

RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL VALUES IN THE BAJAPUIK TRADITION OF MINANGKABAU WEDDINGS: A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE ON BRIDEWEALTH PRACTICES

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Abstract

This study explores the Bajapuiik tradition in Minangkabau weddings, focusing on its embedded religious and social values. Specifically, it examines how this tradition fosters inter-family bonds while adapting to the pressures of modernization, including changes in social structure, gender roles, and economic challenges. Using a descriptive qualitative method and historical approach, data were collected through interviews with traditional leaders and cultural observers, as well as direct observation of marriage ceremonies in Pariaman. Findings show that Bajapuiik is more than just a ceremonial custom; it reflects core Minangkabau values, including cooperation, family honour, justice, and spirituality. As part of a matrilineal society, the bride's family offers symbolic respect to the groom's family, an inversion of most bridewealth practices globally. Although the form and amount of Bajapuiik have changed due to external influences and economic conditions, its cultural essence remains strong. Comparatively, Bajapuiik shares social functions with mas kawin in Islamic tradition, dowry in South Asia, and bride price in African societies. Despite differences in direction and symbolism, these practices serve to affirm kinship ties, reinforce social status, and embody shared cultural values.

Keywords: Bajapuiik Tradition, Minangkabau Wedding, Religious Values, Social Values, Bridewealth Comparison, Cultural Identity

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji tradisi Bajapuiik dalam pernikahan Minangkabau, dengan fokus pada nilai-nilai keagamaan dan sosial yang terkandung di dalamnya. Secara khusus, penelitian ini membahas bagaimana tradisi ini mempererat hubungan antarkeluarga sekaligus beradaptasi terhadap tantangan modernisasi, termasuk perubahan struktur sosial, peran gender, dan tekanan ekonomi. Metode yang digunakan adalah kualitatif deskriptif dengan pendekatan historis, melalui wawancara dengan tokoh adat dan pengamat budaya serta observasi langsung pada prosesi pernikahan di Pariaman. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Bajapuiik bukan sekadar ritual adat, melainkan mencerminkan nilai-nilai inti masyarakat Minangkabau seperti gotong royong, martabat keluarga, keadilan, dan spiritualitas. Sebagai bagian dari masyarakat matrilineal, keluarga perempuan memberikan penghormatan simbolik kepada pihak laki-laki—berbeda dari kebanyakan praktik bridewealth di dunia. Meski bentuk dan jumlah Bajapuiik mengalami perubahan akibat pengaruh ekonomi dan budaya luar, nilai budayanya tetap terjaga. Secara komparatif, Bajapuiik memiliki fungsi sosial yang sepadan dengan mas kawin dalam Islam, dowry di Asia Selatan, dan bride price di masyarakat Afrika. Meskipun arah dan bentuk pemberiannya berbeda, semua praktik ini memperkuat hubungan kekeluargaan, menegaskan status sosial, dan merefleksikan nilai budaya.

Kata kunci: Tradisi Bajapuiik, Pernikahan Minangkabau, Nilai Keagamaan, Nilai Sosial, Komparasi Bridewealth, Identitas Budaya

INTRODUCTION

Marriage is not just a personal or emotional bond between two individuals, but rather a cultural institution that reflects the values, norms, and social structure of a society (Efevbera & Bhabha, 2020; Nuroniyah & Maula, 2022). In various cultures, wedding traditions not only function as a rite of passage but also as a form of expression of collective identity and intergenerational continuity (Subramanee et al., 2022). Indonesia, a country rich in cultural diversity, has numerous unique wedding traditions that reflect the social philosophies of each region. One prominent tradition is the Bajapuik from the Minangkabau community in West Sumatra, which is unique because it reverses the general pattern of bridewealth practices. In patriarchal traditions, the man generally gives property or a dowry to the woman's family; in Bajapuik, it is the woman's family who gives a sum of money or symbolic objects to the man.

