separate occasions, it became clear that women constituted by far the largest group of customers on an average ratio of 93% female to 7% male. This is reflected in the gender base of interviews (70 female

and 7 male: 90.9% female and 9.1% male). The purpose of these interviews was to obtain data on the customers' place of residence, whether they frequented the market every week and their perceptions of the market in terms of its role in the community.

From July to September 1992, further interviews were conducted with twelve of the traders carefully selected on the basis of the commodity they sold, the length of time they had traded in the market and the number of times they traded per week. These interviews were designed to collect in-depth data on the lives of different types of traders and on their perceptions of the market, their other economic activities and the gender division of labour within their household. During this time, I also visited markets in Batu Sangkar and Bukittinggi which supply Salimpaung market. Although no in-depth interviews were conducted, I often stopped to converse with traders there, on an informal basis.

In order to encompass all actors within the market, an in-depth interview was conducted with a trader who buys agricultural produce in the local markets and exports them to other provinces. She was representative of the small group of such traders operating from Salimpaung. An interview with Salimpaung's *penghulu pasar* (senior market official) was also undertaken in order to obtain data concerning the market's history and basic working practices. Finally, in late September, in order to ascertain the changes in the market's constitution over an eight month period, a new map was made showing the number and gender of traders, their commodities and their selling unit.

In April 1992 I began to make a map of *Desa*[3] Nan Sambilan in order to further familiarise myself with the areas of the village and the houses and agricultural land within its confines. This exercise was specifically designed as preparation for a census of 70 households (22% of the total), randomly selected from different parts of the village which I undertook from May to August 1992. The occupations of these householders included civil servants and teachers, farmers and traders. Their dwellings reflected very different incomes and lifestyles. Some lived in concrete built houses and had an electricity supply, a well, a few pieces of furniture and luxuries such as a radio and television. At the other end of the scale were those living in wooden houses, badly in need of repair with no electricity, no well, no furniture and no luxuries. Data collection included the number of people in the household and their relationship to each other, the name of their *suku* (clan) and name of their *penghulu* thereby establishing how different nearby households might be related. Additionally I asked for each household member's date of birth, level of education, occupation, date of marriage, and number of children. Progress was slow and I was only ever able to complete a few surveys each day. This was mainly due to respondents' eagerness to find out about me and life in Britain. Although this proved to be exhausting and at times frustrating, I tried to turn this repetitive exercise into an exchange of information and to acquire more data about respondents' own lives and perceptions.

These respondents were then asked to participate in two further surveys, one on agricultural practices, the other on migration. The aim of the agricultural survey was to collect basic data on the amount of land used by the household, the decision-making process regarding agricultural activities (such as who decided

---

3 The word desa, from an administrative point of view can be translated as sub-village. Within the context of Minangkabau *adat*, the *nagari* is the term for village. In order to be regarded as a *nagari*, the settlement must have a council hall, mosque, road and bathing place (Anwar Khaidir 1976).

the type of crop to be planted), and the person responsible for certain key tasks (planting and harvesting). Several questions were designed to find out about the help the respondent received and whether that was in the form of wage labour or reciprocal assistance from family and friends. Other questions focused on whether the crop was for consumption or sale, and the average number of hours per day spent in the fields. There were also sections on the type of fuel used for cooking and the source of the household's water supply.

The other survey concentrated on the migration practices of the respondents, their parents, their siblings and their children. Data on migrants' destinations, age at migration, occupation and marital status were collected. Questions were used to ascertain whether networks based on kinship, friendship or village origin were of importance either when the respondents or their children lived in the *rantau*, or when they had initially arrived. Information on more formal Minangkabau migrant associations were also obtained including the respondent's membership of such an association, its function, and how often participants met. Further questions explored the links maintained between the *rantau* and the home village either formally through the village office or mosque, or between families by means of visits, letters and remittances. After an initial trial, the questions on remittances were dropped as respondents seemed reluctant to offer specific information on the money they received from their migrant children. In the context of informal discussion, however, which frequently occurred following the survey's completion, they were often more willing to mention that their children sometimes (or regularly) sent them money.

With the exception of three households, the oldest female member of the household answered the questions, sometimes aided by other family members. Even when her husband or brother was present, it was agreed amongst themselves that the woman should be the main respondent. Some of the men,

when I directed my questions to both them and the senior woman, commented that I should ask their wife. 18 households (25.7% of the total) were female-headed; either the woman was a widow or divorcee, or the husband was on migration.

I supplemented the survey data on migration and the networks between the village and the migrant area with informal discussions with migrants as and when they returned home. This was not difficult to do as I seemed to be amongst the migrants' first calls; they clearly found it unusual that a British woman would want to live in and study their home village and they were curious to find out more about this strange phenomenon. I therefore had the opportunity to ask them about their lives and perceptions as migrants and their links with the home village.

In addition I made regular visits to Padang (the West Sumatran capital), 120 kilometres distant, where many Salimpaung villagers migrate. I also undertook two separate trips to Pekanbaru, an important migrant destination in the neighbouring province of Riau, some 230 kilometres from Salimpaung. The first occasion was primarily to attend the wedding of a male member of "my" adoptive matrilineage and the second trip to celebrate "my" brother's wife's second pregnancy. Each time I accompanied Amak Murni and stayed with her daughter and her family. During most of this period I was involved in helping with the preparations for these celebrations but I also had time to visit various members of the matrilineage whom Amak Murni always went to see on her trips to Pekanbaru. From this, I was able to observe the migrants' lifestyles, the traditions they continued, and to ask them about their perceptions as migrants and whether they felt they retained their cultural identity in the urban setting.

In addition to these methods of obtaining data, I also consulted library sources on regular visits to the Documentation and Information Centre for Minangkabau Culture (*Pusat Dokumentasi dan Informasi Kebudayaan Minangkabau*) in Padang Panjang which has a plethora of Indonesian articles and journals on the Minangkabau. Although newspapers were difficult to obtain in the village, I often purchased a local newspaper (*Singgalang*) on my visits to town in order to keep abreast of any important socio-economic developments within the region.

During my year's fieldwork, I was obliged to write quarterly reports in Indonesian to *Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia* (LIPI) - The Indonesian Institute of Sciences - which gave my research official status. I was able to discuss my data on a regular basis with people at the Documentation Centre in Padang Panjang as well as with my academic sponsor and members of his staff at Andalas University in Padang. In a more formal context, I was asked to present a seminar in Indonesian on my research findings to the Department of Education and Culture at Andalas University in June 1992. Collectively, these reports helped me to direct and consolidate my research intentions.

Weaknesses in Methodology

Amak Murni's household comprised women only; I was aware this would make it more difficult to observe gender relations in the household on a daily basis. I weighed this against the obvious benefits of living with her: I felt comfortable in her company, she had a shop located on the main road and close to the mill, giving me easy access to many villagers. I was also confident that I would be able to observe household gender relations elsewhere. Indeed I became a frequent visitor to nearby families who had a mix of female and male residents. Furthermore Amak Murni's household was not untypical: there were a significant number of female-headed and several female-only households in the village.

It could be suggested that as I was treated like a Minangkabau woman, I engaged only in female activities and consequently interacted mainly with women. It is the case that overall I did spend more time with women but this did not mean I had no contact with men. I did not encounter the problems experienced by Western men attempting to speak to Muslim women (cf Errington 1984:xiii). Although I had to be careful about speaking alone to unmarried men, if I conversed with a group of young men or if I was with other (especially older) women, this was acceptable. In my attempts at farming, I was involved only in the female tasks. I did not try to plough the land (a male task) although I did observe men at this activity and chatted to them while they worked. Within the market I regularly talked to both male and female traders. Although the majority of traders and customers are women, and this is reflected in my data collection, I was careful to ensure a gender balance in my in-depth interviews with traders. For the preparations and attendance at life cycle rituals, I was part of the female workgroup. I was not invited to participate in male activities (such as repairing the house) although they found it acceptable for me to watch and to join in their conversations (if these were of an informal nature). I did not participate in the male part of the formal rituals themselves as women remain 'behind the scenes'. Nevertheless these rituals are not regarded as secret and therefore the men were happy for me (and any other women) to openly observe proceedings. I suspect that it may not be so easy for a male researcher to watch the exclusively female parts of the ritual as men are neither visible nor behind the scenes during these events.

Although my key informants were mostly women, I had several male informants to whom I turned, especially from my adoptive family. The kin group's senior *mamak* was one of my principal male informants and in the early stages helped me in my clumsy attempts to be a 'good' Minangkabau, pointing out with diplomacy my *faux pas*, and explaining *adat* to me. I also spent time talking

with other *mamak*, with my *penghulu* (with whom I also conducted a formal interview on his role within the kin group) and with my older and younger brothers. In addition one male farmer from a neighbouring village was especially keen to improve his English language. I taught him English and, in return, he offered his perceptions on many issues. I also spent a couple of hours at various times each day in Amak's shop (often serving while she was busy with other chores). I came to realise that men and women generally tended to frequent the shop at different times although sometimes these periods would overlap. I chatted with individual male and female customers, and listened and often joined in their group conversations.

Conscious of the need to have a well-rounded view of Minangkabau life, I developed relationships with women from different economic backgrounds and ages. Although my main informants were within the family group, I made strong friendships with a number of female traders in the market who covered the spectrum of young and old, better-off and poor. One afternoon a week was set aside to teach English to a group of teenage girls from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds. They helped me understand the young woman's perspective on life. I also developed a firm friendship with an unmarried woman of similar age to me who lived in Pekanbaru but was a frequent visitor to Salimpaung. Lindah was born and brought up outside the village, had been to University in Pekanbaru and was, at the time I first met her, working in a relative's shop there. Her father had died the previous year and her mother had moved back to her natal village of Salimpaung together with Lindah's two youngest siblings. We often exchanged views and pieces of news concerning our lives during her trips to Salimpaung and my visits to Pekanbaru.

One area not covered in any of the surveys was household income. Respondents - and informants in general - appeared to be very suspicious if I asked about

income and financial resources. I decided that for the sake of good relations, and respecting their privacy, I would refrain from asking such questions unless my informant seemed happy to discuss this informally. I recognise that this may be regarded as a potential weakness of the thesis but believe that this can be balanced against the focus on other areas which also directly impinge on the issue of gender relations.

One final remark needs to be made relating to the relationship between the analytical tool used in this thesis, namely network analysis, and the techniques of data collection. Network analysis was not an approach I encountered until my return from fieldwork. I did not therefore go to my field site with ideas and hypotheses on networks which I wanted to prove or disprove. I did make several hypotheses relating to the notion of networks soon after entering the field but this had been influenced by my early observations rather than by any conscious knowledge of network analysis. In an article on network analysis, Clyde Mitchell (1969) considers the different methods of collecting data on networks including interviews and participant and non-participant observation. He notes that interviews can be disadvantageous as the fieldworker only sees the network characteristics from the respondent's viewpoint and the possibility of evaluating the quality of these characteristics becomes unlikely. He concludes that observation over time is the best method as this enables an evaluation to be made. From the perspective of my own data collection, I regard the surveys as the foundation of my data; observations, participation and informal discussions were then utilised to build on this.

The Presentation

The next chapter examines some of the theoretical issues applicable to data in the remainder of the thesis. I focus initially on the classic model of matriliny and argue that it has led to a male-biased interpretation of society. I give examples

of this by examining studies on the Minangkabau which have used this model. I then consider an alternative model incorporating the female perspective, arguing that this model fosters a more balanced view of society by taking account of both men and women. Following on from this debate, I consider how the network concept can be used as an analytical tool to expand our knowledge and understanding of gender relations generally, and specifically with regard to the Minangkabau. I conclude this chapter by introducing some of the networks in Salimpaung and discuss how the network concept is directly applied to my research data.

The objective of Chapter 3 is to provide an ethnographic background to the remaining chapters. It is divided into two main sections. The first offers a general introduction to West Sumatra and to Salimpaung and gives an account of daily life there. The second part of the chapter considers Minangkabau (and specifically Salimpaung) social organisation. This includes a description of key stages in the life cycle intended to contextualise data in Chapter 4.

This thesis is concerned with networks operating within Salimpaung, and between the village and the outside world. To this end, Chapter 4 considers inter- and intra-village networks within a limited geographical location. Chapter 5 examines networks based on commercial activities which take place not only within one local market circuit but also within other geographical regions mainly within West Sumatra. Chapter 6 takes this geographical idea one stage further to include networks linking the village with cities in other Indonesian provinces.

Chapter 4 analyses networks apparent during life cycle rituals. Following a descriptive account of these rituals, the analysis considers the ways these networks can be identified and the criterion for membership. In this regard, attention is centred on the assistance offered during preparations and members'

participation in rituals. The symbolic importance of food, gift exchange and reciprocity in relation to the visible expression of networks are also analysed. I argue that these rituals are ideal for the analysis of gender interaction especially in relation to the distinct and overlapping roles women and men have on these occasions.

Chapter 5 explores the significance of networks emanating from commercial activities in the local market circuit. These networks differ from those discussed in the previous chapter not least because they are neither restricted to village boundaries nor based solely on kinship or residence. Using Salimpaung market as the case study, networks existing between traders, between traders and customers, between traders and suppliers, and between customers are considered. These networks operate within the market itself, between the market and the village, and between the market and other geographical areas, and the importance of these external links are discussed. As stated earlier in this chapter. the market is primarily a female domain both in the predominance of female traders and customers. The focus, then, is on Minangkabau women although through the network concept it is again possible to analyse gender interaction.

Chapter 6 examines networks which create links between villagers and migrants, who often live outside the province. The ways in which formal associations and informal networks connect migrant and homeland areas are considered particularly in the context of their use as vehicles of communication and assistance to new arrivals. Although migration was previously considered to be a male activity, the numbers of female migrants - both as individual women and as part of a family group - have grown in recent years. Migration is therefore an appropriate area to consider gender relations within a different context and the effects female as well as male migration have on the village.

Chapter 7, the conclusion, re-considers the data presented in previous chapters. A comparison with a recent publication on the Minangkabau is given, and the network concept is critically examined. The data are then further analysed in terms of the contributions made to our understanding of Minangkabau gender relations and how they can be utilised as a basis for further research.

CHAPTER 2: GENDER RELATIONS AND NETWORK ANALYSIS

Introduction

The objective of this thesis is to explore Minangkabau gender relations. Gender is a cultural construct involving a "process by which males and females become socially men and women who bear within themselves, in the meanings they attach to their own actions, desires and projects, the imprint of socially-organised directives" with regard to the constitution of maleness and femaleness (Young 1984:62). Gender relations therefore are the socially constructed relations between men and women. In the context of socio-economic change, they are examined in terms of the ways in which the genders are transformed, reinforced or reshaped (Young 1984:63).

In order to realise the thesis' central objective, areas of common as well as distinct male and female activities and responsibilities are identified. The degree of gender interdependence and autonomy can then be examined. To this end a number of features of daily life in one Minangkabau village are recorded and analysed by focusing on intra- and inter-village networks in three areas of Minangkabau social life: those connected with life cycle ceremonies, with commercial activities in the local market circuit and with migration practices. It is intended that a detailed examination of these networks will be able to provide an insight into the cultural relations between men and women.

This chapter investigates these issues from a theoretical perspective beginning with a brief overview of debates on gender and the consequences of its erstwhile neglect in studies of Minangkabau society. Using the classic anthropological model of matriliny as an example, the effects on the collection and interpretation of data on Minangkabau women's activities and roles are considered. The feminist challenge to this classic model is then explored and highlights the

importance of considering both men and women in the attainment of a more rounded picture of Minangkabau society. Attention is then directed to the analytical framework used in this thesis: that of network analysis. This section begins with an overview of how network analysis has been used in previous studies and then explores some of the ways in which this concept can be employed to broaden our understanding of Minangkabau gender relations.

The Anthropology of Gender

A Brief History

The development of research on women and on gender over the last 30 years has had a profound effect on the social sciences. In the early 1970s a new generation of (primarily female) anthropologists expressed their concern that the neglect of women's lives and perceptions had led to the creation of a distorted picture of the world's cultures. Reiter (1975) voiced the views held by many at that time:

> Too often women and their roles are glossed over, underanalyzed, or absent from all but the edges of description. What women do is perceived as household work and what they talk about is called gossip, while men's work is viewed as the economic base of society and their information is seen as important social communication. Kinship studies are usually centered on males, marriage systems are analyzed in terms of the exchanges men make using women to weave their networks. (1975:12)

It was acknowledged that whilst data on women did indeed exist, this had been obtained by anthropologists trained within a male dominated tradition and, with a few exceptions, from male informants rather than from the women themselves. This had then been presented as that culture's social reality rather than as one part of the cultural whole. The distortion of this material was further compounded by the imposition of conceptual analyses reflecting Western social and gender differences; attempts were rarely made to comprehend the society's systems using an indigenous framework (Reiter 1975, Schrijvers 1979, Moore 1988).

The early period of the anthropology of women focused on the assumed universal subordination of women and the related issue of status. Both Rosaldo (1974) and Ortner (1974), two leading exponents of the subordination thesis, explained this phenomenon on the basis of the centrality of childbearing and childrearing to women's lives. They argued that these responsibilities restrict women to the domestic sphere, excluding them either partially or totally from the public domain of political and economic activities, hence allowing men to dominate. Thus the foundation of hierarchical gender relations is formed.

This theory has been criticised from a number of perspectives most notably that it assumed Western concepts of equality and inequality could facilitate the interpretation of other cultural systems (Etienne and Leacock 1980). Milton (1979) argues that the theory has developed from a concern for women's position in Western society rather than considering data from each culture on their own merits. She also criticises these early feminist anthropologists for using information obtained by men yet presented as the cultural expression of the whole society. "Ironically, the feminists are guilty of the bias of which they accuse their colleagues... [They] are effectively ignoring the female point of view" (1979:44-45). As more data became available and alternative approaches developed, it became clear that the nature/culture and public/private categories "were a feature of anthropological discourse rather than of the social or symbolic systems of the societies studied by anthropologists" (Moore 1993:193).

Morgen (1989) identifies three distinct areas of feminist scholarship which had developed by the early 1980s: first, the social or cultural construction of gender using motherhood, kinship and marriage as the focus; second, the historical construction of gender and its relation to class and power; and third, women's status and roles in relation to economic, social and political power.

As the initial emphasis drew on women's activities and perceptions, fears were expressed that male bias would be substituted by a female bias, that only female scholars would study women, that this would be regarded as 'female anthropology' and segregrated from the male focus, and that marginalisation within the discipline would follow (Milton 1979, Strathern 1987).

In contrast, others such as Moore (1988), Morgen (1989) and di Leonardo (1991) argue that the earlier anthropology of women focused on one part of the population in an attempt to correct the male bias in anthropology. From this, feminist anthropology was formed which incorporates:

> the study of gender, of the interrelations between women and men, and of the role of gender in structuring human societies, their histories, ideologies, economic systems and political structures. Gender can no more be marginalized in the study of human societies than can the concept of 'human action', or the concept of 'society'. (Moore 1988:6)

Morgen (1989) notes the development of a third phase in feminist research, that is the need to recognise the cultural and historical specificity of gender. This involves a move away from universal theories on women's lives towards comparative studies within historical, regional and cultural contexts, focusing on women's roles, status and position as they are shaped by age, kinship, marital status, race, ethnicity and class. This necessitates a methodology which brings women as subjects to the forefront of the analysis through the use of oral and life histories (1989:9).

Postmodernism and Feminist Anthropology

Postmodernism is a recent trend in mainstream anthropology focusing attention on the need to be aware of the 'self' in one's observations, distinct from the 'other', the people being studied. This call for reflexivity is purported to be a new development by its proponents, even though feminist anthropologists have

for many years "been conspicuous for their consideration of their presence in the field as an element in their ethnography. Theirs is the gender-inflected voice, which cannot masquerade as universal: they have a standpoint and cannot pretend otherwise" (Bell 1993:2).

Yet postmodernism in anthropology has a distinct male focus. Postmodernist anthropologists (such as Clifford and Marcus 1986 and Marcus and Fisher 1986) have failed to consider (or choose to ignore) the important inroads feminist anthropologists have already made in this area (Bell 1993, Caplan 1988, di Leonardo 1991).

> While women have explored their gendered fields, men have remained free to write the generic 'he'... Those anthropologists who have [now] taken the postmodern turn into textual analyses and plurivocality are forthright in their attention to 'native' as 'other', but tracing a genealogy entirely through males ... are silent on the matter of woman as 'other'. (Bell 1993:2-3)

Again, we have a situation where women, either as the 'self' or as the 'other' are regarded as secondary.

Gender in South-East Asia

South-East Asian women enjoy a higher status than their counterparts in many other regions of the world. Shelly Errington (1990) and Ong (1989), two recent commentators on the anthropology of gender and of women in South-East Asia have noted that cultural features in the area tend to emphasise complementarity rather than opposition; there is a lack of ritual or economic differentiation between men and women. It is common for women to inherit land, to play an active and equal economic role and to maintain their own household.

In her literature review of South-East Asian gender systems, Shelly Errington (1990) notes that collected works in the regional context tend to explore the

position of women in relation to economic and development issues rather than concentrate either on women in relation to current feminist and anthropological theories or on gender as distinct from the study of women (1990:2-3). She suggests that there are two main reasons for this: firstly, feminist theories have usually developed from studies of societies with distinct gender differences. In South-East Asia there tends to be economic complementarity between men and women as well as a lack of 'symbolic expressions of gender differences'. Hence:

> we may be missing issues germane to the topic when we glance casually at the 'high status of women' in an area where the treatment of women seems relatively benign... it could be that differences between men and women are not socially visible to us because they are not marked in ways we easily recognize" (1990:5).

Secondly, the Western anthropologist's attempt to understand gender differences in South-East Asia is often based on an assumption that concepts such as power and status have universal meanings. The Western notion of power emphasising economic control and coercive force may differ from South-East Asian interpretations; indeed such an emphasis may be regarded as demonstrating "a lack of spiritual power and effective potency" which lessens prestige (1990:5). Ong (1989) also agrees that Western interpretations of key analytical concepts such as power and authority may be inappropriate in South-East Asia. Gender may not be such a determining factor of authority as seniority or rank.

An Introduction to the Anthropology of Minangkabau Gender

The study of Minangkabau gender follows a well-trodden path. Until recent years, few accounts of Minangkabau society attempted to incorporate an in-depth and rounded analysis of the lives of Minangkabau women. In the past ethnographers frequently ignored women's activities and perceptions and made only passing reference to women in relation to kinship, marriage and inheritance, thereby relegating them to a reproductive role within a tightly bounded domestic

sphere. Thus women were only considered in relation to men as their wives, mothers or sisters rather than as social actors in their own right.

In the 1970s this situation began to change, most notably with the publication of Nancy Tanner's article on Minangkabau matrifocality in the classic feminist reader Woman, Culture and Society (1974). Tanner showed how the role of mother (ie the senior women in the kin group) provided the basis for women's cultural and social importance in the community. Whilst some critics have argued that this form of analysis creates too narrow a concern for women as mothers and confuses domestic groups with kin structures (Stivens 1981:179), it should be noted that Tanner also considered the economic and ritual complementarity of men and women and of women's activities other than those associated with reproduction. Significantly, she drew attention to the need to consider female power, authority, perceptions and activities. Her work provided a foundation for a research agenda which examines the social relations and interactions between men and women.

Attention was paid to indigenous meanings of concepts such as gender and authority, and these were explored in theoretical debates on the cultural constructions of gender as well as on a feminist approach to the study of kinship and marriage (Benda-Beckmann 1979, Prindiville 1985, Postel-Coster 1985, 1987, 1988, Sanday 1990, Tanner and Thomas 1985). In addition to these theoretical contributions, ethnographic accounts examined issues affecting the lives of both men and women (Alfan Miko 1991, Casey 1987, 1989, van Giffen and Chatra 1990, Gunawan 1990, Postel-Coster 1985, Schrijvers and Postel-Coster 1977, Tanner 1976). The next section examines these developments through the specific example of the debate on matriliny.

The Male-centred Model of Matrilineal Kinship and The Feminist Challenge

This section is divided into three parts. It begins with an examination of the classic model of matriliny using Schneider's (1961) article together with other theoretical pieces by Fox (1967), Douglas (1969), Richards (1950) and Levi-Strauss (1969). These writers, although emphasising different principles, have one clear focus, that matriliny - like patriliny - is concerned with male authority and control over women. In the second part of this section, I attempt to show that such an emphasis distorts our understanding of matriliny and leads to a concentration on men's activities. This leaves the reader with the image that Minangkabau women are passive and dependent on menfolk, rather than independent, active, and especially in their later years, autonomous social actors. The final part of this section considers the new feminist challenge which takes account of the female perspective and advocates the study of both Minangkabau men and women (Postel-Coster 1985, 1987, 1988, Prindiville 1985, Tanner and Thomas 1985, Sanday 1990).

The Classic Model of Matriliny

Schneider (1961) identifies three 'constant features' which, together with the line of descent, "give matrilineal descent groups their distinctive characteristics. These are: first, women are responsible for the care of children, with every child being the primary responsibility of one woman; second, adult men have authority over women and children; and third, descent-group exogamy is required" (1961:5). Schneider argues that whilst authority in the domestic and descent groups must be kept separate, the overall premise remains the same: that men, in whatever capacity, have authority over women.

Schneider considers nine main features of matriliny: first, if the matrilineal descent group is to survive, control must be exercised over its male and female members. Men and women are regarded as interdependent: women are needed

for reproduction and hence the perpetuation of the descent group; men have the authority within and responsibility for that group. Second, the brother is directly concerned with his sister's sexual and reproductive activities but as a "sexual object" his sister is forbidden. This may cause a possible strain and may result in the institution of brother and sister avoidance. Third, the male roles of father and husband are superfluous to the matrilineal system as the child takes his/her descent group membership from the mother. Fourth, the institutionalisation of a strong and lasting bond between husband and wife is not possible as this would create conflict between the domestic group and the descent group. It is therefore necessary to ensure that the husband does not wield authority over his wife and children. For the woman's part, she may experience a crisis of loyalties between her descent group and her husband. Reflecting this, the woman's brother and her husband are likely to have a distant and cold relationship. Fifth, matrilineal descent groups have problems with the organisation of in-marrying husbands; in contrast to patrilineal descent groups, the father-in-law is not in a strong position of authority over his daughter's husband. Sixth, bridewealth or bride service does not establish rights over the future children (as in the case of patrilineal descent systems) as they can only ever be part of their mother's descent group. Seventh, the bond between father and child should not become too strong as this could result in the weakening of descent group authority. Eighth, processes of fission and segmentation differ from those in patrilineal descent groups. It is expected that men remain loyal to their own descent group and have only weak ties with the domestic group. One way to ensure this is to ignore children's different fathers whilst emphasising their common mother. Furthermore, whereas in patrilineal descent groups men can form new lineage segments with their wives and children, in a matrilineal system such a formation is only possible with a man's sisters and their children. Finally, isolated communities comprising the matrilineal core and in-marrying spouses are difficult to maintain. Whereas patrilineal descent groups can sever or limit bonds with female

members who do not reproduce for the group, this is not possible in the case of matrilineal descent groups; without women the group could not continue into future generations. Hence the greater the spatial separation, the less able are women, or men (in their role of exercising authority over the group) to fulfil their duties (Schneider 1961: 8-27).

Fox (1967) proposes four general 'principles' relevant to the study of kinship and marriage: first, women have the children; second, men impregnate the women; third, men usually exercise control; fourth, primary kin do not have sexual relations (1967:31). In his discussion of matrilineal kinship Fox's androcentric interpretation focuses on women's childbearing role:

> As long as the sisters are regularly impregnated, then all will be well. The 'brothers' of our group, of course, will be performing the same service for the 'sisters' of other groups - or rather for their brothers, for we have to remember Principle 3 (male control) (1967:42).

Douglas (1969) considers several other features of matrilineal kinship. These include first, men "straddle" exogamous descent groups and have dual residence and dual loyalty. Second, matrilineal descent groups have to contend with the possibility that disease and mortality may affect women's reproductive capacities and thus severely limit the perpetuity of descent groups. This contrasts with patrilineal descent groups where such problems are easily overcome by taking another wife (1969:125). Poewe (1981) disagrees with Douglas' claim. Whilst she recognises that these elements affect reproductive capacity, she argues that in order to fully understand such a system, one should look closely at the ideology inherent in matriliny in which a man always has sisters whose children have an important kin relationship with him. Equally a woman always has children; if her husband fails to impregnate her, she can choose another husband; if she is infertile then she can claim and receive some of her sister's offspring as her sister's children are also regarded as her own (1981:71-72).

Another feature identified by Douglas is the lack of provision for a strong authority structure. Leadership is based on the election of a man from a group of possible candidates whose eligibility emanates from his kinship relationship with the rest of the group. In contrast to patrilineal societies there is no clear succession to authority and conflicts may arise especially when fraternal succession becomes confused in the second generation (1969:127).

Several years previously, Richards (1950) had also commented that a husband's control over his wife and her children "can never be complete" although through bride service or payments made to the woman's family he may have some degree of power over his wife's labour, property, child-bearing capacity and her children's work and their marriages (1950:208). Richards notes that in matrilineal societies authority is ambiguous; she refers to the conflict of authority between the woman's brother and her husband as "the matrilineal puzzle" (1950:246). The woman must marry out of her descent group in order to provide children for that group and hence ensure its continuity. If she takes up residence in her husband's village, her own descent group loses control over her children with whom, in descent terms, they identify. On the other hand, if the husband takes up residence with the woman in her parents' home, her brothers lose their authority because after their own marriage they move to their bride's parents' home. Thus they are separated from their descent group and village where they have rights of succession. Furthermore, the husband is in a position of inferiority in his wife's village "which he finds irksome and tries to escape from" (1950:246).

Although Richards is primarily concerned with the matrilineal structure and the 'matrilineal puzzle' amongst Bantu groups in Central Africa, she makes a comparison with other matrilineal systems. She identifies the Minangkabau as a society which adopts the "matriarchal solution" to the puzzle: property

inheritance is through the female line but the eldest brother acts as manager. He achieves this through the institution of 'visiting husband'. The Minangkabau man is regarded as part of his sister's household, spends a significant proportion of the day there and enjoys a degree of control over its members. Only at night does he visit his wife's household (1950:247).

Levi-Strauss (1969), in the development of his alliance theory, also refers to the Minangkabau and the notion of male authority. A fundamental element of his theory is based on the concept of exchange. Goods are not only economic commodities but are also symbols of abstracts such as power, influence and status (1969:54). Women are considered to be the "most precious category of goods" and are treated in his analysis as objects of exchange (1969:61). Societies which seem contrary to this model such as the Minangkabau with matrilineal descent, matrilocal residence and husbands referred to as *orang samando* (translated by Levi-Strauss as borrowed man) are dismissed. He argues that it is not men who are exchanged *per se*, rather men exchange other men "by means of" women. Thus women are reduced to passive objects of exchange. Women are given neither autonomy nor authority:

> ... in such systems - and there is scarcely need to recall it - it is the brother or eldest son of the mother's family who holds and wields authority ... The woman is never anything more than the symbol of her lineage. (1969:116)

The feature common to all these pieces on matriliny is the focus on male authority over females. Such a model has been widely employed in the analysis of Minangkabau kinship.

Minangkabau Kinship

The principle of matrilineal descent is acknowledged in the well-known *adat* (customary) saying "*Ayam gadang indak batalua*" (the cock lays no eggs).

signifying that the Minangkabau child is a member of her/his mother's descent group (Benda-Beckmann 1982:26). Indeed the Minangkabau man in his role as husband is sometimes "likened to a bull buffalo borrowed for impregnation"; his position within his wife's descent group is "like a horsefly on the tail of a buffalo, or like ashes on a burned tree trunk [When a little wind blows, it is gone]" (Kato 1978:6-7).

Although it is common to portray the role of husband within the descent group as weak, this is complemented by the emphasis on the strong position a man has as brother or mother's brother. In many studies, the central structural principle of Minangkabau matriliny is perceived to be the *mamak* (mother's brother) and *kemanakan* (sister's children) relationship. Joustra (1920) writes that the *mamak/kemanakan* relationship forms the cornerstone for the system of property inheritance and ownership. The *mamak* is the "true guardian" of his *kemanakan*; he is the head of the family (1920:131). Navis considers that the *mamak*, as leader of the descent group at its various levels of clan, lineage and small family unit, is the basis of the matrilineal system (1984:131). Kato (1978) sums up many writers' notions of Minangkabau matriliny:

> The mutual obligations and duties of mamak and kemanakan are regulated by the adat. The mamak is the guardian of his kemanakan and is responsible for their well-being; it is they who will continue the lineage. The mamak is endowed with authority as tungganai [senior mother's brother] or penghulu [leader of the lineage], and is expected to protect and to increase the matriliny's communal wealth. The essence of Minangkabau matriliny is above all concentrated in the two-generation relationship of mamak and kemanakan. (1978:7)

In two separate footnotes Kato (1982) comments on this structural principle:

> For a long time, almost all students of Minangkabau society have thought that the most crucial human relation in traditional Minangkabau society was that of mamak and kemanakan. I now think that we need to reconsider this assumption, specifically concerning the importance of mothers. There is no doubt that the mamak-kemanakan relation was most important in terms of formal

> structure. Yet in day-to-day life it must have been the mother who connected her child to his or her mamak and who in fact made sure (by cajoling, pleading, threatening, and so on) that the mamak took good care of her child. (1982:60)

and

> The study of Minangkabau matriliny from a female perspective is sorely needed. Among other things we want to know how women wield power and influence within and outside the household, how they manipulate matriliny to their advantage and how they perceive matriliny in contrast to the male-centered view of matriliny as basically the mamak-kemanakan relationship. (1982:61)

In spite of these acknowledgements, further analysis of the female role in matriliny is dismissed in favour of the *mamak/kemanakan* relationship. Attention is directed towards male authority through the roles of *mamak tungganai*, *penghulu* and clan chief.

The Focus on Male-male Relations and its Effects on Minangkabau Data

This focus on the *mamak/kemanakan* relationship as the structural principle underlying matriliny has led to a further assumption that the mother's brother has financial and social responsibilities for his sister and her children. This implies that women do not - and cannot - act autonomously or generate their own income but are both subordinate to and dependent on their menfolk.

Women are frequently portrayed in the literature as dependants and firmly locked in the domestic sphere. In his study of Negeri Taram, Harsja Bachtiar (1967) focuses on male activities in agriculture, whilst emphasising women's domestic role and ignoring their vital labour input and role as managers of ancestral rice land. Swift (1971) suggests that men are traditionally obliged "to provide for the female and infant members of the group" and "spend a lot of money building houses for their sisters and mothers (and to a much lesser extent for their wives)" (1971:260,261). Whilst some brothers and sons do spend time building houses for their female kin, it would appear from my discussions and observations that

women contribute and often have responsibility for producing the majority of the requisite financial resources.

Kahn (1980a), in his survey of male and female economic activities in Limo Suku, makes a distinction between 'household work', and 'real work' defined as earning a cash income in which men are primarily occupied. Although women often earn money through sewing and mat-making, 77.5% of women fall into the occupational category *rumah tangga* (see Table 2.1). In an earlier chapter, Kahn argues that to translate *rumah tangga* as "housewife" is misleading as invariably it includes subsistence farming which "according to local conceptions, [is] a form of domestic labour equivalent to cooking, washing and cleaning" (1980a:71). Yet in his discussion of male and female occupations listed below, he writes that *rumah tangga* "could most simply be translated by housewife" (1980a:106).

Table 2.1: Occupations of Women (married and unmarried) Residents of Limo Suku

Occupation	Number	%
Rumah tangga	663	77.5
Craftswoman	3	0.4
Farmer	30	3.5
Mat-maker	13	1.5
Seamstress	61	7.1
Farmer + mat-maker/seamstress	5	0.6
Merchant	32	3.7
Student	44	5.1
Teacher	5	0.6
Total	856	100%

Source: Kahn 1980a:104 (Percentages added)

Labelling women as housewives only serves to perpetuate the already prevalent myth about women worldwide. It is now commonly accepted that women's work remains largely invisible in official statistics and numerous studies have revealed the deleterious effects of this approach both on women's activities and on communities as a whole (Brydon and Chant 1989, Nelson 1979, Rogers 1980).

I would argue that to translate *rumah tangga* in this way detracts from Minangkabau women's important contributions to the household economy. Data from my household survey suggest that many Salimpaung women are predominantly either full-time farmers, producing both subsistence *and* cash crops, or traders (Table 2.2). *Rumah tangga*, to a Salimpaung women, is closely associated with 'staying at home' because a woman either has young children and there is no one else who can care for them, or she has reached old age and can no longer work.

Table 2.2: Occupations of Women (married and unmarried) Residents of Salimpaung

Occupation	No	%
Farmer	57	33.5
Trader	47	27.6
Student	20	11.8
Rumah tangga	20	11.8
Teacher	12	7.0
Unemployed	10	5.9
Civil servant	2	1.2
Seamstress	2	1.2
Total	170	100%

From a total of the 170 women resident in Salimpaung and included in my household survey, only 20 (11.8%) identified themselves as *rumah tangga*.

Twelve of these women had small children under the age of three years; four others were elderly (over the age of 70 years). These data are in marked contrast to that in Kahn's Limo Suku study (11.8% in Salimpaung compared with 77.5% in Limo Suku). The majority of Salimpaung women considered their occupation to be either farmer (33.5% compared with Kahn's 3.5%), or trader (27.6% compared with Kahn's 3.7%).

Frederick Errington (1984), writing several years after the initial impact of the feminist critique in the social sciences chooses not to incorporate an account of women's lives into his study of Bayur. His objective is to address "the very general question of how meaning is created, expressed, and maintained within a particular social context ... analysis is intended to clarify the relationship between the way people conduct their lives and how they construct their consciousness" (1984:23). 'People', in Errington's mind, appear to comprise only the male population, for in the data chapters following he focuses on the inauguration of a *panghulu*, and on the pig hunt, an exclusively male activity. One chapter, entitled "The composition of the community" appears to ignore the fact that women feature in the community at all; the chapter is broken into sections on hippies (a term Bayur inhabitants apparently use to refer to Western tourists), youths, married men, *parewa* (unmarried men who exhibit irresponsible behaviour long after the time they should have been married) and the *panghulu*. No section is devoted to women, perhaps because Errington places them in the domestic sphere which presumably does not feature in his notion of the community.

Errington explicitly divides the male and female worlds into public and private (or domestic) spheres respectively. His analysis of life cycle ceremonies reflects this dichotomy. Whilst he discusses the woman's role in terms of preparing and serving food, he suggests that on all "public occasions, the host ... expresses the

boundless extent of *his* pleasure that the guests honor *him* with their presence; *he* expresses the extreme importance of this kind of occasion as an essential part of Minangkabau adaik [adat]" (1984:45, my emphases).[1] According to Errington, it is men who display the public political power and women who act behind the scenes, preparing food. As I discuss in a later chapter, men in Salimpaung, whilst playing an important public role through their speechmaking, are also involved in less public preparations for life cycle ceremonies. Likewise, women do not remain solely within a domestic sphere but arguably play a leading 'public' role on these important occasions.

An Alternative Model of Matriliny

In recent years this male focus (both in theoretical terms concerning the matrilineal model and its empirical application to Minangkabau society) has been criticised from a perspective emphasising the need to consider both men *and* women in the analysis.

Wendy James (1978), in her review of matrilineal theory, argues that "the idea of descent itself came to be equated with the transmission of power and authority, though the ethnographic evidence surely shows that there may be many other components in the idea" (1978:145). Rejecting the notion that society should be perceived only in terms of its power structures, she advocates an approach to studying matriliny which returns to its most fundamental principle: that the "connection between one generation and the next is made ... systematically through females" (1978:149). From this perspective, she argues, women cannot be ignored: "The granting of a key position to women in the

---

[1] In my experience, there is rarely one man who performs the ritual speeches. This is usually shared between several members of the lineage (or even the clan). They welcome guests specifically on behalf of the male *and* female members of the *paruik* (extended matrilineal family) whose house is being used for the ritual, and on behalf of the matrilineage. This is discussed further in Chapter 4.

logical, formal ordering of wider relations surely invites us to look further, not necessarily for 'female rule' in a crude power sense, but for equally strong affirmations of the central qualities, even the primacy, of women's position" (1978:149).

Several years earlier, these central qualities associated with motherhood and kinship relations were considered by Tanner (1974) who applied the notion of matrifocality to the Minangkabau. She defines this concept as two dimensional: firstly, a sexually egalitarian society in which both women and men have an important role in economic and ritual spheres; and secondly, a kinship system in which the 'mother' (the senior woman of the kin group) is 'legitimately' the structural, cultural and affective centre (1974:131).

Affective centrality relates to the mother's focal emotional position in society which is both "culturally valued and patterned" through the kinship system and is "utilized as the appropriate motivating force for culturally and structurally defined matrifocality" (1974:132). Cultural centrality is concerned with the cultural image and valuation of the mother, for example whether girls "grow up with images of the self appropriate to an active, decisive, strong, central kin role" (1974:132). Amongst the Minangkabau, the mother is perceived as a source of both strength and wisdom, epitomised in the legendary figure *Bundo Kandueng*, the queen mother of Minangkabau, whose importance is reflected at weddings and ritual displays, and in women's ceremonial attire. The cultural importance of the mother is evident in the Minangkabau worldview that "heaven is said to be beneath the sole of the mother's foot" implying that the mother should be both valued and respected (1974:146).

Structural centrality refers to the control and decision-making powers the mother has over the economic resources of the kin group. Tanner argues that although

in ideological terms the decision-making process is based on common deliberation and consensus, in reality the majority of decisions concerning land use, household management, sale of agricultural produce and education of children, are made by the mother. In lineage affairs, involving the consultation of all senior female and male members of the kin group, the opinion of the mother is given due consideration and often has a significant influence over the course of events (1974:144-145). Female kinship and social networks foster a system of mutual support in both childcare and other daily activities. This, together with their usufruct rights to the ancestral house and ricefields, provides women with a degree of financial independence from menfolk. Tanner concludes that:

> there is little difference between women and men with regard to initiative, assertiveness, autonomy, decisiveness ... [There is] an absence of extreme cultural dichotomization of role expectations for women and men ... and therefore relatively equal participation ... in general societal role systems. (1974:155-156)

In a subsequent article, Tanner together with Thomas (1985) lends further weight to the notion of matrifocality and also questions some of the assumptions within the classic model of matriliny. As a framework they criticise Schneider's (1961) paper on characteristics of matriliny detailed earlier in this chapter. Their initial point strikes at the heart of the problem of male bias in the classic model:

> There is no reason to assume that there is only a male ego, a male actor, or a male perspective in any society. This is so obvious that it is absolutely amazing that such an extensive period of Western anthropology looked at the action of only half the human species and tried to build behavioral models on that basis. It makes a great deal of sense to study both women and men, and much more can be understood about how societies operate if analyses are from both male and female perspectives. (1985:47)

They argue that if Schneider's definition of matriliny - based on male authority - is applied to the Minangkabau, it is "conducive to erroneous interpretations of Minangkabau social life" (1985:48).

The notion of authority in Minangkabau kin groups should not be conceived as based on 'command' but rather on "adjudicatory, advisory, conciliatory, legitimizing and expressive aspects" (1985:52). Group discussion, negotiation, compromise and consensus are all fundamental to the decision-making process and involve both men and women. They dispute Schneider's emphasis on male control over lineage members in the male roles of *mamak* and *penghulu* although they would not deny that these roles carry with them responsibility, status and influence. Whilst women may not have recognised positions of authority, it does not necessarily follow that women have no authority at all. Willinck (1909) argued that the oldest common ancestress had greater authority than the *mamak*. Sanday (1990) found that although the *penghulu* had ultimate authority over lineage members, the general consensus was that "senior women and men, in the context of *adat*, form a single unit that cannot be split" (1990:152). She argues that men and women have their own areas of social responsibility and leadership. In later chapters I consider this notion further in relation to Salimpaung's ritual and migration networks.

In Salimpaung it seemed that there is mutual respect between on the one hand the *mamak* and the *penghulu*, and on the other hand, the senior women of the matrilineage. The opinions of older people are valued and they play an important part in the decision-making process with regard to everyday affairs and ritual events. As Ong (1989) has pointed out for South-East Asian societies generally, the Minangkabau believe that age brings wisdom based on experience. The advice of older people - men and women - should be attended to.

In accordance with attempts to consider indigenous interpretations it is important to note the following *adat* saying:

> *Kamanakan barajo ka mamak*
> *mamak barajo ka panghulu*
> *panghulu barajo ka mupakat*
> *mapakat [sic] barajo kapado alua*
> *alua barajo kapado mungkin dan patuik*
> *patuik dan mungkin barajo kapado bana*
> *bana itulah nan manjadi rajo*
>
> the *kamanakan* are subject to the *mamak*
> the *mamak* is subject to the *panghulu*
> the *panghulu* is subject to the *mupakat* [unanimous decisions]
> the *mupakat* is subject to the power of reasoning
> the power of reasoning is subject to what is appropriate and possible
> what is appropriate and possible is subject to the truth
> it is the truth which is the highest authority
>
> (cited in Benda-Beckmann 1979:81)

Using this aphorism, Benda-Beckmann argues that two principles are apparent: first, that authority is vested in individuals whose ascribed position is based on gender, age and office; and second, that authority is vested in the group through the notion of *musyawarah* (common deliberation) and *mupakat*. Benda-Beckmann concludes that final authority is "vested in abstract values, but what is appropriate, possible, and true, must be found through the exercise of human reasoning" (1979:81).

In response to another of Schneider's basic characteristics of matriliny, Tanner and Thomas (1985) argue that a man's involvement in his own and his wife's descent and domestic groups "gives him a peripherality in both which decreases his 'authority' if conceptualized as rule or control -- yet provides a context for effective male roles as moderator, mediator, consultant, and representative" (1985:70). Women make autonomous decisions regarding daily practical affairs whilst consultations between kin concerning broader issues such as the organisation of ceremonies and the settlement of disputes lead to "a well-functioning group ... with no need for male 'control'" (1985:69). They

conclude that this form of decision-making process, together with the importance of women *and* men as actors in kin and inter-kin affairs, and the cultural and structural centrality of the mother reflect the matrifocality of Minangkabau society and should be viewed as fundamental principles of Minangkabau matriliny (1985:70-71).

Prindiville (1985) also argues that the emphasis on male/female relations in terms of male authority and on male/male relations generally, examined in terms of co-operation (consanguines) or competition (affines), has distorted our conception of matriliny. "In such an analysis, women are reduced to the status of pawns in men's power plays. They do not appear as actors" (1985:32). Consequently, women are perceived as important only in terms of reproduction and the continuity of the descent group; they are thus relegated to a domestic sphere within the context of universal male domination (1985:32).

Prindiville proposes an alternative approach that considers women's wider participation in society. She puts forward four areas where this would be most appropriate: female and male authority; women's role as mediators between descent groups; the social construction of gender ascriptions; and finally, the possibility that "gender similarities are ... as significant and informative as gender differences" necessitating an analysis of overlapping roles such as the mother's brother and the mother (1985:33). Attention should be given to the processes of decision-making (by both men and women), decision validation (a male responsibility) and decision implementation (primarily a female responsibility). This would have the effect of "making visible and analyzing the management roles of both men and women, without prejudicing the outcome by the *a priori* assignment of tasks on the basis of gender status" (1985:39). Her proposal advocates, in agreement with Tanner and Thomas (1985), a re-evaluation of the perceived structural principles underlying matriliny.

Following along this line of thought, Postel-Coster (1988) tackles another area pertinent to the study of kinship systems: Levi-Strauss' theory of the exchange of women, discussed earlier in this chapter. Postel-Coster argues that if men universally exchange women, then this should not be assumed on the basis of Western models "so deeply ingrained in our minds that they do not seem to need any justification" (1988:247). Rather an explanation should be sought. She puts forward several possibilities: first, that all women are passive and all men active; treating women as objects would therefore be a matter of course. This option is favoured by Levi-Strauss. Second, that men have absolute power over women and treat them as objects against their will (1988:248). She notes a third possibility put forward by Van Baal which posits that women willingly and on their own conditions behave as objects. However, she dismisses this as "the notion of free will is highly doubtful in a context of strong male dominance, which Van Baal takes as a point of departure" (1988:248).

Postel-Coster criticises Josselin de Jong's notion of Minangkabau circulating connubium marriage in which clan A *receives brides* from clan C and *gives its women* to men from clan B (1951:35). This portrays women as the objects of exchange. Postel-Coster argues:

> From the point of view of representation, there is no reason to prefer this device to the exchange of men. Any form of symmetric or asymmetric connubium can be presented just as well by assuming that women are exchanging men. Therefore, this choice can only be justified by demonstrating a relation with empirical data. (1988:247)

She notes that other forms of differentiation, including age, need to be considered in this context. The exchange of women suggests that, irrespective of their age, all women are "essentially in the same position of forced passivity". This, she argues, ignores the evidence to show that with age comes "a profound change in power and prestige" (1988:249).

Finding a lack of Minangkabau male terms equating with bridegiver, bridetaker and brideprice, Postel-Coster maintains that "we find an almost perfect reverse of the model of men exchanging women" (1988:250). The initial negotiations are instigated by the parents or mother's brother of the bride; the husband is known as the *sumando* (believed to originate from the word *sando* meaning 'to pledge'). "Thus, the sumando is a person pledged by his family to that of his wife ... Whereas the bridegroom is sometimes referred to as merchandise, it would be unheard of to make such an allusion to a bride" (1988:250). She concludes that alliance theory and the type of analysis advocated by Josselin de Jong may increase our knowledge of Minangkabau culture but, in terms of understanding gender relations, it has created a very narrow scope for anthropological observations and theories (1988:254).

Sanday (1990) explores Minangkabau gender relations at the ideological level using extracts from *adat* and *kaba* (epics) and relating them to daily life. Through an examination of gender representations - defined as "images, symbols, stories, social discourses, and practices that refer to males or females, the masculine or feminine" (1990:164) - Sanday reveals an apparent contradiction at the level of *adat* ideology. Whilst images of matrifocality are depicted in the *Bundo Kanduang Kaba*, androcentric leanings are evident in the legend recounting the origins of Minangkabau matriliny. This, she argues, is not perceived by the Minangkabau as a conflict between two opposing forces, rather it is seen as an integral and unitary part of the *Alam Minangkabau* (the Minangkabau world). These legends:

> demonstrate that the concern of the Minangkabau is with preserving political boundaries on the one hand and *adat* ideology on the other ... [They] employ different strategies to ensure the continuation of the ideology of Minangkabau matriliny and matrifocality. One strategy [in the *Bundo Kanduang Kaba*] "mythologizes" matrifocality, the other [in the origins myth] "historicizes" matriliny... By historicizing and mythologizing matriliny, the Minangkabau propagate *alam Minangkabau*, at least

> conceptually, in opposition to the political forces that would destroy it. No matter where they live in the world, those who identify with this conceptual world think of themselves as Minangkabau. (1990:159-161)

Postel-Coster (1985, 1987) examines the 'modern' pre-war Minangkabau novel which she maintains is a natural progression from the *kaba*. In contrast to the *kaba* which promotes an idealised model of behaviour, the novel is depicted in terms of the practice of daily life (1985:17). In an attempt to ascertain the ambiguous nature of power relations between men and women, she analyses the contents of a selection of ten novels which deal with love, marriage, conflict, the rigidity of *adat* rules and values, dependence and manipulation. She acknowledges that the authors are an elitist, male group residing in migrant areas and that this minimises the representation of a cross-section of the population (in terms of gender, economic background, age and abode). She attempts to dispel criticism by incorporating the reactions of readers from a wide range of backgrounds.

The novels, she argues, display dualistic models, namely male/female, *rantau/darek* (migrant area/homeland), mobility/stability, market economy/subsistence activities, individual performance/collective responsibility, free sexual life/chastity and conjugal fidelity, and finally Islam/*adat* (1987:233). The novels portray men as part of the outside world with access to money, knowledge, religion and political apparatus: the main sources of power. Yet they are "eternal wanderers" who are dependent on women for food and residence (1987:235). The mobility of women, on the other hand, is limited because they "belong" to the ancestral house. Older women are the "treasurers of harta pusaka [ancestral property] and the keepers of well-ordered life" in the homeland. They are the "stable centre of the family network" (1987:232).

The male/*rantau* and female/*darek* dualism should not be regarded in terms of Western notions of public and domestic. The home:

> is not the invisible, isolated reserve for those who are not yet or no longer able to take part in the production process. Rather, the relation between the outside world may be reversed. The ultimate aim of productive activities, of work in the rantau in general, is to contribute to the continuation of the centre. (1987:235).

Whilst both categories are important for survival, "it is the centre of Minangkabau that gives meaning to life" (1987:236); the association of women with the centre therefore results in high female status and authority.

Summary

This section has illustrated the problems of applying the male-centred model of matriliny to the Minangkabau. Alternative approaches which move away from a focus on male-male relations and male authority have been explored and it has been suggested that concentrating on one half of the population creates a distorted image of that society and of the features of matriliny. I would argue, following Tanner (1974), Tanner and Thomas (1985) and Prindiville (1985), that a model of matriliny based on the mother's brother and sister's children relationship is inadequate. Attention has to be given to women and their interactions both with other women and with men in order to provide a more accurate account of that society. The next section considers one analytical means of exploring these interactions - through network analysis.

Network Analysis

Network analysis began to develop in the 1950s with the early work of Barnes (1954) and Bott (1957). Arising primarily from a dissatisfaction with structural-functionalism which viewed society as static, the dynamics of human interaction became the focus for network analysis (Boissevain 1973). As its influence

spread it was used to analyse social relationships in Western industrialised nations (Barnes 1954, Bott 1957, Young and Willmott 1957) and in societies experiencing rapid social change where networks cut across traditional groups within the village and extend to the outside world (Srinivas and Beteille 1964). In urban settings migrant networks have been analysed in terms of the migrants' adaptation to new situations or the support offered during crises (Wolf 1966, Boswell 1969, Collier and Green 1978). The network concept has been used to explore the way in which norms and values are transmitted within a community (Epstein 1969), the support received by different political factions during elections (Boissevain 1974, Mayer 1966), how disputes occur and generate divisions within the workplace (Kapferer 1969), and the means by which co-operation during ceremonies brings the community together (Lamphere 1970). The significance of kin and friendship networks in seeking employment has also been studied (Grieco 1987) as well as the association between attachment to neighbourhood and spatial orientation of friendship networks (Cohen and Shinar 1985).

It has been suggested that the network may be an indigenous concept, part of a folk model, used rather than constructed by the researcher (Barnes 1972). Theoretically the network has been perceived as a system of relations between individuals which either influences behaviour or is used with a specific end in mind (Boissevain 1973). As an analytical tool the network concept and its associated terms have been assigned varying and at times seemingly conflicting definitions and interpretations. This section considers a selection from the multitude of variations of the network concept in order to ascertain its relevance to the analysis of Minangkabau society.

Barnes (1954) was one of the first exponents of network analysis. Influenced by Radcliffe-Brown's (1940) article "On Social Structure" and Fortes (1949) *The Web of Kinship*, he formulated the concept using data from the Norwegian parish

of Bremnes. He proposed that Bremnes inhabitants participated in three different types of social 'field'. The first was based on residence, dealing primarily with social relations between neighbours; the second, on industry involving a number of independent yet related units such as fishing vessels and marketing co-operatives; and the third, on ties of friendship, acquaintance and kinship where no fixed boundaries existed and new and old ties were continuously being re-aligned (1954:42-43).

This third type of social field was of particular interest to Barnes; from this he developed his concept of the 'network'. He noted that each individual in Bremnes had his or her own sets of cognatic kin and friends both within and outside the community. Although it would be highly unlikely for any two persons to have identical sets, there would be individuals whose networks may have some (although not all) of the same members. By exploring an individual's network, Barnes suggests that it would be possible to discover more about that person's interactions.

Bott (1957) utilised Barnes' network concept in her study of 20 London families whose backgrounds ranged from semi-skilled manual to professional workers. She differentiated between an organised group comprising individuals with common aims, interdependent roles and a distinct sub-culture, and a network made up of individuals who have relationships with only some of the other participants in that network. Each individual has friends, neighbours and kin who are unknown to the original family: "the component external units do not make up a larger social whole; they are not surrounded by a common boundary" (2nd edn 1971:58-59). She concluded that the social relationships outside the immediate family could best be described as forming a network. These networks vary in their connectedness, "the extent to which the people known by a family know and meet one another independently of the family" (1971:59). She distinguished between close-knit networks in which there are many relationships

among the component units, and loose-knit networks which offer weaker links and hence less likelihood of mutual help and friendship (1971:59).

Lamphere (1970), in her study of ceremonial co-operation networks among the Navajo, regards Bott's notion of connectedness as problematic as there is an implicit assumption that "all types of ties are usually considered to be of equal strength" and therefore "kin, neighbour, and friend ties [are analysed] as if they were equivalent in determining the connectedness of networks" (1970:46). She attempts to overcome this conceptual weakness based on her observations of the Navajo and their perceptions that interactions with close kin are more concentrated than with clan members or neighbours. She uses Mayer's concept of set, "finite number of links initiated by an ego which forms part of such a network", for "genealogical" kin only and treats "clan" kin and neighbours as separate (1970:46).

Bott (1971), Firth (1969), Grieco (1987) and Young and Willmott (1957) found that people utilised their network contacts to find work or appropriate housing. Although Young and Willmott (1957) did not specifically associate their study of life in Bethnal Green with the network concept, its analytical significance is apparent. In one example, they follow the life and interactions of one woman. During an half-hour shopping trip she interacted with 14 people; over the course of a week her interactions in the street were with 63 people, some of whom she knew personally, while others were known to her through her female kin especially her mother. "Her story showed how she had built up a series of connections with people she had known in school, work or street and, even more forcefully, how her mother and other kin acted as a means of communication between herself and the other people in her social world" (1957:84).

In the early 1960s the network concept was used to analyse social - especially urban - settings in other parts of the world. Epstein (1961, later republished

1969) followed Chanda, a young male migrant in the African town of Ndola to analyse his interactions and consequently his network. Epstein termed Chanda's network 'egocentric' - existing for and defined with reference to one particular individual who believes him/herself to be at the centre of a collection of friends. Each network had two parts: 'the effective network', those people with whom an individual interacts regularly and intensely, and the 'extended network' the remainder of the network members (1969:109).

Epstein used this concept to analyse the way in which norms, values and attitudes filter through society and demonstrates how the network can become an instrument of social control. Friends and neighbours exchange ideas, experiences and news and discuss the affairs and behaviour of absent members of their effective network. The transmission of gossip reaffirms norms of behaviour amongst all the network's members as any breach of these norms is soon made known through the network and inevitably leads to personal loss of esteem. Epstein considers a further dimension, that is the way in which norms and values of the local elite tend to be transmitted to the rest of society through the elite's effective network to the extended network (1969:112-113).

In the introductory chapter to a reader on social networks in urban areas, Clyde Mitchell (1969) identifies two categories of social network: morphological, relating to the 'shape of the individual's network' and equated with structural aspects of social behaviour, and interactional, referring to people's behaviour towards each other (1969:20).

The morphological category has four characteristics: firstly anchorage, the point from which the network can be traced and hence analysed. This usually refers to an individual although Bott (1971) used the conjugal relationship and both Barnes (1954) and Jay (1964) used the group as the anchorage point. Secondly reachability, the extent to which a person can use the relationships within the

network to contact or be contacted by people important to the individual. As an analytical tool, it helps to ascertain the links in the network used as channels for the dissemination of information, and of attitudes which serve to reinforce norms and act as a form of social pressure. Thirdly density, the extent to which possible links between people do in fact exist. Finally range, the form of contact individuals have with each other; some people have many direct contacts (the first-order range) while others may have few. This is important in the analysis of personal networks which examine support for the individual (1969:13-19).

The interactional category has five subdivisions: content, directedness, durability, intensity and frequency. Content refers to the meanings people attach to their network relationships based on reasons why they interact such as economic assistance, kinship obligation, religious co-operation or friendship. In a later article, Clyde Mitchell (1973) considers this feature further and focuses on three ways in which content can give meaning to the network. The communication content relates to how information spreads across generations and authority lines. As an illustration, he cites Epstein's study in which the community uses the network as a set of communication links between people. The exchange content refers to people's link through transactions which have implications wider than the act of exchange itself. The normative content is concerned with the nature of the link which determines the expected behaviour between two people in the network. For example on the basis of a kin relationship the actors involved know how to behave towards others and how others should behave towards them (1973:23-26).

Directedness, another feature of the interactional category, examines the orientation of the relationships in a network - whether they are unidirectional or reciprocal. Durability is concerned with the duration of a network: whether it exists for a set period to realise a specific aim or whether it is lifelong (when the content of the network is kinship). This allows a recognition that networks are

never static as new contacts are made and old ones diminish in importance. Intensity is concerned with the extent to which people acknowledge and act in accordance with their responsibilities as well as their capacity to call upon others to fulfil obligations. This varies according to the relationship (for example the relationship with a close relative is likely to be more intense than with a neighbour). Intensity does not have to be based on face-to-face contact; interaction may be conducted through either letters, regular remittances or visits to the home village for important life cycle events of close kin. Finally, frequency relates to the amount of contact an individual has with others in the network although high frequency does not necessarily equate with high intensity of social relationships (1969:20-29).

Lamphere (1970) draws attention to a weakness in the network approach covered by Clyde Mitchell's conceptualisation. Within the context of co-operative networks she argues that it is difficult to determine the strength of ties in terms of content, frequency of contact and value. She suggests that a means of measurement would be to develop a system which establishes the equivalence between different joint activities, requests for assistance and favours granted. Then the tie between two people, when one offers help in different activities which is later reciprocated, could be weighed against the tie between two people who do not necessarily expect future reciprocal aid. Noble (1973) also notes several ambiguities in the various terms used in network analysis. She asks how ego's relations in networks are evaluated over time as well as how length or frequency of contact correlates with other factors such as geographical and social distance.

