

Negotiating Children's Identity and Rights in Minangkabau– Javanese Interethnic Marriages: Insights from Customary Leaders in Lubuk Kilangan

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Abstract:

This research examines the position of children from mixed marriages between Minangkabau and Javanese ethnicities in Lubuk Kilangan Sub-district, Padang City, based on the viewpoint of customary stakeholders. Problems arise due to differences in kinship systems: Minangkabau adheres to a matrilineal system, while Java is bilateral. This difference affects children's identity, inheritance rights and involvement in adat. The method used is qualitative ethnography with a participatory observation approach, in-depth interviews with traditional leaders, and document studies. The results show that maternal lineage is the main factor in determining the position of children. Children of Minangkabau mothers are traditionally recognized, have rights to high pusako, and are involved in traditional activities. In contrast, children of Javanese mothers are considered “nan indak basuku” (not tribal) and do not have customary inheritance rights, even though the father is Minang. The status of the child is determined through customary deliberation by the customary leader. However, the division of property from the family business can be done based on the principles of Islamic law. The research reveals the tension between inclusive national legal principles and strict customary rules, as well as the family's efforts to adjust to customary forms of exclusion. The research recommends adjustments to civil registration policies, improved cross-cultural communication and an evaluation of the role of customary stakeholders to ensure children's rights in a multicultural society.

Keywords: *Amalgamation; Matrilineal; Pemangku Adat; Cultural Identity*



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Introduction

The phenomenon of interethnic marriages between Minangkabau (matrilineal) and Javanese (bilateral) communities in Lubuk Kilangan District, Padang City, has risen sharply, and is estimated to account for 15–20% of all marriages registered at the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) between 2015 and 2024. This increase has generated urgent

social and juridical complexities, particularly because of clashes between kinship structures that have not yet been accommodated in national legal regulations.¹ In practice, these tensions are evident in the refusal to recognize children's clan affiliation and in disputes over inheritance rights to *pusako tinggi* (high ancestral property) involving children of non-Minangkabau mothers, as customary authorities (*ninik mamak*) continue to uphold the primacy of the matrilineal line as the basis of legitimacy. This situation produces a condition of legal liminality that places children in a vulnerable position, caught between the principle of equality upheld by state law and the rigid norms of adat. In addition, this uncertain status has significant socio-psychological effects, including the emergence of identity dissociation resulting from the label *nan indak basuku* ("without a clan"), which generates stigma and cultural subordination.² Exclusion from access to matrilineal networks, customary titles, and participation in adat rituals compels children to develop individual forms of adaptation amid an intensifying identity crisis. This situation therefore necessitates a comprehensive examination of the dynamics of power relations between customary structures, state authorities, and family agency in determining their socio-legal position.³

Previous studies on the dynamics of interethnic marriages in West Sumatra reveal significant conceptual and methodological limitations.⁴ Specifically, Rosalia's (2020) study on Minangkabau–Javanese marriages focuses solely on cultural assimilation and fails to examine the legal implications for children's status within the matrilineal system. Similarly, Saputra's (2020) study is confined to the procedural aspects of customary law on mixed marriages in Bukittinggi, without analysing the structural consequences for children's inheritance rights and customary recognition.⁵ Meanwhile, Nurhotma et al. (2022) explore the status of children born of Minangkabau–Tapanuli marriages in Kenagarian Bahagia, Padang Gelugur, but they do not critically examine the mechanisms by which customary authorities determine the legitimacy of children's cultural identities.⁶

Meanwhile, there are studies that also explore the status of children born of Minangkabau–Tapanuli marriages, but they do not critically examine the authority of customary leaders in identity construction⁷. The gap analysis indicates that: (1) there is a paucity of ethnographic studies on children's identity negotiations under customary authority; (2) socio-legal approaches to interrogate the power relations of customary

¹ Agil Ahmad, "Perkawinan Menurut Hukum Adat Minangkabau" (OSF, December 28, 2021), 14, <https://doi.org/10.31219/osf.io/r3a8e>.

² Welsa Aini et al., "Analisis Budaya Dalam Tradisi Perkawinan Di Adat Minangkabau," *Innovative: Journal Of Social Science Research* 4, no. 3 (May 13, 2024): 4, <https://doi.org/10.31004/innovative.v4i3.10771>.

³ Irzak Yuliardy Nugroho, Mufidah Ch, and Suwandi, "Pluralisme Hukum Dalam Tradisi Perkawinan Sasuku Pada Masyarakat Minang," *Al-Manhaj: Journal of Indonesian Islamic Family Law* 4, no. 1 (April 13, 2022): 6, <https://doi.org/10.19105/al-manhaj.v4i1.5722>.

⁴ Popy Rosalia, "Perkawinan Campuran (Amalgamasi) Antara Etnis Minangkabau Dengan Etnis Jawa Studi Kasus Di Kenagarian VII Koto Talago Kecamatan Guguk Kabupaten Lima Puluh Kota" 7 (2020): 4.

