

Dialectics of Islam and Culture in Forming the Social Structure of the Rencong Telang Indigenous Community

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Abstract:

This research discusses the dialectics of Islam and culture in the syara mangato adat mamakai tradition in forming the social structure of the Rencong Telang community in Kerinci Jambi. The existence of the culture of Rencong Telang Indigenous People is increasingly disappearing with the arrival of the Syncretic Islamic and Puritan Islamic civilizations. This research employed qualitative research with a phenomenological approach and multiple cases. Data was collected through documentary research, secondary data collection, participant observation, in-depth interviews, and focus group discussions (FGD). The results of the research find that the tradition of syara mangato adat mamakai shows the dialectics of Islam and culture in forming the social structure of the Rencong Telang indigenous community. In this case, Islam is one of the sources of applicable norms and customary law. The social life of the Rencong Telang community is regulated through traditional institutions which are manifested in the formulation of four customs and four laws. The four customs contain traditional principles. Meanwhile, Law Four is in the form of technical and applied regulations.

[Penelitian ini mendiskusikan tentang dialektika Islam dan budaya pada tradisi syara mangato adat mamakai dalam membentuk struktur sosial komunitas Rencong Telang di Kerinci Jambi. Keberadaan tradisi ini semakin menghilang dengan masuknya peradaban Islam Sinkretis dan Islam Puritan. Penelitian kualitatif ini menggunakan



pendekatan fenomenologi dan multiple case. *Penggalian data dilakukan melalui studi dokumentasi, pengumpulan data sekunder, observasi terlibat, wawancara mendalam, dan focus group discussion (FGD)*. Hasil penelitian menemukan bahwa tradisi syara mangato adat mamakai memperlihatkan dialektika Islam dan budaya dalam membentuk struktur sosial masyarakat adat Rencong Dalam hal ini Islam menjadi salah satu sumber norma dan hukum adat yang berlaku. Kehidupan sosial masyarakat Rencong Telang diatur melalui lembaga adat yang terwujud dalam rumusan adat nan empat dan undang nan empat. Adat nan empat berisi prinsip-prinsip adat. Sedangkan Undang nan Empat berupa aturan-aturan teknis dan bersifat terapan].

Keywords :

Dialectics, Islam, Culture, Social Structure, Rencong Telang

A. Introduction

Culture encompasses values and norms of ideas in actions within human groups that have patterns. Today, it implies that culture has regulated human life in an institutionalised environment or all actions and behaviours in agreed-upon methods. In this context, culture is a social institution or another term for a community institution¹.

Culture or a tradition within a community undergoes changes, even extinction, caused by the development of societal lifestyles characterised by modernity². This can be seen from the change in tradition with the introduction of religion into the community's culture³. One example is the tradition of *Macaq Undat*, which has existed since ancient times and has been passed down from generation to generation by the Dayak ethnic community in the Sungai Bawang Cultural Village. In Muara Badak, Kutai Kartanegara, where mantras were used by its people to express gratitude after harvest to gods, these mantras have now been replaced with prayers of gratitude to God. Given the noble values and spirit of mutual cooperation contained within it, it is only fitting that *Macaq Undat* should continue to be passed down, preserved, and developed from generation to generation⁴.

¹ Luthfi Salim, "Kearifan Lokal Sebagai Modal Sosial Ulun Lampung," *RESIPROKAL: Jurnal Riset Sosiologi Progresif Aktual* 5, no. 1 (2023): 103–114.

² Ellya Rosana, "Dinamisasi Kebudayaan Dalam Realitas Sosial," *Jurnal Al-Aadyan* 9, no. 1 (2017): 16–30, <http://www.ejournal.radenintan.ac.id/index.php/alAadyan/article/view/1442>.

³ Naomi Diah Budi Setyaningrum, "Budaya Lokal Di Era Global," *Ekspresi Seni* 20, no. 2 (2018): 102–12, <https://journal.lisi-padangpanjang.ac.id/index.php/Ekspresi/article/view/392>.

⁴ Kristi Marleni, "Simbol Dan Makna Tari Datun Ngentau Dalam Upacara Macaq Undat," *Institut Seni Indonesia Yogyakarta* (Yogyakarta, 2016).

Similarly, the tradition of the Kerinci community, known as *Ngayun Luci*, holds several meanings: *Ngayun* means swinging, while *Luci* is a container resembling an inverted cone on which wooden birds are placed, filled with forest fruits. The *Ngayun Luci* ceremony is also called *Aseak Ngayun Luci* because, during the ceremony, the *luci* is swung by a shaman or *bulian sale* while other participants perform the *Aseak* dance⁵. Another tradition of the Kerinci community is the *Kenduri Sko* tradition, which has been designated as the Indonesian Intangible Cultural Heritage (WBTH) since 2018 and is a series of customary events held only once every five years. The tradition, which has been passed down through generations since the 7th century AD, consists of two main events: the purification of heirlooms and the conferment of customary titles⁶. This *Kenduri Sko* tradition illustrates that the Kerinci community prioritises customs and traditions as a way of communal life. *Kenduri Sko* is the identity of the Kerinci community. As a noble tradition preserved for hundreds of years, the educational values in this grand event are crucial in maintaining the collective identity and the ancestral heritage of the Kerinci community. Alongside are various traditions left behind by ancestors during the animism era⁷.

Cultural change or loss is inevitable because these traditions contradict religious values. One significant factor contributing to culture loss is the disconnection of heirs from communities that fail to perpetuate a tradition⁸. In the context of religion and ethnicity in Indonesia, numerous ethnic groups identify themselves as Muslims. The Buginese people in Sulawesi, the Acehnese and the Minang people in Sumatra, the Malay across Sumatra, Kalimantan, and Malaysia, the Moro people in Mindanao, the Banjarese people in Kalimantan, the Sundanese people in West Java, and the Madurese people in Madura Island and East Java represent the people of the archipelago with the most profound Islamic identity.⁹ Islam has played a significant role in the lives of Malays throughout history. It influences their belief and value systems, socio-economic life, culture, politics, education,

⁵ Marleni, "Simbol Dan Makna Tari Datun Ngentau Dalam Upacara Mecaq Undat."

⁶ (Manik 2021)

⁷ (Manik 2021)

⁸ Ira Siti Rohimah, Achmad Hufad, and Wilodati Wilodati, "Analisa Penyebab Hilangnya Tradisi Rarangkén (Studi Fenomenologi Pada Masyarakat Kampung Cikantrieun Desa Wangunjaya)," *Indonesian Journal of Sociology, Education, and Development* 1, no. 1 (2019): 17–26, <https://ijsed.ap3si.org/index.php/journal/article/view/2/2>.

⁹ Mahli Zainuddin, *Pgong Pakae Konflik Dan Resolusi Pada Masyarakat Kerinci*, 2016.

and all aspects of life. Additionally, it has been the basis for the legitimacy of power among the Malay aristocracy, particularly the sultans. Therefore, it is commonly recognised that the Malay people are Muslims existed since the arrival of Islam in the Malay Archipelago. The term ‘converting to Malay’ has long been used to refer to non-Malay people embracing Islam. This phenomenon has been ongoing for centuries, leading to the failure of the Christianization movement by the Portuguese in 1511¹⁰.

