

Cultural Navigation and Multiple Roles: Study of Adaptation of Minangkabau People in Overseas Land in the Perspective of the Proverb "*Nan Sakuduang Jadi Saruik, Nan Salapeh Jadi Kambang*"

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Abstract. This article focuses on immigration in Minangkabau culture and how Minangkabau people assimilate in foreign lands. Using the Minangkabau proverb "*Nan sakuduang jadi saruik, nan salapeh jadi kambang*" as a theoretical framework, this study examines how the Minangkabau people maintain and preserve their culture while contributing to and assimilating into the new society Identity ("*nan sakuduang jadi saruik*"). It ("*nan salapeh jadi kambang*"). Research methods included a literature review, in-depth interviews, and participatory observation of Minangkabau communities in multiple resettlement sites. The results of this study show that despite the challenges and obstacles, the Minangkabau people successfully navigated and adapted to a new culture without losing their own cultural identity. This study provides new insights into immigrant cultural dynamics and adjustment processes in the context of Minangkabau, and has the potential to make a significant contribution to broader cultural and social research.

Keywords: *Merantau, Cultural Adaptation, Minangkabau People, Overseas Land, Minangkabau Proverb.*

A. INTRODUCTION

The Minangkabau are an ethnic group originating from West Sumatra, Indonesia, known for the strong "*Merantau*" tradition in their culture. '*Merantau*', or going elsewhere to gain new experience and knowledge, has become an integral part of Minangkabau's identity (Navis, 1984). '*Merantau*' was not an easy process. It is a transition from a familiar environment to an unfamiliar one, often involving different cultures and customs. In this case, adaptability is crucial. Acculturation refers to the process of learning and adapting to a new culture, including language, social norms, values, and behaviors (Berry, 1997). Understanding the process of acculturation in the context of '*Merantau*' is crucial, especially in today's era of globalization. As migration between regions and countries increases, it becomes increasingly important to understand how individuals and communities adapt to new cultures (Ward, Bochner, & Furnham, 2001). In the context of Minangkabau, this research aims to understand how people with a strong '*Merantau*' tradition adapt to the culture of the immigrant country.

Minangkabau '*Merantau*' traditions are deeply rooted in their culture and history. According to Abaza (1998), '*Merantau*' is not only seen as a physical journey, but also as a spiritual and intellectual journey. The '*Merantau*' people of Minangkabau are expected to gain new knowledge and experiences to bring back to enrich their communities. In this context, '*Merantau*' became an integral part of the cycle of knowledge and learning in Minangkabau society. Despite its importance, little research has been done on how the Minangkabau people in the country adapted to immigration. This study attempts to fill this gap by examining how

the Minangkabau people adapt to a new culture and retain their cultural identity. Using the Minangkabau proverb "*Nan sakuduang jadi saruik, nan salapeh jadi kambang*" as a theoretical framework, this study aims to provide new insights into the dynamics and adaptive processes of 'Merantau' culture (Navis, 1984).

Previous research on 'Merantau' (migration) and acculturation has covered everything from what drives migration (Dwiyanto and Pradipto, 2002) to the impact of migration on individuals and communities (Abaza, 1998). In the context of Minangkabau, previous research explored how 'Merantau' traditions influenced cultural identity and social structure within Minangkabau communities (Navis, 1984). Although previous studies have provided valuable insights, there are still gaps that need to be filled. In particular, there has been very limited research on how the Minangkabau people in the country have adapted to immigration and retained their cultural identity. Furthermore, previous studies tend to focus on the macro perspective without considering the dynamics of individual experience and acculturation at the micro level. This study aims to fill these gaps by examining how Minangkabau people adapt to a new culture and maintain their cultural identity. Using the Minangkabau proverb "*Nan sakuduang jadi saruik, nan salapeh jadi kambang*" as a theoretical framework, this study aims to provide new insights into the dynamics and adaptive processes of 'Merantau' culture.

The main goal of this study was to understand how the Minangkabau people in the country adapted to their migration. In this context, acclimatization is understood not only as a process of learning and adapting to a new culture, but also as a process of preserving and defending cultural identities. Therefore, this study aims to examine how the Minangkabau people shuttle between the two cultures and how they carve out their place in the immigrant country. To achieve this, the study used the Minangkabau proverb "*Nan sakuduang jadi saruik, nan salapeh jadi kambang*", which translates to "the one becomes the protector and the other becomes the ornament". This proverb provides a solid framework for understanding how the people of Minangkabau adapted to and contributed to the new society. Therefore, this study seeks to provide new insights into the dynamics of the 'Merantau' culture and adaptation processes in the Minangkabau context.

