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## A Study of a Matrilineal Village in Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia

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Negeri Sembilan is well known for its matrilineal system called *adat perpatih*, which has attracted much interest. *Adat perpatih* social organization has its roots in an agricultural subsistence economy. Especially, rice cultivation was very important. There are many studies of *adat perpatih*, although only a few of these are based on field research. This paper gives a brief description of the present situation of a matrilineal Malay village<sup>1)</sup> in the context of the rapid socio-economic change. The paper describes the strong *adat* sentiment among villagers, which is seen in clan exogamy, patterns of postmarital residence, and the inheritance of not only ancestral hereditary land such as rice paddy but also of non-hereditary land such as rubber land. A discussion then follows about the change in the meaning of *adat perpatih*<sup>2)</sup> from a focus on the socio-economic to one of Negeri Sembilan identity. Finally the paper stresses the importance of the marriage ritual, the *kenduri khawin*, which is still practiced to date, and the existence of hereditary rice land, albeit abandoned, as the basis of the persistence of matrilineal *adat perpatih*.

### INTRODUCTION

There has been an accumulation of studies about the Minangkabau Malays in Negeri Sembilan dating back to British colonial times. However, most of these were historical studies by colonial officers<sup>3)</sup>. Only after World War II was anthropological fieldwork carried out. Josselin De Jong did fieldwork in Rembau in 1950s, where he studied *adat* and Islam (De Jong 1960). The Religious Affairs Sector of the Rembau branch of the UMNO (United Malays National Organization) started a political movement for the abolition of *adat*, asserting that the inheritance rules of *adat* were *haram* (illegal) from the viewpoint of Islamic law. Under Islamic law, all the land and property must be inherited bilaterally, whereas *adat* law differentiates ancestral land (*harta pusaka*) from individually acquired land (*harta carian*). The matrilineal *adat* law is applied to ancestral land, thus confining its inheritance to women. In Malaysia, Negeri Sembilan is the only state in which this custom of matrilineal inheritance is practiced. In the district of Rembau, said to be the most conservative and the strongest in *adat* tradition, this custom became the target of UMNO's harsh criticism. Thus an anti-*adat* campaign was carried out as part of a movement to sweep away anti-Islamic customs. As some of the *adat* chiefs (*lembaga*) supported this movement, some Rembau women stood up against

the men and proclaimed that they would divorce any husband who supported the abolition of matrilineal *adat*. In the end, the issue was resolved when some of the *lembaga* were forced to resign, and so the attempts of the anti-*adat* reformists ended in failure<sup>4</sup>).

By describing such an episode, De Jong stressed that the opposition between *adat* and Islam is structural in nature. While there had been an Islamic modernist undercurrent since the early 20th century, UMNO, using nationalism as a spiritually uplifting force in pre-independent Malaysia, sought a base for its nationalist ideology in Islam and used it to spread the national integration movement (Roff 1976:56-90). The conflict in Rembau happened in such a socio-political context. In this sense, the anti-*adat* movement in Malaysia was very political in nature, rather than just structural, as De Jong argued.

In comparison with this one incident in Malaysia, the issue of confrontation between *adat* and Islam has always been a dominant theme in the Minangkabau society of West Sumatra. For example, the integration of Islam with its patrilineal emphasis into a strongly matrilineal society has often been mentioned as an interesting problem (Swift 1965). There have been a number of debates concerning *adat* and Islam between those who emphasize the strong patrilineal elements in Islam and thus assert the disintegration of matrilineal systems under the process of Islamization and those who foresee the durability of *adat* by stressing the flexibility and adaptability of the matrilineal system<sup>5</sup>). Dutch colonialism and capitalization were important historical conditions in West Sumatra related to the rise of radical Islamic reformist movements such as the *Padri* movement of the early 19th century and the *Kaum Muda* movement in the first half of the 20th century. In the case of Malaysia also, there were waves of Islamic reformist movements, such as the *Kaum Muda-Kaum Tua* debate from the 1920s to the 1930s, and the recent *Dakwah* movement which has spread rapidly among students since the 1970s<sup>6</sup>). However, in terms of extremity, radicalism, and social impact, these reformist movements in Malaysia seem to be no match for those of the Minangkabau of West Sumatra.