The Minang people embody the tradition of *Syara’ Mengato Adat Mamakai* in a *nagari*-based governance system, in which the executive function is held by *kapalo nagari* along with various government apparatus such as *manti*, *bandaro*, *paga nagari*, and *cati*; the legislative function is held by *kerapatan nagari*, which consists of *ninik-mamak*, *cerdik-pandai*, and *alim-ulama*; and the judicial function is held by the *nagari* court¹¹. *Syara’ Mangato Adat Mamakai* is a real attitude to the life of the Minang people who understand Islam or sharia¹². Sharia is the key to practising their customs. Those who understand sharia behave in accordance with their customs, while those who only follow their customs may not necessarily understand sharia. Additionally, those who practice sharia base their actions on their customs. Consequently, it may be difficult for those who do not practice sharia to practice their customs correctly, as sharia regulates their customs¹³. Therefore, for the Minang people, it is important to consider three elements when it comes to *Syara’ Mangato Adat Mamakai*: understanding of Islam, understanding of sharia, and understanding of customs. If a tradition changes or disappears, many people may no longer be able to practice the tradition or understand the meaning and function of its elements, which is often due to a lack of effort by the heirs to maintain the tradition through recording or visual documentation¹⁴.

¹⁰ Mahli Zainuddin Tago, “Penguatan Adat Dan Revitalisasi Dakwah Penelitian Di Muara Lingkat, Kerinci-Jambi,” *Afkaruna* 9, no. 2 (2013): 162–174.

¹¹ Yosi Wulandari, Pujiharto Pujiharto, and Sri Ratna Saktimulya, “Custom and Syarak as the Theme in Tambo Minangkabau,” *Indonesian Language Education and Literature* 7, no. 1 (2021): 42.

¹² Jufri Naldo, “Islam Dan Modal Sosial Orang Minangkabau Di Perantauan,” *Jurnal Penelitian* 13, no. 2 (2019): 251–278.

¹³ Fatahuddin Aziz Siregar et al., “Merantau in the Ethnic Tradition of Minangkabau: Local Custom without Sharia Basis?,” *Samarah* 6, no. 1 (2022): 115–138.

¹⁴ Mahli Zainuddin. and Ahmad-Norma Pratama, “Agama Dalam Kebangkitan Adat Di Indonesia: Studi Masyarakat Rencong Telang, Kerinci, Jambi,” *Jurnal Sosiologi Agama; Jurnal Sosiologi Agama dan Perubahan* 15, no. 1 (2021): 38–52.

The Rencong Telang community is one of the Malay ethnicities that follow Islam. Islam was introduced to this area with syncretic nuances, as in other parts of the archipelago. This can be observed today in old Malay and Javanese texts, stating that Islamic teachings do not eliminate all traditional beliefs but rather promote coexistence through a blend of Indigenous, Indian, and Arabic elements¹⁵. Syncretic Islam represents an attempt to reconcile and synthesise principles or practices that contradict Islamic teachings. This syncretism is commonly not apparent as the elements have collided with each other to form a new civilisation¹⁶.

Over time, the Rencong Telang community has undergone a shift in their religious beliefs, transitioning from syncretic Islam to Puritan Islam. The change was brought about by the community leaders' open-mindedness towards progress and the community's strong economy, which facilitated the youth's pursuit of education in Padang Panjang¹⁷. By the 1930s, the syncretic Islamic beliefs and practices in the Rencong Telang community had begun to decline. It was because the youth of Rencong Telang had studied in Padang Panjang and successfully instilled strong Islamic beliefs and practices in the community under Islamic law. The alums from Padang Panjang strongly influenced the Rencong Telang community, forming two groups: the Muhammadiyah group and the Petri group¹⁸. This division was based on differences in religious understanding rather than disputes. The Rencong Telang people refer to these groups as the old school and the modern school or the old people and the young people. Despite differences in religious views, both groups worship in the same mosque, as the Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet become their primary references¹⁹.

There are differences in intensity between the two groups, as they accommodate various local cultural practices. Muhammadiyah people tend to be more puritanical than Perti people, but they both reject various cultures that clearly contradict their religious beliefs and do not exist in the

¹⁵ Ahmad Ibrahim, *Reading on Islam in Southeast Asia* (Singapore: Institute of South East Asia Studies-ISEAS, 1985).

¹⁶ Simuh, *Sufisme Jawa: Transformasi Tasawuf Islam Ke Mistik Jawa* (Yogyakarta: Benteng, 1995).

¹⁷ Mahli Zainuddin Tago, *Memperalat Agama Perubahan Rasionalitas Tindakan Sosial* (Yogyakarta: Samudera Biru, 2014).

¹⁸ Hamka, *Ayahku* (Jakarta: Umminda, 1982).

¹⁹ Jafar Ahmad and Nuzul Iskandar, "The Acculturation Crisis and Religious Commodification in the Customary Conflict of Rencong Telang Kerinci," *Jurnal Penelitian* 19, no. 1 (2022): 11–22.

two primary sources of Islamic teachings. Up to the present day, the mosque congregation in the research location has performed their religious practices by referring to the teachings of Muhammadiyah or Perti, thereby firmly anchoring Islamic law as the basis of their religious beliefs. Moreover, the customary authorities also aligns with the group adhering to Islamic law, as the highest customs in the concerned area also refer to the same teaching. It resonates with the adage stating that “a true custom is based on Islamic law, which is grounded on the Quran.”²⁰

The Rencong Telang indigenous community adheres to a particular principle in the structure of their life. Social structures share similar goals and discourses among each other, whether within the scope of family, friendships, or more formal settings such as workplaces. In society, differences among groups contribute to the establishment of social structure and how each of them has distinct goals, such as in hobby or work-related groups. This diversity is often termed a ‘social difference’.²¹ Both vertical and horizontal-oriented social differences shape the social structure. The Rencong Telang indigenous community establishes a social structure through the *Syara’ Mangato Adat Mamakai* tradition, indicating the integration of Islamic law with customary practices. They perceive customs as synonymous with religion, particularly in the context of Islamic law.²² This study explains how the tradition of *Syara’ Mangato Adat Mamakai* shapes social structures and strengthens institutions to regulate the order of community life in the Rencong Telang Kerinci, Jambi. This tradition, nearly extinct for a century due to the influence of various Islamic civilisations, such as syncretism and puritanism, is being revitalised through *Syara’ Mangato Adat Mamakai*. Therefore, the ‘*pepatah petitih*’ (the advice and teachings from the elders), which contains customary norms and laws and serves as a ‘*pgong paka*’ (the standard for guidance), should be reexplored, reobserved, and reorganised.

²⁰ Zainuddin Tago, *Memperalat Agama Perubahan Rasionalitas Tindakan Sosial*.

²¹ Wahyuni, *Agama Dan Pembentukan Struktur Sosial: Pertautan Agama, Budaya, Dan Tradisi Sosial* (Jakarta: Kencana Prenadamedia, 2018), accessed March 12, 2023, https://books.google.co.id/books?hl=id&lr=&id=uaZjDwAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PR5&dq=bu+daya+sebagai+struktur+sosial+masyarakat&ots=7xayQJ0NkC&sig=n56--yqP3SQMENK4pWWzSxEeQ5k&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=budaya+sebagai+struktur+sosial+masyarakat&f=false.

