

The representation of the matrilineal tribe In Indonesia: a cultural study of selected Minangkabau novels

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Abstract

This study examines the evolving representation of gender roles and cultural identity within the Minangkabau matrilineal system through a critical analysis of three seminal Indonesian novels: *Siti Nurbaya*, *Never the Twain*, and *The Land of Five Towers*. Employing a qualitative-interpretive method grounded in Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony, the research analyzes how power relations, traditions, and ideological negotiations are reflected across colonial and modern contexts. The findings reveal a significant transformation in gender representation. Women are initially portrayed as moral anchors bound by adat (customary law) and sacrifice, but later emerge as visionary figures who guide families toward a synthesis of tradition and modernity. Meanwhile, men negotiate their peripheral domestic role through *merantau* (migration), which functions as a counter-hegemonic strategy enabling them to gain intellectual and social capital. Furthermore, the study highlights the evolving relationship between adat and Islam, shifting from conflict toward a hybrid hegemony encapsulated in the philosophy *Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah*. The study concludes that contemporary Minangkabau identity reflects a resilient integration of matrilineal tradition, Islamic values, and global modernity, as represented in literary discourse.

Abstrak

Representasi dari suku matrilineal di Indonesia: Sebuah kajian kebudayaan dari beberapa novel Minangkabau terpilih

Penelitian ini mengkaji representasi peran gender dan identitas budaya dalam sistem matrilineal Minangkabau melalui analisis kritis kebudayaan terhadap tiga novel Indonesia, yaitu *Siti Nurbaya*, *Salah Asuhan (Never the Twain)*, dan *Negeri 5 Menara*. Dengan menggunakan metode kualitatif-interpretatif berbasis teori hegemoni budaya Antonio Gramsci, penelitian ini menganalisis bagaimana relasi kekuasaan, tradisi, dan negosiasi ideologis direpresentasikan dalam konteks kolonial hingga modern. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya transformasi signifikan dalam representasi gender. Perempuan awalnya digambarkan sebagai penjaga moral yang terikat adat dan pengorbanan, kemudian berkembang menjadi figur visioner yang mengarahkan keluarga menuju sintesis antara tradisi dan modernitas. Sementara itu, laki-laki menghadapi posisi domestik perifer melalui praktik *merantau* sebagai strategi kontra-hegemonik untuk memperoleh modal intelektual dan sosial. Selain itu, hubungan antara adat dan Islam mengalami pergeseran dari konflik menuju hegemoni hibrida yang tercermin dalam filosofi *Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah*. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa identitas Minangkabau kontemporer mencerminkan integrasi yang tangguh antara tradisi matrilineal, nilai-nilai Islam, dan modernitas global dalam wacana sastra.

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1 Introduction

There are many tribes in this world, and particularly in Indonesia, different tribes were existed. The Central Statistics Agency (BPS) notes that the nation consists of more than 1,300 ethnic groups, with the last comprehensive count in the 2010 Census identifying 1,340 tribes. This immense diversity exists within a large population, which, according to the 2020 Population Census (SP2020) released in 2021, totals 270.20 million people. Definitely, these tribes have their own traditions, belief systems, morality, and culture itself.

One of the tribes in Indonesia that has a distinguished culture is Minangkabau. The Minangkabau society lives primarily in West Sumatera, Padang, Indonesia. One of the reasons why this tribe is unique, it is because they still preserve the matrilineal system in their society while also being strong adherents of Islam, following the principles of *adat* (traditional law and custom) and Islamic law. The Minangkabau population stands at approximately 6.46 million people (2010 Census). According to the *Encyclopedia of World Cultures, East and Southeast Asia* (1993), Minangkabau represents one of the last matrilineal societies in the world, where property is inherited down by the female line. This strong combination of matrilineal system and Islamic faith has attracted significant scholarly interest.

The life in the Minangkabau society can be observed through literary works. Wellek and Warren (1956) claimed that literature is a product of society. Thus, literature is considered from the social context and represents social reality. As a social document, literature documents the situation or condition of a certain civilization and keeps the culture of the society alive.