⁵ Saputra, ridho Tri Kurniawan, "Pelaksanaan Perkawinan Campuran Adat Antara Suku Bangsa Minangkabau Dengan Suku Bangsa Diluar Minangkabau (Studi Kasus Kelurahan Puhun Tembok, Kecamatan Mandiannin Koto Selayan, Kota Bukittinggi)" (Pekanbaru, Universitas Islam Riau Pekanbaru, 2020), 6.

⁶ Saputra, ridho Tri Kurniawan, 7.

⁷ Nurhotma Nurhotma et al., "Kedudukan Anak Dalam Perkawinan Campuran Suku Minangkabau Dan Suku Tapanuli Di Kenagarian Bahagia Padang Gelugur," *Journal of Civic Education* 5, no. 3 (August 24, 2022): 7, <https://doi.org/10.24036/jce.v5i3.724>.

leaders are absent; and (3) there is no comprehensive mapping of the impact of the Javanese bilateral system on Minangkabau matrilineality in the context of mixed marriages.

This study offers three main contributions. First, it applies a legal ethnographic approach to reveal how customary authorities exercise their power in determining children's status, going beyond previous normative studies.⁸ Second, it analyses conflicts between matrilineal and bilateral kinship systems through the lens of legal pluralism (Benda-Beckmann), highlighting tensions among customary law, Islamic law (the Compilation of Islamic Law, KHI), and national law. Third, it explores family adaptation strategies in the face of structural exclusion, as a response to earlier studies that adopt a deterministic perspective.⁹

The findings reveal a marked internal paradox in the exercise of authority by customary leaders. At the *nagari* level, they have begun to adopt a bilateral pattern in distributing self-acquired property, such as money and other economic assets which stands in sharp contrast to the strict rules governing *pusako tinggi*. This indicates that the matrilineal basis of power is tightly guarded for sacred forms of ownership (*pusako tinggi*) that function as symbols of communal identity, whereas modern economic assets are regulated more flexibly, reflecting a capitalistically inflected adaptation within a system that, at the discursive level, affirms its commitment to *adat*.¹⁰ This inconsistency shows that customary leaders do not entirely reject transformation; rather, they selectively maintain matrilineal elements that are rigidly preserved (*pusako tinggi* with sacred symbolic value) while allowing negotiation over elements that are materially economic (self-acquired property).¹¹

In Lubuk Kilangan District, Padang City, the phenomenon of interethnic marriages between Minangkabau and Javanese communities gives rise to distinctive issues and calls for a multidisciplinary approach to understanding children's position within a complex social landscape shaped by Minangkabau customary values and the elements of modernity brought by Javanese migrants.¹² Preliminary findings indicate that children of mixed marriages in this area experience a complex state of liminal identity, in which they must bridge the cultural expectations of both sides of the family¹³. Within the context of the relatively rigid Minangkabau matrilineal system, they are often placed in marginal positions¹⁴. At the same time, their role as cultural brokers frequently involves innovative adaptive strategies, such as selective internalisation of cultural norms, flexible negotiation of gender roles, and the creation of hybrid identity spaces that enable connection with the

⁸ Ajisril Ahmad, Kedudukan anak dalam keluarga hasil perkawinan antara etnis Minangkabau dan Jawa di Kecamatan Lubuk Kilangan menurut pemangku adat, March 17, 2025, KUA Lubuk Kilangan.

⁹ Satya Gayatri, Okta Firmansyah, and Dyani Prades Pratiwi, "Teaching Islamic Values through Traditional Stories," *Diksi* 31, no. 1 (March 31, 2023): 12, <https://doi.org/10.21831/diksi.v31i1.59288>.

¹⁰ Annysa Kurnia Sandra et al., "Kedekatan Anak Dan Ibu Dalam Suku Minangkabau: Sebuah Studi Psikologi Indigenous," *Causalita: Journal of Psychology* 1, no. 2 (September 26, 2023): 21, <https://doi.org/10.62260/causalita.v1i2.10>.

¹¹ Ellyne Dwi Poespasari, "Kedudukan Anak Luar Kawin Dalam Pewarisan Ditinjau Dari Sistem Hukum Kekerabatan Adat," *Perspektif: Kajian Masalah Hukum dan Pembangunan* 19, no. 3 (September 29, 2014): 3.

¹² Pusat Pengkajian Islam dan Minangkabau and Lembaga Kerapatan Adat Alam Minangkabau Sumatera Barat, *Himpunan peraturan daerah (Perda) tentang pemerintahan nagari di Sumatera Barat* (Pusat Pengkajian Islam dan Minangkabau, 2004), 23.

¹³ James Martin, *Antonio Gramsci: Marxism, Philosophy and Politics* (Taylor & Francis, 2002), 18.