²² M Zainuddin and Dan Ismail Maisaroh, “Posisi Wanita Dalam Sistem Politik Islam (Telaah Terhadap Pemikiran Politik Yusuf Al-Qardhawi)” *MIMBAR*, Vol. XXI, no. 2 (2005): 178–195.

In addressing this issue, the researchers collected the data utilising qualitative research methods to understand and analyse the formation of social structures through tradition²³. This qualitative study employed a phenomenological approach with multiple cases to explain the phenomena concept based on experiences grounded in natural situations²⁴. Multiple cases involve specific case studies to better understand the issues at hand. This approach develops and refines existing theories by comparing the cases/problems under study. It particularly emphasises explanatory case studies, as the research question refers to the interrogative word ‘how’²⁵.

The primary and secondary data were obtained through in-depth interviews conducted using the focus group discussion (FGD) method. The researchers determined the research subjects using purposive sampling, selecting informants who met the following criteria²⁶: 1) willing to provide information about *Syara Mengato Adat Memakai* in daily life; 2) understanding and adhering to *Syara Mengato Adat Memakai* as a way of life; 3) knowledgeable about the traditional process of *Syara Mengato Adat Memakai* as a way of life; 4) familiar with the community life following *Syara Mengato Adat Memakai* as a way of life. The obtained data was then analysed through the transcription process and then categorised to get answers from the interview guidelines. To draw a conclusion, this study analysed in-depth interview data alongside previous studies and applied the structuration theory.²⁷

B. Theoretical Framework

This study adopted the acculturation paradigm, which involves cultural contact characterised by a two-way process and mutual influence between two groups in contact. Ortiz described acculturation as a reciprocal relationship between cultural aspects.²⁸ The interdependent relationship has impacted the

²³ Jhon. W Creswell, *Research Design, Pendekatan Kualitatif, Kuantitatif Ddan Mixed* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2012).

²⁴ Sugiyono, *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif Dan R&D* (Bandung: Alfabeta Bandung, 2016).

²⁵ M G Bagus Ani Putra, “Peran Kearifan Lokal Dalam Resolusi Konflik Keyakinan Beragama Di Jawa Timur The Role of Local Wisdom for Religions Conflict Resolution in East Java,” *Masyarakat, Kebudayaan dan Politik* 26, no. 1 (2013): 1–14.

²⁶ Rukin, *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif* (Sulawesi Selatan: Yayasan Ahmar Cendikia Indonesia, 2019).

²⁷ Lexy J. Moleong, *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif* (Bandung: Remadja Karya, 2015).

²⁸ dan Herskovist Radfiel, Linton, *Perspektif Tentang Perubahan Sosial*. (Jakarta: Rineka Cipta, 1993).

various sociological aspects of society, such as social change, diffusion, and assimilation. According to William Haviland, significant changes occur within a culture during acculturation. The changes happen when different cultures remain in contact over an extended period. The public's perception of the introduction of foreign cultures plays a pivotal role in the acculturation process. When acculturation is forced, acceptance tends to be prolonged. Conversely, a smooth acculturation process leads to quicker acceptance.²⁹

Anthropologists put down some conditions that will occur during the acculturation process:³⁰ 1) Substitution, a condition where a previously existing element or a group of elements are replaced by other elements that fulfill their functions with insignificant structural changes; 2) Syncretism, a condition where the old elements blend with new elements to form a new one with significant cultural changes; 3) Addition, a condition where a new element or a group of elements are added to the old elements with or without structural changes; 4) Deculturation, a condition where the substantial part of culture disappears; 5) Origination, a condition where the new elements that fulfill new needs emerge due to the situational changes; 6) Rejection, a rapid change that is not acceptable for some people and results in rejection, rebellion, and revival movements.

C. Results and Discussion

1. Source of Norms and Customary Laws

The custom of the Rencong Telang community is established based on certain norms and laws. These are implemented through the environment or surrounding natures, the traditions of neighbouring kingdoms, or sharia. The custom is developed by observing surrounding natures or the environment and includes substantial customary aphorisms inspired by floras, faunas, or the natural environment as a whole.

As previously mentioned, Rencong Telang customary laws and norms are rooted in the cultures of neighboring kingdoms, including Minangkabau, Jambi, and Mataram. The practice of the Minangkabau and Jambi cultures is stated in the customary proverb "*adet tuhuu dehi Pagarryung undang naek dehi Jembi* (the custom was derived from Pagarryung/Minangkabau and developed from Jambi). The Minangkabau culture becomes a reference because one of the Rencong Telang's ancestors, Hangtuao Maligei, who became the descendant of Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang was from Pagarryung Palace. Meanwhile, the

²⁹ Mudzirin Yusuf, *Islam Dan Budaya Lokal* (Yogyakarta: Teras, 1999).

³⁰ Haviland William A dan R.G Soekadijo, *Antropologi Jilid 2* (Jakarta: Erlangga., 1985).

Jambi culture is utilised because the Jambi Kingdom brought four pieces of cloth to Kerinci as a symbol of power at that time. Mataram has strongly influenced the Rencong Telang culture since many *depati* became the early rulers in Rencong Telang, and the pieces of cloth symbolising power given in the era of Daulat Depati Empat Alam Kerinci were from Mataram. This is reflected in many Javanese terms in customary authority, such as *rio*, *menggun*, *pateh*, and *depati*³¹.

Some inharmonious customs derived from Pagarryung and developed from Jambi have been refined thoroughly. Thoroughness itself is related to propriety. It results from the wisdom of the Rencang Telang people themselves. Whether or not a custom can be implemented depends on its propriety aspect. In this case, the emotional aspect is also being considered. In terms of inheritance, for example, sons will receive twice as much inheritance as daughters, according to the Jambi culture. This is in line with sharia. However, according to the Minangkabau culture, daughters will receive all inheritance. Based on the principles the Rencong Telang people believe in, inheritance distribution must be equal. If sons receive a fathom of inheritance, daughters should also receive a fathom of inheritance. If one of them receives more, they should share it with other relatives. The thoroughness aspect prevents any potential dispute in the future. Even sometimes, an individual who is not entitled to receive any share of inheritance according to the custom is still given a share by their relatives. This is partly to prevent unpleasant things from happening in the future.

2. Custom and Islam

The Rencong Telang custom originated from the influential Islamic principles that blend together and become a source of laws in the community. This is stated in a proverb that says, "*adat bersandi syarak dan syarak bersandi kitabullaah* (the custom is based on Sharia, and Sharia is based on the Quran)". The strong relationship between Islamic principles and the custom applied in the community makes Islam the main identity of the community. The Rencong Telang people believe that sharia has blended with their customs. They perceive customs as synonymous with religion, particularly in the context of sharia. There is also another proverb in this regard, which says:

³¹ Syahril Masud, *Wawancara* (Rencong Telang, 2021).

Tebit ayik dehi ulu, tebit getoah dehi betoang. Adet ersendi syarak, syarak besendi kitabullah. Syarak mangatao adet mamakae. Nan dok lapok dek ujoa doak lekkaa dek panaeh. Itulah dio idup nan dipeke matai nan ditumpoa³².