The relationship between literature, society, and the culture that nurtures it are intimate; neither can be adequately understood without reference to the other. To analyze this relationship, especially concerning deeply embedded societal structures and power dynamics, the framework of Cultural Hegemony is highly relevant. Cultural Hegemony, a key concept established by the Italian Marxist philosopher Antonio Gramsci, refers to the domination of a culturally diverse society by the ruling class who manipulate the culture of that society—the beliefs, explanations, perceptions, values, and mores—so that the imposed ruling-class worldview becomes the accepted cultural norm. This concept provides a critical lens to examine how traditional structures, like Minangkabau's matrilineal *adat*, might be represented, maintained, or challenged in the chosen literary texts.

This research uses the following selected Minangkabau novels: *Siti Nurbaya* (Marah Rusli, 1922), *Never the Twain* (formerly *Salah Asuhan*) (Abdoel Moeis, 1928), and *The Land of Five Towers* (Ahmad Fuadi, 2009). These literary works mirror the culture of Minangkabau society across different eras, describing life under *adat*, religion, and external influences (Dutch era and modern period).

Previous research on these three novels has predominantly been categorized into three thematic streams. First, studies on *Siti Nurbaya* often concentrate on the conflict between individual freedom and rigid traditional marriage customs. Second, scholarly discourse on *Never the Twain* (*Salah Asuhan*) frequently explores the psychological impacts of Western education and the alienation of the post-colonial subject (e.g., [Author C, Year]). Lastly, contemporary analyses of *The Land of Five Towers* (*Negeri 5 Menara*) largely emphasize its pedagogical value and the role of Islamic boarding schools in character building. However, there is a lack of longitudinal research that synthesizes these works to examine the shifting power dynamics within the Minangkabau matrilineal system through a political-ideological lens. This study addresses this gap by utilizing Antonio Gramsci's Theory of Cultural Hegemony to analyze the representation of Minangkabau society. Unlike previous moralistic or educational readings, this research offers a novel perspective by framing the novels as sites of ideological struggle where *Adat* and Islamic values are constantly negotiated across colonial and

modern eras. The primary purpose of this research is to deconstruct how literary narratives reflect and reshape the social consensus regarding gender roles and cultural identity in Minangkabau society.

2 Methods

This research employs a qualitative-interpretive approach anchored in the framework of Cultural Hegemony formulated by Antonio Gramsci. To provide a rigorous analysis, the study operationalizes hegemony not merely as a theoretical concept but as a functional tool to examine how literary texts act as sites of ideological struggle, reflecting and shaping the social consensus of the Minangkabau people across different historical epochs.

The systematic analysis begins with the identification of specific units of analysis within the English translations of *Siti Nurbaya*, *Never the Twain*, and *The Land of Five Towers*. These units consist of narrative events that depict conflicts between *adat* and Islam, character construction that illustrates the positioning of individuals within the matrilineal hierarchy, and dialogic interactions that reveal either the internalization of dominant ideologies or the emergence of "counter-hegemony." By focusing on these textual elements, the study avoids extraneous psychological speculation and remains grounded in the narrative representation of cultural power.

The analytical procedure follows a structured three-stage interpretive process. First, data condensation is performed through a coding process to isolate textual fragments related to gender roles and social authority. Second, these codes are organized into thematic categories, distinguishing between "Common Sense" (uncritical acceptance of traditional norms) and "Critical Consciousness" (moments of resistance). Finally, an interpretive synthesis is conducted to map how these representations mirror the evolution of Minangkabau society. This procedure aligns with contemporary qualitative standards, ensuring that the transition from raw text to theoretical conclusion is transparent and replicable (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2020).

To ensure the validity and reliability of the findings, this study utilizes theory triangulation, cross-referencing literary interpretations with recent sociological scholarship on Minangkabau gender dynamics. As highlighted in recent studies, the representation of the matrilineal system in literature often serves as a "negotiated space" where traditional values are either reinforced or challenged by external modernizing forces (Pratama & Setyowati, 2022). By maintaining a consistent coding protocol across all three novels, the research ensures an objective and focused assessment of how cultural power dynamics and gender roles are mirrored and transformed from the colonial era to the contemporary period.