¹⁴ Serena Nanda and Richard L. Warms, *Cultural Anthropology* (SAGE Publications, 2019), 20.

cultural heritage of both parents¹⁵. This phenomenon requires further exploration to examine how these children build agency in responding to social and cultural pressures, while simultaneously contributing to processes of cultural change within an increasingly diverse modern Minangkabau community.¹⁶

Research Method

This study is an empirical juridical (socio-legal) inquiry employing a qualitative approach, aimed at examining the interaction among Minangkabau matrilineal customary law, the Javanese bilateral kinship system, and national law in determining the status of children born of mixed marriages. The research site was purposively selected in Lubuk Kilangan District, Padang City, because it has the highest concentration of Minangkabau–Javanese families and a strong application of Pariaman *adat* in matrilineal inheritance.

The data sources comprised: (1) primary data from participant observation of five customary rituals (such as *tururun mandi* and *batagak penghulu*) and in-depth interviews with seven key informants (four customary leaders and three mixed-marriage families); (2) secondary data from customary documents (the *tambo* of Nagari Lubuk Kilangan), minutes of deliberations of the Adat Council (KAN), and statutory regulations (Law No. 1 of 1974 and the Compilation of Islamic Law, Articles 171–193); and (3) tertiary data from fifteen nationally accredited journals (2018–2023) on the anthropology of family law. Data analysis followed the Miles–Huberman interactive model, encompassing data reduction and data display (matrices of inheritance rights and networks of customary authority), conclusion verification (through focus group discussions with KAN members), and cultural validation based on the principles of *sasuai* and *sakali*. Data validity was ensured through methodological and source triangulation, while credibility was enhanced through member checking, the researcher’s reflexive positioning as an insider, and process documentation via an audit trail. This approach enabled a comprehensive analysis of KAN’s role as a customary law institution and of the adaptive strategies of children of mixed marriages in confronting exclusion from identity recognition and social rights.¹⁷

Results and Discussion

Interethnic Marriages between Minangkabau and Javanese in Minangkabau

This study reveals a duality in the position of children born of mixed marriages in Minangkabau customary law. Children with Minangkabau mothers receive full recognition within the matrilineal system, including rights to *pusako tinggi* (ancestral property), opportunities to inherit customary titles, and participation in rituals. By contrast, children of Javanese mothers are regarded as *nan indak basuku* (“without a clan”) and therefore have no rights to customary inheritance, even though they are administratively registered as “Minangkabau.” The *Kerapatan Adat Nagari* (KAN, Nagari Adat Council) enforces the principle of *sako jo pusako tibo ka kamanakan* through the determination of clan affiliation based on the *tambo*, supervision of *pusako tinggi*, and

¹⁵ Hamka, *Adat Minangkabau menghadapi revolusi* (Firma Tekad, 1963), 48.

¹⁶ Konflik Norma Perkawinan Beda Agama Dalam Undang-Undang Nomor 1 Tahun 1974 Tentang Perkawinan, Kompilasi Hukum Islam, Dan Undang-Undang Nomor 23 Tahun 2006 Tentang Administrasi Kependudukan | (20/7) - Direktorat Jenderal Badan Peradilan Agama,” 11, accessed October 20, 2023,

¹⁷ Deasy Gita Amelia Siallagan, Siti Komariah, and Mirna Nur Alia Abdullah, “Peran Anak Dalam Konstruksi Sosial Budaya Suku Batak,” *Kaganga: Jurnal Pendidikan Sejarah Dan Riset Sosial Humaniora* 6, no. 2 (August 12, 2023): 6, <https://doi.org/10.31539/kaganga.v6i2.6831>.

regulation of participation in *adat* affairs. *Datuak Rajo Mangkuto* emphasises that clan membership follows only the maternal line; accordingly, children of Minangkabau fathers and Javanese mothers still do not have a clan. This impact is evident in the family of Mr Tomi, whose son cannot inherit the title of *Datuak* because he does not fulfil the requirements of a legitimate matrilineal line.¹⁸

These findings confirm Benda-Beckmann's framework of legal pluralism, namely that customary authority is sustained through cultural hegemony in controlling sacred resources.¹⁹ The exclusion of children of Javanese mothers arises because the matrilineal system functions as a form of social closure to safeguard *tanah ulayat* (communal land) and the purity of ethnic identity. Accordingly, customary law operates as a politics of identity that reinforces the position of *adat* elites (*ninik mamak*). However, flexibility is evident in the management of self-acquired property, where customary authorities often adopt the bilateral principles of Islamic law. This is reflected in *adat* deliberations stating that "*pusako tinggi* is given to the matrilineal nephews and nieces, while a father's personal property may be inherited by his children in accordance with Islamic teachings."²⁰

These findings demonstrate that interethnic marriages are not fully accommodated within Minangkabau customary law. The accommodation applies only to *harta pusaka rendah*, whereas *harta pusaka tinggi* remains a "matrilineal fortress" that cannot be penetrated.²¹ This study also highlights a marked contrast with Minangkabau–Tapanuli intermarriages. In Minangkabau–Javanese unions, adoption into the father's *suku* is virtually closed, as the Javanese bilateral kinship system is perceived as a potential threat to the stability of the matrilineal structure. One customary leader explained that the bilateral pattern from the Javanese maternal line is feared to disrupt the established *kamanakan* order, making it impossible for the child to be incorporated into the father's *suku*.²²