Several years after his initial article Barnes (1969, 1972) clarified and developed his own position. He begins by distinguishing between the 'metaphorical' and the 'analytical' uses of the network idea. Radcliffe-Brown had been one of the first anthropologists to use 'network' metaphorically, arguing that Australian

Aborigines were "connected by a complex network of social relations" (1940:2 cited in Barnes 1972:1). "The idea behind those metaphors is simple", argues Barnes. "Every individual in society is seen as linked to several others by social bonds that partly reinforce and partly conflict with one another; the orderliness, or disorderliness, of social life results from the constraints these bonds impose on the actions of individuals" (1972:1-2). Barnes argues that a similar notion of network is used analytically to understand how the links influence behaviour. He states that some anthropologists have analysed the network by defining its members and classifying the kinds of social bonds between them; others have attempted to differentiate between one network and another and "use network parameters as variables in analysis and explanation of other social phenomena" (1972:2).

Barnes distinguishes between the total network, all the social links within a community and as such "a first-order abstraction from reality" (1969:56), and the partial network "any extract of the total network based on some criterion applicable throughout the whole network" such as kinship, marriage, politics or religion (1969:57). He then considers two characteristics of both total and partial networks. Firstly the network is either finite - consisting of "a limited number of persons" - or infinite - "the fact that in reality only a finite number of persons are in contact with one another is ignored for purposes of analysis, and we examine a delimited area of what we can treat as a network stretching on for ever and ever" (1969:68). Secondly the network is either unbounded - "everyone in the social universe, ... there are no persons outside it" - or bounded - there are people outside that network, the latter being associated with partial rather than total networks (1969:68).

He argues that, in general, partial networks are the object of analysis. Once a study of larger networks (more than ten people) is under way, Barnes proposes that different levels of contact need to be differentiated. The relationship

between an individual and his immediate contacts, his first-order contacts, is termed as the "first-order star". This established, the relationship between the links in this star and the actions, decisions, beliefs and status of the individual can be examined (1972:8). The next stage in network analysis is to identify higher-order contacts, those people who can only be contacted through intermediaries of the first-order contacts. Alternatively, the relations between people in a zone, defined as "any delimited portion of the network, containing any set of members and all the relations existing between them", can be explored (1972:11). Barnes uses a number of mathematical equations to measure the density of the first-order and second-order zones. From this, clusters "a set of persons whose links with one another are comparatively dense, without necessarily constituting a clique" can be identified (1969:64). He argues that through a series of graphs and diagrams, the density of the cluster can be ascertained.

Several anthropologists have criticised Barnes' approach as too mathematical. Whitten and Wolfe (1973) describe it as "overly abstract". Gulliver (1971) questions whether it is possible to use a diagram to indicate the links between people in a network. Unless this remains in an over-simplified form, it soon becomes a complicated 'criss-cross of lines' and consequently "incoherent and valueless as a visual explanatory device" (1971:346). Similarly, Clyde Mitchell (1973) argues it is little more than a "symbolic representation of an abstract set of relationships" and points out the difficulties of relating the diagrammatic lines to reality.

Whitten and Wolfe (1973) argue that if network analysis is to have meaning, then its theoretical bases must be sought in a synthesis of role, exchange and action theories. This would enable examination of 'observable human interaction' not just norms and rules. "The active elements in such theoretical models are not network characteristics per se, but the data that can be gained by

effecting a network analysis" (1973:739). Clyde Mitchell (1974) identifies the relationship between the social network approach and general social anthropological theory. The network concept has important connections with transactional theory (people's behaviour towards each other), exchange theory (exchanges between individuals are represented by the observer as a link in the network) and action theory (the way individuals manipulate their relationships for specific purposes).

Both Whitten and Wolfe (1973) and Clyde Mitchell (1974) regard exchange as implicit in the concept of social networks. Sahlins (1974) illustrates the relationship between the material flow of goods and social relations. "A specific social relation may constrain a given movement of goods, but a specific transaction ... suggests a particular social relation. If friends make gifts, gifts make friends ... the material flow underwrites or initiates social relations" (1974:186).

Kapferer (1969) considers the exchange content in interactional aspects of a person's reticulum (ego-centred network) to evaluate the events and people involved in a work dispute and the ways in which people use their network to mobilise support. These interactional bonds between an individual and members of his reticulum are analysed by considering three main properties: the exchange content in the interactional relationship, the degree of multiplexity of the exchange content, and the directional flow of the exchange content in the relationships (1969:211-212). The exchange content, defined as "the overt elements of the transactions between individuals in a situation which constitute their interaction" includes conversational exchange (information, gossip, views), joking exchange, job assistance, financial aid, and personal service for example sharing food and offering help in tasks such as collecting water. Multiplexity refers to "the number of exchange contents which exist in a relationship". The relationship becomes increasingly multiplex the greater the exchange content.

Finally, the directional flow of the exchange content refers to whether the exchange is unidirectional or reciprocal (1969:212-214).

Thus exchange and reciprocity create links between individuals "in series of communicative, economic, manipulative, and other types of strands. Without exchange theory, the notion of network would appear quite abstract, divorced from the realities of human life in specific social and cultural settings" (Whitten and Wolfe 1973:731).

It is clear from this brief overview that the network concept has been used for a variety of purposes and has led to a divergence of interpretations. Bott (1971) comments that:

> When one contemplates the language - total network, personal network, ego-centric network, set, action-set, reticulum, quasi-group, field, star, zone, personal community, ambience, social circle, faction, party, clique, grouping, group, and corporate group - one feels oneself teetering on the brink of terminological if not conceptual disaster. (1971:319)

She identifies three ways in which the term network has been used: firstly, in a metaphorical Radcliffe-Brown sense; secondly, in Barnes' notion of a total network; and thirdly, the personal or egocentric network, all or some of the individuals and groups with whom one person has contact. This is the point of terminological confusion and diversity. She attempts to move towards clarity through simplification:

> I agree with Barnes that it is important to be clear whether one means total network, star, or zone, but I am afraid it is too late to introduce new terms. Like Mitchell (1969), I think the term network has become too well entrenched in the ego-centric sense to be abandoned, and this fact, combined with the different meaning of the word 'star' in common speech as well as in sociometry, makes it unlikely that Barnes's terms will be readily adopted. (1971:320)

Later in this chapter I discuss the term network as I intend to use it in relation to this study of Minangkabau gender relations. First I turn to one aspect overlooked in many network studies - that is the neglect of women.

Women's Networks

Until recently, women's networks have not been studied to the same extent as men's associations:

> When they have been seriously studied at all, they have been viewed as part of a private, domestic world that is dissociated from politics and public purpose... women's informal associations [are] conceived as personalized and devoid of public authority... Even network analysis, the primary method for confronting and analyzing the influence of the informal arena, has a curious tradition for treating women, presuming that women participate in few networks in comparison to men. (March and Taqqu 1986:11)

Opposing this dominant stream of thought, March and Taqqu consider the importance of female networks both practically to the actors concerned, and as a useful analytical tool for the study of communities:

> The study of women cross-culturally has shown that women's associations with one another are as important for women as same-sex associations are for their men, and that both types of association typically animate the life of a community... Through their associations with one another, women not only develop a shared identity, but they widen their options. (1986:x)

Perceiving women's informal relations as networks leads to a recognition that there is not one "but several key structural positions...leaders, decision-makers, power brokers and other influential individuals". Networks can then be regarded not as hierarchical structures with fixed authority relations but rather as a series of linkages between individuals which retains an element of fluidity (1986:7). Both membership and leadership of the network respond to changes within society and to the needs of individuals. Bonds between people may lie dormant until a crisis or a specific occasion activates the network of affiliations, obligations, debts and demands (1986:8).

March and Taqqu argue against the use of the public (male) and private (female) dichotomy and propose that once misapprehensions concerning the private sphere have been put to one side, the inevitable portrayal of women's informal associations as passive, supportive, domestic, disorganised and apolitical no

longer seems appropriate. From such a standpoint women do not retain the image of being weak and dependent but emerge as active social and political beings who consolidate their autonomy through their alliances (1986:35).

March and Taqqu identify two types of women's networks: those based on either defensive or active strategies. The defensive networks operate to maintain a system of mutual support between their members which mobilise in response to economic or life cycle crises. Women have a broad web of contacts who, on a reciprocal basis, offer childcare facilities, lend out foodstuffs, exchange labour, visit the sick and make condolence calls. They meet daily needs but also respond on an *ad hoc* basis to crises in a woman's life cycle. Childbirth is one example where women rally round in support of the pregnant woman, undertaking her heavy physical domestic duties such as collecting water, preparing meals for her and her family, caring for her other children as well as attending the birth to offer whatever assistance is required. A number of women within the network may be responsible for transmitting the news of the baby's birth to relevant people and for preparing a ritual celebratory feast. Such a supportive network is also apparent in other life cycle events such as marriage and death. These defensive associations "serve as an effective safety net for casualties of poverty, unemployment, abandonment, and illness. They represent a continuous and nearly universal mechanism for insulating households and even communities from disaster" (March and Taqqu 1986:40).

Networks with active strategies are concerned with providing useful information for women and their families as part of their survival tactics. Through these networks, women can find out about such essentials as work and housing, two areas which are particularly pertinent to migrants. Rotating labour and credit associations are examples of active networks. During peak times in the agricultural cycle, labour assistance may be exchanged. Ardener defines a rotating credit association as one "formed upon a core of participants who agree

to make regular contributions to a fund which is given, in whole or in part, to each contributor in rotation" (1964:201). Members of such an association are assured of their portion of the money at some future period and this provides an insurance. Credit associations are important amongst women in many parts of the world, not least in Indonesia where *arisan* groups, or *julo julo* as they are referred to in Minangkabau, usually with 15-30 participants, form an important means of saving.

Women's informal associations can be based on a number of criteria although kinship, common residence and similar work patterns appear to be the most common. The associations may exist primarily to provide friendship and help with childcare or may be founded on a more specialised activity such as co-operative marketing. Women participate in order to acquire the network's services which continues for as long as there is a need (March and Taqqu 1986).

Women and Kinship Networks

Stivens (1981) argues that affection, moral support and assistance between kin are an inherent part of kinship and of the "ideological construct of the feminine" (1981:181). Sisters maintain close bonds; women act as mediators in the kinship network, have responsibility for organising kin affairs such as marriage and co-operate in sharing childcare. Peletz (1988) argues that amongst the matrilineal Malays of Negeri Sembilan (believed to be descendants of early Minangkabau migrants) the most important members of the kinship network are female natural and classificatory siblings. Co-operation and exchange in labour, domestic duties and ceremonial affairs are important bases for their kinship relationships. Strathern (1972) notes that female networks enable the Highland New Guinea woman to adapt to her new situation when she moves to her husband's natal village upon marriage. The networks of in-married women enhance her capacity to act as a mediator between men's local lineage groups. Although

Minangkabau residence after marriage is uxorilocal rather than virilocal, women nevertheless mediate between kin groups both within their own lineage and between their lineage and those of their female affines.

Women and Residential Networks

Dwellings located close together, with entrances facing each other or sharing a common well, facilitate frequent contact between female inhabitants. Young women are able to discuss problems with their peers and to seek the advice of older and more experienced women. They offer mutual help in crises such as illness or death as well as assistance during preparations for celebrations. Discussion of common areas of concern can increase their influence within and between household units and over certain issues they may form a solidarity group (Bujra 1978, Berninghausen and Kerstan 1992). This type of influence is reinforced in matrilineal societies as kinswomen generally live in the same or nearby dwelling (March and Taqqu 1986, McAllister 1987, Ong 1989).

Women and Occupational Networks

Common work patterns, or domestic chores such as collecting water and washing clothes at the village water fountain, may encourage conversation, friendship and hence mutual support (March and Taqqu 1986). Nelson (1978) uses the network concept to explore relations between women in Nairobi who illegally produce and sell maize beer. Although each woman works independently, she is part of an effective brewing network which operates within the locality and whose members offer mutual assistance and support. Members lend out equipment, send warnings when police raids are imminent, protect each other from police, thieves and violent lovers, inform close family of a member who is arrested by the police, care for her children temporarily, help raise money for bribes, and exchange information on customers' creditworthiness (1978:84-85). "These daily reciprocal exchanges are part and parcel of 'neighbourly' behaviour and

also include gossiping, joking, mutual hairbraiding, and sharing food" (1978:85).

Women are members of several networks each based on different criteria. Nelson (1978) shows the difference between the Nairobi women's effective network (those with whom they interact on a daily basis and with whom they live and work) and their extended network (kin and friends). Although contact is usually less frequent with members of the extended network, there is a greater degree of durability as rights and responsibilities are based on stronger bonds than in the effective network. The effective network mobilises to deal with short-term problems and members offer help on a reciprocal basis. In the extended network, reciprocity is more generalised.

Each network acts as one thread in the web of female solidarity which enables women to counteract the formal and more dominant associations usually led by men. Papanek (1975) argues that women's informal associations may be more significant than men's more formal associations in the link they provide between families in the neighbourhood. Women can use their networks for mutual support and to exert communal power in a society which may give them no open recognition of authority.

Minangkabau Networks

This section looks at ways in which network analysis can be applied to Minangkabau society and how it can contribute towards a greater understanding of gender relations. To this end I consider the kinds of questions that need to be asked and the conceptual tools used.

As gender relations are concerned with the interaction between men and women culturally, socially and economically, then it would seem that network analysis, which focuses on human interaction, could be a useful means of analysing this

aspect of Minangkabau life. Different types of networks can be considered ranging from those linking households within a village (either by virtue of constants such as kinship, residence or friendship) to extra-household networks (such as those formulated through commercial and migration activities). In this way a greater understanding of the lives women lead and the interactions both between women and with men can be attained.

One relevant question in this area concerns the gender segregation of networks: under what circumstances, if any, do single-sex networks exist and under what conditions do male-female networks become important? Do men and women utilise their networks in similar or different ways and for different ends? Is network membership significant in terms of empowerment, solidarity or support? Do the different roles an individual has in the network in relation to its other members have implications for understanding women's influence or authority? For example a woman's network interactions may be analysed in respect of the roles which she may exercise concurrently - mother, grandmother, sister, daughter or wife, mother-, sister- or daughter-in-law, trader or farmer. Her roles may affect whether she offers or denies support, provides or withholds information, or acts as mediator between groups.

It is not intended to suggest that membership of a network always leads to support and solidarity between women *against* men (although this might at times occur). Nor is it argued that people, by virtue of their network membership, are always supportive and enjoy conflict-free relations. Gender is an important element of social organisation but other variables such as age, position in the community, and occupation should not be neglected. Although it is important to bear this in mind, in relation to the interaction between individuals, it should also be noted that in Minangkabau differing economic situations may not necessarily affect network membership.

Many types of network exist in Salimpaung. Some relate to kinship (close and more distant relations) and marriage (not only the immediate parents and siblings of the bride and groom but also including other family members such as the mother's sister). Some are based on common residence, occupation (such as agriculture or trade) and similar work patterns (such as fetching water and washing clothes at the village water fountain). Others are based on lifestyle (visits to the weekly marketplace either as farmers selling agricultural produce, or as customers making the weekly purchases), and social activities (meeting in the mosque, coffee shop or other recreational locations such as the football field, or at ritual celebrations marking stages in the life cycle).

From an initial reflection on my data, it became clear that women used a female support network to overcome life's crises and respond to daily occurrences. Women frequently provided childcare to their working mothers, daughters or sisters, often on a reciprocal basis. This reciprocity may be based on 'like for like', in other words two women may offer reciprocal childcare on separate days. Alternatively different types of work may be involved: one woman may offer childcare in return for labour during crop harvest. During sickness female kin, neighbours and friends take on additional domestic duties (collecting water, washing clothes, making purchases at the local market and cooking food).

Women may offer economic support, depending on their own financial circumstances, to less fortunate female kin. This is illustrated in the case of a young woman on migration in Pekanbaru.

> Neni has four children under the age of six. Her husband was, at that stage, an unemployed labourer and they were experiencing hard times. Their living conditions were cramped and damp. Neni became ill shortly after the birth of her youngest son. The baby was also weak and her other children were undernourished and unhealthy.
>
> She returned home with her children where she lived with and was cared for by her elderly mother and her older sister. Her mother, who had little income of her own, provided the money for food and necessities for her daughter and grandchildren until her

> daughter's husband was able to find work and could send money to them. Six weeks later Neni, having recovered from her illness, returned to Pekanbaru with three of her children, leaving the eldest son in the care of his grandmother and his mother's sister.

This is by no means an isolated incident. In times of hardship, Minangkabau migrant women may return home knowing they can rely on the support of their female kin. This may in part be a reflection of the principle of inheritance: that women collectively own the land and ancestral house and, even when they choose to migrate, they can return at any time. This is described by informants as "*adat*", every woman knows that this is a possible course of action and acts as her and her family's security during periods of crisis. This is not to suggest, of course, that jealousies and conflicts do not arise from such an occurrence, but that this is perceived as a viable option and appears to happen from time to time.

Women may also use their gendered kin network for the purposes of solidarity, joining forces to present a strong and determined front against potential male decisions. In one such case a woman lived in a house recently built on her mother's pawned land. When she learnt the land was to be sold she called upon the two other female actors who would also be directly affected by the sale and discussed the matter. They feared the male "owner" of this lineage land would present them with a *fait accompli*. They planned a strategy intended to stall him until such time as they could find a more acceptable solution.

This thesis focuses on networks based on three different aspects of daily life: the life cycle *adat* ceremonies, the local market circuit and the institution of migration. In what ways can these networks be analysed? From the preponderance of terms and interpretations discussed earlier in this chapter, which appear to be the most appropriate for studying Minangkabau networks? The notion of first-order, second-order contacts and so on (Barnes (1969, 1972) may be useful to conceptualise the web of divergent links in the market circuit and possibly also for the other networks discussed here. However, the idea of

representing these relationships in a detailed diagrammatic form would appear to be too complex and may cause confusion rather than clarity.

I use Epstein's (1969) notion of effective network (those with whom an individual is in regular and intense contact) and extended network (other people in the network). The limitation of this approach is that the analysis necessitates concentration on one individual. The problem with this notion is that invisible boundaries are created around that person but, as Barnes (1969) has pointed out, in reality there is no such thing as a partial network as one person's network connects with other networks into infinity. For the purposes of analysing case study material, however, this bounded network may be a useful tool. This means that *adat*, market and migration networks are analysed using the experiences and interactions of one person. How is this person chosen and for what reasons? It would seem preferable to leave this aspect of the discussion until the analysis of each individual case study in later chapters.

In order to assist in the detailed analysis of the networks discussed in this thesis, I use the characteristics set out by Clyde Mitchell (1969) and discussed earlier in this chapter. Notwithstanding the valid problems highlighted by Lamphere (1970) and cited above, in particular the need to recognise that the strength of ties between different members of the network may vary, I find Mitchell's outline a useful one to follow. As Mitchell (1969) himself points out, these characteristics are a guideline only; no one study has yet considered all of these together.

Summary

This section has examined the notion of the network and illustrated some of the ways in which it has been used in previous studies. It has been noted that there are several conceptual weaknesses as well as a certain amount of terminological confusion. Nevertheless its potential use in terms of analysing gender relations

has been considered both at a general level and specifically with regard to its application to the Minangkabau. Before exploring these ideas in more detail, the next chapter examines daily life and the social organisation in Salimpaung as a general background to the data presented in later chapters.

CHAPTER 3: SALIMPAUNG: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC SKETCH

Introduction

This chapter introduces the field site of Salimpaung and is divided into two main sections. The first part places Salimpaung within a region-wide geographical and economic context and gives an account of daily life in the village. The second section examines Minangkabau social organisation, providing a background to aspects of Salimpaung society which are given greater attention in later chapters.

The Village of Salimpaung

Salimpaung as a Part of West Sumatra

West Sumatra, the Minangkabau's traditional homeland, covers an area of 42,297 square kilometres, approximately 2% of Indonesia's total land mass. It is bordered on the north by the province of North Sumatra, on the south by Jambi and Bengkulu, on the east by Riau and the Bukit Barisan, a mountain chain which extends the length of the island, and on the west by the Indian Ocean. The landscape is varied, rising from 2 metres to 2,912 metres above sea level, and includes mountain ranges, active volcanoes, lakes formed in volcanic craters, upland and coastal plains; 64% of the land is forested.

Administratively, West Sumatra is divided into five municipalities and eight *kabupaten* (regencies). The *kabupaten* are sub-divided into *kecamatan* (sub-districts), composed of *nagari* (villages) and at the lowest administrative level *desa* (small village entities). In 1988 the population was nearly 4 million with 79% residing in rural areas, 15% in Padang, the province's capital, and 6% in the five other urban centres scattered throughout the region (Bappeda 1990:39).

The majority of the rural population are farmers growing mainly rice, maize, chillies, spices, vegetables and fruits. In many parts of West Sumatra, where a

large agricultural population cannot be supported, crafts such as weaving, filigree, metalwork or embroidery are produced or home-industries sell cooked food in the local area. There is limited large-scale industrialisation and many commodities are imported from other parts of Indonesia or overseas.

Nagari Salimpaung

My research site, the *nagari* Salimpaung in the *kabupaten* of Tanah Datar, is divided into four *desa* namely Nan Sambilan (my fieldwork base), Koto Tuo, Nan II Suku and Padang Jaya. *Desa* Nan Sambilan is three kilometres in length from north to south and bordered by two small rivers. To the east lies Bukit Gadang, a large hill in part used by villagers as an area of cultivation; to the west are the *desa* Nan II Suku and Koto Tuo. Mount Merapi, an active volcano nearly 3,000 metres high and featuring in many of the Minangkabau origin stories, dominates the western horizon.

Salimpaung is well serviced by roads and transport. The recent construction of an asphalt provincial road has reduced Salimpaung's isolation in relation to the outside world. Destinations can be reached much quicker than previously when people travelled either by horse and cart or by foot. Today there are direct and fast bus links with Batu Sangkar (the *kabupaten* capital and a medium-sized town 12 kilometres to the south), with Bukittinggi and Payakumbuh (the main towns of the two nearest *kabupaten* approximately 30 and 22 kilometres to the north), with Padang (120 kilometres south) as well as with locations further afield including the provinces of North Sumatra, Riau, Jambi and Java. With regard to other forms of communication, Salimpaung does not have a post office, although there is one several kilometres away in Tabat Patah, the *kecamatan* centre. Post and newspapers are delivered to the village office three times a week. The village is not linked to the outside world by telecommunications and the nearest office with telephone, telex, fax or telegram facilities is in Batu Sangkar.

Nan Sambilan covers an area of 250 hectares including 90 hectares of *sawah* (wet rice fields), 75 hectares of *ladang* (unirrigated fields), 73 hectares of *kebun* (jungle) and 2 hectares of fishponds. The provincial road runs through the edge of Nan Sambilan. A number of gravel paths link the centre of the *desa* to its outer populated extremities and to the *sawah* and *kebun* on its periphery.

The resident population of Nan Sambilan is 1,444 with a ratio of 662 male to 782 female (45.8% to 54.2%) in a total of 319 households (Source: Village office August 1992 figures). Farming and trading are the main occupations although a small proportion of villagers work as teachers and civil servants. Outmigration, especially amongst school leavers, is a common feature of life in the village.

The main pockets of population are concentrated in one main area but there are some houses dotted in amongst the *sawah* and *kebun*. Some villagers live in *rumah gadang* (traditional Minangkabau houses), some in *rumah permanen* (houses built of concrete), while the majority live either in *rumah semi-permanen* (houses built of a mixture of concrete and wood) or *rumah kayu* (wooden houses). Dwellings vary in size according to the inhabitants' (or their ancestors') financial circumstances. An average house comprises one room at the front for the living area with one or two bedrooms leading off and a kitchen to one side. A few houses in the village were unoccupied during my fieldwork; the previous inhabitants have either moved to a new house or are on migration. Several new houses were being built during my stay although construction is usually undertaken in stages as materials and labour can be afforded. In the last three years, the village has been connected to an electricity supply and many households - over half the houses in my household survey - have taken advantage of this facility. Many villagers have radios and a few households own televisions.



The jungle encroaches on Salimpaung's cultivated land



Salimpaung: the ancestral heart of the village

The village can be divided into two parts, the new centre and the old heart. The new centre is located at the north end of the village and is dissected by the main provincial road. The majority of the community facilities are here: the *Kerapatan Adat Nagari* (the village *adat* council hall), the *Pukesmas* (health centre), the main mosque, the marketplace, the schools, the village office, the village green where football or large religious gatherings take place, and the electricity office, as well as a number of shops selling wares ranging from daily needs to electrical goods and motor repairs.

The old part of Nan Sambilan is set back from the main road and has numerous dwellings surrounded by fields and forest. This is the ancestral heart of the village where most of Nan Sambilan's *rumah gadang* are located. The *rumah gadang* is a traditional house with a wooden frame, walls made of woven bamboo (to facilitate extensions), and a curved wooden roof thatched with *anau* (palm tree) bark or corrugated iron and believed to symbolise the buffalo horns featured in one interpretation of the Minangkabau origin story. The front of the house may be decorated with wood carvings or painted.

The *rumah gadang* is on two levels: the upper level, supported by large wooden pillars, comprises the inhabitants' sleeping and living areas; the lower level serves as a shelter for animals such as buffalo, goats, ducks and chickens. The entrance to the upper level, via steep wooden steps, is usually through a large kitchen to one side of the house which has an open fire for cooking and is equipped with a few cooking utensils. A door from the kitchen leads into a room, the length of the *rumah gadang*, which is used as the living area. There are two or three large windows, open during the day and closed with wooden shutters at night. Depending upon the inhabitants' financial circumstances, the *rumah gadang* may have several pieces of furniture such as a dining table and chairs, a rattan sofa and a cabinet for crockery. This room is used during life

cycle ceremonies or when visitors arrive. If there are insufficient chairs, the furniture is cleared and rattan mats are used for floor seating. This reflects an important aspect of Minangkabau *baso baso* (cultural etiquette) stating that no one person should sit higher than another and symbolising the character of Minangkabau status principles. This is further reflected in the *adat* saying "*tagak samo tinggi, duduak samo randah*" (to stand equally high and to sit equally low). At the back of the house and leading from this long room are *bilik*, separate rooms for each married female member of the household.

The *rumah gadang* is part of a matrilineal group's ancestral property (*harto pusako*) and as such is owned by the descent group as a whole. Although the house may be inhabited by a mother, her children and her children's children, the house also belongs to the mother's other female kin within a matrilineage who also have the right to live there. In practical terms, of course, every woman and her family within a matrilineal group cannot live in one house even though it may have been extended several times to accommodate greater numbers of people. Once the house becomes too overcrowded smaller dwellings are built by the side of the *rumah gadang*. Inevitably, over the years, as more female members lay claim to the ancestral house and it becomes over-populated, some villagers are forced to move away and build other houses, sometimes on ancestral rice land, around the periphery of the old village centre. Nevertheless when these villagers are en route from their home to the ancestral centre of the village and are greeted with "*Ka ma*'?" (where are you going?) they reply "*pulang*" (I am going home) or "*pulang ka kampuang*" (I am returning to my clan). This suggests that they closely identify themselves with this part of the village and with their descent group's *rumah gadang* even if they themselves no longer live (or have never lived) there. Indeed any important event in the life cycle may take place in their *rumah gadang* and it is common for women to return to the ancestral home during their first pregnancy and remain there for a

few months after the baby's birth. The oldest *rumah gadang* remains the most important to members of that matrilineal group even if other traditional houses have been built at a later date.

Daily Life in Salimpaung

Life in Salimpaung is very similar from one day to another. Those working in the fields or the market stop to pray but rarely take extended periods away from their work. Nan Sambilan has had a mosque for 15 years although its construction is as yet incomplete and many people spend their spare time working on the building. This is commonly known as *gotong royong* where villagers come together and work on a given project for the good of the community. *Surau*, prayer houses corporately owned by one section of a matriclan and usually located in the midst of ancestral rice land, are also used. People involved in agricultural pursuits usually prefer to stop work and pray in the nearby *surau* rather than go a greater distance to the mosque.

Religion forms an important part of life in the village. Islamic prayers five times a day are taken seriously by most villagers and older people tend to keep watch over the prayers of their younger relations. From my observations *Bulan Puasa*, the Islamic fasting month, is strictly adhered to by the majority. Those who publicly flout the rules of fasting are generally regarded with disdain.

The relationship between matrilineal *adat* and Islamic beliefs is frequently cited as one of the anomalies of Minangkabau society. "The question of which subsystem should prevail, which subsystem should be superior to the other, explicitly and implicitly is part of the context in which people talk about either adat or Islam" (F and K von Benda-Beckmann 1988:197). Taufik Abdullah (1966), himself a Minangkabau, questions whether Islamic and *adat* values conflict. He maintains that the relationship between Islam and *adat* should be

perceived not as two separate and contradictory entities but as part of one complete system: the *Alam Minangkabau* (the Minangkabau World) (1966:4). Giving other examples which form oppositions (patrilineal kingship and matrilineal commoners, the individual and society), he shows that "conflict is seen dialectically, as essential to achieving the integration of the society" (1966:3). *Adat* itself incorporates a recognition that adaptation to changing times is essential and this can be seen in many of the Minangkabau aphorisms. This is discussed in more detail later in the chapter.

Religion in Salimpaung is not only a belief system, it is also an intrinsic part of the social life of the village. Men and women visiting the mosque or prayer house pray together (albeit in separate parts of the building) and afterwards stop and talk. One major religious event which took place during my fieldwork was a visit to Salimpaung by the famous Islamic orator, Haji Zainhuddin MZ. Shops were shut and the fields and village were deserted. The vast majority of the population of Salimpaung and surrounding villages, dressed in their best clothes, congregated on the football field to hear him speak.

The days leading up to the beginning and end of the fasting month and other religious festivals such as *Hari Raya Haji* (the holy day celebrating pilgrimage to Mecca) are periods of great social activity when work stops temporarily and families gather from far and wide. Other occasions which interrupt the routine of work are ceremonies celebrating important stages in the life cycle. For close relatives, both male and female, these events take considerable time to organise and only essential work elsewhere is undertaken. This is discussed in detail in the next chapter.

The arrival home from *merantau* (migration) of one of Nan Sambilan's villagers is a great source of excitement. Migration, as I discuss in Chapter 6, plays a

significant part in the lives of most Salimpaung inhabitants. Many have been on migration at some time in their lives or, at the least, have a close relative (son, daughter, sibling) currently on migration. Some migrants, especially those living within a day's travel of Salimpaung, are able to return home on a regular basis - once or maybe several times a year. Others migrate to more distant destinations such as Jakarta or Batam. In both cases, this involves a three day journey and is often too expensive for an individual, let alone a family, to undertake regularly. Some migrants only manage to return to Salimpaung every few years. The migrant's visit home is cause for celebration. S/he visits many homes in the village and is also expected to host a *salawak* one evening. The *salawak*, a recitation of Islamic prayers lasting two hours and accompanied by two traditional *rabano* (percussion instruments having features of both the Western tambourine and drum), is led by a group of men from the same clan. It is an important feature of the life cycle rituals but is also an inherent part of other celebrations. It provides an opportunity for members of the host's matrilineal descent group to gather together and exchange news with the migrant about his/her life in the migrant area and about other family members living in the same place.

A Typical Day in Salimpaung

Between 5.00 and 5.30 am, before dawn breaks, Islamic calls to prayer coming from the mosque signal the start of the day and most villagers rise then. Having washed and prayed, women boil water and cook rice in preparation for the first meal of the day. Men and women working in the fields, the market or as civil servants in nearby villages and towns leave their houses early, often not returning until late afternoon or evening.

From the age of seven, children attend school, usually for about three hours a day on six days a week. Younger children may go to a fee-paying nursery

school; state primary education is available from the ages of seven to thirteen. Most of these children are also expected to attend Nan Sambilan's *madrasah* (Islamic school) to learn Arabic and more about Islam. In addition they go to the *surau* several times a week to recite the Koran.

The Salimpaung trader rises and leaves home early in order to arrive at the market and display her/his goods before the first customers appear. Likewise. the Salimpaung farmer begins work in the fields early, before the heat of the day. Activities such as ploughing, planting and harvesting usually take all day but other work such as weeding can be undertaken in the cooler hours. Domestic chores such as fetching water and washing clothes also have to be performed. Some households have their own well but most people collect water two or three times a day from the communal pipes located at several points in the village. Children from the age of about seven - especially girls - are usually expected to wash their own clothes, and boys and girls help to collect water. Occasionally an adult man may undertake this task for his elderly or sick mother, or for his own resident household although this does not appear to be usual and may depend on individual relationships within marriage. Most households cook on open fires although some may also have an oil stove. Some households buy the wood but the majority tend to collect it themselves from the nearby jungle. This is usually undertaken by both male and female members of the household on a weekly or monthly basis. Other domestic duties such as buying, gathering and cooking food are usually the responsibility of the women. Between 11 and 12 noon, most people have their first main meal of the day (unless they have been working in the fields on heavy tasks in which case they eat at about 8 am and then have a high sugar-content snack at 11 am and another meal at 1 pm). Food left over from the night before is usually eaten although an additional dish may also be prepared.

Once agricultural activities have been completed, usually from about 2 pm unless a major agricultural task is involved, time is set aside for visits to other members of the matriclan, to one's spouse's matrilineal group, or to the sick. This is also the time when life cycle ceremonies take place. On days when there is a special life cycle ceremony, work in the fields begins much earlier than usual so that attendance is possible in the afternoon. On an average day another meal is prepared mid-afternoon by the women of the household. If the woman is working and is unlikely to be home until evening, one of her sisters or her mother may prepare a meal. This often works on a reciprocal basis. Her husband may cook if there are no female relations nearby but this depends on individual relationships in marriage and is not regarded as the cultural norm.

Bathing for most people marks the end of the working day. Following this, the hour before sunset is leisure time. During this period there appears to be a clear segregation by age and gender. Older women congregate in a house or a nearby *lapau* (small shop) usually belonging to a kinswoman where they chat with neighbours, friends and the occasional outsider. Older men go to one of the *rumah makan* (cafe) near the marketplace or in the heart of the village to sit, smoke and drink coffee and perhaps to play dominoes. Younger men and unmarried young women stroll through the streets in same-sex groups, meet at crossroads which link different parts of the village or play volleyball amongst themselves or against groups from nearby villages. Occasionally young and older men go to the village green and watch or play football. Young married women bring their small children to play areas such as the forecourt of the mill where they can watch their children while socialising with other young women. Only young male and female children seem to mix as they play tag or ball.

Although there are wealth differentials in the village this does not affect social contact. Rich people live next to the poor. Rich and poor children play and go

to school together. As adolescents and then as adults they remain friends. They freely visit each other's houses and offer assistance in the preparations for the family's life cycle ceremonies just as they would to someone in the same economic group.

In the evening following prayers and a meal people visit their families or neighbours. A man would be most likely to visit his mother or sisters living in a different part of the village; women visit nearby kin or neighbours and sit and chat, watch television or listen to the radio. From time to time a film is shown in the local school attracting many younger members of the community.

Greetings

Throughout the day, time is spent in conversation with other villagers and outsiders as they go about their daily tasks. A conversation begins with a formal greeting. These greetings are a fundamental part of Minangkabau *baso baso* and are learnt from an early age. Anthropologists studying greetings rituals in other cultures have found that greetings are used for different purposes: to transform potentially hostile situations into neutral ones as amongst the Tuareg (Youssouf, Grimshaw and Bird 1976), for status projection as amongst the Wolof (Irvine 1974) or for the exchange of information concerning rain and grazing essential for the Beja's mobile pastoralist lives (Morton 1988). In the Minangkabau case, they appear to be used mainly as an established means of obtaining and disseminating information relevant to the lives of its participants although there may also be an element of social control involved in certain greetings.

The standard greeting, "*Ka ma'*?" ("where are you going?") or "*Dari ma'*?" ("where have you been?"), can begin a dialogue which has relevance to the villagers' livelihood. For example:

Person A: "Where have you been?"

Person B: "To the *sawah*"

Person A: "What were you doing there?"

Person B: "Checking the water supply"

Person A: "And was there enough water?"

Person B: "No, the field was nearly dry. I had to break down a bit of the *sawah* wall to allow water from the irrigation system into my field".

If Person A has newly planted rice in *sawah* fields further down the irrigation system, then she is alerted to the fact that her rice field may also be dry and she may need to take appropriate action. Other conversations may revolve around a plague of mice in Person B's field and Person A may want to keep a closer eye on her own fields to ensure the mice do not destroy her crop. Alternatively they may discuss the chillies that Person B has just harvested and is to take to market the following day. Person A may have sold chillies in the local market recently or she may have spoken to someone else who has done so and she is therefore able to pass on information to Person B regarding the cost per kilo she can expect to obtain. This exchange of economic information is discussed further in Chapter 5.

Greetings can also act as a mild form of social control in the village especially, but not solely, from the older to the younger generations. For example, following the Muslim call to prayer from the mosque a common greeting is "*Alah sumbayang*?" ("have you prayed yet?") If the response is "*Alum lai*" ("not yet") some form of rebuke may follow but if the answer is "*Alah*" ("Yes I have") a nod of approval is often forthcoming. During Ramadan, the Islamic fasting month, a common greeting is "*alah puaso*?" ("are you fasting?"). Again, if the answer is "no" the individual is made to feel ashamed.

Communal meeting places enable people to exchange news and gossip and discuss issues of common interest on an *ad hoc* basis. The area around the market is a designated meeting place mainly for the young men of the village in the early evening. The village office becomes a centre of activity when post and papers are delivered. In addition to outside news, villagers and visitors exchange information on local issues. Other meeting places tend to be in the old part of the village including Nan Sambilan's mosque, *surau* and communal washing and bathing places as well as a multitude of *lapau*.

As Tanner (1971) has argued:

> The woman's washing spot is sometimes jokingly referred to as the village parliament, an appelation rather close to the truth since it is one of the village's major opinion forming institutions. This function is shared with the village square or crossroads and the village coffee shops, places in which men gather. (1971:85)

The importance of the market and the *lapau* as meeting places and forum for the exchange of information are discussed further in Chapter 5.

Agriculture in Salimpaung

Wet rice (*sawah*) is the most common form of cultivation in Salimpaung. Although some dry rice production is attempted it is not regarded as particularly successful. Land is fertile and during the wet season irrigation water from Mount Merapi's springs is plentiful. Rice fields with constant water supplies yield two harvests per annum but there are few fields like this, and when irrigation water is unavailable rice is replaced by dry field crops such as chillies, peanuts, tomatoes, corn and soybeans. Rice is grown primarily for subsistence, whereas dry field crops are intended for sale in the local market. Although the latter crops provide a cash income, there is a general preference for rice production as people believe that if they have rice they will not starve. With this in mind, a decision is often made to leave the field fallow following harvest

for slightly longer than the customary two months in the hope that there will be sufficient irrigation water to grow rice at the end of this period.

In comparison to the cultivation of other crops, rice production is labour- and time-intensive. As an initial stage, rice seeds are either scattered over muddy ground or planted in dry soil in one small section of the field or in the farmer's yard around the house. The ground is enclosed by latticed bamboo fences; old clothes and plastic bags are tied to the fence to scare away the birds. Seedlings take one month to grow before they can be transplanted to the *sawah*.

Preparation of the *sawah* prior to planting takes between one and three days depending on the size of the field. Water is channelled through the village irrigation system to the appropriate field. This may be problematic as the water often has to pass through several other fields first. If dry crops are being grown in any of the fields further up the irrigation system then the farmer lower down has to wait until those crops have been harvested before the water can be supplied. This is not a particularly common occurrence as harvests in adjacent fields tend to coincide, but in such cases a decision has to be made, weighing up the advantages of either waiting for the other field's harvest and then planting wet rice, or alternatively planting dry crops too.

Once the field is sufficiently muddy, the soil can be prepared either using a buffalo-drawn plough or, if the previous harvest was also rice, manually using a hoe. Sections of the walls of the fields (which also form paths between fields and may be used to connect one part of the village to another) often have to be rebuilt. In order to make rice planting more effective the field is levelled using a large flat piece of wood pulled by a buffalo or again undertaken manually.

The ground is now ready and the rice seedlings are gathered into large bundles and taken to the field. They are dipped in fertiliser and then two or three seedlings are planted together, approximately 15 centimetres apart. This is a female activity. Usually several women work together; a woman only tends to work alone if the field is small. For the first two months of growth, it is essential that the rice plants receive adequate water and every day the field is checked and the water supply adjusted accordingly. One and two months after planting the field is weeded (both men and women do this) and at two months the water is drained from the field and fertiliser is applied. Four months after planting, the rice is ready to harvest.

The main harvest season creates a special atmosphere of excitement in the village. Families know that at least for the next couple of months they do not have to worry about food; money, often in short supply, does not have to be spent on buying rice, their staple food.

Harvesting an average size field takes several people one day working from dawn to dusk. If the task cannot be completed in that day male members of the group sleep in the field overnight to guard the rice from animals or thieves. During harvesting there is no strict division of labour although generally women cut the rice plants with a sickle and carry them in bundles to the threshing area and men do the threshing. The *padi* are separated from the stalks by a process of hitting the stalks against a row of wooden planks releasing the rice to a large box underneath. To ensure that the rice is not carried away by the wind, large plastic sheets attached to wooden poles are placed in holes in the four corners of the wooden box. This 'threshing box' is a recent development; prior to this most people - men and women - threshed by stamping on the rice plants with their feet thereby releasing the *padi*. Although a much slower process some farmers still use this method if they do not have, or do not wish to hire, the threshing box.

The separated grain is scooped into a hand-driven winnowing machine. The whole grain can then be put into sacks and taken to the farmer's home or to the mill. The rice stalks are fed to buffalo and goats which are also turned into the fields. Finally the remaining stubble in the *sawah* is burnt. The field lies fallow for two months before new crops are planted.

Throughout the harvesting day refreshments - rice and *sambal* (hot spicy dishes made from meat, fish, vegetables or pulses) - are brought to the workers by women. At a surface level it could be suggested, as indeed one anthropologist has done, that it is mainly men who work in the fields while women work in the kitchen to provide the meals (Harsja Bachtiar 1967). This approach neglects Salimpaung women's role as holders of the usufruct rights to ancestral property and fails to recognise that they have the overall responsibility for the management of rice cultivation. Part of this responsibility is to ensure there is adequate labour to complete the task. The provision of food to workers provides these women with the opportunity to oversee the workers and assess how the harvesting is progressing. When the final meal has been taken to the field, usually by the early afternoon, she may also join in the harvesting. If other female members of her family - her sister or mother - are not involved in the harvest then they may help with the cooking or look after the workers' young children. Children from the age of four begin to learn the skills of rice cultivation by observing the family at work and by joining in agricultural activities. Whilst at this age it is only a game, it helps to prepare them for the skills they are expected to have in order to contribute their labour when they are older. Most children begin to help in rice production from the age of about ten years old.



The rice harvest: men, women and children work together

After threshing, the rice is laid out in the sun for one to two days and is then stored. It is milled as and when required. Twenty or so years ago, prior to the existence of the mechanised mill, rice was pounded manually using a *lassuang* (stone mortar) and a long bamboo pole to separate the husks from the rice; sometimes a water-powered mill was used. Both methods were time-consuming. A sack of rice could be milled in half an hour in a water-powered mill, compared to the seconds that it takes at the mechanised mill. Now the *lassuang* is used for grinding coffee or for pounding rice into powder for baby food.

Men and women may help each other in the fields through mutual aid groups (*gotong royong*) at key times during the agricultural year. Kahn (1980a) suggests that although these groups were once an important institution in his research area of Sungai Puar, they are now less significant. In Salimpaung, they do not always feature prominently in all stages of the agricultural cycle. In some households, wage labour has replaced *gotong royong*. In others, *gotong royong* persists although the principles involved are now different. Labour is still exchanged between two parties but nowadays, at certain stages of the agricultural cycle, workers - kin or friends of the landholder - may be paid for their work. Sisters frequently help each other, especially during planting and weeding, on a reciprocal non-payment basis. In contrast, labour during harvest is more likely to be on a reciprocal payment basis. In other words, a woman may need help with her harvest and so her brother and his wife offer their labour. At some future date, that same woman, together with her husband, may help her sister-in-law in her field. Although labour is based on the principle of reciprocity, on each occasion payment is made in the form of a portion of the rice harvest. The only people who do not receive payment for their labour are a woman's husband and children living in the same household who are the first to benefit from the harvest.

Many villagers earn a subsistence living by offering themselves as wage labourers at key stages in the agricultural process. Labour during ploughing or planting is paid in cash but during harvesting the payment is a portion of the rice harvest. Those who have insufficient land may also be involved in sharecropping. The landholder supplies the land and fertiliser; the sharecropper provides all the labour (even if this has to be bought in at certain stages such as ploughing). The harvest is then halved between them.

Although there is a gender division of labour in the early stages of rice cultivation (the main male task is ploughing, the main female task is planting) gender roles are not so clearly defined in weeding, applying fertiliser and harvesting. Furthermore gender roles may not always be strictly adhered to. The woman who has neither male kin nor money to pay for wage labour ploughs the rice field manually and builds up the *sawah* walls herself. I knew of no instances where men planted the rice but then in most cases men work on fields belonging to women. It is the woman who manages the ancestral rice fields, organises the labour and makes the decisions concerning all aspects of the rice growing process.

The production of dry field crops does not involve a strict division of labour. Both men and women plant the crops, weed the fields and harvest. As a crop reaches harvest time, it has to be guarded against thieves. Women spend a large portion of the day there whilst men may sleep in the field overnight. Women are also more likely to be responsible for organising the sale of the harvest. Wage labour is rarely employed for the activities around these crops (unless of course those with usufruct rights are not farmers) as harvesting can be more gradual (over a period of a week for example) and children (from the age of about five) as well as the elderly often help with the harvest.

Most villagers have tracts of *kebun* located on the outskirts of the village in which cinnamon and coffee are grown for sale and bananas and cassava for consumption. Cinnamon is particularly important to the economy of the region and tends to keep a stable price. It is therefore an important source of income for villagers without being too labour-intensive. A branch of the tree is cut down, the bark is separated from the wood and then left in the sun to dry. The bark is sold, the wood is used as fuel.

Fish are kept in the ancestral fishponds and some villagers raise a few goats, ducks and chickens. In addition to the crops cultivated in the fields, many households grow a selection of vegetables, spices and fruits in the yard around the house. In times of financial crisis the villagers can easily be self-sufficient (as long as they have rice) as they can gather wild vegetables and plants as well as use the crops in the yard. In addition, although harvests of dry field crops are destined for sale in the market it is customary to give a portion of the harvest to family members and occasionally to neighbours.

Traditional farming methods and implements are employed. Mechanised agricultural tools are used in some parts of the province although this is rare. The only mechanisation in Salimpaung is the rice mill. There have however been a number of changes in the agricultural process over recent years. High yield varieties of rice are used. Fertilisers are now factory manufactured rather than the traditional combination of buffalo dung and ashes from burnt rice husks, although some farmers still use a traditional fertiliser made from a collection of different types of leaves. Another source of fertiliser, albeit a sporadic one, comes from Mount Merapi's eruption of tons of volcanic ash. This occurs several times a year and, depending on wind direction, ash may settle on Salimpaung land. Insecticides are rarely needed as there is little risk of pests in this particular part of the province. The main dangers to rice plants are either an

occasional plague of mice, and on such occasions poison is put around the plants, or of ducks which swim amongst the young rice plants trampling them down or eating them. Regular visits to the fields to chase away the ducks and to undertake any necessary replanting helps to minimise damage.

Minangkabau Social Organisation

Introductory Comments

This section examines Minangkabau social organisation particularly within the Salimpaung context. It is based on my own field notes on Salimpaung culture and is complemented, at a general level, by material from previous studies on the Minangkabau. Before proceeding three points should be made concerning the parameters of this section.

Firstly, and this point was made in the introductory chapter, Minangkabau village culture displays diverse characteristics, even within a confined geographical area. This is readily apparent in the wide range of customs to celebrate stages in the life cycle, the various terms and their possible meanings applied to the descent groups, the differing socio-political organisation as well as the diversities in dialect, architecture and customary dress.

Secondly, in Chapter 2, I criticised several previous studies for being too male-focused. Can I then use material from these studies and escape the accusation that I am using biased material to create an apparently rounded picture of Minangkabau society? (Milton 1979). There are two responses to this: the first is that these studies are useful inasmuch as they provide a male perspective on Minangkabau society. It is the total neglect of women or the portrayal of women as dependent which I criticise. The second is that this section is based mainly on my own field notes. The other studies are employed to give more weight to commentaries on *adat*, drawing on direct *adat* aphorisms wherever possible.

Thirdly, some of the literature used in this section is based either directly or indirectly on sources written during or after Dutch colonial rule. Kahn (1976) criticises early Dutch authors and those who use their work for portraying Minangkabau society during colonialism as 'traditional'. In contrast, Kahn believes this record is only a representation of social organisation following the impact of 300 years of Dutch mercantilism and colonialism. The notion of 'traditional matrilineal organisation' implies "a timeless system, while Minangkabau society has undergone a series of historical transformations which demand that any historical reconstruction be anchored in a specific historical period" (1976:79). Furthermore "it smacks of the ideology of 'the golden age'" and suggests that neo-colonialism can effect "a smooth transition from tradition to modernity" (1976:79). Whilst I would not dispute that these arguments are valid, the purpose of this chapter is neither to give a detailed account of the ideal-typical Minangkabau culture as an exercise in itself nor to reflect the broad contemporary situation in contrast to traditional Minangkabau society. Rather its objective is to provide a background to the specific fieldwork area for the remaining chapters.

Minangkabau Adat

The Minangkabau divide their world into three distinct entities, the *darek* (the cultural and geographical heartland bordered by Mounts Merapi, Sago and Singgalang), the *pasisie* (the coastal area from the sea to the *darek*) and the *rantau* (traditionally the area extending eastwards from the *darek* but latterly also used to describe any region where a significant number of Minangkabau migrants have settled) (Dt Rajo Penghulu 1978:21-22). The *darek* comprises three parts or *luhak*: Tanah Datar, Limapuluh Kota and Agam. Historically, Tanah Datar is the most important of these having within its boundaries the first *nagari*, Pariangan Padang Panjang, and the royal court in Pagaruyung (Datuk Nagari Basa 1966:9).



Sakali aie gadang, sakali tapian baralieh (When the floods come, the bathing place moves): The merging of the old with the new

The *tambo* (traditional historiography), originally transmitted orally and later recorded in Arabic script, sets out the boundaries of the *darek*, *pasisie* and *rantau*. It also contains 'ideal' rules of conduct and recalls a number of stories concerning the Minangkabau mythical era when Datuk Katumanggungan and Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang, two prominent cultural figures, laid the foundations of Minangkabau *adat* (Kato 1982; Taufik Abdullah 1972). Taufik Abdullah (1985) draws attention to the different versions of the *tambo*. These variations reflect local oral traditions but are also a consequence of Islamic influence when the *tambo* was first written down. He argues that nearly all the *tambo* texts have been Islamicised.

Adat, embodied in proverbs (*kata pepatah*) and rules (*kata petiti*), provides the basis of the Minangkabau social system with regard to descent, inheritance and authority. Furthermore *adat* creates a system of values through which ideal behaviour can be learnt and moral judgements made (Datuk Rajo Penghulu 1978, Imran Manan 1984; Taufik Abdullah 1966).

Four categories of *adat* can be identified. Firstly, *adat nan sabananyo adat* (*adat* which is truly *adat*), the teachings of Datuk Katumanggungan and Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang, regarded as central to the Minangkabau system (such as inheritance rules) and thus unchanging. This is manifested in the *adat* maxim: "*[adat] indak lakang dipaneh, indak lapuek diudjan* (*adat* neither cracks in the sun nor rots in the rain)". Secondly, *adat nan diadatkan* (*adat* which becomes *adat*) which is not rigidly adhered to but adapts in response to discussion and consensus amongst the community. This is illustrated in the maxims "*sakali aie gadang, sakali tapian baralieh*" ("When the floods come the bathing place moves") and *"Baiek dipakai djo mupakat, buruek dibuang djo rundingan"* ("That which is good should be used through consensus, that which is bad should be discarded after discussion"). Thirdly, *adat nan teradat* which recognises the

different interpretations of *adat* at the local village level. Finally, *adat istiadat* referring to the customs of one particular village or group such as their music or form of rituals. This is referred to in the saying *"Nan baraso bamakan, Nan babunyi badanga"* ("That which tastes good should be eaten, that which is sung should be heard") (Darwis Thaib 1965, Datuk Rajo Penghulu 1978, Nasroen 1957, Taufik Abdullah 1972). Two of the central tenets of *adat nan sabananyo*, namely descent and inheritance, are now discussed in more detail. Authority, another important aspect of *adat*, has already been considered in Chapter 2 in relation to the debate concerning classic and feminist models of matriliny.

Matrilineal Descent Groups

There are a number of different terms used for the various levels of matrilineal groupings and this next section reflects the situation in Salimpaung rather than the wider Minangkabau society which, as I suggested earlier in this chapter, varies from village to village. There are three levels of descent group most commonly recognised by inhabitants of Salimpaung: the *(sa)paruik* (extended matrilineal family), the *(sa)payung* or *kaum* (lineage) and the *suku* or *kampuang* (clan).

The *saparuik* comprises the mother, her children and her daughters' children. The father of the children may visit or live with them but he remains a member of his mother's descent group and therefore has little authority in discussions relating to the affairs of his wife's matrilineal group. The mother's brother (*mamak*) is an important figure in his sister's family group. He goes to his sister's home on a regular basis and within this family circle he is shown great respect. He takes an interest in his sisters' children and, together with his sister, plays a leading role during the discussions and preparations for their marriages.

This male-male or male-female relationship is significant but, I would argue, female-female and female-male relations are of equal importance. This refers in particular to the relationship between sisters or between a mother and daughter, as well as between a woman and her sister's children. Sisters live in the same house at least until marriage, unlike brothers who often sleep in the *surau* and do not have the same attachment to the house. After marriage, a mother and daughter, or sisters, not only remain part of the same descent group but may also be part of the same domestic unit, often sharing living space. Alternatively they may be neighbours. They often work together in the fields and may even share the usufruct rights to one field if the corporate group does not have a lot of ancestral land. Although there may be an element of competition or jealousy between sisters, for external appearances, their relationship is based on reciprocity and co-operation. Sisters help each other in times of crisis or celebration and generally regard their relationship as more important than that between sister and brother. Lewis (1962) believes the sister bond is so strong in terms of sharing property and home as well as providing support and security that the "structural tie between sisters is the model upon which the matrilineal system is based" (1962:124).

Salimpaung women often remarked that their most important relationships were with their close female kin (mother, sister, daughter). Female relations offer support to a pregnant woman, visit a sick woman and care for her, bring her food and drink, sit with a dead woman and give her her final *mandi* (bath). Ros, a female teacher, told me of her plans to visit her older sister in Jakarta during her school holidays. Her sister was heavily pregnant and Ros intended to look after her sister's clothing business and help with the care of her sister's other children. I remarked that her brother's wife, who lived in Pekanbaru (a six rather than 72 hours' journey) had just had a baby and asked if she would go there first. Ros replied in a somewhat surprised tone that she would not. She

regarded the relationship with her sister and her sister's children as far more important than that with her brother and his child, even though she saw her brother more frequently because he lived much closer and often returned to Salimpaung. Ros' ties with her sister were further accentuated because her sister needed her assistance. This was by no means an isolated comment and reflects the importance not only of the relationship between sisters but also between a woman and her sister's children.

Sisters' children are likely to divide their time between their mother's and their mother's sisters' houses and may often be offered food by their mother's sister if they are there during a meal time. The important role of a woman in relation to her sister's children is reflected in the kinship terminology. The word for mother is *amak*; the term for mother's sister is either *adang* or *etek* depending on whether the sister is older or younger. However, the mother's sister is, in nearly all cases, referred to as *amak*. The exception is when the woman concerned is much younger than the child's mother. Women call their sister's children *anak* (child), the same kinship term they use for their own children. This may refer to the commitment most women have to their sister's children: if a woman dies her sister would take either full or part responsibility for the upbringing of the deceased's offspring.

The *sapayung* consists of a group of related *paruik* able to identify a common female ancestor. The *penghulu* (the male leader of the lineage) is a position inherited from mother's brother to sister's son and selected from amongst the male members claiming the closest association to the founding female of the lineage. He is expected to be wise, trustworthy, patient, a good orator and fully conversant with *adat* laws. In contemporary Salimpaung society he has a ritual role in life cycle events and is also important as a mediator between two disputing parties within and between matrilineages. The respect associated with

this position is exemplified by his inherited title (such as Datuk Sinaro Kayo or Datuk Rajo Usali) together with the term of address ('*datuk*') given to him by the younger generations. In some cases he has the sole use of a piece of ancestral rice land, known as *sawah kagadangan*, as well as an ancestral fishpond. Although each lineage has its own *penghulu* position not all of these were occupied. One clan, for example, had seven *penghulu* positions but men in only two of these. The other *penghulu* had died and had not been replaced mainly due to the expense of the inauguration ceremony prescribed by *adat*.

The final matrilineal grouping is the *suku*, related lineages whose members believe they share a common female ancestor although they are unable to name that ancestor. In Salimpaung there are four main *suku* and several minor *suku*. Although during household surveys no distinction was made by respondents between *urang asali* (descendants of original settlers in Salimpaung) and *urang datang* (newcomers), my data suggest that one of the main *suku* may not have been an original settler's clan. It has only four *rumah gadang* in comparison to other *suku* (which have an average of nine) and those it has are not old. Its territorial area is located around the outskirts of the heart of the village, its members have little ancestral land and what they do have is bought, pawned or sharecropped. Indeed few of its members are farmers and most trade for a living.

Genealogy to some extent determines territorial boundaries and members of a *suku* live together in one area of the village; that part of the village is known by the name of their clan.

Ancestral Property

One of the central and unchanging tenets of *adat* is that *harto pusako*, such as agricultural land, the ancestral house and any heirlooms, is corporately owned by

the matrilineal group. This provides an element of economic security for the matrilineage and consequently helps to ensure its continuity.

As one *adat* maxim states:

> *Aienyo bulieh diminum,*
> *buahnyo bulieh dimakan,*
> *batangnyo tatap tingga*
>
> Its water may be drunk,
> its fruit [may] be eaten,
> but its stem remains forever
>
> (cited in Benda-Beckman 1982:27-28)

There are several basic *adat* principles applied to land distribution within a matrilineage. Land should be allocated in accordance with the needs of the married women of the lineage. It is recognised that land rights are not static and that, at some time in the future, redistribution may occur in the light of the particular needs of different lineage sections. This is decided at a meeting of lineage members which is led by the eldest woman and the *penghulu*, although agreement should be reached through consensus (Imran Manan 1984:70).

In Salimpaung the usufruct rights to the matrilineal group's ancestral land and house are usually divided equally between senior women of the matrilineage and are passed from mother to daughter when the mother reaches old age or dies. If the mother has no daughters then her son may use the land for his lifetime. Once he dies the land is returned to the matrilineal group as a whole and usufruct rights are re-allocated to the female kin within the group closest to the dead man's mother. Female migrant members of the matrilineal descent group usually lose their rights to the property although if they decided to return some land would have to be allocated to them. If a harvest coincides with a visit by one of the family to the migrant, then it is usual for a portion of the crops to be taken to her.

Harto pusako is regarded as belonging to the corporate lineage group and therefore cannot be sold. Benda-Beckmann (1979) draws attention to two possible exceptions to this principle: the ancestral land could be sold to other villagers for the purposes of house building; and, if there are no future heirs, the last remaining members of the lineage may sell to other villagers. In both cases, there must be consensus between the members (Benda-Beckmann 1979:169).

Harto pusako may also be pawned to meet debts incurred under certain circumstances prescribed by *adat* and provided the individual has the agreement of the other members of the matrilineal group. These are the burial of a member of the matrilineal group, the first marriage of a female member of the group, the urgent repair of an ancestral house or the installation of a *penghulu* (Benda-Beckmann 1979). In contemporary Salimpaung society, however, several separate cases revealed that ancestral land could, with the agreement of descent group members, be sold or pawned in order to pay hospital and school fees.

It is preferable to pawn ancestral property to someone within the immediate descent group; if this is not possible then to someone in the same clan or at the least in the same village. There is a general reluctance to sell or pawn land to outsiders because it may be difficult for descent group members to reclaim their property. Pawning within one section of a descent group can also occasionally cause problems if left for a generation. One case arose during my fieldwork which illustrates this point.

> Approximately 60 years ago Amak Jamillah, finding herself in financial difficulties, had no alternative but to pawn one of her ancestral rice fields. In exchange for the equivalent of three gold pieces and with the approval of other members of her family, she relinquished her landholding rights to her older sister, Amak Rosmidar.
>
> Amak Rosmidar continued to cultivate rice there and also built a small shop on part of the land. Many years later Amak Rosmidar died and, having no daughters, left the usufruct rights of the field to her elder son, Pak Abral, who had recently retired from the

police force and had returned home from migration. Her only other son, Pak Adip, was at the time working in Jakarta. Pak Abral used the rice field but closed the shop.

At about the same time Amak Jamillah's eldest daughter, Amak Mariana, and her husband reached retirement age and returned to the village from migration. Having nowhere to live and no income other than a small government pension, Amak Mariana approached her mother's sister's son, Pak Abral, and asked if she might reopen the shop. Following a family meeting, Pak Abral agreed, Amak Mariana and her husband moved in and she began to trade. Several months later, Amak Mariana decided she would like to have a home for her old age. Until this time she had been living in the shop. Although there was a room for her in her ancestral house she had become used to her own home whilst on migration. Her migrant children had offered to provide some financial assistance and, as is customary in these instances, she decided to build the house in stages as and when she could afford to do so. Once again, she approached Pak Abral and asked if she might have a portion of the rice field on which to build a small house. Following another family meeting, Pak Abral agreed. One of her sons returned home from migration and, with the help of two of Amak Mariana's brothers, laid the foundations of the house.

Soon after this, Pak Abral died. His brother, Pak Adip, returned home from Jakarta and took over the usufruct rights to the ancestral rice land. He used the rice to feed himself, his wife and children. Any dry field crops were taken to market and sold. The money became part of his household's income. Meanwhile, Amak Mariana's husband died and she received a sum of money from his pension fund which was enough to continue the house construction. Three years later the house was finished.

At about this time Pak Adip, aware that he was no longer a young man, began to consider the position his children would be in once he died. They had no ancestral land to inherit from their mother and he realised that upon his death his land would be returned to his matrilineal descent group and redistributed amongst the female kin. He therefore decided to sell the land and use the money to buy a field near his wife's home which his children could inherit as it would be regarded as *harto pencaharian* (individually owned property purchased through one's own labour and not belonging to the matrilineage).

