



# The Creation and Re-creation of the Adat Village in West Sumatra, Indonesia

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Over time, village governance in Indonesia has undergone many changes. In the pre-colonial era, villages were organised according to the local customary law called 'adat', and today, those same villages are part of the modern state. Suharto's centralised New Order regime led to dramatic changes in village governance, as all villages were arranged uniformly in a system called 'desa'. Changes to the law after Suharto left office were marked by regional autonomy, which allowed local governments to manage their own territories in accordance with local conditions. Some desa chose to return to an adat village system. The village dynamics have, more recently, been heightened with the passing of the Village Law, which allocates funds to villages to manage independently. This has resulted in the subdivision of villages, in order to acquire more funds. In this paper, we argue that the trend in village splitting is not necessarily related to changes in the law or political events. Based on ethnographic research conducted in a village in West Sumatra, this paper concludes that the dynamics of returning to the customary order, and the decisions to divide villages are influenced by factors of history, tradition and local culture, and by a momentum not previously experienced.

**Keywords:** *Adat village, Customary law, Village government, Indonesia, West Sumatra*

## Introduction

The Indonesian villages are the country's smallest administrative units, which have marked post-Suharto democratisation with various important events. Through the process of democratisation, the political participation of village actors and institutions has increased, the reorganisation of village forms was carried out, villages were



provided with funds to stimulate economic development, and hopes for prosperity were raised.

The local institutions, and leadership in the regions, such as Africa, Latin America, and Southeast Asia, are of interest to scholars of the democratisation process. The research into community-based development and civil society has been conducted in Indonesia (Antlöv, 2003; Antlöv et al., 2016). In Italy, Putnam (1993) has explored civic community, and social capital. The World Bank has conducted research on village institutions and leadership, such as local level institution studies in Bolivia, Burkina Faso, and Indonesia (Grootaert et al., 1999; Wetterberg, Jellema & Dharmawan, 2014), and local governance reforms in Europe, and the United States (US) (Berg & Rao, 2005).

For Indonesia, in particular, the impact of political reform on the political elite has been explored, and a specific approach has been taken to the phenomenon of elite survival, and the significant role of established elites in Indonesia's democratic transition (Permana, 2017: 4). Other research in Indonesia has explored the importance of local customs and identity (Choi, 2011; Henley & Davidson, 2008; Aspinall & Fealy, 2003), and the rise of the civil society (Antlöv et al., 2010; Takano, 2008; Nordholt & Klinken, 2007). In addition to monitoring democratisation, decentralisation, and community-based development processes, some initiatives have been undertaken to encourage civil society institutions to promote government accountability and effectiveness in sectors such as education, health, and social capital, in an effort to improve community welfare or reduce poverty (Grootaert et al., 1999; Wetterberg et al., 2014).

Henley and Davidson (2007) argue that traditions and customs in Indonesian politics are important to understand the contemporary Indonesian political landscape. For instance, local governance arrangements often reflect the culturally demanded struggle for power and culturally motivated efforts to gain access to power (Bebbington et al., 2004). These authors argue that community-driven development and decentralisation programmes must pay attention to village level tensions, as inherent cultural forms and local traditions can easily exacerbate potentially complex conflicts.

In January 2014, Law Number 6/2014 on the Villages Government was issued. This decentralisation policy frees villages from a higher-level governmental authority by granting village autonomy. However, it has created loopholes for democratic institutions that aim to revitalise village development, as a village's democratically elected 'Badan Perwakilan Desa' or Village Representative Body cannot really play a role in establishing strategic decisions (Antlöv, 2003; Antlöv et al., 2016). In addition to giving villages wider autonomy, this law also explicitly provides options for the return to the adat, as this law allows for a return to, or a re-creation of, a village model rooted



in the adat, which is already embedded in local social systems (Vel & Bedner, 2015). Adat is a loose term used by Indonesians to refer to old and traditional social arrangements, and it sometimes also refers to traditions or customary laws. The return to adat is also perceived as a means to recognise the traditional rights of rural communities, to strengthen weak governance arrangements and to empower villages to meet development needs, and reduce poverty and social inequality (Antlöv et al., 2016).