Marriage as a social event plays an important role in maintaining the continuity of traditions and collective identity (Andriyan, Suryanto, & Herdiana, 2021). Through the implementation of wedding customs, ancestral values are preserved, even amidst the increasingly rapid flow of modernization. In addition, wedding ceremonies are often a significant moment to strengthen relationships between families and communities, a concept known in Indonesia as *gotong royong*. The involvement of many parties in the wedding procession, from the extended family to the surrounding neighbors, reflects the high values of togetherness and social solidarity in society. In this era of globalization, although some elements of marriage have undergone adaptation and modification, the essence of the inherited customs remains intact as a symbol of respect for the rich cultural heritage and local identity. One wedding tradition that stands out in its uniqueness is the Bajapuik tradition among the Minangkabau people, particularly in the Pariaman region.

Indonesia is home to a diverse range of marriage traditions, shaped by its rich ethnic and cultural diversity. Among them, the Minangkabau people of West Sumatra practice a distinctive matrilineal system, one of the most notable customs of which is Bajapuik. In this tradition, it is the bride's family who provides a sum of money or valuables to the groom before the wedding takes place (Aini, Suri, & Pujiati, 2024). Unlike the patriarchal norms standard in many other societies, where the groom bears most wedding expenses, Bajapuik reflects the Minangkabau's matrilineal values, in which lineage and inheritance pass through the female line (Zainal Abidin Fikri, 2024). This practice carries symbolic and social significance, expressing respect for the groom's upbringing and strengthening ties between both families (Nadira, Kurniati, Sari, & Nurhaninadira, 2023). It marks not only a marital union but also the integration of extended kinship networks within the community.

However, along with the changing times and the influence of modernization, the Bajapuik tradition has begun to face challenges. For the younger generation who have lived outside Pariaman for a long time or those who have been exposed to outside cultures, this tradition is often considered a burden, especially for the woman's family. Lack of understanding of the true meaning of Bajapuik can lead to a negative perception that this tradition only functions as an economic transaction between two families and is even considered a form of "buying and selling" of men, when in fact this is not the case (Aini et al., 2024). Minangkabau traditional figures or leaders themselves strongly reject this assumption and emphasize that Bajapuik is not a form of buying and selling, but a symbol of appreciation and acceptance of the woman's family towards the groom who will join their family (Martha, 2020). They emphasize that Bajapuik reflects respect and social responsibility, where the woman's family shows its commitment to welcoming the groom as part of the extended family, while maintaining the honor and balance of relations between the two parties.

Previous research on the Bajapuik tradition has highlighted different aspects of this practice. In a study conducted by Asmelinda (2023), the Bajapuik tradition was found to be closely related to the Minangkabau matrilineal system. According to Asmelinda, this system gives rise to collective responsibility from the extended family in determining the marriage process, where Bajapuik is one of the essential rituals that emphasizes the social structure of the female family in Minangkabau society. In contrast to Asmelinda, Aini (2024) shows that this practice reflects the relationship between social and economic values, where the material aspect (japuik money) functions as a symbol of respect for the groom, but also often gives rise to the interpretation that there is an

element of commodification in the marriage relationship. Additionally, research conducted by Miftahunir (2022) examines the dynamics of social status within the Bajapuik tradition. Miftahunir argues that Bajapuik is a way to strengthen the social status and honour of the family, especially in ensuring that the male party is perceived as equal to or higher in the social hierarchy, thereby creating a mutually beneficial relationship between the two families.