Tebit ayik dehi ulu means that every single one of the customary laws and norms is based on an upstream, i.e., the 6,666 verses of the Quran. The Rencong Telang people believe that there is nothing more worthy as the upstream of life than the verses of the Quran. They also believe that the Quran is their customary holy book. *Tebit getoah dehi betoang* means that the sap comes out of the stem. The stem refers to words, actions, and events blessed by the Prophet Muhammad. *Syarak mangatao adet mamakae* means everything stated in the sharia will be applied as a custom. In other words, sharia, as a normative law, is conveyed in the form of customary laws and norms so that people can apply it in their everyday lives. *Nan dok lapok dek ujoa doak lekkaa dek panaeh* means something that is not weathered by the rain and heat. According to the Rencong Telang people, it means that the custom that unites with sharia is eternal. This is further emphasised by the customary proverb *idup nan dipeke matai nan ditumpoa* (it is used while we live and becomes a ride after we die). It means that the custom becomes the guidance in life, from now to the afterlife³³.

The implementation of the Rencong Telang customary laws and norms always refers to the sharia. As an example, if there is a conflict between two parties within the community, the customary provision that says “*betinju behempuh di halamaa tahutaa beselom abih uhang duo* (if two parties fight, they will be subjected to customary sanctions and should shake hands)” will be applied. This means that there should be no fight among the people of Rencong Telang. If a fight happens, the parties involved in the fight will be subjected to customary sanctions. The sanction is in the form of conducting a banquet where one party must provide a whole chicken, and another party must cover other banquet costs. The reconciliation process is concluded with the parties involved in a conflict shaking hands, which is then followed by reciting a prayer for forgiveness together³⁴.

In connection with the above, the sharia teaches people not to break ties with others and that all Muslims are brothers. In the event of conflicts, all parties

³² Bagindo Sutan Emas, “Wawancara” (Rencong Telang, 2022).

³³ Habibi, Wawancara (Rencong Telang, 2022).

³⁴ Zainuddin, *Pgong Pakae Konflik Dan Resolusi Pada Masyarakat Kerinci*.

involved must be able to forgive each other. The ties must remain connected even after a fight. Therefore, the prayer for forgiveness recited in the reconciliation process is “*Innamal mu’minoona ikhwatun fa aslihoo baina akhawaykum.*”

Sharia and local customs are also demonstrated by the central role of ulama (Muslim scholars) in the customary sessions for all cases. There is a customary proverb in this regard, saying “*depati nan berenam, ninik mamak nan selapan, pegawai nan berempat, dan alim ulama*” (six *depati*, eight *ninik mamak*, four employees, and *alim-ulama*). As mentioned by Hery Cipta, the Secretary of the Customary Institution:

Social disputes that cannot be resolved amicably will be brought to the *Ninik Mamak* Session. In this session, religious officials refer to *wattaqul laaha la'allakum turhamoon* (Q.S. Al-Hujurat: 10, “The believers are but one brotherhood, so make peace between your brothers who are in dispute and be mindful of Allah so that you will be among those whom Allah loves”). In addition, they follow a hadith, which states that a person is not a believer until he loves his brother as he loves himself³⁵.

The assembly of *bilals* (religious officials) acts as a witness. If a dispute is not settled at the *Ninik Mamak* Session, it will be escalated to the *Depati* Session. The *Depati* Session must be attended by a mosque imam or khatib. The resolution at this session must be based on the Qur’an and Sunnah of the Prophet by pointing out related verses and hadiths. In case of deviation from the Qur’an and Sunnah of the Prophet, the resolution is null and void, and the session must be restarted³⁶.

Syahril Masud told a story about the *Depati* Session he once attended:

At the session, he was present as a mosque imam. The dispute had to be settled further because no final decision was reached at the lower-level session, the *Ninik Mamak* Session. Consequently, the dispute was escalated to the *Depati* Session. The *depati* eventually managed to reach a collective decision. Afterward, they inquired of the informant about the compatibility of the customary legal decision with the religious postulates known to the informant as the mosque imam. When he confirmed its compatibility, only

³⁵ Masud, *Wawancara*.

³⁶ Hery Cipta, *Wawancara* (Rencong Telang, 2022).

then could the customary decision be effected. Therefore, the relevant parties attending that *Depati* Session³⁷ wrote and signed the decision.

Due to the strong connection between the sharia and their custom, religious leaders in Rencong Telang generally served as traditional leaders in the past. The people who became *depati* were the *buya* (a term to refer to a father or a respected man), who always went to the mosque diligently. Furthermore, the management of the mosque was appointed by the *depati* and *ninik mamak*. The *depati* were also confirmed in the mosque. The position of *depati* itself is generally associated with efforts to build mosques. For instance, upon returning from Sumatera Thawalib in Padang Panjang in the mid-1930s, the father of an informant immediately became a *buya* in his village. He was appointed as *Depati Tago* at a relatively young age in the 1950s. He held this position until the 1970s. During this era, the community also appointed him as the mosque khatib and the chairman of the Mujahidin Mosque development committee.

3. Customs as an Establishment of Social Structure

Social structure is essentially a set of regulations organised by established institutions in social life. This implies that social structure is an institutional structure formed by social systems that foster solidarity across space and time.³⁸ The structure of the Rencong Telang indigenous community adheres to a principle in its way of life. Social structures share similar goals and discourses among each other, whether within the scope of family, friendships, or more formal settings such as workplaces. In society, differences among groups contribute to the establishment of social structure and how each of them has distinct goals, such as in hobby or work-related groups. This diversity is often termed a 'social difference'. Both vertical and horizontal-oriented social differences shape the social structure.³⁹

The Rencong Telang indigenous community establishes a social structure through the *Syarak Mangato Adat Mamakai* tradition, which means that Islamic law has become integrated with customs. They believe that customs hold the

³⁷ Masud, *Wawancara*.

³⁸ Anthony Giddens, *Teori Strukturasi Dasar-Dasar Pembentukan Struktur Sosial*, II. (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2016).

³⁹ Wahyuni, *Agama Dan Pembentukan Struktur Sosial: Pertautan Agama, Budaya, Dan Tradisi Sosial*.

same significance as religion, particularly in the context of *syarak* (sharia or *Islamic law*).⁴⁰

Social structure in the social system has the following conceptualisations:

Structure	System	Structuration
Rules and resources, or a set of transformational relationships, organised by the social system	The relationships collectively reproduced by the actors, organised by regular social practices	Conditions that govern the structure of life in a transformative manner due to having been reproduced by the social system

The Rencong Telang custom is known to have a law called *pgong pakae*. This implies customs are something that is upheld and utilised, or something that is directly employed in social life. Customs are a guide to life at various levels and domains of life. Customs regulate all matters, including wedding processions, residential spatial planning, utilisation of customary land (*tanah ulayat*), and even issues of relations with neighbouring countries.⁴¹ In practice, customs are formulated in various forms ranging from general to specific. The formulation of the Rencong Telang custom is based on fundamental principles and related to technical or applied matters, as detailed below.

4. Customs as an Establishment of Social Structure

a. Adat nan Empat

The general formulation of *Adat Nan Empat* contains principles without detailed and technical matters and serves as the basis for all other formulations. The *Adat nan Empat* formulation is derived from the strength of its sources. Therefore, the stronger the source, the stronger its influence in binding society. Meanwhile, the weaker the source, the weaker the influence in society. As the name suggests, *Adat Nan Empat* consists of four customs as follows.