In West Sumatra, this policy has been perceived as a form of political freedom and decentralisation following the collapse of the centralised Suharto regime in 1998. The period since has been one of contestation and continuously negotiated adat relations, in an attempt to ensure that the village realm is legally and formally represented by the State. One major change that has occurred in relation to decentralisation is the reorganisation of village administration, known as 'back to the nagari' (Vel & Bedner, 2015). The nagari is a traditional village structure which has existed since long before national independence. It has roots in pre-colonial political organisations and is part of the adat system. In 1983, the traditional Minangkabau village government became desa, with attendant changes to the concept of territory and traditional institutions. Customary leaders were replaced by State officials, who became village leaders. Despite this, the Provincial Regulation Number 13/1983 stated that adat institutions would continue to apply to the regulation of daily life at the community level (Benda-Beckmann & Benda-Beckmann, 2006). This phenomenon of dualism between the formal rules governing village administration and customary rules at the community level has previously been discussed in the Indonesian contexts by Nordholt (2005), Pichard (2005), and Warren (2007).

In 2014, the Village Government Law Number 6/2014, which is operationalised through the Government Regulation Number 60/2014 concerning Village Funds, gave rise to a very different dynamic. Some villages are divided into two or three smaller villages, with the hope that communities in these new villages will receive village funding. Village elites now compete for legitimacy to create new villages. In West Sumatra, where village funding is lower than in other Sumatran provinces, a number of nagari have been divided, so that village funds can be increased (Firdaus, 2017).

In addition to the long discourse about democratisation in post-Suharto villages, which are concerned with the institutional, leadership, and village-splitting issues associated with village fund incentives, a different trend has been observed in Nagari Pariangan, in the Tanah Datar District, West Sumatra. In this paper, we argue that village dynamics in Nagari Pariangan are not merely the result of political and legal issues brought about by changes to regulations and laws. Foresight, historical context, local pride, and a momentum that has happened by chance, all provide a new explanation of the changes taking place in Indonesian villages today. The defence of this argument begins by



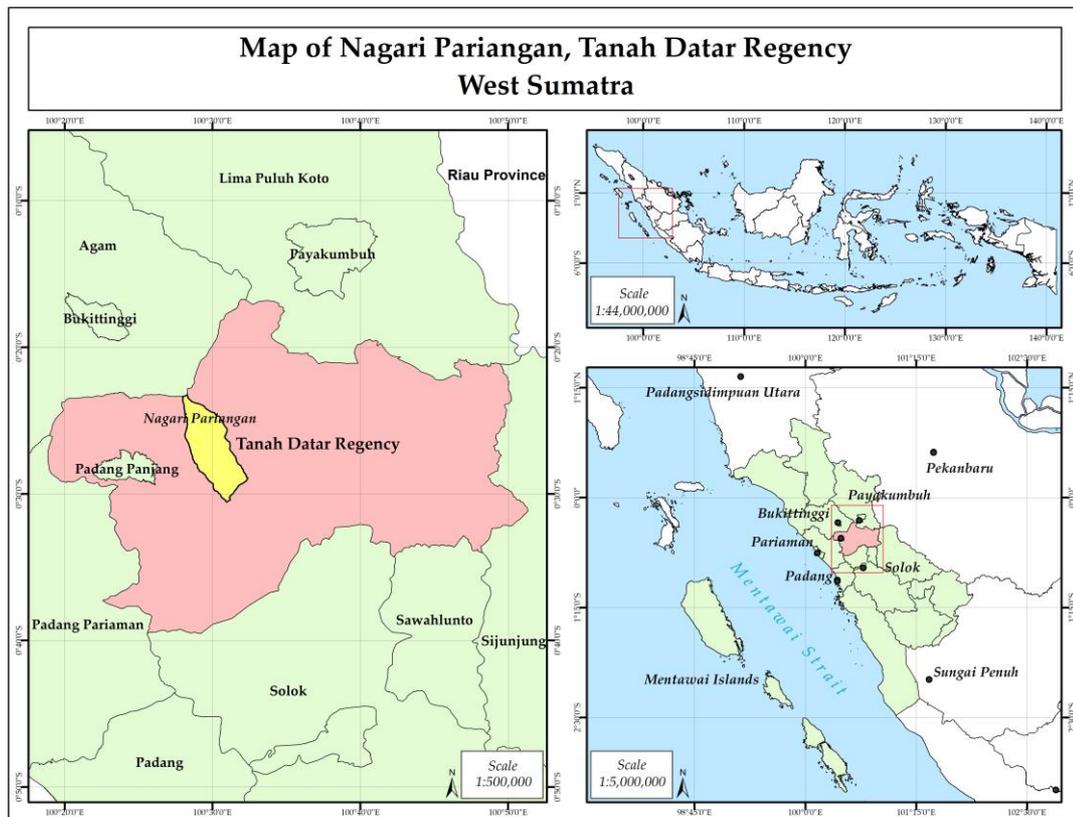
placing Nagari Pariangan in the Minangkabau cultural structure, narrating the changes during the New Order era and the post-Suharto era, and exploring the current momentum created by tourism development.