Although previous studies have examined Bajapuik primarily through the lenses of economics, gender, and cultural change, they often treat these aspects in isolation, overlooking the interconnected social and religious meanings embedded in the tradition. What is still lacking in existing research is an integrated understanding of Bajapuik as a system of values that reflects the collective identity and moral framework of the Minangkabau people. This study addresses that gap by offering a holistic approach and an analytical perspective that views Bajapuik not merely as a financial transaction or gendered practice, but as a cultural institution encompassing cooperation, family honor, spiritual beliefs, and community-based social mechanisms. By doing so, this research expands the discussion beyond economics or gender to include the moral and communal dimensions of the tradition. Understanding Bajapuik in this way is crucial, as it reveals how local customs function as strategies for cultural continuity and negotiation in the face of globalization and modernization. Furthermore, this study examines contemporary perceptions, procedures, and challenges surrounding Bajapuik, particularly among younger generations and those who have migrated away from Pariaman, offering a dynamic picture of how tradition adapts without losing its core values.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research was conducted in West Sumatra, precisely in Padang Pariaman Regency, which still maintains the Bajapuik practice in Minangkabau weddings. The research took place from June to August 2024, focusing on direct observation and primary data collection through interactions with informants (Sugiyono, 2007). This research is a descriptive, qualitative study with a historical approach, utilising the theory of social change as the primary analytical framework. The data collection procedure involved in-depth interviews with key informants, including traditional leaders, the bride and groom, and the bride's parents, who were purposively selected to obtain authentic perspectives on the Bajapuik tradition. Additionally, participatory observation was conducted during the wedding process to observe this traditional practice firsthand. Historical documentation, including adat archives, traditional marriage records, minutes from customary deliberations (*kerapatan adat*), and local historical texts, was analyzed to enrich the data. These sources were used not merely as background material, but to trace the historical development of Bajapuik, revealing changes in its social meaning, function, and public perception over time. Data obtained from various sources will be validated through triangulation to ensure accuracy and consistency. The data analysis methodology involves transcribing interviews, categorising data into relevant categories, and interpreting the findings within the context of religious and social values. Through this analysis process, the research aims to explore how the Bajapuik tradition is not only a traditional ritual but also a reflection of the socio-cultural dynamics that continue to evolve amidst social changes in society.

Table 1.
Research Informants

No.	Name of Informant	Gender	Age	Role
1.	RF	Male	24	Groom (Recently married in 2023)
2.	AG	Male	53	Father of RF (the groom)
3.	S	Famale	34	Minangkabau Cultural Observer/Lecturer
4.	KL	Male	64	Datuk Marapulai/Traditional Leader

Informants in this Bajapuik tradition study were chosen for their roles and authority. The bride was excluded because she does not directly determine or negotiate Bajapuik, which is the *ninik mamak's*

domain, making her perspective less relevant. The groom, RF (male, 24), was included for his firsthand experience with *dijapuik* and adaptation, while his father, AG (male, 53), contributed insights on *Bajapuik* negotiations. S (female, 34), a lecturer and cultural observer, offered academic perspectives on its religious and cultural meanings. KL (male, 64), a *Datuk Marapulai*, was included for his deep understanding of *Bajapuik*'s legal and philosophical values.

The qualitative data in this study were analyzed using thematic analysis, following the six-phase framework by Braun and Clarke (2008). The process began with familiarization and open coding to identify meanings related to the religious and social values within the *Bajapuik* tradition. Codes were then grouped and developed inductively into key themes, such as religious values, family honor, and social mechanisms between extended families. These themes also served as a basis for comparing *Bajapuik* with other cultural forms of bridewealth. Analytical validity was ensured through source triangulation and peer debriefing.

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

History of the Bajapuik Tradition in Minangkabau Community Weddings

The *Bajapuik* tradition is a significant element in Minangkabau wedding customs, reflecting the uniqueness of the procedures and value systems of its society. The term *Bajapuik* originates from the word *japuik*, meaning "to pick up" or "to collect." In the context of marriage, this tradition marks the moment when the woman's family hands over a certain amount of money or goods to the groom's family as a sign of respect and a symbol of "picking up" the groom into the woman's extended family. The historical development of this tradition is closely tied to the matrilineal system adopted by the Minangkabau people, in which lineage and inheritance rights are determined through the female line. Consequently, a married man moves into the woman's home and family environment. This is different from patrilineal culture, where the woman usually "leaves" her family and follows her husband. The *Bajapuik* tradition then emerged as a symbolic manifestation of the man's move, where "picking up" the man into the woman's family becomes symbolic of including the groom into the matrilineal community. This is in line with what was conveyed by Ibu Rahmawati as a cultural observer in Minangkabau:

"In Minangkabau culture, they adhere to a matrilineal system, where lineage, property, and inheritance rights are all passed down through the female line. Men who marry will live in the female family environment, not the other way around. So, this *Bajapuik* tradition reflects the movement of men to the female family environment, where the women "take" their husbands. This is very different from patrilineal culture, where usually it is women who move to the male family." (Interview August 2, 2024)

In the tradition, *Bajapuik* functions as a bridge connecting two large families in a closer bond of brotherhood. This tradition not only brings together two individuals, but also strengthens the relationship between two family communities, strengthening solidarity and cooperation, which are important parts of the Minangkabau social structure (Gustiana, 2021). The presence of the *Bajapuik* tradition in marriage also highlights the importance of respecting ancestral customs and traditions as a means to maintain social balance in a matrilineal society. This tradition symbolises reciprocal respect between the families of the bride and groom, fostering harmony in the broader social sphere.