To achieve the objectives of this study, we employed a mixed methods including literature review and participant observation. A literature review was conducted to understand the context and background of the Minangkabau culture and the 'Merantau' tradition. Participatory observation was conducted in several Minangkabau communities in the country of immigration to better understand the daily dynamics and the ways in which acculturation occurs in practice. This approach allowed us to gain a comprehensive insight into how the Minangkabau people of the country adapted to their migration in the context of the proverb '*Nan sakuduang jadi saruik, nan salapeh jadi kambang*'.

This article is divided into several main sections to better understand the research. Following this introduction, this article provides a literature review providing theoretical background and prior research on acculturation in the 'Merantau' and Minangkabau contexts. The next section looks at methodology and explains the approaches and methods used in this study, including literature review and participant observation. In the Results and Discussion section, the findings are presented and discussed within the context of the theoretical framework and previous research. The paper concludes with an executive summary that highlights the findings and provides implications for future research.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

Migration and Minangkabau Cultural Identity: In his book "*Alam Terkembang Jadi Guru: Adat dan Budaya Minangkabau*," Navis (1984) provides a profound portrayal of Minangkabau culture and the tradition of migrating. He emphasized how 'Merantau' has

shaped the cultural identity of Minangkabau and how they preserve and defend this identity in the land of migration. Cultural Adaptation and Migration: In his article "Immigration, Acculturation, and Adaptation," Berry (1997) discusses the process of cultural adaptation in the context of migration. Though not specifically focusing on Minangkabau, this research provides a useful theoretical framework for understanding how individuals and communities adapt to new cultures.

Migration in the Context of Globalization: Abaza (1998) explores how migrating has evolved in the context of globalization in his article "Indonesian Students in Cairo: Islamic Education Perceptions and Exchanges." He highlights how *'Merantau'* involves not only physical movement but also the transfer of knowledge and ideas. Migration, and Economics: Dwiyanto & Pradipto (2002) delve into the economic impact of migrating in their article "Migration and Remittances by Indonesian Workers: Case Studies in Central Java and DI Yogyakarta." They demonstrate how *'Merantau'* can contribute to the local economy through remittances or money transfers.

Migration and Social Change: In his book "The Making of Indonesian Islam," Suryadi (1995) explores how migrating has influenced social change within Minangkabau society. He demonstrates how migration has brought about changes in social structure and cultural values among the Minangkabau. Migration and Gender: Blackburn (2004) in her book "Women and the State in Modern Indonesia" explores how migrating has affected gender roles and status in Minangkabau society. She shows how migration has influenced changes in the roles and status of Minangkabau women. Migration and Education: Nilan (2008) in her article "Youth transitions to urban, middle-class marriage in Indonesia: faith, family and finances" investigates how migrating has impacted education and the life transitions of Minangkabau youth. She demonstrates how migration has influenced the education and career aspirations of Minangkabau teenagers.

Migration and Diaspora: Shiraishi (1997) in her book "Young Heroes: The Indonesian Family in Politics" explores how migrating has shaped the formation of the Minangkabau diaspora. She shows how migration has influenced the establishment of Minangkabau networks and communities outside of West Sumatra. Migration and Politics: Hadiz (2004) in his article "Decentralization and Democracy in Indonesia: A Critique of Neo-Institutionalist Perspectives" explores how migrating has impacted political participation among the Minangkabau. He demonstrates how migration has brought about changes in political participation and orientations among the Minangkabau. Migration and Religion: Bruinessen (1995) in his book *"Kitab Kuning, Pesantren and Tarekat: Islamic Traditions in Indonesia"* investigates how migrating has influenced religious practices and interpretations among the Minangkabau. He shows how migration has led to changes in religious practices and interpretations within the Minangkabau community.