His decision caused great conflict between two parts of his matrilineal group: on the one hand Pak Adip, and on the other hand Amak Mariana, her mother and her brother. Amak Mariana was worried because although she would be allowed to keep her house the shop would be pulled down and reclaimed as rice land. Amak Mariana's mother, Amak Jamillah, regarded the land as part of the matrilineal group's ancestral property which should be returned to the corporate group once Pak Adip died. She argued that, according to *adat*, pawned land could not be sold in this manner. Amak Mariana's brother could see the ancestral property diminishing and was concerned for the future of the matrilineage, particularly that sector, if the sale was allowed to proceed.

> Following family discussions Pak Adip agreed to give first refusal to Amak Mariana's family in order to allow the land to remain in the matrilineal group. The problem was eventually resolved when Nina, Amak Mariana's daughter, a migrant of many years, agreed to buy the land from Pak Adip. The land would be used by Amak Mariana and upon her death by Nina herself. The land would later be regarded as part of the ancestral property and corporately owned. Consequently upon Nina's death first refusal on the usufruct rights to the land would be inherited by Nina's daughter rather than her son. If Nina's daughter had no female children, the land would revert to the corporate group for redistribution.

This example shows that conflicts over ancestral property can occur within one segment of the matrilineal descent group. Disputes easily arise when land has been pawned between sisters and, one or two generations later, the landholder wishes to sell the land. This is especially the case when the usufruct rights following pawning are inherited by a son. Pak Adip's argument was that as his mother had given money to her sister, Amak Jamillah, the land then became *harto pencaharian* rather than *harto pusako*. The other side of the family disagreed and felt that upon Pak Adip's death the land should be reabsorbed into the wider matrilineal group (female descendants of *all* Amak Jamillah's sisters) and redistributed accordingly.

This example also illustrates that it is the women of the matrilineal group who are expected to repurchase the land from their male kin. After some deliberation between Amak Jamillah, Amak Mariana, Amak Mariana's sister and brother (the only adult members of that segment of the descent group living in Salimpaung) it was agreed that Amak Mariana should approach her eldest daughter rather than any of her four sons. Although her daughter had to borrow money from various sources to meet the costs of buying the field, she considered this to be her duty to her matrilineal group and also believed it represented future economic security for her own daughter.

The Minangkabau Life Cycle

This section provides a brief description of the Minangkabau life cycle as part of a general overview of life in Salimpaung. It also serves as a background to the *adat* ceremonies celebrating different life cycle stages which are described in full and analysed in the next chapter.

Childhood

For the first few years of life there is little difference in the way boys and girls are treated. The mother has the main responsibility for the care of a baby although the grandmother and mother's sister may help. Nevertheless, a baby is often the centre of attention and men as well as women appear to be happy and confident with caring for the young. Until the age of about three, infants may be carried by adult women or older female and male siblings in a pouch made from a piece of batik cloth which is wrapped around the carrier's neck and back. During the day children are most likely to be cared for by older siblings or by their parents. If siblings are at school and parents at work then the mother's sister, mother or father tends to care for the child.

As soon as they can talk, children are taught the appropriate terms of respect and attendant rules of behaviour with regard to their elders. Age differentiation is emphasised even to the youngest children. Most young children are pampered and spoilt and are often given sweets and snacks by other family members and by other villagers. They are encouraged to share any treats they receive. An adult may ask for a sweet and if s/he refuses to share the child is called miserly. Children are rarely harshly scolded but they are teased excessively. The aim is to make the child feel mean and ashamed of her/his behaviour.

Once children reach school age, they are expected to do certain chores including washing their own clothes and fetching water from the village pump or well near

their house. Both girls and boys learn to cook by observing their mother or other female kin but as the years go by girls are expected to help in the kitchen and in the house generally. Boys are given different duties. In the early morning before school begins or in the late afternoon when most people have returned from their work and are at leisure, many boys walk through the village selling snacks such as freshly cooked corn or peanuts to other villagers. Both girls and boys are expected to care for younger siblings, to help out in the fields, planting, weeding or harvesting and to look after the family's domestic animals such as goats and ducks. Once their chores are finished they are free to play with other children. They have few toys and they are expected to share those they do have. Children from better-off families may have a bicycle. Poorer children are more likely to have a kite or a ball. If there are no toys available, the children make their own amusements, running around and playing tag.

The Minangkabau place great emphasis on education and parents often struggle financially to put their children through senior school. Although primary education is basically free, items such as books, stationery and compulsory uniform have to be purchased; there is also an examination fee. Only those children who pass their exams may move on to the next class. Male and female children from the age of 13 may be sent away to the *rantau* to stay with relatives and attend school there or they may continue their education to secondary school near Salimpaung often with the financial help of migrant relatives. Children may also be involved in small-scale economic activities after school to contribute towards school fees. Both girls and boys appear to be given equal access to education and there is not the cultural gender difference now that was apparent amongst older generations. During one female informant's school years, she was told: "Don't continue your education. You're a girl. You must work in the kitchen". In contrast her own daughters were educated to upper secondary school level. Female education has been steadily increasing since the beginning

of the twentieth century both in West Sumatra generally (Gunawan 1990, Tanner 1982) and in Salimpaung specifically.

Nevertheless there is still an emphasis on girls learning to cook. If they do not have this skill, they are mocked by other women and they do not command the same respect. As I discuss in Chapter 4, food is of great cultural significance to the Minangkabau, forms an important part of *adat* ceremonies and is a tool used to cement the relationships established between matrilineal groups through marriage. If the food is neither cooked nor displayed appropriately it is regarded as an insult to its recipients. Food is a means of expression and communication between women. Learning culinary skills is therefore an important part of a girl's upbringing. Children frequently join their parents in attending life cycle rituals and so become familiar with the customs and acceptable behaviour on such occasions. As Watson (1992) observes during life cycle events in Kerinci - and this could equally be applied to Salimpaung - children's attendance teaches them the importance of common kinship ties as well as helping them to identify their close kin (1992: 80). Boys can become familiar with the male part of rituals and may gradually be interested to learn more about the male *pasambahan* (ritual speeches).

As girls and boys reach adolescence their paths diverge. As Muslims, the girls must show decorum and grace. They must ask permission before they leave the house and many adopt Muslim dress - a *baju kurung* (long skirt) and *jilbab* (veil which covers the hair leaving only the face visible). If they wish to leave the confines of the village then it is usual for them to go in groups; it is not expected that they would go alone. Adolescent boys on the other hand have a much freer lifestyle. They can come and go as they please and are allowed, and even expected, to run a little wild. From the age of about ten or eleven, boys no longer sleep in their mother's house; instead they go to the *surau* with other boys

and unmarried men or, with the family's permission they and their male friends may choose to sleep in an uninhabited house, belonging to their matrilineage. Nevertheless, despite these particular gender differences in terms of freedom of movement, girls and boys are expected to provide assistance in the fields or, if their parents or other kin are traders, to help in the market. Alternatively they may be asked to prepare a meal for their parents' return home.

Once they have finished school both girls and boys are expected to contribute to the family income. Although at a personal level parents rarely want their children to migrate in search of work, they regard this as a natural course of action because of both cultural expectations (it is perceived as a rite of passage) and the population pressures which limit availability of land and jobs for young people. According to the literature, in the past men have migrated alone and only more recently have been accompanied by women (Kato 1982, Mochtar Naim 1971). My data suggest that a growing number of Salimpaung women as well as men have in recent years migrated to other parts of Indonesia. This is discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

Marriage

Although young women and men migrate they are still strongly influenced by their families. This is especially the case for marriage. It seems that there is formal social pressure on women to marry, but if men remain unmarried for too long they are subjected to milder social pressure such as teasing. The different levels of social pressure may be less concerned with gender difference *per se* and more closely related to the descent system, as women who do not marry and have legitimate children cannot continue the matrilineage.

Fifty years ago in Salimpaung it was common for females to marry at the age of 14. This is no longer the case and the earliest they now marry is 16. Even so

this is rare and between 18 and 25 is more usual. If a woman remains unmarried at the age of 30 she is the centre of gossip, sometimes malicious, and her parents usually demand that she marries.

> At the age of 21 Kakak Reni, a woman now living in Salimpaung, had migrated to Bukittinggi in the next *kabupaten* to work for a seamstress. There she met an Acehnese family who wanted her to work for them in Jakarta. She agreed and spent seven happy years there. At the age of 28 she received a letter from her parents informing her that a marriage had been arranged for her in the village. She replied that she was unwilling to return home. It was only when her mother's brother travelled to Jakarta to collect her that she realised she had little choice but to obey her parents' wishes.

Arranged marriages occur less frequently than in the past although, as the above example illustrates, if young people reach a certain age and have not found their own suitable marriage partner a member of the family begins to look around on their behalf with or without their consent. Marriage is generally regarded from a practical perspective. The purpose of marriage is to have children who can provide security in old age. This is a common view held by many - even young people - although with the influence of television and imported programmes from the West, especially America, the notion of 'falling in love' is given more attention. Nevertheless, even under such circumstances, marriage is still regarded as an alliance between two matrilineal groups and it is believed that the two families - and not just the bride and groom - should have an amicable relationship.

Migrant men who have not found a suitable wife in the *rantau* often prefer to marry a woman from the same village or from a family already known to his own family. The marriage is arranged between the parents and mother's brother of the prospective bride and groom who themselves appear to have little say in the matter. The future marriage partners may have no opportunity to get to know each other before they marry, perhaps only meeting for the first time one

or two days before the wedding and often leaving for the *rantau* soon after all the marriage rituals have been performed.

According to *adat*, the clan is exogamous although in practise the real exogamous unit is generally the *payung*. Both patrilateral cross-cousin marriage (a woman marries her father's sister's son or other male member of her father's lineage) and matrilateral cross-cousin marriage (a woman marries her mother's brother's son or mother's mother's brother's son) are acceptable although the latter appears to be rare in Salimpaung.[1] These forms of marriage, as I discuss in more detail in the next chapter, help to perpetuate the ties already established between two matrilineal descent groups at the time of the marriage between a woman's mother and father.

A marriage involves two types of ceremony: the *nikah*, Islamic wedding, followed by a series of *adat* rituals. They may be arranged several months apart depending on the financial circumstances of the bride and groom and their respective families as the *adat* ceremony is a great expense.

Upon marriage residence is uxorilocal (the man goes to live at his wife's family house). If they migrate it is usual to stay temporarily with family members and then to rent their own house. The husband who remains in the village lives, eats and sleeps in his wife's house and may help in her or her mother's fields. Nevertheless he retains active membership of his own matrilineal group especially in the role of mother's brother and may help in his own mother's or sister's fields.

---

[1] From the male perspective these would, of course, be matrilateral and patrilateral cross-cousin marriages respectively.

Polygyny, allowed under Islamic marriage laws, is fairly common among the older generation although it appears to be unpopular with women because the husband's income has to be divided amongst two or more households. Polygyny is rare among the younger generation and divorce and remarriage appear to be more likely. The 1974 *Undang-Undang Perkawinan* (marriage laws) effectively ensured that polygyny could only be allowed with the first wife's approval (Watson 1992). If the woman agrees and a second marriage takes place, her husband visits each of his wives' dwellings in turn. Although a first marriage may be arranged it is unlikely for this to be the case with subsequent marriages. Following divorce, the children from the marriage automatically stay with the mother and may see their father infrequently. Traditionally, if the mother dies the matrilineal descent group looks after the children and the father leaves, but in more recent years the father may be more likely to stay and care for his children himself with help from his wife's matrilineal kin.

Adulthood

As Tanner (1971) points out marriage "marks the onset of adulthood for both men and women" but it affects them in different ways. The woman "regains some of her preadolescent freedom of movement ... She may gradually grow into a position of strength and authority within the kin group and community" (1971:302-303). For the woman then, although some adjustment to married life has to be made, she remains in the same house with her family and has the same neighbours. The married man, on the other hand, may have more difficulty in adjusting to his new life. He now has responsibilities and must act in a mature way. He "retains his mobility but loses his youthful freedom of behaviour. He must now show the proper, more subdued, demeanour of a man in his wife's household" (Tanner 1971:303).

Most women hope to become pregnant within a year of their marriage thus providing security for old age and fulfilling their kinship obligation to continue the matrilineage. A woman's first pregnancy is an exciting event and is celebrated in a series of visits and *adat* ceremonies involving consanguines and affines. Although not particularly usual nowadays, she may move out of her mother's home at this time and return to her *rumah gadang* where a *bilik* is made available for her. A female child is particularly welcomed by her descent group as she represents the future of the lineage. Many women who had only sons told me of their great sense of disappointment.

Salimpaung has several midwives and once the pregnant woman goes into labour it is usual for a midwife to attend. Alternatively the woman may go to the Health Centre where there are several beds and nursing staff. The midwife appears to have superseded the role previously played by the *dukun* (traditional medical practitioner). The woman's mother and occasionally her sister may also be in attendance to offer her support.

Once the child is a few months old the woman may return to her mother's house or she and her husband may set up their own home. Motherhood brings with it a new found respect within the community and a relaxation of previous restrictions on her movement and her demeanour. A woman who has no children does not command the same social status irrespective of her wealth or prestige based on her occupation. Even pilgrimage to Mecca, recognised as an important vehicle for status enhancement, cannot compensate for the lack of children. It is customary for a woman who has no offspring to help towards the care of a sister's child, in particular to pay for her/his education. Under such circumstances it is expected that the child recognises this commitment in later life and is then responsible for caring for her/his mother's sister in her old age.

Child mortality appears to have decreased in recent years. Data from my household survey revealed that the oldest generation (ie the grandmother in the family group) was more likely to have lost several offspring (as small children, babies or through miscarriage), the middle generation (ie the mother) was more likely to have lost one or two children, and the youngest generation (ie the daughter who is currently of childbearing age) is more likely to have healthy children (as a general rule although there were two known instances of baby mortality during my stay).

Until recently large families have been the norm in Minangkabau. The introduction of the Indonesian government's promotion for smaller families and for various forms of birth control appear to have had an impact on Minangkabau women. In Salimpaung few women of child-bearing age appear to want a large family and many have responded to the government's policy of "two children is enough". This may cause some dilemma when both children are boys and in such cases women are more likely to continue to bear children until they have a female child.

Many of the older women whose children are now grown up told me that they would have welcomed birth control methods had they been available. They explained that if they had had fewer children it would have been possible to give them more opportunities especially in terms of education. Many women said that with a large family it was often a struggle to feed and clothe the children. Nevertheless these women all stated that *now* they were glad they had a large family as they were secure in the knowledge that their children would care for them in old age. This is particularly the case for women who have daughters. Those who have only sons are, to some degree, dependent on the relationship with their sons' wives. Women often told me that their daughters were closer to them. Although sons would frequently recognise a financial duty to their

parents, it is the daughters who care for their mother during sickness and who are the chief mourners upon her death, performing the death rituals (such as giving the deceased her final bath before burial).

As the average woman approaches middle age she gains growing respect from the matrilineal group and from the community at large. She takes a leading role in preparations for the *adat* ceremonies of her matrilineal kin. She has an ancestral home to live in and, if she is fortunate, may have ancestral rice fields. She oversees the management of her house and ancestral property and makes the daily decisions in these areas. As her children grow up she receives their help in the house and fields. Later as her children begin to work in a trade or profession she can expect some financial assistance. The middle-aged man may work hard in the fields, especially at peak agricultural times, or in the market but he may also find some leisure time to go to the coffee shop, play dominoes and chat with friends and neighbours or help with village improvements such as building the mosque or a new road linking different parts of the village.

In old age, a woman is secure in the knowledge that she will remain in her house cared for by her children or alternatively that she can live with her children in the *rantau*. The old woman is greatly respected and usually self-assured and forceful, especially in cultural matters such as teaching children Minangkabau ways of behaviour. Her opinion is sought in many areas of life and she supervises the preparation of food for *adat* ceremonies. She is regarded as the unrivalled expert in this field.

The security of the old man is not so assured and he is far more dependent on the good nature of his sisters, their children and his own children. He may find himself living alone and caring for himself if his wife dies before him. Nevertheless the older man is also a respected member of the community. The

experience that comes with age is greatly valued in Minangkabau. This is manifested in the famous *kaba* (epic) *Rantjak diLabueh* in which Siti Djuhari offers advice to her two growing children, her son Rantjak diLabueh and her daughter Siti Budirman. In the following two extracts, Siti Djuhari is teaching her son how to behave towards the older generation:

kuaik baguru kanan pandai
kuaik batanjo kanan tahu
suko barundieng djo nan tuo

happy to learn from those cleverer than he,
always questioning those who had any skill,
eager to ask the opinion of the old

(Johns 1958:25-26)

and

kok duduek djo nan tuo
banjaklah rundieng djo paparan
banjak pitua nan kalua
papatah banjak diuraikan
salah sabuah kok tapakai

When you sit with older people
much will be said and much explained;
much good advice will come out,
many of the proverbs will be expounded

(Johns: 1958:35-36)

Finally, the death of a family member restates the importance of the matrilineal group and affinal relations. In accordance with Islamic beliefs, the burial must take place on the day of death before sunset and those relations who are available pay their last respects well before this time. As in all key stages in a person's lifetime, *adat* and Islamic ceremonies operate side by side.

Summary

The objective of this chapter has been to provide a background to daily life in Salimpaung as a basis for contextualising data in the remaining chapters. The last sections on Minangkabau social organisation and the life cycle are particularly pertinent to the issues raised in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4: NETWORKS, EXCHANGES AND LIFE CYCLE RITUALS

Introduction

The study of kinship and marriage is one of the few areas which has included women although a positive image has not always been created. In Chapter 2, I demonstrated how some accounts of Minangkabau kinship focus on men's purported public and private control over women who consequently are portrayed as passive and dependent. Such a perspective overlooks the central role women play as mediators between different kin groups and, associated with this, their important part in all stages of life cycle rituals from initiation through to participation. These rituals not only acknowledge milestones in an individual's life, they also represent, celebrate and strengthen kinship ties within the small descent group (*paruik*), the lineage (*payung*) and the clan (*suku*), as well as between two descent groups allied through marriage. Any of these rituals have, as a focal element, the acts of gift-giving (usually of food) and ritual feasting. Women are involved in preparing and exchanging food and when the symbolic importance of the food itself, and thus the act of exchange, is understood, the significance of women's, in addition to men's, contributions can be better appreciated.

This chapter begins with an account of the principal life cycle rituals in Salimpaung. Case studies are used to provide in-depth descriptions of a selection of these rituals in order to analyse the ways in which kinship relations and alliances are expressed. Two points need to be made with regard to using this material. Firstly, as a participant observer I could only obtain and interpret the data from one side of the alliance on any given occasion. For example the marriage rituals are described primarily from the perspective of the bride and her family. This is because I had been adopted into the bride's *payung* several months previously and my contribution to the preparations for and my

participation in these rituals were of necessity undertaken as a member of the bride's descent group. In order, wherever possible, to put forward the perspective of the man's *payung* as well, I draw on observations from my participation in the preparations and attendance at other marriage celebrations when I was 'related' to the bridegroom's descent group.

Secondly, it is self-evident that the ostentation of the rituals varies according to the family's financial circumstances. The rituals are generally the same but the bridal costume and *pelaminan* (bridal dais)[1] may be more luxurious, or new furniture, bought specially for the occasion, may be more expensive. Equally, I attended marriage rituals which did not display the level of ostentation seen in the case study. The bride and groom had only a very small *Baralek* (wedding party) at a minimal cost and the bridal costume and headdress were not so ornate.[2] It would appear, however, that the *Baralek* has for many years - and at least since the mid-nineteenth century - been an important part of Minangkabau marriage (Couperus 1855). Navis (1984) records that Minangkabau *adat* does not permit a couple to live in the same house until they have had a *Baralek* even if the religious ceremony has been conducted. According to one Salimpaung informant, feasts, gift exchange and *pasambahan* (ritual speeches) between the descent groups of the bride and groom have always been part of the ritual but wedding parties have become more elaborate for less wealthy people only in recent years. When she and her sisters married between 25 and 40 years ago,

---

1 *Pelaminan* is a difficult word to translate. I use the term 'bridal dais' not because it is set up high as if on a platform but because it is 'set apart'. It consists of a couch draped with a rug where either the bride or the bride and groom sit, depending on the stage of the marriage rituals. Behind and to the sides of this couch is a backdrop of layered black, red and blue velvet embroidered with gold thread. Plastic flowers, fruit, beads and strips of embroidered velvet hang from a canopy of red embroidered velvet. Frey proposes that "the *pelaminan* rests on a platform which symbolically connects animistically with the spirits. There are two big pillows which mean that the bride and groom support one another". The colours each have symbolic meaning "red represents life, black the unchangeable *adat* and yellow prosperity" (1985:133).

2 Navis (1984) differentiates between three levels of marriage celebrations based on the size of the wedding party and the food available.

they had neither bridal headdress, costume nor *pelaminan*. Whilst wealth must clearly be taken into account in any comparative analysis of marriage rituals, my aim in this chapter is to consider those features which are part of *adat* and are therefore essential to the meaning assigned to marriage (no matter how small or large, how basic or luxurious these ceremonies may be). Through such an examination, the kinds of networks that exist within and between villages, which come to the forefront at events such as these, can be analysed.

Following the descriptive account of life cycle rituals, I analyse the data within the context of networks based on kinship and marriage. Attention is particularly given to the ways in which these networks are expressed through the assistance offered during preparations for and participation in these rituals as well as through the symbolic importance of food and gift exchange, and the principle of reciprocity. I also suggest that these ceremonies provide a fertile ground for analysing gender interaction. Developing a theme initiated by Prindiville (1980), I propose that women and men have separate yet complementary roles, activities and spheres of influence in both their everyday and public lives. Gender distinctions and complementarity are particularly apparent during preparations for and participation in life cycle rituals and are a reflection of the notions inherent in the Minangkabau worldview.

Minangkabau Life cycle Rituals

The following section plots the important ritual events in an individual's life cycle mainly using case studies collected during fieldwork. I begin with the ceremonies surrounding marriage, mainly because this is the point at which an alliance between two descent groups begins. With it come certain mutual rights and obligations prescribed by *adat* which grow as time passes and endure until death. I then examine the importance of pregnancy, the subsequent birth of a baby, and childhood rituals in terms of the relationship between the mother's and

father's descent groups. Although a member of her/his mother's matrilineal group, a child helps to reinforce the alliance through the rights and responsibilities the father's descent group has towards the child. Finally I briefly discuss death rituals and the obligations various kin groups have towards the dead person and her/his family.

Marriage

In Minangkabau society, marriage is regarded as an alliance between two descent groups rather than two people. This is reflected in the marriage rituals which comprise a series of ceremonies involving a wide range of consanguines and affines related to both the bride and the bridegroom. Due to the large numbers of people who generally attend these events and, bearing in mind that each ritual involves at some stage a formal feast, final preparations take several days with the help of many people.

The rituals are recorded through a description of the marriage between Epa, the bride, and Buyung, the bridegroom. Their descent groups had already formed an alliance through previous marriages between their members. Epa, aged 24, had been trained as a primary school teacher but at the time of her wedding was unemployed. Amak Mariaman, her mother, is a farmer with an above average number of ancestral and personally owned rice fields. Epa's father is a trader in medical supplies visiting distant markets in less accessible parts of West Sumatra for two to three week stretches although when in Salimpaung he also works in his wife's fields. Although they are not poor, neither are they amongst the wealthier members of the community. Buyung's parents are traders; indeed Buyung himself had migrated several years earlier to South Sumatra where he sells general household items. He returned to Salimpaung specifically for the wedding and then left for the *rantau* (migrant area), together with Epa, shortly after the event.

Batimbang Tando (The Exchange of Heirlooms)

The marriage proposal is usually initiated by the female side represented by the mother, older married sister, father, *mamak* (mother's brother) or any combination of these. Once this has been accepted, the mother, father and *mamak* from the male side go to the prospective bride's house to discuss wedding arrangements. Gifts of *beras* (hulled rice), *nasi lamak* (glutinous rice cooked in coconut milk) and a large basket of fruit are taken to the bride's mother by the bridegroom's mother. This is acknowledged and reciprocated in the form of a meal of rice and *sambal* (spicy side dishes). Sometime later a formal occasion, the *Batimbang Tando*, involving members of both matriclans, signifies the descent groups' intentions to commence their alliance. Heirlooms are exchanged - usually a *keris* (ceremonial dagger) or *kain panjang* (long piece of batik cloth)[3] - to express both goodwill between the two families and an expectation that the marriage will proceed without any foreseeable obstacles.

Preparations in Epa's household began two days before this ritual. A small number of women were involved: Etek Upik, Etek Anim, Etek Rosmi and Etek Ramlah (from the same *payung*), Amai Nani (wife of one of Epa's *mamak*), Amai Rosmiar (wife of the *penghulu*), and Kakak Ta wife of Abang Ali, Epa's older brother) (see Chart 4.1) as well as one of Epa's neighbours, Amak Samtiar from a different clan. Together they made the ceremonial *rendang* (buffalo meat cooked in spices). The day before the *Batimbang Tando* ceremony, more food was prepared by the same women. Meanwhile, Mamak Sudirman and Mamak Adnan (see Chart 4.1) made a few essential repairs to the house while Eri, Epa's younger brother, tidied the yard and path around the house.

---

3 In many Indonesian societies, exchanges during marriage rituals are based on the principle that 'female' goods (textiles) are offered by the bride's family in exchange for 'male' goods (weapons), given by the bridegroom's family. In Salimpaung, no such distinctions appear to be made, both sides offering both 'male' and 'female' goods.

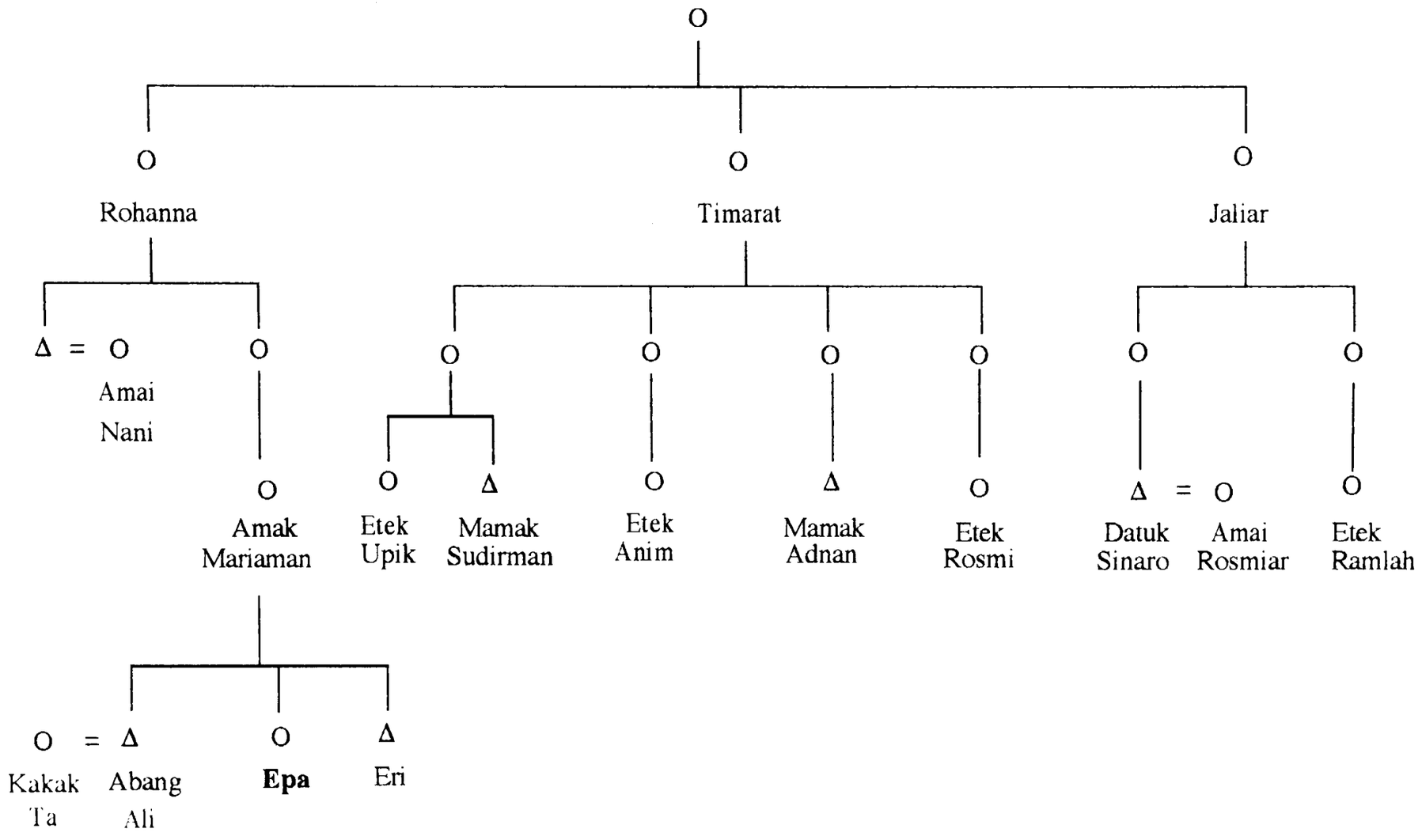


Chart 4.1: Participants in the Preparations for the Batimbang Tando

Throughout that day women from Epa's *payung* visited female members of their own *suku*, wives of the male members of the *suku* (known as *amai*) and women from Buyung's family in order to inform them about the forthcoming event. Similarly, men from Epa's *payung* told male members of their *suku*, in-married men (the *sumando*) and men from Buyung's family. This practice is known as *pai manggi* and occurs prior to all major life cycle events.

On the day of the *Batimbang Tando* ceremony, women arrived early at Epa's house in order to prepare other food dishes (bean curry, dried fried fish and fried cassava slices in chilli). The rice was then cooked and the water boiled for tea. Etek Upik, Etek Anim, Etek Rosmi and Etek Ramlah were again involved and additionally Amak Suma from the same *payung*. Amai Rosmiar, Kakak Ta and Amak Samtiar also helped. Epa did not cook but she was busy collecting crockery and cutlery from family and neighbours.

Great attention was given to the preparation of the food signifying how important it is for the quality to be of the highest standard. At one stage during preparations the bean curry was, for convenience, divided into two separate cooking pots. Towards the end of the cooking time it became apparent that the curries were of different colour and consistency. A great debate over appropriate action involved all the senior women in the cooking party. The final decision was made by Amak Mariaman, Epa's mother.

That afternoon, between 3 pm and 5.30 pm, approximately 200 women together with some small children (girls and boys) arrived either individually or in small groups. They represented Epa's and Buyung's families and were both consanguineal and affinal relations. These women brought *beras* on a plate wrapped in a small cloth which together totalled about one sack of rice. The women sat on floor mats, chewed *sirih* (a mixture of betel leaf, areca nut, lime

and gambier) and then drank tea and ate rice and *sambal*. They left soon after they had eaten so the whole process for each woman took approximately half an hour.

A greater number of women had by this time offered their assistance (Chart 4.2). They had different roles according to their kin relationship with Epa and her mother. Two older women of the same *payung* (Etek Upik and Etek Ramlah) were washing up while others (Etek Murni, Etek Anim and Etek Rosmi) were responsible for organising the rice and tea; wives of *mamak* (Amai Nas, Amai Jan and Amai Rosmiar) arranged the food on plates; younger unmarried female members of Epa's *payung* (including Yas and Yani) as well as several unmarried female neighbours took the plates of food from the kitchen and served them to the guests. Amak Mariaman, Epa's mother, did not work in the kitchen although her advice was frequently sought. She sat with the guests talking to them while they ate and encouraging them to refill their plates. Epa was not at the house that afternoon; it was considered inappropriate for her to be seen by female members of her prospective husband's family.

That same evening the men had their official ceremony. At 8 pm *mamak* from Epa's *suku* arrived together with the *sumando*. Half an hour later the men from Buyung's *suku* appeared. In total there were approximately 80 men; Buyung was not amongst them. Epa's *mamak* sat in a line with the *sumando* opposite them; in a circle to one side sat the men from Buyung's *suku*.

The men were offered *sirih* to chew. Following a half hour exchange of *pasambahan*, a *keris* was given to Epa's *penghulu* by Buyung's *penghulu*. This is regarded as the *tando* (symbol) of the impending marriage between Epa and Buyung and hence the alliance between the two kin groups. The *keris* would remain with Epa's family until after the wedding.

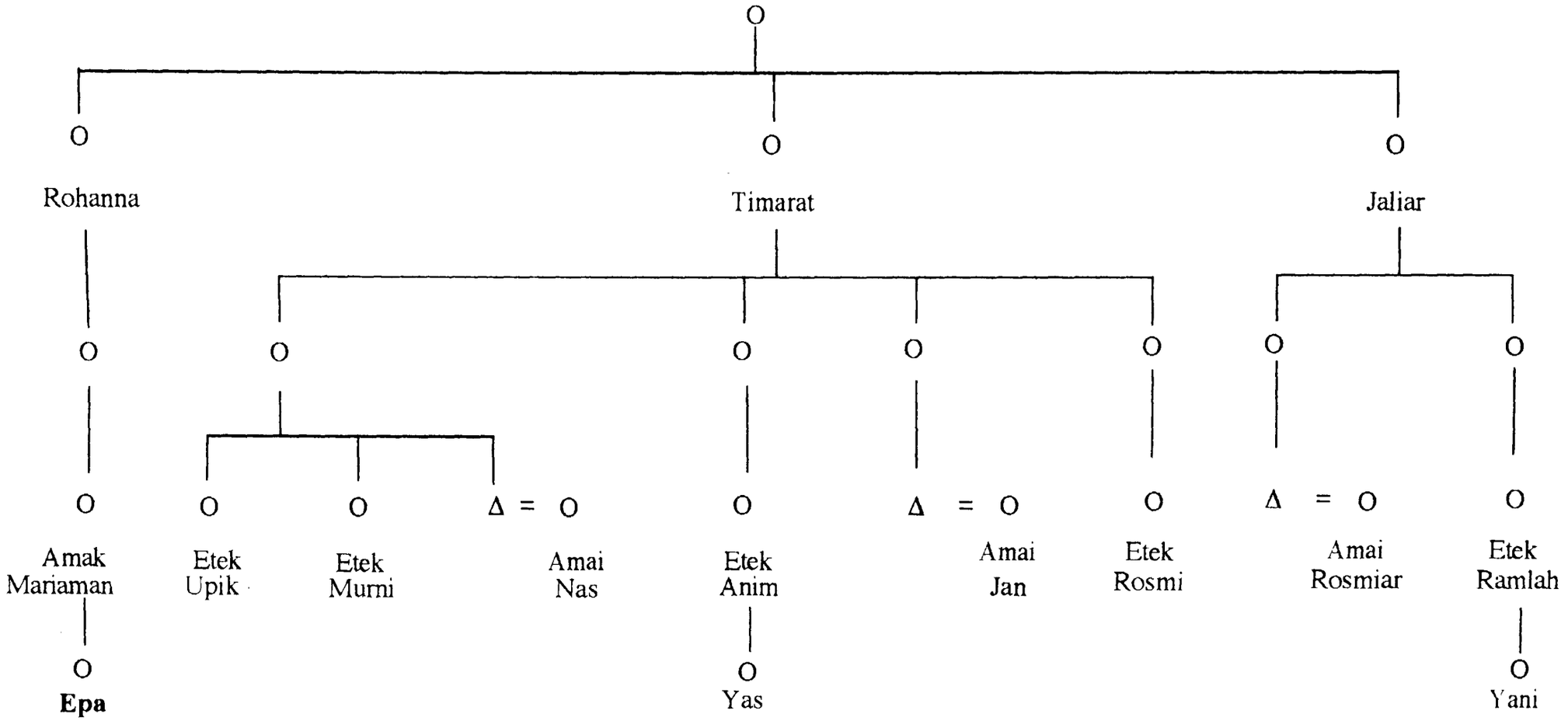


Chart 4.2: Female Helpers during the Female *Batimbang Tando* Rituals

Food was then served. The male helpers had different roles according to their kin relationship to Epa's *paruik*. While women laid out the food on plates in the kitchen, unmarried men from Epa's *payung* carried food from the kitchen to the room where the guests were seated and the *sumando* served the guests. Once the meal had finished the men exchanged a further set of *pasambahan* in which the guests asked permission to leave. The ritual ended with Islamic prayers. The men from Buyung's *suku* departed, followed shortly after by most of the *sumando* and *mamak* from Epa's *suku*. The following evening another *Batimbang Tando* ceremony was held at Buyung's family house when Epa's *niniek mamak* (the collective term for *mamak* from the same clan) offered a *keris* to Buyung's family as their symbol of the forthcoming marriage.

After the first *Batimbang Tando* a few men remained behind including Datuk Sinaro Kayo, the *penghulu* from Epa's *payung*, another *penghulu* from a different *payung* within the same *suku*, Pak Jamirin (Epa's father), Mamak Sudirman, Mamak Adnan, and Abang Ali (Epa's older married brother). They were joined by some of the senior women from Epa's *payung* namely Amak Mariaman, Etek Upik, Etek Murni, Etek Rosmi and Etek Ramlah as well as Epa herself. They discussed the practicalities of the wedding ceremony, including enlarging one *bilik* (bedroom) to accommodate the bridal bed, and considered the other preparations necessary for the *Baralek* (wedding party).

It had been arranged that evening that the religious wedding ceremony would take place three weeks' later. This was a small event held in Epa's house and attended by close family only (mother, father, *mamak*, brothers and sisters) of the bride and groom. The bridegroom's mother brought *beras* and cakes. Before and after the ceremony a meal of rice and *sambal* was provided by Amak Mariaman for her guests. It was agreed that one month later the *Baralek*, the traditional wedding party held in accordance with *adat*, would take place.

Baralek (Wedding Party)

The *Baralek* is probably the largest, most costly and, in terms of preparation, the most time-consuming of Minangkabau life cycle ceremonies. It comprises a series of reciprocal visits over the course of a week between the members of the bride's and bridegroom's families. Each of these visits involves gift exchange and ritual feasting.

Due to the number of guests involved and hence the amount of food required, preparations for Epa's *Baralek* began the week before, when the older women (including Etek Upik, Etek Musni, Etek Anim, Etek Rosmi, Amak Suma, Etek Ramlah, Amai Nani, Amai Rosmiar, Amak Siti and Kakak Ta (see Chart 4.3) began to cook the *rendang*, one part of the *Baralek*'s ceremonial food. Meanwhile Epa and some of her friends made cakes and fancy biscuits. Further house repairs were undertaken by Mamak Sudirman and Mamak Adnan, and Arlin converted two bedrooms into one room to accommodate the bridal bed. Eri tidied the yard and path and cut back some of the overhanging bushes. Pak Jamirin and Abang Ali worked in the fields harvesting essential foods, such as chillies and beans, for the ritual feasts. The following day, six days before the *Baralek*, *sagun* (cake made from coconut, sugar and rice flour), was made by Etek Upik, Etek Anim, Etek Rosmi, Amak Siti, Kakak Warni and Kakak Ta (see Chart 4.3).

Three days before the *Baralek*, Eri began to collect glasses and plates from family and neighbours. Etek Anim and Etek Rosmi made preparations for the following day's cooking (pounding chillies and other spices and making enough food for all the anticipated helpers). That evening Etek Upik, Etek Murni, Etek Anim, Etek Rosmi, Etek Ramlah, Amai Nani, Amai Risah and Amak Siti gathered at Epa's house in order to make *kerupuk ubi* (fried cassava) and to continue preparing a selection of spices (see Chart 4.3).

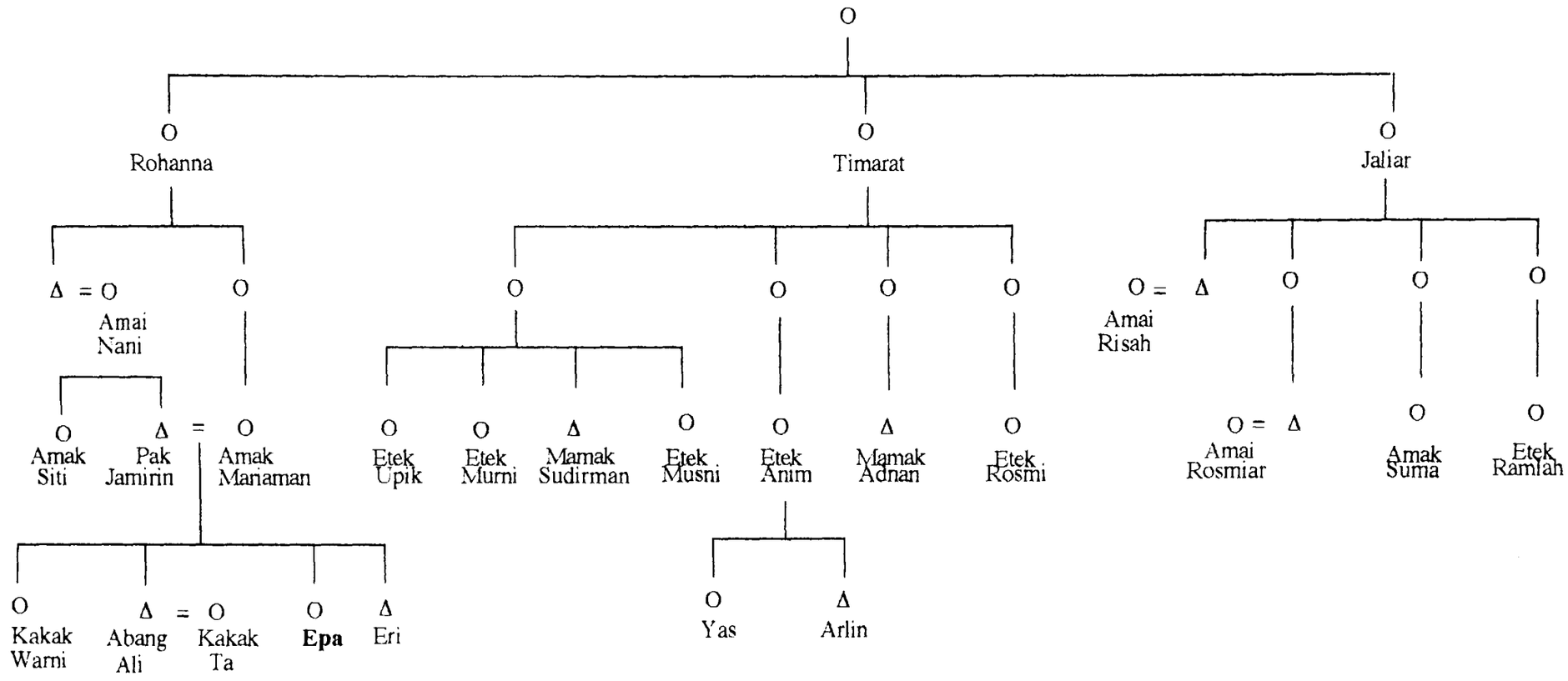


Chart 4.3: Helpers in the Early Preparations for the *Baralek*

Meanwhile young women and men - Epa's unmarried kin, friends and neighbours - put up decorations in the long room where the ritual feasts would take place. New furniture - a double bed, sofa and chairs - had arrived that day, purchased especially for Epa's wedding, as is customary when a daughter marries.

The day before the *Baralek* was particularly busy. From early morning Etek Upik, Etek Murni, Etek Anim, Etek Rosmi, Amak Suma, Etek Ramlah, Amai Nani, Amak Siti, Amai Rosmiar, Kakak Warni and Yas worked in the kitchen slicing large quantities of bamboo (see Chart 4.3). That same morning 25 men from Epa's *suku* together with 15 *sumando* met over a communal meal of rice, *rendang*, bean curry and *kerupuk* to discuss killing the goat in readiness for cooking the goat and bamboo curry that evening. This is one of the principal dishes in the marriage feasts and, in accordance with *adat*, is their responsibility.

It was then decided that Zul and Wol, two young unmarried men of the *suku*, should *pai manggi* to male *suku* members and *sumando*, not present at the meeting. Eri and some of his unmarried male friends began to erect a welcome arch at the front of the house. This was made from bamboo poles covered with white paper and decorated with coconut leaves. They then cleared the long room of furniture where the ritual feasts would take place and put down rattan mats over the wooden floorboards; the seating area was now ready.

Meanwhile by 10.00 am the bamboo had been prepared, most of the women had eaten and some had departed. Etek Anim, Etek Rosmi and Etek Ramlah had left to *pai manggi* to the women of the *suku* and to the wives of *mamak*. During the morning the *pelaminan* was collected by Etek Murni and Kakak Warni from a woman in the village. Etek Murni took a plate of *beras* covered with a cloth to the woman, Nenek Asni, who kept these decorations. She in turn offered them

tea and a special type of biscuit used in ritual feasts. The decorations were then taken back to Epa's ancestral house and put up by young men and women from Epa's family under the supervision of Nenek Asni. Meanwhile the older women continued cooking, occasionally helped by some of the younger women. The older women were skilled in making the various dishes but, conscious of the grave responsibility of their task, they spent a considerable amount of time consulting and seeking advice about the particular food they were preparing, discussing its texture and taste.

Throughout that evening members of Epa's family arrived home from migrant areas. Approximately 150 male and female kin and neighbours were engaged in a variety of jobs (see Chart 4.4). Etek Murni, Etek Ramlah, Amak Suma, Amai Rosmiar and Amak Siti were involved in making *nasi lamak*, and the *nasi ranggah*. This is made from strips of glutinous rice, black rice and glutinous rice coloured yellow with turmeric, cooked in coconut milk and shaped together into a pyramid. These rice dishes would be taken to the house of the *marapulai* (bridegroom) the following day. Another smaller group of women (Etek Upik, Etek Rosmi, Etek Anim and Amai Nas) made the *singgang ayam* (chicken curry) which would also form part of the gifts for the *marapulai*'s family. Meanwhile the men cooked the goat and bamboo curry, preparing the meat and coconut and using the essential spices and bamboo prepared earlier by the women. Datuk Sinaro Kayo, the *penghulu*, supervised and offered advice on the quality and taste of the curry during the several hours of cooking.

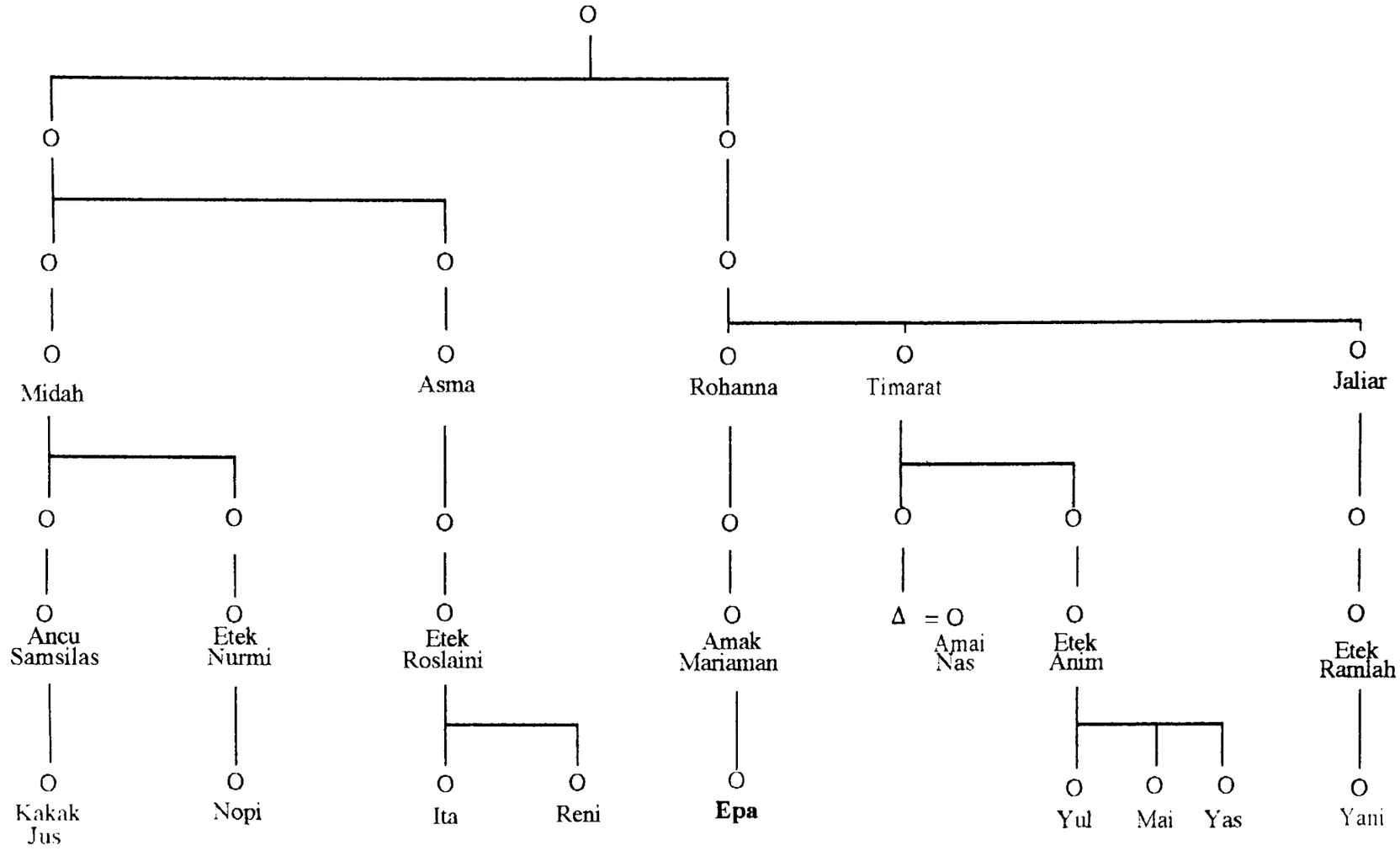


Chart 4.4: Additional Principal Female Helpers in the Later Preparations for the *Baralek*
(see also Chart 4.3)

In the long room other women put a small amount of *nasi lamak* into 150 tiny parcels handmade from banana leaves. These were for the female guests who, the following day, would bring gifts of *beras* to Epa's house. These female helpers included Ancu Samsilas, Etek Nurmi, Etek Roslaini, Kakak Jus, Nopi, Ita and Reni, all members of the same *suku* but different *payung* (see Chart 4.4). Younger members of Epa's *payung* were also involved including Yul, Mai, Yas and Yani, as well as several neighbours. Once they had completed this task and had accepted a meal of rice and *sambal*, they left. Young men and women continued decorating the long room and making *selamat datang* (welcome) signs to put up inside and outside the house. By 10 pm the work was complete, the goat curry had been cooked and everyone stopped to eat; shortly afterwards they returned home.

The next day - the first day of the *Baralek* - involved a number of last minute preparations. The 'welcome' archway, assembled the previous day, was further decorated with freshly cut bougainvillea. The canopy where guests could sit outside, sheltered from sun or rain, was erected by young men from Epa's family. In the kitchen older women cooked more food for the following day's feast. Younger women prepared flower petals which would later be used to throw over the *anak daro* (bride) and the *marapulai* (bridegroom) as a form of welcome when they arrived at the bride's house. Epa and her *dayang-dayang* (unmarried female attendants who accompany the bride and take care of her needs) were making their own preparations before dressing in ceremonial costume. Epa had four *dayang-dayang*: Kakak Warni's two daughters, Rina and Tini, Amak Siti's daughter, Tika, and Abang Ali's daughter, Ia (see Chart 4.5).

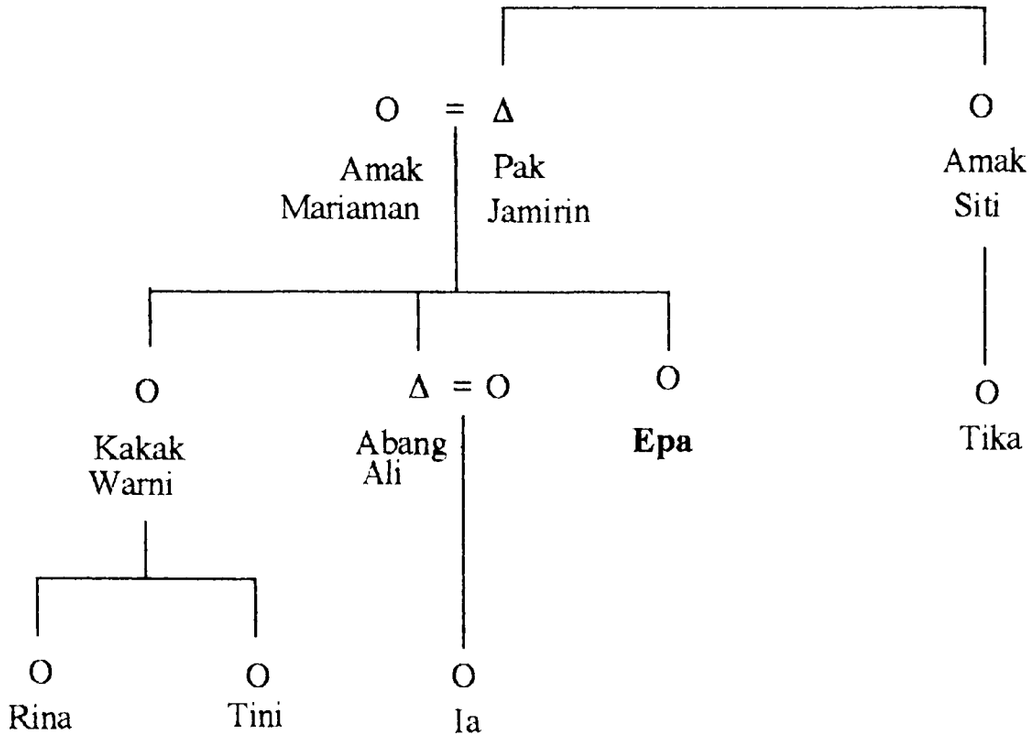


Chart 4.5: Kinship Relationship Between Epa and her *Dayang-dayang*

At 10.00 am Epa went to the house of her *bako* (father's matrilineal descent group) where her bridal headdress and clothes had been left. Traditional music was played outside as she changed into her ceremonial costume. Two hours later the *anak daro* - as she was then referred to for that and subsequent days until the marriage rituals were complete - left the house of her *bako*. Accompanied only by women (and the male musicians), she paraded through the village back to her own ancestral home. Three women from Epa's *bako* carried three large baskets of *padi* (unhulled rice) as gifts for Epa's descent group. Upon arrival home Epa sat on the *pelaminan*.

During that afternoon (before Epa left, during her absence, and when she had returned), women from Epa's *suku* brought gifts of *beras*. Wives of *mamak* and other affines brought *padi*. There they were greeted by Amak Mariaman and offered rice with goat and bamboo curry and *kerupuk ubi*. They observed the *anak daro*, if she was there, and left once they had eaten. Upon departure those who had brought *beras* received one of the parcels containing *nasi lamak* which had been made the previous evening.

At 1.00 pm men from Epa's *suku* and the *sumando* arrived and ate a ceremonial meal of rice with goat and bamboo curry and *kerupuk ubi* in the long room close to where Epa was sitting. They discussed when they and the *anak daro* should begin the ritual known as *Manjapuik Marapulai* when the bride collects her *marapulai* from his descent group's ancestral house.



Manjapuik Marapulai: the *anak daro*, on her way to collect her future husband, is accompanied by her *dayang-dayang*, female kin, neighbours and friends

Manjapuik Marapulai (The bride collects the husband)

With an hour's walk ahead of her, the *anak daro* left her family home accompanied by her *dayang-dayang*, women from her own *suku*, women married to men of her *suku*, female members of her *bako* as well as some of her friends and neighbours. Amak Mariaman and several other senior women from her *payung* including Etek Upik, Etek Musni, Etek Anim and Etek Rosmi remained at home in order both to entertain any guests who arrived whilst the *anak daro* was away and to later welcome the *marapulai* to the *anak daro*'s home (see below). The *anak daro* and her female kin and friends were followed by the musicians and finally by the men of her *suku* together with the *suku*'s *sumando*.

Five women related to the *anak daro* - Etek Murni, Etek Ramlah, Kakak Jus, Amai Nani and Amak Siti (see Chart 4.6) carried the gifts of food prepared by the *anak daro*'s female kin for the family of her *marapulai*. With the exception of the *singgang ayam*, the main constituent of these food gifts is rice: *nasi ranggah*, *salamak kuning* (glutinous rice coloured yellow with turmeric and cooked in coconut milk), *salamak hitam* (black rice cooked in coconut milk) and a large basket of *padi*.

As the *anak daro* approached her destination, the *marapulai*'s relations, friends and neighbours lined the route to watch the *anak daro* pass. The *marapulai*'s mother came out to meet her and to bathe her feet as a welcoming gesture while other female members of the *marapulai*'s family threw flower petals over her. The *marapulai's* mother then led the *anak daro*, followed by the *dayang-dayang*, to the bridal dais. Meanwhile the gifts of food, brought by the *anak daro*'s family, were given to women from the *marapulai's* family. All the women who had accompanied the *anak daro* entered the *rumah gadang*'s long room and sat on one side. The men from the *anak daro*'s family sat on the other side of the room facing male members of the *marapulai*'s family.

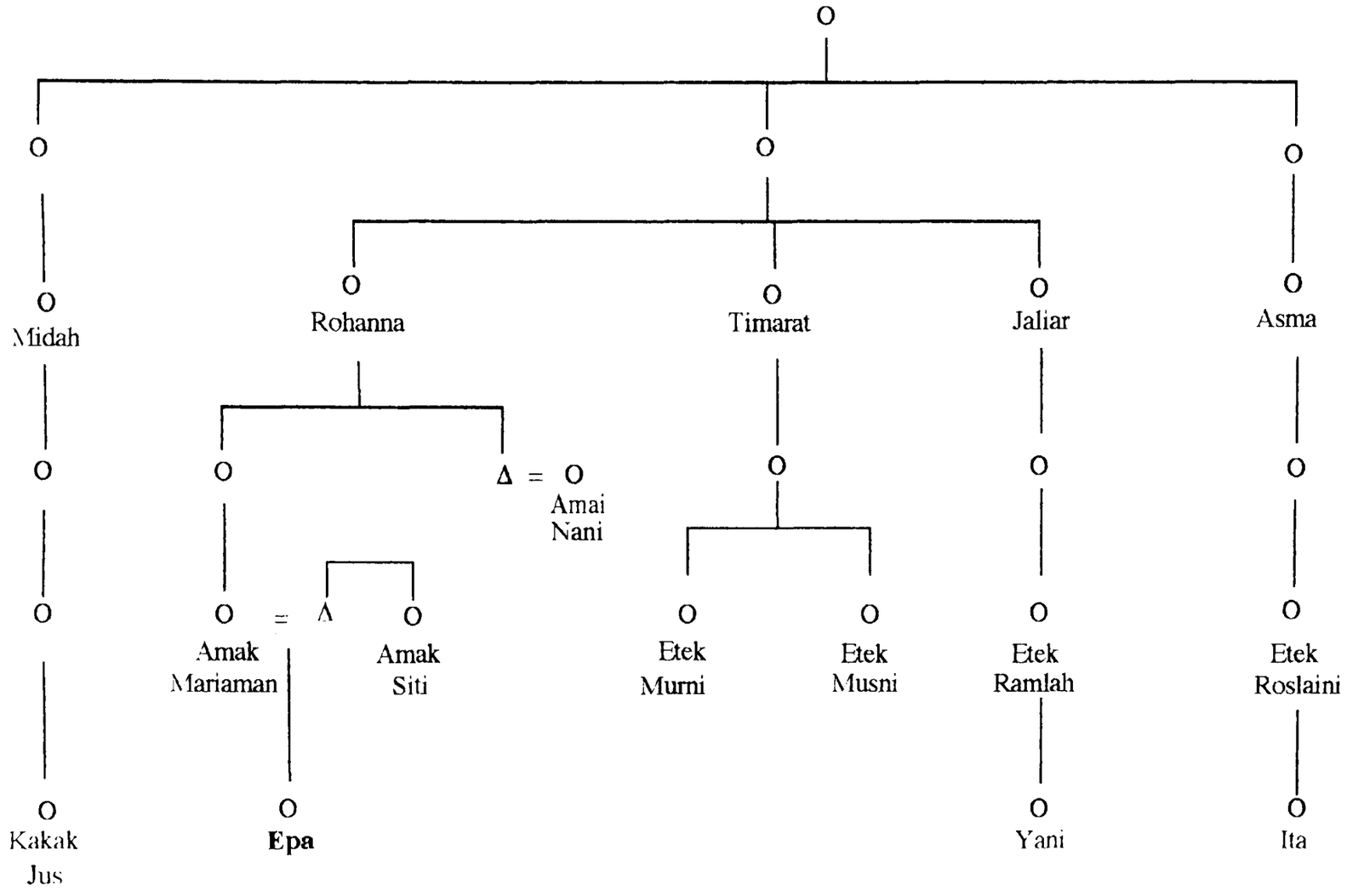


Chart 4.6: Principal Female Actors in the *Manjapuik Marapulai* Ceremony



The *anak daro* and the *marapulai* at the *pelaminan*

The women were served rice with goat and bamboo curry and *kerupuk ubi* while the men engaged in *pasambahan*, passing greetings between the two families. Within both groups there were key speakers skilled in speechmaking although other members participated to a lesser extent. Then they too ate, served by in-married men from the *marapulai*'s kin group. The *marapulai* arrived, shook hands with all his family and then sat amongst them. The *pasambahan* resumed as the male members of the *anak daro*'s family asked permission to leave.

The *anak daro* and *marapulai* prepared to depart followed by the *dayang-dayang*, the women, musicians, and other men who had accompanied Epa to her husband's family home, and additionally male consanguineal and affinal relations of the *marapulai*. Women from the *marapulai*'s descent group presented gifts to the *anak daro* and her family: a large basket containing a *sarung* (sarong) for the *anak daro* and *baju* (shirt) for the *marapulai*, a mat, cup, teapot, and *kabasuah* (a vessel used for washing hands) which was carried back to Epa's home in a large basket by Etek Ramlah; and areca nut, betel leaves, a duck's egg and turmeric on a bed of *nasi lamak* carried by Etek Murni. Yani and Ita, two young women from the *anak daro*'s *suku* (see Chart 4.6 above), each carried a suitcase containing the *marapulai*'s clothes.