Unlike in Minangkabau, Malay Islamic reformist movements have not been discussed fully in relation to matrilineal inheritance systems. The issue of either the disintegration or the persistence of the matrilineal systems has not been explored fully (Peletz 1981:2)<sup>7</sup>). In Malaysia, the potential for survival of the matrilineal systems has mostly been argued with reference to the penetration of the capitalism economy, through the introduction of rubber, rather than in terms of its relation to Islam. It has also been said that the continuity of the matrilineal system in Minangkabau is due to the failure to capitalize agricultural production in the area (Kahn 1976). In Malaysia, the main theme of discussion is how the matrilineal system disintegrated under economic changes brought about by rapid capitalization.

Swift (1965) and Lewis (1962) were the first to conduct extensive fieldwork in Negeri Sembilan. Swift carried out his fieldwork at a Malay village in Jelevu between 1954 and 1956. Swift's description of the Jelevu Malay economy was

intended as a contribution to peasant studies. He argued that economic changes played a major part in inducing broader social change, and that the introduction of cash crops such as rubber had led to an individualization of the economy, and therefore to opposition to the traditional ownership of land by women as representatives of their matri-kin. It also led to kinship restrictions on the rights of land-owners. The growth of a cash economy was a major factor in the decline of *adat perpatih*, and a source of contention between those upholding clan-based land rights and those preferring individual disposal (Swift 1965:172-173). Swift argued that these changes, initiated by the cash economy, caused a general decline of traditional kinship organization (Swift 1965:2).

Lewis conducted her fieldwork at Inas in Johor from 1958 to 1959. Like Swift, she studied the changes in matrilineal society. She viewed *adat perpatih* as a form of social organization in which social relationships based on matrilineal descent, inheritance and matrilocal residence were supported by an ecological system in which women played the dominant role (Lewis 1962:328). She differentiated social change into two aspects, socio-cultural and economic, and she considered the economic aspect more important than the socio-cultural in causing transformation in broader social structure. Thus, she analyzed economic change from the viewpoint of the ecological system, and concluded that if households increased their dependence on income from the male members' cash economy, the economic importance of rice fields would decline. Moreover the means by which lineage groups controlled and maintained their members and, furthermore, the authority of traditional chiefs would be lost. Overall the importance of matrilineal inheritance and matrilocal residential patterns would be weakened (Lewis 1962:331-333).

The most intensive field research in Negeri Sembilan was done by Peletz (1981, 1985, 1987a, 1987b, 1988, 1995). He conducted fieldwork in a Malay village in Rembau between 1978 and 1980. His analysis focused more on kinship and stressed the importance of sibling relations over descent relations as an analytical framework for understanding the social structure of the matrilineal societies of Negeri Sembilan. He pointed out that the structural complementarity underlying sisters' ties with their brothers also provided the model for relationships between women and their husbands, who address and refer to one another with the terms used by siblings (Peletz 1985:82). He remarked the continuous existence of the matrilineal system in the way hereditary lands are shared among siblings. Unlike his predecessors, he consciously and very carefully analyses his data within the anthropological framework of kinship theory.

While the studies mentioned above were all done by Western anthropologists, there are also studies by anthropologists who are natives of Negeri Sembilan. While Swift and Lewis researched social change in relation to changes in the economic system, Norhalim (1976) focused his study on how changes in socio-cultural areas, such as the education system, affected the broader social structural organization, though he saw politico-economic change as the undercurrent. He argued that the traditional political system was being replaced by a modern

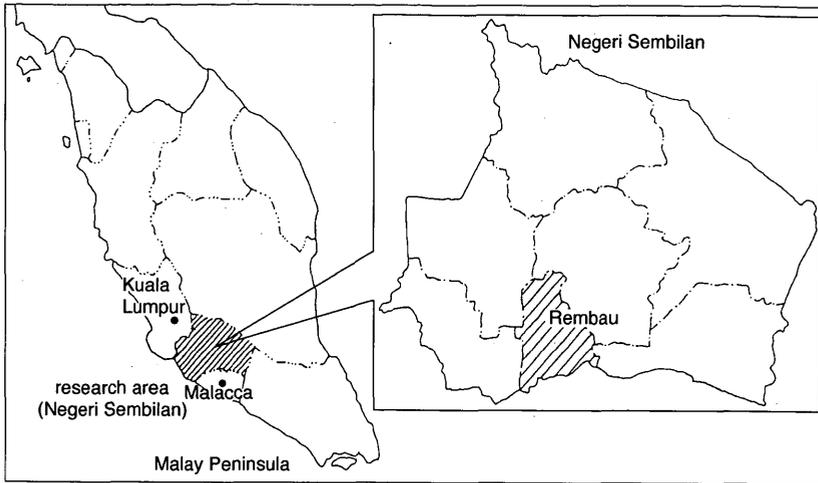
bureaucratic system, and it was this politico-cultural change that was the main cause behind the weakening of the matrilineal system. Economic changes were nothing but an outcome of politico-cultural change. He concluded that the changes in opportunity for social mobility was both a cause and effect of broader social change (Norhalim 1976:323-324). Education had become a new way to climb the social ladder of government bureaucracy, and the introduction of the secular education was thus a turning point in social change.