2.1 Data Sources and Selection

The primary data consists of textual evidence from three pivotal Minangkabau novels. These works were selected because they represent different stages of hegemonic negotiation. The researcher used library research as a technique to see through the gathering and selection of data, combined with note-taking technique. The library research includes gathering of data from printed materials as well as from the electronic materials. Specifically, to answer the statement of problems of this study, the data gathering procedures involve the following phases to facilitate the discussion of the data of this study. These are:

Phase I: Initial Listing, Surveying and Reading of the Media Text of the Literary Works.

The researcher made a list of the literary works about the Minangkabau societies from several sources. This was also done to check whether the literary works have English translation or not. Then, the researcher collected the information about the literary works by using the instrument of the study. To make it easier, the researcher arranged the list of literary works in tabular form (see Table 1).

Table 1. Initial list of literary works.

TITLE	AUTHOR	ORIGIN	YEAR PUBLISHED	KIND OF LITERATURE
Ayat-Ayat Cinta (The Verses of Love)	Habiburrahman El-Shirazy	Indonesia	2008	Novel
Rubuhnya Surau kami	A.A Naviz	Indonesia	1956	Short story
Harimau	Putu Wijaya	Indonesia	1975	Novel
Negeri Lima Menara (The Land of Five Tower)	Ahmad Fuadi	Indonesia	2009 and 2011 for the English Translation	Novel
Di Bawah Lindungan Ka'bah	Hanny Saputra	Indonesia	2011	Film
Tenggelamnya Kapal Van Der Wijck	Buya Hamka	Indonesia	2013	Film
Siti Nurbaya	Marah Rusli	Indonesia	1922 and 2011 for the English Translation	Novel
Wanita Berkalung Surban	Abidah El Khalieqy	Indonesia	2009	Novel
Never the Twain	Abdoel Moeis	Indonesia	1928 and 2010 for The English Translation	Novel
Laskar Pelangi (The Rainbow Troops)	Andrea Hirata	Indonesia	2005 and 2009 for the English Translation	Novel
Rusmi Ingin Pulang (Rusmi Wanted to Come Home)	Ahmad Tohari	Indonesia	2004 and 2015 for English Translation	Novel

Phase II: Selection of Final Listing Based on Given Criteria

After the preliminary listing of the literary works, the researcher carefully selected the literary works based on the criteria grounded in the objectives of the research. These criteria involve the following;

1. The literary work must have an English translation.
2. The literary work should be written by an Indonesian author.
3. The author should be from the Minangkabau society.
4. The literary work should tell about the Minangkabau society.

Phase III: Rereading, Reviewing of Genres, and Final Selection of Literary Works

Based on the set of criteria, the researcher chose the three novels for analysis. The researcher carefully considered the novels that have English translations along with other criteria mentioned

above. The literary pieces were also examined to see if they reflect the way of life in the Minangkabau society. The list of the final novels is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Final list of literary works

TITLE	AUTHOR	ORIGIN	YEAR PUBLISHED	KIND OF LITERATURE
Negeri Lima Menara (The Land of Five Towers)	Ahmad Fuadi	Indonesia	2009 and 2011 for the English Translation	Novel
Siti Nurbaya	Marah Rusli	Indonesia	1922 and 2011 for the English Translation	Novel
Never the Twain	Abdoel Moeis	Indonesia	1928 and 2010 for the English Translation	Novel

Phase IV : Analysis and Interpretation of the Represented of Men and Women in Minangkabau Society

The researcher selected three Minangkabau novels based on the set of criteria. These novels have been analyzed through the theories by Cultural Hegemony formulated by Antonio Gramsci guided with the objectives of this research. The researcher identified how the Minangkabau society (men and women) were represented in terms of moral and social aspects, the factors which influenced how the Minangkabau society were represented, and the implementation of the representation towards the modern Minangkabau society in particular.

By analyzing the novels through the hegemony cultures, the researcher gained the knowledge about the culture of the Minangkabau society and how the matrilineal system works among them. Moreover, the researcher described the representation by using the parameters of the hegemony cultures in terms of morality and society.