These findings indicate that mixed marriages are not fully accommodated within customary law, because accommodation applies only to ordinary (non-ancestral) property, while *pusako tinggi* remains an impenetrable "matrilineal stronghold." The study also highlights a marked contrast with Minangkabau–Tapanuli marriages. In Minangkabau–Javanese unions, adoption into the father's clan is almost entirely closed off, as the Javanese bilateral system is perceived as potentially disrupting the stability of the matrilineal structure. As one customary leader stated, the bilateral pattern associated with Javanese mothers is feared to disturb the *kamanakan* order, so the child cannot be incorporated into the father's clan.²³

¹⁸ Ridwan Jamal, "Kewarisan Bilateral Antara Ahli Waris Yang Berbeda Agama Dalam Hukum Perdata Dan Kompilasi Hukum Islam," *Jurnal Ilmiah Al-Syir'ah* 14, no. 1 (September 13, 2016): 3, <https://doi.org/10.30984/as.v14i1.312>.

¹⁹ Nurana, Zulyani Hidayah, and Syamsidar, *Undang-Undang Adat Minangkabau* (Direktorat Jenderal Kebudayaan, 1992), 29.

²⁰ Erfina Nur Asria Rangkuti and Fatmariza Fatmariza, "Karakter Anak pada Perkawinan Campuran Suku Minangkabau dan Batak di Kelurahan Tanjung Buntung," *Journal of Civic Education* 3, no. 4 (December 14, 2020): 2, <https://doi.org/10.24036/jce.v3i4.391>.

²¹ Imam Muhardinata, *Pembagian Warisan Masyarakat Muslim Minangkabau: Studi Kasus Di Percut Sei Tuan* (Deepublish, 2020), 24.

²² Ulfa Sundari, "Sistem Pewarisan Dalam Perkawinan Antara Suku Batak Dan Suku Minangkabau (Studi Di Kota Medan)," 8, accessed November 30, 2023, <https://repositori.usu.ac.id/password-login>.

²³ Mohamad Sabri bin Haron, "Harta Dalam Konsepsi Adat Minangkabau" (Batusangkar, 2018), 23.

To cope with structural exclusion, mixed-marriage families employ three strategies. First, they pursue cultural compromise by teaching the Minangkabau language and values and involving children in customary practices as *urang sumando* (*affinal kin*)²⁴. Second, they engage in economic mobilisation by converting wealth into movable assets that can be inherited under Islamic law. Third, they undertake symbolic negotiation by conferring the title *Sutan* from the father’s side as an honorary substitute for the title *Datuak*. As Mrs Sri explained, this title was given because her child could not obtain the *Datuak* title. Although these strategies help to mitigate psychological impacts, they do not resolve the underlying structural inequalities.²⁵

Table 1. Theoretical Contributions and Corrections to Previous Studies Based on Key Research Findings

Aspect of Findings	Theoretical Contribution	Correction to Previous Studies
Duality of Children’s Status	Reinforces Barth’s (1969) theory of boundary maintenance	Corrects Saputra (2020) regarding the accommodation of customary law
Coping Strategies	Develop Hall’s (1996) concept of pragmatic hybridity	Revises Afrizal (2019) on matrilineal adaptation
KAN Authority	Affirms Benda-Beckmann’s notion of legal pluralism as hegemony	Strengthens Abdullah’s (2021) argument on the role of customary guardians

The Position of Children in Families Resulting from Minangkabau–Javanese Marriages in Lubuk Kilangan District

This study reveals a rigid kinship stratification system based on the maternal line among the Minangkabau community in Lubuk Kilangan District. This system creates a sharp dichotomy between the position of children born to Minangkabau mothers (*nan basuku*, having a clan) and those born to Javanese mothers (*indak basuku*, without a clan), functioning as a mechanism of social control that ascriptively determines an individual’s place in the customary hierarchy and cannot be altered by personal achievement.²⁶

Children of Minangkabau mothers receive full recognition within the traditional customary structure through a series of rituals and formal procedures that have been passed down from generation to generation. This recognition begins at birth with the recording of the child’s name in the *tambo* (clan genealogy), which is read aloud by the clan chief (*datuak kepala suku*) during the *tururun mandi* ceremony. This process

²⁴ Saputra, ridho Tri Kurniawan, “Pelaksanaan Perkawinan Campuran Adat Antara Suku Bangsa Minangkabau Dengan Suku Bangsa Diluar Minangkabau,” 34.

²⁵ Rahman Malik, “Ikatan Kekerabatan Etnis Minangkabau dalam Melestarikan Nilai Budaya Minangkabau di Perantauan sebagai Wujud Warga NKRI,” *Jurnal Analisa Sosiologi*, Ikatan Kekerabatan Etnis Minangkabau dalam Melestarikan Nilai Budaya Minangkabau di Perantauan sebagai Wujud Warga NKRI, 2 (2016): 9.