Azizah (1988), from Negeri Sembilan, conducted ethnological research in Kuala Pilah. Her study differs from those mentioned above in that, in the fifties when Swift and Lewis did their field research, Malaysia had a mixed economy of rice cultivation and rubber, whereas in the seventies and eighties, when Azizah conducted her fieldwork, the rice fields had been mostly abandoned, the village economy was more dependent on remittances and pensions, and a shift away from the peasant economy could be observed. Based on these socio-economic changes, she has taken up the theme of gender since 1970, analyzing and discussing changes in the social roles and status of men and women in matrilineal society (Azizah 1970, 1974, 1976, 1986).

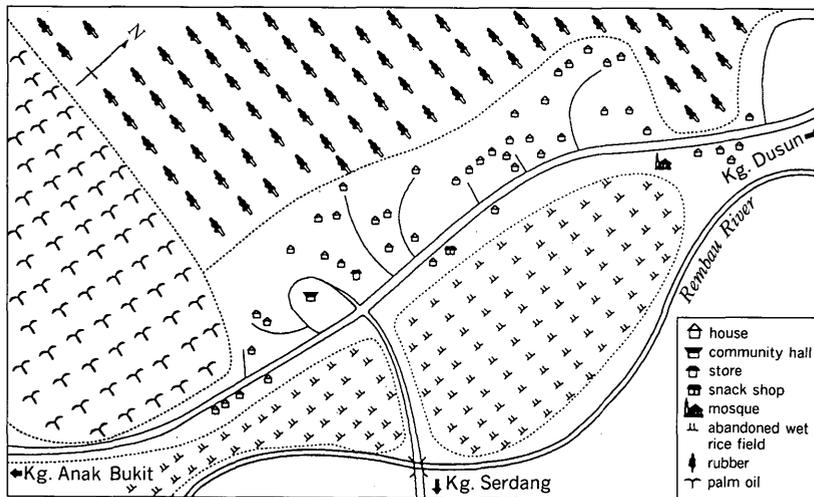
Thus, unlike the West Sumatran Minangkabau studies, the issue of *adat* vs. Islam is not been so much a focal point in Negeri Sembilan. Rather, here, interest has concentrated on *adat perpatih* and the introduction of a capitalist economy. This paper also focuses on the relationship between economic change and matrilineal society. In the following section, after a brief introduction to the research area, I describe the present condition of the matrilineal system in a Malay village in Rembau, Negeri Sembilan. In the final section, I discuss the relationship between economic change and the matrilineal system and its implications for change in matrilineal society as a whole. Fieldwork for this study was undertaken in one Malay village in Rembau, Negeri Sembilan for about 10 months between 1988 and 1989. In this paper, the village is given a pseudonym, Kampung (Kg.) Padang Binjal.

## VILLAGE PROFILE

Kg. Padang Binjal is located in one of the subdistricts of the administrative district of Rembau. Kg. Padang Binjal is about 80 km southeast of Kuala Lumpur and about 30 km northwest of Malacca (see Map 1). It has a population of 208 people, all of whom are ethnic Malays. There are 44 households and 50 families with 98 males and 110 females. Kg. Padang Binjal is located close to the Rembau River (see Map 2). Between the village settlement and the Rembau River is a wide stretch of abandoned rice fields. The fields used to be cultivated until the 1970s, after which time farmers slowly began to leave their fields. The abandonment of rice fields did not occur in this village alone but was a widespread phenomenon in the whole of Negeri Sembilan<sup>8</sup>. One of the main reasons for it was the ecological imbalance caused by rapid deforestation through timber logging (Peletz 1988:158-



**Map 1.** Map of Malay Peninsula and the State of Negeri Sembilan



**Map 2.** Map of Kg. Padang Binjal

161). This consequently hastened the adoption of rubber cash cropping. The local people attributed the motive for such changes to the shortage of water for irrigation. It should be noted however that, at the time, the market price of rubber was higher than that of rice. At present, village people subsist mainly on rubber tapping. Their small rubber holdings are located on the hilly slopes at the back of the village. Beyond the rubber trees are large oil palm and rubber plantations which are owned by large agricultural corporations.