Thus, the creation of an adat village as an example of the political and cultural identity making cannot be explained in a single explanation. However, over a discourse of creation as a way to challenge structure (Rapport & Overing, 2000), we are also aware that the process will always link to other matters, such as history (Spillman, 1997), policy reform and change (Harrell, 2001; Belshaw, 2014), and several old cultural practices (MacClancy, 2019; Wulff, 2019). Therefore, we must notice that in talking about creation, at the same time, we need to think about re-creation, since it is in fact a cyclical process.

## **Methods**

We conducted research in Nagari Pariangan, a village located in the Pariangan Subdistrict, Tanah Datar District, in West Sumatra. This nagari is administratively divided into four jorong or hamlets. These are Jorong Pariangan, Jorong Padang Panjang, Jorong Guguak, and Jorong Sikaladi. As an administrative unit, Nagari Pariangan is led by a Wali Nagari, whom is a leader democratically elected by the community and assisted by several kepala jorong, who each lead a jorong. We performed an ethnographic research for eleven months from October 2018 to August 2019. At those times, we stayed at the homes of local people and spent each day with the residents of Nagari Pariangan, particularly in Jorong Pariangan, and Jorong Guguak.

**Figure 1.** Map of the research site



As an ethnographic study, our research design is quite extensive and flexible. At first, we identified what Malinowski called a foreshadowed problem, which covered several aspects of the life of the community to be studied, the problems they faced, and how they viewed the community and themselves in their community (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007: 3). Designed as a dissertation research for Febrianto on the theme of shifting political systems at the rural level due to changes in national policies, some findings indicate a tendency for a number of local institutions to persist, especially in relation to strategies to collect village funds. After the eighth month in the field, a field assistant was sent to specifically explore the issue of village funds, and the return of adat systems in village governance.

We understand that researchers are important instruments in qualitative research, as expressed by Creswell (2009: 173). Incidentally, one of the writers came from the Minangkabau ethnic group, the same as the residents of Nagari Pariangan. Apart from the ease that results from language acquisition and early knowledge of Minangkabau culture, this study is not an auto-ethnographic research (Denzin, 2009: 206). We consider that there are many new things that we do not know, even though we are very aware of the possibility of bias due to relationships that are too close to the community



under study. As his dissertation supervisor, the other writer became a partner in reminding that there are possible biases.

The procedures of data collecting in the field, and analysis are carried out following the stages of Creswell (2009: 178–179), starting from purposefully identifying specific locations and informants to determine the settings, actors, events, and social processes to be observed. In addition, data was collected mainly through in-depth open interviews (Fetterman, 2010: 40–52) with actors who were considered important, and observations of a series of events that occurred during the study. Our informants were selected by contacting the highest traditional leaders in Nagari Pariangan, then proceeding to matrilineal leaders, namely, ‘bundo kanduang’, and ‘niniak mamak’. In total, we interviewed 62 people during the study consisting of 12 datuak or community leaders and niniak mamak; 36 men to represent government and adat officials, youth, teachers, and religious leaders; and 14 women to include bundo kanduang. To complement the data, we also utilised a number of documents produced by traditional leaders in the village.

## **Findings**

### ***The Creation and Re-creation of Nagari Pariangan***

#### *A Short History of Nagari Pariangan*

As a geographical and cultural region, Nagari Pariangan plays a significant role in the mythology of the Minangkabau people, the biggest and most dominant ethnic group in the province of West Sumatra. According to local mythology, the first kingdom of the Pasumayan Koto Batu, and the oldest nagari were built in the place now called Nagari Pariangan. Pariangan is known, therefore, as the oldest nagari or nagari tuo. Local written history or tambo tells when the king, Sultan Suri Maharajo Dirajo, the youngest son of Alexander the Great, and his followers sailed around the world, they landed on Mount Marapi. As soon as they landed, the king and his men began to look for a place to live. That place became the old settlement that finally developed as the Kingdom of Pariangan. In addition to the tambo, we collected three other local stories told by the villagers about the origin of Nagari Pariangan and found several variants in these stories.