3 Findings

This study reveals a significant transformation in the representation of gender roles within the Minangkabau matrilineal system across different literary periods. In *Siti Nurbaya* and *Never the Twain*, women are predominantly portrayed as moral anchors of adat (customary law), characterized by obedience, sacrifice, and their role in maintaining social stability. Although they occupy a central symbolic position, their agency remains constrained by hegemonic traditional norms.

In contrast, *The Land of Five Towers* presents a shift in female representation toward more visionary and influential figures. Women are no longer limited to preserving tradition but actively guide their families toward a synthesis of cultural values, religion, and modernity.

For men, the findings indicate a consistent portrayal of marginality within the domestic sphere of the matrilineal system. In earlier works, this condition produces a crisis of identity, leading male characters to seek authority through Western education or external institutions. However, in the modern narrative, men are depicted as intellectual agents who gain legitimacy through *merantau* (outmigration), which functions as a means of acquiring social and intellectual capital.

Furthermore, the study finds a transformation in the relationship between adat and Islam. Earlier texts tend to portray these elements in tension, while modern narratives reflect a more integrated and harmonious relationship, encapsulated in the philosophy *Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah*.

4 Discussion

This part will present the discussion of the analyzed works, utilizing the theory of Cultural Hegemony to examine the construction of social norms. It explores how the novels reflect the tension between dominant traditions and emerging counter-ideologies within the Minangkabau cultural context. It will discuss by analysing the selected novels through the critical framework of Gramscian Cultural Hegemony. The analysis treats these literary works as sites of ideological struggle, uncovering how the social consensus of the Minangkabau matrilineal society is negotiated and represented.

4.1 The Representation of Men and Women Within the Minangkabau Matrilineal System is Portrayed in the Selected Novels

The portrayal of men and women within the Minangkabau matrilineal system in these novels is not just a description of "roles" but a representation of Hegemonic Power Dynamics. Using Gramscian theory, we can see that the novels reflect how the matrilineal "common sense" (tradition) is either maintained, resisted, or synthesized with new ideologies.

Using Gramsci's (1971) concept of hegemony, the novels represent the matrilineal system not merely as a kinship rule, but as a dominant cultural "common sense" that dictates power. In *Siti Nurbaya* and *Never the Twain*: There is a visible tension between the traditional hegemony of the *Bundo Kanduang* (female authority) and the emerging counter-hegemony of modern-patriarchal values. In *Never the Twain*, the protagonist Hanafi represents a "crisis of hegemony"; as a Minangkabau man, he feels disempowered by a system where property and lineage belong to women, leading him to seek a counter-identity through Western education (Hegemony of Colonialism).

In *The Land of Five Towers*: The representation shifts toward a Religious Hegemony. While the matrilineal background remains, the male characters are portrayed as the primary agents of moral and intellectual leadership, suggesting that in modern narratives, the "intellectual" leadership has moved toward a synthesis of Islam and globalism, often transcending traditional gender constraints (Blackwood, 2000). According to Bahardur (2023), The Minangkabau people practice a matrilineal kinship system. This system establishes women as the heirs of the lineage and the inheritors of ancestral property through the maternal line, as well as granting them the right to educate children and manage the family. Therefore, ideally, Minangkabau women should hold higher authority within the family and society compared to men. Related to this statement, researcher found in the selected novels illustrate a shift from traditional sacrifice to modern-religious negotiation, as follow;

4.1.1 Women: From "Guardians of the Clan" to "Visionary Mothers"

In the Minangkabau matrilineal system, women are traditionally the *Bundo Kanduang* (the pillar of the house) and owners of ancestral property. The Hegemony of Duty (*Siti Nurbaya*): Nurbaya represents the "centrality" of women, but it is a centrality tied to sacrifice. Her character reflects the hegemonic expectation that a woman's primary role is to ensure the economic and social survival of the family (the *kaum*). Her autonomy is surrendered to maintain the family's honor, portraying women as the moral martyrs of the *adat* system. The Hegemony of Resilience (*Never the Twain*): Rapih and Hanafi's mother represent the "Persistence of Style" (Hebdige, 1979). Even when faced with Hanafi's Westernized rebellion, they remain rooted in the domestic sphere. They are portrayed as the anchors

of consent; they do not fight with force, but their unwavering adherence to *adat* makes Hanafi's Western identity look like a "failure."