Village settlement follows the road which extends from north to south. On its northern and southern endpoints are located the village mosque and the community

gathering place (*balai raya*) respectively. There are only two stores: a variety store which sells goods for everyday use and coffee, and a snack shop which sells cooked food.

In Kg. Padang Binjal, the richest household is one in which both the wife and the husband are teachers. The poorest household consists of an elder who lives on a small pension. No villagers own enough land to be of the landlord class. Eight (20%) out of the total 44 households own no rubber land. On the other hand, 20 households (45%) do not own any rice field at all. Today, the value of rice land is almost nothing since rice farming is no longer practiced at all. Using income and land ownership as indicators, it is possible to say that disparity of wealth or class does not exist in Kg. Padang Binjal. All households alike are petty peasants.

There are nine matrilineal clans (*suku*) in Kg. Padang Binjal. Each clan is subdivided into several lineages (*perut*). There are three to four lineages per clan in the village. Three lineages from among all the clans have lineage heads (*buapak*). The *buapak* is at the bottom of the leadership hierarchy in the matrilineal kinship organization. He is the mother's brother to his sister's children. He is expected to know everything about *adat* and to direct various rituals. The clan head is called *lembaga*, and all the *lembaga* of the major clans of Kg. Padang Binjal live outside the village. The influence of the *lembaga* has steadily diminished in recent years. Today, not many villagers could give the name of their *lembaga* immediately when asked. A number of village people, especially the younger generation, did not know their *lembaga*'s name or where he lived.

The *undang* is a kind of territorial chief representing the *adat* district (*luak*) of Rembau. He has great authority and power. The current *undang* (as of 1989) is the twentieth *undang* of Rembau. By then, he had been in power for nearly 30 years (since 1963).

The state of Negeri Sembilan consists of seven administrative districts, each of which is further subdivided into subdistricts (*mukim*). Each district has a district governor, called District Officer (D.O.). Each subdistrict has a *penghulu mukim* as parish head, and comprises settlements called *kampung*. A few neighboring *kampung* are combined into the smallest administrative unit, called JKKK (*Jawatankuasa Kemajuan dan Keselamatan Kampung* or Village Development and Security Committee). Each *kampung* has a village head (*ketua kampung*) who is partly a public official and is expected to mediate between the *penghulu*, the subdistrict head, and fellow villagers. He is also JKKK chairman, elected by villagers. Usually elections are held at the same time as the UMNO branch leadership election, and there is a tacit understanding that the *ketua kampung* elected should be a member of UMNO. Every UMNO local branch leader is also elected to the JKKK. UMNO is the only party in Kg. Padang Binjal<sup>9</sup>.

## THE CONCEPT OF ADAT PERPATIH

Many village people regard themselves as the descendants of Minangkabau

immigrants of West Sumatra. They stress that they brought the set of customary beliefs and practices, called *adat perpatih*, with them when they settled in Negeri Sembilan. *Adat Perpatih* is generally taken to mean a matrilineal system of kinship organization. Its basic principles are summarized as follows (Azizah 1988; Khadijah 1978; Lewis 1962). The society is composed of 12 matriclans (*suku*). Each *suku* is led by the clan chief (*lembaga*). Each *suku* is further divided into lineages (*perut*). Each lineage is led by the lineage chief (*buapak*). The posts of *lembaga* and *buapak* are held by men, but are inherited matrilineally from mothers' brothers to sisters' sons. Each clan owns a specified amount of ancestral land. This land, known as customary land and called *tanah pusaka*, are registered in the name of female lineage members, and are inherited matrilineally through them. Male members have only the right to use *tanah pusaka* land.

*Adat perpatih* prescribes *suku* exogamy. However, the actual exogamous unit could be either lineage or clan, depending on the demographic size of each. Postmarital residence pattern is matrilocal; the husband moves into his wife's mother's place.