At 5.30 pm they arrived back at the *anak daro*'s family home. Epa's mother went out to meet the *marapulai* and escorted him to the house. Etek Musni washed his feet and other women threw rose petals over the *anak daro* and *marapulai*. Having entered the house the bridal couple sat on the *pelaminan*.

Men from both families began an exchange of *pasambahan*. This was followed by a meal of rice with goat and bamboo curry and *kerupuk ubi* served by the *sumando* from the *anak daro*'s family. The feast was officially over once the second series of *pasambahan* had been completed. Having sought permission through these formal speeches, the men from the *marapulai*'s family left, taking the *marapulai* with them.

That evening women, including Etek Upik, Etek Murni, Etek Anim, Etek Rosmi, Amai Rosmiar and Amai Nas, prepared food for the following day. They pounded chillies, grated coconuts, peeled potatoes and cut up beans.

At about 7.30 pm men from the *anak daro*'s *suku*, together with in-married husbands, gathered together in the long room. The *anak daro*, no longer in her ceremonial attire, sat in one corner of the long room slightly apart from the men. The two sides exchanged *pasambahan* and this was followed by a *salawak* (Islamic chant) lasting for one and a half hours and given by the *suku*'s *salawak* group. Once the *salawak* had ended, food was served to the men by in-married husbands. The speeches resumed culminating in one given by Datuk Sinaro Kayo about the importance of religion and *adat* and of women's appropriate behaviour both before and during marriage. By this time, the women had finished food preparations and had joined the men in the long room.

Meanwhile, the *marapulai*, his family and in-married men were also having a *salawak*. Only once it had finished, food had been eaten and speeches made could these men and the *marapulai* set out for the house of the *anak daro*. At 12.30 am they arrived. *Pasambahan* began the ritual, followed by a *salawak* from the *marapulai*'s group in return for a meal of rice and *sambal*. *Pasambahan* completed the evening's ritual. At 2.30 am the *marapulai*'s family left. The *marapulai* stayed for the night departing early the next morning.

Manampuh (Women from the *marapulai's* family visit the *anak daro*)

The next day - the second day of the wedding celebrations - women from the *marapulai*'s family made their first formal visit to the *anak daro* and her descent group. From mid-morning food preparations were being undertaken by women from Epa's family. Embroidered cloths were placed over the floor mats and dishes of food - *rendang*, goat curry, *pregedel* (potato patties), noodles, chillied fried cassava, cakes and biscuits - were carefully displayed by senior women from the *payung*.

At 1.00 pm the *marapulai* arrived. The *anak daro* sat on her bridal dais while men from her immediate family, Datuk Sinaro Kayo (her *penghulu*), Mamak Sudirman (her most senior mother's brother), Pak Jamirin (her father), Abang Ali (her older brother) and Abang Yufrizal (her sister's husband) (see Chart 4.7) invited the *marapulai* to eat with them. The meal complete, the *marapulai* joined the *anak daro* on the bridal dais.

At 4.00 pm between 40 and 50 women from the *marapulai*'s family arrived bringing gifts of *salamak hitam* and *nasi lamak* as well as large bowls of *beras* and plates of cakes for the *anak daro* and her family. As they arrived the *marapulai* and the other men disappeared. The *anak daro* left her bridal dais and sat on the floor next to the most senior woman (Buyung's maternal grandmother) and ate with these women. Amak Mariaman also joined them. The older women - Etek Upik, Etek Murni, Etek Musni, Etek Anim, Etek Rosmi, Amak Suma, Etek Ramlah, Amai Rosmiar, Amai Nani, Amai Jan and Amak Siti - remained in the kitchen while the younger members such as Yas, Mai and Yani served the food to the guests. Following the meal, *sirih* was offered and then at 5.00 pm the women left, taking the *marapulai* with them. He returned later that evening.

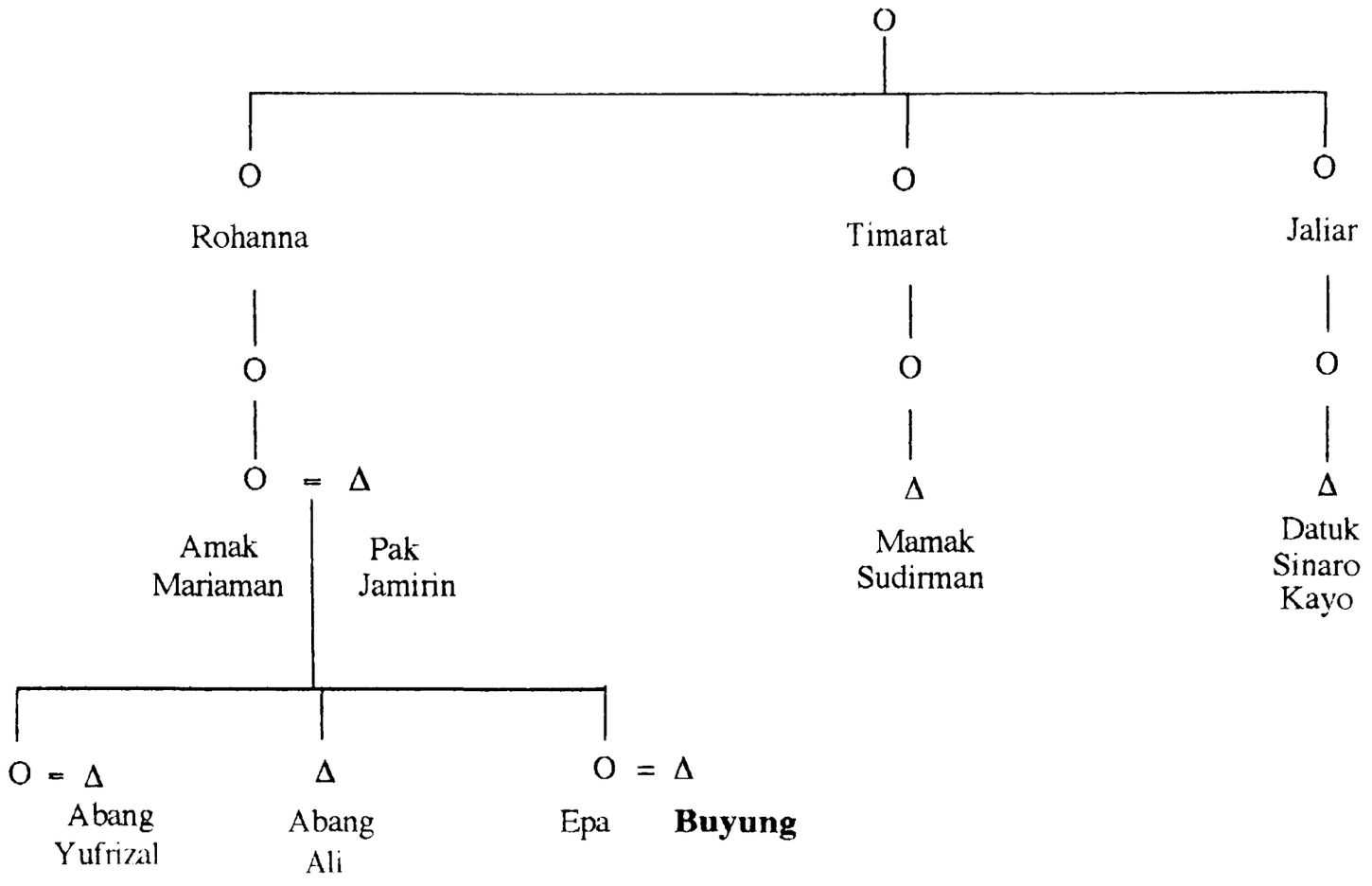


Chart 4.7: Kinship Relationship between the Men who ate the Communal Meal with Buyung

Mantan Pamili (Receiving the family)

The following day the *anak daro*, together with consanguineal and affinal relations (women and children) visited the *marapulai*'s female kin. In this part of Epa's wedding celebrations 45 such relations accompanied her. These included Etek Upik, Etek Musni and her six year old son Aan, Etek Anim and her daughters Yul, Mai and Yas, Etek Rosmi and her daughter Ia, Etek Ramlah and her daughter Yani, Amai Risah, Amai Nani, Amai Nas, Amai Rosmiar and her daughters Mi and Da, Amak Siti and her daughters Mira and Tika, Kakak Warni and her daughters Rina and Tini, as well as Amak Samtiar and her daughter Rita and several other neighbours (see Chart no 4.8). Amak Mariaman did not go.

The women took with them traditional gifts of food for the *marapulai*'s family: a tray with four bunches of bananas, four *petai* (type of bean), *lamang* (cake made from glutinous rice and coconut milk), four corn cobs, *ikan teri* (type of fish) and some salt and *sirih*, carried by Etek Upik; and a tray with four coconuts and two *ikan siam* (large fish), carried by Etek Rosmi. In addition ten other women took plates of *beras* and cakes.

Upon arrival at the *marapulai*'s home they presented the food to their female hosts and then sat down to a feast of rice, *rendang*, various curries, noodles, chillied fish and chicken, *pregedel*, followed by cakes and biscuits. Throughout the meal, as is customary on such occasions, the female hosts encouraged their guests to eat heartily with comments such as "*Tambuah nasi*" ("have some more rice") and "*ja'an baso baso*" ("don't stand on ceremony"). Epa politely refused to eat until she was persuaded by several of her husband's kin. Following the meal, *sirih* was offered. Shortly after, Epa and her female kin left. The trays, with half of the food still left on them, were returned to Epa's family. The plates used to carry the gifts of *beras* were handed back to the women, empty.

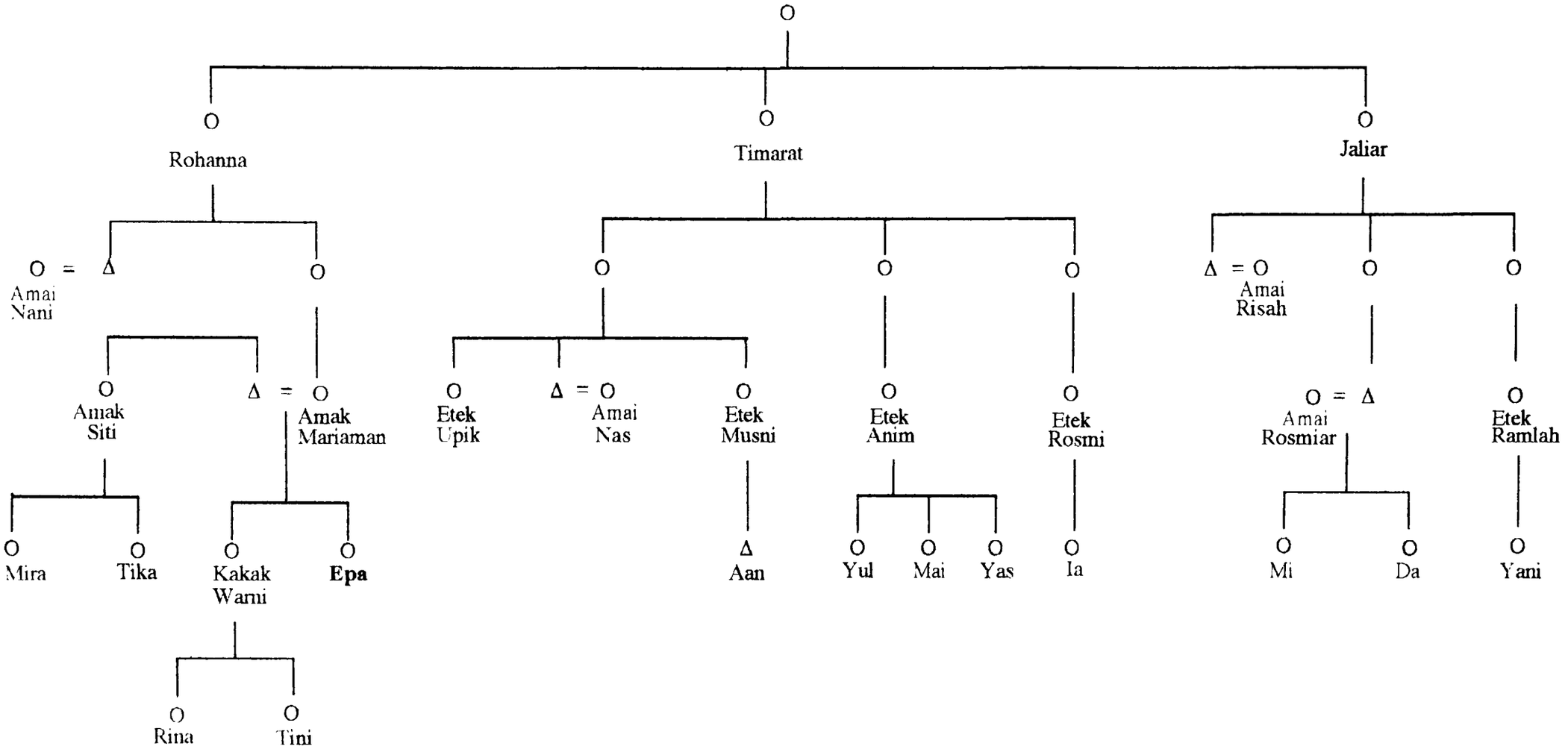


Chart 4.8: Women who *Mantan Pamili*

Manjalang (To pay one's respects to the family)

The following afternoon Epa, accompanied by two female members of her *payung* (Etek Upik and Etek Anim), went to pay her respects to her husband's family. They took baskets of *padi* and *beras* with them. On arrival at his family house they were given tea and light snacks followed by rice and *sambal*. Then Epa, together with her husband, visited members of his matrilineal kin group in the vicinity.

Other Visits between the Two Families

That same morning, in preparation for another visit from the *marapulai*'s kin later in the day, women from Epa's family (Etek Upik, Etek Murni, Etek Anim, Etek Rosmi, Etek Ramlah, Kakak Warni and Amak Siti) cooked more food (cakes, beef and potato curry and beans). At 4.00 pm all the food was laid out. The guests - both men and women - arrived at 5.00 pm. Epa and her husband sat and ate with the guests - Epa with the women, Buyung with the men. *Mamak* and in-marrying husbands from Epa's family also joined the feast but female members did not eat. Women (including Kakak Ta) served the female guests while men (Zul and Eri, but not Abang Ali who was eating with guests) served the men. The ritual followed a standard form: an exchange of *pasambahan* before and after the feast.

For the following few days further visits to and from Buyung's family, perceived as an extended *Manjalang* ritual, took place. Gifts of *beras* and cakes were offered and this was reciprocated in the form of a meal. On each visit to Buyung's family, Epa was accompanied by a small group of female kin: Etek Upik and Etek Anim one day, Kakak Warni, Etek Upik and Etek Rosmi on the following occasion, and finally Amak Mariaman, Etek Upik, Etek Anim and Etek Rosmi. This was the first formal visit Amak Mariaman had made throughout the marriage rituals and since the initial marriage negotiations. Until

this time, her responsibility for receiving guests wishing to pay respects to the bride and her descent group had taken precedence. Now that the volume of people arriving at her home had diminished, she could turn her attention to the alliance between her own descent group and her new son-in-law's kin group. Likewise, Buyung's mother was also able to make her first formal visit to Epa's descent group during this period.

Pregnancy, Birth and Childhood

The announcement of a woman's pregnancy (especially her first) is greeted with excitement by both the mother's and the father's matrilineal groups. Although the baby becomes a member of the mother's matrilineal group, s/he represents the important bond between that group and her/his *bako*. *Bako* members, especially the women, are involved in - and may instigate - various life cycle ceremonies around pregnancy, the birth of the baby and the child's growing years. The relationship extends into adulthood and, as I have already shown, (and discuss in greater detail in the analytical section of this chapter), is particularly apparent in marriage ceremonies.

Tujuh Bulan (literally meaning seven months)

This ceremony celebrates a woman's pregnancy. It is usually held when she is approximately seven months pregnant - hence its name. She is visited by female members of her husband's family who bring her gifts and, in exchange, receive a special meal of rice and *sambal*. The following example shows Amak Upik's visit to her son's wife, Dai, who is pregnant with her third child.



Tujuh Bulan: the paternal grandmother, together with her sister, prepares to leave for her daughter-in-law's house, bearing gifts of fruit as part of the rituals surrounding pregnancy and birth

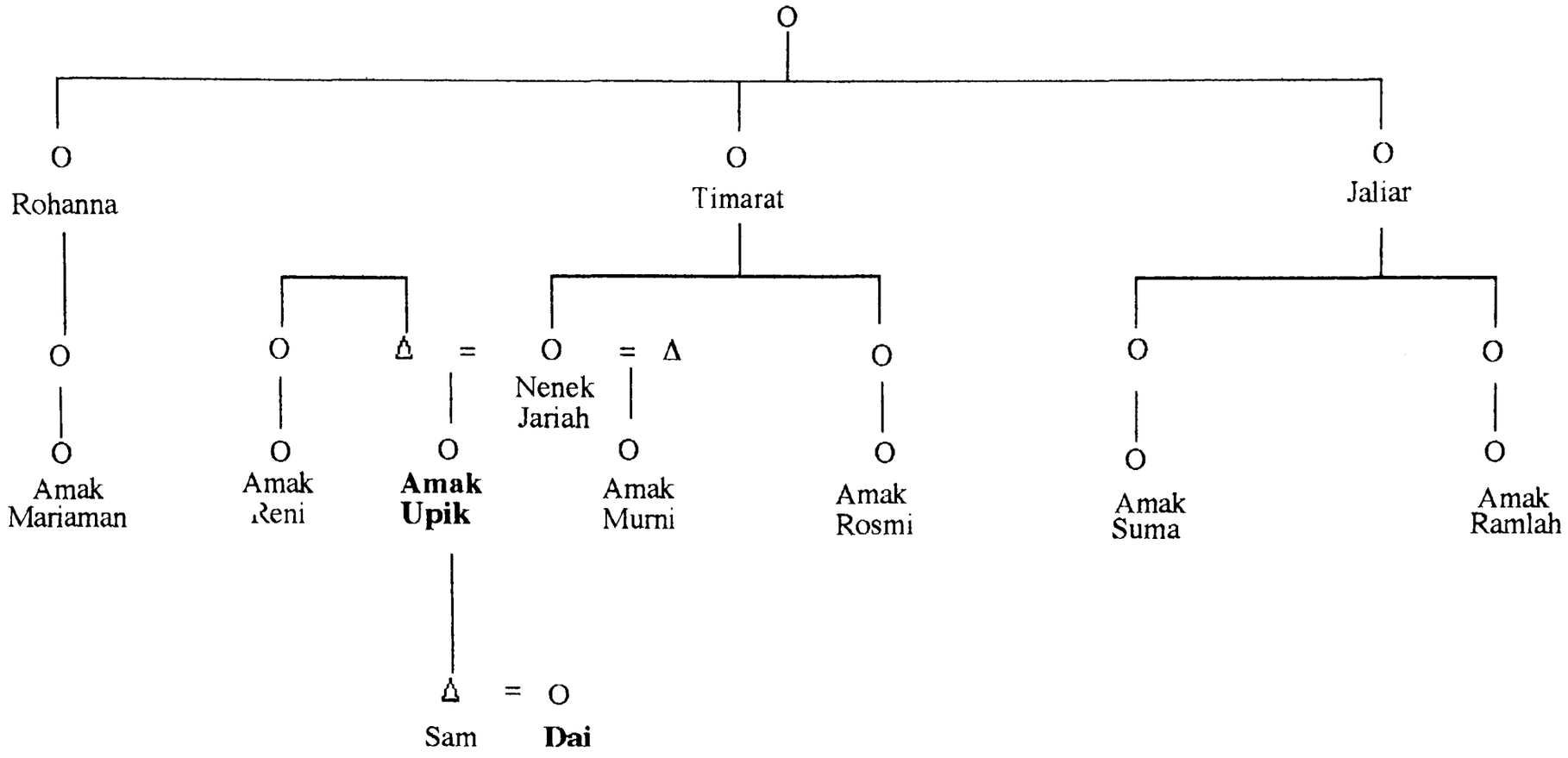


Chart 4.9: Women involved in the Tujuh Bulan Ritual

The day before and on the morning of the *Tujuh Bulan*, Amak Upik went to several nearby markets to purchase many types of fruit. Then she, her mother Nenek Jariah, her sister Amak Murni, and her mother's sister's daughter Amak Rosmi, arranged the fruit in two large baskets and made *salamak kuning*. These, together with one litre of *beras*, were to be the gifts from Amak Upik. Amak Murni, took her own gifts of *salamak kuning*, bananas and a litre of *beras*. Nenek Jariah, Amak Rosmi, and several women in the same *suku* - Amak Mariaman, Amak Suma and Amak Ramlah (see Chart 4.9) - and a neighbour, accompanied Amak Upik. They also took gifts of *beras*. Another woman, Amak Reni, represented Amak Upik's own *bako*. She took a gift of *padi*.

On arrival, they were welcomed by Dai and her mother and their gifts were accepted. Amak Upik and the other women were invited to eat a ceremonial feast of rice and *sambal*. Dai and her mother joined them but the other female members of her family worked in the kitchen or served the food. There were no men present.

Maliek Anak (Visiting the Newborn Baby)

Two days after the baby had been born close female kin of the father - in this case Amak Upik (the child's grandmother), Nenek Jariah (the great-grandmother), Amak Murni (the grandmother's sister), Amak Rosmi and Amak Ramlah (two other members of the *payung*) took gifts of *beras* and a plate of cakes to the baby's mother. They saw the baby but only the grandmother was allowed to hold her. They were served tea and cakes by Dai's family, followed by a meal of rice and *sambal*. They left shortly after they had eaten.

Mambadak Anak (literally meaning to powder the baby following its first bathing)

Several weeks after the baby is born female members of the mother's and father's families (both close and distant, consanguineal and affinal relations) go to visit the baby. Women of the same *suku* take *beras*, members of the *bako* and other affinal relations take *padi*. On arrival the women are offered *sirih*. The baby's mother and maternal grandmother sit with their guests while they eat rice and *sambal* served by young women from the mother's family. During the evening the men participate in a *salawak* and in return are given a meal.

Ikah (The Third Formal Visit to See the Baby)

During the baby's first few months and before s/he reaches one year old, the paternal grandmother takes *salamak kuning*, bananas and *dadih* (buffalo yoghurt) to the baby's mother's house. She is joined by other members of the baby's *bako* who take *padi* and cakes. They are served rice with goat curry (a goat is killed especially for the ceremony). This occasion is in recognition of the further strengthening of the alliance between the two descent groups through the birth of the baby.

Jemput Anak (Collecting the child)

When the baby is approximately one year old, the paternal grandmother goes to the baby's mother's house accompanied by other female members of her family. They take gifts of *padi* for the child's mother and in return are given a meal of rice and *sambal*. They then take the baby back to the paternal grandmother's house where s/he remains for the day until the mother arrives to collect her/him.

Sunat Rasul (Circumcision)

In accordance with their Islamic beliefs, all Minangkabau children are circumcised. It is an important stage in the male life cycle taking place around the age of ten years. The alliance between the boy's *bako* and his own

matrilineal kin group is symbolised by the gift of *padi* from the female kin of the boy's father. In return they receive a meal of rice and *sambal* from the boy's mother and her matrilineal kin group. Although girls are circumcised - usually as babies - the event passes without recognition and no gifts are exchanged.

Khataman Al-Quran (The first reading of the Koran)

As part of their Islamic upbringing, children from the age of seven regularly visit the *surau* to learn about the Koran. Between the ages of ten and 13, their education is complete. In recognition of this important achievement, a *Khataman Al-Quran* is held in the local mosque, lasting several hours. Children of a similar age recite verses from the Koran and a prize is given to the most skilled amongst them. This event attracts large numbers of villagers and male and female members of the child's matrilineal group and *bako* are invited to attend. The men meet at the mosque but women first visit the child's home taking gifts of *beras* (if they are from the same matrilineal group) and *padi* (if they are from the child's *bako*). In return, they are given a meal of rice and *sambal*. Together, the women go to the mosque to watch the *Khataman Al-Quran*. Once this is over, male and female relations return to the child's home for another meal.

Death

Rituals surrounding death also signify the importance attached to kinship ties and to alliances made through marriage. This section describes the death rituals of Nenek Mariam, a woman related to my adoptive lineage through marriage. Nenek Mariam's daughter and one of "my" *paruik*'s *mamak* are married (Chart 4.10).

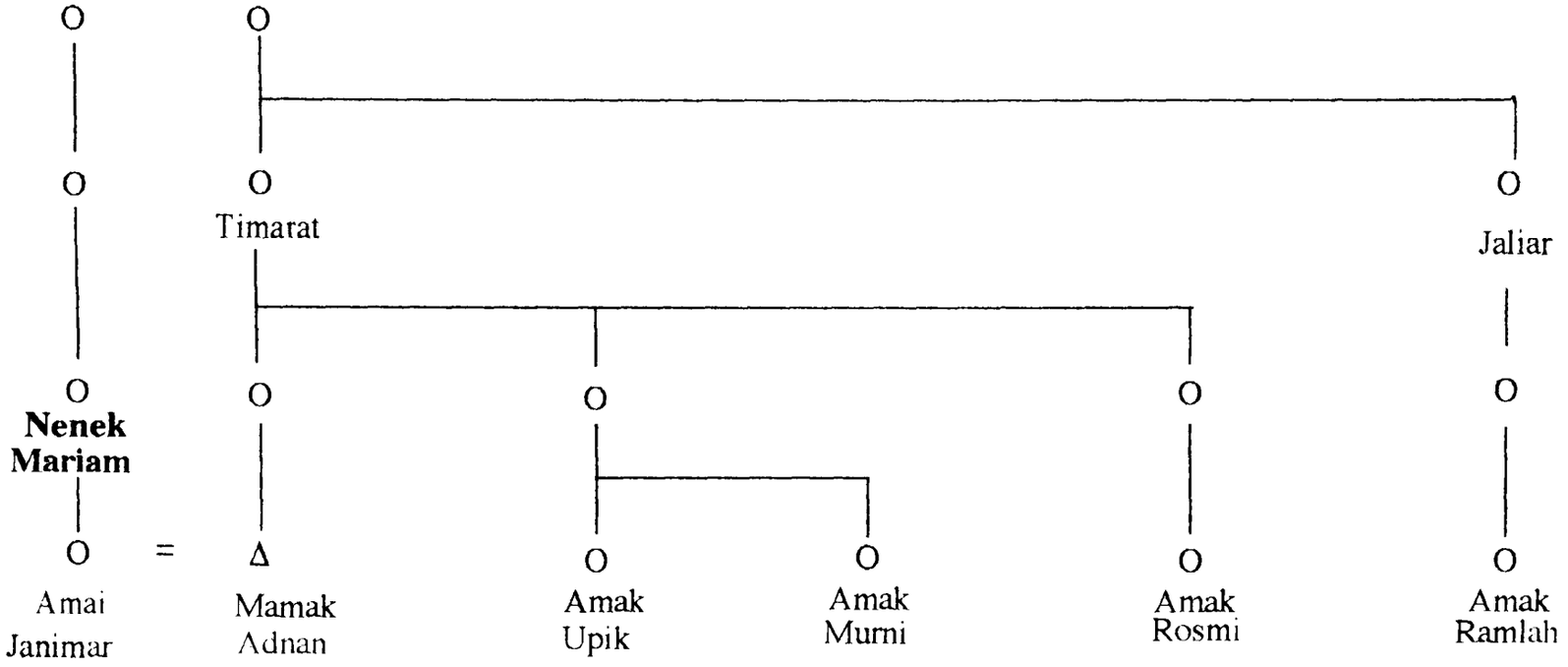


Chart 4.10: Relationship between Nenek Mariam and 'my' Adoptive Lineage

Manjanguak (To pay one's last respects)

Soon after the woman had died, messengers from her family were sent out to inform various members of her *suku* and those people related to her through marriage. During the afternoon, Amak Upik, Amak Murni, Amak Rosmi and Amak Ramlah visited her house.

Women and men were seated in different rooms. Nenek Mariam lay on a mattress on the floor, covered with several *kain panjang*. She was surrounded by her closest female kin (her three daughters and her two sisters). Amak Upik, as the most senior woman in the group mentioned above, placed her *kain panjang* over Nenek Mariam. The other women did not take anything. Each woman in turn sat by Nenek Mariam, lifted up the pieces of cloth which covered her, touched her head, stroked her hair and then replaced the cloth. They talked quietly to the chief female mourners and then left within half an hour.

In accordance with Islamic beliefs, the burial had to take place before sunset.[4] Shortly before the burial, several women gave Nenek Mariam her last *mandi* (bath). Amak Upik, representing her descent group, helped with this. The other women returned home.

Nenek Mariam, covered by the *kain panjang*, was placed in a metal coffin and carried from her home to the grave by male members of her *paruik* (her sons and grandsons). Other male consanguines and affines formed a procession, followed by a few women. The chief mourners stayed at home in order to receive visitors offering their condolences. As the procession went through the village, men and women left their houses to stand by the roadside. At the burial ground, the

---

4 The Minangkabau adhere to the orthodox Islamic practice of burial before sunset should the person die during the daytime, and burial the following day before sunset should the death take place at night.

grave had already been prepared by the men of the family. After the burial, the male and female mourners returned to Nenek Mariam's house where they remained for a short time.

The following day Amak Upik, Amak Murni, Amak Rosmi and Amak Ramlah, as well as other female mourners, returned to the house for a visit lasting approximately 15 minutes. Affines took gifts of *padi*, consanguines took *beras*. Again the women were segregated from the men. *Sirih* was offered but no food or drink. This part of the death rituals and the giving of rice lasted several days until all members of the community had had the opportunity to pay their respects. The evening after the burial, and again on the third, seventh and fortieth evenings, a *salawak* was held in honour of the dead woman. Although men were the principal participants, women from Nenek Mariam's matrilineal group were also present.

Mandoa (Ritual Feasting associated with Death)

Seven days after the burial a meal was given by the dead person's female kin. Female and male consanguines and affines had been informed of the *mandoa* the previous day by women and men from Nenek Mariam's matrilineal kin group. During the late afternoon individuals or small groups of women took gifts of *beras* and cakes (irrespective of their relationship to the deceased). Upon arrival they were served a meal of rice, goat and bamboo curry, chillied cassava slices and tea. They left once they had eaten. During the evening male consanguines and affines held a *salawak*, attended by female members of Nenek Mariam's *payung*, and then ate a meal. This, and the final *salawak* after 40 days (involving the same participants), marked the end of the death rituals and the chief mourners resumed their normal pattern of life.

Food Exchanges and the Religious Calendar

In addition to rituals based on the life cycle there are also several events in the religious calendar which reveal the importance assigned to affinal relations. Two of the most important occasions are used here as illustrations.

Bulan Puasa (Fasting Month)

Two days before the beginning of the fasting month, women visit the wives of their close male kin (especially a son or brother), as well as the wives' mother and sisters, taking gifts of *beras* and cakes. In return they are offered tea and cakes followed by a meal of rice and *sambal*. The day before the fasting month these visits continue and the women who had the day before received gifts of *beras* and cakes and provided a meal now arrive at the house of their husband's mother or sister with *beras* and cakes and, in exchange, receive a meal of rice and *sambal*.

During the fasting month itself, women prepare a meal as a gift for the wife of their close male relatives (brother, son, mother's sister's son). This ritual is known as *Maantakan Pabukoan*. The meal, taken to the female in-law's house during mid-afternoon, is carried in a special food container comprising several different compartments stacked one on top of the other. Inside, a variety of food dishes form a complete meal (such as *beras*, fish in chilli, meat in sauce, *serikayo* (a sweet dish made from eggs) and *nasi lamak*). Another event during the fasting month takes place as the day's fasting draws to a close. Known as *Terbuko Puaso* (ending the fasting for the day), male relatives (especially brothers) arrive, often with their children, and eat a meal prepared by their female kin.

On the eve of the close of the fasting month, cooking activities are at a height as food is prepared for the feasts which take place over the next few days. Cakes

and *sambal* are prepared in anticipation of the guests who will arrive. *Hari Raya Idul Fitri* (the day which marks the end of the fasting month) begins with communal prayers in the mosque; the remainder of the day is devoted to visiting and entertaining although most of the guests are men on that first day. Anyone entering the house on *Idul Fitri* is offered rice and *sambal* although most people eat only the cake and numerous types of snacks offered. Religious festivals, especially *Idul Fitri*, are traditionally times when conflicts should be resolved and communal meals eaten.

The following day, women begin visiting their husband's mother and sisters taking gifts of *beras* and cake and receiving a meal of rice and *sambal* in return. This is known as *Manjalang Mintuo* (to visit in-laws). Over the next few days women continue to visit more distant relations who may live in a different village and whom they do not meet on a regular basis.

Hari Raya Haji (The Festival Celebrating the Annual Pilgrimage to Mecca)
One of the other major events in the Islamic calendar is the annual pilgrimage to Mecca for those who can afford to do so. To mark their departure, these pilgrims each invite many villagers to a feast of goat and bamboo curry with rice. The pilgrims are aided in their food preparations by their female and male consanguineal and affinal kin. The men kill the goat and cook the curry, the women prepare the spices, cook the rice, collect and boil the water for the tea and clear away afterwards. The people going to Mecca are also expected to buy one or more cows for the village celebrations. These animals are slaughtered on *Hari Raya Haji* and shared amongst all the villagers. Several days later, the pilgrims return home and those villagers who had previously been to the feast, go to pay their respects.

Analysis

Lamphere (1970), in her study of ceremonial networks amongst the Navajo, argues that

> ceremonial co-operation has an ego-centred focus which shifts from situation to situation... Generalised notions of authority and co-operation are used by the individual who is most concerned with a ceremony to recruit kin from a network of ties. (1970:43)

From the data above, this is clearly the case in Minangkabau. Individuals, irrespective of their wealth or status in the community, hold life cycle celebrations and use their female and male kin networks to request assistance in the preparations. In Chapter 2, when the concept of network analysis was first discussed in detail, it was suggested that specific networks relating to *adat*, market activities and migration practices would be analysed using the "experiences and interactions of one person". In the following analysis, in relation to Epa's marriage rituals, the network notion is explored further from the anchorage point not of Epa herself but of her mother, Amak Mariaman. Although Epa was the key female actor in terms of her role as *anak daro*, it was her mother who had the main responsibility for managing the preparations and female rituals, and liaising with the men, overseeing their rituals and ensuring that the necessary female inputs were ready at appropriate times. Furthermore assistance in and attendance at these rituals, as well as the roles adopted, were determined by the participants' relationship to Amak Mariaman.

A number of analytical points arise from both the descriptive accounts of these marriage rituals and of the other life cycle celebrations. Firstly, marriage is an alliance between two descent groups and forms a network of consanguines and affines within the same as well as different villages. Secondly, these networks are characterised by a series of rights and obligations which are manifested in the life cycle rituals especially in the help offered during preparations. Thirdly, the

nature of these network relations is reflected in the participatory role people have within the celebrations themselves. Fourthly, a fundamental part of the rituals is gift exchange, mainly of food and ritual feasting. Food, then, becomes a useful analytical tool symbolising consanguineal and affinal ties. Through an analysis of the giving of food and providing feasts, the relationship between giver and receiver can be ascertained. Fifthly, the gifts of food and offers of assistance at preparations for life cycle rituals are based on a principle of reciprocity. Finally, to conclude this section, an analysis of male and female roles in the preparations and celebrations of the life cycle rituals can be utilised to broaden our understanding of gender interaction.

a) *Marriage as an Alliance Between Two Descent Groups*

Marriage is regarded as an alliance between two descent groups which begins with the initial proposal of marriage, is formalised with the *Batimbang Tando* and reinforced during the marriage celebrations. At the announcement of a first (and subsequent) pregnancy, women maintain the alliance through a celebration of fertility and motherhood by means of gift-giving and ritual feasting. As the child grows up, the relationship is further strengthened through involvement in childhood rituals by both the mother's and father's matrilineal descent groups. Even in death, the importance of the alliance is recognised as affines arrive to pay their last respects.

Amak Mariaman, as Epa's mother and therefore the principal female actor from Epa's descent group, would be likely to try and maintain a strong relationship with Buyung's family. She would accomplish this through occasional visits when time allows and during the festivities in and following the fasting month when women exchange gifts of food with their female in-laws. She would also be informed of life cycle rituals concerning Buyung's lineage members and would, if time allows, assist in the preparations. The mother tends to be the key

actor in maintaining the relationship between two descent groups; other female members of their kin group play a secondary part but, with time, the mother's mediating role is taken over by her daughters.

The importance of maintaining relations between these descent groups is further reflected in the following example. One female informant expressed her disappointment in her son's wife's family. She noted that it was customary to keep in regular contact with a son's or daughter's spouse's family especially around *Idul Fitri* and for both families' main life cycle events. Even if it was not possible to offer help towards preparations for these life cycle rituals, it was important to visit the family to pay one's respects. The woman told me that she had never been invited to her daughter-in-law's mother's house located in a nearby village. Although she had invited her affines to her own home, they had never arrived. When her daughter-in-law's grandmother died, the woman had not been told directly but heard much later and through a third party. She had not therefore been able to follow her duties, prescribed by *adat*. This she found disturbing and questioned how an alliance could be maintained if she was not informed of important events such as these.

Traditionally marriage has been used to strengthen social ties either between family (marriage between a woman and her mother's brother's son or father's sister's son), friends or neighbours, or to broaden an already existing relationship (daughter or son with in-law's family) (Navis 1984:211). Kahn (1980a) found that in his research area of Sungai Puar cross-cousin marriages were used to create "relatively permanent links between kin groups, such that a significant proportion of women of one group are married to the men of the other" (1980a:48). In my household survey in Salimpaung 26% of arranged marriages were between cross-cousins.

A marriage which continues an already existing alliance is described by Navis (1984) as *ambil-mengambil*, a term difficult to translate directly but which implies exchange or giving and taking. In other words a woman from one descent group marries a man from another; later her brother or sister marries someone from her husband's descent group. One of the aims of this form of marriage, according to Navis, is to strengthen the kinship ties between in-laws (1984:194). It is perhaps the case that under these circumstances the bride or groom would find it more difficult to extricate her/himself from the marriage if other family members had already married into that kin group. To break such a pattern might cause bad feeling, disharmony and even conflict within and between the kin groups. From my household survey data, 33% of arranged marriages were of the *ambil-mengambil* form. Epa's and Buyung's marriage also developed an already existing relationship between two descent groups. Twelve years previously, Epa's sister Kakak Warni married Yufrizal, a man from the same lineage as Buyung; seven years later her brother Abang Ali married Kakak Ta, also from the same lineage. As Epa approached marriageable age she was encouraged to marry Buyung.

Although Epa and Buyung had an arranged marriage, a comparative study of marriage practices over time in Salimpaung revealed that young men and women are now more likely to choose their own marriage partners. Placing marriage into three time categories based on the person's year of birth (firstly pre-1930, secondly 1930-1954 and finally 1955-1992) it appeared that there was a significant fall in arranged marriages in more recent times. Of those born before 1930, 89% had arranged marriages compared with 71% in the category 1930-1954 and 33% in the third category. The decrease in arranged marriages raises the question of whether this would have repercussions for networks established

through marriage within the village or between neighbouring villages.[5] The data indicate that a significant proportion (26.7%) of men and women who did not have an arranged marriage, chose their partners from within the same village while 16.7% married someone from a neighbouring village. This suggests that networks could be easily established and maintained. Another group (38.3%) married people who originated from villages or towns further afield and the remainder (18.3%) married non-Minangkabau. It is more difficult - but nonetheless possible - to maintain links between descent groups who live in a distant part of Minangkabau. This is illustrated in the following example.

> Lindah is the oldest of six children. Her father and mother are both Minangkabau. Her father originally came from a village several hours' journey from Salimpaung. Her mother was born locally. They met and married in 1964 whilst on migration in Lampung. They and their children lived there until 1990 when Lindah's father died. Her mother then returned to Salimpaung with her two youngest children. By this time Lindah and three of her siblings lived and worked in Pekanbaru.
>
> Although the families are scattered in different parts of Sumatra, Lindah and her siblings felt it important to maintain links with their father's descent group. When her father's sister's child married, Lindah, her mother and her two youngest siblings decided to attend the celebrations. Lindah left Pekanbaru staying in Salimpaung overnight and proceeding to her father's village where she and her mother spent several days helping with preparations for the marriage in Lindah's *bako*.

Although it was not as easy to offer assistance as it would have been if Lindah's *bako* had lived in Salimpaung or nearby, it was still felt that the alliance was important enough to travel great distances to fulfil the obligations prescribed by *adat*.

---

5 This type of breakdown in networks was avoided in the past in Rao Rao, a neighbouring village, where until 1955 anyone marrying outside the village in defiance of an edict from the *kerapatan adat nagari* (village council) was no longer considered a member of that community (Navis 1984: 194-195).

b) *Mutual Help in Consanguineal and Affinal Networks*

The assistance offered during preparations for marriage or other life cycle celebrations renews and reflects the bonds within the bride's mother's descent groups and between these groups and their affinal relations (especially wives of *mamak* and the bride's *bako*) as well as the mother's other affines (such as her daughters-in-law).

The many food preparations for Epa's wedding required help from a large group of women. Those closest, in terms of kinship relation, offered the most assistance but at key stages in the preparations and during the actual celebrations more distant kin were also involved.

Those who helped with preparations most frequently were women closely related to Amak Mariaman, namely Kakak Warni, her eldest daughter, who returned to Salimpaung from her home in Pekanbaru six days before the *baralek*, as well as Etek Upik, Etek Anim, Etek Rosmi and Etek Ramlah who all live in Salimpaung. These women do not share the same mother, or even the same grandmother, but they are members of the same *payung*, have the same *penghulu* and belong to the same *rumah gadang* although only Etek Anim (and Amak Mariaman and their families) actually live there. Rohanna the grandmother of Amak Mariaman, Timarat the grandmother of Etek Upik, Etek Anim and Etek Rosmi, and Jaliar the grandmother of Etek Ramlah were sisters, having the same mother (see Chart 4.1 above). These are Amak Mariaman's closest matrilineal female kin as her mother and siblings are no longer alive. They are a part of her effective network. If confined only to an analysis of these actors, the network can be regarded as dense: all members know each other as the content is kinship tracing descent through a common (and named) ancestor. In Clyde Mitchell's terms then the network is of high intensity and high frequency as these women do not meet just for these preparations but interact on a regular, usually daily,

basis. In accordance with *adat*, it was these four women who offered the most support in the preparations for Epa's wedding. At a later stage, when their own children are ready to marry, Amak Mariaman would in turn offer strong support.

Other women in the same kinship relationship to Amak Mariaman namely Etek Murni, Etek Musni and Amak Suma, offered their help wherever possible although, for personal or economic reasons, they were unable to provide assistance as frequently as the others. Etek Murni helped more with preparations in the evening once she had shut her shop; Amak Suma assisted at the times convenient to her extensive farming activities as she had many plots of *sawah* (wet rice fields), *ladang* (unirrigated fields) and *kebun* (jungle) which needed daily attention.

More distant kin relations - those who were of the same *suku* but not the same *payung* - most notably Ancu Samsilas, Etek Nurmi, Nopi, Etek Roslaini, Ita and Reni all helped at Epa's marriage celebrations at a time when assistance was most needed: on the evening before the *Manjapuik Marapulai*, the event which begins the wedding celebrations. They came to do a specific job and then left. They could be described as part of Amak Mariaman's extended network in which the characteristics include lower intensity, and lower frequency of contact, although as the network's content is kinship, durability remains lifelong.

These were not Amak Mariaman's only helpers and this is where the importance of ties other than those based on consanguineal kinship arise. One of the key helpers in the food preparations was Amai Rosmiar. In accordance with *adat*, as the wife of Datuk Sinaro Kayo, the *payung*'s *penghulu*, she was expected to help her husband's descent group at these events. Another in-married woman who offered help and support was Kakak Ta, wife of Abang Ali, Amak Mariaman's eldest son. Kakak Ta's particular role was complicated because, as a member of

Buyung's descent group, she was also obliged to help with their food preparations. She divided her time between her own and Epa's family kitchens. Kakak Warni, as a wife of a member of Buyung's matrilineal group, was also expected to spend time engaged in both descent groups' food preparations. Other in-married wives of Epa's *suku*, especially Amai Nani, Amai Nas and Amai Risah offered help with varying degrees of frequency.

According to Navis (1984) and a report prepared by the *Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan* (1986/7) (Department of Education and Culture), one of the obligations a woman has to her husband's descent group is to work in the kitchen to prepare for the feasts held at her in-laws' life cycle rituals; her failure to help is perceived as an insult. Her in-laws watch her cook to see whether her standards match their own; they mock any lack of skill and this is humiliating for her (Navis 1984:217; Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan 1986/7:223). Ridicule perhaps takes place because it is insulting for a woman to be served poor quality food when food is, as I discuss in detail later, such an expressive medium of communication between women. To avoid this mockery girls learn to cook from an early age and by the time they reach late teenage years the majority are already skilled.

Other affinal female relations may also offer their assistance during preparations. Although Kakak Warni's and Abang Ali's mothers-in-law could not offer help to Amak Mariaman, because they were helping their own sister with the preparations from the *marapulai*'s side, it is usual for a woman to help at the food preparations for weddings, births, deaths and minor life cycle events in her child's spouse's *paruik*.

Another woman who gave up a considerable amount of time to help was Amak Siti, the sister of Amak Mariaman's husband, and consequently a senior member

of Epa's *bako*. Her interest in Epa's marriage was rooted in the marriage between her brother, Pak Jamirin, and Amak Mariaman. At that time, Amak Siti's mother and grandmother would have been the key female actors in forming and perpetuating the alliance between her own and Amak Mariaman's descent groups. Amak Siti would have helped with the marriage preparations and would have been a participant and minor actor in the celebrations; now with time and age she had taken over her mother's role and continued to maintain the important links with Amak Mariaman and her *paruik*. Only with the death of her brother's children would this alliance wane; alternatively the alliance could be renewed through the marriage of Eri or one of Warni's, Ali's or Epa's children with a member of her own family. In network terms, the content is affinal relations. It is not as durable as the network based on consanguineal relations. In future generations, without the renewal of this alliance through another marital union, the network will be forgotten.

The type of work undertaken by an individual during food preparations can also yield information about the status and form of their relationship with the bride's mother. She is the most senior woman and is neither involved in preparing (cutting onions, extracting milk from coconuts, pounding chillies and other spices) nor cooking food. She reserves her time for overseeing the activities, ensuring fresh supplies of produce are readily available, offering advice where appropriate, making any key decisions regarding the preparations and welcoming guests. She also ensures workers are well cared for, that before they start work they are offered a meal of rice and *sambal* and that once they have finished their task, and before they leave, they have also eaten. Ingredients are often prepared by younger, less experienced women (unmarried female kin and neighbours) as well as older women who also have the responsibility for cooking the food. Their expertise in providing food for these important feasts is readily acknowledged and welcomed by the bride's mother.

Without this help from consanguineal and affinal relations as well as from neighbours and friends, such elaborate feasts could not be prepared. Providing food for between 300 and 500 guests (the average number at most marriage celebrations) and in excess of 200 guests at some of the other life cycle ceremonies to celebrate pregnancy or to honour the dead, requires large resources of people to help with preparations. Even preparing a wide variety of dishes for the smaller numbers of male and female guests at the *Manampuh* and *Mantan Pamili* rituals would be difficult without a core group of helpers, often working from early morning until late evening, on whom the senior woman can rely. Years ago this help would have been even more essential than in the present day. One informant told me that before the mechanised rice mill, *padi* had to be dehusked manually by pounding the rice with a large stick. This significantly increased the time spent on wedding preparations and the pounding would continue late into the night in order to ensure there was sufficient *beras* to cook for guests at the ritual feasts.

The help men provide during preparations also draws on kinship ties. In preparation for Epa's wedding celebrations, male members of the kin group undertook repairs and alterations to the *rumah gadang*. Mamak Sudirman and Mamak Adnan, both skilled carpenters, were the key actors. Amak Mariaman had no surviving brothers, and these two *mamak* were amongst the classificatory brothers closest to Amak Mariaman who still lived in Salimpaung. They were therefore fulfilling their cultural role (*mamak*) of looking after their *kemanakan* (sister's child). They are also part of her effective network and may meet on a regular basis although the frequency of interaction would be greater during this period. Arlin, whose mother lives in the same house as Amak Mariaman, also helped by enlarging one room in the *rumah gadang* to accommodate the bridal bed. Amak Mariaman's husband and eldest son helped by harvesting foods

needed for the ritual feasts. Eri, Amak Mariaman's youngest son and her only remaining unmarried child, was responsible for preparations outside the house (tidying the yard for example) and for organising the welcome signs and archway. Younger unmarried men of the *suku* were also important in informing male members of the *suku* and *sumando* of the forthcoming rituals.

The main event which required the help of large numbers of men was cooking the goat curry. Participants included male members of Amak Mariaman's *suku* (Mamak Sudirman, Mamak Adnan, Abang Ali, Eri, Arlin and Zul) and in-married husbands (such as Epa's father and the husbands of Kakak Warni, Amak Suma and Etek Upik). Datuk Sinaro Kayo, the *payung*'s *penghulu*, organised and supervised the preparation of the spices and coconuts (which form key ingredients in the curry), killing and dissecting the goat and finally cooking the curry in its large cooking pot. At this stage, then, Amak Mariaman calls upon male members of her consanguineal and affinal network to provide assistance. Certain principal actors are expected to attend because of their close kin relationship and it is hoped that other more distant relations would also help.

As the celebrations begin and the ritual feasts get under way a number of tasks are undertaken to ensure their smooth running. The kin relationship with the bride's mother determines the responsibility that person has in these celebrations. The women closest to her do the more menial tasks (clearing away and washing up) while the senior wives of the *payung*'s *mamak*, the *amai*, are responsible for transferring the food from the large cooking pots to dishes and plates. This is a role prescribed by *adat*. Their willingness to help reflects the cultural importance they place on the alliance between their own and their husband's descent groups. Nevertheless as they are not part of the *suku* and their children follow their line of descent, it is not necessary for the *amai* to wholly integrate into their husbands' descent group. They therefore keep slightly apart. They could not be expected to engage in any menial tasks and are not allowed to carry

food or serve guests. As young in-married wives they, together with young unmarried women of the *suku*, are expected to help with the preparations and to serve their in-laws' guests at female feasts but with motherhood their role changes and they become respected *amai*. Their expertise in cooking becomes more valued and they help with displaying rather than serving or clearing away the food.

During the male feasts, a similar division of labour occurs. The *amai* put out the food on dishes, young unmarried men of the *suku* take these dishes of food and give them to the waiting *sumando* (usually the younger men), who then serve the male guests.

c) *Consanguineal and Affinal Relations: Participants in Life Cycle Celebrations*

Throughout the marriage celebrations, the importance of the relationship between firstly Amak Mariaman and her descent group, secondly Amak Mariaman, her descent group and the wives of the *payung's mamak*, thirdly Amak Mariaman and her children's spouses and their descent groups, and finally Amak Mariaman, her descent group and her husband's descent group (Epa's *bako*), are symbolised in the roles assigned to a representative from each group.

The mother's role is to welcome and converse with guests, and to ensure that they eat well. She is one of the few 'public' representatives of the female side of the descent group during ritual feasts held in her home. During the *Manjapuik Marapulai* part of the marriage rituals, the mothers of the *anak daro* and the *marapulai* leave their homes to meet and welcome their child's spouse for the first time within a formal ritual context as they see her/him approaching. While other senior women threw petals over the bridal couple, Etek Musni, Amak Mariaman's classificatory sister, washed the feet of the *marapulai* as an act of

welcome and guarded approval. (I use the term guarded deliberately as the women appear to give their wholehearted approval of the marriage at a later stage in the wedding celebrations when the bride's mother eats with the bride and groom).

Senior women, representing the bride's mother and their matrilineage, play an important role in those parts of the celebrations which do not take place within the lineage's *rumah gadang*. At the *Manjapuik Marapulai*, the *Manampuh* and the *Mantan Pamili* parts of the wedding celebrations, the mothers of the bride and groom are represented by senior women from their lineages. These women carry gifts from the mother to her new female affines. In Epa's wedding celebrations, Etek Murni, Etek Ramlah (both from the same *payung*) and Etek Jus (from the same *suku*) took gifts from Amak Mariaman when they accompanied Epa to collect her husband from his family home. Etek Murni and Etek Ramlah also brought back the gifts given by the *marapulai*'s family. At the same time two younger unmarried female members of Epa's *suku* brought the suitcase containing the *marapulai*'s clothes, a symbol that his family 'guardedly' approved of the marriage. At the *Mantan Pamili* stage of the celebrations, when Epa was accompanied by a large number of female kin on one of her visits to the women of the *marapulai*'s descent group, two senior women of the *payung*, Etek Upik and Etek Rosmi, carried the gifts to and from Epa's house. During the numerous other visits that took place on a much smaller scale between Epa's and Buyung's families, a small number of senior women accompanied Epa, as her mother's and the *payung*'s representative.

Relations between consanguineal kin are also expressed in other life cycle ceremonies. The *Tujuh Bulan* pregnancy ritual illustrates the importance of the relationship between sisters and between a woman and her sister's child. Amak Murni, sister of Amak Upik (the future paternal grandmother) took her own gifts

of fruit, *nasi lamak* and *beras*. She was the only woman (besides Amak Upik) to do this.

The recognition of the alliance between the descent group and in-married wives was, in Epa's marriage, reflected in the importance attached to Amai Nani when she was asked to carry one of the gifts of food to the *marapulai*'s house during the *Manjapuik Marapulai*. Additionally several *amai* attended the important *Mantan Pamili* ritual. The relationship with Amak Mariaman's in-laws was also acknowledged as Ia, her son's child and a member of her daughter-in-law's lineage, was one of Epa's *dayang-dayang*. Likewise, Tika, the daughter of Amak Siti, Amak Mariaman's husband's sister and a member of Epa's *bako*, was also one of the *dayang-dayang*.

The importance of the relationship between Amak Mariaman and Epa's *bako* was reflected in Epa's personal preparations for the beginning of the wedding celebrations. Her bridal clothes, headdress and jewellery were left at the house of her *bako*. On the morning of the *Manjapuik Marapulai* ceremony, accompanied by some of her younger unmarried female kin, she went to that house where she changed from her everyday clothes into her bridal wear and emerged as the *anak daro*. On the walk back to her own home, she was joined by female members of her *bako*, bearing gifts of *padi*. The significance of the *bako* was further acknowledged when Amak Siti, as the senior woman of the *bako*, joined senior women from Epa's *payung* in presenting her own gifts to the family of the *marapulai*. She carried a large basket of *padi* - one of those that had been taken to her brother's daughter's house that morning - to symbolise her association with Epa and Epa's mother.

At a more general level, a wider group of people participated in the celebrations even if they did not take a leading role. Women from the same *suku* as well as

more distantly related *amai* (women who have married men from the same *suku* but not from Epa's *payung*) attended female feasts at the *anak daro*'s house and brought gifts of rice.

Pai manggi, informing people of the forthcoming *Baralek*, is an important means of communicating with more distant kin. The women and men who *pai manggi* were Amak Mariaman's link to the other participants. They connected her effective network to her extended network. Expanding Amak Mariaman's network to include those who were informed of Epa's wedding celebrations, the content is no longer consanguineal relations but incorporates affinal relations as well. Those closest to Amak Mariaman - both female and male - undertook to inform all possible participants. This involved going outside the village to affinal relations with whom Amak Mariaman may not have been in regular contact. On one such *pai manggi*, I accompanied Etek Anim and Etek Ramlah to a village several kilometres from Salimpaung. There, we searched for the homes of two *amai* who did not keep in regular contact with Amak Mariaman but who nevertheless had to be informed of Epa's wedding. Etek Ramlah, who had only returned from long-term migration the previous year, had not met either *amai* since she was a child but could remember the marriages between the women and her male relatives. Etek Anim and Etek Ramlah had never been to either home and it took us some time to find them. On each occasion, the *amai* invited us into their homes to drink tea and eat cakes. Etek Anim and Etek Ramlah told the *amai* of the forthcoming event and of the background to the marriage. Such relations then are durable, they are lifelong: once two people marry, their descent groups enter into a lifetime relationship, even when this is not necessarily characterised by high frequency or intensity.

d) Food Symbolism

Food is used for a variety of different purposes other than the satisfaction of hunger and provision of nourishment. In many cultures food provides a focus for communal activities, signifies social status or wealth, and symbolises, as well as helps to establish and maintain, social relationships (Bass, Wakefield and Kolassa 1979, Douglas 1982, Firth 1973). It expresses messages "about different degrees of hierarchy, inclusion and exclusion, boundaries and transactions across the boundaries" (Douglas 1975:249). The ritual preparation, presentation, distribution, exchange and consumption of food often comprises the central core of many religious and social rituals (Cohen 1968, Fieldhouse 1986). In order to fully appreciate the significance of gifts of food and feasts at life cycle rituals, the role of food in Minangkabau daily life is first examined. Food serves as a means of communicating between groups, of expressing sentiments important in social relations such as trust, distrust, conflict, harmony and status, of symbolising new or continuing relations and the state of the relationship. Its importance is also reflected in its use as an analogy in many *adat* aphorisms.

Food, Hospitality, Cultural Etiquette and Communication

Food is a central part of Minangkabau *baso baso* (cultural etiquette). Depending on the relationship to the host, visitors (except very close kin such as mother and sister) are always given refreshments ranging from a glass of water or plain tea, sweetened tea or coffee, snacks, cakes and fruit to rice and *sambal*. The type, quality and, to a limited extent, the quantity of refreshments offered as a form of hospitality is more than either merely sharing food as a generous act, as a principle of reciprocity, or as a "symbol of union" (Richards 1932:190). It also signifies the kind of relationship the host believes she has with her guest. Fieldhouse (1986) has suggested that the "quality and quantity of food offered or shared reflects a common understanding of the closeness of various types of social relationships" (1986:105).

In my fieldwork experience people who visited Amak's house fell into a number of categories and were given different refreshments accordingly. Close female kin (mother, sister, daughter) were given water or plain tea and then only if they specifically asked. Quite often they would go and fetch their own drink. Fruit or cakes, purchased during Amak's trip to the market, would often be shared with these female kin if they visited at an appropriate time. Close male kin (brother or son) were normally offered sweetened coffee. Those who were more distantly related (brother's wife, mother's sister's daughter) were given plain tea and some cake, if available. Other affinal relations (daughter's or son's spouse's mother), or those who were not related at all and who were infrequent visitors to the house, were given sweetened tea together with cake or fruit. The amount of sugar in the tea also appeared to signify the kind of perceived relationship between host and guest. The more formal or important, yet distant, the relationship was deemed to be, the sweeter the tea. As a guest in people's houses, I found a similar pattern emerged. Those women regarded as close family (in the same *paruik*) whose houses I frequented regularly (grandmother, mother's sister, grandmother's sister's daughter) rarely offered me a drink but expected me to 'help myself'. Those people whose houses I visited on an occasional basis (*penghulu*, other kin from the same lineage) offered me tea and (sometimes) cakes. Those people whose houses I rarely visited - and perhaps visited only once, whilst conducting household surveys for example - usually offered me sweetened tea and cakes or fruit. As I show later in this section, the types of food offered as either gift exchange or at ritual feasts reflect the relationship between giver and receiver.

Equally, the visitor has to comply with *baso baso* with regard to receiving refreshments: consuming the drink or taking a cake from the plate prior to being invited to do so, and before the most senior person in the group, is considered rude. Instead the visitor is expected to wait until her host has encouraged her

several times to drink or eat. In addition, visitors are expected to leave untouched a small part of their drink - to consume it all suggests that the guest should have been offered more and that consequently the host is '*ceke*' (stingy), something which an accused Minangkabau would find highly insulting. If rice and *sambal* are offered, the opposite is the case - if *sambal* is left untouched on the plate the host feels personally slighted although this would not seem to be the case if part of the rice is not consumed. It would appear that the amount of food a guest eats is also an expression of the type of relationship she has with her host. I was invited to one meal, as part of celebrations in the religious calendar, given by a woman for her husband's mother and sisters. From prior and regular observations it was clear that the host and her guests enjoyed a strong and lasting relationship. The guests frequently commented on the excellent food and ate copious amounts, constantly encouraged by their host. Conversely at weddings for example where relations may be more distant, rules of *baso baso* dictate restraint: only a small amount of food is accepted (although a second helping is always offered and usually received to show politely one's appreciation of the food).

The elements of *baso baso* are learnt at an early age as the following case illustrates:

> Ayu is the granddaughter of Amak's sister. She lives in the next village but is a frequent visitor both to Amak's home and to her grandmother's house nearby. Ayu is not regarded as a 'formal' visitor mainly because of her age (seven years old) possibly also because she goes there regularly. As the daughter of Amak's sister's son, it was usual for Amak to spoil her with sweets and cakes from her shop. If she wanted a drink Ayu was usually given water.
>
> On one occasion however it became clear that her preference was for a glass of milk. Milk is expensive, is rarely purchased by the average family, and is therefore considered a treat. Ayu drank with relish but then realised to her apparent horror that she had very nearly finished the contents of the glass. Quickly, and looking around to check that no-one could see her, she added some more water from a nearby jug so that the glass was half full.

> She drank a little more and then, leaving some milk in the bottom of the glass, went happily out to play.

Ayu understood, even at this young age, that to leave the room having consumed all her drink was both insensitive and rude. It would be seen as an accusation of miserliness towards her grandmother's sister. This she had realised, hence the swift and slightly uncomfortable way in which she rectified the situation.

Another aspect of *baso baso* concerns the consumption of food in public places. If one person is eating s/he is expected to offer some of the food to people nearby, irrespective of whether the two parties are acquainted. For example in a village coffee shop, or even in a town *rumah makan* (restaurant), it is common practice to say to other customers "*Makanlah*" ("please eat") or "*Minum*" ("have a drink with me"). The reply is "*Makanlah*" or "*Silahkan*" (literally "please" but meaning "please carry on") to thank them for the acknowledgement but to politely decline the offer. Only when this response has been received may the first person begin to eat or drink. In the village, when refreshments are being taken to agricultural workers, it is polite to invite the people one meets en route to the fields to join the workers for some food. The usual greeting is "*Makanlah. Enak makan di sawah*" ("Come and eat. It's nice to eat in the rice field"). These could also be regarded as forms of greeting in which reference to food serves as communication between people. Furthermore, around recognised meal times, people are frequently greeted with "*Alah makan*?" ("have you eaten?").