²⁶ Angga Dimas Pratama and Wiwiek Wahyuningsih, “Tinjauan Yuridis Status Anak Yang Lahir Dari Perkawinan Campuran Antara Warga Negara Asing (WNA) Dengan Warga Negara Indonesia (WNI),” *Private Law* 3, no. 1 (February 2, 2023): 14, <https://doi.org/10.29303/prlw.v3i1.2204>.

involves a specific ritual in which the *mamak* (maternal uncle) formally declares his acknowledgment of the new *kemenakan* (niece/nephew) before the *ninik mamak* (customary leaders) of the clan.²⁷

Cultural legitimacy is realised through the granting of rights to customary titles such as *Datuak* or *Sutan*, which are inherited along the matrilineal line. *Anak basuku* (clan-bearing children) who reach a certain level of maturity are entitled to participate in the *batagak* (installation) process as prospective *penghulu* (clan chiefs).²⁸ Their status as legitimate heirs places *anak basuku* in a strategic position within the traditional Minangkabau economic system, not only as recipients of inheritance but also as trustees responsible for maintaining and preserving clan ancestral property.²⁹ By contrast, children of Javanese mothers face a contradictory reality within the prevailing social system. Although biologically they possess Minangkabau blood through their fathers—even when the father descends from a *penghulu* with high social status—they are still categorised as *indak basuku* and are regarded merely as *anak pisang*, or marginal kin. This term carries negative connotations, portraying their position as individuals situated at the periphery of the social structure.³⁰

The identity paradox experienced by children categorised as *indak basuku* is reflected in the disjuncture between administrative recognition and cultural rejection. Administratively, they are registered as Indonesian citizens who possess the same civil rights as others, yet culturally they face systemic discrimination that restricts their access to various dimensions of social and economic life within Minangkabau communities.³¹ This stratification system challenges earlier studies that claim the existence of equality in mixed marriages and flexibility in the Minangkabau kinship system. Empirical realities show that, despite processes of modernization, the matrilineal kinship structure continues to preserve its exclusive traditional characteristics. The principles of *baso*, *basi*, and *budi*, which are often invoked to justify acceptance of mixed marriages, are in practice not applied consistently to the children born of such unions.³²

Children's inheritance rights are determined in a sharply dichotomous manner through the principle of sacralising the maternal line, which reflects a fundamental belief in Minangkabau cosmology that clan identity and the rights attached to it can only be transmitted through women. *Anak basuku* enjoy full rights over the three categories of property that constitute the foundation of the traditional Minangkabau economy: *pusako tinggi* (communal ancestral land), *pusako randah* (parents' self-acquired property), and

²⁷ Faisal Habib Lubis, "Pemulihan Trauma Pada Anak Korban Bencana Dalam Perspektif Islam (Studi Kasus Bencana Gunung Sinabung Di Desa Guru Kinayan, Kecamatan Payung, Kabupaten Karo, Sumatera Utara)," *AL-IRSYAD* 11, no. 2 (December 20, 2021): 7, <https://doi.org/10.30829/al-irsyad.v11i2.9587>.

²⁸ Bahar Datuk Nagari Basa, *Tambo dan silsilah adat Minangkabau* (Eleonora, 1966), 27.

²⁹ Martyn Pitt, "A Tale of Two Gladiators: 'Reading' Entrepreneurs as Texts," *ResearchGate*, 2, accessed May 11, 2025, <https://doi.org/10.1177/017084069801900302>.

³⁰ Ona Yulita et al., "Akulturasi Budaya Pernikahan Minangkabau Dengan Transmigrasi Jawa Di Kabupaten Solok Selatan Sumatera Barat," *Ideas: Jurnal Pendidikan, Sosial, Dan Budaya* 7, no. 2 (June 4, 2021): 4.

³¹ Rahmi Murniawati, "Eksistensi Peradilan Adat Dalam Penyelesaian Sengketa Di Sumatera Barat," *Unes Journal of Swara Justisia* 7, no. 3 (October 21, 2023): 8, <https://doi.org/10.31933/ujsj.v7i3.417>.