## THE PRESENT SITUATION OF ADAT PERPATIH

### *Suku* as Matriclan

How far can the basic principles of *adat perpatih* be observed in Kg. Padang Binjal today? As mentioned above, there are forty-four households, fifty families, and nine *suku* in the village. Out of forty-four households only one does not belong to any *suku*. That is, only one out of fifty families does not belong to a *suku*. The biggest *suku* in terms of number of members is *suku* Tiga Nenek, followed by Biduanda Bukit, Tiga Batu, and so on (see Table 1). Some of the oldest *suku* are Biduanda Relung, Biduanda Bukit, and Tiga Nenek. Seven *suku* have their own *buapak*. In two *suku*, the names of *buapak* are not known by the *suku* members. Furthermore members of two *suku* did not know who was their *lembaga* (see Table 2). As far as Kg. Padang Binjal is concerned, clans still exist, and a newborn child automatically becomes a member of his or her mother's *suku*.

Essentially, each *suku* is led by an *adat* chief as a corporate group. He decides which of the various *adat* rules, such as the *suku* exogamy rule and rules of inheritance, are followed by members or not, and he gives advice if asked. The *adat* chief is responsible for the marriage rituals and procedure. He also advises clan members on the inheritance of hereditary land, and serve as an observer for members' registration of inherited land at the government land office.

Today, an *adat* chief has no right to inflict physical punishment on his members. According to *adat*, for example, those who broke the exogamy rule were liable to a death penalty. There were two cases of the breaching of the *suku* exogamy rule after the war. However, in one case, the couple was expelled from the village and, in the other case, the couple eloped. In the latter case, the father of

Table 1. Household *Suku* Membership in Kg. Padang Binjal

<i>suku</i>	male (husband)	female (wife)	total
Tiga Nenek	4	10	14
Biduanda Bukit	3	9	12
Tiga Batu	6	6	12
Anak Melaka	3	9	12
Biduanda Relung	4	4	8
Batu Hamper	4	0	4
Semelenggang	1	2	3
Paya Kumbuh	1	2	3
Tanah Datar	0	1	1
no suku	3	1	4
Total	29	44	73

Table 2. *Suku* Chiefs in Kg. Padang Binjal

<i>suku</i> (matriclan)	<i>lembaga</i>	<i>buapak</i>	residence
Tiga Nenek	Datuk Sebatang	Karim Idrus Hj Singah Badur	Sg. Jurneh Padang Binjal
Biduanda Bukit	Datuk Purba	Daud Maasin Bujai	Padang Binjal Serdang
Tiga Batu	Datuk Purba Datuk Kanda	Hassan Lihin Osman Sinar	Serdang Padang Binjal
Anak Melaka	Datuk Ganti	Sengel	Serdang
Biduanda Relung	Datuk Purba	Hj Atan Ahmad	Serdang
Batu Hamper	Datuk Putih	Hamid	Kg. Pulau
Semelenggang	-	-	-
Paya Kumbuh	?	Hj Mulup	Kg. Pancang
Tana Datar	?	?	?

the woman had almost no say in the matter. Her mother's brother, as a *buapak*, had to take all responsibility. The scandal even reached the ears of lineage members who lived in a northern state of Malaysia far from the village. Members of the *suku* both within the village and outside harbored ill-feeling towards the couple for disgracing their clan name. One elderly woman of the village still shows very forthright anger towards them more than ten years after the event. Given the reaction of *suku* members to this breach of clan exogamy, coupled with the fact that village youth still have a good knowledge about their own *suku*, we can say that village people maintain deep-rooted lineage sentiments and a sense of solidarity.

During marriage, a *buapak* still performs the ritual according to *adat* rules. The marriage ceremony is the best opportunity for a *buapak* to demonstrate his role as an active *adat* chief. A *buapak* needs to have deep knowledge of the *adat*

concerning the complicated procedures for the engagement ceremony, the negotiation of bride-price and the marriage ritual. All members of a *suku* are expected to attend the marriage feast (*kenduri khawin*). A number of marriages are held especially in December, and *buapak*s are busy officiating at two or three marriage ceremonies in the same month. *Suku* members come back to the village to attend marriage ceremonies no matter how far away they live. This shows the corporateness of *suku*. The attendants of a marriage ceremony include not only fellow *suku* members, but also people of the village or near-by villages who come to celebrate the marriage. Thus, local ties among villagers are also important. In this way, the role of *buapak* in marriage ceremonies and in many other rituals is still important today. However, as years progress more and more young people do not know the names of their *lembaga* and *buapak*, especially the *lembaga*. Today, there are fewer and fewer relations between *lembaga* and villagers. The status of the *lembaga* is declining. *Adat* chiefs of the older *suku* are more respected and command a stronger leadership role in a various rituals than those of younger *suku*. A sense of *suku* membership is also stronger in the older *suku*. Thus, there is often a difference in the sense of *suku* membership, solidarity, and cooperation according to whether a *suku* is older or newer in the village.