Food As an Expression of Trust

Tanner (1971) describes food as "the primary expression of Minangkabau hospitality, of motherly or wifely care, and of social relatedness -- [but it] can also be dangerous. Eating therefore becomes an act of trust" (1971:58). Death and illness through poison is often cited as a reason to mistrust people from

certain areas. Tanner illustrates this with a case of students on a University research project in a remote part of Minangkabau who were warned against accepting food from villagers as it was believed that strangers were served poisoned food (1971:58-59). More than 20 years after Tanner's fieldwork, I was told similar stories. On one occasion, I was visited by a research student who had recently arrived in West Sumatra and who was about to embark on fieldwork in a distant part of the Minangkabau region. A significant proportion of the inhabitants were non-Minangkabau and several villagers warned her against going there. They all alleged that a group of University students had been poisoned by the people there and, although no-one could actually verify this story, all were adamant that this had really occurred.

Food can be regarded as an expression of distrust but, conversely, also a symbol of trust. Following the successful resolution of a dispute, the parties concerned may often have a meal together (Tanner 1971). Sharing of food therefore represents harmony and peace between two individuals or groups; it is believed that once people have eaten together they can no longer remain hostile. Thus refusing food can be regarded as a sign of continuing hostility. This was illustrated by one incident which I witnessed in a longstanding dispute between a woman's brother and her husband. The brother appeared in his mother's house where his sister and her spouse were visiting and eating a meal; he refused to join in or to sit with them saying that he had already eaten at his friend's house. As soon as his sister and her husband had left he fetched some food and sat down to eat. He told me that he had not eaten at his friend's house but that he had not wished to eat with his wife's husband with whom he had quarreled. The dispute had not been (and would not in the foreseeable future be) resolved. He did not therefore feel able to eat with his sister and her husband. As Tanner has argued "not only is communal eating the symbolic act of unity traditional to the end of a dispute, but eating is in itself an act of trust and intimacy" (1971:115).

Food and Adat

Food plays an important symbolic part in numerous *adat* aphorisms which depict the ideal form of behaviour. The following are three examples:

> *Ikan di lauik asam di gunung*
> *batamu dalam balango*
>
> (The fish in the sea [and] the sour fruit on the mountain
> meet in the cooking pot)

The meaning of this aphorism is that two people from different villages can live together in the same household through the bond of marriage (Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan 1986/7:259).

> *Kuah talenggang ka nasi*
> *nasi ka dimakan juo*
>
> (The sauce mingles with the rice
> The rice is also eaten)

This refers to marriage between an individual and her/his mother's brother's child (Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan 1986/7:266).

> *Nasi samo ditanak karak samo dimakan*
>
> (As the rice is cooked so the *karak* is eaten)

Karak is the crust of rice left at the bottom of the cooking pot which is either discarded, scraped out and eaten as a snack, or as part of the rice meal if the family is short of financial resources. This particular saying refers to the need for people to share the good times with the bad (Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan 1986/7:268).

Food, the Life Cycle and Networks

Major rites of passage in most societies are marked by the ritual distribution and consumption of food (Cohen 1968). Within this context, food is frequently used "as a symbolic instrument to express ideas of social co-operation and social

status, by many subtle variations in amount, composition and style of presentation. Every type of formal social occasion tends to have its own type of food transaction, often with a special name" (Firth 1973:253).

Imran Manan (1984) examines the importance of food at the *penghulu* inauguration in which the slaughtering and eating of a buffalo is an essential and symbolic part. Three important symbolic meanings are assigned to this act: the first, *tanduk ditanam* (the horn is buried) symbolises the importance of burying those human characteristics that may hurt other people. The second, *daging dilapah* (the meat is eaten) symbolises the good and bad characteristics which the *penghulu*'s sisters' children may have and emphasising that those characteristics which are good should be encouraged, those which are bad, discouraged. The third, *kuah dikacau* (the sauce of the meat is properly mixed) symbolises the *penghulu's* need to work for the benefit of his community (1984:148).

Imran Manan argues that cooking:

> is the art of mixing the various kinds of ingredients to produce a delicious sauce. A penghulu...should master the arts of management... The eating of the buffalo curry during the ceremony symbolizes that the villagers recognize his legitimacy as a leader. (1984:148)

The gifts of rice cooked in coconut milk (*nasi ranggah*, *salamak kuning*, *salamak hitam*) given at various life cycle ceremonies could be perceived as symbols of fertility. Rice is fundamental to Minangkabau life; coconut is a symbol of fertility relating back to the traditional epic of *Kaba Cindua Mato* which tells of the Minangkabau queen, Bundo Kanduang "who stood by herself, created together with this universe" (Taufik Abdullah 1970:4). One day she developed a desire for a drink of coconut milk and, having drunk her fill, fell asleep. The possessor of the *Ka'ba Allah* of Mecca visited her in a dream and told her she would have a son. Thus she had Dang Tuangku who was "a son of Indo Djati,

the ancient Minangkabau idea of divine conception" (Taufik Abdullah 1970:17). The presentation of *salamak kuning*, a dish which uses both rice and coconut milk, at the *Tujuh Bulan* by the pregnant woman's mother-in-law could be a symbolic acknowledgement and celebration of the woman's fertility. Once the baby has been born, at the ceremony known as *ikah*, the paternal grandmother again takes *salamak kuning* as a celebration of the mother's fertility. During marriage rituals, the gifts of *nasi ranggah*, *nasi lamak*, *salamak kuning* and *salamak hitam* exchanged between the bride's and groom's descent groups express their hope that the marriage will bring children to further strengthen the alliance.

Sanday (1990) argues that "ceremonial food concretizes the Minangkabau worldview, providing a model *of* and *for* the value attached to blending all the various ingredients of existence into a harmonious whole in accordance with the recipes codified by *adat*" (1990:162). She states that women prepare and display ceremonial food based on elaborate *adat* recipes and rules; to ignore these rules could stop ritual proceedings. Indeed food is cooked to the highest standard (illustrated in the perceived problems concerning the two pots of bean curry at Epa's *Batimbang Tando*). Great attention is given to the presentation of food especially at the *Manampuh* and *Mantan Pamili* ceremonies. During other life cycle events such as *Tujuh Bulan* great efforts are made to ensure the *salamak* is the correct shape and consistency. In life cycle rituals, as in daily life, food is a form of expression, so time and care must be taken over its preparation, cooking and presentation.

Food as a Symbol of Kinship Ties

Not only is the presentation of the food important, the type of food offered also gives an insight into the status of a relationship. This has already been discussed earlier with regard to daily life and is mirrored in the ritual life of Minangkabau

women. The most important events in the marriage ceremony, once the husband has been collected, are the *Manampuh* and *Mantan Pamili* at which women give their approval to the marriage. Here, Epa's most important relations accompanied her to the *marapulai*'s home and likewise Buyung's senior women went to the *Manampuh* at Epa's house. The food was prepared with great care and comprised a larger selection of dishes than any of the other marriage ceremonies, reflecting the importance of this event. This is also the case with the *Tujuh Bulan* and *Mambadak Anak* where a variety of dishes are prepared.

The marriage ceremony and the symbolic importance of food can be further analysed in terms of the concept of approval. Van Gennep (1960) has suggested that the rite of eating and drinking is a rite of incorporation; sharing meals is often reciprocal. "There is thus an exchange of food which constitutes the confirmation of a bond" (1960:29). At Epa's first official visit to the home of the *marapulai* (the *Manjapuik Marapulai*), her female kin, her male kin and the *suku*'s *sumando* participated in a ritual feast provided by the *marapulai*'s female kin. She did not eat. Likewise during the ritual feast at Epa's house when the *marapulai* first arrived, he was not invited to participate in the feast provided for his and Epa's male kin. It was only the following day, before the *Manampuh*, when the *marapulai* arrived for a second time that he was invited to eat with a small gathering of senior men related to Epa (her *penghulu*, her *mamak*, her father, her older brother and her sister's husband). Once he had eaten, Buyung was required to rejoin Epa on the bridal dais. As the women from Buyung's family arrived, Epa and her mother sat with them and ate, signifying their acceptance of their future responsibility towards these in-laws. The following day, on Epa's second visit to her husband's descent group in the ceremony known as *Mantan Pamili* Epa, after a great deal of urging from her husband's female kin, joined her own family in a meal provided by her husband's descent group in the ceremonial setting of her husband's mother's house. Whilst his kin

did not eat with her, they nevertheless offered her food which *they* had prepared. The significance of this urging demonstrates women's feelings of approval or disapproval, hostility or harmony, expressed through food. Offering a meal to Epa was a sign of their acceptance of her marriage to a member of their group.

Towards the end of the cycle of festivities, women and men from Buyung's descent group visited Epa's house. There they had another meal, the women on one side of the room, the men (both from Buyung's and Epa's families) on the other side. On this occasion not only did Epa join Buyung's female kin and Buyung join Epa's male kin, they both ate with their respective groups. This further signified Epa's and Buyung's willingness to work at the marriage and the descent groups' alliance and to accept their associated rights and obligations towards their in-laws. Similarly their in-laws, by allowing Epa and Buyung to sit and eat with them, gave their seal of approval.

e) Gift Exchange and the Principle of Reciprocity

It is clear that within women's practice of giving gifts of food there lies the principle of reciprocity. This is exemplified by an *adat* aphorism, found in one of the *kaba* (traditional stories) and reproduced in Josselin de Jong's (1951) brief discussion of the importance of gift exchange between the bride's and bridegroom's descent groups:

> *djoko' diudji samo merah*
> *djoko' dikati samo bare'*
> *djoko' diukue samo pandjang*
> *djoko' dibidang samo laweh*
>
> (when they are tested they should be equally red
> when weighed, equally heavy
> when measured, equally long
> when surveyed, equal in surface) (1951:65)

Of particular symbolic importance then, is the gift exchange at the *Manjapuik Marapulai*, *Manampuh* and *Mantan Pamili* ceremonies. At the *Manjapuik Marapulai*, gifts from the *anak daro*'s family were taken to the *marapulai*'s female kin. As the guests left, they were given gifts by the *marapulai*'s female kin for Epa, her mother and her descent group. This was followed the next day by further gifts from the *marapulai*'s female kin when they arrived for the *Manampuh* ritual. At the *Mantan Pamili* ceremony, only half of the gifts offered by the *anak daro*'s female kin (the tray of coconut and fish, and tray of bananas, *lamang*, corn and fish) were taken, the other half were left on the trays and returned to Epa's mother. Just as in daily life one is expected to share a meal or snack with on-lookers, so in ritual life there is an obligation not only to receive gifts of food but also to share. These food exchanges symbolise the status of the relationship between women of the two descent groups and the essence of the future alliance. Their equivalent members from both sides (such as the bride's and bridegroom's mothers) are considered to be of equal status, having the same rights and obligations including sharing food and offering help as required in the future. The bride's mother initiates the gift exchange thus mirroring the initial marriage proposal from the woman's side but this is always reciprocated by the *marapulai*'s family. As the alliance becomes stronger with time, especially with the birth of the first baby, a network of mutual help and gift exchange has been established and remains at least for the lifetime of the children. This can be seen in the pregnancy and childhood case study and Amak Upik's relationship with her daughter-in-law and her grandchild. It also shows that the relationship between child and *bako* can be maintained through further generations as in the example of Amak Reni who attended the *Tujuh Bulan* as a representative of Amak Upik's *bako*.

Gift giving is not confined to the bride's and groom's immediate relations but extends to gifts of rice from every woman who enters a house on a ritual

occasion. The rice is given by close kin (same *payung*), more distant kin (same *suku*), affinal relations, neighbours and friends and is a token of assistance at a time of great expense for one particular family. Although one individual plate of rice amounts to little, when in excess of 200 women attend a ceremony (as in Epa's *Batimbang Tando*) a large amount of rice is soon acquired.

Frederick Errington (1984) has discussed the significance of a gift of either *beras* or *padi*. Speaking with men who observed women taking *beras* and *padi* to a ritual associated with house building, he was given two different interpretations; firstly, that *padi* could be used as a seed, could therefore increase and help to cover the costs of building a house, and secondly, that *padi* keeps for a longer time than *beras* (1984:89). Whilst neither interpretation is incorrect, Errington fails to explain why some women take gifts of *beras* and others take *padi*. I was told by senior women during attendance at one marriage ritual that the form in which rice is given depends upon the kin relationship involved and the type of ritual. An analysis of the gifts of rice given at the life cycle ceremonies reveals some kind of pattern, albeit tentative. It would appear that when there is a differentiation, it is the women of the same *suku*, those closest to the principal actor, who always take *beras*, and affinal relations, those more distantly related and not of the same clan, and especially those of the *bako*, who take gifts of *padi*. On each occasion, the gifts of rice are reciprocated with a meal of rice and *sambal*.

The only exception to this pattern is during death rituals. In the first part when the dead person is visited for the last time by female consanguines and affines, no gifts are exchanged. The following day, the same women return with gifts of rice for the dead person's matrilineal group. On this occasion, *sirih* - used in other life cycle ceremonies as a form of hospitality and signifying peace and amity - but not food, is offered in return. It is only in the third part of the ritual,

seven days after the death, that a select number of women - representing their own matrilineal group - are invited to a meal in honour of the dead person. In practical terms, there is insufficient time available immediately following death for the preparation of large quantities of food that would be required for so many visitors. In addition, I would argue that, at an earlier stage, the provision of food by the dead person's matrilineal group would be inappropriate. Although gifts of *beras* and *padi* express condolence, a meal of rice and *sambal* usually signifies incorporation or reinforcement of a kin relationship. Death rituals do not involve incorporation for the living and the relatives need time to mourn. The meal, seven days after the death, symbolises the need to return to normal life in the future and to re-establish kinship and alliance ties.

Reciprocity is an important principle in relation to seeking help during preparations for life cycle ceremonies. This principle is essential amongst the senior women of the matrilineage on whom the bride's mother relies to undertake the majority of the work. She requests their assistance, knowing that in the past and at some stage in the future, her offers of help have been welcomed. Etek Murni had received Amak Mariaman's help during the recent marriage of one of her sons. Amak Suma had also been on the receiving end of assistance. Six months earlier her son had married in Pekanbaru where he lived. This was a six hours and relatively expensive bus journey and so only Etek Murni and Etek Ramlah from Amak Suma's *payung*, as well as Amai Rosmiar and Amai Risah, could go from Salimpaung to help with the food preparations. Nevertheless, there is a large Minangkabau community in Pekanbaru. Many of Amak Suma's *payung* have migrated there and the women spent the week helping with preparations. This included Ita, daughter of Etek Murni, Lindah and Yanti, daughters of Etek Ramlah, and (of particular interest to this example) Kakak Warni, daughter of Amak Mariaman.

Several months after Epa's wedding celebrations, Etek Upik's youngest son, Ijal, decided to marry. Amak Mariaman offered her help with the food preparations for Ijal's *Batimbang Tando* and would be expected to offer assistance during the wedding preparations as well.

As the time draws nearer to a particular ceremony more people arrive to offer their help, knowing that at some stage in the past they or their family have depended on their distant kin to help them. A report on cooking and food in West Sumatra prepared by the local Department of Education and Culture argued that "women, close kin and distant relatives, as well as neighbours all help without being asked...They arrive one by one or in groups and usually go straight to the kitchen as if they already know what work has to be done".[6] The report suggests that this mutual co-operation strengthens existing kinship and neighbourhood ties and also presents the opportunity for a wide group of women to socialise and exchange information (Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan 1986/7:220, 41).

It is also necessary to borrow plates, dishes, rice bowls, glasses and spoons as clearly no one small family group has enough crockery and cutlery to cater for so many guests. Relations, neighbours and friends are called upon to lend these items which they do willingly, knowing that at some stage they will require this kind of help themselves.

Men also make exchanges through *pasambahan* and *salawak*. Each formal male ritual begins with an exchange of *pasambahan* between the descent groups and their affines. In certain rituals, on the evening of the *Manjapuik Marapulai*, a

---

6 My translation of "*para wanita yang terdiri dari kerabat dekat maupun jauh serta tetangga ikut semua membantu tanpa disuruh mereka...Mereka berdatangan satu persatu atau secara berombongan, dan biasanya langsung menuju dapur dan seolah-olah sudah tahu apa yang harus dikerjakannya*".

salawak is also performed by the *marapulai*'s descent group, the new affines, and on this occasion it is reciprocated by offering food. This is discussed further in the following section.

Female and Male Actors and Gender Interaction

Thomas (1977), in his discussion of the importance of feasts in the Minangkabau life cycle, puts forward a male interpretation of events and fails to recognise women's important contributions. He argues that the formal guests are men, and that men and women eat separately, men eat in the ceremonial room "out front" whilst women eat "in the back without much ceremony". Women's only involvement is in the ritual handing over of the groom to the women of the bride's matrilineal descent group. After the main wedding feasts:

> women have feasts, which do involve ceremonial activity, from which men are excluded. These feasts are, however, more private and smaller than the ones in which the men participate; they also involve less ceremonial activity. (1977:111)

Thomas' research site was located in a different part of the Minangkabau region to my own and, as I have already suggested elsewhere, detailed customs within these rituals differ from village to village. Nevertheless I would argue, based on my experience of wedding feasts in a number of different areas, not just in my research village, that women always play a prominent role. In all cases, food - its preparation, presentation, exchange and consumption - is of primary importance in these ceremonies. Thomas' dismissal of women's participation overlooks the symbolic value and thus the importance accorded to food by both women and men. The study of the role of food in life cycle rituals, as I have shown, highlights the complex but interwoven web of kinship relations.

To consider Thomas' points separately. Firstly, men do indeed play an important role in the celebrations by exchanging heirlooms at the *Batimbang Tando* and through their *pasambahan* and *salawak*. At all life cycle ceremonies

pasambahan are exchanged between *mamak* (the *suku* men) and *sumando* (the in-married men). This is their expression of the bonds between affinal relations. As women use food between women of the *suku* and wives of male members of the *suku*, so men use words. As with the women's preparation of the food, the speeches must be of the highest standard, and men skilled in these recitations are chosen to lead the group.

In addition the *marapulai*'s male kin provide a *salawak* for the *anak daro*'s family as their collective gift at the wedding. After the marriage the *marapulai* joins the *sumando* and participates in his affinal *suku*'s life cycle ceremonies. Hence at the marriage ceremony, before Buyung's family arrived, *mamak* and *sumando* from Epa's *suku* began with *pasambahan* and a *salawak* to reinforce the bonds between them.

This public performance does not make men the *only* 'formal' guests but it does show that the exchange of words is the male means of expression and communication. Women recognise the importance of the *pasambahan* as the male part of the ceremony but regard it as superfluous to their own means of expression.

Women have their own ways of participating in ceremonies and are also principal actors in the preparation and presentation of gifts which begin at the announcement of the marriage and continue through to the birth of a baby, the childhood rituals, the child's eventual marriage and finally death. It would appear that this "crucial role of women in arranging and implementing marriages, and the continuing expression and reinforcement of these affinal relations by exchanges among women has been virtually ignored in the ethnographic literature" (Prindiville 1980:4).

The second point raised by Thomas is that men have ritual feasts "out front" while women eat "in the back without much ceremony". This is indeed the case for men's feasts in Salimpaung but during this time women are involved in preparing food for that or the next ritual feast and at this time they remain "in the back" snatching at food as and when time allows. However - and this relates to Thomas' third point - either before or after the men have their ritual feasts, women have their own feasts "out front" inviting women from their own *suku*, the bridegroom's *suku*, the in-married wives and their *bako*. These events are usually held over several hours and have perhaps given Thomas the impression that they are "private and smaller". Indeed they are 'private' in the sense that women attend but men are nowhere in sight (in contrast to women who can freely observe if not participate in men's rituals). They are not private in the sense of seclusion, nor are they smaller. On the contrary, at Epa's *Batimbang Tando* for example I counted in excess of 200 women (compared with 80 men) who came in small groups to offer gifts of rice to Epa and her family and to receive a feast of rice and *sambal*. As men communicate through these *adat* speeches they have to participate as a group at a pre-arranged time. This is their contribution to the ritual and their medium of expression. Women on the other hand communicate and express their kinship relations through the medium of food. As this can be acceptable either as an individual or communal act it is not essential for them to go together.

In these Minangkabau ceremonies then it is impossible - not to mention undesirable - to argue that one gender has ritual importance over the other. As Prindiville has argued, women's roles both contrast and overlap with those of men; the degree of contrast is determined by the context.

Within the ceremonial context men and women represent their kin group through exchanges. The contrast

> is in terms of the media of exchange rather than the presence or absence of the activity. In intergroup interactions men exchange words while women exchange food. In the roles of *bundo* [mother] and *mamak* we find a degree of complementarity and balance, but even more coincidence of image and role. (1980:6)

If we accept previous ethnographic accounts it is indeed men who appear to act as their kin groups' public representatives. If, in addition, we examine rituals from the female perspective we can see that women also act as public representatives through their processions between the homes of members of a descent group, through their gifts of food and through key female actors participating in these ceremonies. These women - especially the bride's mother and other senior women waiting in the house - welcome both female and male guests and the *marapulai* to their home thus signifying that they are the female heads of their kin group and this is their ancestral house.

At all life cycle ceremonies men and women make exchanges with other kin often emphasising the alliance with affinal relations. This is usually exclusively between men or women, although exchange does occur between the genders when men perform a *salawak* or *pasambahan* and in return women offer food. Furthermore, male and female spheres are generally separate, yet may at times overlap. Food preparation is usually a female domain but the main ritual dish at the *Manjapuik Marapulai* - the goat and bamboo curry - is prepared and cooked by men. The curry is then served with rice and *kerupuk ubi*, which have been prepared by women. Men and women are acknowledged experts in their own fields but they have enough knowledge to interpret the meaning of the other's activities in terms of *adat*. Each regards their own means of expression as having more importance, yet this form of cross-communication symbolises gender interaction and complementarity at the ritual level.

Summary

This chapter has examined the importance of networks based on kinship, residence and friendship using an analytical framework of life cycle rituals. In addition, the role of men and women within these networks as a means of analysing gender interaction at the ritual level has also been considered.

The networks, which become apparent during life cycle rituals, can be broken down into six basic categories: networks formed firstly within the same *payung*, secondly within the same *suku*, thirdly with affinal relations (the wives of *mamak*, one's sibling's in-laws), fourthly with one's *bako*, fifthly with neighbours who are not necessarily related and finally with friends.

Female members of each of these parts of the network offer assistance at key stages in preparations for life cycle rituals and in addition, participate in the rituals and feasts. The most important of these networks is the first category - within the same *payung* - reflecting a woman's close relationship with her female kin most notably her mother, natural and classificatory sisters. Generally living close together on a daily basis, these members of a woman's effective network constantly offer each other assistance and support during good times (such as sharing the harvest) and bad times (such as illness). These are the women who offer most help at life cycle ceremonies as the case of Epa's wedding showed, where Etek Upik, Etek Anim and Etek Rosmi were the most frequent workers.

The other networks based on kinship or alliance (the second and third categories) are also maintained on a regular (if not daily) basis not only through providing assistance and support but also through frequent visits, if this is possible, or annual visits (during the fasting month) if affines live further away.

Men's involvement in these networks would appear to be of a more formal ritual nature. They exchange *pasambahan* and *salawak* between their kin group and *sumando*. As this is undertaken as a group, their network is on a clan rather than a lineage basis although members of the same *payung* are more likely to be involved in detailed preparations for the life cycle ritual (illustrated in the house repairs undertaken by two of Epa's closest *mamak* prior to her wedding celebrations). The other main difference between male and female networks within the kinship and alliance context is that whilst men establish links almost exclusively during the ritual only, women are more likely to maintain their female networks through occasional visits and gifts of food which can easily be undertaken on an individual basis. Involved in preparations for wedding ceremonies over the course of two weeks women come into contact with their consanguineal and affinal relations more frequently than do men.

In order to ensure the success of life cycle rituals, women require the strong, constant and dependable support of their female kin, neighbours and friends this can only work if it operates on a principle of reciprocity. This was illustrated in the case of Etek Upik's assistance during Epa's wedding celebrations which was later reciprocated by Amak Mariaman at Ijal's (son of Etek Upik) *Batimbang Tando*. Likewise Kakak Warni, Epa's sister, had given her help at Amak Suma's son's wedding preparations and this was reciprocated when Amak Suma gave her assistance at Epa's wedding. This suggests that the principle of reciprocity does not have to relate directly to two people but is more concerned with the network as a whole entity. The case study also illustrated that help is provided by close affinal relations and, at times of peak activity, by women from the same *suku*. This latter category appear to do a specific task and leave once this has been accomplished. They know that their help will be reciprocated at some time in the future as and when required.

One issue discussed in this chapter was the effect on networks of the decrease in arranged marriages. It was noted that in recent years more people had chosen a marriage partner from a distant village although a significant proportion still marry someone from the same or neighbouring village. It was also suggested that although marriage with someone from a distant village caused problems in terms of establishing and maintaining networks, many people made a great effort to fulfil their obligations prescribed by *adat* even under these difficult circumstances. Lindah's eagerness to remain in contact with her *bako* relations even after her father's death was such that she was prepared to travel several hundred kilometres to offer support at her father's sister's child's marriage. In another example a pregnant woman living in Pekanbaru was visited by her mother-in-law from Salimpaung who wanted to perform her obligations to take *salamak kuning* and fruit in the *Tujuh Bulan* ritual. The older woman asked her female consanguines and affines in Pekanbaru to accompany her.

The symbolic importance of food both in daily and ritual life as a means of expression and communication between individuals and groups has been considered. Reference to food is used as a common greeting "*alah makan*?"; a meal is used to express the status of a relationship (based on quantity and type of food and/or drink). Eating a communal meal implies trust and a lack of conflict between the host and guest and is usually the final event in the resolution of disputes. Within the ritual context food symbolises approval of a future in-married member of the descent group. I showed how this was signficant in marriage ceremonies when Epa and Buyung ate with their respective in-laws for the first time. Gifts of rice cooked in coconut milk exchanged between the two descent groups symbolise fertility, motherhood, children and therefore a strengthening of the alliance.

I also illustrated that women communicate between kin groups through offering gifts of food and through ritual feasting. I argued that if Minangkabau life is examined solely from a male perspective, a distorted picture of reality emerges in which women remain 'out the back' and have no 'public' role representing their kin group. If, however, life cycle rituals are examined from a perspective which is gender-balanced, it becomes apparent that it is not only men who mediate between kin groups through their displays of *pasambahan* and *salawak*. Women, through their consanguineal and affinal networks, also act as mediators on a frequent and concentrated level. They do this by offering help to other kin groups during preparations for life cycle rituals, by exchanging gifts of food and by representing their kin group to the wider community. Such an approach suggests that neither gender has ritual superiority over the other. Male and female spheres are regarded as having equal importance which together constitute the complete ritual. Viewed in this way, the significance of gender complementarity in Minangkabau society is readily apparent.

CHAPTER 5: MINANGKABAU MARKET NETWORKS

Introduction

An early morning journey through the Minangkabau heartland is an exhilarating experience; the majestic mountains and lush tropical vegetation create an air of peace and tranquillity. On the approach to one of the many rural markets the calm dissipates and is replaced by a brisk and vibrant atmosphere.

The entrance to the marketplace is full of buses, stationary while traders unload their goods. Sounds seem to compete: bus' horns, people shouting, pop music blaring. Inside the market the level of noise and bustle from trading activities increases. Tables and other market equipment are taken from a storehouse within the market confines to designated areas. Traders carry their goods from the road to their selling place delicately weaving their way between other traders. Women balance on their heads sacks of chillies and onions, large hessian sacks enclosing reams of cloth or long bamboo poles used to display clothes. Male labourers pushing wooden three-wheeled trolleys stagger under the weight of several boxes of dried fish or large rattan baskets containing *kerupuk* (snacks made from rice or cassava). Women and men put up makeshift roofs of tarpaulin or plastic as protection from the weather. Food traders set up their equipment - a small oven, using coconut husks as fuel, for baking cakes, a hot pan for making *martabak* (pancakes) - and then they begin to prepare their ingredients: a big drum of *martabak* or cake mixture, or batter for fried bananas. In every direction activity is at a height. In amongst the hubbub traders exchange quick greetings but as time progresses, goods are displayed, and as traders await the arrival of their first customers, the pace slows down a little and traders chat more leisurely. The diverse character of the market is revealed in all these activities as its vitality and warmth, its energy and sociability are absorbed.

The Market as an Area of Study

From my many conversations with both traders and customers and from observations made throughout the trading day, it became clear to me that the rural market is a vital part of everyday life both in a social and economic sense. Following the thesis' theme, networks based on kinship, neighbourhood, occupation, common interests and friendship which exist and come together within the market are used to explore gender interaction. As an introduction, I briefly discuss literature on the market institution both within and outside the specific Minangkabau context. Using Salimpaung market as my case study, I then consider its numerous networks - most noticeably those between traders, those between customers, and those between traders and customers - and examine how these networks are used in developing communications between and within villages.

Previous Studies on Markets

During the early 1960s social scientists began to analyse the market as an economic and social institution and as an essential part of the local community. Studies focused mainly on African and South-East Asian markets; of the latter Dewey (1962) and Clifford Geertz (1963) were amongst the earliest anthropologists in this area, conducting their research in Modjokuto, the pseudonym given to Pare, a medium-sized town in the Brantas basin of East Java.

Dewey analyses the structure of the Javanese market system, the links it provides between rural and urban areas, the categories of traders and their goods and the various forms of finance available in the market. She describes Modjokuto market as:

> the center of the bustle and color of town life... The market is a place to meet people, have a snack at one of the food stands, and sit and watch life go by while gossiping about the latest news and

> gathering information about crop conditions and prices. The carriers, travelling constantly back and forth between the various markets, spread news, and so the latest information is always available in the marketplace. (1962:68-69)

Similarly, Geertz describes the market as:

> at once an economic institution and a way of life, a general mode of commercial activity reaching into all aspects of Modjokuto society, and a sociocultural world nearly complete in itself. As agriculture for the peasant, so petty commerce provides for the trader the permanent backdrop against which almost all his activities occur. It is his environment - as much, from his perspective, a natural phenomenon as a cultural one - and the whole of his life is shaped by it. (1963:30)

Geertz examines Modjokuto market from the perspective of economic development and modernisation. He contrasts the Western industry-based 'modern economy' where business is conducted through impersonal institutions and is aimed at constantly developing new markets, with the 'bazaar economy' "based on the independent activities of a set of highly competitive commodity traders who relate to one another mainly by means of an incredible volume of *ad hoc* acts of exchange" (1963:28-29). Certain aspects of trading lead Geertz to suggest that Modjokuto market was, at the time of his study, in a transitional stage between the bazaar and the western economy. He discovered that in Modjokuto social ties such as friendship and kinship between traders and between traders and customers are kept distinctly separate from commercial transactions. Economic rationalism is present:

> Traders not only treat each other in precisely formulated and technically restricted terms - so that the diffuse social categories of age, sex, rank and so on enter but slightly into the definition of the relationship - but they do so largely independently of particularistic ties. A man and his brother, a son and his father, even a wife and her husband will commonly operate on their own at the bazaar and regard one another within that context with nearly as cold an eye as they would any other trader. (1963:46-47)

This form of economic rationalism based on calculating impersonal relationships between market participants in Modjokuto contrasts strongly to those in the marketplace of Baguio City in the Philippine province of Northern Luzon. There, Davis (1973) found that "exchange relations [are] characterized by a high degree of reciprocal and conscious social obligation" (1973:xi). To exemplify the extent of these exchanges he examines the *suki* relationship prevalent in the market. This refers to the special relationship either between a supplier and a trader or between a trader and a customer. It is based on trust, goodwill and reciprocity and includes the trader's provision of credit facilities, price reductions and additional measures of goods (especially perishables) to the buyer. In return, an unspoken agreement is made to purchase those specific goods from that seller only, to 'advertise' the seller and his/her goods to others and possibly to introduce the seller to potential customers. These *suki* relationships form and regulate the basic principles on which the market operates. Not only do they create security for traders through their regular customers, they also regulate relations between traders selling similar goods, as poaching another trader's *suki* buyer is regarded as contrary to the market's ethics.

Davis argues that this lack of competition fosters co-operation between traders and is further reflected in the frequent borrowing of goods between traders to sell to their *suki* buyers, looking after a neighbouring trader's stall and even selling goods on behalf of the absent trader. An extension to these *suki* relations is the *compadrazgo* or ritual kinship relationship in which one member of the *suki* (usually the retail trader) invites the other party (usually the supplier) to become godparent to the former's child. Thereby a relationship is instigated which creates stronger social ties between the two parties, consequently "stabilizing highly valued economic relationships" (1973:238).

Mai and Buchholt (1987) in their study of Kakas market in Minahasa draw attention to the arena of "socially dense networks" involving relatives, friends, neighbours and other villagers in which economic transactions are conducted. Those involved in market activities can engage in a "unique extension of village life in that it permits communication with virtually everybody in a very informal way" (1987:117).

The majority of actors in Kakas market are women, either as traders (72%) or as consumers (86%). Thus it is primarily women who are the main communicators and recipients of news of both a social and economic nature. "As access to public communication reflects to some degree power relations, this, together with the fact that women control at least part of the household budget, seems to indicate that at least through small-scale trading and household provisioning through the market, women have gained a fairly strong position in the family" (1987:75).

Alexander (1987), in her study of Javanese markets, notes that previous studies have often considered the market from a geographical or economic perspective. She argues that an holistic view can only be attained using a combination of these two, together with an analysis of the social signficance of the market. Her study investigates the market from three perspectives: firstly, through trade which includes the spatial distribution of markets and the material flow of commodities; secondly, through traders and the market as a social system: the types of traders, their careers and the social relationships within the market; and thirdly, through trading, a perspective which she argues is often forgotten. This she conceptualises as "a structured flow of information, showing how traders make their living by acquiring information and concealing it from others" (1987:2).

This chapter follows the second and third perspectives put forward by Alexander. The social relationship between traders and with other actors in the market is investigated. This serves to illustrate the links to a wider communication network. Furthermore, such an approach allows for an analysis of male and female roles within the commercial arena of a village economy and, through network analysis, draws attention to the degree and type of gender interaction that occurs. Before examining these ideas in more detail, I turn first to a brief review of historical and contemporary accounts of the Minangkabau market.

The Minangkabau Market

The Historical Dimension

The Minangkabau have a history of long-distance trading. Archaeological findings suggest that around the 12th or 13th centuries trade routes connected the outside world with one particular region of the Minangkabau heartland, namely Tanah Datar, largely due to its importance as a gold-producing area (Dobbin 1983:60).

When the first Europeans settled in the Minangkabau Highlands the village market was already a well-established institution. In 1825 Dutch administrators recorded 34, 15 and 14 marketplaces in the regencies of Tanah Datar, Agam and Limapuluh Kota respectively (Dobbin 1983:48). Both Dobbin (1983) and Graves (1971) indicate the way in which the market, as a small trading microcosm often unattached to a specific village, brought together two otherwise quite distinct ecological and economic regions. Marketplaces flourished in areas where the hills met the plains, the highlands met the west coast, and the borders of the Minangkabau world met the world outside (Dobbin 1983:48).

It was often the case that within a discrete geographical region a series of weekly markets developed enabling traders to travel from one market to the next on a

daily basis. These weekly markets not only attracted traders from a wide radius but also provided nearby inhabitants with the opportunity to enhance their incomes through the sale of either surplus agricultural crops or home-produced crafts. Some traders frequented these rural markets specifically to buy such goods to sell later either to customers in a distant market, to export dealers in a regional market centre such as Bukittinggi or to itinerant small-scale traders who travelled great distances to areas where these commodities were scarce and sought after. Similarly other traders bought dried salted fish in coastal villages and transported them over many kilometres to the markets of the uplands (Graves 1971:184-185).

Verkerk Pistorius (1869) gives an account of a market in a 'typical' village in the Minangkabau Highlands in the mid 19th century. To one side of the marketplace were "*lapou's*", small buildings where itinerant traders, arriving the evening before market day, could sleep overnight. The remainder of the marketplace was an open space where traders displayed their wares on the ground or under cover of small shelters. Many varieties of dried and fresh fish had been brought to the village from the coastal areas around Padang and Pariaman. In other parts of the market chillies, spices, rice and fruit were sold. During the early morning there were only a few people in the market but by 8 or 9 o'clock others were arriving from the surrounding villages and by 10 o'clock the market was busy. Both women and men participated in the market activities although women undertook most of the trading.

It would appear that, even prior to regular contact with the national or international trading world, the market played an essential part in the domestic economy. However, its non-economic functions should not be overshadowed.

Graves argues that the markets:

> were not only centers for economic exchange but for swapping information as well. The travelling merchants and artisans brought news and opinions about events outside the village world and were not shy about disseminating it either. People would hear about and perhaps be stimulated to visit the world beyond. (1971:185)

The Contemporary Context

Very little data appear to have been published on contemporary Minangkabau markets. Kahn (1980a) incorporates a brief discussion of trading and the West Sumatran market system in his study of the 'peasant economy'. Trading, he argues, is one of the principal occupations amongst the Minangkabau, accounting for why, in contrast to other parts of Indonesia, there is no Chinese trading monopoly in this region. Within his research area of Sungai Puar he identifies three types of trader: *manggaleh babelok* - male and female traders who leave their village to make trading trips lasting several days; traders who buy commodities such as coal and steel from outside to sell in the village; and finally, those who rent shops or stalls in Sungai Puar market. Within this latter category, although not necessarily attached to the market itself, are traders who own *lapau* (small shops selling basic necessities) where men congregate to drink coffee, chat, and play cards and dominoes (1980a:108-109).

Kahn argues that a merchant hierarchy operates in both large city markets such as Padang and small weekly village markets. Traders who own or rent *toko* (large glass-fronted shops) situated outside the main marketplace are at the highest strata of the hierarchy. At the next level are those who rent *kedai* (small wooden-shuttered stalls with room for the trader to sit inside and for the customer to enter). Lower down are those who trade from *kios* (similar to *kedai* but smaller with room for the trader and his/her wares only). Traders with less capital display their goods under a large rented umbrella in the general

marketplace. Finally, at the bottom of the hierarchy *kaki limo* (pavement) pedlars rent a small space in the marketplace displaying goods on the ground or on low tables. The size of the market determines the most common type of shop or other selling space. In Padang, for example, there are many *toko* traders whereas in a rural village there is likely to be a predominance of *kaki limo* traders (1980a:113-114).

Kahn briefly discusses the ethics of the West Sumatran market. He suggests that each transaction is between the customer and the trader only; neither party seeks the support of bystanders. Bargaining is often a long process and if a customer remains unsatisfied with the price, s/he is free to go to a different stall; only then does that trader become involved. Prior to purchasing a particular item, the expected price would first be ascertained from friends and neighbours to ensure some bargaining power. Discussions on prices of goods often begin when a villager, returning from the market with her/his purchases, is asked "*Bara bali*?" ("how much did you pay?"). Kahn argues that all Minangkabau, traders and customers alike, "are expected to be commercially competent, and commercial astuteness is highly admired" (1980a:113).

Kahn's analysis places most emphasis on how the market institution fits into the peasant economy. Tanner (1971) briefly mentions the social importance of the market system "which provides an important channel for both rural-urban and village to village communication and integration" (1971:18).

More recently van Giffen and Chatra (1990) have focused their attention on two aspects of the market system: firstly, the important role women play in Minangkabau markets especially in the food section, and secondly, the significance of markets in women's 'survival strategies' providing women with the opportunity to enhance their family income (1990:58). They examine the

economic position of female traders with particular reference to gender specific commodities, types of selling unit and their average number of trading days per week. Their research suggests that the total number of female traders in a given market varies significantly from one geographical area to another. For example women constitute 49% of all traders in the regency of Pesisir Selatan compared with 64% in Tanah Datar (1990:51). This difference, they argue, is based on a combination of geographical, demographic, economic, socio-historical and cultural factors. Due to its smaller size and higher population density, Tanah Datar is able to support a greater number of markets and "the closer the distance, the easier it is for traders within the market cycle to return home each day" (1990:52).[1] In contrast, centres of population in Pesisir Selatan are spatially scattered thus limiting the possibility for traders to return home more than once a week. This "has restricted married women from entering the market circuit who, besides trying to increase the family income, bear the full responsibility for rearing and caring for offspring" (1990:52).[2]

They conclude that women's involvement predominantly in small-scale trading of agricultural crops "only constitutes a continuation of their traditional role" as subsistence food producers and is a reflection of the cultural factors which create strong ties between women and ancestral property. Men's position in the social structure, on the other hand, does not tie them to land or ancestral property thus enabling "their complete involvement in the world of trade" (1990:57).

Van Giffen and Chatra's work is a useful foundation for further research. It provides a database for comparative study both on markets in different

---

1 My translation of "*Jarak yang lebih dekat itu lebih memudahkan pedagang keliling kembali ke rumah setiap hari*".

2 My translation of "*...sudah membatasi masuknya wanita kawin ke dalam sirkuit pasar, yang selain berusaha meningkatkan pendapatan keluarga, juga memikul tanggungjawab penuh untuk membesarkan dan mengasuh keturunannya*".

Minangkabau areas and on women's participation in trading. Their emphasis, however, is on the market's economic aspects and women's participation in the household economy rather than the social significance of the market as a forum for gathering and disseminating information and providing mutual support to traders and customers. The remainder of this chapter concentrates on these latter issues using the weekly market of Salimpaung as a case study.

Balai Jumat (Salimpaung's Friday Market)

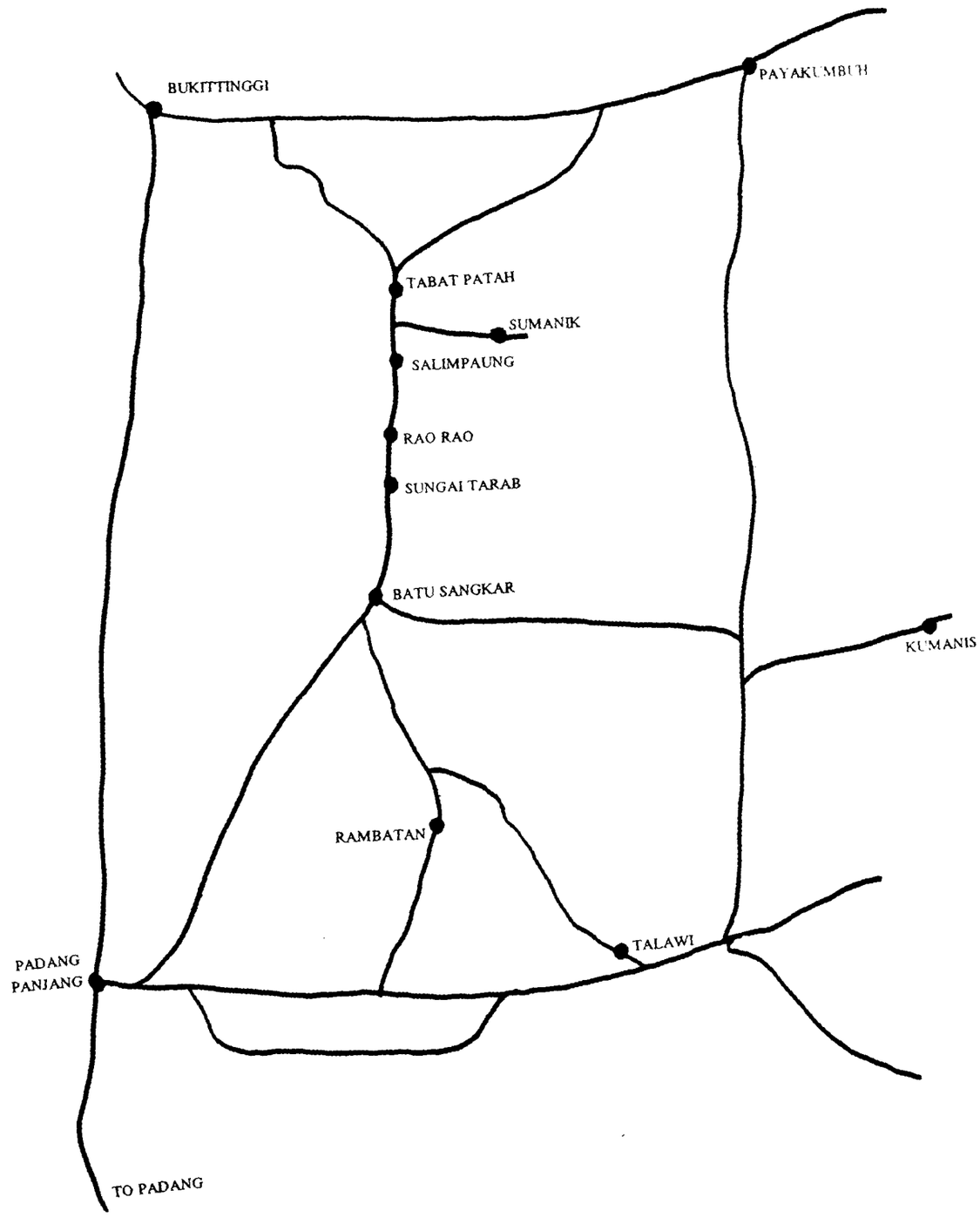
Salimpaung and the Local Market Cycle

Balai Jumat, Salimpaung's market, forms one part of a local weekly market cycle which covers an area of approximately 50 square kilometres and transcends administrative *kecamatan* (sub-district) boundaries (see Map 4). Over 250 traders frequent *Balai Jumat* every Friday, yet it is one of the smaller markets in the circuit. Sunday's Sumanik market is of similar size.

Batu Sangkar, the capital of Tanah Datar, has a daily market, and a larger market every Thursday. It is by far the biggest (in excess of 1,000 traders) and busiest within the cycle; indeed it forms part of this and other circuits covering a wide geographical area.

The markets in Tabat Patah and Sungai Tarab, the two largest villages in *Balai Jumat's* circuit, attract hundreds of customers and, in an average week, between 500 and 600 traders. Located at the centre of their respective *kecamatan*, close to major intersections on the provincial road system and serviced by frequent transport on main routes and to outlying villages, many people from other market circuits come to trade here. In sharp contrast, Rao Rao's Saturday morning and Wednesday markets are frequented by only a small number of traders (approximately 80) and customers. Goods are limited to a selection of foodstuffs.

Map 4: Salimpaung and the Local Market Circuit



Two Tuesday markets at Pasir Lawas and Malintang were both closed in the 1970s. According to local informants, the market at Pasir Lawas was demolished by a landslide from Mount Merapi. Malintang market gradually lost its traders and custom possibly because improved road and transport systems facilitated ease of travel over greater distances. One trader described how, prior to the existence of the road and transport, she and other traders had to walk from home to the marketplace. This limited the trader to a small choice of market destinations, as well as restricting the available selling time, and the amount of goods taken (based on the weight that could be carried personally). The number of customers was generally small usually comprising the residents of that particular village only. Later, with the introduction of transport and the construction of the roads, custom declined and Malintang was unable to compete with larger markets nearby.

Salimpaung Market: Its History and Organisation

Salimpaung marketplace is located in the northern section of Salimpaung within *Desa* (sub-village) Nan Sambilan. It is close to the main route leading to the other sections of the *nagari* (village) and is adjacent to the main provincial road linking Batu Sangkar, Bukittinggi and Payakumbuh, the administrative capitals of the three districts which form the Minangkabau heartland.

According to local accounts, the marketplace has occupied its current location since 1914, although on a much smaller scale and without many of the permanent buildings that it has today. In the early 1970s land adjacent to the market site was bought from one of the village's clans, ownership was transferred to *Nagari* Salimpaung and the marketplace was thus extended. In the 1980s the construction of an asphalt road along the provincial route which passes through Salimpaung, together with an increase in transport facilities, ensured accessibility to the market for a larger number of both traders and customers.

In 1982 its status changed from a *Pasar Nagari* (village market) to a *Pasar Inpres (Pasar Instruksi Presiden)*, thereby becoming eligible for a government loan for renovations. The old wooden structures, comprising the only sheltered trading areas, were replaced by more solid buildings. This modernisation programme attracted many more traders. The income from their weekly rent, after deductions to repay the loan, was used to continue these refurbishments.

The market is managed by the *penghulu pasar* (senior market official), a role undertaken by Nan Sambilan's *Kepala Desa* (village head) who is accountable to the *Kerapatan Adat Nagari* (village council). He has responsibility for collecting rents, for overseeing the activities of the market and for ensuring it is kept clean, peaceful and orderly.

The marketplace is divided into two main trading areas. *Pasar Atas* (the Upper Market) is the larger of the two and is adjacent to the main road. It has approximately 180 selling units for regular traders, although some of the permanent structures remain unoccupied, and additional space for *ad hoc* traders. Both food (mainly rice, fruit, vegetables, spices, cakes and general groceries) and non-food items (clothes, household utensils, stationery and medicines) are sold here. *Pasar Bawah* (the Lower Market) has approximately 65 selling units. It is accessible from the road by means of a narrow path and from the Upper Market by a series of steps. It is solely a food market and is dominated by the sale of fresh and dried fish, meat and vegetables.

Whilst the marketplace (the spatial areas described above) sets the formal boundary, market activities - buying, selling, conversing, exchanging information and so on - are not restricted to these confines. Other traders sit opposite the marketplace, on the roadside and in the nearby forecourt of one of the larger electrical, paint and wood shops.



Rice traders occupy the area outside *Balai Jumat*'s Upper Market



Balai Jumat's Lower Market is dominated by the sale of fresh and dried fish and meat

The Typical Market Day

At 5.00 am the lone figure of the *tukang payung* (the man who makes and rents out the large umbrellas used by some traders as temporary shelters) arrives at the marketplace and opens up one of the storehouses where the umbrellas and tables are kept. He begins to move them to designated places in the market in anticipation of the day's activities. Between 6.00 am and 6.30 am he is joined by a few traders who have a lot of goods to display, or who have food to prepare. *Ad hoc* traders also arrive at this time to ensure a place in the Upper Market. By 7.00 am, their numbers have multiplied. The marketplace is gradually transformed from a quiet and deserted place to an active and crowded area.

From approximately 7.30 am, and for the next couple of hours, local farmers appear, bringing their surplus agricultural produce for sale to both *Balai Jumat* traders and export traders. The farmers - predominantly women - move from one trader to another in order to obtain the best price for their produce.

By 8.00 am, buses, minibuses and vans arrive, bringing traders from major towns in the district and from outlying villages. Horns blast as the drivers wait impatiently to reverse their vehicles into the small parking area at the front of the market so that passengers and their wares can be offloaded. Some traders have already completed their preparations and they chat to nearby traders or wander to other sections of the market while they await the arrival of customers. By 8.30 am, while many traders are still unpacking their goods, customers begin to appear. By 9.00 am all but a few traders have arrived and many customers have already made some purchases. Children from the nearby primary schools descend upon the market and run excitedly from one trader to another as they decide how to spend their daily 'snack' money. Their impatience creates additional hustle and bustle.

Peak trading is between 10.00 am and 11.30 am and the narrow pathways between the selling units overflow with people often making passing difficult. More children, their school day over, make their way to the fruit and cake traders. Employees from the village office begin their weekly rent collection.

By 12 noon, the level of market activities subsides a little. This is a slack period in most markets as it is prayer time but this is accentuated in Salimpaung market because Friday is the holy day in the Islamic week. Many of the traders and customers temporarily leave to prepare for their *Dhuhur* prayers at the mosque. Soon after 1.30 pm, once prayers are over, the number of customers increases but by this time the bulk of the day's trading is complete. Many of the *ad hoc* traders have already sold their goods and left. The market lacks the frenetic energy of the morning and exudes a leisurely pace. Groups of young men appear around the market's periphery, smoking and joking together.

By 3.00 pm the market day is drawing to a close. Many of the regular traders begin to pack away; the *tukang payung* begins to dismantle the *payung* and tables and puts them back in storage. A few of the male traders, especially those resident in Salimpaung, having packed away their goods, return to the market area to sit on its periphery and chat to friends.

By 4.00 pm the market is virtually devoid of customers. Few economic transactions take place and only those traders selling perishable goods remain. At 5.00 pm only a small number of people are in the market. Having placed their goods into boxes, hessian sacks or rattan baskets, they wait for transport to take them home. Within a very short time dusk settles over *Balai Jumat*, the market is over, the last *payung* have been taken down and the door of the storehouse is closed for another week.

Actors in the Market

People are the essence of the market - they create the vibrant atmosphere, they discuss prices and negotiate sales, they exchange news and gossip. They participate in the networks which sustain market activities and create links between villages. Although there would be no market without these actors, there can be no simple classification into traders and customers as this would belie a more complex reality. There are several types of trader: the regular traders who sell in the market each week; the *ad hoc* traders who trade on an irregular basis; and the traders who buy agricultural produce for export to distant destinations. There are also several types of customer: those who make household purchases, those who are primarily traders yet leave their selling place in the market to buy goods from other traders, and those who buy goods to sell later in their shop or other markets.

There are two further categories of market actors. The first is perhaps best termed the 'socialiser', the individual who only uses the market as a meeting place; the second includes other people in the market such as labourers, village office employees, and local bus drivers who spend time in the market until their vehicle is full. In the following section, traders, customers and socialisers are examined in more depth. The networks existing within and between these actors are then considered.

Regular Traders

There are over 250 regular traders in *Balai Jumat*. Most trade in one of the market buildings or use a *payung* as shelter from rain; some rent a small area and display their goods on the ground; others prefer to walk around the market rather than stay in one fixed selling space.

Table 5.1: Percentage of Traders by Gender and Commodity

Commodity	Female %	Male %	Female /Male %	No	Total %
Clothes	55.6	19.4	25.0	36	100
Gold	-	100.0	-	3	100
Other non food	45.0	65.0	-	20	100
Vegetables and fruit	96.8	3.2	-	31	100
Dried fish	66.7	23.8	9.5	21	100
Fresh fish	16.7	66.6	16.7	12	100
Meat	-	100.0	-	5	100
Rice	100.0	-	-	15	100
Spices	50.0	30.0	20.0	10	100
Cooked food & homemade cakes	75.8	18.2	6.0	33	100
Other food	47.8	21.1	31.6	38	100
Total	138	57	29	224	

Note:
1. This third column headed female/male refers to those traders who work together in a partnership

From the total of 224 traders interviewed, 67.9% are female. Some commodities are gender specific. Table 5.1 shows that rice is exclusively a female commodity while fruit and vegetables, cooked food, dried fish, cakes and snacks are dominated by women. Meat and gold are exclusively male domains and the sale of fresh fish is dominated by men.

Men and women are fairly equally represented in the sale of other commodities although there are slightly more female than male cloth traders. In this section a significant proportion of traders form a wife and husband, a mother and daughter, or a sister and brother team.



A *Balai Jumat* trader displays fresh spices for sale including limes, garlic, ginger, tamarind and, in the boxed trays, the more pungent spices

It is usual for a partnership of this kind to be found amongst traders at the higher levels of the trading hierarchy. This hierarchy is not formal and those at the higher end mingle, chat and joke with other traders lower down the scale. The financial capital required for the initial outlay of goods sold is a determining factor of one's position in the hierarchy. Spice traders, needing only a small amount of capital, are regarded as near the bottom. Conversely, cloth traders are believed to have enough money to buy a large amount of stock, even when in reality they may be heavily in debt to suppliers. Their profit margin is considered sufficient to allow risk-taking in the form of credit to customers and the purchase of new, fashionable and hence untested stock. Their success and apparent affluence are reflected in their ability to pay for their children's university education[3] and, in later years, their own pilgrimage to Mecca. With good reason, then, the vast majority aspire to these trading positions.

It should also be noted that the type of goods sold by a trader may not always, on its own, equate with wealth or provide a measurement of status. Rice trading for example is generally considered to be an occupation which does not necessitate an initial huge outlay, especially as most mill owners offer credit to traders on a weekly basis. It is therefore an area where many low-income women begin trading. There are, of course, exceptions to this general rule. One woman of my acquaintance has been a rice trader for 22 years yet comes from one of the wealthier households in Salimpaung. She is a *Hajah*, her husband a *Haji* (denoting that both have been on pilgrimage to Mecca). Her husband is a retired high school teacher and was also village head for 12 years. As a civil servant, he receives a reasonable pension. They have a chicken farm as well as extensive landholdings. They live in a large well-furnished house with many items beyond the financial reach of the vast majority of villagers. This rice trader has no

---

3 University education is on a fee paying basis only. Very few villagers in Salimpaung can afford higher education for their children.

economic need to work in the market but does so for her own enjoyment. Throughout her trading career she has always sold rice, believing it to be her forte, and has never had any interest in selling cloth or other goods considered to be more profitable and prestigious. Her position in the trading hierarchy then is ambiguous - as a rice trader she is on the lower rungs but her position as a *Hajah* demands respect and commands status even within the market. Her occupation as a market rice trader alone cannot determine her position in the trading hierarchy.

Profile of the Regular Trader

The example above illustrates the difficulty of providing a stereotypical profile of the market trader because of the wide range of variations in social background. Nevertheless it is useful to examine a number of common characteristics. Traders range in age from 22 to 70 years old although the majority fall within the 31 to 60 age bracket. Most of the traders (80.8%) were, at the time of the survey, married with children. A small proportion (6.2%) had never been married although this group mainly consisted of young men under the age of 30 with only four women falling into this category. The remaining 13% are widowed or divorced; all but two of them are women. Babies and young children rarely accompany their trading parents; generally they are cared for in the home by a member of the trader's extended family. Throughout my ten months' study I saw only one baby and a small number of pre-school age children brought to the market by their trading parents. Older children - especially those living in or near Salimpaung - are expected to help their mother, father or other, particularly matrilineal, kin in the market after school either by selling or by packing goods away.

Most traders come from a farming or trading background with only a small percentage (5.3%) whose parents have other occupations such as civil servant or builder. Many have parents, siblings or children who are also traders, some in Salimpaung market. Education levels vary quite significantly with 59.4% of traders having graduated from *Sekolah Dasar* (primary school), 30.8% from *Sekolah Menengah Pertama* (lower secondary school) and 8.9% from *Sekolah Menengah Atas* (upper secondary school). These latter traders are generally part of the higher echelons of the trading hierarchy whose parents had been wealthy traders. Only 0.9% of traders had never attended school; they were amongst the older age group who would not have benefited from state education, introduced in recent years.

Most traders live within an eight kilometres' radius of Salimpaung with the largest proportion (39.7%) living in Salimpaung itself and 15.2% and 4.9% residing in the adjacent villages of Rao Rao and Malintang respectively. Only a small proportion (5.4%) come from distances of over 25 kilometres. One female trader, selling fresh fish, comes from Umbilin on the shores of Lake Singkarak, approximately 30 kilometres from Salimpaung and a bus journey of one and a half hours. She is part of a long tradition of traders who transported goods from one distinct ecological area to another although nowadays her visit to Salimpaung market can be undertaken in one rather than several days.

Table 5.2 demonstrates that only a few Salimpaung traders (9.8%) have been trading for less than one year. The majority fall almost equally within the categories two to five years, six to ten years and 11 to 15 years, although 21.9% have also been trading for 16 years and over.

Table 5.2: Number and Percentage of Traders according to the Number of Years they have been Trading in Salimpaung Market

No of years	No of traders	%
0-1	22	9.8
2-5	50	22.3
6-10	49	21.9
11-15	50	22.3
16-20	24	10.7
21+	25	11.2
Don't know	4	1.8
Total	224	100.0

The majority of traders frequent a market more than once a week (only 4.9% female and 0.9% male of all traders sell in Salimpaung market only). The goods they sell may vary according to the market frequented, to ensure the greatest profits. Table 5.3 shows that the largest proportion of female traders (17%) and the second largest proportion of male traders (7.1%) follow the market cycle four days a week. Generally they combine trading with farming as a livelihood. This allows them to take time off during peak periods in the agricultural cycle. Others have small shops which they open on the days they are not in the market. Few traders (6.3% of women and 8.0% of men) frequent markets seven days a week. Those who do, generally have little or no agricultural land (unless they are in the upper levels of the trading hierarchy and then they usually employ either wage labourers or sharecroppers). Many who trade five or more days a week told me "*Balai ladang saya*" ("the market is my field") implying that in contrast to the other principal local occupation of farming, their livelihood is trading.

Table 5.3: Percentage of Traders by Number of Times They Trade per Week (N = 224)

No of times	Female	Male
Once	4.9	0.9
Twice	7.6	5.4
Three times	10.3	4.4
Four times	17.0	7.1
Five times	13.4	4.4
Six times	6.7	3.6
Seven times	6.3	8.0

Following the market cycle

For the majority of those who trade more than once a week, the local weekly market cycle is followed. Table 5.4 shows that the Monday market in Tabat Patah is frequented by 94.2% of all Salimpaung traders. The Wednesday markets in Sungai Tarab and Rao Rao jointly attract 89.5% of Salimpaung traders. Slightly less popular are Saturday's Rao Rao, Sunday's Sumanik and Thursday's Batu Sangkar markets. This may be because Sumanik and Rao Rao markets are small and attract fewer customers or that the trader frequents an alternative market within a different circuit nearer her/his place of residence. For example, one other Saturday market is held in Balimbing, 25 kilometres from Salimpaung, and the small number of Salimpaung traders who do go there live in that vicinity.

As there is no nearby Tuesday market, traders either frequent Batu Sangkar market or travel much further afield to Kumanis, Rambatan or Talawi (45, 20 and 36 kilometres respectively from Salimpaung). These are shown separately in the table to signify that in a geographical sense they cannot be regarded as part of the local market circuit but that, paradoxically, in a socio-economic sense they are recognised by the traders themselves as viable options.