The first one is *Adat yang Sebenar Adat* (true custom). The complete formulation of this custom is *Adat nan Sebenar Adat, Adat nan Bersendi Syarak, Syarak Besendi Kitabullaah, Doak Lapok Dek Hujoan Doak Lekang Dek Panaeh*. This is the highest custom formulation. As the highest custom, all

⁴⁰ Zainuddin and Ismail Maisaroh, "Posisi Wanita Dalam Sistem Politik Islam (Telaah Terhadap Pemikiran Politik Yusuf Al-Qardhawi)."

⁴¹ Zainuddin, *Pgong Pakae Konflik Dan Resolusi Pada Masyarakat Kerinci*.

customs below it must not conflict with it. This custom is also the spirit or source of enthusiasm for all other customs. As the highest custom, it strongly binds all members of the Rencong Telang indigenous community. Any violation of this custom will result in heavy customary sanctions. This custom is eternal, free from time limits and decay or defect. The main source of this formulation is the Quran and the Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH, with the real form being Allah's law or Islamic law.

The second custom is *Adat Istiadat* (traditions and customs). It refers to a custom that has been practised since the life of the ancestors. Various forms of customs originate from the ancestors and are still relevant in society. One instance is the tradition of holding *kenduri adat* (traditional feast) after the rice harvest and before working on rice fields. The primary aim of *kenduri adat* is to express gratitude to Allah for all the blessings received. In addition, *kenduri adat* serves as a forum to reexamine various existing customs or traditions. Perhaps there are outdated and discordant customs that require change. Obviously, *kenduri adat* also aims to share with relatives and neighbours on a joyful occasion.

The third of *Adat nan Empat* is *Adat yang Diadatkan* (established custom). This custom is created based on consensus in a meeting. Sometimes, in the course of social life, new issues arise along with the development of the times, which cannot be resolved solely by *syarak* and ancestral traditions. Therefore, a meeting of the rulers of *negeri* is needed to reach a consensus. An example of consensus is a mutual agreement to collectively build a road in an area that does not have one. This consensus then becomes a practice that must be implemented in communal life. This consensus is what *Adat yang Diadatkan* means.

The last one is *Adat nan Teradat* (shaped custom). This custom arises from the habits of individuals or specific social groups because they are frequently practised. For example, a person has the habit of smoking after every meal. Because it is a personal habit, it only applies at the individual level. Everyone with this habit bears all the risks associated with it. Therefore, this custom cannot be applied to all members of the Rencong Telang indigenous community.

b. Undang nan Empat

The next customary formulation is *Undang nan Empat*. Customs under *Undang nan Empat* are more applied in nature. This formulation includes sanctions for anyone who is guilty, enabling a more orderly life. The benefits of orderliness are felt by society owing to the principle of justice that must be upheld. Customary authorities must impose punishment as fairly as possible. In this case, this traditional proverb applies: “*Tibo di phut doak dikempihkan tibo di matao doak dipicingkan tibo di papan doak berentak, tibo di duhi doak maningkaek.*” The proverb means customary authorities should not evade a matter. Should there be a dispute, they must intervene to resolve it. This also means that in resolving an issue, customary authorities must refrain from acts of discrimination based on relationships, regardless of whether the connection is based on friendship or familial ties.

Undang nan Empat comprises four parts, namely *Undang Luhak*, *Undang Negeri*, *Undang nan Duo Puluh*, and *Undang Dalam Negeri*. *Undang Luhak* regulates officials in a *luhak*, sub-village, *negeri*, and *rantau*. *Undang Negeri* contains rules related to ethics that must be adhered to create order in a *negeri*. *Undang nan Duo Puluh* contains applicable civil law and criminal law in a *negeri*. Meanwhile, *Undang dalam Negeri* contains various further detailed customary regulations following the community’s collective needs.

In practice, *Undang nan Empat* consists of the following:

1) Undang Luhak

Undang Luhak states *luhak berpenghulu, kampung bertuo, negeri berajo, rantau berjenang*. *Luhak berpenghulu* means that every *luhak* in a *negeri* must have a customary chief or *penghulu adat* to lead the *luhak*. The chief of a *luhak* should be *depati* and *ninik mamak*. If a *luhak* does not have a *depati* and *ninik mamak*, then the *luhak* will experience disorder and inconvenience. The same thing will occur if a *luhak* has a *ninik mamak* and a *depati*, but they do not function properly. As a consequence, the lives of everyone in the *negeri* will be impacted. Customs are no longer applicable because there are no respected leaders. This situation is depicted in a proverb “*Tanjung doak ditunggu imao kuboang doak ditunggu lucaek,*” which means when a territory does not have an authoritative leader, what applies is the law of the jungle.

Kampung betuo means that in every sub-village there must be respected elders. The respected elders of a sub-village are called *tuo tengganai*. They are the most respected people because of their higher pedigree position, older age, or wider experience and knowledge. Their primary duty is to prepare leadership cadres. In this sense, they have the authority to appoint anyone worthy of becoming a *depati* and *ninik mamak* and to dismiss a *depati* and *ninik mamak*. The absence of *tuo tengganai* within a *negeri* may lead to a power struggle in a *luhak*. All *anak jantan* and *anak betino* (male and female offsprings) will appoint a customary chief as they wish. However, it is possible for a *luhak* not to have a leader because no one wants to assume the position of a customary chief.

Negeri berajo suggests that a *negeri* has a supreme leader. Leadership in the Rencong Telang indigenous community is collective in nature. The supreme leader is in the form of a council of *depati*. For certain purposes, the council will appoint one person to be the chief of *depati*. The name for the chief of *depati*, also known as the king, is *Depati Rencong Telang*. As king, *Depati Rencong Telang* is selected from among the six *depati* or *depati nan berenam*. This implies that as a leader, the king works on behalf of the other *depati*. As a representative and carrier of the aspirations of other *depati*, he cannot act as he pleases without considering the other *depati*. The term of office of *Depati Rencong Telang* depends on the agreement of *depati nan berenam*. Therefore, the role is not assumed by one person for the long term.

The presence of a king holding the title *Depati Rencong Telang* supports the government function. Deliberations that take place in a *negeri* can proceed seamlessly. When a *negeri* needs to communicate with other *negeri*, *Depati Rencong Telang* will be the first person to perform the duty. It is because the *depati* appointed as *Depati Rencong Telang* certainly has more qualifications than the others. These qualifications primarily revolve around speaking skills and courage in facing and addressing various issues both inside and outside of their *negeri*.

Rantau Berjenang means that in each *rantau*, a person is appointed as a leader called *jenang*. A *rantau* is an area far from *luhak* or *negeri* but is still under the authority of *luhak* or *negeri*. To govern a *rantau*, a *depati*, as the ruler of *luhak*, appoints a *jenang*. In other words, a *jenang* is an extension of a *depati*. In *rantau*, the *jenang* is responsible for governing the *negeri* according to the

custom applicable in the *luhak* or the main *negeri*. The *jenang* must also report the implementation of their work within a certain period to the *depati* appointing them.