"*Bajapuik* is not just about material things, but also about preserving customs and togetherness. This tradition strengthens family ties and shows that even though times have changed, we still maintain the noble values of our ancestors." (Interview August 2, 2024)

In Pariaman society, *Bajapuik* has become one of the essential pillars in the traditional marriage process. Its existence, which has lasted for centuries, proves that the *Bajapuik* tradition is not just a ritual ceremony, but a social mechanism that helps maintain stability and relationships between families within the community. Thus, the *Bajapuik* tradition not only preserves cultural heritage but also becomes an important element in maintaining a unique local identity and values amid increasingly complex social changes. The following are the stages in implementing the *Bajapuik* tradition.



Picture 1.
Stages in the Bajapuik Tradition

The Bajapuik process in Minangkabau traditional weddings, especially in Pariaman, consists of a series of stages that are full of symbolic and spiritual meaning, and involve the entire extended family from both sides. This process not only includes interactions between two individuals who will be married, but also strengthens relationships between extended families and involves the community more widely. Each stage in this process is deeply rooted in social, cultural, and customary values, reflecting the importance of cooperation and respect in Minangkabau culture. The Bajapuik process begins with an initial stage called Maantaan Asok, which is the initial stage of introduction between the two families (Alhadi & Zikri, 2024). In this stage, the woman's side comes to the man's side to establish friendship and find a match for her child or nephew. This is the initial step that lays the groundwork for the relationship between the two families. This process is not just a formality, but also an initial step in establishing closer family relationships in the future. This is in accordance with what was conveyed by Mr. Sofyan as the *ninik mamak* or representative of the bride:

"In the early stages, it is called Maantaan Asok, where the woman will traditionally approach the man to introduce herself and open the way for communication between the two families. Not only an introduction, but this is also a kind of initial friendship to explore the possibility of a marriage relationship." (Interview August 2, 2024)

After the Maantaan Asok stage, the next stage is Batimbang Tando. At this stage, both families exchange signs or rings as a symbol of agreement and bond. In addition, at this stage, the terms and conditions of the Bajapuik are also discussed, including the amount of money or goods that will be given by the woman to the man (Alhadi & Zikri, 2024). The Batimbang Tando stage not only involves the bride and groom, but also involves the entire extended family and is often led by traditional elders, known as *ninik mamak*. They play a crucial role in formulating agreements so that the marriage can take place in accordance with the applicable customs and traditions. This is in accordance with what was conveyed by Mr. Sofyan as *ninik mamak*, or representative of the bride:

"Next, the two families will exchange signs or what is known as Batimbang Tando, which is usually a ring or other object as a symbol that an agreement between the two parties has been reached. This sign holds deep meaning as a testament to the bond that has been formed and agreed upon by the two families. In addition, this stage is also an important moment to discuss the conditions related to Bajapuik, namely the amount of money or goods that will be given by the woman to the man." (Interview August 2, 2024)

The most important stage in the Bajapuik process is Manjapuik Marapulai, which is the peak moment where the woman's family symbolically "picks up" the groom from his house (Zainal Abidin Fikri, 2024). This procession is a characteristic of Minangkabau traditional weddings in Pariaman. At this stage, the woman brings the Bajapuik money that has been agreed upon previously and hands it over to the man. Manjapuik Marapulai is a strong symbol of the agreement that has been reached between the two families and respect for the role and status of the groom in his new family (Alhadi & Zikri, 2024). This tradition is also a symbol of cooperation, as the entire family and relatives of the woman typically participate in this welcoming procession. This is in accordance with

what was conveyed by Mr. Sofyan as the *ninik mamak* or representative of the bride:

"The main stage in the Bajapuik tradition is *Manjapuik Marapulai*, where the woman's family brings the previously agreed Bajapuik money and hands it over to the groom. This money is not just a payment, but a symbol of respect and appreciation for the groom's role in his new family. In addition, this procession also marks the agreement that has been reached previously, both regarding Bajapuik and all other marriage requirements." (Interview August 2, 2024)

After the *Manjapuik Marapulai* stage, the marriage contract is carried out according to Islamic teachings, as the Minangkabau people are a predominantly Muslim society. This marriage contract marks the legal union of the bride and groom, as recognised by their religion and law, and is the culmination of the entire wedding ceremony. Although Bajapuik is an important part of the wedding tradition, religion still plays a significant role in perfecting the marriage bond. After the marriage contract is complete, the Bajapuik process continues with the *Baralek* stage, which is a wedding party held to celebrate the union of the bride and groom. At this stage, both families invite relatives, friends, and the surrounding community to join in the celebration of the wedding. *Baralek* not only functions as a celebration, but also as an opportunity for the extended family to show solidarity and togetherness. This is part of the Minangkabau tradition that highly values the importance of togetherness and cooperation in everyday life.

The next stage is *Manjalang*, which is the bride's official visit to the groom's family home after the wedding. *Manjalang* is a symbol of recognition and respect from the woman to the groom's extended family (Febianti, 2024). During this visit, the bride typically receives a *Pasalaman*, which is a gift in the form of money or valuables from the groom's family as a gesture of reciprocity for the Bajapuik that was previously given. This is a form of reciprocity that symbolizes balance and appreciation between the two families. *Pasalaman* not only shows that the groom's family also contributes to the marriage process, but also emphasizes that marriage is a shared responsibility involving both parties. This is in line with what was conveyed by Ibu Rahmawati as a cultural observer in Minangkabau:

"After a series of activities, usually a few days later, the new bride will visit the groom's family's homes, commonly called *Manjalang*. This visit is not just a formal event, but a symbol of recognition and respect from the woman to the husband's extended family. This is also an important moment to show that the relationship between the two families has been close after the wedding took place." (Interview August 2, 2024)

Additionally, there is the *Manduo Jalang* stage, one of the final stages that is becoming increasingly rare. At this stage, a few days after the wedding party ends, the bride will visit the groom's family home and stay there for a few days (Nadira et al., 2023). This tradition aims to strengthen the relationship between the bride and her husband's extended family, as well as strengthen the newly formed family ties. *Manduo Jalang* also reflects the importance of acceptance and adaptation for the bride in her new life with her husband's family. This is in line with what was conveyed by Ibuk Rahmawati as a cultural observer in Minangkabau:

"There is one more final stage that is currently rarely done, namely *Manduo Jalang*, where the bride will stay for several days at the groom's house to be able to strengthen the relationship between the bride and her husband's extended family, but this is now rarely done, because usually couples who are married immediately move to their own house or because of work, so there is no more time to follow the *Manduo Jalang* tradition." (Interview August 2, 2024)

The Bajapuik process in weddings in Pariaman is not only a traditional ceremony, but is also a manifestation of social, cultural and spiritual values that are very important for the Minangkabau people (Sulistiani & Idris, 2021). Each stage in this process involves numerous parties, underscoring the importance of solidarity, cooperation, and respect in fostering and sustaining relationships between families. Bajapuik is a means to strengthen family ties and create harmonious social relationships in a community that upholds traditional and religious values.

Identification of Religious and Social Values in the Bajapuik Tradition

The Bajapuik tradition in Minangkabau weddings is not only part of a ceremonial custom but also embodies strong religious and social values that underpin inter-family and community relationships. These values, such as family honor, mutual respect, and communal responsibility, have demonstrated resilience over time, even as social dynamics shift due to modernisation and globalisation. Rather than fading, these values have adapted in form: the symbolic meaning of Bajapuik is maintained, while the practice itself is adjusted to align with contemporary economic and cultural realities. This reflects both the persistence and transformation of local values within changing social contexts.