The Visionary Hegemon (*The Land of Five Towers*): Amak represents a modern evolution. She still holds the matrilineal power to decide her son's path, but she uses "soft power" (love and prayer) rather than rigid *adat* rules. She is portrayed as the intellectual guide who directs the male energy toward a synthesis of religion and modernity.

4.1.2 Men: From "Peripheral Guests" to "Intellectual Agents"

In a matrilineal society, men often experience a "power gap" because they do not inherit the ancestral house or land.

The Crisis of Authority (*Siti Nurbaya & Never the Twain*): Men like Samsulbahri and Hanafi are portrayed as being in a state of hegemonic instability. Because they lack structural power in the house, they seek power elsewhere—through the military or Western education. Hanafi's tragedy is a representation of the "Minangkabau male's frustration" with a system that treats them as guests (*urang sumando*) in their own wives' homes (Kato, 1982).

The Organic Intellectual (*The Land of Five Towers*): Alif represents the resolution of this crisis. By going on *Merantau* to a *pesantren*, he gains a new kind of power: Intellectual and Religious Hegemony. He is portrayed not as a "guest" in the system, but as an autonomous agent who brings pride back to the matrilineal line through global achievement rather than land ownership (Zee, 2020).

4.1.3 The Mother as the Anchor of Hegemonic Consent

According to Gramsci (1971), hegemony operates through "consent" rather than force. In these novels, the unconditional love of the mother is the primary tool for securing this consent.

Internalized Authority: In *The Land of Five Towers*, the character of Amak does not use physical coercion to make Alif attend a religious school. Instead, she uses her moral authority and "sacrificial love" to shape his desires (Fuadi, 2011). Alif's eventual submission represents the successful internalization of the mother's will as his own "common sense."

The Struggle of Tradition: In *Never the Twain*, Hanafi's mother represents the traditional Minangkabau hegemony facing a counter-hegemonic force (Westernization). Her persistent love and refusal to "disown" her son, despite his Dutch-like behavior, is an attempt to maintain a moral bond that the colonial system tries to break (Moeis, 2010).

4.1.4 Respect and Sacrifice as Mechanisms of Social Maintenance

Hegemony is maintained through "civil society" (family and education), where roles are clearly defined. Self-Sacrifice (The Case of Nur): In *Siti Nurbaya*, Nur's decision to marry Datuk Maringgih to save her father from prison is the ultimate example of Hegemonic Duty. Her "politeness" and "respect" are not just traits; they are the ideological glue that binds the individual to the welfare of the *kaum* (clan). As Hadler (2008) suggests, the Minangkabau system survives because individuals accept the "burden" of tradition as a moral necessity.

The Raso jo Pareso (Feeling and Reason): The characters demonstrate Octavianus' (2006) concept of *Raso jo Pareso*. From a hegemonic perspective, this is the "moral policing" that ensures children (like Alif or Samsu) remain respectful even when their personal dreams are thwarted.

4.2 Factors Influencing the Representation of Minangkabau Society

According to Hebdige (1979), culture consists of the subcultural and style. The subcultural itself was reflected to small elements that build the culture such as the language, music and cloths. In

connection of the Hebdige explanation, the researcher found out that the subcultural consisting of the Minangkabau culture was *adat* (traditional law and custom) and religion as well. The tradition of *Merantau* (voluntary migration) is not merely a social habit in Minangkabau culture; through the lens of Gramscian Hegemony, it serves as a crucial counter-hegemonic space for Minangkabau men. In a society where the domestic and economic hegemony is traditionally held by women through the matrilineal inheritance of land and houses, *Merantau* provides men with a platform to negotiate their own power, autonomy, and identity.

4.2.1 Merantau

Merantau is one of the Minangkabau *Adat*. For men who are already mature enough, they were required to go far away from their house and their country because of the matrilineal system inside the Minangkabau society. Women would ask their son to go far away and find a new place. It was stated that the factor that made the Minangkabau men do *Merantau* is the matrilineal system within this tribe. The matrilineal system in this tribe just provided the heritage for the women. Meanwhile, men do not get any heritage. Therefore, men in Minangkabau choose to do *Merantau* to get better lives, aside from the economic aspect or the education aspect as well.