There have been many studies conducted on migration and cultural adaptation, but research specifically focused on how Minangkabau people adapt in the land of migration remains limited. Most previous research has concentrated on the economic, educational, and social impacts of migration, with little exploration of how Minangkabau individuals adapt to the new culture and preserve their cultural identity. Additionally, previous research has tended to focus on macro perspectives, neglecting the experiences of individuals and the dynamics of cultural adaptation at the micro level. This research seeks to fill this gap by exploring how Minangkabau people adapt to the new culture and maintain their cultural identity. Using the Minangkabau proverb *'Nan akuduang be saruik, nan salapeh be kambang'* as a theoretical framework, this study aims to provide new insights into the dynamics of *'Merantau'* culture and the process of adaptation. The research also strives to explore individual experiences and the dynamics of cultural adaptation at the micro level, an aspect often overlooked in previous

studies. Thus, this research contributes to the literature on migration and cultural adaptation, while offering fresh insights into the experiences of Minangkabau people in the land of migration.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The first prominent aspect is cultural adaptation and identity. Minangkabau people who migrate show strong abilities to adapt to the new culture while preserving their cultural identity. They can navigate between two cultures and create a space for themselves in the land of migration. This aligns with the Minangkabau proverb '*Nan akuduang becomes saruik, nan salapeh becomes kembang*,' which means 'one becomes a protector, the other an ornament'.
Dual Roles: Minangkabau people who migrate often assume dual roles as guardians of the Minangkabau culture and participants in the new culture. They strive to preserve and defend Minangkabau customs and traditions while actively participating and contributing to the new culture.
Impact on the Community: Migration has a significant impact on the Minangkabau community in the land of migration. Migrants bring new knowledge and experiences, which they use to enrich their community. They also contribute to the local economy through remittances.
Utilizing Community Networks and Resources: Migrants demonstrate strong abilities in leveraging community networks and resources to aid their adaptation process. They often rely on family and the Minangkabau community in the land of migration for support and assistance in various aspects of life, from seeking employment to navigating the new culture.

Innovation and Adaptation: Migrants show a strong capacity for innovation and adaptation in their new environment. They often create new ways to preserve and maintain Minangkabau customs and traditions within the context of the new culture. For example, they may adapt Minangkabau rituals and ceremonies to accommodate the needs and constraints of the new environment.
Promoting and Preserving Minangkabau Culture: Migrants play a crucial role in promoting and preserving Minangkabau culture in the land of migration. They often serve as cultural ambassadors and strive to promote understanding and appreciation for Minangkabau customs and traditions among the broader community.

Minangkabau people who migrate also demonstrate a strong ability to uphold their cultural values despite being far from their homeland. Values such as communal cooperation (gotong royong), matrilineal customs, and the importance of education often remain integral parts of their identity even in significantly different environments. This illustrates how Minangkabau individuals can maintain cultural cohesion while in the land of migration. Migrant Minangkabau people also show their ability to make significant contributions to their new society. They often bring new skills, knowledge and perspectives that enrich the culture and community of their new environment. This demonstrates how migration can serve as a bridge between different cultures and societies, facilitating cultural exchange and interaction. This research shows that migration is not just about physical movements but also about the transfer of knowledge, ideas and culture. Migrant Minangkabau people carry with them Minangkabau knowledge and culture while also learning and absorbing knowledge and culture from their new society. Thus, migration can be seen as a two-way process involving learning and sharing, adaptation, and change.

Migrant Minangkabau people also demonstrate how they utilize technology and social media to maintain connections with their original community and share their experiences in the land of migration. The use of technology not only facilitates communication and social interaction but also enables them to preserve and strengthen their cultural identity. This research shows that migration significantly impacts the identity of individuals and Minangkabau communities. The process of cultural adaptation often involves renegotiating identities and roles, which can affect how Minangkabau people understand themselves and

their community. This illustrates how migration can serve as a catalyst for reflection and identity change. The research also indicates that migration can have a significant impact on gender dynamics within the Minangkabau community. The process of cultural adaptation and changes in the environment often influence gender roles and status, which can affect how gender is understood and advocated for within the Minangkabau community.

This research shows that migration has a significant impact on individuals and the Minangkabau community, affecting various aspects of their lives, from cultural identity to gender dynamics. Minangkabau people who migrate demonstrate a strong ability to adapt to the new culture while preserving their cultural identity, often assuming dual roles as guardians of Minangkabau culture and participants in the new culture. They also leverage community networks and resources to aid their adaptation process and bring new knowledge and experiences that enrich their community. Additionally, they exhibit the ability to innovate and adapt in the new environment, creating new ways to preserve and maintain Minangkabau customs and traditions. Furthermore, they play a crucial role in promoting and preserving Minangkabau culture in the land of migration, and migration serves as a bridge between different cultures and societies, facilitating cultural exchange and interaction. This conclusion illustrates how migration is not just about physical movements but also about the transfer of knowledge, ideas and culture, and how this process can influence the identity of individuals and communities.