Religious Values in the Bajapuik Tradition

First, prayers and religious rituals in the Bajapuik tradition procession become strong symbols that emphasize the religious values in this tradition, reflecting the view of the Minangkabau people that marriage is not just a union of two individuals, but also a way to seek God's blessings and pleasure. The role of religion functions not only as a spiritual guide but also as a foundation that forms cultural practices and customs. The Bajapuik tradition demonstrates how Islamic teachings influence aspects of Minangkabau culture, shaping the social actions of the Minangkabau people and fostering a sense of togetherness and spiritual commitment in the context of marriage. Prayers and tahlilan, which are usually performed before and after the wedding procession, indicate that marriage is a sacred moment that God must bless. Islamic values in the wedding tradition in West Sumatra are reinforced by practices such as joint prayers carried out before marriage, which aim to surrender the marriage process to God fully. Joint prayers before marriage serve not only as a symbol of custom but also as a request for protection from all disasters and blessings for the bride and groom as they embark on a new life. Based on an interview with a traditional figure in Minangkabau.

“The role of prayer cannot be separated from the Bajapuik procession because the community believes that prayer is a spiritual force that will unite and maintain a sacred relationship built on faith. Prayer is a form of gratitude as well as surrender to God. Without prayer, this marriage seems to have lost its soul. In our customs, God is always involved, especially in sacred moments like marriage.” (Interview August 2, 2024)

The Bajapuik tradition places God at the centre of building a new family, so that marriage not only has social meaning but also serves as a spiritual mandate. This view underscores the vital role of religion in maintaining and reinforcing the foundation of marriage, ensuring it is not only strong from a social perspective but also from a spiritual one. The involvement of the extended family in various religious rituals suggests that they share a deep hope that the household they form will not only be harmonious but also always be under divine protection and guidance.

Second, the principles of justice and simplicity in the Bajapuik tradition of negotiations reflect the religious values upheld by the Minangkabau people. In this negotiation process, the extended families of the bride and groom gather to determine the amount of Bajapuik, not only as a form of dowry but also as a symbol of unity and shared responsibility. These principles are carried out in the Bajapuik tradition as a reflection of the value of syura, where decisions are made by considering the welfare of both parties and avoiding conflict or excessive burdens. The extended family is expected to prioritize simplicity in the agreed amount of Bajapuik, distancing themselves from excessive materialistic demands. Based on an interview with Mrs. Laila, a traditional figure.

“We should not demand a burdensome amount, because marriage is the beginning, not the end of a relationship between families. What is more important is the good intentions and sincerity of both parties.” (Interview August 2, 2024)

This approach is also in line with Islamic teachings, which advocate for simplicity in the wedding procession as a form of respect for the bride's family's financial capabilities. In this Bajapuik tradition, religion plays an essential role in strengthening social norms and building a strong community structure. The Bajapuik tradition exemplifies the close relationship between cultural norms and religious values, which in turn shape the social norms that the Minangkabau people hold in high regard. The process of ritual or religious practice is not only a spiritual means but also functions as a mechanism that strengthens social solidarity. In the Bajapuik tradition, the principles

of justice and simplicity not only reduce materialistic demands that can trigger tension but also make the wedding procession a forum for strengthening family spirit.

Third, Religious values in the Bajapuik tradition are not only a ritual aspect but also reflect the importance of maintaining the sanctity of marriage, which is highly valued in Minangkabau culture. Marriage is viewed here as a sacred bond, involving significant responsibility for both the bride and groom, as well as their families. The Bajapuik tradition is more than just a customary symbol; it functions as an important reminder that all parties share the responsibility of building a family based on faith and piety towards Allah. Marriage is not only a social milestone, but also a significant step in spiritual life that has long-term implications for the family and society. An interview with Ibu Rina, a local religious figure, reinforces this view. She stated,

"Marriage is a sacred covenant before God, and Bajapuik is part of the process that maintains good intentions between two families. We always remind ourselves that this bond is not just for today, but for life." (Interview August 2, 2024)

This indicates that many Minangkabau parents view Bajapuik as a reminder of the moral commitment that couples must maintain. They believe that the sanctity of marriage must be upheld, and Bajapuik serves as a reminder to continue building a harmonious household within the framework of religious values. Every element in the Bajapuik procession has a deep meaning. Every prayer, every negotiation of the number of Bajapuik, and every family gathering not only builds relationships between individuals but also forms the foundation for a new life full of responsibility. This aligns with the view that the Bajapuik tradition, through its religious elements, aims to ensure that marriage is based on strong faith and support from the entire family, thereby creating a conducive environment for the couple to start their new life. Thus, the Bajapuik tradition is not only a formality process, but also a spiritual journey that emphasizes the importance of the sanctity of marriage and the commitment to support each other in carrying out their responsibilities as husband and wife.