In the selected novels, it was found that almost all the characters of Minangkabau men do the *merantau*. It was show from *The Land of Five Towers* novel, *Siti Nurbaya* novel and *Never the Twain* novel, as follow:

4.2.1.1 The Search for Agency in a Matrilineal Hegemony

In the traditional Minangkabau structure, men often occupy a peripheral position in the domestic sphere—as "guests" (*urang sumando*) in their wives' homes or as protectors of their sisters' property. Kato (1982) argues that *Merantau* allows men to escape this domestic dependency.

In *Never the Twain (Salah Asuhan)*: Hanafi's migration to Batavia (Jakarta) is a radical attempt to overthrow the traditional hegemony entirely. He seeks a "Westernized" identity to compensate for his lack of structural power within the *adat* system. His adoption of Dutch culture is what Hebdige (1979) would call a "subcultural style" of resistance against the suffocating expectations of his matrilineal kin.

In *Siti Nurbaya*: Samsulbahri's move to Batavia to pursue his education is a search for individual merit. By becoming an educated officer, he builds a "public" hegemony that is independent of the "private" matrilineal property controlled by Datuk Maringgih's clan.

In the earlier novels (*Siti Nurbaya* and *Never the Twain*), *Merantau* was often a source of tragedy or cultural alienation. However, in Ahmad Fuadi's work, it is reconstructed as a positive counter-hegemonic act. According to Bourdieu (1986), cultural capital consists of knowledge, skills, and education that confer status. In traditional Minangkabau *adat*, the most valuable capital is land and lineage (controlled by women). Since Alif, as a male, does not inherit this, his *Merantau* to Pondok Madani in Java is a quest for a different kind of capital: Intellectual Capital (English, Arabic, and religious scholarship). By mastering these "global languages," Alif breaks the dependency on the matrilineal domestic structure. He creates a new "common sense" where a Minangkabau man's worth is measured by his global contribution, not his status as a "guest" in the ancestral house.

In Fuadi's work, it also find there is a phrase "*Man Jadda Wajada*". In *hagemoni* culture, this phrase was pointed to a transformative ideology. In Gramscian terms, this mantra replaces the old "common sense" of *nasib* (fate) or traditional social constraints. Alif's *Merantau* is characterized by extreme self-discipline (the *jasus* system, the strict schedule). This represents the Internalization of

Hegemony; he no longer needs his mother or *ninik mamak* to police his behavior because he has adopted the "Man Jadda Wajada" philosophy as his own internal law.

4.2.1.2 Merantau as the Production of "Organic Intellectuals"

Gramsci (1971) defines "organic intellectuals" as individuals who arise from a specific class or group to provide it with a new self-consciousness and a sense of mission.

In *The Land of Five Towers*: Alif's journey to the *pesantren* (Islamic boarding school) in Java is a modern form of *Merantau*. Here, migration is the process of becoming an organic intellectual. Alif is not just moving for money; he is moving to acquire a Religious and Global Hegemony. By mastering Arabic, English, and Islamic law, Alif creates a new "common sense" that proves Minangkabau men can succeed on the global stage, thereby shifting the power balance from traditional land-ownership to intellectual capital (Zee, 2020).

4.2.1.3 The Tension Between Global Aspirations and Traditional "Consent"

While *Merantau* is an escape, it is also a trap of expectations. Gramsci notes that hegemony is maintained by the "prestige" of the dominant system. Shame as a Border: As analyzed previously, Alif's fear of the "shame" of returning home unsuccessful (Fuadi, 2011) shows that even in the counter-hegemonic space of migration, the original *adat* hegemony still exerts its "gaze." Peletz (1996) observes that Minangkabau men often feel a dual burden: they must succeed abroad to prove their worth to a society that gives them no automatic inheritance at home.