Table 5.4: Number and Percentage of Salimpaung Traders who Follow the Local Market Cycle

1	2	3	4	5
Saturday	Rao Rao	58	84	69.0
Sunday	Sumanik	42	69	60.9
Monday	Tabat Patah	163	173	94.2
Wednesday	Rao Rao	64)		45.1
	Sungai Tarab	63)	142	44.4
Thursday	Batu Sangkar	66	90	73.3
Tuesday	Batu Sangkar	19)		28.8
	Kumanis	19)		28.8
	Rambatan	17)	66	25.8
	Talawi	11)		16.7

Columns 1: Day of the week
2: Name of the market
3: Number of Salimpaung traders who frequent that market
4: Total number of Salimpaung traders who trade on that day
5: Percentage of Salimpaung traders who trade at the named market

Alexander's study (1987) of Javanese markets shows that traders there take into account four main criteria when deciding on the markets they frequent, namely residence, competition, transport and restocking. Transport is usually expensive in relation to the trader's income and the high cost of travelling further afield for greater profits has to be balanced against smaller profits with less transport costs. In Central Java small-scale traders, especially in perishable goods, tend to stay nearer home as this involves less outlay and reduces the risk factor (1987:42).

Salimpaung traders also weigh up transport costs against the benefits of trading further afield, but for many a distant market reaps far greater profits in spite of higher travelling costs. Every Tuesday, for example, small groups of Salimpaung traders travel to Talawi. There is no direct public transport available between the two locations so together they hire a van. Whilst the cost, by the

trader's standards, is high (Rp3000 per person) the profits are far greater than those to be made in a local market. Talawi is in a mining area and most of the customers are either civil servants or labourers. As agricultural produce is scarce, they are prepared to pay more for these items than customers would in markets close to Salimpaung.

One trader sells chillies and beans in Salimpaung market but in Talawi she sells chillies, a wide selection of vegetables and many different spices. The profit from the sale of only 60 small parcels of mixed spices pays for her transport to and from Talawi. As she can make significantly larger profits on her other goods than she would do in a local market, she believes the one and a half hour journey and high cost of transport is worthwhile.

A small number of Salimpaung traders go much further afield. One woman travels to Padang city market, 120 kilometres away. Another female trader goes to Pulau Punjung for two days a week and to Pangkalan two days a week; both these markets are at least 150 kilometres from Salimpaung and necessitate an overnight stay. She sells chillies and onions, produce not grown in either region. For her the high transport costs and the long journeys are outweighed by the profits to be made in these markets.

Ad hoc Traders

Ad hoc traders sell in the market on an infrequent basis. There are three main reasons for their presence as traders: first, they wish to sell the surplus of their agricultural crops. Second, they take advantage of certain holy festivals in the Islamic calendar, most notably *Bulan Puasa* (the fasting month), the days leading up to *Hari Raya Idul Fitri* (the festival marking the end of the fasting month), and to *Hari Raya Haji* (the festival celebrating pilgrimage to Mecca). During these periods, the volume of custom doubles and there is an increased demand

for certain types of food especially fresh fish, vegetables, rice, eggs, and special cakes and snacks. Finally, they resort to selling agricultural crops or home-produced goods for a few weeks of the year in order to enhance their income. This often occurs at the beginning of the school year when money has to be found for fees, new uniforms and books for their children.

Almost without exception these *ad hoc* traders are women. Although the very nature of this category does not allow wholly accurate statistics, as each week numbers fluctuate, a rough headcount over several market days suggests that the average ratio of female to male *ad hoc* traders is 90% to 10%.

This type of trader may only appear in the market on an occasional basis although of course it is likely that they still visit the market as customers. As traders, they become an important, albeit temporary, link in the information network transmitting and receiving news both within the market and between the market and their home village in the same way as a regular trader does each week.

Export Traders

Export traders do not frequent Salimpaung market in quite the same numbers as Tabat Patah or Batu Sangkar markets. Those who do, arrive early and claim a small space in the Upper Market. They are searching for different but specific products: some are only interested in buying freshly prepared cinnamon bark which they transport and sell in Padang on the international market; others buy local produce such as chillies, tomatoes, avocados and bananas to sell in markets in Pekanbaru, Duri and Jakarta where these crops are not grown and where, despite the high transport costs involved, large profits can be made.

Most of these traders represent a family business. During my fieldwork, I spent some time with one of these export enterprises:

> The trading activities are managed and overseen by Delfita, a young woman in her mid-thirties. She had started the business three years previously. Initially she chartered a lorry to transport her goods until she could afford to purchase her own vehicle. Eighteen months later two lorries were bought.
>
> She employs 15 people. Two employees go to Kerinci, approximately 200 kilometres south of Salimpaung, to purchase large supplies of potatoes which are then brought back, washed, and exported to Pekanbaru. Tomatoes are bought from a local entrepreneur who acts as the link between farmers and exporters. Other agricultural produce such as bananas and chillies are bought direct from the farmer.
>
> Delfita employs two other drivers to transport chillies, onions, vegetables and bananas to Jakarta. This is a week's round trip. She and her husband travel in the third lorry to Pekanbaru three times a week, leaving Salimpaung one evening and arriving at 4 o'clock the following morning. She spends the next couple of hours delivering goods to her regular customers. Then she rests until late afternoon when she returns to collect their money (she offers credit facilities for two days only) and their orders for the following trip. Hence there is no surplus produce at the end of the day and risks are reduced. She leaves Pekanbaru late evening arriving home at 4 o'clock the next morning and that same evening the process begins again.

It would appear from this example that the export trader comes into contact with and collects a variety of different information from a wide range of people: the farmer, the entrepreneur, other traders and customers in the local markets, as well as traders and shop owners in Pekanbaru, Jakarta and other export destinations. Information is exchanged amongst exporters who discuss the price of their goods especially during seasonal fluctuations. Whilst they appear to regard each other as competitors, and perhaps more aggressively than traders in the local market, this competition deters neither their friendship and offers of support nor the exchange of information.

Customers

For many Salimpaung inhabitants - and perhaps especially for those who rarely leave the confines of the village - Friday is an important day. Clearly the market is a place for customers to buy their weekly purchases, but it also serves as a forum for interaction and the exchange of the week's news and gossip between individuals who may only occasionally have an opportunity to meet outside the market. The social significance of this weekly event is reflected in the care people take in their appearance. Discarding work clothes, women wear their best attire, their brightly coloured scarves, their powder, lipstick and perfume; men put on their carefully brushed black hats, their polished shoes, their 'smart' shirt and trousers and their sarong wrapped around their necks and thrown loosely over their shoulders, all indicators of attendance at a social event.

Although a definitive headcount would be impossible, a rough estimate of customers was made over several weeks at various times of the day. It became clear that women constituted the larger proportion on an average ratio of 93% female to 7% male. Of the 70 female customers interviewed, 71.4% live in Salimpaung with a further 11.4% and 8.6% residing in two of the nearby villages. Of the seven men interviewed, four resided in Salimpaung, two in the next village and only one, a bus driver, lived in an area outside the market circuit. 32.9% of female customers always travel to the market by bus, 51.4% always walk, 11.4% sometimes travel by bus and at other times by foot, and only 4.3% have their own car or motorbike.

87.1% of female customers frequent Salimpaung each week whilst only 8.6% said they rarely visit the market. As Table 5.5 shows, over 50% visit at least one other market, the most popular being Tabat Patah. All the men interviewed in this survey rarely frequented a market other than *Balai Jumat*.

Table 5.5: Number and Percentage of Female Customers by Average Number of Market Visits per week

No of visits per week	No of customers	%
Once	26	37.1
Twice	22	31.4
Three times	8	11.4
Four times	3	4.3
Five times	2	2.9
Six times	-	-
Seven times	-	-
Varies/ don't know	9	12.9
Total	70	100.0

The Socialisers

This category of actor encompasses those people who use the market only as a meeting place. Almost exclusively the younger male population, they rarely go into the market itself, preferring to sit on its periphery congregating in small groups chatting, smoking and joking. Many are farmers or high school students who have finished their day's work. They remain for most of the afternoon, later moving on to the village green to watch or play football. Between 3.00 pm and 4.00 pm they are joined by men from an older generation who either sit and relax around the outskirts of the market or go into the *rumah makan* (cafe) and consume coffee and cigarettes and play dominoes with their friends. Their contact with traders is generally more limited than that of the women who, as customers, walk round the whole market area. Men tend to stay within one vicinity in their own group, only occasionally wandering through the market to chat to trading friends. The range and volume of information they gather is therefore likely to be more limited.

Communication Networks and Trade

The marketplace is compact in size and exudes an informal and friendly atmosphere. Under such circumstances, it is likely that the trader knows and is known by all other traders within the market as well as by most regular customers. In addition, these people may know each other outside the context of the market perhaps as members or in-married members of the same matrilineal group, as neighbours, as co-workers in the cycle of agricultural labour (if they do not work full-time in the market) or as friends.

Interaction between Traders

As I indicated in a previous section, many traders frequent the same markets. Although in Salimpaung they may be located within the same small trading area, in the other markets they may be scattered in different places. During slack periods they may take the opportunity to 'catch up' on the week's news. Responding to a question in the traders' survey, the majority replied that this may include discussion with other traders selling similar wares on the cost of goods and the prices they charge. Information, then, is exchanged between an ever-widening circle of traders who either trade in different places at the same market or in different markets throughout the week but who, at some stage, come into close contact. Thus within the network, traders have an input at different times and from different sources. Later in this chapter, this is considered further in a case study concerning Kakak Yanti and Abang Buyung's network.

Additionally, some traders sell different goods according to the markets they frequent. One trader sells low cost household essentials such as sugar, tea and soap in Salimpaung market but sells *gula tebu*, locally made cane sugar in other markets; another trader sells chillies in Salimpaung but a wide range of vegetables in another market. Although this decision is obviously based on

economic considerations intended to maximise profits, the consequences are also of a social nature. These traders have a different circle of trading neighbours according to their goods and the specific market, thus the information circle widens. Similarly traders without a fixed selling space who walk around the market selling their goods can also act as key informants, learning news from one trader and taking it to different traders in another area of the market.

The cooked food section, frequented by both traders and customers, is an appropriate place for information exchange. Here, tables and benches are provided for people wishing to sit and eat. Some traders offer a selection of rice, cooked meat and vegetable dishes; others sell snacks, desserts and drinks. During their meal, people converse with the trader and with other customers.

If there is no time to chat and discuss news with other traders within the market, the opportunity often presents itself on the journey home. Some traders go on the public buses, others who live in more inaccessible areas join together with other traders from the same or a nearby village and hire a van or small bus to transport them and their wares to and from the market. This brings together traders selling diverse goods in different parts of the market who perhaps would not necessarily meet and discuss market news if it were not for their shared transport home.

Interaction between Traders and Suppliers

The exchange of information further extends to conversations between traders and their suppliers. Traders selling goods such as vegetables or chillies are often supplied by farmers who take their agricultural crops to Salimpaung market; others have to go much further afield to collect their goods. They usually visit their suppliers on a regular weekly basis. Shoes, cloth, clothing, general household goods, stationery and bric-a-brac, spices and general groceries are

usually bought from suppliers in Bukittinggi, 30 kilometres and one hour's bus ride from Salimpaung. Most other goods are bought from suppliers in Batu Sangkar or from local home industries manufacturing cakes and snacks or coffee, whilst specialist items such as dried fish are bought in Padang. As Padang is a long and expensive journey, one trader from Salimpaung travels there and buys enough dried fish for all the other traders in the market (charging a small fee to cover costs and increase his profits). Some traders buy their goods in other parts of the province where there is a surplus of those products. For example, two or three times a week several traders go to Pariangan, 35 kilometres from Salimpaung, to buy their supply of coconuts. One trader in cloth periodically travels to Jakarta, approximately 1200 kilometres and a three days' bus journey from Salimpaung, to buy batik and the 'latest clothing fashions' in order to keep ahead of other traders. Meanwhile, his wife and their assistant continue the business in the market circuit.

The majority of traders have a credit agreement with their suppliers (with the exception of those who buy agricultural produce direct from farmers). Some suppliers offer extended credit on a week-to-week basis; others, most notably in the clothing and materials business, may offer an unrestricted credit period to traders on the condition that each week part of their debt is paid off and goods are bought regularly from them. The trader must initially be trusted by her supplier. Often she is already known to the supplier, perhaps through her parents' business or through a personal introduction. Congeniality and trust must be sustained if credit facilities are to continue. A trader may have more than one creditor/supplier, as long as they are all visited on a regular basis; consequently suppliers may spend some time enticing the trader to buy more stock from them. Clearly it is to the advantage of both sides to develop a strong relationship. This promotes the flow of information in both directions whilst stock is being considered and negotiations conducted.



Cloth traders attract many customers in *Balai Jumat* and their selling area becomes a typical meeting place

Interaction between Traders and Customers

The credit relationship also exists between trader and customer at the local level. In Salimpaung market not all traders offer credit to customers; the most obvious examples that do not are those selling vegetables, spices or cakes, small items costing only a few rupiah. Some traders - usually those selling general household essentials - offer some form of credit facility often on a week-to-week basis but occasionally, and especially if the customer is a civil servant and therefore has a fixed salary, on a monthly basis.

Other traders whose goods are more expensive offer credit facilities in order to attract custom. Cloth traders are a good example of this. During *Bulan Puasa* it is customary for people to choose a new set of clothes for themselves and their children in anticipation of the *Hari Raya Idul Fitri* celebrations. The majority of people could not afford to pay for these goods outright and instead buy them on credit, paying a small portion each week over an indefinite period. Clothes for weddings, and school uniforms may also be purchased in this manner. These regular visits by customers make the cloth trading area a typical meeting place in the market.

The principles involved are similar to those between trader and supplier. The customer has to be known and trusted before the trader accepts her as a debtor, and this can only take place through recommendation or through previous acquaintance in a different context. The relationship then involves some groundwork of 'getting to know' each other a little. Although the customer is not under obligation to buy all such goods from that particular trader, once she becomes a debtor, she often remains in such a credit relationship with that trader alone. The trader often achieves this with a friendly disposition as well as by enticing the customer with new stock or the 'latest fashions' in the hope that she is tempted to buy and thus add to her debts. One trader in cloth commented:

> The relationship has to be good all the time. It's not just the goods that are important, the relationship with our customers has to be good as well. You develop social skills - small talk for example - it has to be like that or they wouldn't keep coming.

Bargaining requires social as well as economic skills. For everyday goods, bargaining is over quickly but for more expensive items such as clothing, blankets and larger household utensils the process can be protracted. Serious negotiations including a detailed examination of the goods, the pretence of ending the bargaining following seemingly unrealistic offers, and asking other customers' opinions, are usually interspersed with social chit chat, the exchange of news concerning their respective families and any interesting information learnt earlier in the market.

Traders who buy and sell gold typically have strong bargaining powers but also offer credit facilities to their customers. For the Minangkabau, gold is regarded as a form of savings. Very few villagers have bank accounts; some are part of the village *Koperasi* - a government savings and loans scheme; others are participants in *julo-julo* (the rotating savings association). For many villagers, however, the gold trader represents the main source of savings or loans in the form of jewellery. During hard times, villagers may sell or pawn their jewellery in order to buy food; then, once they have saved some surplus income, they repurchase that or another piece of gold jewellery. Whilst this does not necessitate a continuous relationship with the gold trader many people appear to return to the same trader when the need arises. Inevitably as a customer chooses or sells a piece of jewellery and negotiations are being conducted, news of a social and often economic nature may be exchanged.

Another means used by traders to entice and retain regular custom is to offer extra measures of their goods so that customers receive more for their money.

Alternatively, the trader may charge customers lower prices whilst still making a small profit. One trader expressed it as follows:

> When I first started trading people didn't know me, they just walked past and only looked. Then I began to offer lower prices and now I have regular customers.

Other traders said that they had no initial problems attracting regular customers as, coming from the same village, they already knew so many people who were willing to buy from them. This suggests that social bonds (kinship, friendship and neighbourhood) may have an influence on economic transactions. The results of my customer survey suggest that the cost and quality of goods may also play an important part in deciding where to make purchases.

Social interaction then occurs at all levels of the market especially through bargaining, credit relations, offering lower prices or additional measures with the aim of retaining regular customers. During slacker periods traders usually find time to exchange news and gossip amongst themselves and with customers on a leisurely basis. Some traders have a higher turnover than others, especially the larger cloth traders and those who have a monopoly in the market such as the sole woman selling lake fish. Although they probably have access to a larger number of people they may have less time to stop and chat than the traders who do not do such a constant business. They may only spend time conversing towards the end of the day's trading when the market's activities are winding down.

My own experience as a customer - and therefore an actor within the market - illustrates that news obtained from one person in the market filters through to other customers and traders. I found that if I passed on a piece of news to one particular trader during the morning, later on that day I would be questioned

about it by a different trader in another section of the market or by other customers with whom I had not previously discussed that particular item of news. This suggests that once information enters the market through a customer or trader, it is transmitted to an ever-widening circle of recipients. The trader acts as one of the anchorage points from which news is received and disseminated. Furthermore the news does not remain solely within the marketplace but is also 'taken home' by traders and customers.

News can take many forms. In the course of conversation, traders relayed personal news (the recent death of another trader's relative, the impending marriage of a neighbour with whom I was acquainted) and news of a more informative economic nature within the context of trading (such as the levels of custom and potential income in Salimpaung market compared with another more distant Friday market. This information had been obtained in another market frequented by the trader). From the traders' point of view, these pieces of information were passed to me not for their research interest but, I would argue, because I was a customer in the market and a participant in village life. This notion is backed up by the frequency with which I would return home to tell other villagers the news I had learnt in the market that day only to find that someone else had already imparted this information to villagers in my area of residence.

The following example illustrates the informative and supportive networks that exist in a rural market.

> Through the lines of communication in Salimpaung and other markets, it became common knowledge that a fire had destroyed a section of one of Bukittinggi's markets. One of the permanent shops, owned by the sister of a cloth trader in *Balai Jumat*, had been completely destroyed together with all its stock worth several million rupiah. The Salimpaung trader was understandably very upset.

> Although she is not an inhabitant of Salimpaung, she does live in a nearby village. She and her husband have been part of *Balai Jumat*, either working for their parents or for themselves, for the last 16 years. They have the biggest collection of cloth and clothing and offer credit to many people. Both are respected members of the trading community. In order to show sympathy and support in a time of great crisis for the trader and her family, large numbers of female traders and customers brought her bowls of uncooked rice during the following Friday's market activities. In other markets, similar gestures had been made.

As discussed in a previous chapter, a gift of food, especially rice, has an important symbolic significance. Whilst gift-giving usually takes place within the village setting and in the context of life cycle rituals, in other circumstances such as these, women use gifts of rice as an expressive and communicative medium.

Trading as a Way of Life

This example suggests that traders are not perceived purely in economic terms associated with the goods they sell, but may also be seen as participants in the village community. On the basis of informal discussions with numerous traders in *Balai Jumat* and the more formal in-depth interviews with a small number of traders, it would appear that they do not regard trading merely as a means of making a living. They may also view it as a pleasurable pursuit and an important part of their social existence. Comments from traders when describing their perceptions of the market and their lives therein included the following:

> I get an inner satisfaction from being in the market. It's entertainment. It's a hobby. It isn't hard work and it's not boring.

> I love markets. On a Thursday, if I'm not trading in Batu Sangkar market, I often go there anyway just to wander around.

Traders clearly see trading as a way of life; few of them would prefer to have an alternative occupation. One trader, asked when he and his wife would stop trading, voiced the opinion of many with whom I have spoken:

> We don't have an end in sight. We'll keep going as usual until we're too old and tired.

Although there may be an element of competition between traders to attract custom, few actively perceive their trading neighbours as competitors and the majority regard them as 'people just like themselves who are trying to earn a living'. Competition rarely takes the form of an aggressive selling style, and traders still chat, laugh and joke amongst themselves. If a trader wishes to leave her/his selling unit temporarily, then another neighbouring trader tends to look after her/his goods. This can often extend to selling on behalf of the absent trader even when this means that those goods are bought in preference to the trader's own. One female rice trader, questioned on what happened to her goods when she left her selling space, replied:

> My friends look after my goods - my friends who sell the same goods as me. I help my friends. My friends help me.

Traders often go to neighbours selling the same goods and ask to borrow or to buy, at trade price, similar goods which their customer wishes to purchase from them. On one occasion, a customer had bought some chicken's eggs from an egg seller and then wished to purchase a couple of duck's eggs. The trader's supply had already been sold so she quickly left her selling place and asked a nearby egg seller for some duck's eggs. These she bought at trade price and then sold them to her customer at the normal, higher price. From this example, and many of my observations and conversations in the market, it would be unrealistic to regard the relationship between traders as based on anything other than co-operation and mutual support. One trader summed up the feelings of many when she said:

> I love being a trader. It's my hobby. If I'm with my friends I'm happy. In the market I can socialise *and* make a profit. I've got lots of friends in the market. With lots of friends and friendly people, selling is easy. It's great. If I don't go to the market I just get miserable at home. I prefer to go to the market all the time. If I'm a little bit off colour, I still go to the market - I don't want to stay at home.

The Information Network: The Trader's Perspective

The following example serves to illustrate the type of contacts that are made in the marketplace and the flow of information that can occur through this network. Choosing one trader as the anchorage point was not easy. What criteria should be used to select the trader? I have decided to use the example of Abang Buyung and Kakak Yanti, a husband and wife team, who trade in factory made cakes and snacks. The main reasons for this choice are twofold: firstly, they seem fairly typical of the trading community (at least in terms of communication networks); and secondly, I spent a lot of time with them both in *Balai Jumat* and Tabat Patah market. On one occasion I spent the day trading with them. My direct experience therefore plays a part in the illustration below.

> Abang Buyung and Kakak Yanti have been trading in this region for seven years and in Salimpaung market for five years. They trade seven days a week, visiting Tabat Patah, Talawi, Padang Ganting and Sijunjung markets on Monday to Thursday respectively. The other two days they make regular trips to sell their cakes to owners of approximately 60 small shops in isolated villages. Kakak Yanti's sister and her husband also trade in the same goods so they are able to share a modest warehouse near their home in Batu Sangkar.
>
> Their trading activities in these markets bring them into contact with a variety of traders. In each of the markets, their trading neighbours are different. Even those traders who frequent Salimpaung market are generally located in another section of the other markets. This is illustrated in Salimpaung where their trading neighbours are different to those in Tabat Patah even though all the traders go to both markets.
>
> In Salimpaung market their immediate trading neighbours are Amak Sima who sells general household essentials such as oil, tea and sugar, As who sells stationery and toiletries, Mar who sells shoes, Amri who sells shoes and bags, and Amak Nel who sells homemade cakes. All these traders go to Tabat Patah market but, with the exception of Amak Sima, they are located in a different part of the market to Kakak Yanti and Abang Buyung. In Tabat Patah, their immediate neighbours are Iskandar who buys and sells gold, Pak Asmi who sells cigarettes and Amak Eli who sells fish. These three traders all frequent Salimpaung market but are situated in different sections. (There is also a man who sells agricultural tools but he does not go to the same Friday market). With the exception of Mondays and Fridays, these traders follow diverse market routes. They therefore know a variety of people. Travelling to distant markets (Talawi and Sijunjung), Abang Buyung and Kakak Yanti can obtain news from a wide

> geographical area. The exchange of information and news is between different groups of traders on a daily basis involving an ever-increasing circle of participants.
>
> In Salimpaung market Abang Buyung and Kakak Yanti have a lot of regular customers, not least because they offer the biggest selection of cakes and snacks, attractive to small shop owners. Some of their customers buy goods from them at more than one market each week. Others may buy on a more *ad hoc* basis. On their trips to outlying villages, they stop at each shop for approximately 20 minutes and while sales are made, news is exchanged between trader and customer. They may offer credit in order to retain regular customers.
>
> Their occupation also brings them into contact with a number of different suppliers. Twice a week, a travelling cake seller from Payakumbuh meets them in Batu Sangkar prior to the day's trading activities. Likewise twice a week, a cake seller from Padang calls. One evening a week, Kakak Yanti and Abang Buyung visit a cake factory in Padang Panjang (approximately 40 kilometres from Batu Sangkar). Twice a week, en route home from the market, they stop at another cake factory to purchase more cakes. Several of these suppliers offer credit facilities which means that Kakak Yanti and Abang Buyung remain regular customers.

Using Kakak Yanti and Abang Buyung as the anchorage point, it is possible to see that they provide a vehicle for the receipt and transmission of information. Their network with other traders is dense in terms of the actors in each individual market. This is especially the case for Salimpaung as it is compact in size and all traders know each other. If considered as a whole (all the markets they frequent), it could not be described as dense. Only some of the other Salimpaung traders frequent Talawi or Sijunjung, larger markets which are further afield. From the point of view of network range, they have a large number of direct contacts, more so one could argue than a trader who only sells twice a week and spends the rest of the week working on the land. The content of their market network is commercial but, specifically in terms of communication content, they are in contact with a lot of different people from a range of backgrounds. The relations with these contacts could not be described as based on a principle of reciprocity, neither are they durable: if they stopped trading, many of the links in their network would vanish. These contacts, then, are all part of their effective trading network.

Interaction between Customers

Networks based on kinship, residence and common work patterns already exist in a small rural village and its environs. It would be virtually impossible for a Salimpaung inhabitant (or for that matter a resident of another nearby village who was born in Salimpaung) to go to the market and not meet someone she knew. Many customers have both cognatic and affinal kin living not just in their own *desa* but in other nearby *desa* as well, in particular Koto Tuo, Nan II Suku and nearby Lawang Mandahiling. They may not necessarily be able to visit them regularly. The market gives them the opportunity to meet on an occasional basis, to keep up-to-date on family news and to exchange other pieces of information.

In terms of the women's own perceptions of their visit to the market, 55.7% said they made their purchases and left straight away compared to 38.6% who had time to chat to traders and other customers (the remaining 4.3% only sometimes having the time to socialise). In addition the women were asked how much time on average they spent in the market: 45.7% spent two hours or more there; only one woman said she was in the market less than one hour.[4] This response implies that some amount of socialising must occur as, if they wished, these women could shop and leave within an hour. Perhaps their perceptions of conversing with others are different to my own. My notion of conversing includes a short chat. The concept amongst the Minangkabau, it could be argued, is on a more formal and structured basis. Generally it involves entering a woman's house, being offered tea or some other drink and possibly some cakes, snacks or fruit. One respondent, when asked whether she regarded the market as a place which presented the opportunity to meet and talk to people, commented that she goes to her friends' or kin's homes to do that. I asked her

[4] None of the men interviewed made any purchases during their visit to the market and regarded the time they spent there only in terms of socialising.

whether this meant that if she saw people she knew in the market, especially someone she had not seen for a long time, she would ignore them or pass a greeting and then walk on. She replied somewhat indignantly that of course she would do no such thing as that would be considered very rude. She would stop and talk to them and exchange all the latest family news. Indeed to ignore a relative, friend or acquaintance is certainly considered impolite and comments concerning that person's disregard for *baso baso* (cultural etiquette) would start to circulate.

Upon meeting, the common greeting is "*A' bali*?"("what have you bought?" or "what are you going to buy?"). This greeting, I suggest, serves a double purpose: socially it is an acceptable and indeed expected greeting; in economic terms, it begins an interesting and often fruitful dialogue on prices or availability of certain foodstuffs as this initial greeting is followed by "*Bara'a*?" ("how much did that cost?"). Particular attention is directed towards foodstuffs such as coconuts and chillies (because of the tendency for prices to fluctuate), and larger non-food items such as clothing or household equipment not purchased on a regular basis. On their journey to and from the market, either on foot or by bus, customers are greeted with "*Ka ma'*?" ("where are you going?") or "*Dari ma'*?" ("where have you been?"). This initiates discussion on food prices through the further greetings "*A' Bali*?" and "*Bara'a*?"

Such a greeting and thus the exchange of information can also occur between two people who do not necessarily know each other. In this case, it could be argued, the exercise is less of a greeting and more for the purposes of seeking information only. A conversation of this kind usually takes place when more expensive items, not for every day usage, are involved. On one occasion I witnessed one of my principal female informants asking a second woman how much she had paid for the large mat she was carrying. Having received the reply

and examined the mat's quality, my friend walked on; it became obvious that she had not known the second woman. On another occasion I overheard five people, in the space of only a few minutes, each ask a woman how much she had paid for the live chicken she was carrying. Again, having obtained a response and passed a comment, they parted company. This is also the case for foodstuffs known to have fluctuating prices. The coconut is one such example and people carrying one are almost inevitably asked how much it costs. The questioner then has bargaining power through her knowledge of that day's accepted price. She can walk away from a trader selling expensive coconuts with the expectation that she can buy the same goods elsewhere at a more reasonable price.

One part of the survey asked customers whether they discussed prices with other customers and/or with people when they returned home. 84.3% replied that they did. The exchange of information on prices is not limited to the marketplace but, for any large household item or for certain foodstuffs, the common questions put to recent arrivals from the market by people in the village is also "what have you bought?" and "how much did that cost?" This type of information then is not limited to the market boundaries but overflows into the village.

As discussed previously, news is also exchanged between a customer and trader. Many customers go to regular traders to make their weekly purchases. Even if they do not buy anything from those traders on a particular day, they may often stop to chat especially if trade is slack. This information may then be taken back to the village and transmitted by the customer to her family, friends and neighbours.



The *lapau*: a typical meeting place in the local neighbourhood

One particularly interesting example of the link between the market and the village concerns the small shop owner. In Salimpaung there are approximately 20 such shops (called *lapau*) often located in one part of a person's house. These shops supply the local neighbourhood with basic household goods such as cooking oil, tea, coffee, sugar, sweets and snacks as well as cigarettes, matches and soap. They are open long hours, from dawn to dusk, and most shop owners living on the same site are usually willing to reopen the shop for potential customers. Without exception, these shops are owned and run by women. They provide a focal point for the exchange of information within the village as other villagers often congregate in their shops; they may want a drink and a rest from work in the fields or they may wish to purchase some household item or snack. In any event, they stay in the shop for a few minutes (or longer) to chat to other customers and to the shopowner; this is especially the case if a piece of news is being discussed which they have not yet heard. This category of customer/trader, and through them the link between the village, the market and the outside world, is explored further using the example of Amak Murni who owns one of these small shops.

> Her shop is on the main road, opposite a prosperous and active rice mill. Customers include other villagers especially those living nearby and often members of Amak Murni's own lineage or clan; and children en route to and from school. People who do not live in Salimpaung but are travelling between villages may stop there for a rest and a drink, or to shelter from heavy monsoon rain. The long distance lorry drivers employed by the mill owner to transport rice from Salimpaung to distant provinces often appear for coffee, a snack and a cigarette before or after a long drive. Amak Murni and her other customers converse with them. They have different news to recount about the distant places they visit, often in the context of the cost of goods there and other market information. Traders selling to shops over a wide area also visit. The *kerupuk* trader, a regular supplier to Amak Murni's shop, uses a motorbike to travel to villages between Batu Sangkar and Bukittinggi. Offering the *kerupuk* on a credit basis, he brings the snacks in the morning and returns for the money on his way home in the afternoon. He and Amak Murni usually have a brief conversation; occasionally he stops for longer to have a drink and a cigarette. Inevitably news from a wide distribution of village shops is received and Amak Murni may tell him relevant Salimpaung news.

News in the shop can be of varying kinds. I often overheard discussions on the price of agricultural crops, information obtained from recent market visits. Conversations also included news of illness, birth, the arrival home from migration of a villager's son or daughter, and death. In one case, a customer was told of the recent death of a neighbour. This was significant because the recipient of this information - given by Amak Murni and obtained from an earlier customer - then went home to prepare for her visit to the dead person's home as part of the customary funerary rites.

On market days, Amak Murni rises earlier than usual. She has a number of regular chores to do before she can go to the market. In addition local farmers and traders often ask her to store their large baskets of agricultural produce overnight in her shop as this makes transporting them to the market the following morning that much easier. They tend to make an early start and she is up when they arrive. She examines the goods and wants to know the price the farmer or trader is hoping to obtain. Frequently, she exchanges this information with other farmers so that prices can be compared.

She visits a market at least twice a week, always going to Salimpaung and to Tabat Patah. During busy weeks, she may have to go to a further market (usually Sungai Tarab on a Wednesday or Batu Sangkar on a Thursday). Her trip to the market usually begins around nine or ten o'clock. Her mother looks after the shop in her absence. She walks to Salimpaung market, frequently joined by her sister or one of her close friends who lives nearby. They often meet other villagers also going in that direction.

Once at the market, she makes her way to those traders who sell cigarettes, cakes and snacks, and general household goods. She is a regular customer with all these traders (and may also purchase goods from them in the other markets she frequents). As the main objective of her trip is to restock her shop, she buys a lot of goods and consequently spends quite a long time with them. Inevitably news and gossip is circulated between the trader and shop owner, even during busy trading hours because of the length of time she is there. She has been buying from them for many years; they know her well and she frequently makes use of the credit facilities they offer. From their point of view, this increases the likelihood that she remains a regular customer.

Once she has completed her purchases for the shop, she can then concentrate on her other needs. She leaves these purchases with an egg trader, located in the upper market close to the road. This trader is a neighbour and a member of Amak Murni's clan. In return, Amak Murni buys her egg supply from her.

Her next visit is to the cloth traders, a husband and wife team whom she has known for many years. She gives them her weekly debt repayment for clothes or other items she has previously taken. Sometimes she buys something new, in any event she chats with them for a while. Other customers also appear, inevitably people she knows, who join in the conversation. She may spend as long as an hour talking to these traders and their customers.

> She then purchases a selection of foodstuffs, usually from traders she goes to regularly. If they are not busy, she may talk to them. She may also spend time with other traders from whom she does not buy but whom she knows either because they are consanguineal or affinal relations, other villagers or simply traders who have been frequenting Salimpaung market for years. During her shopping, she may also converse with other customers. She often meets consanguines and affines living in other nearby villages and, particularly if she has not seen them for a while, she stops to chat.
>
> Her trip to the market always takes two hours and can often be significantly longer. Finally, she collects all her purchases and gets on one of the buses. There, while the bus fills, she talks to passengers, exchanging different pieces of market news and discussing market prices. The bus leaves the marketplace and within a couple of minutes she is home. There her mother and possibly some shop customers greet her with "*A' bali*?", followed by "*Bara'a*?". The conversation turns to a further exchange of news brought back from the market.

From the perspective of network analysis, how can Amak Murni's network be analysed? In terms of communication, she is certainly a useful anchorage point, providing a medium between villagers and people outside the village who trade in the markets she frequents. All the Salimpaung traders know her well. They are aware of her regular visits to the market and may ask her to pass on a message to a villager who frequents her shop but who has not been to the market that day. This often happens with the cloth traders who may ask her to tell a certain villager that their clothes are ready for collection. In this sense, the reachability characteristic in Amak Murni's network is strong. Her market network is dense: most of the traders with whom she socialises also know and are known to her shop customers and they may interact on occasions. Her level of contact with traders and villagers is high as she regularly visits the market, and she sees most of her shop customers on a daily basis.

The content of Amak Murni's market network is primarily economic although ties of kinship, marriage and residence may also play their part as many of the market traders are related to Amak Murni or live nearby. From this standpoint,

it is difficult to say how durable her network is as this would depend on the particular members concerned. Those traders related to her would maintain durable relations with her, not necessarily because of their trading activities; kinship obligations would play a larger part. Other traders, not related to her, would be unlikely to have lasting relations with Amak Murni. If for example she moved to Pekanbaru to be near her children, she would be unlikely to keep in contact with these traders.

The shop owner, then, is in a unique position within the village. Her shop is the place where many people, either individually or in small groups, gather together at intervals during the day and information can be extracted and disseminated accordingly. She also provides a key link between the village and the outside world. By virtue of the nature of her business, she needs to go to the market several times a week to keep her stocks replenished. Generally the income from the shop (mostly from small items) does not allow her to buy in bulk once a week as the outlay would be too much; instead she must buy several times a week as her cash flow determines. This involves visits not only to her own village market but also to markets *outside* Salimpaung. Thus the sources of information originate from a wide number of traders in different locations. This is significant, bearing in mind that many villagers, in particular the farming population, rarely leave Salimpaung from one year to the next.

Gender Interaction in the Marketplace

In many ways there is no gender segregation within the marketplace. Both women and men are traders and customers, and even if these are not in equal proportions, both genders are free to go to the market in either capacity. For women, however, marital status would appear to affect their presence there. It was noted that there are very few unmarried women amongst the traders and although some unmarried women and teenage girls may be asked to make

purchases, they are in the minority of customers. In addition, it would be considered inappropriate - bearing in mind the cultural constraints imposed on them through Islamic rules of behaviour - for younger unmarried women to converse at length with male traders (or customers). Thus they have only limited access to information. Overall, then, it is older married women who form the majority of the female actors and who have the largest part to play in the market's information network.

There appear to be gender specific commodities. An exclusively female commodity is rice; an exclusively male commodity is meat. The remaining goods may be heavily dominated by either men or women but even then there is some overlap. Although fresh fish is generally sold by men, there is also one female fresh fish trader in Salimpaung. Likewise, although fruit and vegetables are primarily female commodities, there is also one Salimpaung male trader. In other areas such as cloth trading distinctions are not necessarily made and some female traders may form a partnership with other women or men related to them through kinship or marriage.

In terms of their presence in the market, both men and women, as traders, have equal access to information. They have a wide range of contacts both in terms of numbers and geographical distance. They form an important link between the village and the outside world. They meet many different traders in the other markets they frequent and also go further afield to meet suppliers, in one instance as far as Jakarta.

Interaction between traders, and between traders and customers is not based on gender divisions. They exchange economic information on the state of other markets, new suppliers and price fluctuations, as well as news of a more social nature such as marriage or birth within the community. Many participants in the

information network act upon the news they receive. The fire in Bukittinggi market which directly affected one trader and her family was an illustration of this as female traders and customers showed their support and condolences through gifts of rice.

The majority of customers are female and they may spend up to two hours in the market. Although their visit is primarily to make their weekly purchases, they also use this opportunity to meet and exchange news. They tend to visit a greater number of markets (50% of customers in the survey went to more than one market each week) than men do (who generally only frequent Salimpaung market). These women provide the main link between their household (and their village) and the outside world. Their kinship, neighbourhood, occupation and friendship networks come together in the market and are used to find out local information. Through their greetings in Salimpaung and other markets as well as in their journey to and from the markets, they learn news which may not otherwise filter through to the village. This puts them in a powerful position as they choose whether or not they should impart this information to other household and village members.

Summary: Markets and Communication Networks

Using the example of *Balai Jumat*, Salimpaung's Friday market, my objective in this chapter has been to examine networks operating within and between the markets. Previous studies have concentrated on the market as an economic institution whilst acknowledging its social significance in the local community or the social context in which many economic transactions take place. As Alexander argues in her recent study of the Javanese market "we have been slow to appreciate that a market, like kinship or religion, is always a cultural construct. ... traders plan, execute and justify economic actions in the concepts of ... culture" (1987:1). She draws attention to the importance of analysing

social relationships, cultural norms, credit relations, bargaining, and kinship, neighbour and patron-client ties operating within the market. Davis' (1973) study of Baguio City market also examines the cultural context of market activities focusing on the *suki* relationship, based on trust and reciprocity between buyer and seller which influences the other facets of market ethics and promotes co-operation between traders. In Minangkabau markets economic transactions clearly operate under the influence of its culture and although there is no formal *suki* relationship there are resemblances in terms of the credit facilities available to buyers, the mutual trust and co-operation existing between traders and the ground rules of market ethics.

The market has a wider function than merely acting as an arena for buying and selling. As I have illustrated through an analysis of the networks associated with it, the weekly market acts as a focal point for the transmission and receipt of information of varying types as well as providing a support system for its participants in times of crisis. The market support network also enables its members to deal with occasional 'problems' reflected in the case of the trader who had sold her supply of duck's eggs and used another egg seller's stock to supply her customer. The principle of mutual help is also evident in the example of the rice trader who left her goods, knowing that her rice trading friends would look after and even sell stock on her behalf.

The participants in these networks come from a broad social, economic and geographical background. They may have some previous association through kinship or marriage, through occupation (traders in the same market), or may have just a momentary association on the basis of common interests (a desire to find out the cost of agricultural crops for example). Some networks are well-established whilst others may be of only fleeting significance when two people meet at a market stall, or on transport to and from the market, and engage in

conversation. The durable networks are usually founded on a basis of regular sales between seller and buyer and include both trader and customer within the local market, and trader and supplier in the larger city market. Due to the very nature of credit relations, participants meet regularly maintaining an amicable relationship which entails polite often lengthy conversations and, over a sustained period, is conducive to the exchange of information. News exchanged can be varied: it may relate to the price of chillies per kilo (a crop grown and sold in the local market by most villagers), the cost of a large item not purchased on a regular basis such as cooking utensils, or goods prone to price fluctuation such as coconuts. In addition, news may be of a more personal nature (impending marriage or recent illness) which may require immediate action by the recipient.

Traders, suppliers and customers all have important roles to play in the receipt and dissemination of information through the network system. It was shown that over half the traders frequent markets between three and five times a week; they go to different markets some close to their homes, others at much greater distances. Each time they go to and return home from these markets they are in receipt of new information. In addition some traders sell different goods according to the market they frequent (as in the case of the woman who sold everyday household essentials in *Balai Jumat* and sugar in her other markets). This travel gives traders greater exposure to a range of people selling different goods and therefore a variety of information. The trader network, then, covers an ever-widening geographical area and encompasses an ever-growing circle of both participants and information.

Customers also play an important part in transmitting and receiving information. It was discovered that most *Balai Jumat* customers spend more than one hour (and often closer to two hours) in the marketplace. Whilst purchasing and bargaining can be a lengthy exercise most customers still find time to stop and

chat to people they know. As Mai and Buchholt have argued in relation to Kakas market, and this also applies to *Balai Jumat*, "merely participating in market activities, without regard to the commercial role of trade, also demonstrates the common belonging to the village, in addition to the pleasure derived from exchanging news and gossiping about entirely non-commercial matters" (1987:117).

Customers' interactions can be directly related to the notion that the market is a cultural construct. The initial greetings people make ostensibly emanate from *baso baso* but in fact can yield important information which can be used in other contexts. The initial greeting "*Dari ma'*?" is both culturally expected and courteous, and its response confirms to the questioner that the recent arrival has just come from the market. The next question "*A' bali*?" leads the second woman to open her bag and produce her purchases. The third question is even more specific, the questioner selects a particular item, often picks it up and examines it and then says "*Bara'a?*". This yields information concerning price fluctuations which the questioner can store in her mind and possibly use at some later date.

Another actor in the market, discussed in relation to participation in the information network, is the small shop owner. She goes to the market several times a week in order to keep her stocks replenished. She is therefore a great source of information and provides a key link between the village and the outside world. As most villagers usually only frequent their own village market and rarely leave the village, the shop owner has an important role in the local community.

Women dominate the market both as regular traders (68%), as *ad hoc* traders (average 90%) and as customers (average 93%) and, as an extension to this, as

small shop owners. Within the market context, then, it is women who are the primary actors in this communication network. Far from being tied to their homes, ancestral property and involved only in household work and childcare, I have shown that in the market context, Minangkabau women play a very active role in village social life. Their contact with other actors in the market means that the female trader or customer is often in receipt of information earlier than other members of her household. For those people who do not leave the village on a regular basis, or even frequent their own village market during peak times in the agricultural year, the market woman acts as a key informant and mediator between the two spheres of the household and the world outside. This can often be crucial when other members of her descent group have harvested their agricultural crops and wish to sell them. From her regular visits to the market and discussions with other people who have already sold their harvests, she has a clear idea of the expected sale price. In this light, it is unconvincing to portray Minangkabau women as passive and dependent. Instead they should be seen as active participants in the community who interact with other female as well as male actors in the marketplace.

CHAPTER 6: MIGRATION AND NETWORKS

Introduction

It is well known that significant numbers of Minangkabau people migrate to other Indonesian provinces and parts of South-East Asia. Many academic studies have examined this phenomenon focusing on the reasons for migration (Maude 1979, Mochtar Naim 1971, Murad 1980, Swift 1971), the consequences of migration (Maretin 1961, Errington 1984, Kato 1982, Mochtar Naim 1971), the lives migrants lead (Mochtar Naim 1984, 1985, Persoon 1982, 1986) and the links between the migrant area (the *rantau*) and the homeland (the *darek*) (Mochtar Naim 1971, 1984, 1985, Kato 1982, van Reenen 1990).

With the exceptions of Murad (1980) and van Reenen (1990), these different studies have one area of common ground: the male migrant is the focal point and there is little recognition that women migrate at all. At best, it is assumed they migrate as dutiful wives, rarely as independent women. This is contrasted to men who are portrayed as frequently migrating independently or as the head of the conjugal family.

Although this focus on the independent male migrant is widespread in both theoretical and ethnographic studies, Chant and Radcliffe (1992) point out that both men and women, in any part of the world, rarely migrate independently. Even when someone moves alone to another geographical area, it is unusual for other people not to be involved, either those in the home village who may supply money to help the migrant prior to departure or those already in the migrant's destination who offer hospitality. This indeed concurs with my data which I discuss later in this chapter. It is perhaps appropriate then to distinguish between people migrating as individuals and people migrating as part of a family unit. Each category has a context of support involving many ties.

Few Minangkabau studies appear to acknowledge this refinement. Consequently, as it is assumed women migrate with and under the direction of their husbands; surveys tend to seek out male respondents as the considered heads of households. Women's occupations, activities and perceptions, as well as their networks both in the *rantau* and between the *rantau* and the homeland, appear to be regarded as unimportant and so remain unexplored and unanalysed. Yet women do migrate - and if outmigration from Salimpaung follows a broader pan-Minangkabau pattern - in growing numbers. Although it would appear to be the case that the majority do migrate with husbands or other family members, in recent years there has been a growing trend towards the migration of 'individual' women. In addition, those studies which place women in the category of "following or accompanying their husbands" (*ikut suami*) fail to consider that many women who, at a later stage, separate from or divorce their husbands may remain in the *rantau* and, with any children, may form and head their own independent household unit.

This chapter is divided into two sections: the first part begins with a general introduction to Minangkabau migration. This considers the numbers involved, their destinations, their reasons for and the consequences of migration. Some of the formal networks operating both within the migrant area for the benefit of migrants (the associations), and between the migrant area and the homeland such as *Gerakan Seribu Minang* (The Minangkabau One Thousand Movement, commonly known by its abbreviated form, *Gebu Minang*) are also examined. The second section explores migration from Salimpaung. This begins with survey data which provides a background to the incidence of migration from Salimpaung, migrants' destinations, occupations and age at the time of migration. The link between migrant and homeland areas through formal and informal networks and their use as support for new arrivals to the big city are then examined. I conclude this chapter using the life-history of a young woman,

born in Salimpaung who has spent many years on migration. This case study shows the way in which she uses her network for support, assistance and identity and how this is based on reciprocity with other people from both the city and the home village.

The Incidence of Minangkabau Migration

It has been estimated that as many as one third of the 5.5 million people who identify themselves as Minangkabau live outside West Sumatra (Persoon 1986:180). According to the 1980 Census, the province has one of the highest rates of migration in Indonesia: 18.6% of all people born in West Sumatra no longer inhabited the province by 1980 and a further 12% who were living there at the time of the census had previously resided elsewhere. In recent years the trend towards medium- and long-term migration has become more prominent (Hugo et al 1987, Maude 1979). Comparative data from the 1971 and 1980 Censuses show that the net outmigration rate for West Sumatra had increased from 2.4% in 1971 to 7.6% in 1980 although the incidence of outmigration varies around the province. It is estimated that the average migration rates per village ranged from 34% and 17% in the *kabupaten* (regency) of Agam and Tanah Datar to 8% and 6% in Sawahlunto/Sijunjung and Limapuluh Kota (Kato 1982:143, Hugo et al 1987).

Kato (1982) identifies three ideal types of Minangkabau *merantau* (migration) which approximate to historical periods. The first is village segmentation which occurred up to the early 19th century when population growth and land shortage forced sublineages to move to new and permanent settlements. Myths from other parts of Sumatra and as far away as Negeri Sembilan on the Malay peninsula record tales of Minangkabau settlements by the end of the fourteenth century (Josselin de Jong 1951, Kato 1982:23, 29-30, 87).

The second ideal type is circulatory migration which took place between the late 19th century and the 1930s when men temporarily migrated to urban areas to work in non-agricultural occupations. Generally they did not venture great distances and maintained contact with their families, returning usually once or twice a year (Kato 1982:30).

The third form is described as 'Chinese' migration which began in the 1950s. This is of a semi-permanent nature involving nuclear families who move to large urban centres and work in non-agricultural occupations. Destinations tend to be further afield than in previous forms of migration, contact is maintained with the natal village but migrants tend to return home less often (1982:30).

Migrants' Destinations

Migrants choose to go to many different parts of Indonesia including other Sumatran provinces, Java and Kalimantan, as well as Malaysia. They do not always remain in their first destination but may move to other cities or regions several times in pursuit of economic opportunities (Chadwick 1991, Maude 1979). Indeed, the trend towards certain destinations appears to change according to the perceived economic situation of that city or region. For example during this century there has been a move away from the destinations of Jambi, North Sumatra, Bengkulu, Aceh and Malaysia in favour of Riau, South Sumatra, West Java and Jakarta (Maude 1975 cited in Syamsul Azhar 1988:35). In Riau and South Sumatra this could in part reflect the expansion of oil and related industries (Murad 1980:53).

In 1957 Riau, Jambi and West Sumatra formed one province (Central Sumatra). Pekanbaru was a small, economically unproductive town; the centre of trade and government activities for that area was in insular Tanjung Pinang. In 1960 Riau was assigned provincial status and the capital moved to Pekanbaru. From that

time it began to grow economically with a continuous development of new warehouses, shopping centres and roads. Coinciding with the uprising by the PRRI (*Pemerintah Revolusioner Republik Indonesia* - the Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Indonesia) and the mass exodus from West Sumatra, an estimated 70,000 Minangkabau found their way to and settled in Pekanbaru, 35% migrating from Pariaman, 35% from Agam and the remainder from Limapuluh Kota, Batu Sangkar and surrounding areas. By 1971 Pekanbaru had a population of 120,000, approximately 65% were Minangkabau. There are so many Minangkabau now living there that their language has become the local *lingua franca*. Pekanbaru is only 220 kilometres from Bukittinggi and less than 100 kilometres from the West Sumatran border. There are frequent and relatively fast transport links between the two provinces by air, and road especially since the building of the Trans-Sumatran Highway in 1980. Before this the journey took two days and two nights by bus and boat. These facilities, together with the growth in industries, have attracted many migrants. In the 1970s Caltex, a large oil company, situated to the east of Pekanbaru employed many Minangkabau: 60% of the Indonesian management and 60% of the 4,000 workers. Many Minangkabau took advantage of the expanding opportunities in trade and service activities, such as the supply of food and public transport for Caltex workers and sites, which were created through this industrial growth. More than two decades later, Pekanbaru continues to grow (Mochtar Naim 1984, United Nations 1981).

Like Pekanbaru, Jakarta has only become a Minangkabau destination in recent years. According to the 1930 census only 7,700 Minangkabau men were in Java (Mochtar Naim 1984:115). Although Minangkabau traders have for many years journeyed to Java in order to buy batik and antiques and returned to sell these goods in West Sumatra, semi-permanent migration remained insignificant until the 1950s following Indonesian independence and the establishment of Jakarta as

Indonesia's capital city. As the 1971 census did not include an analysis of ethnic background it is difficult to provide accurate figures for the number of Minangkabau migrants although it is estimated that at that time there were 60,000 Minangkabau in Jakarta (Castles 1967). According to the 1980 Census, the Minangkabau, together with the Batak, comprised the largest non-Javanese ethnic group in the capital (Hugo et al 1987:187).

According to Salimpaung informants, one of the new and popular destinations is Batam in insular Riau, approximately 30 kilometres south-east of Singapore. It forms part of a recent (1990) joint Indonesian-Singapore-Malaysian development project, the "triangle of growth", linking Riau islands with Singapore and the Malaysian state of Johore. The Indonesian government's aim is to develop Batam as a major centre for electronics and service industries in the region. It is regarded by many Salimpaung villagers as an attractive place to migrate with many employment opportunities and a comparatively high standard of living.

Male Migrant Occupations

Studies suggest that the majority of Minangkabau male migrants work as traders although there are also a significant proportion in professional, administrative and clerical occupations (Murad 1980, Persoon 1986). Mochtar Naim's (1984) study of life in the *rantau* reveals that Minangkabau traders dominate certain types of trade and particular market locations. For example in Pekanbaru they are concentrated in two of the markets, Pasar Pusat and Pasar Bawah. They supply most food, especially imported West Sumatran rice and vegetables, to Caltex and also dominate trade in textiles, household utensils, books and stationery as well as owning restaurants and cafes. Similarly in Jakarta, Minangkabau traders are concentrated in Pasar Senen and also occupy 60% of the permanent shops in Blok M Market.

Female Migrant Occupations

Mochtar Naim (1971) argues that "*merantau* movement has for a long time been a man's trait. Women are left behind, although some are *taken along* ... [The] wife is *lucky* if she is taken along" (1971:6, 8, my emphases). Although historically this may well have been the case, the contemporary picture appears to be very different.

According to the 1930 census in Batavia the ratio of Minangkabau women per 100 men was 52; by 1961 this ratio had increased to 78. This rise "calls into question the normally held view of a heavily male-dominated pattern of *merantau* from West Sumatra" (Murad 1980:65). Kato (1982) puts forward two main reasons for this change: firstly, more women and children tend to migrate without men (3% in the Dutch period, compared to 12% in the period 1942-1961 and 26% in the post-1961 period). This pattern reflects the growing number of young women who attend educational establishments away from their home village and also of older women - usually widows - who migrate in order to live with their children. Chadwick (1991) found that single women from Koto Anu, his field site, are most likely to "follow or accompany" an elder married sister. Kato's second reason for the increase in female migrants is that conjugal families are now more likely to migrate. In the Dutch period 17% of families migrated compared to 48% in the post-Dutch period (Kato 1982:147-149).

Persoon (1986) suggests that women are "implicitly ... supposed to 'just follow their husbands' but often they set up a business, big or small, in order to gain an income independent of their husband" (1986:183). Female migrants are rarely included in surveys; Hugo et al (1987) note the difficulties of measuring female labour mainly because women tend to be engaged in the borderline between economic and non-economic activities and are more likely to work part-time or seasonally. As the data on female migrants collected from my survey in

Salimpaung reveal, this is not necessarily the case. I would argue that the lack of available information reflects a common assumption, particularly prevalent in the past amongst many (primarily male) academics, that the man is the household head and hence the main, and perhaps sole, breadwinner. Indeed this is exactly one of the changes which Mochtar Naim (1985) believes has occurred. The husband is no longer a "guest of honor for procreational purposes" but has "authority, which is fully accepted and recognized by the family ... [and] assumes full responsibility for the care and raising of his children" (1985:114). As feminist scholars have pointed out - and this is also apparent in the Salimpaung data set out in this and previous chapters - such notions overlook the substantive evidence that numerous households are headed by females and that many men *and* women *together* support their families (Nelson 1979, Papanek 1977, Sicoli 1980).

Reasons for Migration

The main causal factors put forward to explain the high incidence of Minangkabau migration fall into two categories. The first, economic reasons, concern population pressures in relation to land availability, together with the lack of employment opportunities in the province (Errington 1984, Graves 1981, Mochtar Naim 1971, Maude 1979, van Reenen 1990). Many migrants are traders who believe that there is more chance of making a living outside their homeland. They may feel that because West Sumatra is primarily an agricultural area, trading profits are low and fluctuate (especially around harvest times); in contrast trading levels in non-agricultural cities such as Pekanbaru or Jakarta are more consistent and profits higher.

The second, cultural reasons, focus on male migration as a rite of passage from adolescence to manhood (Errington 1984, H Geertz 1963, Graves 1981, Mochtar Naim 1985, Tanner 1971). This is reflected in the *tambo* (traditional

historiography) in which one of the two founders of *adat*, Datuk Perpatih nan Sabatang, left the Minangkabau world and travelled for a time in China (Taufik Abdullah 1972). Pelly Usman (1983) argues that migration forms an important part of Minangkabau cosmology. The purpose of migration is to enrich the Minangkabau world; it is a manifestation of Minangkabau culture (1983:373). Migrants who return home are expected to bring either wealth or knowledge as a symbol of their success. Those who fail to do so are mocked and referred to as *pulang langkitang* (a snail returned to his shell) or *baitu pai baitu pulang* (as he went so he returned) (1983:13).

The importance of migration is illustrated in the famous *adat* aphorism:

> *Karatau madang dihulu*
> *Babuah babungo balun*
> *Marantau bujang dahulu*
> *Di rumah baguno balun*
>
> *Karatau* and *madang* [grown] far upstream[1]
> No fruit, no flowers yet
> Go merantau young man, first,
> At home, no use yet
>
> (cited in Kato 1982:118)

Hildred Geertz (1963) suggests that men can only gain respect, a position of authority in their village community and offers of marriage once they have acquired experience in the outside world and are perceived as successful. Errington (1984) describes the young men of Bayur who eagerly await the time when they can convince their parents that they are old enough to go on migration. Then they can experience life in the city and feel a sense of freedom from cultural and social constraints (1984:12). Taufik Abdullah (1966), himself a Minangkabau, identifies migration both as an "institutional outlet for the

---

1 The *karatau* is a species of mulberry; *madang* is often used to make house pillars (Kato 1982:118).

frustations of unmarried young men, who lack individual responsibilities and rights in their own society" and as an escape route for married men from the conflicting pressures of the wife's and the mother's families (1966:6).

Swift (1971) agrees that the matrilineal kinship system encourages men to conduct their economic activities on migration but puts forward an additional factor: that of status differential between families. *Orang asa*, those people from the first settler lineages of a community, have higher status and therefore greater opportunities of attaining positions of authority in the village than those who do not have similar origins. This motivates some villagers to leave in order to counteract their 'ascribed inferiority' (1971:258).

The Consequences of Migration

The main effects of migration most frequently put forward can be divided into three categories: firstly, the notion that the migration of the conjugal family is evidence that the extended family, and consequently matriliny is losing its significance in the modern world. In contrast, others argue that migration helps to maintain matrilineal ideology. The second category is that changing migration practices such as semi-permanent rather than temporary migration has effects on the village economy. Finally, the adherence of second generation migrants to matriliny and their identity as Minangkabau is called into question. These three issues are discussed in greater detail in this section.

In 1909, Willinck reported that the Minangkabau social structure was undergoing change. Several years later, Joustra (1920) noted that the focal relationship between the *mamak* (mother's brother) and his *kemanakan* (sister's children) was being replaced by the father/child relationship. Maretin (1961), using the work of these and other Dutch scholars, records the apparent breakdown in the social system epitomised by the nuclearisation of the family unit and consequent

weakening of *suku* (clan) ties. Islamic movements promoting patrilineal inheritance are posited as one causal factor for this change but migration is also seen as playing a major part in this process. It is argued that as migrants settle in new conurbations and come into contact with members of other ethnic groups, the significance of their own social system diminishes. In the homeland absent family members, failing to contribute their labour, lose their communal rights to land and produce.

Schrijvers and Postel-Coster (1977) argue that once a woman moves away from her own kin group and ancestral land, her status deteriorates. She loses both her solidarity with her kinswomen and her source of economic independence. As a migrant it is more difficult to share childcare with other women and this lessens her ability to find a job.

Persoon (1986), on the other hand, disputes the claim that the nuclearisation of the migrant family has led to the diminishing importance of extended families. On the contrary, he argues, migrants' offers of assistance are not restricted to close kin alone but are also extended to the wider matrilineal kin group. Kato (1982) acknowledges that as the husband and wife leave the familiarity of social and family networks in the village, they tend to place more importance on their own relationship; the nuclear family therefore becomes an important economic and residential unit. According to Kato, women's decision-making role becomes stronger whilst the *mamak* has less influence in the lives of his *kemanakan* (1982:161-162). This does not equate with the disappearance of matriliny, Kato argues, as matriliny and migration have always had an interdependent relationship:

> Merantau and the persistence of adat are integral parts of Minangkabau societal process. Adat remains strong and survives, albeit with accommodations, because of merantau. It is as if by dispersing populations in different fashions, merantau at each historical stage provided the means for successfully maintaining

> the matrilineal system. Matriliny and migration thus form the core of Minangkabau traditions which, rather than stagnating or involuting, have evolved through their history (Kato 1982:244).

The homeland needs the migrant area in order that the problems of excessive population growth can be overcome and ambitions realised. It benefits from the wealth and ideas which migrants bring home on return trips. Equally the migrants need the homeland. It provides them with a strong identity through their adherence to matriliny. The matrilineal system has always been and remains ideologically important. Migrants regard the matrilineal kinship system and associated customs as essential to the Minangkabau way of life. They expect this *adat* to be followed by those at home even if this is more difficult for the migrants themselves. Van Reenen (1990) upholds this argument, adding that it is precisely because migrants can provide financial assistance to their relatives in the natal village, that any need to sell off the lineage's ancestral land (which itself underpins matrilineal ideology) is reduced.

Migrants offer both social and economic benefits to their natal village. As Hugo argues, urban migrants:

> do not have strong ties with their village as such; these ties come indirectly through the village's role as the traditional home of their family. These deeply held sentiments have a major impact not only on whether movement occurs but on the movement strategy adopted. It is usually extremely difficult, then, to separate village or community ties from family loyalties since they are closely interrelated. (Hugo 1981 cited in Chant and Radcliffe 1992:16)

Minangkabau migrants are regarded as a source of ideas and knowledge and an important link to the outside world (Errington 1984, Maude 1979, Pelly Usman 1983). They send remittances to family members, provide funds to reclaim pawned lineage land and contribute to village development projects. Mochtar Naim (1985) argues that a migrant's success "is often judged in terms of the amount of care and attention he gives to his people who remain in the village" (1984:114). In areas where many migrants originated this is clear to see, he

argues, from the numbers of new houses, schools and mosques as well as the large proportion of children sent to school with money supplied by migrants.

Other scholars such as Swift (1971) and Maude (1979) examine the less attractive effects of migration. They argue that long-term migrants may allow close ties with their home village to lapse. On the basis of survey data, Maude found that in those villages with a high level of return migration, respondents perceived migration as beneficial both to individual households and to the village economy. Conversely, where return migration was low, the negative aspects of migration, such as the loss of labour for improving village facilities, were emphasised by respondents.