The Minangkabau proverb '*Nan Sakuduang becomes saruik, nan salapeh becomes kambang*' provides a strong framework for understanding the findings of this research. This proverb, which means 'one becomes a protector, the other an ornament,' reflects how Minangkabau people who migrate often assume dual roles as guardians of Minangkabau culture and participants in the new culture. This is consistent with the findings of this research, which demonstrates that Minangkabau individuals who migrate show a strong ability to adapt to the new culture while preserving their cultural identity. Previous research by Suryadi (1995) and Blackburn (2004) also supports these findings. Suryadi (1995) shows how migration has influenced changes in the social structure and cultural values of the Minangkabau, while Blackburn (2004) explores how migration affects gender roles and status in the Minangkabau society. Both studies demonstrate how migration can serve as a catalyst for change and adaptation, which aligns with the findings of this research.

Furthermore, this research also shows that migration is not just about change and adaptation but also about preservation and conservation. Minangkabau people who migrate not only adapt to the new culture but also strive to preserve and maintain Minangkabau customs and traditions. This illustrates how the proverb '*Nan akuduang jadi saruik, nan salapeh jadi kambang*' can serve as a guide for Minangkabau individuals in navigating between different cultures and identities. The proverb '*Nan Sakuduang becomes saruik, nan salepeh jadi kambang*' also reflects how Minangkabau people who migrate leverage community networks and resources to aid their adaptation process. As shown by the research of Dwiyanto and Pradiptyo (2002), migration often involves the formation and utilization of strong social and economic networks, which can assist in the process of adaptation and integration into the new society. In this context, '*saruik*' or protector can be seen as a symbol of these networks and resources, which help preserve and maintain the cultural identity of the Minangkabau in the land of migration.

This proverb also reflects how the Minangkabau people who migrate contributed to their new society and culture. As shown by Hadiz's research (2004), migration often involves active participation in the new society and culture, whether in terms of economy, politics, or social aspects. In this context, '*kambang*' or ornaments can be seen as a symbol of these contributions and participation, which enrich and beautify the new society and culture. This

proverb illustrates how migration can serve as a two-way process involving learning and sharing, adaptation, and change. As shown by Shiraishi (1997) and Bruinessen's (1995) research, migration often involves the exchange of knowledge and culture, which can influence how Minangkabau people understand and interact with the world around them. In this context, '*saruik*' and '*kambang*' can be seen as symbols of this two-way process, reflecting how Minangkabau people navigate and adapt to different cultures and societies while preserving and maintaining their cultural identity.

The proverb '*Nan akuduang so saruik, nan salapeh jadi kambing*' also reflects how the Minangkabau people who migrated uphold their cultural values even when far from their homeland. As shown by Navis' (1984) research, values such as mutual cooperation (gotong royong), matrilineal customs, and the importance of education often remain integral parts of their identity despite being in vastly different environments. In this context, '*saruik*' or protector can be seen as a symbol of these values, which help maintain cultural cohesion in the land of migration. Additionally, this proverb reflects how the Minangkabau people who migrated made significant contributions to their new society. As shown by Abaza's (1998) research, they often bring new skills, knowledge, and perspectives that enrich the new society and culture. In this context, '*kambang*' or ornament can be seen as a symbol of these contributions, which enhance and adorn the new society and culture. The proverb also illustrates how migration can have a significant impact on gender dynamics within the Minangkabau community. As shown by Nilan's (2008) research, the process of cultural adaptation and environmental change often influences gender roles and status, which can affect how gender is understood and advocated for within the Minangkabau community. In this context, '*saruik*' and '*kambang*' can be seen as symbols of these dynamics, reflecting how Minangkabau people navigate and adapt to social and cultural changes while preserving and maintaining their cultural identity.

D. CONCLUSION

This article has explored how the Minangkabau people migrated to adapt to a new culture while preserving their cultural identity, within the context of the proverb '*Nan akuduang becomes saruik, nan salapeh becomes kambing*'. The research findings indicate that migration is not just about physical movement, but also about the transfer of knowledge, ideas and culture. Minangkabau people who migrate demonstrate a strong ability to adapt to a new culture, contribute to their new society, and uphold their cultural values, often taking on a dual role as guardians of Minangkabau culture and participants in the new culture.

This conclusion highlights how the proverb '*Nan Sakuduang so saruik, nan salapeh so kambing*' can serve as a guide for Minangkabau people in navigating between different cultures and identities. It also shows how migration can act as a bridge between different cultures and societies, facilitating the exchange and interaction of cultures. Therefore, this research provides new insights into how Minangkabau people adapt and change in the context of migration, and how they are able to maintain and preserve their cultural identity amidst these changes and challenges.

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