4.2.2 Adat and Religion

The interaction between Adat (traditional custom) and Religion (Islam) is the central hegemonic tension in Minangkabau literature. In *The Land of Five Towers*, this relationship is portrayed not as a destructive conflict (as seen in earlier novels), but as a negotiated synthesis. In the context of the three selected novels, the relationship between Adat and Religion (Islam) is portrayed as an evolving dialogue of power. Through a Gramscian lens, these two forces act as dual hegemonic pillars that define the "common sense" of Minangkabau society. While earlier literature often depicted them in conflict, the modern narrative suggests a successful synthesis known as the philosophy of Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah.

According to Gramsci, hegemony is maintained by "organic intellectuals" who spread ideology. In these novels, the representation of Minangkabau is shaped by the tug-of-war between two ideological apparatuses: Adat and Islam. The Adat Factor: Represented by the *Ninik Mamak* (maternal uncles), who act as the guardians of the matrilineal status quo. Their role in the novels often highlights the struggle to keep traditional property and marriage laws intact against the pressures of individualism. The Religious Factor: Hadler (2008) notes that Minangkabau history is a series of negotiations between "Muslims and Matriarchs." In *The Land of Five Towers*, Islam acts as a modernizing force that provides a new hegemonic framework, shifting the focus from tribal lineage to universal religious achievement. This reflects the philosophy of "*Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah*" (Adat is based on Sharia, Sharia is based on the Quran), where religion is the ultimate filter for cultural representation.

The portrayal of this relationship shifts from a source of tragedy to a source of empowerment.

4.2.2.1 *Siti Nurbaya* and *Never the Twain*: The Hegemony of Conflict

In the colonial-era novels, *Adat* and Religion are often portrayed as separate, sometimes clashing, forces that trap the individual.

- **Adat as Coercion:** In *Siti Nurbaya*, *Adat* is depicted in its "darker" hegemonic form—rigid and susceptible to manipulation by powerful figures like Datuk Maringgih. Religion (Islam) is present as a moral refuge, but it is unable to stop the tragic outcomes dictated by traditional debt and clan honor.
- **The Silent Religion:** In *Never the Twain*, Hanafi's mother represents the "Religious-Adat" synthesis in its traditional form—quiet, suffering, and prayerful. However, for the "modern" Hanafi, neither *Adat* nor Religion offers a sufficient framework to compete with his Western education, leading to his cultural alienation.

4.2.2.2 *The Land of Five Towers: The Hegemony of Synthesis*

In this modern novel, the tension between *Adat* and Religion is resolved through a **negotiated consensus**.

- **Religion as the Filter:** Here, the philosophy of *adat basandi syarak, syarak basandi kitabullah* is the dominant hegemony. Religion does not replace *Adat*; it refines it. For example, Alif's mother uses the *Adat* authority of a mother to push Alif toward a *Religious* education.
- **Organic Intellectuals:** The teachers at Pondok Madani act as "organic intellectuals" who teach Alif that being a good Muslim (Religion) actually makes him a better Minangkabau (*Adat*). The "Man Jadda Wajada" mantra becomes the spiritual engine that allows him to fulfill his *Adat* duty of bringing pride to his lineage.

4.3 Implications for Contemporary Minangkabau Society

The analysis of the selected novels reveals a profound evolution in the Cultural Hegemony of the Minangkabau people. These literary works do not just reflect the past; they provide a blueprint for understanding the Implications for Contemporary Minangkabau Society. As the contemporary Minangkabau society is currently living through the "Hybrid Hegemony" predicted in the transition from *Siti Nurbaya* to *The Land of Five Towers*.

The evolution of representation across these three novels reveals a hybridization of hegemony. Persistence of Symbolism: The novels imply that while the matrilineal system remains a core ethnic identity (hegemonic symbol), its practical power is being renegotiated. Comparing the tragic endings of the colonial-era novels with the success story in *The Land of Five Towers* suggests that modern Minangkabau identity has successfully integrated patriarchal-religious values with matrilineal pride. The implication for today's society is that hegemony is no longer a "clash" but a negotiated coexistence, where women hold symbolic/ancestral power while men dominate the public and economic spheres (Naim, 1985).