Over time, Nagari Pariangan has seen various changes in its government system. Originally, the village government was collectively led by 22 chosen people, called ‘niniak mamak nan duopuluhduo’. Each jorong was represented by several ‘niniak mamak’, who were members of the clans or suku within the jorong. The collective leadership of the early days of a nagari consisted of niniak makak, manti, dubalang, and malin. Niniak mamak played a leading role in all nagari affairs. The members of ‘manti’ were kaum cerdik pandai or wise elders, tasked with solving problems. The ‘dubalang’



was the person responsible for security, and the malin was the person in charge of the nagari's religious affairs.

When the Dutch colonised Indonesia, with the Law, 'Regerings Reglement', which launched in 1848, they wanted each nagari to have one leader in order to facilitate coordination between the Dutch, and nagari in the Minangkabau region (Tegnan, 2015). The representatives of the collective leaders were appointed as Kapalo Nagari or sometimes, angku kapalo were tasked to report on the social dynamics in the nagari. The leadership system changed again under the three years of Japanese occupation, during the period of 1942–1945. The angku kapalo was no longer chosen by the mamak niniak as the representative of a suku but was, instead, directly elected by the community. Thus, during the Japanese colonisation, the angku kapalo did not necessarily come from the ninik mamak but could be any member of the community considered capable of leading the nagari.

This system was applied until 1979, when the Village Government Law Number 5/1979 replaced the nagari, and other traditional village systems throughout the country. At that time, the name of the angku kapalo was changed to kepala desa, a national term which means village head. Interestingly, when this Village Law was implemented in Minangkabau, each jorong that had been part of the original nagari became a village with its own village head. Each of these then became a desa, a national term for village: Desa Pariangan, Desa Padang Panjang, Desa Guguak, and Desa Sikaladi. This change of name was confusing, as the local terms for desa, and nagari continued to be used in West Sumatra. The four were referred to as Nagari Pariangan, Nagari Padang Panjang, Nagari Guguak, and Nagari Sikaladi. However, since they were also part of the traditional nagari, they remained known as Jorong Pariangan, Jorong Padang Panjang, Jorong Guguak, and Jorong Sikaladi, each with its own kepala desa.

#### *Nagari Pariangan during the New Order*

To assist the kepala desa in carrying out his administrative role, the State introduced the Lembaga Musyawarah Desa (LMD) or the board of villagers. The LMD consisted of an elite representative, hamlet leaders, and distinguished village residents. The main task of the LMD was to assist the kepala desa in formulating village policies. At the same time, the voice of the community was channelled through the Lembaga Ketahanan Masyarakat Desa (LKMD), a board of community representatives. This board was a forum for the community to participate in village decision-making, primarily in the planning of development programmes.

The 1979 Village Government Law Number 5/1979 applied the principle of decentralisation, so that the village head was considered a government extension. The village government and village community were under the control of the kecamatan or



subdistrict, so that villages lacked autonomous and democratic rights. With the village head, together with supporting institutions, becoming fully responsible for planning, implementing, and running the government, traditional actors and institutions, such as niniak mamak, alim ulama, cadiak pandai, and bundo kanduang, no longer played a role in the government system.

We examined various elements of the role of adat or customary governance in the village government system of West Sumatra. Firstly, a case arose in the nagari, involving problems among kin groups (anak kamanakan), and local elites (niniak mamak), and disputes at the 'suku' level in the village. Before becoming a desa, all social problems in Nagari Pariangan had to be resolved in stages from the level of the houses of the niniak mamak. If a problem could not be resolved, it was discussed in the higher level of the niniak mamak, at the level of the nagari. If the problem was still not resolved, it was brought to the 'niniak mamak nan salapan'. This is an institution of the niniak mamak at the nagari level that comes from each jorong and is facilitated by the 'Datuak Bandaro Kayo'. The datuak is the highest person consulted by the Minangkabau people when there is a dispute. His decision is final and cannot be contested or challenged, as he serves as the 'Tampuak Tangkai Alam Minangkabau' or the highest decision maker in the Minangkabau's adat. However, during the Suharto era, disputes were resolved by the kepala desa, and his/her staff, with the coordination and supervision of the pengadilan or national court. In some cases, the village-based police and military became involved. In this way, the national village government system introduced during the New Order eroded the sovereignty of traditional governance. Adat institutions, with their own conflict-solving systems in the nagari, became paralysed and no longer functioned.