Social Values in the Bajapuik Tradition

First, Cooperation and Family Solidarity, one of the most prominent social values in the Bajapuik tradition, emphasises cooperation and solidarity among extended family members. The Bajapuik process involves contributions from many parties, including the female extended family, both in terms of material and moral support. In many cases, collecting money or goods for Bajapuik is not only done by the nuclear family, but involves wider relatives. This process reflects the spirit of togetherness and mutual support between members of the extended family. In addition to the material aspect, cooperation is also evident in the preparation of the wedding event, where family members and neighbours assist one another. This tradition strengthens family solidarity, where each family member feels involved and has a responsibility to support the wedding event, which is considered a significant milestone in their social life.

This is also in line with the observations made by researchers in Padang Pariaman, West Sumatra, who noted that cooperation and family solidarity are at the core of the Bajapuik tradition's implementation. The collection of Bajapuik, which involves contributions from the female extended family, demonstrates that participation in the wedding ceremony extends beyond the nuclear family to wider relatives. It is also seen how members of the extended family voluntarily donate money or valuables, such as gold, as a symbol of togetherness and support. In addition, the spirit of cooperation is also evident in the preparation of the wedding ceremony, where families and neighbors work together in various activities, from cooking to decorating the venue. This confirms that Bajapuik is not only a traditional procession, but also a moment that strengthens social ties and a sense of collective responsibility between family members and the community.

Second, the Bajapuik Tradition is also closely related to the values of dignity and social status in Minangkabau society. The amount of money or goods offered in Bajapuik is often a symbol of the social status of the woman's family. The higher the value of Bajapuik, the greater the recognition of the family's social status and dignity in the eyes of society. Therefore, in some cases, the woman's family tries to present a large Bajapuik as a form of prestige and appreciation for the man's family.

"In the Bajapuik tradition, the higher a person's education, the higher the japuik money. For

example, if he is a college graduate or has a higher degree, then his japuik money will be greater, likewise with his job. If the prospective groom has a good job and a high position, his japuik money will be greater. In addition, the social status of the prospective groom's family also affects the amount of japuik money. If he comes from a prominent family or has a high position in society, the japuik money given will be greater.” (Interview August 2, 2024)

Dignity is also related to how the woman's family respects the man's family. Although the matrilineal system gives women dominance in terms of family management, respect for the groom is still maintained through Bajapuik. The amount of money or goods given in this tradition is a symbol of the respect the woman's family shows to the man's family who invites their son to become part of the woman's family. However, it is essential to note that the dignity to be maintained through Bajapuik is not always in the form of excessive material wealth. In some Minangkabau communities, the value of Bajapuik is more symbolic, where what is prioritized is a mutual agreement to maintain harmony between the two families.

Third, the Bajapuik Tradition also reflects the values of deliberation and consensus that are highly valued in Minangkabau society. Before the wedding takes place, the number of Bajapuik to be offered is usually the result of negotiations between the bride's and groom's families. This process not only involves material considerations but also considers the values of togetherness and mutual agreement to create harmony between the two parties.

“Before the wedding takes place, there is usually a negotiation process between the bride and groom's families regarding the amount of Bajapuik money that will be presented. This process is not one-sided; rather, it is the result of a mutual agreement. Families from both sides will sit together, discuss calmly, consider various aspects, both in terms of family ability and social status, so that both parties can accept the agreed amount of Bajapuik.” (Interview August 2, 2024)

This negotiation reflects how the Minangkabau people uphold the principle of deliberation in resolving important matters, including marriage. The Bajapuik tradition provides space for both families to dialogue, understand each other, and reach an agreement that benefits both parties. This demonstrates that marriage is not merely a personal matter between two individuals, but also a union of two extended families that must be built through dialogue and mutual understanding. The social values reflected in the Bajapuik tradition demonstrate the importance of cooperation, respect for dignity, and mutual agreement in the structure of Minangkabau society. This tradition is not only a traditional procession, but also a means to strengthen social relations, maintain family status, and facilitate dialogue between large families. By prioritizing these values, Bajapuik remains one of the traditions that is maintained and appreciated in Minangkabau society, even though it has undergone adaptation in the modern social and economic context.