4.3.1 From "Land-Based" to "Intellect-Based" Hegemony

Traditionally, power in Minangkabau was rooted in *harta pusaka* (ancestral property) managed by women. Nowadays, as seen in the success of Alif in *The Land of Five Towers*, the society has shifted its focus to Cultural Capital (education and professional merit). For contemporary Minangkabau, especially men, the "new inheritance" is a high-quality education. Success in the *rantau* (abroad) is now the primary way to gain status back home, reducing the friction once caused by the lack of male land inheritance.

4.3.2 The Practical "Patriarchalization" of a Matrilineal System

While the symbolic hegemony remains matrilineal (names, clans, and traditional ceremonies), the practical hegemony has become increasingly patriarchal, influenced by Islam and modern

economic structures. Contemporary Minangkabau families often operate with the father as the primary provider and decision-maker (Islamic/Modern model), while the mother remains the guardian of the ancestral identity (*Adat* model). This "dual-leadership" is the result of the negotiation seen in the literature—a way to modernize without losing the unique matrilineal "brand" that defines the ethnic group.

4.3.3 Merantau as a Global Mindset (The Digital Rantau)

Merantau is no longer just a physical act of leaving; it has become an ideological state of mind. The contemporary Minangkabau person is a "Global Citizen." The literature shows a movement from the tragic alienation of Hanafi (*Never the Twain*) to the global success of Alif. Today's Minangkabau youth use technology and global networks to maintain their identity while competing in international markets. The *rantau* is now a space for hegemonic expansion, not just survival.

4.3.4 The Resilience of ABS-SBK in a Secular World

The philosophy of *Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah* (ABS-SBK) has proven to be an incredibly resilient hegemonic filter. In an era of globalization and secularism, Minangkabau society uses Islam as a moral shield to protect their *Adat*. Contemporary Minangkabau culture doesn't see "Modernity" as an enemy (as Hanafi did), but as a tool to be "filtered" through religious values. This makes the Minangkabau one of the most culturally resilient groups in modern Indonesia.

5 Conclusion

The analysis of *Siti Nurbaya*, *Never the Twain*, and *The Land of Five Towers* reveals that contemporary Minangkabau society, as represented in these literary works, functions as a hybrid hegemony. These narratives portray a cultural evolution that strives to be "modern without being Western," illustrating a literary negotiation where patriarchal practices and matrilineal essences coexist within the narrative space. This study demonstrates that these novels serve as a chronological record of an ideological journey, moving from early 20th-century structural dependency to a more contemporary intellectual autonomy. In these texts, the representation of women has evolved from figures of tragic sacrifice to visionary "moral anchors" whose consent drives the family's success. Conversely, the Minangkabau man is depicted as navigating his peripheral status in the matrilineal household by establishing a counter-hegemony in the public sphere through *merantau* and education, effectively bridging the local village with a globalized world.

Furthermore, the tension between *adat* and Islam within these literary representations appears to have reached a state of hegemonic peace. While earlier literature often portrayed these forces as conflicting boundaries, modern narratives reflect a successful literary institutionalization of the *ABS-SBK* (*Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah*) philosophy. In this context, religion provides the moral and intellectual framework that allows *adat* to maintain its relevance within the text's secular and globalized setting. *Merantau* is thus portrayed not merely as physical migration, but as a sophisticated hegemonic strategy—a "style" of resistance where the migrant strengthens their matrilineal identity from afar, bringing prestige back to the symbolic heart of the culture.

The implications of this research highlight that literature remains a primary instrument for maintaining and renegotiating cultural consensus in the face of modernity. By analyzing these representations through a Gramscian lens, this study underscores how literary texts function as a medium for "organic intellectuals" to shape the cultural identity of an ethnic group. However, as this study is limited to the narrative content of selected novels, it does not account for the empirical socio-economic shifts in real-world Minangkabau society. Therefore, future research should consider a comparative approach between these literary representations and ethnographic data to determine the extent of the gap between "textual ideals" and "social reality." Additionally, further studies could

explore how contemporary Minangkabau digital literature or social media narratives continue to challenge or reinforce the hegemonic structures identified in this research.

Disclosure Statement

The authors claim there is no conflict of interest.

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