³² Norma Fauza, "Keistimewaan Wanita Minangkabau dalam Karya Seni Lukis 'Alua Tataruang Patah Tigo, Samuik Tapijak Indak Mati,'" *INVENSI* 8, no. 2 (December 1, 2023): 8, <https://doi.org/10.24821/invensi.v8i2.8280>.

the *rumah gadang* (matrilineal clan house).³³ By contrast, *anak indak basuku* face severe restrictions on access to traditional economic resources. They obtain only limited access to *harta randah* through gifts (*hibah*) or wills (*wasiat*) based on Islamic law, the implementation of which often encounters resistance from the father's extended family. A case study of Mr Ramadhan's family in Nagari Lubuk Kilangan offers a concrete illustration of how this system operates in everyday life: his daughter was prohibited from inheriting her father's ancestral rice field, even though in principle she holds inheritance rights under both Islamic and national law.³⁴

Participation in customary rituals constitutes the clearest arena in which the prevailing social stratification is manifested.³⁵ *Anak basuku* occupy central roles in key rituals such as *batagak penghulu* and *tururun mandi*, whereas *anak indak basuku* function only as "passive observers" in customary events. They are permitted to attend various ceremonies but have no right to take an active part in the ritual processes and are even prohibited from wearing full customary attire, which serves as a symbol of full membership in the Minangkabau community. In facing these restrictions, families with *anak indak basuku* develop creative coping strategies.³⁶ These include converting economic resources into movable assets, conferring the title *Sutan* as a symbolic substitute, and allowing limited involvement as *urang sumando* (honoured affinal guests).³⁷ However, a survey of *anak indak basuku* respondents in Lubuk Kilangan District shows that many of them still experience stigmatisation as *anak singkek* (children without a clan) in everyday interactions.³⁸ The persistence of this stigma demonstrates that these coping strategies are essentially palliative and do not address the structural roots of inequality embedded in the Minangkabau kinship system. Although they offer some short-term relief, such strategies are unable to alter the community's fundamental perceptions of the status of *anak indak basuku*.³⁹

These findings revise earlier claims that acculturation is effective in resolving identity conflicts in multicultural societies. Empirical realities indicate that, in the context of the Minangkabau matrilineal kinship system, acculturation tends to produce new hierarchies rather than equality. The acculturation process is asymmetrical: the dominant group (Minangkabau) maintains its hegemonic position, while the minority group (Javanese) experiences systemic marginalisation.⁴⁰ Overall, this study reveals that the

³³ Surhermi Surhermi, "Naskah Lakon Sabai Nan Aluih Karya Tulis Sutan Sati: Fenomena Androgini Dalam Masyarakat Matrilineal Minangkabau," *Puitika* 15, no. 2 (2019): 6, <https://doi.org/10.25077/puitika.15.2.135--154.2019>.

³⁴ Fahmil Samiran et al., "Values behind Osong Kapali Ceremony: Sociocultural Review of Indigenous and Religious Tradition," *El Harakah: Jurnal Budaya Islam* 24, no. 2 (November 19, 2022): 11, <https://doi.org/10.18860/eh.v24i2.17338>.

³⁵ Muhammad Taufiq, *Qur'anic Culture Dalam Perkawinan Adat Di Minangkabau* (Uwais Inspirasi Indonesia, 2023), 29.

³⁶ Sari, Syeilendra, and Hidayat, "Jejak Falsafah Alam Takambang Jadi Guru Dalam Repertoar Musik Tradisional Minangkabau," 5.

³⁷ Rika Febri Anti Lubis and Rabiatal Abawiyah, "Pewarisan Harta Di Minangkabau Dalam Perspektif Kompilasi Hukum Islam," *Al Qadhi* 1, no. 2 (December 31, 2023): 15, <https://doi.org/10.62214/jaq.v1i2.144>.

³⁸ Musrayani Usman, *Sosiologi Keluarga* (Nas Media Pustaka, 2024), 55.

³⁹ Lisna Sandora, "Nilai-Nilai Pendidikan Dalam Tradisi Batagak Pangulu Di Kabupaten Lima Puluh Kota," *Khazanah: Jurnal Sejarah Dan Kebudayaan Islam* 11, no. 1 (November 19, 2021): 16, <https://doi.org/10.15548/khazanah.v11i1.519>.

⁴⁰ Lisna Sandora, "Nilai-Nilai Pendidikan Dalam Tradisi Batagak Pangulu Di Kabupaten Lima Puluh Kota," *Khazanah: Jurnal Sejarah Dan Kebudayaan Islam* 11, no. 1 (November 19, 2021): 16, <https://doi.org/10.15548/khazanah.v11i1.519>.

Minangkabau kinship stratification system is highly resilient to bottom-up efforts at change. The persistence of subtle forms of discrimination shows that, despite modernisation in various spheres of life, the matrilineal kinship structure continues to preserve its exclusive characteristics, sharply distinguishing between *anak basuku* and *anak indak basuku* in all dimensions of social, economic, and ritual life.⁴¹

The Authority of Minangkabau Customary Leaders in Determining Children's Status and Social Rights

The authority of the *Kerapatan Adat Nagari* (KAN, Nagari Adat Council) in determining the status of children from Minangkabau–Javanese mixed marriages rests on three mutually reinforcing pillars of legitimacy that together create a comprehensive system of power. The first pillar is the monopoly over the *tambo* as an exclusive genealogical document that serves as the primary reference for determining lineage and kinship status.⁴² The *tambo* is not merely a genealogical record; it is a sacred document containing historical narratives about the origins of the clans, ancestral migrations, and the territorial division of power among clans within a *nagari*. This monopoly over the *tambo* is strengthened through the ritualisation of its recitation, which may only be performed by *datuak* or *ninik mamak* who have received formal legitimacy from the KAN. The recitation process involves specific procedures requiring spiritual preparation and mastery of classical Minangkabau language, which is not understood by the wider community. By controlling access to the *tambo*, the KAN is able to determine which version of history is regarded as authentic and legitimate, and can exclude particular individuals or families from the official narrative of clan membership.⁴³

