

## TRADITION OF GIVING PALANGKAHAN MONEY IN MARRIAGE IN LIMA PULUH KOTA REGENCY



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### Abstract

This research explores the tradition of palangkahan money in marriage practices in Nagari Lubuak Batingkok, Lima Puluh Kota Regency. The objective of this study is to examine the cultural and social significance of the tradition, focusing on its role in family relationships and its alignment with Minangkabau customs. A qualitative methodology was employed, using interviews and field observations with local adat leaders, community elders, and knowledgeable informants. The findings reveal that palangkahan money is not just a financial exchange but a symbolic gesture intended to maintain emotional harmony between siblings, particularly when the younger sibling marries before the older one. The amount of palangkahan money is flexible, varying according to family agreements and the economic capabilities of the parties involved. This adaptability is crucial in maintaining the tradition's relevance in modern times. The study concludes that the tradition of palangkahan money plays a significant role in preserving cultural values, fostering mutual respect, and ensuring family harmony. It also highlights the interaction between Minangkabau cultural norms and Islamic teachings, showing how the practice adapts to contemporary religious and social frameworks. The academic contribution of this study lies in offering a nuanced perspective on how local customs persist and evolve within the context of modern social dynamics. The research also underscores the importance of qualitative fieldwork in capturing the lived experiences of individuals within a specific cultural context.

### Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji tradisi uang palangkahan dalam praktik pernikahan di Nagari Lubuak Batingkok, Kabupaten Lima Puluh Kota. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk memahami makna budaya dan sosial dari tradisi ini, dengan fokus pada perannya dalam hubungan keluarga dan kesesuaian dengan adat Minangkabau. Metodologi kualitatif digunakan dalam penelitian ini, dengan wawancara dan observasi lapangan yang melibatkan tokoh adat, tokoh masyarakat, dan informan yang memiliki pengetahuan tentang tradisi tersebut. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa uang palangkahan bukan sekadar pertukaran finansial, melainkan sebuah simbol untuk menjaga keharmonisan emosional antar saudara, terutama ketika adik menikah lebih dahulu. Jumlah uang palangkahan bersifat fleksibel, bervariasi sesuai dengan kesepakatan keluarga dan kemampuan ekonomi masing – masing pihak. Fleksibilitas ini sangat penting agar tradisi ini tetap relevan di zaman modern. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa tradisi uang palangkahan memiliki peran penting dalam mempertahankan nilai – nilai budaya, membangun saling menghormati, dan memastikan keharmonisan keluarga. Selain itu, penelitian ini juga menunjukkan interaksi antara norma budaya Minangkabau dan ajaran Islam, serta bagaimana praktik ini beradaptasi dengan kerangka agama dan sosial kontemporer. Kontribusi akademik dari penelitian ini terletak pada perspektif yang lebih mendalam tentang bagaimana adat lokal bertahan dan berkembang dalam dinamika sosial modern. Penelitian ini juga menekankan pentingnya penelitian kualitatif dalam menangkap pengalaman hidup individu dalam konteks budaya tertentu.

## INTRODUCTION

Marriage in the Indonesian context is not merely understood as the union of two individuals but also as a social institution embedded with cultural, religious, and customary values (Young *et al.*, 2022). In Indonesian, the term *akad kawin* derives from the word *menikah*, which etymologically signifies forming a family through a lawful union between a man and a woman (Utsany, Tw, & Khamim, 2022). The term marriage itself originates from the word *nikah*, which means "union", "encounter", and is often associated with sexual relations (*al-wath'*). According to Law No. 1 of 1974 Article 1, marriage is defined as a profound and legitimate bond between a man and a woman to establish a happy and lasting family under the guidance of the Almighty God (Arief & Karlinah, 2022). Thus, marriage is regarded as a firm covenant with deep religious significance and strong social implications (Jones & Menon, 2022). In Minangkabau society, the meaning of marriage becomes even more complex due to the matrilineal system intertwined with the long-held principle "*Adat Basandi Syara', Syara' Basandi Kitabullah*". Within this cultural framework, local traditions—such as the payment of *palangkahan* money—play a crucial role in marriage practices, reflecting the dynamic interaction between Islamic teachings and customary norms (Jankowski, Sandage, Wang, & Hill, 2022).