2) Undang Negeri

Undang Negeri differs from *Undang Luhak*, which highlights leadership in the basic rules existing within a *negeri*. *Undang Negeri* mentions *negeri bepagoa adet tapian bepagoa baso*. *Negeri bepagoa adet* means that a *negeri* definitely has a custom that protects the life of its people. This custom binds all members of society, including *anak jantan* and *anak betino*, not to mention the customary authorities such as *depati* and *ninik mamak*. In this way, community life in a *negeri* can function and flourish. Moreover, *anak jantan* and *anak betino* may develop their various positive potentials. Since different *negeri* have different customs, the Rencong Telang indigenous people must also understand the customs that are relevant in other *negeri*, especially the *neighbouring* ones. This is to establish good relations and avoid conflicts with other indigenous communities.

Tapian Bepagoa Baso carries both general and specific meanings. The general meaning is that in every interaction among the people of a *negeri*, they should show some manners. Manners are affiliated with reciprocal relationships or interactions between children and parents, nephews/nieces and aunts/uncles, family and *semendao* people, younger people and older people, and men and women. Meanwhile, the specific meaning is related to the bank as the bathing facility. A bank or bathing facility for the people of a *negeri* should be used with *baso* or manners. In general, the bathing facilities in a *negeri* for men and women are provided separately. Men are not allowed to bathe in women's areas, and vice versa.

3) Undang nan Duo puluh

Undang nan Duo Puluh contains customary law related to civil and criminal matters. This customary law consists of *Delapan Pucuk Larangan* or *Induk Undang nan Delapan* and *Undang nan Duo Belas*. *Delapan Pucuk Larangan* contains eight actions that are strictly prohibited. Meanwhile, *Undang Nan Duo Belas* is divided into two parts. The first one is *Enam Undang Tuduh*, which contains six conditions for accusing a criminal or civil action. In other words, it discusses an accusation based on evidence. The second one is *Enam Undang*

Cimo, which consists of six conditions for suspecting the occurrence of a criminal or civil action, or in other words, allegations without evidence.

a) Delapan Pucuk Larangan

Delapan Pucuk Larangan is also called *Induk Undang nan Delapan*. It is a customary law consisting of eight actions that are strictly forbidden for *anak jantan* and *anak betino*. *Delapan Pucuk Larangan* is detailed as follows.

First: *Tikam-bunuh*. *Tikam* is the act of stabbing or injuring someone with a sharp object or weapon, which is considered a serious assault. *Bunuh* means murdering or taking someone's life. Murder can be committed with or without a weapon, intentionally or unintentionally, and can be either spontaneous or premeditated.

Second: *Upeh-racun*. It refers to the act of poisoning someone to death or causing someone to become ill intentionally or unintentionally. *Upeh* is a type of poison that comes from plants. Included in *upeh-racun* is drug abuse, which not only harms the body and soul but can also lead to death.

Third: *Rampok-rampeh*. This is the act of forcibly taking someone's possessions in front of them, either through robbery or seizure. Another term for this is *samun-sakar*. *Samun* means intercepting someone in a quiet place with the intention of taking their belongings, often involving violence, assault, and even murder. *Sakar* is the act of robbery or seizure, often involving violence.

Fourth: *Maling-curi*. It refers to taking someone's possessions without their knowledge. *Maling* or burglary is carried out at night, targeting where the possessions are stored, while *curi* or stealing is carried out during the day, targeting the same thing. *Maling-curi* also includes *nutoh-kapayang*, or illegally logging forests, which is detrimental to the public interest, and *nubo-tepian*, or poisoning someone else's fish or livestock.

Fifth: *Siang-bakar*. This is an activity of burning anything that may harm others, for example, burning houses, plants, fields, and more. It also encompasses negligence leading to fires, such as discarding lit cigarettes or torch butts, resulting in the burning of other people's properties.

Sixth: *Lancang-kicuh*. It refers to the fraudulent conduct of deception and trickery to gain the maximum benefit for oneself and create loss for others. Another term is *umbuk umbai*. *Umbuk* is persuasion with sweet words or

grandiose promises, while *umbai* is seduction with the intention to deceive and beguile.

Seventh: *Dago-dagi*. *Dago* is the act of opposing authorities, officials, or respectable people in public. *Dagi* is the act of going against superiors, disobeying orders, spreading rumours, or slandering, which results in chaos or causes harm to other people.

Eighth: *Sumbang-salah*. *Sumbang-salah* is inappropriate, improper, and indecent behaviours or deeds that violate customs, laws, or religions. For example, marrying a sibling, committing adultery, raping, and other acts violating morality.

b) Undang nan Duo Belas

Undang nan Duo Belas is the second part of *Undang nan Duo Puluh*. It consists of twelve articles. The first six articles contain *Undang Tuduh*, also known as *Jalan Tuduh*, discussing the conditions for accusing someone of committing an act against customs. The other six articles contain *Undang Cimo*, or *Jalan Cimo*, discussing the conditions for suspecting someone of committing an act violating customs.

Enam Undang Tuduh has several rules. The first is *terlelah-terkejar*, which refers to the state of a person who is tired, exhausted, and fatigued after having a long run due to being chased by many people until that person is eventually caught. The second is *tertando-terbukti*, which refers to the discovery of signs or evidence indicating a violation of the law on a person's body or clothing, the discovery of objects belonging to a person at a crime scene, or the discovery of lost objects in the hands of a person. The third is *terikat-terkungkung*, which refers to a situation where a person is tied up or confined, making him unable to escape, or where a person is subjected to spells that cause them to lose sight of a way out. The fourth is *tertambak-terciak*, which refers to the situation where a lost object or animal is found to be tethered to a person's land, and the animal makes a sound. The fifth is *tercencang-terekah*, which refers to when a person is caught taking items that do not belong to them or stolen goods and then attempts to flee but fails due to getting caught in a fence, trapped in something, or injured by a booby trap, leaving an imprint on their body. The sixth is *tercencang-terekah*, which means someone is caught violating customary law,

and there is no way to make an excuse. Another term for this is being caught red-handed.

If a person is found in one of these six situations, it is evidence that they have violated customary law. This is in accordance with the traditional proverb “*Rusa berlari membawa jaring, burung terbang membawa damak (anak sumpitan), mendaki jejak tertukik, menurun jejak terlanjar, merenah runut terbentang.*” In this case, if the accused cannot make excuses, they can be considered the perpetrator, as another proverb states: “*Ayam putih terbang siang hinggap di kayu tak berdaun*” (caught with one’s hand in the cookie jar).

Enam Undang Cimo has a number of rules. The first is *basurih bak sipasin*, suggesting the presence of footprints that can lead us to a person if traced back. It is inspired by a dragonfly nymph that leaves a trail. Another term for this is *berbau bak embacang*. The second is *berjejak-berbekas*, which means that there are traces or marks that can be followed, such as traces of cart wheels, bicycle wheels, motorcycle wheels, car wheels, or fingerprints that can identify a person. The third is *enggang terbang ranting patah*, referring to a person who disappears from a *negeri* while, at the same time, there is also a missing item in that *negeri*. The fourth is *kacondong mato orang banyak*, which refers to a person who suddenly changes uncharacteristically, raising suspicion among many people. This can also apply to situations where the crowd tends to suspect a person who frequently violates customary law whenever a violation occurs. The fifth is *terbayak-tertabur*, which means that something has been widely spread. It refers to the circulating news about a person’s offence so that everyone is aware of it. The sixth is *tergegas-gegas pergi malam balik malam*, which refers to a person who rushes as if being chased by someone else. Another expression for this is *menjual bermurah-murah*, which is a situation where a person sells something in haste, expecting it to be sold quickly, for fear of being caught by the real owner of the goods.