Swift (1971) notes that second generation migrants may not understand the importance their parents attach to Minangkabau tradition and may have no knowledge of the Minangkabau language. Pelly Usman (1983) points out that there are no *adat* council buildings in the *rantau* as there are in the homeland; consequently young people's knowledge of *adat* is restricted to receiving instruction rather than first hand experience and many do not know how to behave towards their *mamak* (1983:341). In contrast, I G Mitchell (1969), using case studies of young adults in Jakarta, suggests that Minangkabau teenagers in migrant areas often feel the conflict between the values of *adat* and those of "the individualistic urban culture". Discussions during my own fieldwork lead me to suggest that it is difficult to generalise in quite this way. Second generation migrants whose parents retain strong ties with their home village or who live with a large Minangkabau migrant community appear to identify clearly with their Minangkabau roots. They enthusiastically participate in traditional customs surrounding key life cycle stages (even if this involves some synthesis with the culture of the migrant area) and whilst at home, converse in the Minangkabau dialect. On the other hand those born in the *rantau* who have never seen their

'homeland' and have grown up in a different region of Indonesia may not have such a strong identity with Minangkabau ways. Several young people, male and female, who had spent their childhood, teenage years and early twenties in the *rantau* but had returned at that stage to West Sumatra with their parents, commented that they found difficulty identifying with their homeland. They had to learn the language and failed to understand - and often were not interested in - the significance of traditional songs and customs.

Minangkabau Migrant Associations

Urban Minangkabau networks are utilised as a means of retaining cultural identity and communication both within the community and between the *rantau* and the homeland. These networks may be based either on organised formal Minangkabau associations or on contacts between individual people without any overall formal structure. The formal associations are considered in this section; informal networks are discussed in detail in the second half of this chapter.

In his study of Minangkabau migrants in Jakarta, Persoon concludes that:

> One of the most important items and conditions for the survival of an ethnic group in a culturally plural environment is to have good channels of communication... Through various channels members of an ethnic group can keep in contact with one another as well as with the relatives in the home area. In Jakarta the Minangkabau possess a large number of organizations which are necessary in order to ensure the continued survival of the ethnic community. (1986:184-185)

It is estimated that there are approximately 300 Minangkabau migrant organisations in Jakarta. These can be divided into four categories. First, pan-Minangkabau associations with large-scale membership which have branches nationwide and aim to fulfil a specific function. Examples include *Ikatan Keluarga Sumatera Barat* (West Sumatran Association) which offers social and economic support to its members, and *Keluarga Mahasiswa Minangkabau* (Association of Minangkabau Students) which focuses on Minangkabau culture

and aims to help young Minangkabau retain their identity in the city environment (Persoon 1986).

Second, associations with a specific purpose such as *Lembaga Kesenian Alam Minangkabau* (Institute of Minangkabau Art) which promotes the continuation of Minangkabau cultural representations, *Majelis Pembina Adat Alam Minangkabau* (Council for Minangkabau Adat) and *Yayasan Bunda* which is oriented towards education and general development issues (Persoon 1986, Shofwan Karim 1990).

The third and fourth categories straddle the boundary between the formal organisation and the informal network. Both operate at a grassroots level and exist to bring Minangkabau people together. The third category includes those organisations whose members reside or work in a particular district of Jakarta such as *Ikatan Keluarga Minang Kebayoran Lama* (The Kebayoran Lama Minangkabau Association) (Shofwan Karim 1990).

The fourth and final category incorporates associations based on place of origin which aim to bring together either those who identify themselves as Minangkabau; migrants from a particular *kabupaten* (regency) or *kotamadya* (municipality) in West Sumatra; migrants from a certain *kecamatan* (sub-district); or from a specific village. Members (usually only a small number comprise a group) meet on a regular basis. They use the association for cultural, social and practical functions: both as a substitute for the village institution, thereby preserving *adat* especially in areas concerning marriage and death, and as the structure for organised savings groups. They also offer accommodation to new arrivals and provide a network of referees in the occupational sectors. These organisations often form the main basis of communications with the home village and the means through which funds are sent to aid small development projects such as the construction of schools, health facilities or mosques (Kato

1982, Mochtar Naim 1984, Persoon 1986, Shofwan Karim 1990). Mochtar Naim (1984) argues that village associations in the *rantau* are likely to be more effective than those with a broader-based membership. These associations, particularly amongst those people of lower socio-economic status, not only provide an identity but also some degree of security. Often they trade together, talk over daily problems and offer social and economic assistance when needed. Thus the association acts in a similar way to friendship within the village setting.

Tanner (1971) suggests that:

> even where such formal association does not occur, people of common village origin tend to remain in close contact; friendship and kinship bonds are often reinforced by business ties. Thus, the people of common village origin form a dispersed yet self-aware community within the urban setting. (1971:24)

Mochtar Naim (1984) illustrates the importance of kinship, village or common Minangkabau identity for new arrivals in the city. He found that when migrants first arrived 66% were given shelter by a relative, 19% by a friend and 14% by someone originating from the natal village. Similarly in their search for work, 52% were aided by family, 20% by friends, 5% by someone originating from their natal village and 23% by someone who previously had no direct relationship with the migrant other than their common Minangkabau identity. Although he does not comment on this last category, it could be that other kin have used their networks (people who are unknown to the migrant) to obtain work for their relative or friend.

These associations are not limited to Jakarta but exist wherever a large Minangkabau population resides. In a comparative study of urban migration and adaptation amongst Minangkabau and Mandailing Batak migrants in the North Sumatran city of Medan, Pelly Usman (1983) argues that voluntary associations facilitate adaptation to a different urban culture. He suggests that migrants

experience conflicting forces; they are expected both to preserve their ethnic identity and to adapt to their new place of residence; associations help them to overcome these pressures (1983:19). He identifies 27 Minangkabau village associations in Medan. These take their name from villages in the homeland; members are primarily migrants originating from or near that village. These associations support the development of their home villages, offer assistance to newly arrived migrants, organise trips to the homeland and promote cultural (art, music and dance) activities, particularly amongst the young (1983:345).

Other forms of communication within Minangkabau migrant areas and between migrants and the homeland include the media. In addition to Minangkabau newspapers published in West Sumatra and on sale in Jakarta and other cities, there used to be a specific Minangkabau magazine for migrants, *Aneka Minang*. Set up in 1972, it was designed to provide information on cultural events in West Sumatra as well as offering a means of exchanging news between migrant settlements in different parts of Indonesia. *Aneka Minang* has now been replaced by newsletters and bulletins directed towards certain parts of the Minangkabau migrant community. In addition, a number of privately-owned radio stations in Jakarta offer news from the homeland and entertainment in the form of Minangkabau music and drama (Naim 1984:130, Persoon 1986:185).

Migrants' enthusiasm for Minangkabau identity, culture and contact with the homeland has been used to aid development in the form of an organisation known as *Gebu Minang*.

Gebu Minang

Gerakan Seribu Minang (The One Thousand Movement), more commonly known in its abbreviated form *Gebu Minang*, was a government initiative first conceived in 1982 and put into operation in 1989 once an infrastructure and a

business strategy had been agreed. Minangkabau migrants have traditionally sent money to their families in the homeland, averaging between ten and twenty million rupiah per annum in the form of money orders (Singgalang 1989). *Gebu Minang* was set up to institutionalise this tradition for the development of villages and towns in West Sumatra. Participating migrants are asked to contribute in denominations of Rp1,000 per month through the *Bank Perkreditan Rakyat* (BPR). This money is then used for socio-economic development projects such as education, water supplies and village public buildings. Donors can state the sub-district to which their money should go thus ensuring that funds benefit their own place of origin (Chairul Mursin 1991, Emil Salim 1986, Buletin Gebu Minang 1991). As *Gebu Minang* is a recent initiative, its progress is as yet unpublished.

Salimpaung Migrants

Life in the Migrant Area

Mochtar Naim (1984) argues that in some migrant destinations there are defined Minangkabau communities whilst in other cities ethnic identity alone is insufficient to determine place of residence. In Pekanbaru, for example, with the exception of the elite who often choose to reside in multi-ethnic residential areas, the Minangkabau are concentrated around Pasar Pusat and Sahil. In Jakarta, on the other hand, socio-economic status plays a more pronounced role in influencing a place of residence. Those of lower economic status, *kaki lima* (pavement) traders for example, choose to live close to their trading place; middle-class Minangkabau are concentrated in residential areas reflecting their status while the Minangkabau elite tend to live in one of two Jakarta suburbs, Gondangdia or Kebayoran Baru.

From my own observations, established migrants generally appear to have a higher standard of living than their counterparts in the home village although this

may entail several years of hard work to achieve (and there are of course always exceptions to this pattern). Houses may be built of cement, brick, wood or bamboo. Clearly style and size of house together with the accompanying facilities are dependent upon the occupants' income. At one end of the scale are well paid civil servants or successful business people who have large houses with expensive furniture and decoration and many modern appliances such as a refrigerator and a washing machine. These are items which, even in the richest households, would be unknown in Salimpaung. At the other end of the scale are those who live in a one-roomed wooden or bamboo house with few or no furnishings and water supplies shared in a common place with neighbours. In between these two extremes are those who are doing well in their migrant area, who rent or own a two or three bedroomed wooden or cement house, who have their own piped water supply and electricity and who often have several pieces of furniture in each room as well as a television. Very often, family members who remain in the home village would have none of these. In conversation with one migrant, a trader, I was told that there were many more economic opportunities in the migrant area than in the homeland. When I pointed out that he could be a trader in the local village market circuit, he commented that it was only possible to scrape together a living as a trader in West Sumatra; it was difficult to afford either essentials, such as schooling for his children, or any luxuries. In the migrant area, he told me, these things were possible to obtain through hard work.

Outmigration from Salimpaung

The statistical data for this section are taken from a survey conducted on a random basis amongst households in Salimpaung and are supplemented by observations and informal discussions with numerous migrants either in the *rantau* of Pekanbaru or when migrants returned to Salimpaung for a visit. A small proportion of the data analysed below refers to the respondents themselves and is

used specifically to compare inter-generational migration practices and to present information on membership of migrant associations. The remainder of the statistical data utilises information provided by respondents on their migrant children. 51 of the 70 households surveyed had children over the age of 15 who were no longer at school and it is these households which form the survey base. I decided to use the 15 year age level as the point from which to analyse whether or not respondents' children had migrated. This was because, although some children in the village have left school by the age of twelve, they would be unlikely to migrate alone until they reach the age of 15. Of those 51 households with children aged over 15, one or more children had migrated from 45 (88.2%) of those households. The remaining six households had one or more children over the age of 15 who lived and worked (or were at school) in or near Salimpaung and, to date, had never migrated.

The total number of children over the age of 15 within these 45 households is 180 of which 122 (67.8%) have migrated. In terms of gender composition, this can be broken down into 84 (78.5%) out of a total of 107 males over the age of 15 and no longer at school, and 38 (52.1%) out of a total of 73 females. These proportions partly reflect women's general tendency to migrate at a more mature age than men (Table 6.1). Historically, men have tended to migrate more often than women (this is illustrated not only in the general literature but also in the specific case of Salimpaung) but changes now appear to be occurring. Although the largest proportion of migrant women leave the village following marriage a growing number migrate as individuals especially if they have family in their preferred destination. In recent years, the migrant population has increased although the survey data suggest that in the last three generations there has never been a great gender difference in migration practices. Of the 70 households' (female) respondents, 32.9% born between 1930 and 1954 had migrated at some point in their lives (with only 4% migrating as individuals) compared to 40% of

their spouses. In the respondents' parents' generation, born before 1930, migration was less significant with only 10% of the respondents' mothers and 12.9% of the respondents' fathers ever having migrated.

Table 6.1: Age at First Migration by Gender

Age	Male		Female	
	No	%	No	%
10-15 years	23	27.3	3	7.9
15-20 years	43	51.2	20	52.6
21-25 years	12	14.3	11	28.9
26-30 years	4	4.8	4	10.5
31-35 years	2	2.4	-	-
Total	84	100.0	38	99.9

Although the largest proportion of both men and women migrate between the ages of 15 and 20, men are more likely than women to migrate before this, whilst more women tend to migrate in the 21 to 25 age bracket.

From the total 122 migrants, 94 (77%) migrated in search of employment, 15 (12.3%) migrated for the purpose of education and 13 (10.7%), all of whom were recently married women, accompanied their husbands on migration. Five of these women took up employment in the *rantau*, the remaining eight having the main responsibility for the care of young children.

The majority of migrants, both male and female, are employed as traders with very few working in offices or as shop assistants, reinforcing the image that the Minangkabau prefer to be self-employed. Table 6.2 shows the distribution of migrants according to occupation and gender.

Table 6.2: Migrants' Occupations by Gender

Occupation	Male		Female	
	No	%	No	%
Trader	44	52.4	14	36.8
Driver	13	15.5	-	-
Student	9	10.7	6	15.8
Rumah tangga(1)	-	-	8	21.1
Builder	6	7.1	-	-
Office Worker	5	6.0	1	2.6
Professional(2)	2	2.4	4	10.5
Shop Assistant	3	3.6	2	5.3
Tailor/seamstress	1	1.2	1	2.6
Army	1	1.2	-	-
Factory worker	-	-	1	2.6
Unemployed	-	-	1	2.6
Total	84	100.0	38	100.0

Notes:

1. *Rumah tangga* in the urban context is similar in meaning to housewife in which the woman's primary concern is childrearing.

2. Professional occupations here refer to teaching and nursing.

The majority of migrants in the survey (72.9%) prefer to stay in Sumatra (Table 6.3). The largest proportion (28.6%) choose to live in Pekanbaru although Jakarta is also a popular destination (18.9% of migrants live there). The new business centre in Batam currently attracts only a small proportion of migrants but throughout my fieldwork a number of people told me they intended to live there in the future and many were making plans accordingly. Although Batam has one of the highest living costs in Indonesia it is nevertheless perceived as a place of opportunity where a substantial amount of money can be earned. Most of the migrants currently in Batam have not been there long. According to the pattern that has emerged from my data on other migrant areas it is possible that once one sibling has settled there, others may follow.

Table 6.3: Salimpaung Migrants' Destinations

Sumatra		
Pekanbaru	35	
Tebing Tinggi	12	
Batam	11	
Padang	10	
Mainland Riau	5	
Bengkulu	5	
Kerinci	4	
Jambi	4	
Medan	3	
	89	(72.9%)
Java		
Jakarta	23	
West Java	8	
	31	(25.4%)
Bali	2	(1.7%)
Total	122	(100.0%)

My survey data show that 71.1% of female and 65.5% of male migrants had family who already lived at their chosen destination. 40% of males and 37% of females had siblings at their migrant location. Furthermore in 23.3% of families, all the siblings had migrated to the same city, in 16.3% of families all siblings except one were in the same place, only in 11.6% of families had all the siblings migrated to different destinations.

In addition to siblings who go to the same migrant city, a similar pattern emerges with other matrilineal family members. Of those included in the migrant survey, 50.9% of males and 51.9% of females had at least one member of their mother's family in their migrant destination while only 5.5% of males and 3.7% of

females stated that there was at least one member of their father's matrilineal descent group in that conurbation.

Graves (1981) argues that since the nineteenth century it has been relatively easy for the Minangkabau to migrate to any Indonesian city. Their strong ties of kinship, birth or village of origin facilitates their adaptation. Salimpaung migrants use their family connections as a means of adapting to their new environment. For those people who had family in their migrant destination 87.3% of males and 96.3% of females in my survey stayed with that family upon arrival in the city until they had established themselves and found their own accommodation. In an earlier part of this chapter, I cited studies by Persoon (1986) and Naim (1984) which reached similar conclusions. Naim (1985) found that offering hospitality and assistance to new migrants extends to distant relatives and even non-kin from the same village. "Such social obligation is a norm and it is considered a virtue to show ethnic solidarity in the *rantau*" (1985:114).

Tanner (1971) argues that bilateral ties become more important in the urban context as young migrants use all available contacts to find food and accommodation. Although patrilateral ties may be significant, as indeed common village ties are too, it would appear from my own data that the matrilineal kin group remains the most important. Wealthier Minangkabau migrants who have moved from small-scale trading to large market stalls or even shops employ younger members of their own family. One example concerns Haji Ikbal, a wealthy man who owns a general store in Pekanbaru. His wife oversees the shop and two of their seven children also work there. The remaining three employees are all members of his matrilineage, his mother's sister's daughter's children, in other words his classificatory *kemanakan*.

Even less wealthy migrants frequently send for younger female relatives to care for their children and look after the house while they work. In return they are offered meals and accommodation until they can establish themselves in a job. Persoon (1986) argues that strong Minangkabau identity acts against extreme cases of poverty. Many new arrivals head for a Minangkabau restaurant owned by someone from their natal village who may offer a small wage, food and a place to sleep in return for their labour. "During the first difficult months such a restaurant creates an atmosphere of familiarity because there are many other Minangkabau people working there" (1986:183). This principle works on a reciprocal basis. Whilst children may migrate and live with their mother's brother or mother's sister, the mother's brother's or sister's young children may be sent back to the homeland for his/her education. Although the relatives in the home village would not necessarily be expected to provide accommodation and food for the child, they may be asked to 'keep an eye' on him/her.

In addition to these informal networks, associations have also helped Salimpaung migrants to adapt to urban life. Amongst the 28 household respondents who had migrated at some time in their lives, 17 (61%) were members of a Minangkabau migrant association. Generally these were village or district associations. As members, they usually met either once a week or a month and regarded the purpose of the association both as a means of retaining their Minangkabau identity and of providing or receiving assistance in times of crisis.

In the majority of cases in my survey, contact with the home village was maintained. When asked how frequently their migrant children visited home the mother, as respondent of the survey, often replied that her children returned on a regular basis (more than once a year) (Table 6.4).

Table 6.4: Frequency of Migrants' Visit Home

Frequency of Visits	Male		Female	
	No	%	No	%
Regularly	30	35.7	15	39.5
1 x year	14	16.7	6	15.8
1 x 2 years	4	4.8	1	2.6
1 x 3 years	4	4.8	2	5.3
1 x 4 years	6	7.1	1	2.6
1 x 5 years	3	3.6	1	2.6
1 x 6-10 years	3	3.6	-	-
Has never returned home	20	23.8	12	31.6
Total	84	100.1	38	100.0

When asked the reason for their most recent return a common reply for 54.7% of men and 38.5% of women was that there was no special reason, it was just a visit. *Bulan Puasa* (the Islamic fasting month) and *Hari Raya Idul Fitri* (the festival marking the end of fasting) were also cited as reasons to return home by 28.1% of male and 46.1% of female migrants. *Pulang ka kampuang* (returning home) is commonly associated with this period in the religious calendar and whole families who have not seen each other for several years may take advantage of the holiday season and plan a visit home at the same time. Other reasons for returning were attendance at celebrations of relatives' births and marriages (9.4% of males and 15.4% of females) and the death of a close relative, usually a parent (7.8% of males, no females).

Family still in the village also visit those in the *rantau*. Table 6.5 shows the frequency of visits by the mother to her migrant children. In all cases but three the mother went for a visit but did not cite a special reason for going. The exceptions involved a mother's stay with her pregnant daughter in order that she

could help at the birth and thereafter. It was clear that under such circumstances it was always the mother, and sometimes younger sisters, rather than the father who would go, often staying for several months.

Table 6.5: Frequency of Mothers' Visits to the *Rantau*

Frequency of Visits	Visits To Sons		Visits To Daughters	
	No	%	No	%
More than 1 x year	21	25.0	22	57.9
1 x year	14	16.7	5	13.2
1 x 2 years	4	4.8	3	7.9
1 x 3 years	6	7.1	3	7.9
1 x 10 years	5	6.0	1	2.6
Never visited	34	40.4	4	10.5
Total	84	100.0	38	100.0

Communication between Rantau and Village

In the majority of cases, contact between migrants and their home village is maintained especially if close family (parents or siblings) still live in the natal village. Even when it is not possible to make visits either to the *rantau* or the village, communication continues usually through letters. In addition migrants frequently send money home either through the banking and postal systems in the form of money orders or through a friend or relative who is a migrant in the same city and who plans to return to the village for a holiday. As we have already seen from other studies, and my own data concur with this, Minangkabau migrants in the same city are often in frequent contact. This may be because they are part of the same matrilineage, the same matriclan, the same *bako* (father's matrilineal group), originate from the same village or they may be

affines. Alternatively, they may be neighbours in the city, work in the same place, have met through a formal migrant association, through mutual acquaintances or met casually.

Many migrants told me - and indeed my own experience in urban areas confirmed this - that upon first meeting someone and having established that they are Minangkabau, the next stage would be to find out from which part of the homeland they originate. So for a Salimpaung migrant, the initial response to a question on place of origin would be "*Urang Padang*" (someone from Padang and a term commonly used to mean a Minangkabau). Then this would gradually be narrowed down through the district *Urang Batu Sangkar* (someone from Batu Sangkar) to *Urang Tabat Patah* (someone from the sub-district whose main town is Tabat Patah) and so finally to *Urang Salimpaung*. Thus it is possible to identify with another individual at various levels of specification. The more closely they can identify the more likelihood there is of the offer of assistance, should this ever be necessary. Acknowledgement of their common background may also find other forms of expression. For example several times I overheard a market trader and a customer in the migrant area chatting for (what would appear to have been) the first time. Upon realisation that they were from the same or nearby area of the Minangkabau homeland, the trader would be quite likely to reduce the sale price slightly or to provide additional goods free of charge as a symbol of their common identity and their need to help each other. The migrant customer may, in turn, be inclined to return to that trader again and establish a regular purchasing pattern there.

Migrants returning to the home village for a holiday frequently bring letters and messages from other migrants to their relatives. Once it is known that a migrant has returned home, s/he is often visited by members of a family who have kin in the same city in order to seek out news from or of that relation. A large part of

a migrant's visit home is spent with these families so news can be readily exchanged. It is often the case that a special celebration, organised and paid for by the migrant or his/her family, takes place both to mark the migrant's temporary return home and to symbolise his/her success. Relatives and friends are invited to a *salawak* (Islamic chanting) which is then followed by a communal meal. Again news can be exchanged. Similarly when the migrant is due to return to the city s/he may be asked to take a letter back to other migrants from their families.

Information about migration including the choice of destinations, the economic situation there, the cost of living, the residential areas to go to as well as addresses of contacts are invaluable to inexperienced migrants. This type of information is commonly provided by migrants who have returned home either for a holiday or on a permanent basis. Once questions about the wellbeing of family members have been asked, conversation turns towards daily life, success and survival in the *rantau*. These exchanges occur not just on visits in people's homes but also in the marketplace, the village coffee shops, the mosque, the *surau* (prayer house), the water fountain and any other places where people gather and news can be exchanged. Information of this nature spreads throughout the village. As Collier and Green (1978) suggest, the village environment facilitates the ease and rapidity of information transmission. Using the network concept they propose that as density (the extent to which everyone knows each other), the reachability (the number of steps it takes to contact other members of the network) and boundedness (the degree to which the network is an isolated social unit) are all high, news concerning conditions in the cities travels fast within the same village. Although information dissemination may be slower and less reliable between villages, people from different areas can nevertheless meet in a common town during market day and in this way information can be passed on (1978:26-27). For the Minangkabau, as I have

discussed in the previous chapter, markets provide an important structure for communication channels. Within the network system, if one member of the village network meets someone at the market who, in his or her network, has spoken to or knows of a recently returned migrant then this, together with any other relevant information, can be relayed to other people within the village network.

News between families is also exchanged through the medium of any villager who visits her/his relatives in the migrant area. Prior to departure s/he visits people whom s/he knows have a family member on migration in the same city. Alternatively, s/he makes it common knowledge through the market and small shop network in the village that s/he is going away and is willing to pass on messages and take letters to any migrant residing in the proposed destination.

As the migrant sends money home for his/her family, so on a reciprocal basis, the visitor to the migrant area takes gifts from the homeland to her family. In one instance a woman of my acquaintance frequently follows the harvest of her rice and peanut crops with a visit to her children, sister and brothers, who are all in the same migrant location, so that she can share the produce with them. Whilst the migrants recognise that they relinquish their usufruct rights to the ancestral land whilst on migration, they may nevertheless receive a small portion of the harvest from that land. Consequently buses en route to migrant areas are laden with sacks of rice, chillies, peanuts and bananas, all expensive items in the non-agricultural producing cities. In one case a man decided to perform his marriage rituals in the migrant area. In order to cut costs his mother, who lived in Salimpaung, took with her the majority of the requisite ritual food including sacks of chillies, rice and ginger from her own land, as well as two goats purchased in the local market.

Ira's network

The notion of networks both within the city and between the city and the village, is further investigated using the case study of one Salimpaung migrant. Ira was selected because of her frequent interactions with men and women in the *rantau* and the homeland.

Ira is a migrant originally from Salimpaung living in Pekanbaru. From early childhood she lived away from the village both in Padang and Batu Sangkar where her father worked as a civil servant and her mother traded in the towns' markets. In 1972, at the age of twelve, and having finished her schooling, she moved on her own from Batu Sangkar to Padang and lived with her father's brother where she helped in the house and later became a trader. Whilst in Padang she met Safnur whom she later married at the age of 20. They migrated to Mentawai where Safnur began work as a mechanic for a logging company. They spent several years there and, during this time, had two of their three children, both daughters. In 1983, when their second child died at the age of a few months old, they decided to leave Mentawai and move to Pekanbaru. There they had their third child, a son. Her children are now aged 11 and 8, both at primary school. Ira and Safnur have ambitions for their children and want them both to continue to secondary education.

On arrival in Pekanbaru they stayed with Mamak Ahmad, Ira's mother's brother, until they found their own accommodation. They now rent a two-bedroomed wooden house but have recently bought a plot of land where they intend to build their own house. They live in a part of the city which is recognised as primarily Minangkabau. One of Ira's closest friends, who lives across the road and runs a small shop, is a Minangkabau from Umbilin, a large village approximately 30 kilometres from Salimpaung. Ira and Safnur's house is a 15 minute walk from where they work. Ira is a vegetable trader in the local daily market in the heart

of the city. The market has approximately 500 traders selling goods ranging from spices and vegetables to clothes and household utensils. Safnur works as a *becak* (motorised three-wheeled cab) driver operating from the marketplace.

When they first arrived in Pekanbaru several members of their respective families already lived there (see Chart 6.1). Safnur's two sisters, Ria and Ida, had already made their home in the same residential area. Mamak Ahmad, together with his brother, Mamak Ardius and his sister, Etek Zuriana had migrated there in the 1970s. Ira's older brother, Yus, and one of her younger brothers, Akhendi, had also been living in the city since that time. Once Ira had established her own home, Akhendi went to live with her and Safnur for several months. He worked as a driver and was therefore able to contribute to the running costs of the household. In 1989 he married and although he moved into a small two-roomed dwelling near Ira's home, he remains a daily visitor to her house. In 1986 her youngest brother, Yul, began high school in Pekanbaru, staying with Mamak Ahmad. The following year Win, another brother, having completed his education in Salimpaung, migrated to Pekanbaru in search of work. He too stayed with his sister until he had successfully found a job and was able to move to his own rented accommodation nearer his workplace. Meanwhile Yul, having left high school in Pekanbaru, lived with Ira for several months until he had secured a permanent job as a driver whereupon he moved out to a friend's house. All except one of Ira's siblings now live in Pekanbaru.

Two of Ira's brothers, Safnur's two sisters, one of Ira's mother's brothers and several other lineage members all live in the same area of Pekanbaru and are able to meet regularly. Although Yus lives in another part of the city, which entails a bus journey, he works near Ira's house and frequently calls in on his way home. Win also lives in a different part of the city but visits regularly. Ira's home is

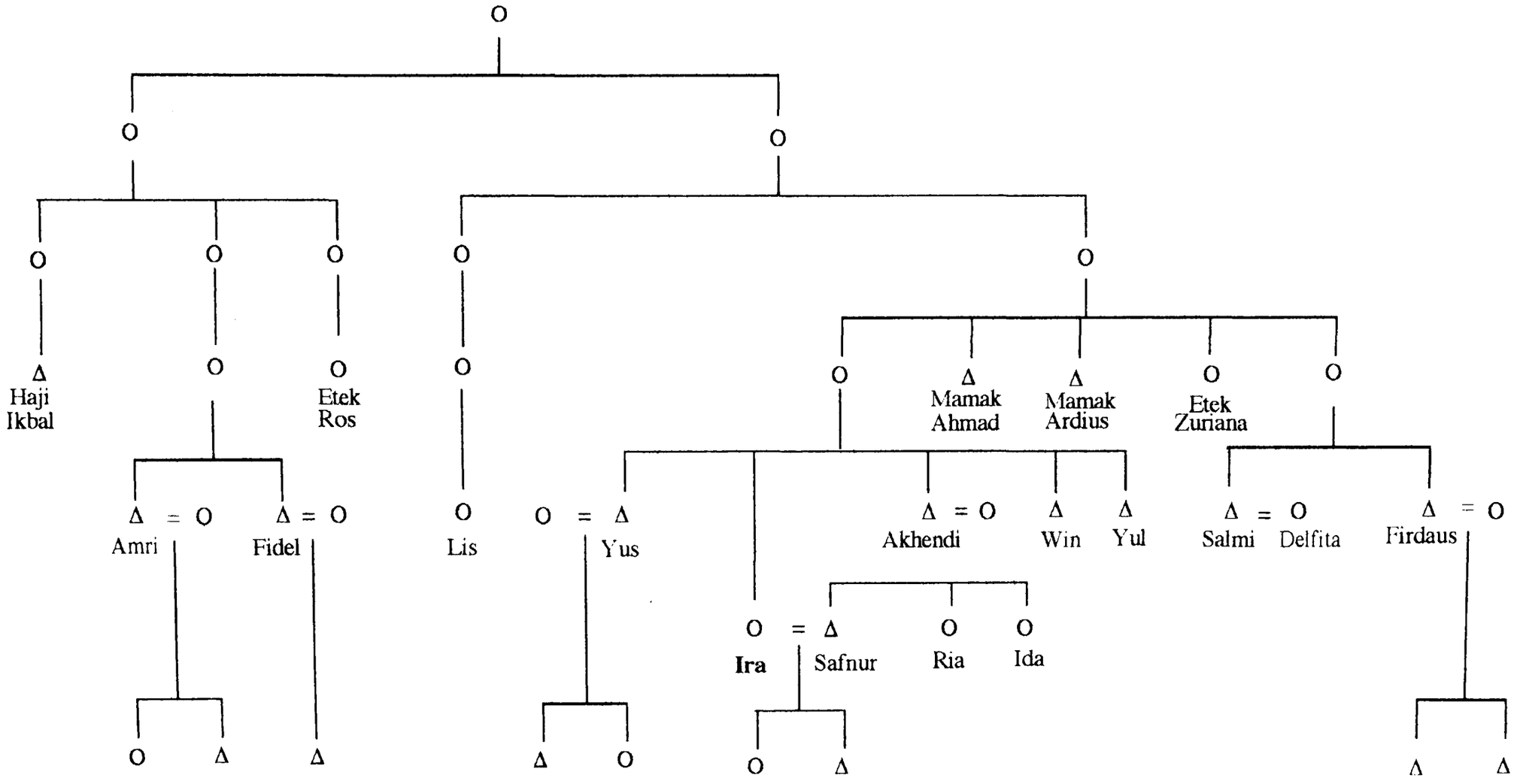


Chart 6.1: Ira and her Kin in Pekanbaru

used in the same way as a sister's house would be in the home village. It is the meeting place when they want to discuss family business relating either to their lives in the *rantau* or to kin who remain in the home village. Although Ira and her married brothers, who also have children, are not always able to send money to their mother, they recognise their responsibilities to her and help out as and when they can. On visits to the *rantau* their mother may stay overnight with Yus and her own brothers and sister but she uses Ira's home as her base and her sons and other relations in Pekanbaru go to visit her at Ira's home.

When Yus, Ira's elder brother, first arrived in Pekanbaru he rented a room from a woman and her family, also a Minangkabau but originating from a different district of the homeland. Other male members of Yus' family also made this house their first point of contact upon arrival in Pekanbaru. Both of Yus' mother's younger brothers lived there for a time as well as his mother's sister's two oldest sons. Yus eventually married his landlady's daughter and they continue to live with her, three of her four sons and their families. When he first arrived he was a trader, then a driver. Now he works in and part owns a business selling wood. This business is under the general leadership of Amri, a fellow member of Yus' lineage; Yus' and Amri's greatgrandmothers were sisters (see Chart 6.1 above). Amri employs several members of his lineage and allows Etek Ros, his mother's mother's sister's daughter, the use of one of the buildings in the compound which she has converted into a small coffee shop. Amri's business is located on the main road into the city but he lives in the same district as Ira approximately ten minutes walk from her house.

Firdaus, Ira's mother's sister's son, has been in Pekanbaru for seven years and although he and Ira live in different parts of the city, they meet from time to time. Firdaus' older brother, Salmi, was also in Pekanbaru for several years prior to his marriage when he returned to Salimpaung to live with his wife,

Delfita, and her family and engage in a joint venture on trade between Salimpaung and Pekanbaru. He and his wife are an important link between the two locations, providing a communication channel through their thrice weekly round trips to Pekanbaru. Messages can be passed through them either in the form of letters or the spoken word. This person-to-person communication channel is used especially on the occasions when urgent business necessitates a family member's return to Salimpaung. People who are not related to Salmi or Delfita may also ask them to pass letters and remittances between Pekanbaru and Salimpaung.

Salmi and Delfita transport their goods (vegetables, chillies, and fruit) from Salimpaung to Pekanbaru markets in a large lorry which is empty on the return journey. Family and other village members and their relatives in Pekanbaru are therefore able to use the vehicle to transport goods from the city to Salimpaung. On several occasions during my stay in Salimpaung, pieces of furniture, bought by migrants in Pekanbaru for their families in the village, were transported in Salmi and Delfita's lorry. In addition, wood used for fuel but expensive to buy in Salimpaung - and also difficult to obtain unless one is prepared to walk some distance and carry wood back from the forested area around the village - is often transported. This has been obtained cheaply for members of the same lineage from Amri's business in Pekanbaru and sent to family members in Salimpaung as a way of supplementing their income.

Ira buys the vegetables she trades in Pekanbaru market from Salmi and Delfita. Consequently she meets them every other day and it could be argued that she often provides the focal point of contact in Pekanbaru and therefore links the village, through them, to urban life. Salmi and Delfita are limited in the amount of time they can remain in Pekanbaru. They are busy during that period delivering vegetables and fruit to their customers and later collecting money and

future orders and, except in an emergency, would not have time to visit other members of the family. Hence any messages sent through them from someone in Salimpaung to a member of the lineage would go through the network using Ira as the first contact.

Ira's home, like many others in Minangkabau communities, has an open door policy and she welcomes visitors especially those from her home village. It is customary for her to provide temporary shelter and food for these people, in particular if they are relations, until they have established themselves. During my fieldwork Lis, a female and unmarried member of Ira's lineage, moved to Pekanbaru (see Chart 6.1 above). She stayed with Ira for several months and in return helped in the house and with the children when she was not at work. Lis' initial job was temporary and when she found a permanent position she moved to different accommodation nearer her place of work. Although Lis was not a close relation (ie sibling) she is a member of the same lineage and Ira fulfilled her social obligation by providing that initial point of contact for Lis and gave her the security she needed upon first arrival.

Ira's kinship network in the city operates in much the same way as her mother's network in the village although the geographical distance covered in the city is generally wider. Whilst Ira and her family acknowledge that they live in a multi-ethnic environment and have made some adjustments to accommodate this, they nevertheless retain many of their Minangkabau customs. This is most readily apparent in the celebration of life cycle events. During my stay Fidel, a male member of Ira's lineage, married (see Chart 6.1 above). Ira, together with many other female kin living in Pekanbaru, neighbours of the bridegroom and several female lineage members from the village helped with the preparations. Ira took her social responsibilities towards those kin seriously and for several days she did not work in the market in order to fulfil this role. This kind of commitment is

expected from those in the village, so in this sense life in the *rantau* is no different. Indeed a life cycle event, whether in the village or migrant area, brings together many Minangkabau. In this particular case lineage members appeared from Pekanbaru, Salimpaung, Jakarta, Duri and Lampung to attend the wedding celebrations. In addition, women also take their responsibilities seriously within the affinal context. The obligation to help with preparations for life cycle events noted in Chapter 4 between affines living in the village extends to those in the *rantau*. One such example is the case of Amak Siti whose daughter is married to Amri, Fidel's brother. She arrived from the village several days before Fidel's wedding celebrations and began to help with preparations.

Other life cycle events, including the celebration of pregnancy and subsequent birth also necessitate attendance by lineage members and affines. This is another means by which those related consanguineally or through marriage, from different parts of Pekanbaru, together with some family from Salimpaung, meet on an occasional basis. The preparations for as well as the attendance at these life cycle events provides women with the opportunity to keep in contact with other lineage members and affines who are usually dispersed over a wide geographical area. Their gatherings provide a useful communication channel both within the city and between the city and the village.

Ira and her family do not return to Salimpaung regularly although her widowed mother visits Pekanbaru every two or three months, usually staying for a couple of weeks. The most likely occasion for Ira to go back to Salimpaung is either for *Hari Raya Idul Fitri* although this does not happen often because as a trader this is her busiest and most profitable period, or for an important life cycle ceremony. When her brother, Akhendi, married she returned home spending several days there before the rituals in order to help with preparations.

Although her trips home are infrequent, her village, her family members as well as the ancestral house, provide security for her and her children. On one occasion, when she had family problems in Pekanbaru she decided to return to Salimpaung for a week. On another occasion, when her son was ill, she brought him to Salimpaung to recuperate and to make full use of the clean air in the highlands, and medicine of the *dukun* (traditional medical practitioner).

The extent to which she considers her natal village as security is perhaps reflected in the following instance. A dispute over land arose between her mother and her mother's mother's sister's son. Ira was asked and finally agreed to buy the land from her male relative in order to provide for her mother's old age. Discussing the purchase, she told me she also regarded the land as security for herself and gave her the opportunity to retire to the village should she so wish. Furthermore her daughter would always be able to return to Salimpaung and live off the land should she ever encounter any financial problems in the future.

Although Ira and Safnur do not belong to any of the formal networks operating in Pekanbaru, other members of Ira's lineage do participate and she and Safnur are invited to the major annual cultural events presented by *Ikatan Keluarga Sumatra Barat* (West Sumatran Association). These are attended by over 600 people who gather in a large hall to enjoy displays of Minangkabau music and dance. A collection is made during the performances which is used for the development of specific areas in the Minangkabau homeland. Ira and Safnur belong to a *julo-julo* (savings group) in which they pay 3000 rupiah per day to a central fund. Each month one person from the group, chosen on a rotation basis, receives a large sum of money. The group is not strictly Minangkabau based; amongst the ten savers a number of Javanese are also represented. Ira and Safnur became involved as Eti, the mother of their daughter's schoolfriend,

organises the group. Interestingly, their participation in the *julo-julo* was, at this point in their lives, concerned with saving for consumption (such as household furnishing) rather than used as business capital.

Migration and Network Analysis

Lomnitz (1988), in her study of a Mexican shanty town, examines the importance of networks in the urban area and the significance of the inherent concept of exchange. She argues that the "exchange of goods and services serves as the underpinning of a social structure: the network organisation. When this exchange ceases to exist, the network disintegrates" (1988:257).

She considers a number of different exchanges which occur between migrants; firstly, information exchange including suitable migrant destinations, accommodation and employment. As this chapter has illustrated, the Minangkabau both in urban areas and as migrants returning home, continuously offer information on these and other issues which aid adaptation to urban life.

Secondly, those already established in the city may offer to teach a skill to a younger relative and recent migrant. During the apprenticeship, earnings are shared and at a later stage help is given to find customers for the new migrant. As I have shown in the cases of Haji Ikbal and Amri, as well as in the data provided in other studies, employment is most frequently offered to matrilineal relatives. Amongst the Minangkabau employment with older, successful and well-established migrant family members is common.

Thirdly, loans of money, food and tools may be exchanged. As we have seen in previous chapters, exchange of food is an intrinsic part of Minangkabau hospitality, etiquette and rituals and this is no exception in the *rantau*. During my limited stay in the urban area I did not personally encounter any occasions

when people borrowed money but there is no evidence to suggest that this practice would necessarily be any different to the situation in the village.

Fourthly, the exchange of services including accommodating relatives, caring for elderly neighbours or young children and offering assistance in home construction, and fifthly sharing facilities such as a television or toilet. Amongst Minangkabau migrants, this often occurs. As we have seen it is most common amongst kin but may also include non-kin who share a common village identity.

Finally, offering emotional and moral support on ritual occasions (weddings, baptisms and funerals) as well as day-to-day interaction (1988:256-257). This is a common occurrence in the homeland village, indeed it is regarded as part of *adat* and therefore both custom and social obligation. This is extended to life in the *rantau* and would appear to contribute towards the retention of a Minangkabau identity as well as to enhancing the social life of the migrant community.

These forms of exchange can be seen both in the general information provided in this chapter and the more specific case of Ira's network. The defensive and active strategies inherent in any network system (March and Taqqu 1986) are readily apparent. Ira herself has experienced first-hand the importance of the defensive network which mobilises support for its members, and enabled her and her family to find shelter when they first arrived in Pekanbaru. This system is based on a reciprocal arrangement, not necessarily between exactly the same people but rather between people in the same network. Her network is not only female-based and involves interaction with men. The support, as a new migrant, she received and now, as an established migrant, she offers, crosses gender boundaries. As a newcomer to Pekanbaru, she called on her *mamak* for assistance; in turn, she later provided shelter and food for her brothers as well as

more distant female kin. In this latter case, assistance was more immediately exchanged for help around the house and with childcare.

During the latter part of her brother's wife's pregnancy and following the birth of their first child, Ira visited regularly, cooking for her brother and his wife and providing any other help that may have been appropriate. Although the new mother was an affinal relation, Ira continues to recognise the Minangkabau custom of creating networks with one's affines and this is manifested in her visits and her offers of assistance.

These defensive strategies also exist in the help Ira offers to her relatives during preparations for life cycle celebrations. In much the same way as this reciprocal exchange of labour occurs in Salimpaung so the principle is extended to the city. No doubt when her own children reach a marriageable age and, should Ira decide to locate the wedding celebrations in Pekanbaru, she would receive help and support from her female kin during preparations which she herself has offered to them over the years.

The active strategies within Ira's network are also apparent. Working in the market Ira socialises with people from many different ethnic and economic backgrounds and from various residential areas. She has a regular place in the market where she has traded for several years. She is well known with both customers and other traders and in quiet periods, Ira exchanges news and views with other people in the marketplace. Ira's husband's sisters also work in the market, close to her trading place, so Ira can act as a medium between the two families. She is a useful source of information to new arrivals and to other members of her network. On the basis of her discussions in the marketplace, she may be able to provide information on accommodation, and work, on successful traders who may require additional help, as well as on areas where goods are

most sought after and which would therefore make a profitable and steady trading occupation.

Ira's resourcefulness in terms of the information to which she has access is based not on one but many aspects of her social life (see Figure 6.1). Ira comes into contact with kin members of her network and with people associated through her work or place of residence. In terms of Clyde Mitchell's (1969) conceptualisation then, Ira is a useful person to use as the anchorage point from which the network can be traced and analysed. She has a dense network with a wide range of contacts both within the *rantau* and back in the homeland. The content of her network varies according to the particular contact concerned. Kinship is an important content but as I have shown friendship, occupation and residence are also significant.

Ira's effective network incorporates those with whom she works on a daily basis in the market, her immediate neighbours with whom she has established a close relationship such as the woman from Umbilin and other friends including Eti, the woman who organises the *julo-julo*. Although Eti is Javanese, her daughter and Ira's daughter are in the same class at school. Over the years Ira and Eti have established a firm friendship and, when Eti makes her daily visit to collect the *julo-julo* money, she often enters the house, drinks tea and she and Ira spend several minutes exchanging news.

The durability of Ira's network is dependent upon the actors concerned. When content is kinship based, her network may be considered to be lifelong although as members of her family move to or away from Pekanbaru the intensity of these relationships fluctuates. For example although she maintains contact with her younger sister who lives in Batam, because of geographical distance the frequency with which Ira interacts with her sister is less than with her brothers.

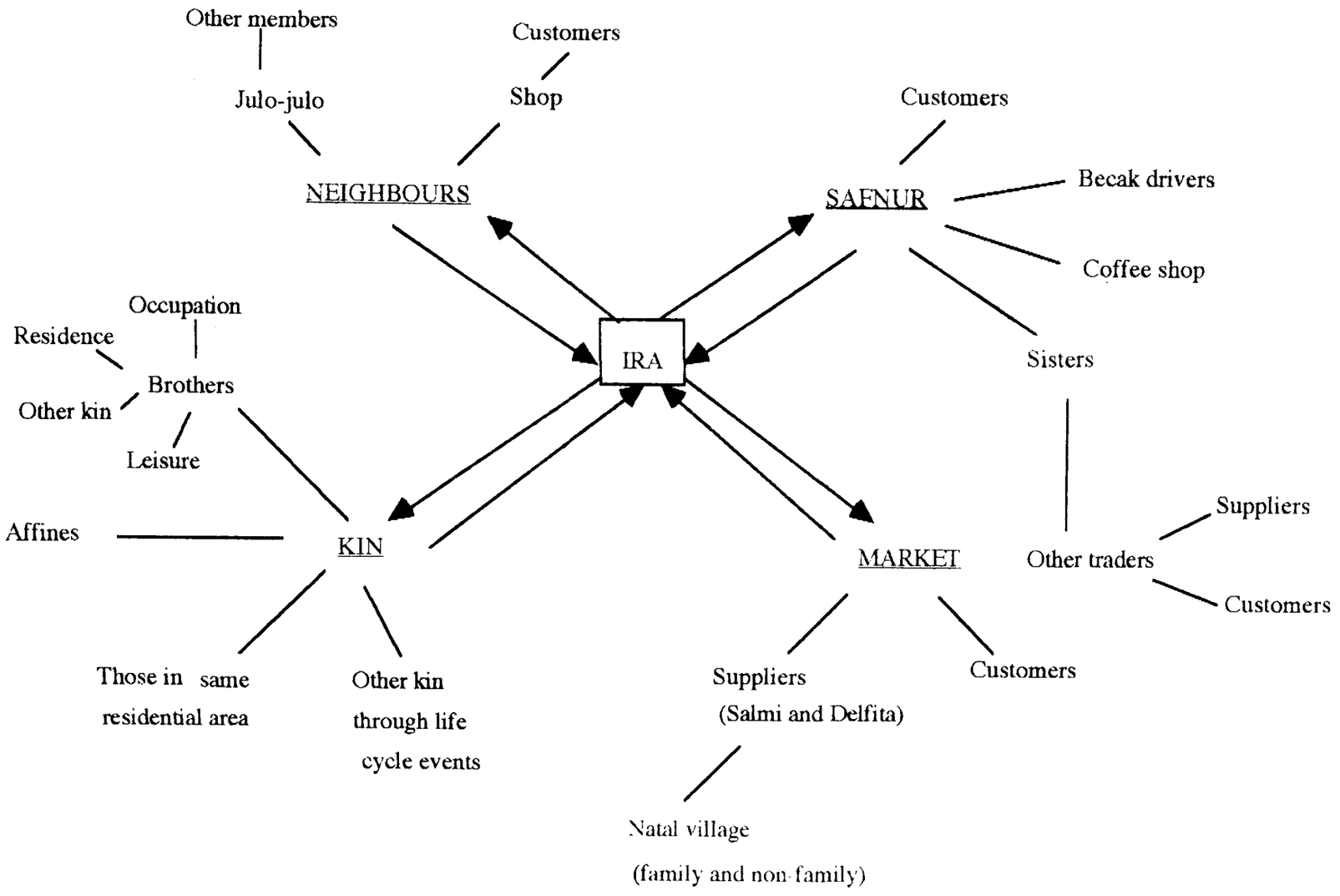


Figure 6.1: Ira's Network

If her sister moved to Pekanbaru, however, it is likely their interaction would be more frequent. On the other hand the durability of her interaction with the neighbours in her network may not be permanent. When she moves to her new residence she may interact less frequently with these people and because they have no other, stronger, ties they may lose contact altogether.

So far I have focused mainly on the female content of Ira's network but this does not suggest there is no gender interaction. As Figure 6.1 shows, her husband and brothers form an important part of her effective network. As her house is regarded as the family 'base' in Pekanbaru, her brothers frequently visit and may pass on information that they have learnt at their workplace or in conversation with other family members they encounter in their places of residence in different parts of Pekanbaru. Likewise, Safnur's job as a *becak* driver takes him to different locations and he is in contact with a wide range of customers and other *becak* drivers.

Ira's extended network, those whom she does not see intensively, include other kin and affines in the migrant area. She is aware that she can call upon these people in times of need or alternatively may be expected to help them if they are in difficulty or need assistance in preparations for life cycle celebrations. Under such circumstances they temporarily become part of her effective network. Over time, members of the effective network can move to the extended network. For example when Ira and her family first moved to Pekanbaru her mother's brother, who offered them shelter, was very much a part of her effective network; once they had settled in another part of Pekanbaru they did not meet on a daily basis.

Also included within her extended network are those members of her family who remain in the village. Although her mother is an important part of her life, she is nevertheless part of the extended network because they do not interact on a

frequent basis. Salmi and Delfita provide one of the links between Ira's effective and extended networks. They see her every other day and can furnish her with news from the village. Similarly, when they return they can take back news of her and her family to the people in Salimpaung. Ira is therefore an important contact for many of her lineage members in Pekanbaru as she provides a link, in the city, between the *rantau* and the village. Ira's network is not gender specific and she freely interacts with both men and women. Her work in the market, her contact with consanguines and affines in the city and in the village give her a mediating role between the two spheres and between the genders.

Conclusion

This chapter illustrates that far from being a primarily male trait, increasing numbers of women also participate in migration. They may migrate as individuals or as part of a family unit but, in whatever capacity, they contribute to the social and economic life of both the household and the migrant community. Through an analysis of the network of Ira, a female migrant in Pekanbaru, it is apparent that women are not the helpless passive beings some would have us believe. Ira is a key point of contact for new migrants offering them advice and assistance. She receives and passes on information which may be of use to established migrants, to new arrivals and to those still in the home village. She actively plays her part in retaining the Minangkabau identity and keeping the community together through her assistance and participation in the life cycle rituals which form such an important part of daily life in the natal village and, for migrants, are symbolic of home life. When viewed in such a light, it is difficult to adhere to the image of Minangkabau women as passive and dependent. Ira's interaction with women and men as kin, fellow traders, market customers, neighbours and members of migrant groups illustrate that women as well as men play their part in migrant life and in communication with the homeland.



Leaving Salimpaung: some of my family and friends come to bid me farewell

CHAPTER 7: GENDERED NETWORKS IN MINANGKABAU

Introduction

The objective of this thesis has been to contribute to a broader understanding of Minangkabau gender relations. This stemmed from a concern with the way in which matriliny is portrayed by the classic anthropological model of the matrilineal system and the general application of that model to analyses of Minangkabau society. In Chapter 2, an examination of the literature revealed that many studies in the past have been somewhat male-centred.

The male perspective concentrates on the relationship between the *mamak* (mother's brother) and the *kemanakan* (sister's child), depicted as the structural principle underpinning Minangkabau matriliny. As the *mamak* is always male and the emphasis is on the male *kemanakan*, one gains the impression that men are the principal actors in Minangkabau society. Using this model, positions of authority and management of the ancestral property are male spheres while the female role is found in the areas of marriage and childbearing as the inter-generational link (as sister or mother). There is little acknowledgement that they may participate in other areas. Consequently, women as strong, decisive or active beings, rarely feature in this picture. This leads to an emphasis on male responsibilities (and implicit control) in kinship and on their activities either within the village or on migration. Such a perspective, I have argued, creates a distorted picture of Minangkabau society which ignores both the female population and neglects the importance of the range of relations between men and women.

Influenced by the work of Tanner (1974), Tanner and Thomas (1985) and Prindiville (1985), the ideas contained in this thesis attempt to move towards a more balanced approach using gender relations as a core component. These

writers argue that the structural principles of matriliny should comprise not only male-male relations but also female-female relations and female-male relations. Attention should be paid to indigenous concepts of group deliberation and consensus involving both men and women within the kin group. Consequently the notion of control is replaced by that of influence and more analytical focus is directed towards the decision-making process.

Whilst in the field, and bearing in mind this foundation for my own research, I started by considering the relations between women and between women and men in more depth. Several months into my fieldwork I began to formulate the idea that networks could be used as a means of analysing gender interaction. This was, in a sense, a departure from my pre-fieldwork objectives, which were directed in part towards gender relations in terms of household economics and technological developments. However, as I began to consider my data in the early analysis during fieldwork, I found that networks featured prominently. Although consciously, I was unaware of network analysis as a tool, I began to build up a picture of networks linking firstly Salimpaung and neighbouring villages, particularly through people's contacts within and between descent groups, secondly Salimpaung and other parts of West Sumatra through the sphere of commercial activities within the market system, and finally Salimpaung and the 'outside world' through migration practices. In each area, gender relations was an important element.

This chapter examines the data as a collective whole and seeks to consider the implications both for our perceptions of Minangkabau society and for the wider gender debate in anthropology. I begin with a critique of the data itself and compare my study to a recent publication on the Minangkabau. I then turn to a discussion of network analysis as the analytical tool used within this thesis. I consider its usefulness in analysing my data. I explore whether, had I

encountered network analysis prior to my fieldwork, I would have used other methods of collecting data and whether this would have enhanced the study. In conclusion, I return to my stated objectives and consider whether any contribution to the 'body of knowledge' has been made and whether this has raised any questions as a base for further research.

The Gendered Perspective and Contemporary Minangkabau Studies

The supportive, informative and reciprocal characteristics of networks have featured prominently in this study. I have suggested that in times of crisis or celebration the network of kin, neighbours and friends offers support and assistance. During illness food may be offered, domestic chores may be undertaken and children cared for. In death, emotional support is provided to the principal mourners. Labour may be exchanged during peak times in the agricultural cycle. The harvest of dry field crops may be shared with kin, neighbours and friends. During life cycle rituals, women and men offer their assistance in the preparations for ritual feasts and actively participate in these rituals. In the market network, traders and customers freely discuss prices and use friendly rather than aggressive bargaining techniques. In migration, kin and people with a common village identity offer advice and shelter to newcomers. Financial and emotional support between migrants and villagers is offered on a reciprocal basis.

Does this focus on networks portray an overly harmonious picture? Am I presenting an idealistic or sentimental rather than realistic image? Previous studies have demonstrated that conflict is an everyday part of Minangkabau life (C E von Benda-Beckmann 1984, F von Benda-Beckmann 1979, Tanner 1971, 1982) and I would not deny this. Indeed several examples in my own data acknowledge this.

In contrast to my own study, Kahn (1993), a well-established scholar of Minangkabau society, concentrates on an alternative viewpoint:

> traditionalist images of Indonesian village life [did not] ring true to me. In many ways village life as I experienced it was intensely competitive, economistic and individualistic. Money, prices and the difficulties of earning a living, together with intense and often highly malicious gossip about the pecuniary nefariousness of government officials, merchants and even close friends and neighbors were everyday topics of conversation. (1993:vii)

In order to explore this conflicting image further, let us consider some of the specific observations and alternative interpretations made by Kahn in the three main areas of my own study. With regard to life cycle rituals, Kahn argues that they:

> were mostly perfunctory affairs. The romanticized images of Minangkabau and Indonesia tradition jarred considerably with my own experiences of an intensely competitive - not to say anomic - daily routine. (1993:viii)

There are several points to make with regard to Kahn's statement. Firstly, from my observations of life cycle rituals, I could not agree with this description of them as perfunctory. Everyday life in Salimpaung may indeed be structured by the routine of working, praying, eating and sleeping, with little chance to leave the village environment. Rituals, both the preparation and participation stages, provide the opportunity to interact with people who, under normal circumstances, may be seen infrequently. My observations lead me to suggest that these rituals are viewed with pleasure by both men and women, old and young. The inference that people attend rituals because they have nothing better to do also seems a misapprehension. Many Salimpaung villagers give up their work in the market or fields, often for several days, in order to help with preparations. Even if, for economic reasons, this is not possible, they offer their assistance during the evening when their working day is over. Equally, many

people organise their agricultural activities to fit in with life cycle rituals which usually take place in the afternoon or evening. For example, one of the principal speechmakers in the *Batimbang Tando* ritual was a young man who usually spent his days working in his mother's fields. On the morning of the ritual, he rose earlier than usual so that he could finish his work before the afternoon events and thus meet his kinship obligations.

Secondly, I would argue that describing Minangkabau life as characterised by intense competition is rather an overstatement. It cannot be denied that competitiveness does feature in the lives of Salimpaung villagers. In a ritual sense, this is reflected in women's preparation and display of food which receives the utmost care and attention. It is an expression of *adat* and of the relationship between individuals or groups. To offer gifts of imperfect food is therefore insulting. The male expression of *adat*, the *pasambahan* (ritual speeches), are based on competition. Stumbling over or forgetting words is met with derision and, in a similar way to female exchanges, would be considered an insult to the receiving party. Nevertheless without the co-operation of female consanguineal and affinal relations, as well as friends and neighbours, the preparation of food would not be possible; neither could a male ritual proceed without an appropriate number of participants.

In a general sense, competition may be manifested in conspicuous consumption and jealousy. Some people told me that they had very little income but their siblings were much better off as they received regular remittances from their migrant offspring. Yet, they noted, no attempt was made to share this income. These sentiments, however, rarely stop people from being supportive in times of need.

In the context of market activities, I have argued that these are characterised by co-operation rather than competition. In Chapter 5, I suggested that greetings play an important part in the communication content of the network. Before, during and after market visits, greetings such as "where have you been?", "what have you bought?" and "how much did that cost?" serve to circulate important information about fluctuating market prices. Villagers can therefore attain an element of bargaining power during both the sale of their surplus agricultural crops and the purchases of their weekly shopping.

Kahn whilst acknowledging these are greetings, interprets them differently, arguing that "money, prices, and costs were an almost obsessive topic of everyday conversation" (1993:38). He recounts that on his return from the market one day, people in his research village asked him how much he had paid for his purchases. When they realised he had paid much more than the normal price, they laughed openly. "The attitude was, clearly, that I had only myself to blame for putting myself in a position to be swindled" (1993:39).

Kahn infers from this general amusement concerning his weak bargaining skills that everyone is economically individualistic, and goes even further, suggesting that many are corrupt. This seems something of an overreaction. I would not disagree that "economic calculation [is] ...a significant aspect of the cultural life of...Minangkabau villages" (1993:39) but to suggest that profit maximisation and loss avoidance "becomes an end in itself" (1993:39) seems inappropriate and blinkered. I would not argue with Kahn that money is very important to Minangkabau villagers but this is hardly surprising, bearing in mind that many people are on a low income. For this reason it is understandable that potential customers should focus on the price of goods and that traders can acceptably charge as much as an individual is prepared to pay, on the basis of economic survival.

I too experienced villagers' amusement at the excessive amounts I paid for purchases. Who would not take advantage of someone who, in the eyes of the trader, appears to be both affluent and naive enough to pay that much? My only option was to shrug my shoulders and laugh with the villagers! My own experience - or perhaps I should say inexperience - clearly illustrates that I was ignorant of the normal price and this considerably weakened my bargaining powers. I soon realised this and then used the market greetings of "what have you bought?" and "how much did that cost?" not just as greetings *per se* but in the way that villagers use them - to keep abreast of prices.

Where, I wonder, would Kahn place the additional measures given by traders in his model of economic individualism? Clearly such a practice makes sound business sense: if the customer is offered extra measures of goods, she is more likely to return the following week. Yet traders neither give extra measures to all customers nor do they do so on a regular basis. I suspect that part of the bargaining skills of both trader and customer is to know when additional measures can be used successfully. Furthermore, traders may occasionally give small quantities of their goods as gifts to people related through kinship or marriage, or who are neighbours or friends. Kahn may be inclined to argue that giving in a public place is a means of attaining status, and there might well be an element of truth in that. Nevertheless I would argue that sharing, especially small food items, is a basic principle in the Minangkabau way of life and, as I discussed in Chapter 3, is learnt at a very young age. Furthermore I argued that co-operation between traders is an underlying element of market ethics. Traders are willing to look after an absent neighbour's goods temporarily and sell on her behalf, even if this means they may lose a sale. They are also willing to sell their goods at trade price to another trader whose stock has run out. As the comments (cited in Chapter 5) made by the rice trader suggest, this co-operation is on a reciprocal basis and tends to negate any notion of aggressive competition.

Kahn's work also calls into question my portrayal of Minangkabau migration. He argues that the Padang and Jakarta migrants he spoke to frequently complained about requests for assistance from poorer kin in the village. It is the case that there are always going to be some people who do not wish to fulfil their kin obligations. In my experience, this is the exception rather than the rule. Furthermore, I would argue that Kahn fails to realise that assistance is a two-way process. Kin and other villagers do make demands on migrants both as newcomers to the migrant area and as villagers requesting financial assistance. However, migrants may also seek help from relations in the village. In times of need, they can return to the village where their close kin are likely to give them support. This was illustrated in Chapter 2 when a sick woman and her children returned home to be cared for and supported financially by matrilineal kin while her husband sought work. In Chapter 6, I gave a similar example and also showed that villagers often visit their migrant relations to coincide with a harvest of rice or dry field crops so that a portion may be given to them. Furthermore, in accordance with *adat*, the principle of reciprocity is a fundamental characteristic of obligations between consanguines and affines. By offering support and guidance to newcomers, the established migrants can expect to rely on them for future help in preparations at life cycle rituals or during their own life crises. Provision of this kind of support also helps to strengthen their cultural identity which appears to be an important element of their lives in the mixed ethnic conurbation.

The data in this and in the chapter on life cycle rituals suggest that Minangkabau matriliny is not in a process of disintegration, as some have argued. The contrary appears to be the case: attention is paid to the mutual obligations between matrilineal kin both at the levels of *paruik* and *payung* and in the wider *suku* group. When help is required - either in the preparations for rituals, in response to crises, or in the provision of shelter and information to new migrants

and security for migrants returning home - the majority of Minangkabau people offer their services willingly. They do this, at times irrespective of geographical distance, knowing that at some stage in the future they, or other members of their matrilineal group, may need to call upon their close and distant kin for assistance.