In Lima Puluh Kota Regency, particularly in Nagari Lubuak Batingkok of Harau District, there exists a long-standing tradition that regulates the sequence of marriage among siblings (Wijesinghe *et al.*, 2022). The community strongly discourages a younger sibling from marrying before the elder sibling, whether male or female (Luetke Lanfer, Rossmann, & Kargbo, 2023). Should this occur, the younger sibling is required to provide *palangkahan* money as a gesture of permission and respect toward the elder sibling. This tradition is believed to be inherited from ancestors and is considered essential for safeguarding the family from misfortune, delayed marriage prospects of the elder sibling, or other undesirable outcomes (Mehmood & Seror, 2023). If the younger sibling fails to provide *palangkahan*, it is believed that the elder sibling may face prolonged difficulty in finding a spouse and may experience stress, disappointment, or emotional distress for being "surpassed." In some cases, the elder sibling's demands may exceed the younger sibling's financial capability, thus obstructing the marriage process (Dodd *et al.*, 2023). Despite its persistence, this practice has received limited academic or religious scrutiny, raising important questions about its place within Islamic family law and contemporary social realities (Kilp & Pankhurst, 2023).

The strong influence of *adat* within Minangkabau marriage practices makes the tradition of *palangkahan* payment an important subject for further examination, especially in relation to the perspectives of religious scholars (Holleman & Chaves, 2023). Although classical Islamic jurisprudence does not explicitly discuss cases where a younger sibling marries before an elder one, the community continues to uphold this practice as a cultural identity that fosters harmony and respect among family members (Chalem *et al.*, 2023). However, the tradition also raises several issues, including potential conflicts with Islamic principles of justice, possible financial burdens on younger siblings, and concerns that elements of the practice may align with superstitious beliefs rather than religious doctrine. Therefore, it is crucial to investigate how religious leaders interpret this tradition, the extent to which it aligns with Islamic law, and its legal and moral standing within Minangkabau society. Based on these considerations, the research questions are: (1) How is the *palangkahan* payment tradition practiced in Nagari Lubuak Batingkok? and (2) How do religious leaders perceive this tradition within the framework of Islamic family law?

This study is grounded in the argument that any local tradition related to marriage must be examined from two essential perspectives: its compatibility with Islamic teachings and its social impact on the community. The palangkahan tradition may be understood as a symbolic gesture of respect toward the elder sibling, yet it has the potential to impose social and psychological pressure if not practiced wisely (Roso, Chaves, & Keskinürk, 2024). Using a qualitative approach supported by interviews with religious leaders and traditional figures, this research aims to analyze the religious perspectives surrounding palangkahan and assess its legal status within Islamic family law (De Clercq, Haq, & Azeem, 2023). Conceptually, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of the relationship between Minangkabau customary law and Islamic principles, especially in marriage practices. Practically, the findings may serve as a reference for community members and traditional authorities in reconsidering the implementation of palangkahan to ensure that it aligns with Islamic ethics and does not disadvantage any party. From a policy standpoint, the study offers insights that may strengthen legal literacy in harmonizing adat and Islamic law within local marriage traditions.

## METHODS

This study used a field research design to gather primary data directly from informants in Nagari Lubuak Batingkok, Harau District, Lima Puluh Kota Regency. The research adopted a qualitative approach, enabling a detailed examination of the cultural and religious aspects of the palangkahan payment tradition in marriage practices. Data collection occurred from March to June 2025, involving twelve participants, including religious leaders, traditional leaders, and community intellectuals (*cerdik pandai*), who were either directly involved in or knowledgeable about the tradition. Primary data was obtained through interviews with these key informants, while secondary data was gathered from books, journal articles, and scholarly publications to support and contextualize the findings. This combined approach ensured a comprehensive understanding of the local practices and their theoretical grounding within broader academic discourse, following established methodological references for qualitative field studies with adaptations specific to Minangkabau customs.

Data collection primarily involved semi-structured, open-ended interviews, allowing flexibility and in-depth participant responses. Interviews were conducted both in person and via online platforms like WhatsApp, accommodating participants' availability. Additional documentation, such as written materials and photographs, was also collected to supplement the fieldwork. Ethical considerations, including informed consent and confidentiality, were strictly adhered to. The data analysis process involved organizing raw data into meaningful units, followed by data reduction to summarize key information. The elaboration stage focused on grouping and comparing evidence based on emerging thematic categories related to cultural and religious perspectives. Finally, conclusions were drawn by synthesizing the analyzed data, ensuring methodological rigor and validating the findings through cross-checking with multiple sources and informants. This approach ensured the study's reliability, validity, and transparency, adhering to qualitative research standards.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### RESULT