If a person is in one of the aforementioned six circumstances, it may be considered a reason to suspect that they have violated customary law.

4) Undang Dalam Negeri

This law is also referred to as *Anak Undang Nan 50*, *Anak Undang nan 100*, or with higher number according to *seko atas tumbuh lembago atas tumpak*. *Anak Undang*, for example, includes *luko dipampaih*, *mati dibangun*, *balu*

ditepung, iram dilembago, hilang dicari, tatimbun dikekeh, hanyut dipinteh, gadai ditebus, hutang dibayar, piutang diterima. Some of the contents of *Undang dalam Negeri* relate to family matters. For example, this includes rules related to *tembo* (lineage), addressing others, marriage, divorce, and inheritance.

a) Tembao and Addressing People

The Rencong Telang indigenous community traces their lineage from both father and mother's sides with the principle of "*suku duo timbal belik, ninek empat, puyang delapan*" (two reciprocal tribes/parents, four grandparents, and eight ancestors). For example, for person A, their "*suku duo timbal belik*" consists of A's mother and A's father. Then, the "*ninek empat*" for person A consists of the grandparents (grandfather and grandmother) from their father's side and mother's side. Furthermore, "*puyang delapan*" refers to eight individuals who are the parents of each of the four grandparents of person A. Although the lineage can be traced further upwards, the Rencong Telang indigenous community emphasises the importance of remembering the lineage up to the level of these eight ancestors.

In addition, this community also has specific terms of address for their family members. Following the vertical line upwards, the term for mother is "*Indok*", while the term for father is "*Upoak*". The term for the mother of "*Indok*" is "*Ninao*," and the term for the father of "*Indok*" is "*Nakek*." The term for the mother of "*Upoak*" is "*Nunggoh Jantan*," and the term for the father of "*Upoak*" is "*Nunggoh Tinu*." Moving further up, the term for both the father and mother of "*Ninao-Nakek-Nunggoh Tinu-Nunggoh Jantan*" is "*Nunyang*." Meanwhile, following the downward vertical line, the term for a child is "*Anak*". The term for the child's child is "*Cucong*." The term for the child of "*Cucong*" is "*Puyang*." Furthermore, the terms for the sibling of grandparents (either from "*Ninao*," "*Nakek*," "*Nunggoh Jantan*," or "*Nunggoh Tinu*") are generally addressed as "*Nanggut*" for men and "*Ninaek*" for women.

Following the horizontal line, the eldest child in Pulau Sangkar is called "*Wao*"; the second child is called "*Ngah*"; the third child is called "*Ndaek*"; the fourth child is called "*Buh/Buw*," the fifth child is called "*Cik*," and the youngest child is called "*Ncuw/Nzuw*." If there are more than six children, a child after "*Cik*" is called according to specific characteristics. A tall child is called "*Njang*";

a child with a large body is called “*Dong*.” If a child is a girl with a chubby or round body, she is called “*Uleet*” or “*Uleak*.”

The term for paternal uncle is “*Upoak*,” with additions based on the birth order of the uncle. If this uncle is the first child, he will be called “*Upoak Tuwao*” by his nephews and nieces. If the uncle is the second child, he will be called “*Upoak Ngah*.” This pattern continues with “*Upoak Ndaek*,” “*Upoak Buh*,” “*Upoak Cik*,” “*Upoak Njang*,” and “*Upoak Nzuw/Ncuw*.” Meanwhile, a paternal aunt is called “*Indok*,” followed by a particular title according to her birth order. If the paternal aunt is the eldest child, she will be addressed as “*Induk Tuwao*.” If she is the second, third, or subsequent child, she will be addressed, in sequence, as “*Induk Ngah*,” “*Induk Ndak*,” “*Induk Buh*,” “*Induk Cik*,” and “*Induk Nzuw*.”

A maternal uncle is called “*Mamak*,” followed by a specific title determined by his birth order. Accordingly, there will be “*Mamak Tuwao*,” “*Mamak Ngah*,” “*Mamak Ndaek*,” “*Mamak Buh*,” “*Mamak Cik*,” and “*Mamak Nzuw*.” Barely different from the abovementioned pattern, a maternal aunt is called “*Datung*,” followed by a particular title according to her birth order. Correspondingly, there will be “*Datung Tuwao*,” “*Datung Ngah*,” “*Datung Ndak*,” “*Datung Buh*,” “*Datung Cik*,” and “*Datung Nzuw*.”

The difference in addressing relatives indicates the lineage or personal closeness among the Rencong Telang indigenous community. These terms of address generally apply to a family within the circle of “*suku duo timbal balik nenek empat puyang delapan*” (two reciprocal parents/tribes, four grandmothers, and eight ancestors). When familial relationships extend beyond this circle, the term for an uncle is simply “*Mamak*,” and the term for an aunt is “*Datung*.” Meanwhile, an older person is merely addressed as “*Kayao*” or “*Bepoak/Indok si Anu*.”

b) Marriage

Several customary stages are commonly observed before a wedding in Rencong Telang. The first stage, as the preliminary step, is ***bertandang***, which involves the bride and groom and their close friends. The second stage is *menyilau*, which involves the bride and groom’s close relatives. The third stage is *menyasat*, which involves *tuo tengganai* (the respected elders in the village)

of both the bride and groom. Only after these processes have been completed can *blek* or a wedding ceremony proceed.

Bertandang is a tradition where a man visits the house of a woman he desires to marry. He will come accompanied by some of his close friends. This tradition is intended to get them to know and observe each other's characters. During the visit, they will be engaged in an intense conversation, with two-way dialogue, as well as reciprocal figurative words, metaphors, and pantoums. The quality of the man will be exposed in this process. Therefore, the role of the man's close friends and the woman's confidants becomes crucial to help them overcome potential breakdowns or problems during the diplomatic conversation.

Bertandang or the visit stage should occur in the early evening. The man will come to the house of his beloved woman after *maghrib* prayer time (the sunset hour of the day) to prevent many people from knowing about this process. The woman, accompanied by her mother or confidants, meets the man with his close friends. In this process, the woman's father is usually not at home. A pious father is typically found at the mosque, listening to religious lecturers until the *isha* prayer time. On the other hand, an irreligious father casually sits and chats in a coffee stall. Even if he comes home during these hours and finds a special guest visiting her daughter, he will turn around and go back to the coffee stall to give the man and his daughter time to settle their courtship.

The process can be either successful or unsuccessful. The visit is unsuccessful if the feelings of both parties fail to align. That is why the visit can only take place once. However, the failure in this process will not be a problem for the man. His dignity will not be necessarily crushed by the public since he visits in the evening, so it is unknown to them. The visit is successful if both parties have the same feeling. When the first visit is successful, there will be more visits in the following evenings as desired. Thus, the relationship between the man and the woman enters a serious phase.

After they achieve the purpose of the visits and commit to each other, the man and the woman exchange a token. The man leaves his valuable thing for the woman to keep. It can be a shirt, pants, or a golden ring. The woman then gives the man a special gift in return, commonly a long piece of cloth and a handkerchief. The initial of the woman's name is beautifully knitted on the handkerchief. The man will carry the handkerchief wherever he goes, indicating

irrefutable proof he can show to his friends that the woman loves him back and that he already has someone willing to marry him at the right time.