A second issue focussed on the planning and implementation of village development programmes. According to the Village Law Number 5/1979, development programmes were entirely the responsibility of the Village Government. The kepala desa and his staff received financial assistance from the 'bantuan desa' (known as 'bandes', for short) or village assistance from the central government to conduct village development programmes. The adat were excluded from the design and formulation of village development programmes, and their existence and role became obsolete. Before the law was implemented, and Nagari Pariangan was still led by the angku kapalo, and certain elements of the adat served an important function in each stage of development in the Nagari. Members of the adat would regularly gather to plan and decide on future village needs, while also searching for available funding.

The niniak mamak played a significant role as one element of the adat in the Nagari Pariangan development process. They always felt that the process of change in the nagari was their responsibility, and they were obliged to contribute their advice and



finances for the future of the nagari. The principles of mutual cooperation (gotong royong), and deliberation (musyawarah) were firmly held tenets of the adat, and the angku kapalo, when deciding on development plans. Unfortunately, centralised planning during the Suharto era ruined these mechanisms.

### *Nagari Pariangan after Regional Autonomy*

The enactment of the 1999 Law of Regional Governance Number 22/1999, and its 2004 revision (Law of Regional Governance Number 32/2004) gave more room to locals to manage their own affairs. It resulted in West Sumatra returning to the nagari village system. At the beginning of the reimplementation of the nagari system, the West Sumatra provincial government used the phrase, 'Babaliak Ka Nagari' or 'return to Nagari'. This phrase describes the Minangkabau people's dream of one day returning to forms of social life that are based on their traditional values.

Following the return of the West Sumatra Province to the nagari system, the role of 'tungku tigo sajarangan' (or the three stoves) grew in importance in government affairs, customs, and religious affairs. It is a metaphor that refers to the three elements of community represented by religious scholars, intellectuals (cadiak pandai), and suku or clan heads (niniak mamak). To perform the government functions of the nagari, a 'Wali Nagari' is chosen as the village head, assisted by a nagari secretary, and five 'kepala urusan' or heads of public affairs, finance, government, development economics, and welfare. The nagari government is assisted by the 'Badan Permusyawaratan Rakyat Nagari' or Nagari People's Consultative Body, which is tasked with establishing nagari regulations with the Wali Nagari and accommodating the aspirations of the citizens of the nagari. In addition, the Nagari Pariangan government established the Karapatan Adat Nagari (KAN), an institution that manages and preserves traditional customs and culture in Minangkabau, which consists of the 'tungku tigo sajarangan'.

A close examination reveals that the current leadership structure in the nagari government system is a modification of the desa government system under the Village Law Number 5/1979. Several elements of the law continue to be in use, such as the role of kepala urusan, who assist the Wali Nagari in performing government functions. Similarly, the Badan Permusyawaratan Rakyat Nagari has the same function as the LMD created through the Village Law Number 5/1979. However, other institutions differ from the previous government system, such as the KAN. Through the KAN, the Government of the West Sumatra Province hopes to restore the position of adat institutions in the daily life of the community.

## Discussion

When the province decided to return to the nagari form of governance, the desa or villages were returned to jorong under the auspices of the nagari government. As a result, the number of nagari in West Sumatra fell to 550, less than the number of desa that existed before. This might not be considered a problem, if one imagines that a smaller number of villages will lead to a more effective administration. However, the situation became tempestuous when the Village Law Number 6/2014 was enacted. One of the articles of that law determined that the primary source of village income would be the 'Anggaran Pembelanjaan dan Belanja Negara' (APBN) or State Revenue and Expenditure Budget. To make the management of village funds more effective, this law was enacted by the passage of the Government Rule No. 60/2014 on Village Funds from the State Revenue and Expenditure Budget and the Ministerial Regulation Number 19/2017. These laws regulate the allocation of village funds to enable village development at the regional level (Vel et al., 2017). The villages receive 'Dana Desa' (village funds) from the central government through the APBD, and 'Alokasi Dana Desa' (allocated village funds) from the regional government at the kabupaten or district level through the APBD. Due to the logic of these laws, the greater the number of villages in a province, the more money the province will receive.