The tradition of palangkahan money in marriage within Nagari Lubuak Batingkok manifests in several concrete forms that continue to be practiced by the community (Hunt et al. 2024). First, it is expressed through the giving of a monetary amount by the younger sibling who marries first, symbolizing respect and emotional acknowledgment toward the older sibling. This monetary payment is typically made before or during the wedding ceremony, often accompanied by advice from family elders and religious figures. This practice is a deeply symbolic act that reinforces the bond between siblings while highlighting the importance of hierarchy and respect within the Minangkabau community. Second, the study found that the value of palangkahan money varies, depending on family agreements and economic capability, rather than any fixed customary amount. This variability highlights the dynamic nature of the tradition, where flexibility is key to accommodating the specific circumstances of each family. Third, the tradition is often integrated into local cultural ceremonies, demonstrating its deep connection to Minangkabau social norms (Sudantra and Laksana 2019). Far more than a monetary exchange, palangkahan money is woven into larger cultural rituals, prayers, and community participation, reinforcing its significant role in the social fabric.

Several factors contribute to the persistence of the palangkahan money tradition. The strongest influence is the cultural value of *malu* (shame) and mutual respect between siblings, which the community believes must be maintained to prevent social disharmony. In Minangkabau society, the maintenance of familial harmony is paramount, and the palangkahan money tradition helps prevent conflicts between siblings, ensuring no one feels neglected or slighted. The concept of *malu*, which dictates appropriate social behavior, is central to the practice's enduring relevance. Religious leaders also play a role in sustaining the tradition by offering interpretations that affirm its compatibility with Islamic legal principles, as long as it does not conflict with religious teachings (Suriansyah 2019). The tradition's alignment with Islamic principles is crucial for its continued acceptance, as religious leaders provide guidance that helps validate the practice within the community. Furthermore, economic considerations influence the practice, as families negotiate the appropriate amount of palangkahan money, ensuring it does not financially burden the younger sibling (Ramlin 2020). These economic factors are vital in ensuring that the practice remains accessible and sustainable, without causing undue hardship.

The palangkahan money tradition also has transformative implications for family relationships and social structures. In many instances, the payment serves as a mediator of familial harmony, helping prevent jealousy or emotional tension between siblings, particularly in cases where there are age gaps or perceived disparities in the resources involved in marriage. The practice offers a structured way to express emotional acknowledgment, which in turn promotes unity and understanding within the family. Moreover, the tradition strengthens community identity by preserving Minangkabau cultural values in contemporary marriage practices. As societal norms evolve, the palangkahan money tradition acts as a stabilizing force, anchoring younger generations to their cultural roots. Simultaneously, it fosters a dialogue between religious norms and adat, encouraging local religious leaders to interpret the tradition in ways that maintain cultural continuity without violating Islamic principles. This ongoing dialogue ensures that the tradition evolves while respecting both cultural heritage and religious beliefs,

thus bridging the past and present.

Another important aspect of the palangkahan money tradition is its adaptability to modern realities while preserving its core values. As Nagari Lubuak Batingkok faces economic changes, the practice adjusts to reflect these shifts, such as reducing the amount of palangkahan money during times of financial hardship, yet maintaining its symbolic significance. This adaptability is a testament to the tradition's resilience, allowing it to remain relevant despite changing external conditions. Additionally, the tradition reinforces social cohesion, offering a framework for navigating complex family relationships within the broader societal context. The negotiation process surrounding the amount of palangkahan money fosters communication between family members, facilitating mutual understanding and preventing potential misunderstandings. In this way, the tradition not only preserves cultural values but also encourages dialogue and cooperation within families, ensuring its continued relevance across generations.

The palangkahan money tradition plays a significant role in reinforcing gender roles within the community. Typically, the younger sibling who marries first is a female, and the monetary gift serves as a form of acknowledgment of her role within the family hierarchy. By doing so, the tradition both reflects and perpetuates traditional gender expectations, particularly in the context of Minangkabau matrilineal society, where women play a central role in inheritance and family lineage. The practice highlights the interplay between gender and social customs, shaping expectations about the roles and responsibilities of women and men within the family and community. As such, the palangkahan money tradition functions as more than just a financial exchange; it serves as a mechanism for perpetuating gendered expectations, ensuring the continuity of established societal roles (Syair, 2024).