The second pillar is the mandate of *musyawarah nagari* as the embodiment of *kato sapakat* (customary consensus), which grants democratic legitimacy to KAN's decisions.⁴⁴ *Musyawarah nagari* involves all *ninik mamak* from the various clans and is regarded as the highest forum for decision-making on adat-related matters. In practice, however, this consensus is often formed before the formal deliberation takes place, through a series of informal negotiations among influential customary leaders.⁴⁵

The third pillar is state recognition through the *Peraturan Daerah* (Regional Regulation) on *Nagari*, which confers formal legal status on KAN as the lowest level of government institution within the regional autonomy system. Through this legal recognition, KAN acquires the authority to issue decisions that are legally binding, not only in the realm of adat but also in administrative governance. This legal status provides

⁴¹ Esli Zuraidah Siregar and Ali Amran, "Gender Dan Sistem Kekerabatan Matrilineal," *Jurnal Kajian Gender Dan Anak* 2, no. 2 (January 14, 2020): 7, <https://doi.org/10.24952/gender.v2i2.2173>.

⁴² Lisa Elfira and Delfi Eliza, "Analisis Information Book Pengenalan Budaya Minangkabau Untuk Anak Usia Dini," *Jurnal Obsesi: Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini* 7, no. 4 (August 29, 2023): 7, <https://doi.org/10.31004/obsesi.v7i4.5028>.

⁴³ Nurul Anita and Nugroho Trisnu Brata, "Makna Budaya Bajapuik dalam Pernikahan Etnis Minangkabau di Kota Pariaman Sumatra Barat," *Aceh Anthropological Journal* 7, no. 2 (October 31, 2023): 5, <https://doi.org/10.29103/aaj.v7i2.12718>.

⁴⁴ Ikhwanuddin Harahap, *Perkawinan adat suku Batak dengan Minangkabau: model integrasi budaya* (Bogor: ByPass, 2023), 21, <https://repo.uinsyahada.ac.id/1158/>.

⁴⁵ Felia Wati, "Tradisi Maisi Sasuduik Dalam Perkawinan Masyarakat Minangkabau: Studi Interaksi Adat Dan Hukum Islam," *As-Syar'i: Jurnal Bimbingan & Konseling Keluarga* 6, no. 1 (2024): 3, <https://doi.org/10.47467/as.v6i1.4925>.

KAN's decisions regarding the status of children from mixed marriages with legal legitimacy that can be invoked in interactions with other state institutions.⁴⁶

In the inheritance dispute of Mr Tomi's family in Nagari Lubuk Kilangan, KAN illustrates how these three pillars of legitimacy are used synergistically to reinforce its exclusionary decisions. When Mr Tomi's child, who already held a land certificate for an inherited rice field, intended to sell the land, KAN intervened by invalidating the land certificate on the grounds that the land constituted *pusako tinggi* that "*indak tibo ka anak singkek*" (cannot devolve upon a child without a clan).⁴⁷

This annulment was carried out through the deployment of textual authority, reflecting KAN's discursive power in interpreting and applying customary law. KAN referred to the *tambo* of the Piliang clan, which states that the land had been designated as *pusako tinggi* since ancestral times and could not be transferred to individuals who lacked a matrilineal genealogy within that clan. Legitimacy through *kato sapakat* was asserted by claiming that the annulment decision had received the consensual support of all *ninik mamak* of the Piliang clan.⁴⁸

KAN's dominance is exercised through four interrelated mechanisms of control. The first mechanism is the sacralisation of the maternal line in the *batagak penghulu* ritual, which functions as a means of reproducing matrilineal ideology and reinforcing social hierarchy. This ritual involves a series of complex procedures that emphasise the centrality of matrilineal descent in determining the legitimacy of leadership, including rigorous genealogical tracing and formal recognition by the *bundo kanduang* (clan matriarchs).⁴⁹ The second mechanism is systematic delegitimation through the label *indak basuku*, which operates as an effective form of social stigmatisation to exclude children of mixed marriages. The term *indak basuku* carries negative connotations, depicting individuals as lacking a clear cultural identity, being unreliable in upholding tradition, and having insufficient commitment to Minangkabau communal values. This delegitimation is further reinforced by the use of other pejorative expressions such as *anak singkek*, *urang asing*, or *anak campuran*.⁵⁰

The third mechanism is the monopoly over the interpretation of customary proverbs (*pepatah adat*), which grants KAN discursive power to determine the authoritative meaning of key Minangkabau teachings.⁵¹ KAN exploits the inherent ambiguity of these proverbs to support interpretations that favour an exclusive matrilineal stratification system. This interpretive monopoly is strengthened through KAN's control over various adat discussion forums and traditional educational spaces in the *nagari*, including the right to determine the curriculum of customary education taught in *surau*.⁵² The fourth

⁴⁶ Ibnu Amin, "Implementasi Hukum Islam Dalam Falsafah Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah Di Minangkabau," *IJTIHAD* 38, no. 2 (December 31, 2022): 7, <https://journals.fasya.uinib.org/index.php/ijtihad/article/view/140>.