The visiting stage then continues to the stage of *menyilau*. This stage no longer involves close friends but relatives consisting of maternal uncles (*mamak*) of the man and the woman, both from close and distant relatives. The uncles involved in this process have been mandated by the father of the man. After ensuring that the woman loves him back, the man will ask his older sibling or one of his close relatives for help to inform his father that he already has a partner and that his partner is ready to have a more serious relationship with him. The sibling or close relative of the man will then tell his father about it. Next, the father finally asks the maternal uncles for help in executing the stage of *menyilau*.

Similar to *bertandang*, both parties will use figurative words, metaphors, and pantoums to talk to each other, and they will speak carefully and wisely. For example, the representative of the man's relatives takes a peek at the backyard of the woman's house and finds a banana tree. He then asks the woman, "Is it the right time to cut down that old tree? Does the tree belong to someone else?" If anyone has not proposed to the woman, the representative of her relative will answer, "If someone wants to cut down the tree, that is indeed what we are asking for. *Pucuk dicinto ulam tibo*." The conversation is considered to end when the agreement between both parties has been reached. "*Kok biang hampir tembus kok genting telah memutuskan*." It means that both parties have found chemistry in each other, indicating that the man has gone through this process successfully.

After succeeding in this stage, the man asks his relatives to return to his house and tell other relatives that the process has been completed. However, they continue to discuss more seriously in this regard until they reach an absolute certainty, as the proverb says, "*pasti ketat telah berbuku lancar telah berruas*". Therefore, the father of the man has been absolutely sure to proceed with a more serious process, i.e., *menyasat*.

Menyasat is a stage where the man's family proposes to the woman carried out by *tuo tengganai* (elderly) from the man's family. They bring valuables for the woman, such as *tando*. The arrival of the man and his family, who have been awaited by the woman, is welcomed by *tuo tengganai* from the woman's family.

They call this tradition "*malam berletak taruh berkapak tando*". After the handover of the *tando* is over, the next stage is determining a time for the marriage by *tuo tengganai*.

After the woman and her family receive *tando*, neither the woman nor the man is allowed to retreat to cancel everything. The man and the woman must get married as soon as possible. If one party has to annul the marriage for some reason, they must be subjected to customary sanctions. It is stated that "*kalau urung dari pihak jantan tando hilang, kalau urung dari pihak betino tando dikembalikan duo kali lipat*". Subsequently, they hold *blek* or *walimatul ursy* to officially announce the man and the woman's marriage and celebrate their relationship. People can hold a big wedding ceremony if they have enough money. However, they can also hold the event only in the religious affairs office if the budget is limited.

After being officially married, the married couple will live in the house of the wife's parents for one year, as specified in a proverb, "*dimano ayam betino disitu ayam jantan*". This also becomes an indirect help given by the wife's parents to the married couple who start their married life. Sometimes, they live with the wife's parents for more than a year. It depends on how quickly the married couple can live independently or build their own house.

c) Divorce

Although no one expects it, a marriage sometimes ends in a divorce. If this happens, the custom stated in a proverb, "*sarang dibagi dan sekutu dibelah, jika bulat dikeping dan jika panjang dikerat*" will apply. It means that fairness must be upheld in divorce. All assets and properties owned by the couple filing for divorcing couple must be divided as fairly as possible.

In more detail, according to the custom applied in Kerinci, there are two types of marital separations, i.e., separation by divorce and separation by death. If somebody files for a divorce, the customary norm contained in the proverb "*sarang dibagi sekutu dibelah*" will apply. The livelihood assets and properties in domestic life come from both partners. If they end in a divorce, the assets and properties owned by both partners are equally divided, as specified in a proverb, "*bulat dikeping, panjang dikerat*".

However, the inherited assets and properties given to the spouse before marriage will not be divided and remain theirs. In this case, their children are

not involved in the asset and property division as both partners have parental responsibility for them. However, both partners can make a mutual agreement covering their children, as stated in a proverb, “*alah seko dek janji, alah janji dek suko sama suko*”. If the mutual agreement is reached, the assets and properties can be divided among the husband, wife, and children.

d) Inheritance

There are two types of inheritance in Pulau Sangkar, including assets and properties, and hereditary title (*sekao*). Assets and properties are also classified into two, *pusakao tinggai* and *pusakao rendah*. *Pusakao tinggai* refers to ancestral inheritance passed down through generations. There are two forms of this inheritance: *digalung ditaruko dengan tembilang besi* and *diteruko dengan tembilang perak/emas* (owned through buying).

According to the custom, the rule of “*amanah pado anak betino kuaso pado anak jantan*” dictates the inheritance of wealth acquired through *tembilang besi*. This rule grants daughters specific rights, such as cultivating wetlands (rice fields), while prohibiting them from pawning or selling these properties. Sons, however, are entitled to receive the proceeds from selling such properties. This principle ensures that inherited wealth remains intact and is not sold off. However, exceptions to this principle may arise in specific circumstances, such as during occurrences like “*mayik tabujua ditangah rumah*,” or where the family lacks funds to organize a funeral for another dead family member, “*rumah gadang ketirisan*,” when the main house requires renovation but the budget is insufficient, or “*gaduh gadang alun balaki*,” where the inheritance should be sold to finance the daughter’s marriage. Another condition that could nullify the principle is “*anak-jantan belik mao pdang bedehoh*.” Therefore, inheritance may be pawned or sold in emergencies such as these to address pressing needs.

Additionally, inheritance acquired through *tembilang perak*, typically obtained through purchase, should be allocated to sons. Meanwhile, the inheritance of title or *sekao* is generally inherited from the mother.

e) Customs on Property Rights Affected by Natural Disasters

Customarily, when a natural disaster occurs and results in harm to one party while benefiting another, it is termed “*tanjung putus, pulau beralih, tak disangka lubuk menjadi pulau, pula menjadi lubuk*.” For the benefiting party, this is referred to as “*mas picak tibo malayang mas bulet tibo begulii*”. Conversely, for

the suffering party, it is described as "*mas tboa ninggalkan pulao, padi berengket ninggalkan rankiang, bambam nulak licin, dan rebung nulak miang.*" According to the custom, neither of these occurrences is questioned; they are viewed as common natural laws.

When a fire disaster occurs in the area of "*delom parit nan besudut empat, delom lawang nan bekatup duo,*" and destroys houses, it is considered as "*tanah ajun arah belik ke rajo (depati and ninik mamak)*". *Depati* and *Ninik Mamak* are responsible for proposing and overseeing the reorganization of the land to facilitate the orderly rebuilding of the area.

D. Conclusion

Social life in the Rencong Telang indigenous community is governed by an institution known as "*Adat*," which is also referred to as "*Undang*." The role of *Adat* in regulating the community is functional and covers various fields and aspects of life. *Adat* or *custom* has deep historical roots in this society, originating from when *Datuk Perpatih Nan Sebatang* successfully established control over *Tanah Sabingkah*, later known as *Pulau Sangkar*. Before this, customs were not formally recognized, and communal life was governed solely by *alo* with propriety—the principle of lineage and propriety. This means that societal customs at the time dictated communal life. []

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