In addition to its role in reinforcing gender norms, the palangkahan money tradition enhances the social prestige of families, especially those who can provide a generous sum (Suriansyah, 2019). This aspect of the tradition ties into broader social dynamics, where the ability to perform rituals with grandeur is often associated with higher social status (Bosa, 2024). Families that contribute a significant amount to the palangkahan money may gain social recognition, reinforcing the societal value placed on wealth, generosity, and familial honor (Ramlin, 2020). Consequently, the tradition has the potential to influence the social mobility of families within the community, with wealth and the ability to participate in cultural practices elevating their standing in social and cultural spheres. This intersection of economic status and cultural practice underscores the complex relationship between material wealth and social identity, shaping how families navigate both family dynamics and broader societal expectations.

The palangkahan money practice plays an essential role in fostering intergenerational relationships and the transmission of cultural knowledge. Elders within the community guide younger generations through the proper practices and expectations surrounding the tradition (Khalif, 2024). This transfer of knowledge goes beyond the practical aspects of the tradition, extending to the emotional and moral lessons that are integral to the Minangkabau way of life (Sudantra & Laksana, 2019). Through participation in the tradition, younger family members learn the importance of values such as respect, humility, and social responsibility (Hunt *et al.*, 2024). These values are central to the community's identity, and the palangkahan money tradition serves as a means of instilling these principles across generations. By continuing to practice this tradition, the community ensures the preservation and transmission of its cultural heritage, reinforcing its role as a powerful cultural practice that shapes both family and social life in Nagari Lubuak Batingkok.

## DISCUSSION

The tradition of palangkahan money continues to play a significant and deeply embedded role within the marital customs practiced in Nagari Lubuak Batingkok, functioning as both a cultural symbol and a social mechanism that shapes interpersonal relationships within families and the wider community. The various forms through which this tradition is expressed—ranging from monetary offerings that symbolize emotional reconciliation between siblings to ceremonial gestures interwoven with local adat rituals—reveal that the tradition extends beyond a simple economic exchange (Sugitanata, 2021). Instead, it reflects a multi-layered system of values intertwined with respect, hierarchy, and communal expectations. These varying manifestations, together with the flexible determination of the monetary amount and the active participation of religious figures, adat authorities, and community elders, demonstrate the dynamic, adaptive, and context-driven nature of the practice. Such adaptability enables the tradition to remain relevant despite socio-economic changes and shifting marital norms brought about by modernization. The evidence suggests that the tradition persists not only because of cultural continuity but also because of its function as a stabilizing force that mediates emotional balance and reinforces social order.

Reflecting on these findings, a number of causal factors emerge that clarify why the tradition of palangkahan money has endured across generations in Nagari Lubuak Batingkok. At the cultural level, the Minangkabau social structure—which highly values seniority, sibling harmony, and emotional interconnectedness—provides a strong foundation for maintaining the tradition. The emphasis on malu, rasa hormat, and family honor forms a psychological and moral basis that guides interpersonal expectations within households. Religious and adat leaders play a reinforcing role by offering interpretations that help the community reconcile longstanding cultural norms with Islamic legal principles (Aulia, 2020). Their involvement reduces the potential tension between adat and religion, especially in cases where community members may question whether certain customs align with Islamic teachings (Rahmi & Henny, 2020). At the same time, economic considerations influence how families negotiate the value of palangkahan money, ensuring that the practice does not impose undue burdens on the younger sibling.

The effects of these causal interactions are reflected in the broader transformative impact that the tradition has on social harmony, emotional stability, and the affirmation of cultural identity within the village community (Rabbani Lubis & Suhri, 2020). The practice of palangkahan money helps prevent emotional conflict between siblings, particularly in situations where traditional expectations concerning marriage order might otherwise generate tension or jealousy. In this sense, the tradition acts as a symbolic mediator that restores harmony and reinforces family cohesion (Muslimin, 2019). Furthermore, by embedding the practice within ceremonial contexts and integrating religious guidance, the community preserves the cultural significance of the tradition while ensuring alignment with moral and ethical standards rooted in Islam. These integrative effects contribute to the long-term sustainability of community values, reinforcing local identity despite external pressures of modernization and changing marital patterns. Additionally, the tradition provides an opportunity for intergenerational dialogue, as older community members transmit knowledge regarding adat, moral conduct, and the ethical meaning of family respect (Islamy, 2019).