As a result of the introduction of these laws, more and more villages are being created in Indonesia. While many villages have applied for village division or splitting (Vel & Bedner, 2015; Firdaus, 2017), Nagari Pariangan has gone in a different direction. It has retained its hold on the four jorong, as part of the nagari, even though, during the Suharto era, these four *jorong* became autonomous villages, each with its own village head. Why has Nagari Pariangan retained these four *jorong* within a single nagari, rather than split them into four nagari or villages in order to receive a larger amount of village funding from the APBN? There are a number of reasons why Nagari Pariangan has followed this path and maintained its traditional pre-Suharto era village structure.

### *Historical and Cultural Reasons*

As in Spillman's case (1997), that the national identity creation is always rooted in history, we also found a similar trend. Nagari Pariangan is a 'nagari tuo' or older nagari, which means that it is the traditional home of the ancestors of the Minangkabau. Previously, the four jorong in Nagari Pariangan were among 15 koto, as one informant explained that the development of Nagari Pariangan began with the formation of four koto: Pariangan, Padang Panjang, Guguak, and Sikaladi, referred to as the 'ampek koto diateh'. It then expanded to eight koto, with the addition of Sialahan, Koto Tuo, Koto Baru, and Batu Taba; the ampek koto dibawah. The tambo states that the 15 koto comprising salapan koto dimudiak, tujuh koto dihilia or eight koto upstream and seven



koto downstream. The 15 koto were grouped as one 'lareh' or moiety, called 'lareh nan panjang', as part of 'lareh bodi chaniago'. Minangkabau's moiety generally comprises of a lareh bodi chaniago, which is led by Datuak Bandaro Kuning, and lareh koto piliang, which is led by Datuak Bandaro Putih.

However, the people of Nagari Pariangan were not bound by the moiety. They freely refer to themselves as part of both the bodi chaniago, and the koto piliang. The tambo notes that they sometimes refer to neither of the two lareh. Even today, the people of Nagari Pariangan emphasise that they are not from either of the two lareh, since Nagari Pariangan was created long before the other suku in Minangkabau, which is why it is called 'nagari tuo'. For the people of Nagari Pariangan, being a nagari tuo means they have an obligation to maintain their Minangkabau customs.

The people of Nagari Pariangan consider themselves to be related to each other by blood. In their minds, the four jorong — Pariangan, Padang Panjang, Guguak, and Sikaladi — make up one cultural unit. There are two main cultural connections between the jorong, which ensures they remain a united village. The first relates to the customs implemented in each jorong. For example, similarities in the wedding ceremony procession can be observed in the stages carried out in the adat procession. Each jorong also has a special ceremony, 'muluik', that celebrates the birth of the Prophet Muhammad. While there is a different emphasis on the rhymes in each jorong, this event usually consists of reading the 'kitab syaraf al anam' — an old Arabic book on the birth of prophet Muhammad written in ninth century — at home or in the mosque. In addition, the four jorongs implement adat punishments in a similar way, by socially sanctioning those who have committed crimes. This adat sanction includes maisi carano or fines imposed by the niniak mamak, which must be paid in gold or money, or the slaughter of goats or other livestock, and the calling together of the community to eat the meat. The second is the connection between jorong communities in the management of natural resources, such as dry fields (ladang), wet rice fields (sawah), and forests. During the field research, we noticed that some people from Jorong Pariangan owned rice fields in Jorong Guguak. Each day, they went to Jorong Guguak to cultivate the ladang, and sawah.

At first, before the colonial era when market system was introduced, people cultivated the land close to their houses or the territory of their suku. Land was owned and managed communally. This led to communal property that excluded people from outside the suku, who could not own or cultivate the land without special permission. Later on, following the introduction of the market economy, buying and selling property became common. The people from Nagari Pariangan's four jorong are fortunate to have communal access to cultivate the land within the territory of each jorong, and everyone is eligible to own land outside their own jorong. It is now common for people from one jorong to own parcels of land in other jorongs.