Social Change and Comparative Perspectives on the Bajapuik Tradition in Minangkabau

Like many enduring traditions, the Bajapuik custom in Minangkabau weddings has experienced significant social change shaped by modernization, globalization, shifting gender roles, and economic inequality. While still upheld, Bajapuik has adapted to contemporary realities, showing how Minangkabau communities maintain cultural relevance (Aini et al., 2024; Rahayu, 2023). Historically expressed through symbolic goods, such as textiles or food, Bajapuik is now often accompanied by money, with rising amounts, at times reflecting the bride's family's social status. Wealthier families may use Bajapuik to display prestige, while for others, it can become a burden, indicating a shift from symbolic to material emphasis (Sulistiani & Idris, 2021).

Such monetization mirrors global marriage exchanges: dowry systems in South Asia, where brides' families offer gifts to grooms, are debated for commodifying women (Busyro, Burhanuddin, Muassomah, Saka, & Wafa, 2023; Efevbera & Bhabha, 2020), while African bride price systems involve grooms paying brides' families as a sign of respect and alliance (Brandl & Colleran, 2024; Subramanee et al., 2022). In Islamic culture across Indonesia and Malaysia, mahar is a religiously obligatory gift from the groom to the bride with spiritual significance (Ali, Amar, Mahfuzh, &

Maulana, 2025; Fajar et al., 2025). Bajapuik is unique for its reversed flow of wealth rooted in Minangkabau's matrilineal kinship, where the bride's family honors the groom's integration (Zainal Abidin Fikri, 2024). This shows women as key actors safeguarding lineage and family honor. Globalization has also challenged rigid interpretations, with families negotiating symbolic or reduced amounts, even replacing cash with gold or practical goods to emphasize togetherness (Nadira et al., 2023). Rising education and gender equity have encouraged younger generations to reinterpret Bajapuik as a cultural identity marker while simplifying its substance (Aulia, Rahiem, & Nourwahida, 2023). As one informant explained:

“Some young people feel Bajapuik is burdensome, but many still want to preserve it as part of their Minangkabau identity by adapting it to simpler forms” (Interview, August 2, 2024).

This flexible engagement supports the anthropological view that traditions are dynamic negotiations of meaning (Pallathadka, Pallathadka, & Devi, 2022). Showing Bajapuik as a living heritage that reconciles change with cultural continuity.

CONCLUSION

The Bajapuik tradition in Minangkabau weddings, particularly in Pariaman, is a cultural heritage rich in religious and social values. This practice serves not only as part of a ceremonial process but also as a representation of core cultural principles, such as respect, cooperation, justice, and spirituality, in fostering inter-family relationships. Rooted in a matrilineal kinship system, Bajapuik is uniquely structured as the bride's family offers a symbolic tribute to the groom's family, in contrast to most bridewealth systems around the world. In response to modernization, globalization, and socio-economic shifts, Bajapuik has demonstrated flexibility through adjustments in its form and amount. Younger generations actively reinterpret the tradition, seeking to preserve its essence while adapting it to contemporary realities. These adaptations demonstrate that Bajapuik is not a rigid cultural form, but a dynamic and responsive tradition capable of evolving in response to social change. From a comparative perspective, Bajapuik shares similar social functions with *mas kawin* in Islamic traditions, dowry in South Asia, and bride price in several African societies. Although the direction and form of the gift may differ, these practices commonly serve to strengthen kinship ties, affirm family status, and express shared cultural values. Thus, Bajapuik holds not only local cultural importance but also global relevance within broader discussions of marriage systems, cultural identity, and the evolving meanings of tradition in a modern world.

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