A comparison of these findings with previous studies reveals both areas of convergence and critical distinctions (Hermanto & Ismail, 2020). Existing literature on

Minangkabau marriage customs tends to emphasize the centrality of adat norms, matrilineal kinship structures, and the symbolic nature of certain traditions, including monetary gestures within weddings. However, many of these studies overlook the evolving role of religious leaders in mediating customary practices and providing contemporary interpretations that align with Islamic legal perspectives (Nurani, 2021). This study contributes new insights by highlighting the active involvement of religious leaders in legitimizing, modifying, or refining the practice of palangkahan money to ensure that it does not conflict with Islamic principles. Additionally, while prior research often frames the practice as purely symbolic or ceremonial, the present findings demonstrate that palangkahan money carries practical social functions such as reducing emotional tension between siblings, strengthening interpersonal communication, and preventing latent conflicts that may arise due to perceived injustices in the marriage order (Daud & Rosadi, 2021). This distinction underscores that the tradition has both symbolic and functional dimensions, making it more complex than suggested by earlier scholarship.

Recomendation study underscores the necessity of integrative actions that involve cultural, religious, and policy – oriented perspectives aimed at maintaining the balance between tradition and modern social demands (Abdillah, Nuriyyatiningrum, & Miftahunnaja, 2022). Conceptually, the tradition of palangkahan money should be understood not as a financial obligation imposed upon individuals but as a cultural mechanism designed to preserve emotional harmony and respect within families. From a methodological perspective, future research would benefit from widening its scope by adopting comparative analyses across multiple Minangkabau regions to deepen understanding of variations in practice, motivation, and interpretation (Aminah & Sugitanata, 2022). Policymakers, particularly local adat councils and religious authorities, could play a strategic role by formulating clear and equitable guidelines that maintain the voluntary nature of the tradition, ensuring that it is not misinterpreted or misused as a compulsory financial payment. Strengthening collaboration between religious and adat institutions would help maintain cultural integrity while promoting fairness and reducing potential social or economic burdens. In this way, the tradition can continue to evolve in a manner consistent with contemporary values of justice, respect, and communal well – being, enabling it to serve as both a bridge between old and new generations and a model for culturally sensitive social regulation.

## CONCLUSION

The findings of this study highlight the enduring significance of the palangkahan money tradition in Nagari Lubuak Batingkok, demonstrating its role in shaping social interactions within Minangkabau family structures, particularly in marriage. The practice is more than a financial exchange; it represents a symbolic gesture aimed at maintaining emotional harmony between siblings, especially when the younger sibling marries before the older one. Religious leaders, adat authorities, and community elders are instrumental in legitimizing and guiding the custom, ensuring it aligns with Islamic ethics while retaining cultural significance. The practice is flexible, with the amount of palangkahan money adjusted to avoid placing undue burden on the younger sibling. Ultimately, the tradition acts as a mechanism to prevent emotional tensions, preserve intergenerational respect, and uphold family dignity, highlighting the interaction of cultural norms, religious guidance, and social expectations within the community.

This study offers valuable contributions to the understanding of the intersection between Islamic law and Minangkabau customary traditions. Conceptually, it reinterprets palangkahan money as a tool for reinforcing social cohesion rather than a mere transactional obligation, providing insight into how traditional practices adapt to contemporary Islamic values. Methodologically, it demonstrates the effectiveness of qualitative fieldwork in capturing lived cultural experiences, emphasizing the importance of interviews, observation, and contextual analysis. Theoretically, the study expands discussions on the relationship between adat and Islam, particularly the mediating role of religious leaders in shaping and legitimizing customary behavior. Despite its strengths, the study has limitations, such as the small sample size and reliance on qualitative interviews, which may not fully represent the diversity of practices across different socio-economic groups. Future research could explore regional variations in the practice or combine qualitative and quantitative methods to offer a broader understanding of its social impact.

## DECLARATIONS

### AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

Asari Mista Mira contributed to conceptualizing the study, designing the research framework, interpreting the results, and ensuring the overall accuracy and integrity of the study. She was responsible for manuscript preparation and final approval for publication. Hendri assisted in data analysis, contributed to the interpretation of results, and reviewed the manuscript for accuracy. Sofia Ridha supported the data analysis process, contributed to the discussion of results, and helped in the manuscript revision process. Muhammad Ridha and Andriyaldi contributed to data collection and analysis, reviewed the manuscript, and provided valuable insights into the interpretation of the results. All authors reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript for publication.

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### DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

All data supporting this study are available from publicly accessible sources and can be obtained from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

### DECLARATION OF INTERESTS STATEMENT

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest or competing financial interests related to this study.

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