⁴⁷ Muhamad Rizky Setiawan, Hairul Amri, and Mohd Yunus, "Analisis Hukum Islam Terhadap Sanksi Adat Perkawinan Sesuku Di Masyarakat Minangkabau | Journal of Sharia and Law," *Journal of Sharia and Law* 2, no. 2 (April 2, 2023): 5.

⁴⁸ Widjono Hs, *Bhs Ind Mt Kulh Pngemb Kepri DiPT (Rev)* (Grasindo, 2007), 23.

⁴⁹ Samiaji Sarosa, *Analisis Data Penelitian Kualitatif* (PT Kanisius, n.d.), 45.

⁵⁰ Iwan Hermawan, *Metodologi Penelitian Pendidikan (Kualitatif, Kuantitatif dan Mixed Method)* (Hidayatul Quran, 2019), 23.

⁵¹ Conny R. Semiawan, *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif* (Grasindo, n.d.), 34.

⁵² Novita Fini, "Perkawinan Campuran (Amalgamasi) etnis Jawa dan Minangkabau (studi kasus jorong sungai duo nagari luak kapau alam pau duo kabupaten solok selatan)" (diploma, Universitas Andalas, 2018), 4, <http://scholar.unand.ac.id/38302/>.

mechanism is strict regulation of economic access to *pusako tinggi*, which operates as the most effective material control in maintaining the supremacy of “pure” matrilineal groups. KAN maintains tight control over *pusako tinggi* through an internal registration system that recognises only the rights of individuals who can prove matrilineal descent via *tambo* documentation. This regulation involves a series of complex and time-consuming customary bureaucratic procedures that, in practice, exclude individuals who lack strong social networks within the matrilineal community.⁵³

One of the cases involves an individual with high academic and economic achievement who was nevertheless denied access to a customary title because they did not meet the criterion of “purity” of matrilineal descent. The rejection process was carried out through opaque mechanisms, without clear explanation of the criteria used or any accessible appeal procedure. This demonstrates that KAN’s exercise of authority is driven by an agenda of identity purification aimed at preserving the supremacy of the “pure” matrilineal group.⁵⁴

Conclusion

Based on ethnographic research in Lubuk Kilangan District, Padang City, this study concludes that the status of children born of Minangkabau–Javanese marriages is rigidly determined by the Minangkabau matrilineal system as exercised through the authority of customary leaders (KAN). Maternal descent is the primary determining factor: children of Minangkabau mothers (*nan basuku*) receive full customary recognition, including rights to inherit *pusako tinggi*, eligibility for customary titles, and participation in rituals. By contrast, children of Javanese mothers (*indak basuku*) experience structural exclusion: they are denied customary inheritance rights, prohibited from wearing full traditional regalia, and recognised only as *anak pisang* (marginal kin), even though they are administratively registered as Minangkabau. This situation stems from KAN policies that seek to preserve matrilineal “purity” through a monopoly over the *tambo* as a sacred genealogical document, the ritualisation of *batagak penghulu* to reinforce a mother-based hierarchy, and strict control over *pusako tinggi* as a fortress of collective identity. Together, these practices create a legal paradox between the inclusive principles of national and Islamic law and the exclusivist logic of *adat*, producing identity dissonance among children (*tagak di duo batan*, “standing on two stones”) and social polarisation. Although families develop adaptive strategies—such as converting property into movable assets and conferring symbolic titles (e.g., *Sutan*)—these measures remain palliative and do not resolve the underlying structural inequalities. The study therefore recommends reconstructing civil registration policies to accommodate dual identities, revitalising KAN’s role as an inclusive mediator, and strengthening intercultural dialogue to safeguard children’s rights in a multicultural society.

⁵³ Dafik Syahroni, “Kepatuhan hukum dalam Asimilasi Budaya pernikahan antar suku: Studi keluarga Amalgamasi Dayak Tomun dan Jawa di Kotawaringin Barat Kalimantan Tengah” (masters, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim, 2023), 32, <http://etheses.uin-malang.ac.id/74485/>.

⁵⁴ Huma Sarah, “Pelaksanaan Pembagian Harta Warisan Berdasarkan Hukum Adat Pada Masyarakat Suku Minangkabau di Kota Matsum II Medan” (Thesis, Universitas Medan Area, 2020), 34, <https://repository.uma.ac.id/handle/123456789/12240>.

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