Turning to other considerations of the data presented in this thesis, it has been noted that the survey on migration was undertaken from the perspective of those who remained in the village. It is the case that the survey questions - such as "in which year did your offspring first migrate?", "where did they migrate to?" and "what occupation do they have?" - warranted direct answers from village respondents. This survey was supplemented by many informal discussions with migrants, who returned home for a brief stay, on their perceptions of urban life. Nevertheless it could be argued that this was a select sample who may offer biased accounts. This could be because they either sentimentalised life in the village or alternatively, glorified migration or overstated their success because of the other people listening to the conversation. Whether this was in fact the case is difficult to determine without undertaking a study in the migrant area itself.

A detailed examination of my thesis reveals that the emphasis has been on female networks. Although this was one of my stated objectives from the outset, should I have spent more time exploring all-male networks? It is clear that, up to a point, my gender did influence my data collection. Would a male researcher, undertaking a study of networks, have collected a totally different set of data? As a woman, how could I discover more about male networks other than those discussed in life cycle rituals, markets and migration? Could I have frequented male meeting places? Would this have been acceptable to men (or to women) or would I have risked ostracism?

Men and women do have separate leisure activities and often different meeting places. As I explained in Chapter 3, the hour before *magrib* (prayers following sunset) is generally regarded as leisure time. Women meet in their homes or in small shops owned by a kinswoman, or outside the mill where they can also watch over their children playing. I recall one occasion when I was in a woman's house chatting with a small group of older women. The woman's sister, who lived next door, was amongst this group. Suddenly her husband appeared, uninvited. The women greeted him but then returned to their conversation, ignoring him. Looking uncomfortable, he pulled a chair up to the window and sat there looking outside. Occasionally he turned round to the group of women as if he wanted to join in. Eventually after several minutes, he realised this seemed unlikely and left.

During this hour it is not customary for women and men to mix. Applying this example to my previous point, would men have found it acceptable for me to participate on anything other than a momentary basis? On another occasion I was invited to go to a nearby town with a group of young men. Fortunately I refused and was told later that this would have been unacceptable. Older women and men would have disapproved.

In addition, my study of life cycle, market and migration networks has been partly concerned with the points when male and female networks interact. The focus on support and co-operation tended to skim over any notions of manipulation and withholding information. I found little evidence of this but I am aware that this might occur and it might shed some light on the debate on influence and authority within the household. Perhaps I could have learnt more about this if I had directed my attention to dispute management and settlement.

This section has highlighted some of the areas not covered in my thesis. In order to present a rounded critique, I now consider the analytical tool I have used, namely network analysis.

Network Analysis

In Chapters 1 and 2, I highlighted the male bias in many studies of Minangkabau society and the neglect of women's lives, and I followed Prindiville's argument that there is also a need to consider both female-female relations and female-male relations. To this end, I proposed a study of different networks involving both women and men using life cycle rituals, market activities and migration practices as the areas of analyses. It was intended that this would also shed light on the varying levels of inter-village networks as well as those which link Salimpaung to the outside world.

Within such a framework, I proposed that network analysis may be a useful tool to explore this theme. It was intended that the study would adopt a gendered perspective whilst recognising that the particular emphasis was given to women's roles in these networks. As many feminist anthropologists have argued in the past, we need to recognise the differences between women on the basis of structural determinants such as age, economic background and status. In a recent book on the role of gender studies in anthropology, Moore (1993) argues that it had often been assumed that

> each society had a single gender ideology or model, and that such models were based on two discrete categories, the 'female' and the 'male'...The pressing task for the anthropology of the future is that we must begin to acknowledge the differences within rather than simply the differences between. (1993:199, 204)

Focusing on women in this way (whilst also considering their interactions with men) would also expose the gaps in our knowledge concerning men which often tends to be based on 'loose generalisations' (Ardener 1985).

In addition, I felt there was a need not only to recognise these differences but also to consider the similarities between women and men in their network interactions. Shelley Errington (1990) has argued that there has been a consistent focus on gender differences but that we may be able to learn more about gender by considering further the notion of complementarity prevalent in many South-East Asian societies. Taking this a stage further, and following Prindiville's proposal, I felt it was also important to consider the way in which male and female roles may be both distinct and overlapping.

Before considering this in more detail, I wish first to turn to the concept of network analysis itself and how useful this has been in furthering the thesis' aims. In other words, has network analysis helped or hindered the attempt to analyse the interactions between women and between women and men?

Networks, in the metaphorical sense, have been used by many anthropologists. Watson, in his study of the developmental cycle in Kerinci, bordering West Sumatra to the south, writes of the "networks of relationships with kinsmen" during middle age as "people concern themselves directly with their younger siblings and become more seriously committed to watching over their own and their siblings' children" (1992:112). Peletz, exploring the Minangkabau settlement in Rembau, Malaysia, suggests that "however else ... women stood connected or linked through exchange, they were also involved in numerous networks of reciprocity based on the sharing of prepared foods" (1988:48). Discussing Minangkabau migration, Kato considers the strengthening of the conjugal tie in the migrant area once the husband and wife are "separated from extensive kin networks in the villages" (1982:161). Prindiville describes the village "as a unit bound by a network of affinal relations linking individual kin groups" (1980:4).

Can networks only be used in this metaphorical sense, or is it possible to reach a deeper level of analysis? Once the researcher attempts to analyse her data using this concept, does it immediately become too clumsy, too cumbersome and, as Gulliver (1971) has criticised, too complicated? How useful is it to follow the guidelines set out by Clyde Mitchell (1969)?

The notion of networks was useful to show the links between groups of people and individuals through their kin relationships. In the study of male and female networks and gender interaction in life cycle rituals, this helped to highlight the obligations different people have to their consanguineal and affinal kin. I was able to show the importance of close kin ties in preparations for and participation in these rituals. It was also possible to distinguish the links between these kin and their more distant clan relations as well as neighbours who, at a crucial time, offered their services to ensure that the preparations were complete and the ritual ran smoothly.

In the market study, networks between customers, traders and suppliers were primarily analysed using actors, such as the shopowner, Amak Murni, and the traders Kakak Yanti and Abang Buyung, as the media through which information could be received and transmitted. Network analysis was also a useful means of identifying the interactions between migrants and between the migrant area and the home village. In all three main areas of study the directional flow of information and support to others in the network became apparent and through this analysis I was also able to demonstrate that women as well as men have an active part to play in social life.

Some of the characteristics of networks put forward in Clyde Mitchell's (1969) article also aided analysis. His notion of communication content (how information transcends generational and authority lines) was particularly apparent

in the market network. In the life cycle rituals it became evident that Amak Mariaman used her network of female and male kin to communicate information concerning her daughter's impending marriage to more distant relations. In the chapter on migration, I showed how Ira was also able to collect and pass on information regarding potential jobs and housing to new migrants which she had obtained through her interactions in the marketplace and her meetings with consanguines and affines.

The exchange content put forward by Clyde Mitchell and also an important element of Kapferer's (1969) study helped to frame the analysis for my own data. It revealed how people within the kinship network are related. It also served to indicate the importance attributed to these links. The exchange of gifts at life cycle rituals are, in Minangkabau terms, expressions of *adat*, their worldview. These gifts are specifically gendered with men exchanging *pasambahan* and women exchanging food. The principle of reciprocity also showed that not only one party benefited. Previous studies of migration have generally considered the unidirectional flow of assistance from the migrant area to villagers. My study, by incorporating the element of reciprocity, brought attention to the two-way process of support and, on occasions, financial aid.

Some of the other characteristics proposed by Clyde Mitchell were more difficult to apply to my data. This included density (the extent to which links between people in an individual's network exist) and range (the form of contact, either direct or indirect). This may have been due to the nature of my data. For example, the case study of Kakak Yanti and Abang Buyung revealed that they had a wide range of contacts through their market network: traders and customers from Salimpaung and other markets in their circuit, as well as a number of suppliers. They in turn have their own networks and information is therefore disseminated to a wide range of people. However, it was impossible

either to quantify that range or to measure the quality of the link between them. This was not the case with Amak Mariaman's network. The quality of the link was apparent. Perhaps this was because one specific event was the subject of analysis in comparison with the markets and migration case studies which were not time-specific.

In Chapter 1, I stated that I had only learnt of network analysis following fieldwork. If I had been aware of it at the time, would I have developed testable hypotheses? Would this have influenced my methodology? Would I have collected different data? Would it have been possible to assess the quality of the links between different members of the network? With hindsight, I believe it would have been useful to collect several life histories similar to that presented in Ira's network. As her life history revealed, her effective network in Pekanbaru is different now to when she first arrived there. A comparative analysis of several people's perceptions of their network from participants within the same network may also have been a useful exercise. Ira's effective network for example included her mother's brother and her brother when she first arrived in Pekanbaru. Would a study of these actors' networks have revealed great differences in perceptions? This may have contributed to a greater understanding of male and female perceptions concerning interaction both within and between the genders.

A study using some elements of the time allocation method may have been of use here. This has been successful not only in examining how men and women use their time but also how household decisions are influenced (White 1984). The recall method could be employed to ask respondents the number of interactions they have over a certain period, the time spent in each interaction, the gender of the other person and the relationship with that individual (such as close or distant kin, neighbour, fellow worker or friend). This may also provide an indication of

the changes in interaction over time and may reveal why the level of intensity changes. For example during life cycle rituals the intensity of contact becomes greater.

Alternatively, it may have been a useful exercise to undertake a survey on people's networks. Questions could include the number of people with whom the respondents interact on a regular basis and their relationship. The survey could also inquire about who the respondent regards as the most important contacts and whether this necessarily correlates with a high level of interaction. I suspect that in a village where migration is so important, such a survey may reveal that the people with whom one meets and converses within the village on a daily basis may not necessarily be the most important people in their network. If the survey, like the life histories suggested earlier, could include several people within the same network, the differences in their perceptions with particular reference to gender could be analysed. For example, we have been led to believe that the relationship between mother's brother and sister's son is the most important for a man. Would such a survey confirm this or would it reveal that a brother, sister, mother, offspring or other kin is more important? Does a woman regard her brother or her sister, or someone else, as the most important person? Does a woman, in her old age, depend more on her daughter or her son? Who is the most important contact for an elderly man? Although I have not followed Barnes' (1972) proposal that a network study should comprise no more than ten people, any survey of the kind described above would have to be limited to a manageable size if all the people within that network were to be questioned and several separate networks analysed.

Gendered Networks

Having considered some of the possible alternative positions with regard to the data presented in this thesis, as well as a critique of the analytical tool used, I now turn to a consideration of what can be drawn from the data.

Prindiville has argued that in order to overcome the male bias in the literature on Minangkabau society, it is necessary to identify specific female roles and to explore the nature of female units. Although she was particularly concerned with analysing the matrilineal structure itself, my study broadens the analysis to women's wider participation in society and how their other roles may impinge on their lives and their interactions with men. To this end, I examined three areas of Minangkabau social life in one West Sumatran village. The first considered life cycle rituals and the differing yet complementary male and female roles as well as the ways in which men and women expressed their common identity within one descent group and their relationship with other descent groups allied through marriage. The second explored the realm of commercial activities emphasising access to and management of information and its effects on household budgeting. The third considered notions of common identity based on kinship, village origin or ethnicity in the migrant area and how this was expressed in the support and information networks between the West Sumatran village and the migrant city.

The data raises a number of analytical points. The first recognises a current theme in gender anthropology: that there is no one category of Minangkabau 'woman' or 'man' as economic background, status and age need to be incorporated into the analysis. Notwithstanding this important point, there are some situations when these differences are less significant and kinship roles and village identity are more prominent. The second point indicates that women as well as men play an important role both publicly and 'behind the scenes' in all

three areas discussed. The third, that although they have distinct areas of responsibility and activities which are gender specific, these may be regarded as complementary and, under certain circumstances, may even overlap. These points are now considered in more detail.

The Minangkabau Woman

> Gender relations are as much about same-sex relations as they are about cross-sex relations, yet the quality of same-gender relations is predicated upon opposite-gender relations in each socio-cultural instance. Same-sex relations take on specificity of meaning only if we view these within an overarching reference to cross-sex relations. Moreover, within any one society, we must be open to the possibility that persons of the same sex are not necessarily of a kind; both category and age may further complicate the gender picture. (Howell and Melhuus 1993:45)

Whilst feminist anthropology in the early years drew attention to the differences between the genders it is only more recently that the differences within one gender have been considered in depth. In Chapter 2, it was noted that age is a clear determinant of status and authority for both men and women (Ong 1989, Postel-Coster 1988). In Chapters 3 and 4, I showed that Salimpaung women attain a higher status once they have had children and this becomes more pronounced with age. They have greater responsibility within the kin group, liaising with other descent groups and preparing the gifts of food exchange in life cycle rituals.

Older women often have their own income (through farming, trading or professional occupation). Although most of this becomes part of the household income, women can be autonomous and independent of their husbands and brothers. For female-headed and women-only households, this is particularly pronounced.

Women's different incomes are reflected not only in their own lifestyles but also in their children's education. There are distinct income differentials between women in the village with civil servants, teachers and female members of successful businesses (such as the mill owner's household or the export trader cited in Chapter 5), amongst the better-off. Within agricultural work, there are different categories of farmer: some women own (or have the usufruct rights to) a significant amount of land whilst others have little or no land and therefore seek income by working in others' fields, by sharecropping or by trading for a couple of days a week. In Chapter 5, I showed that in the market system, there are different categories of trader from the wealthy cloth traders to the poorer rice and spice traders.

Nevertheless income level cannot on its own determine either status or participation in networks. As I stated in Chapter 3, neighbourhoods are not segregated by economic factors, and rich and poor often live in close proximity. When the mill owner's son celebrated his *Khataman Al-Quran*, his mother invited not only her consanguineal and affinal kin but also her poorer neighbours and the women who work for her in the mill.

In Chapter 4, I showed how female networks come into operation in order to provide assistance at the preparation of life cycle rituals. Their content is drawn from consanguineal and affinal relations as well as common residence and friendship. When help is needed to prepare enough food for 500 guests, distinctions based on wealth become unimportant. Furthermore, female and male, affluent and poor guests participate in life cycle rituals and are treated equally. I cited the *adat* aphorism - to stand equally high and to sit equally low - to illustrate this further.

In Chapter 5, the market networks between traders and customers operate irrespective of these income levels. Women stop to chat and exchange news and market information, not distinguishing between economic status. To illustrate this, I cited the *Hajah* rice trader. Throughout her trading life she has sold rice, a position lower down the hierarchy, and yet she is a wealthy farmer and has also been on pilgrimage to Mecca which sets her apart from most other Salimpaung villagers and market traders. The cloth traders, in the upper level of the hierarchy, attract a lot of customers who go there to make purchases or their weekly debt repayments. Although these are the primary reasons, they often sit and chat with the traders and other customers and news is freely exchanged. There is no apparent discrimination based on status.

In Chapter 6, the migrant networks again illustrate the superfluous nature of economic status. Established migrants from varying income levels offer support and advice to newcomers. These data suggest that although in some areas of village life, different categories of women and men are important, in the three areas I have studied, where information and support networks operate, these distinctions are not necessarily made.

Male and Female Roles

Prindiville (1985) has argued that gender similarities may be as important and informative as gender differences. In this regard she is particularly concerned with the roles of *mamak* and mother. This raises the question of whether the fundamental structural principle of matriliny is based on the inter-generational relationship between *mamak* and *kemanakan*. The male role of *mamak*, it cannot be denied, is an important one. As I showed in Chapter 3, young children are taught to respect their *mamak*. As an element of the ideology of gender and age, the *mamak* demands this respect. The *mamak* is involved and may take a leading (but not necessarily a leader's) role in many of the group discussions with adult

men and women on affairs associated with inheritance and with marriage. He is a central character in men's formal life cycle rituals and gives support during preparations. Nevertheless this should not detract from the woman's central role as mother within the kin group. She is one of the principal actors in female life cycle rituals and also acts as mediator between women and men.

It is also important to consider the relationship between sisters. As early as 1962, Diane Lewis had suggested this with regard to Negeri Sembilan Minangkabau in Malaysia; Peletz reiterates this structure in his study of Minangkabau in the Rembau district of Negeri Sembilan: "Data now available ... reveal that relationships of siblingship are of far greater structural relevance than assumed by earlier observers, many of whom focused largely on issues of descent or alliance" (1988:355).

From the female perspective, as I argued in Chapter 3, (and based on many discussions with and observations of women of all ages), the relationship between sisters is regarded as the basic structural principle underpinning matriliny. Those still resident in the village live close together, either in the same house or as neighbours. Their children grow up together and are often close playmates. They frequently eat and sleep in the same house, especially if a woman offers childcare while her sister works. This is usually on a reciprocal basis. Sisters may cook and eat together. A woman may offer help when her sister or other members of her sister's household fall sick. Their rice fields are often adjacent and they may even share the same field. This may necessitate compromise of the individual's desires and co-operation between sisters who need to make joint decisions on whether a field should be used either for rice (and perhaps left fallow for several months until the water supply is plentiful) or for dry field crops destined for the local market. Women frequently work together in each other's fields during the rice production process. Planting rice

is on a reciprocal non-payment basis. During harvest, although sisters still work in each other's fields, labour is usually based on reciprocal payment. In life cycle rituals, sisters (natural and classificatory) are important figures in the preparation of food for ritual feasting.

I have also suggested that the relationship between a woman and her sisters' children is as important as that between a man and his *kemanakan*. The kinship term given to a woman's sisters' children is *anak*, the same as a woman gives to her own children. This reflects the important role she has in caring for her sister's children. This may be on an *ad hoc* basis whilst the sister works in the fields, it may involve offering food to the sisters' children should they appear during meal times. If a woman has no children of her own, she may offer her sister financial assistance and other means of support intended for the children. More important, it reflects the responsibility and inclination a woman may have to care for her sisters' children if their mother dies. They are part of the same *paruik* and as such the sister has a social obligation to care for them.

This is readily apparent in the *Tujuh Bulan* ritual celebrating a woman's pregnancy and cited in Chapter 4. The paternal grandmother takes gifts to her pregnant daughter-in-law. The grandmother's sister also takes her own gifts. This shows that, next to the mother, the mother's sister is the child's most important kin in the mother's generation. This continues into adulthood and on to the next generation. Hence, if the paternal grandmother died, her sister would take over her responsibilities.

In Chapter 4, I showed how women have the key role in mediating within and between descent groups. In the formal context of the marriage rituals, Amak Mariaman, the bride's mother, was the principal actor liaising between her consanguines and affines. Through her network of close kin (women of the same

lineage), she was able to contact more distantly related kin as well as affines to seek their assistance and participation in her daughter's wedding. While the mother remains at home during the *Manjapuik Marapulai* when the bride collects her future husband from his family home, the mother's sisters represent her and her lineage through the exchange of gifts and food with the new affines.

These women are more prominent in the marriage preparations than the men. For the two weeks before and during the feasts women from the bride's and bridegroom's mothers' groups offer support. They meet in large numbers, often spending the whole day together. This gives them the opportunity to meet and chat when under other circumstances they may be too busy. Men also help, but in smaller numbers and for shorter periods. The large groups needed for the women's cooking parties are not mirrored in men's work groups with the exception of the cooking of the bamboo and goat curry the day before the wedding celebrations begin.

I also showed that it is the bride's and the groom's mothers who play the greatest part in establishing and maintaining the new relationship based on their children's marriage. This was seen in the marriage itself when, having directed attention towards welcoming guests from their own lineage and clan and affinal relations of long-standing, they begin to form a stable relationship with the new female affines. Although this begins with the early marriage negotiations, the relationship is formally established during the marriage feasts and continues once their offspring have children of their own. On a more informal basis, the two descent groups, represented by the mothers, exchange gifts of food during the Islamic fasting month and may also visit on an *ad hoc* basis to further cement the alliance. They take on new responsibilities, prescribed by *adat*, towards their daughter- or son-in-law's descent group and offer assistance during preparations for the life cycle rituals of their affine's *paruik*.

As the mother becomes too old, her daughters (or her sisters' daughters) continue her principal mediating role. The senior woman representing her lineage in Nenek Mariam's death rituals was Amak Upik. She is related to Nenek Mariam through marriage, as her classificatory brother is married to one of Nenek Mariam's daughters. Although it would be appropriate for Amak Upik's mother to lead the lineage representation, she considered herself to be too old and preferred to stay at home and leave this role to Amak Upik.

Men have an important ritual role to play in the presentation of ritual speeches and *salawak* (Islamic chants) at all life cycle rituals and at the *Batimbang Tando* pre-marriage rituals, they are responsibile for the exchange of heirlooms. Although there are primary actors, men have a collective responsibility to participate in these rituals. On an informal basis, their importance in mediating between descent groups allied through marriage is less pronounced. Although a man links his own descent group to that of his wife's (particularly if he lives in his wife's mother's house, or nearby), in the wider descent group context, he does not have the same kind of liaison role as a woman has. He would not be expected to make informal visits to the senior male relations of his child's or sibling's marriage partner. Thus their main mediating role only appears to be within the structure of the rituals themselves.

There is a wider implication with regard to the woman's mediating role. If women, as mothers, sisters, wives and daughters, frequent these pre-ritual work groups and, on an *ad hoc* basis visit other households (often located in different villages), what implications does this have for their position in society? Through their role in marriage negotiations and visits to women of the affinal household in order to establish these alliances, they become privy to different sets of information. Information is a powerful tool and a woman can choose with whom she shares this news. This puts her in a strong position in the household.

Bearing in mind women's central role in the mediation within and between descent groups and in their access to information from different areas there and in the market (which as I showed in Chapter 5 is dominated by women), it is difficult to follow previous accounts either portraying women as bound within a domestic sphere, playing a secondary and dependent role, or depicting their rituals as having less importance than those of men. Female rituals, which involve parading between households, bearing gifts carried in large baskets balanced on the head, can hardly be regarded as conducive to an image of women operating only within the private or domestic sphere. These are public occasions openly celebrating women's fertility and centrality within society. Placing women within the private domain is a distinction made only in the eyes of the male-focused ethnographer. Women on these and other occasions act independently of men. They form an autonomous unit. With data from this and other parts of the world, it is nothing short of amazing that ethnographers continue to give women a secondary place in their studies.

Yet as recently as 1993, Kahn was still portraying Minangkabau women as the passive dependent beings reminiscent of the early literature. Kahn's modernist model is epitomised in the archetypal Minangkabau merchant who is geographically mobile, a devout Muslim, lives in an elementary family household and finds kin and village obligations tiresome (1993:5). He contrasts this to the traditionalist model in which people remain in the village, working as rice farmers and craftspeople, spend much of their leisure time involved in rituals, live in extended family households, have collective work groups in the fields and on village improvements, and have the highest respect for kinship obligations. Kahn concludes that it is "not surprising that when we think of the "modern" Minangkabau more often than not we have a man in mind; while most images of the Minangkabau traditionalist are either female, or include both men and women" (1993:5).

Despite feminist anthropology's efforts to bring women, as well as men, into the centre of studies, we are still subjected to this form of male bias. As Bell has commented in a recent publication: "Given that anthropology has a long-standing interest in the relations between the sexes (marriage, kinship, rites of passage), it is ironic that its observations still reflect what are for the most part male standpoints presented as the 'norm'" (1993:2).

By definition, Kahn portrays men as successful, outward-looking businessmen, whilst women stay in the village focusing on the home. How does this image (and indeed the dichotomous model of traditionalism and modernism) fare in relation to my data? In Chapter 5, I gave an example of the "modern" Minangkabau woman. Delfita's export business necessitates regular travel over great distances. She manages to oversee the business as well as have time for family obligations. She is a practising Muslim and has brought her children up in the Islamic ways (by Kahn's standards, apparently modernist traits), yet she lives in an extended family household comprising her mother, her husband and her three children, her older sister and her family, and her younger sister. She ensures she has time to participate in the life cycle rituals for her family as prescribed by *adat* and also places importance on the relationship with her husband's mother who lives nearby. Delfita and her mother-in-law exchange frequent visits on the one day a week Delfita does not trade. During my fieldwork her mother-in-law fell sick, and Delfita and her own mother invited her to stay as their house is both more comfortable and located closer to the village health centre. She and her mother helped to care for her husband's mother.

I would argue that far from placing Delfita in a traditionalist role, because of her attention to kin obligations and her residence with her extended family, these features postively *enable* her to make such a success of her business. Does this

suggest that she mixes traditionalism with modernism or, as I believe is more likely, in previous studies we have tended to look at village life in the wrong way? We have assumed that those who remain at home, who do not venture out on migration may fall into a dependent and traditionalist category. I would argue that this is not so. Women for many years (according to discussions with older village members) have traded in distant markets often leaving their village for several days a week. They also migrate individually. Surely it is only the way people in the past have portrayed Minangkabau women *and* men, that has distorted our image of this society.

In the market, women are out in the open. They have a 'public' face. In Chapter 5, I showed that many regard market visits not as a chore but as a pleasurable way to pass time. They may spend several hours in the market and chat to people they know (or indeed may not know). From their discussions, they can obtain a lot of information which enhances their bargaining powers and aids household budgeting. This and other information they have places them in a powerful position within the household.

My observations and participation in life cycle rituals, market activities and my introduction to migrants' lives lead me to argue that women are important active, social beings. Both men and women have respect for their own and the other gender's roles and this is especially reflected in life cycle rituals. Neither gendered role is regarded as superior; rather they are seen as part of one cultural whole defined by *adat*, their worldview.

Complementarity

Complementarity is a common theme in South-East Asia (Errington 1990, Ong 1989). In Minangkabau, upon first encounter with the data, there appear to be contradicting notions: matrilineal *adat* and patrilineal Islam, the *darek*

(homeland) and the *rantau* (migrant area), stability at home and mobility, and some scholars have equated this with a distinct dichotomy between men and women. Others, most notably Tanner (1971, 1974), Prindiville (1980) and Sanday (1990), have noted the complementarity between men and women. Analysing *kaba* (traditional epics), Taufik Abdullah (1970) and Johns (1958) "contrast females as the source of wisdom and males as the agents through whom that wisdom is implemented" (Prindiville 1980:3).

This notion of complementarity within the Minangkabau worldview is especially prominent in kinship. Prindiville has developed the notion that both men *and* women should be regarded as structurally important. She and Tanner (1974, 1985) argue that men in their role of *mamak* are central in the cultural (if not in the spatial) sense. Women as mothers are also focal and together these roles should be viewed as forming a complementary whole. As I have suggested earlier in this chapter, I would add that the relationship between sisters and between a woman and her sister's children must also be regarded as structurally central.

In life cycle rituals this complementarity is readily apparent. Whilst there are distinct male and female roles, to the Minangkabau these are part of one cultural whole. Men are involved in exchanges of *pasambahan* whilst women use food as their expression of *adat*. As Prindiville comments "although my original research focus was on the *pasambahan* exchanged by men, I found that I could not understand either their meaning or the ceremonial context in which they were imbedded without also analysing the participation of women in these events" (1980:1).

It is, I would argue, the case that life cycle rituals cannot proceed (or be considered complete) without both male and female parts. Although they may

take place at different times, they are complementary. The roles during preparations are similarly complementary. Men concentrate on manual work (improving, tidying and decorating the house and yard and harvesting food for the ritual feasts) while women work in the kitchens. At times even these roles overlap. Women prepare most of the ritual food except the goat and bamboo curry, an essential dish, which is prepared by men. Women may assist by preparing the spices and also cook the accompanying rice and *kerupuk ubi* (fried cassava slices). At male feasts, the majority of food is provided by the women but served by the men. At these rituals, 'male' *pasambahan* are exchanged for 'female' food.

In trade, there are gender specific commodities but this does not stop either gender from working in the market and engaging in its social activities. Both sets of gendered commodities are needed for the market to function as a whole. In agriculture there are gendered tasks although even these may overlap if there is no-one else to perform the work. Male *and* female migrants offer support to male and female newcomers, irrespective of their gender. The notion of complementarity between the genders, then, is central to Minangkabau social and economic life.

Gendered Networks and the Minangkabau: Future Research

It is not intended that this study should be a definitive statement on gendered networks; rather it should be regarded as an initial exploration in this field. As this chapter has shown, there are areas which have not been covered and numerous questions still to consider.

Network analysis, used to explore gender relations either between groups of women (March and Taqqu 1986, Nelson 1978) or men and women (Lamphere 1970) is not a new approach; but neither has it been fully investigated. From the

analytical point of view, this thesis was intended as an exploration into whether network analysis could be considered a useful tool to analyse gender relations. As its focus is on human interaction, initially it seemed to be appropriate. Many of the problems of applying this technique to my data appear to emanate from a dearth of relevant information rather than from irreconcilable faults with the approach.

I would argue that such a tool could be usefully employed in future research to focus on areas of interaction both within one gender (all-male or all-female networks) and between the genders (gendered networks) in both Minangkabau and other societies. Concentrating on the points at which different groups interact, networks and access to information could be analysed in terms of manipulation and withholding information.

Market activities, an area where women and men meet and converse, exchange news and information, could be studied focusing on the reasons why information may be withheld and/or manipulated. In the area of migration, a similar study could be undertaken. In this way women's place in migration studies could become central rather than peripheral, as they appear to be at least in the Minangkabau literature. Such contributions would enhance our understanding of the relations between Minangkabau men and women and result in a more rounded, balanced and gendered perception of Minangkabau society.

To conclude, I have employed an explicit and open approach to my data in order to realise my stated objectives. This I see as an achievement of the thesis and a necessary approach for gender studies.

GLOSSARY

(The terms used are in Minangkabau unless otherwise stated)

A' bali?	What have you bought? or What are you going to buy? (A common Minangkabau greeting)
Adat or *adaik*	The basis of the Minangkabau social system including rules on descent, inheritance, authority and behaviour
Alah makan?	Have you eaten? (A common Minangkabau greeting)
Alam Minangkabau	The Minangkabau world
Amai	The wife of a *mamak*
Amak	Mother (or term given to a woman of similar age to one's mother, especially if she is kin)
Anak daro	Bride
Bako	Father's matrilineal kin group
Bara'a?	How much did that cost? (Part of a Minangkabau greeting)
Baralek	Feast as part of a life cycle ritual most commonly associated with marriage
Baso baso	Cultural etiquette
Batimbang Tando	Part of the pre-marriage rituals in which the families of the bride and groom exchange heirlooms as a sign that they believe the marriage will proceed without obstacles
Beras	Hulled rice
Bilik	Bedroom in a traditional Minangkabau house
Bulan Puasa (Indonesian)	The Islamic fasting month
Compadrazgo (Philippine)	A term used to denote ritual kinship between a trader and supplier
Darek	The cultural and geographical Minangkabau heartland
Dari Ma'?	Where have you been? (A common Minangkabau greeting)

Dayang-dayang	Unmarried girls who accompany the bride to collect her husband during the *Manjapuik Marapulai* ceremony and who attend to the bride's needs
Desa	The smallest Indonesian administrative unit, a sub-village
Dukun	Traditional medical practitioner
Gerakan Seribu Minang (GEBU)	The One Thousand Movement
Gotong Royong	Mutual help
Hajah (female) *Haji* (male)	A term of respect given to someone who has been on pilgrimage to Mecca
Hari Raya Haji (Indonesian)	Religious festival celebrating the annual pilgrimage to Mecca
Hari Raya Idul Fitri (Indonesian)	Religious festival marking the end of the Islamic fasting month
Harto pencaharian	Individually owned property purchased through one's own labour and not belonging to the matrilineal group
Harto pusako (or *harta pusaka* - Indonesian)	Ancestral property belonging to the matrilineage
Julo-julo	Savings group
Kaba	Minangkabau epic
Kabupaten	Regency (large administrative unit)
Kain panjang	A long piece of batik cloth
Kaki limo	Market trader who rents a small piece of ground in the market and displays her/his goods on plastic sheeting or sacking
Ka Ma'?	Where are you going? (A common Minangkabau greeting)
Kampuang	Clan
Kaum	Lineage
Kebun	Forest, jungle
Kecamatan	Sub-district
Kemanakan	Sister's child(ren)

Kerapatan Adat Nagari	Village *adat* council hall
Keris	Ceremonial dagger
Kerupuk	Snacks made from rice or cassava
Khataman Al-Quran	A child's first formal reading of the Koran
Kios	Type of market building
Ladang	Unirrigated fields
Lapau	Small village shop
Lassuang	Stone mortar
Mamak	Mother's brother
Mamak tungganai	Senior mother's brother
Manampuh	Part of the marriage ritual in which the husband's family visit the bride's home
Mandoa	Ritual feasting associated with death
Manjalang	Part of the marriage ritual in which the bride and groom visit members of the groom's matrilineal group
Manjanguak	To pay one's last respects to the dead
Manjapuik Marapulai	Part of the marriage ritual in which the bride collects her husband from his mother's house
Mantan Pamili	Part of the marriage ritual in which members of the bride's family visit the women of the bridegroom's family
Marapulai	Bridegroom
Merantau	Migration
Mupakat	Unanimous decisions
Musyawarah	Common deliberation
Nagari	Village
Nasi lamak	Glutinous rice cooked in coconut milk
Padi	Unhulled rice
Pai manggi	The practice of telling consanguines and affines about forthcoming life cycle rituals
(Sa)paruik	Extended matrilineal family

Pasambahan	Ritual speeches
Pasisie	The coastal area from the sea to the *darek*
(Sa)payung	Lineage
Payung	Large umbrella used by market traders as shelter
Pelaminan	Bridal dais and decorations
Penghulu or (or *panghulu*)	Male leader of a lineage
Penghulu pasar	Senior market official
Pukesmas	Health Centre
Rantau	Migrant area
Rendang	Buffalo meat cooked in spices, served at ritual feasts
Rumah gadang	Traditional Minangkabau house
Rumah makan	Cafe, restaurant
Salamak hitam	Black rice cooked in coconut milk
Salamak kuning	Glutinous rice coloured yellow and cooked in coconut milk
Salawak	Islamic chanting
Sambal	Spicy side dishes served with rice
Sawah	Wet rice field
Sawah kagadangan	Ancestral riceland for the sole use of the *penghulu*
Sekolah Dasar (SD)	Primary school
Sekolah Menengah Atas (SMA)	Upper secondary school
Sekolah Menengah Pertama (SMP)	Lower secondary school
Singgang ayam	Chicken curry, a gift given by the bride's to the bridegroom's descent group as part of the exchanges during marriage rituals
Sirih	The betel chew consisting of betel leaf, areca nut and lime together with other ingredients such as gambier

Suki (Philippine)	A term used to denote a special relationship between a trader and customer or a trader and supplier which has economic benefits for both parties
Suku	Clan
Sumando (or *samando*)	(In-married) husband
Surau	Prayer house
Tambo	Minangkabau historiography
Tujuh Bulan	Ritual celebrating a woman's pregnancy
Tukang Payung	Man who makes and rents out large umbrellas used by market traders as temporary shelters
Urang asali	Original settlers (or their descendants) in a village
Urang datang	Newcomers (or their descendants) to a village

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ALEXANDER, J 1987 *Trade, Traders and Trading in Rural Java* Singapore: Oxford University Press

ALFAN MIKO 1991 *Pekerja Wanita pada Industri Rumah Tangga Sandang di Propinsi Sumatra Barat* Seri Studi Wanita no 9, Pusat Penelitian Kependudukan, Yogyakarta: Universitas Gadjah Mada

ANWAR KHAIDIR 1976 "Minangkabau, Background of the Main Pioneers of Modern Standard Malay in Indonesia", *Archipel Etudes interdisciplinaires sur le monde insulindien* 12: 77-93

ARDENER, S 1964 "The Comparative Study of Rotating Credit Associations", *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 94: 201-229

ARDENER, S 1985 "The Social Anthropology of Women and Feminist Anthropology", *Anthropology Today* vol 1 no 5: 24-26

BAPPEDA 1990 *Sumatera Barat dalam Angka* Kantor Statistik dan Bappeda Tingkat I, Kantor Statistik Sumatera Barat, Padang

BARNES, J A 1954 "Class and Committees in a Norwegian Island Parish", *Human Relations* vol 7 no 1: 39-58

BARNES, J A 1969 "Networks and Political Process" in J Clyde Mitchell (ed) *Social Networks in Urban Situations* Manchester: Manchester University Press

BARNES, J A 1972 *Social Networks* An Addison-Wesley Module in Anthropology, no 26: 1-29

BASS, M A, L M WAKEFIELD AND K M KOLASSA 1979 *Community Nutrition and Individual Food Behaviour* Minnesota: Burgess Publications

BELL, D 1993 "Introduction 1. The Context" in D Bell, P Caplan and W J Karim *Gendered Fields. Women, Men and Ethnography* London: Routledge

BENDA-BECKMANN, C E von 1984 *The Broken Stairways to Consensus. Village Justice and State Courts in Minangkabau* Dordrecht: ICG Printing

BENDA-BECKMANN, F von 1979 *Property in Social Continuity. Continuity and Change in the Maintenance of Property Relationships Through Time in Minangkabau, West Sumatra* The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff

BENDA-BECKMANN, F von 1982 "*Ayam Gadang Toh Batalua*? Changing values in Minangkabau Property and Inheritance Law and their Relation to Structural Change", *Indonesia Circle* 27: 26-38

BENDA-BECKMANN, F and K von 1988 "Adat and Religion in Minangkabau and Ambon" in D S Moyer and H J M Claessen (eds) *Time Past, Time Present, Time Future: Essays in Honour of P E de Josselin de Jong* Dordrecht: Foris Publications

BERNINGHAUSEN, J AND B KERSTAN 1992 *Forging New Paths. Feminist Social Methodology and Rural Women in Java* London: Zed Books Ltd

BOISSEVAIN, J 1974 *Friends of Friends: Networks, Manipulators and Coalitions* Oxford: Blackwell

BOISSEVAIN, J 1973 "Preface" in J Boissevain and J Clyde Mitchell (eds) *Network Analysis. Studies in Human Interaction* The Hague: Mouton

BOSWELL, D M 1969 "Personal Crises and the Mobilization of the Social Network" in J Clyde Mitchell (ed) *Social Networks in Urban Situations* Manchester: Manchester University Press

BOTT, E 1957 *Family and Social Network. Roles, Norms and External Relationships in Ordinary Urban Families* London: Tavistock Publications, 2nd edition, 1971

BRYDON, L AND S CHANT 1989 *Women in the Third World: Gender Issues in Rural and Urban Areas* Aldershot: Edward Elgar

BUJRA, J M 1978 "Introductory: Female Solidarity and the Sexual Division of Labour" in P Caplan and J M Bujra (eds) *Women United, Women Divided. Cross-cultural Perspectives on Female Solidarity* London: Tavistock

BULETIN GEBU MINANG 1991 *Edisi Perdana Juli-Agustus*, Jakarta

CAPLAN, P 1988 "Engendering Knowledge. The Politics of Ethnography (Part 2)", *Anthropology Today* vol 4 no 6: 14-17

CASEY, M 1987 "Female Work Patterns in Silungkang, West Sumatra: Preliminary Observations", *Indonesia Circle* 43: 41-49

CASEY, M 1989 *Women and Work in Silungkang, Minangkabau* PhD Thesis, University College London

CASTLES, L 1967 "The Ethnic Profile of Djakarta" *Indonesia* 3: 153-204

CHADWICK, R J 1991 "Matrilineal Inheritance and Migration in a Minangkabau Community", *Indonesia* 51: 47-81

CHAIRUL MURSIN 1991 "Gerakan Seribu Minang (Gebu Minang)", *Seminar Sehari ke V Materi Seminar Pendalaman Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman*, 5 October 1991 Medan

CHANT, S and S A RADCLIFFE 1992 "Migration and development: the importance of gender" in S Chant (ed) *Gender and Migration in Developing Countries* London: Belhaven Press

CLAMMER, J 1981 "Review of Minangkabau Social Formations" *Man* vol 16 no 3: 495-496

CLIFFORD, J and G E MARCUS (eds) 1986 *Writing Culture: The Politics and Poetics of Ethnography* Berkeley: University of California Press

COHEN, Y A 1968 "Food Consumption Patterns" in D L Sills (ed) *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* vol 5: 508-513 MacMillan and Company and the Free Press

COHEN, Y S and A SHINAR 1985 *Neighborhoods and Friendship Networks. A Study of Three Residential Neighborhoods in Jerusalem*, University of Chicago Department of Geography Research Paper no 215

COLLIER P AND J M GREEN 1978 "Migration from Rural Areas of Developing Countries: A Socio-economic Approach", *Oxford Bulletin of Economics and Statistics* vol 40 no 1: 23-35

COUPERUS, C TH 1855 "De Instellingen der Maleijers in de Padangsche Bovenlanden", *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde uitgeven door het Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen*, Deel IV, Nieuweserie Deel 1: 1-22

DALTON, B 1988 *Indonesia Handbook* Chico, California: Moon Publications

DARWIS THAIB 1965 *Seluk-beluk Adat Minangkabau* Bukittinggi, N V Nusantara

DAVIS, W G 1973 *Social Relations in a Philippine Market. Self-Interest and Subjectivity* Berkeley: University of California Press

DEPARTEMEN PENDIDIKAN DAN KEBUDAYAAN 1986/87 *Dapur dan Alat-alat Memasak Tradisional Daerah Sumatera Barat* Direktorat Jenderal Kebudayaan, Direktorat Sejarah dan Nilai Tradisional Proyek Inventarisasi dan Dokumentasi Kebudayaan Daerah

DEWEY, A G 1962 *Peasant Marketing in Java* New York: The Free Press of Glencoe

DI LEONARDO, M 1991 *Gender at the Crossroads of Knowledge: Feminist Anthropology in the Postmodern Era* Berkeley: University of California Press

DOBBIN, C 1983 *Islamic Revivalism in a Changing Peasant Economy Central Sumatra 1784-1847*, London: Curzon Press

DOUGLAS, M 1969 "Is Matriliny Doomed in Africa?" in M Douglas and P M Kaberry *Man in Africa* London: Tavistock Publications

DOUGLAS, M 1975 *Implicit Meanings. Essays in Anthropology* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul

DOUGLAS, M 1982 *In the Active Voice* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul

EMIL SALIM 1986 "*Apa Mengapa Gebu Minang*?" in *Buku Panduan dan Kenang-kenangan* Pekan Wisata Budaya Minangkabau dan Halalbihalal Masyarakat Sumatra Barat, Istora Senayan 6-13 Juli 1986: 81-83

EPSTEIN, A L 1969 "The Network and Urban Social Organization" in J Clyde Mitchell (ed) *Social Networks in Urban Situations* Manchester: Manchester University Press

ERRINGTON F K 1984 *Manners and Meaning in West Sumatra: The Social Context of Consciousness* New Haven: Yale University Press

ERRINGTON, S 1990 "Recasting Sex, Gender, and Power. A Theoretical and Regional Overview" in J M Atkinson and S Errington (eds) *Power and Difference: Gender in Island Southeast Asia* Stanford: Stanford University Press

ETIENNE, M and E LEACOCK (eds) 1980 *Women and Colonization: Anthropological Perspectives* New York: Praeger

FIELDHOUSE, P 1986 *Food and Nutrition: Customs and Culture* London: Chapman and Hall

FIRTH, R et al 1969 *Families and their Relatives: Kinship in a Middle-Class Sector of London: An Anthropological Study* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul

FIRTH, R 1973 *Symbols Public and Private* London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd

FOX, R 1967 *Kinship and Marriage. An Anthropological Perspective* Harmondsworth: Penguin

FREY, K S 1985 *Journey to the Land of the Earth Goddess* Jakarta: Gramedia Publishing Division

GEERTZ, C 1963 *Peddlers and Princes. Social Change and Economic Modernization in Two Indonesian Towns* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press

GEERTZ, H 1963 "Indonesian Cultures and Communities" in R T McVey (ed) *Indonesia* New Haven: South-east Asian Studies, Yale University

GENNEP, A VAN 1960 *The Rites of Passage* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul

GIFFEN, D FLUD VAN AND E CHATRA 1990 "*Wanita di Pasar Minangkabau*", *Andalas, Jurnal Penelitian dan Pengabdian pada Masyarakat* No 5, September 1990: 44-61

GOUGH, K 1962 "The Modern Disintegration of Matrilineal Descent Groups" in D M Schneider and K Gough (eds) *Matrilineal Kinship* Berkeley: University of California Press

GRAVES, E E 1971 *The Ever Victorious Buffalo: How the Minangkabau of Indonesia Solved their 'Colonial Question'*, PhD thesis, University of Wisconsin

GRAVES, E E 1981 *The Minangkabau Response to Dutch Colonial Rule in the Nineteenth Century* Ithaca New York: Cornell Modern Indonesian Project

GRIECO, M 1987 *Keeping it in the Family. Social Networks and Employment Chance* London: Tavistock Publications

GULLIVER, P H 1971 *Neighbours and Networks. The Idiom of Kinship in Social Action among the Ndendeuli of Tanzania* Berkeley: University of California Press

GUNAWAN, INDRAWATI 1990 *Processen van Sociale Verandering in Matrilineair Minangkabau gerelateerd aan Hoger Onderwijs voor Vrouwen* PhD thesis, Antropologisch-Sociologisch Centrum, Universiteit van Amsterdam

HARSJA BACHTIAR 1967 "'Negeri' Taram: A Minangkabau Village Community" in Koentjaraningrat (ed) *Villages in Indonesia* Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press

HOWELL, S AND M MELHUUS 1993 "The Study of Kinship; the Study of Person; a Study of Gender?" in T del Valle (ed) *Gendered Anthropology* London: Routledge

HUGO, G J et al 1987 *The Demographic Dimension in Indonesian Development* Singapore: Oxford University Press

IMRAN MANAN 1984 *A Traditional Elite in Continuity and Change: The Chiefs of the Matrilineal Lineages of the Minangkabau of West Sumatra, Indonesia* PhD thesis, University of Illinois

IRVINE, J T 1974 "Strategies of status manipulation in the Wolof greeting" in R Bauman and J Sherzer (eds) *Explorations in the Ethnography of Speaking* London: Cambridge University Press

JAMES, W 1978 "Matrifocus on African Women" in S Ardener (ed) *Defining Females. The Nature of Women in Society* London: Croom Helm

JAY, E J 1964 "The Concepts of 'Field' and 'Network' in Anthropological Research" *Man* vol 64: 137-139

JOHNS, A H 1958 *Rantjak diLabueh: A Minangkabau Kaba. A Specimen of the Traditional Literature of Central Sumatra* Data paper no 32, Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, Ithaca

JOSSELIN DE JONG, P E de 1951 *Minangkabau and Negri Sembilan. Socio-political Structure in Indonesia* 's-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff

JOSSELIN DE JONG, P E de 1985 "The Relevance of Minangkabau Studies for Anthropological Theory" in L Thomas and F von Benda-Beckmann (eds) *Change and Continuity in Minangkabau: Local, Regional, and Historical Perspectives on West Sumatra* Ohio University, Monographs in International Studies, Southeast Asian Series no 71

JOUSTRA, M 1920 *Minangkabau. Overzicht van Land, Geschiedenis en Volk* Leiden: Drukkerij Louis H Becherer Uitgaaf van het Minangkabau Instituut

KAHN, J S 1976 "Tradition, Matriliny and Change among the Minangkabau of Indonesia", *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 132: 64-95

KAHN, J S 1980a *Minangkabau Social Formations. Indonesian Peasants and the World Economy* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

KAHN, J S 1980b "Review of F von Benda-Beckmann's Property in Social Continuity" *Indonesia Circle* 22: 81-88

KAHN, J S 1993 *Constituting the Minangkabau. Peasants, Culture, and Modernity in Colonial Indonesia* Oxford: Berg

KAPFERER, B 1969 "Norms and the Manipulation of Relationships in a Work Context" in J Clyde Mitchell (ed) *Social Networks in Urban Situations* Manchester: Manchester University Press

KATO, T 1978 "Change and Continuity in the Minangkabau Matrilineal System" *Indonesia* 25: 1-16

KATO, T 1982 *Matriliny and Migration: Evolving Minangkabau Traditions in Indonesia* Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press

LAMPHERE, L 1970 "Ceremonial Co-operation and Networks: A Reanalysis of the Navajo Outfit" *Man* vol 5: 39-59

LEVI-STRAUSS, C 1969 *The Elementary Structures of Kinship* Revised edition translated from French by J H Bell, J R von Sturmer and R Needham (ed) Boston: Beacon Press

LEWIS, D K 1962 *The Minangkabau Malay of Negri Sembilan: A Study of Socio-cultural Change* PhD Thesis, Cornell University

LEWIS, I M 1976 *Social Anthropology in Perspective: The Relevance of Social Anthropology* Harmondsworth: Penguin

LOMNITZ, L 1988 "The Social and Economic Organisation of a Mexican Shanty Town" in J Gugler (ed) *The Urbanisation of the Third World* Oxford: Oxford University Press

MAI, U and H BUCHHOLT 1987 *Peasant Pedlars and Professional Traders. Subsistence Trade in Rural Markets of Minahasa, Indonesia*

MARCH, K S and R L TAQQU 1986 *Women's Informal Associations in Developing Countries. Catalysts for Change*? Boulder and London: Westview Press

MARCUS, G E AND M J FISHER 1986 *Anthropology as Cultural Critique: An Experimental Moment in the Human Sciences* Chicago: University of Chicago Press

MARETIN, J V 1961 "Disappearance of Matriclan Survivals in Minangkabau Family and Marriage Relations" *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 117: 168-195

MAUDE, A 1979 "How Circular is Minangkabau Migration?", *Indonesian Journal of Geography* Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University vol 9 no 37: 1-12

MAYER, A C 1966 "The Significance of Quasi-Groups in the Study of Complex Societies" in M Banton (ed) *The Social Anthropology of Complex Societies* London: Tavistock Publications

MCALLISTER, C L 1987 *Matriliny, Islam, and Capitalism: Combined and Uneven Development in the Lives of Negeri Sembilan Women* PhD thesis, University of Pittsburgh

MILTON, K 1979 "Male Bias in Anthropology" *Man* vol 14: 40-54

MITCHELL, I G 1969 "The Socio-cultural Environment and Mental Disturbance: Three Minangkabau Case Histories" *Indonesia* 7: 123-137

MITCHELL, J CLYDE 1969 "The Concept and Use of Social Networks" in J Clyde Mitchell (ed) *Social Networks in Urban Situations* Manchester: Manchester University Press

MITCHELL, J Clyde 1973 "Networks, Norms and Institutions" in J Boissevain and J Clyde Mitchell (eds) *Network Analysis. Studies in Human Interaction* The Hague: Mouton

MITCHELL, J C 1974 "Social Networks" in *Annual Review of Anthropology* vol 3: 279-299

MOCHTAR NAIM 1971 *Merantau: Causes and Effects of Minangkabau Voluntary Migration* Occasional Paper no 5, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies

MOCHTAR NAIM 1984 *Merantau: Pola Migrasi Suku Minangkabau* Yogyakarta: Gajah Mada University Press

MOCHTAR NAIM 1985 "Implications of Merantau for Social Organisation in Minangkabau" in L L Thomas and F von Benda-Beckmann (eds) (1985) *Change and Continuity in Minangkabau: Local, Regional, and Historical Perspectives on West Sumatra* Ohio University, Monographs in International Studies, Southeast Asia Series no 71

MOORE, H L 1988 *Feminism and Anthropology* Oxford: Polity Press

MOORE, H L 1993 "The Differences Within and the Differences Between" in T del Valle (ed) *Gendered Anthropology* London: Routledge

MORGEN, S 1989 "Gender and Anthropology: Introductory Essay" in S Morgen (ed) *Gender and Anthropology. Critical Reviews for Research and Teaching* Washington: American Anthropological Association

MORTON, J 1988 "*Sakanab*: Greetings and Information among the Northern Beja", *Africa* vol 58 no 4: 423-436

MURAD, A 1980 *Merantau: Outmigration in a Matrilineal Society of West Sumatra* Indonesian Population Monograph Series no 3, Department of Demography, Australian National University, Canberra

NAGARI BASA, B DT 1966 *Tambo dan Silsilah Adat Alam Minangkabau* Payakumbuh: Eleonora

NASROEN, M 1957 *Dasar Falsafah Adat Minangkabau* Jakarta: Pasaman

NAVIS, A A 1984 *Alam Terkembang Jadi Guru. Adat dan Kebudayaan Minangkabau* Jakarta: Grafitipers

NELSON, N 1978 "'Women must help each other': the operation of personal networks among Buzaa beer brewers in Mathare Valley, Kenya" in P Caplan and J M Bujra (eds) *Women United, Women Divided. Cross-cultural Perspectives on Female Solidarity* London: Tavistock

NELSON, N 1979 *Why has Development Neglected Rural Women? A Review of South Asian Literature* Oxford: Pergamon Press

NOBLE, M 1973 "Social Network: Its use as a Conceptual Framework in Family Analysis" in J Boissevain and J C Mitchell (eds) *Network Analysis. Studies in Human Interaction* The Hague: Mouton

ONG, A 1989 "Center, Periphery and Hierarchy: Gender in Southeast Asia" in S Morgen (ed) *Gender and Anthropology. Critical Reviews for Research and Teaching* Washington: American Anthropological Association

ORTNER, S B 1974 "Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?" in M Z Rosaldo and L Lamphere (eds) *Woman, Culture, and Society* Stanford: Stanford University Press

PAPANEK, H 1975 "Women in Cities: Problems and Perspectives" in I Tinker, M B Bramsen and M Buvinic (eds) *Women and World Development* New York: Praeger

PAPANEK, H 1977 "Development Planning for Women" *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* vol 3 no 1: 14-21

PELETZ, M G 1988 *A Share of the Harvest. Kinship, Property, and Social History among the Malays of Rembau* Berkeley: University of California Press

PELLY USMAN 1983 *Urban Migration and Adaptation in Indonesia: A Case Study of Minangkabau and Mandailing Batak Migrants in Medan, North Sumatra* PhD thesis, University of Illinois

PERSOON, G 1982 *Wij Met Elkaar (awak samo awak). De Minangkabau in Jakarta* Institute of Cultural and Social Studies Publication no 58, Leiden University

PERSOON, G 1986 "Congelation in the Melting Pot. The Minangkabau in Jakarta" in P J M Nas (ed) *The Indonesian City* Dordrecht: Foris Publications

POEWE, K O 1981 *Matrilineal Ideology. Male-Female Dynamics in Luapula, Zambia* London: Academic Press Inc

POSTEL-COSTER, E 1985 *Het Omheinde Kweekbed. Machtsverhoudingen in de Minangkabause familieroman* Delft: Eburon

POSTEL-COSTER, E 1987 "The Image of Women in Minangkabau Fiction" in E Locher-Scholten and A Niehof (eds) *Indonesian Women in Focus. Past and Present Notions* Dordrecht: Foris Publications

POSTEL-COSTER, E 1988 "Women as Gifts. An Observer's Model" in D S Moyer and H J M Claessen (eds) *Time Past, Time Present, Time Future: Essays in Honour of P E de Josselin de Jong* Dordrecht: Foris Publications

PRINDIVILLE, J C J 1980 "The Image and Role of Minangkabau Women" Unpublished paper given at *Seminar Internasional mengenai Kesusasteraan, Kesyarakatan, dan Kebudayaan Minangkabau*, 4-6 September, Bukit Tinggi, Sumatera Barat, Indonesia

PRINDIVILLE, J C J 1985 "Mother, Mother's Brother, and Modernization: The Problems and Prospects of Minangkabau Matriliny in a Changing World" in L L Thomas and F von Benda-Beckmann (eds) (1985) *Change and Continuity in Minangkabau: Local, Regional, and Historical Perspectives on West Sumatra* Ohio University, Monographs in International Studies, Southeast Asia Series no 71

RAJO PENGHULU, H I DT 1978 *Pokok-Pokok Pengetahuan Adat Alam Minangkabau* Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya

REENAN, J VAN 1990 "Labour Migration and Matrilineal Patterns of Land Tenure: Some Social Impacts on a Minangkabau Village Community, the Case of Rao Rao" in Abdul Aziz Saleh and D Flud van Giffen (eds) *Socio-cultural Impacts of Development: Voice from the Field* Andalas University Research Center, Padang

REITER, R R (ed) 1975 *Toward an Anthropology of Women* New York: Monthly Review Press

RICHARDS, A I 1932 *Hunger and Work in a Savage Tribe. A Functional Study of Nutrition Among the Southern Bantu* London: Routledge

RICHARDS, A I 1950 "Some Types of Family Structure Amongst the Central Bantu" in A R Radcliffe-Brown and D Forde (eds) *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage* London: Open University Press

RICKLEFS, M C 1993 *A History of Modern Indonesia Since c1300* London: MacMillan

ROGERS, B 1980 *The Domestication of Women. Discrimination in Developing Societies* London: Routledge

ROSALDO, M Z 1974 "Woman Culture and Society: A Theoretical Overview" in M Z Rosaldo and L Lamphere (eds) *Woman, Culture, and Society* Stanford: Stanford University Press

SAHLINS, M 1974 *Stone Age Economics* London: Tavistock Publications

SANDAY, P R 1990 "Androcentric and Matrifocal Gender Representations in Minangkabau Ideology" in P R Sanday and R G Goodenough (eds) *Beyond the Second Sex. New Directions in the Anthropology of Gender* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press

SCHNEIDER, D M 1961 "Introduction: The Distinctive Features of Matrilineal Descent Groups" in D M Schneider and K Gough (eds) *Matrilineal Kinship* Berkeley: University of California Press

SCHRIEKE, B 1966 *Indonesian Sociological Studies* Part I The Hague: W van Hoeve Publishers Ltd

SCHRIJVERS, J 1979 "Viricentrism and Anthropology" in G Huizer and B Mannheim (eds) *The Politics of Anthropology* The Hague: Mouton Publishers

SCHRIJVERS, J AND E POSTEL-COSTER 1977 "Minangkabau Women: Change in a Matrilineal Society", *Archipel Etudes interdisciplinaires sur le monde insulindien* 13: 79-103

SHOFWAN KARIM 1990 "*Menata Mekanisme Sentral Organisasi Perantau Minang*" *Singgalang* 14 October 1990

SICOLI, F 1980 "Women in Rural Development: Recommendations and Realities" *Ceres, FAO Review of Agriculture and Development* vol 75, no 13: 15-22

SRINIVAS, M N and A BETEILLE 1964 "Networks in Indian Social Structure" *Man* vol 64: 165-168

STIVENS, M 1981 "Women, Kinship and Capitalist Development" in K Young et al (eds) *Of Marriage and the Market* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul

STRATHERN, M 1972 *Women in Between* New York: Seminar Press

STRATHERN, M 1987 "An Awkward Relationship: The Case of Feminism and Anthropology" *Signs* vol 12 no 2: 276-292

SWIFT, M G 1971 "Minangkabau and Modernisation" in L R Hiatt and C Jayawardena (eds) *Anthropology in Oceania. Essays presented to Ian Hogbin* Sydney: Angus and Robertson

SYMASUL AZHAR 1988 *Minangkabau Culture* Bukittinggi: Tropic Offset Printing

TANNER, N M 1971 *Minangkabau Disputes*, PhD thesis, Berkeley: University of California

TANNER, N M 1974 "Matrifocality in Indonesia and Africa and amongst Black Americans" in M Z Rosaldo and L Lamphere (eds) *Woman, Culture, and Society* Stanford: Stanford University Press

TANNER, N M 1976 "Minangkabau" in F M Le Bar (ed) *Insular Southeast Asia: Ethnographic Studies* New Haven Human Relations Area Files vol 1

TANNER, N M 1982 "The Nuclear Family in Minangkabau Matriliny: The Mirror of Disputes", *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* no 138: 129-151

TANNER, N M AND L L THOMAS 1985 "Rethinking Matriliny: Decision making and Sex Roles in Minangkabau" in L L Thomas and F von Benda-Beckmann (eds) (1985) *Change and Continuity in Minangkabau: Local, Regional, and Historical Perspectives on West Sumatra* Ohio University, Monographs in International Studies, Southeast Asia Series no 71

TAUFIK ABDULLAH 1966 "Adat and Islam: An Examination of Conflict in Minangkabau" *Indonesia* 2: 1-24

TAUFIK ABDULLAH 1970 "Some Notes on the *Kaba Tjindua Mato*: An Example of Minangkabau Traditional Literature", *Indonesia* 9: 1-22

TAUFIK ABDULLAH 1972 "Modernisation in the Minangkabau World: West Sumatra in the Early Decades of the Twentieth Century" in C Holt (ed) *Culture and Politics in Indonesia* Ithaca: Cornell University Press

TAUFIK ABDULLAH 1985 "Islam, History, and Social Change in Minangkabau" in L L Thomas and F von Benda-Beckmann (eds) *Change and Continuity in Minangkabau: Local, Regional, and Historical Perspectives on West Sumatra* Ohio University, Monographs in International Studies, Southeast Asia Series no 71

THOMAS, L L 1977 *Kinship Categories in a Minangkabau Village* PhD thesis, University of California, Riverside

UNITED NATIONS 1981 *Migration, Urbanisation and Development in Indonesia* Bangkok: Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

VERKERK PISTORIUS 1869 "Het Maleische Dorp", *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandsch Indie*, 3rd series Part 1: 97-119

WATSON, C W 1992 *Kinship, Property and Inheritance in Kerinci, Central Sumatra* CSAC Monographs 4, South-East Asia Series, University of Kent

WHITE, B 1984 "Measuring Time Allocation, Decision-making and Agrarian Changes affecting Rural Women: Examples from Recent Research in Indonesia" *Institute of Development Studies (IDS) Bulletin* vol 15 no 1: 18-32

WHITTEN, N E and A W WOLFE 1973 "Network Analysis" in J Honigmann (ed) *Handbook of Social and Cultural Anthropology* Chicago: Rand McNally and Co

WILLINCK, G D 1909 *Het Rechtsleven bij de Minangkabausche Maleires* Leiden: E J Brill

WOLF, E R 1966 "Kinship, Friendship, and Patron-Client Relations in Complex Societies" in M Banton (ed) *The Social Anthropology of Complex Societies* London: Tavistock Publications

YOUNG, K 1984 "Future Rapid Appraisal Work of the IDS Women's Cluster" *Institute of Development Studies (IDS) Bulletin* vol 15, no 1: 62-63

YOUNG, M AND P WILLMOTT 1957 *Family and Kinship in East London* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul

YOUSSOUF, I A, A D GRIMSHAW, AND C S BIRD 1976 "Greetings in the desert", *American Ethnologist*, vol 3 No 3: 797-824