*From Nagari Tuo to the Most Beautiful Village in the World*

We have explained why Nagari Pariangan did not take the opportunity to become four nagari, despite being four autonomous villages during the New Order era. Its status as nagari tuo was an important historical and cultural reason for remaining as one nagari. While the creation of region and nation identities is linked to policy reform, as noted by Harrell (2001), and Belshaw (2014), we specifically notice the reform on financial budgeting for the villages. However, the community leaders were not incentivised by village funding to divide the nagari tuo. Financial matters, according to one informant, were not a problem. At the time of writing, Nagari Pariangan is flooded with investment offers from both the State and the private sector, in order to be developed as a tourist destination.

The idea of tourism development started from a posting on a website in February 2012. An article entitled “World’s 16 Most Picturesque Villages”, posted on the website [www.budgettravel.com](http://www.budgettravel.com), was interpreted by the local media as a list of the world’s most beautiful villages. It was considered a beautiful village because of its rich nature and cultures. Since the website posting, it has been the focus of media attention, and in 2016, several national television stations reported on the area. Following the media coverage, many local and national tourists flocked to visit the nagari, and it is rumoured that former President Susilo Yudhoyono heard from former US President Barack Obama about the existence of this beautiful village. When President Joko Widodo visited Nagari Pariangan, he set out plans for developing it as a tourist resort. The provincial and district governments immediately responded by budgeting for funds to make it happen.

Nagari Pariangan has now become a village with abundant funds for socio-economic development. There has also been unexpected funding from other parties, including politicians, local parliament members, businessmen, and villagers who have migrated away from the area (perantau). In one year, Nagari Pariangan receives four to seven billion rupiahs in funding from various parties. When the research was conducted in 2019, the currency rate was around 14,000–14,200 rupiah for one US dollar. This income came from the State budget, taxes, and retribution, SILPA (Sisa Lebih Pembiayaan Anggaran or the difference between budget surplus or deficit and net financing), as well as legitimate village income. In addition to the sources listed above, on 2 February 2018, President Joko Widodo made a promise to develop Nagari Pariangan through the national development budget. Funding will be provided for the revitalisation programme of historic relics and sites, such as stone inscriptions, and traditional buildings. The Ministry of Public Development and Settlements has allocated a budget of 42 billion rupiah in 2019 but the village must meet some technical



requirements on the blue print of the projects. This seems to have taken a long time and it will not be until the end of November 2020 that the Ministry will complete the assessment for the first period of IDR 21 billion.

With this budget and future budget allocation promises for Nagari Pariangan, there is no reason to split the nagari into four autonomous villages. The nagari can continue to function as a nagari tuo, keeping Minangkabau traditions alive, while at the same time, maintaining historical and cultural pride. The central and local government village funds have not incentivised the nagari to be split into four, as more funding can be pursued and obtained for tourism development.

## Conclusion

This paper has examined the West Sumatra trend to systematically return to adat from the provincial to the village level. In Nagari Pariangan, in particular, villagers and the village elite have chosen to return to the nagari system, and as endorsed by the Province. As a result, leadership positions in the village were quickly reactivated according to the nagari system. A striking difference between this and the village system during the Suharto era is the importance of the role of adat through the ninik mamak institutions, which were later contained in the KAN. This distinguishes Nagari Pariangan from other villages in West Sumatra.

When the State formally allocates village funds through newer village laws, social and political dynamics in Indonesian villages are strengthened. Village fund incentives of up to one billion rupiah have made the village an incredibly attractive political and economic administrative unit. Governments at the provincial and district levels have new targets to increase money circulation in their regions through village funds. This has implications for the number of villages that have been split to increase village funds. In West Sumatra, the absorption level of village funds remains low due to the relatively small number of villages. Therefore, the division of villages has become a necessity in the Province. This research shows that this trend does not apply to Nagari Pariangan.

As the village is now managed according to a traditional nagari system, the role of customary law has become important. Nagari Pariangan's position has become central to all Minangkabau nagari, because it is the oldest nagari. For historical, traditional, and cultural reasons, the nagari elite chose to not rashly divide their village into four villages, despite existing as four villages during the Suharto era. In addition, the unexpected momentum arising from internet and social media coverage has greatly influenced the development in the area. It is considered to be one of the most beautiful villages in the world, and Nagari Pariangan has received the blessing of local and national tourists, and officials from the local to the national levels have forecast that it will become a world-class tourist resort. Because of this, the State has budgeted billions



of rupiah for tourism development. Therefore, incentives for village funds are no longer attractive to the village elites of Nagari Pariangan.

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