### Matrilinel Inheritance

Most *buapak* are still asked to serve as an adviser or mediator among sisters in conflicts of interest in the inheritance of the lineage lands. Most hereditary clan land is homestead land and rice fields. The total acreage of the homestead land in Kg. Padang Binjal amounts to 56.05 acres. The average of homestead land per household is 1.27 acres. Women's holdings amount to 60.3% of total acreage. The average acreage per villager is 1.21 acres for women, 1.85 acres for men, and 0.77 acres for both men and women. The total acreage of hereditary clan land against total homestead land is 16.75 acres (about 30%), which is owned by 15 women (see Table 3).

The total acreage of rice field holdings is 42.25 acres, and the ratio of ownership is 87% by female and 13% by male. Rice field holdings average 1.53 acres per woman, 1.1 acres per man, and 0.96 acres per household. Total acreage of hereditary clan land is 24.25 acres (57.4%) of the total rice field acreage, which are held by 17 women (see Table 4).

From the statistics above, we see that about 50% of homestead land owned by 15 women is hereditary clan land, and 90% of rice fields is owned by women, out of which 66% is hereditary clan land. Thus, more than half of the rice fields are hereditary clan land, while 70% of homestead land is non-hereditary land, that is, individually acquired land. In Kg. Padang Binjal, therefore, matrilineal system of inheritance of hereditary clan land is still practiced to date and remains firmly-rooted in custom. Peletz (1988), who conducted field research in a Rembau village in the early 1980, reports the same importance of matrilineal inheritance for hereditary clan land. However, the villagers' interest in the inheritance of rice

**Table 3.** Homestead Holdings in Kg. Padang Binjal

acreage	female (acreage)	male (acreage)	total (acreage)
0	16 ( 0)	17 ( 0)	33 ( 0)
0.5	11 ( 5.5)	-	11 ( 5.5)
0.75	-	2 ( 1.5)	2 ( 1.5)
1.0	3 ( 3.0)	-	3 ( 3.0)
1.25	2 ( 2.5)	1 ( 1.25)	3 ( 3.75)
1.3	1 ( 1.3)	-	1 ( 1.3)
1.5	2 ( 3.0)	1 ( 1.5)	3 ( 4.5)
1.75	-	1 ( 1.75)	1 ( 1.75)
2.0	8 (16.0)	5 (10.0)	13 (26.0)
2.5	1 ( 2.5)	-	1 ( 2.5)
2.75	-	1 ( 2.75)	1 ( 2.75)
3.5	-	1 ( 3.5)	1 ( 3.5)
Total	44 (33.8)	29 (22.25)	73 (56.05)

**Table 4.** Rice Fields Holdings

acreage	female (acreage)	male (acreage)	total (acreage)
0	20 ( 0)	24 (0)	44 ( 0)
0.5	4 ( 2.0)	1 (0.5)	5 ( 2.5)
0.75	-	1 (0.75)	1 ( 0.75)
1.0	4 ( 4.0)	1 (4.0)	5 ( 8.0)
1.25	1 ( 1.25)	1 (1.25)	2 ( 2.5)
1.5	5 ( 7.25)	-	5 ( 7.25)
2.0	8 (16.0)	1 (2.0)	9 (18.0)
3.0	2 (16.0)	-	2 (16.0)
Total	24 (36.75)	5 (5.5)	73 (42.25)

fields is not as high as before, since rice fields have been abandoned or neglected, and their economic value is negligible.

### Matrilocal Residence

To understand the present condition of *adat perpatih* it is also important to know where newly married couples choose to live. Traditionally, it was common for a married man to live with his wife's parents at her mother's place. In the case of Kg. Padang Binjal, there are 25 households in which the wives come from within the village itself. Out of these households 18 (72%) are living matrilocally (see Table 5 and 6). The ratio of matrilocality for village women is 41%, and this indicates that the number of women from outside the village is notably high. If we look at mother-daughter residence, there are 6 cases in which a married daughter's family lives with her mother. So, altogether the number of families residing

matrilocally amounts to 24 cases. This indicates that about 50% of all families in the village are matrilocal. Out of 44 households, six (14 women) consist of sisters and their families (see Table 7). There are no cases where brothers are living in separate households in the same village.

**Table 5.** Home Village of Household Couple

home village	wife	husband	total
Padan Binjal	25	7 (11)*	32 (36)
others	19	22 (35)	41 (54)
Total	44	29 (46)	73 (90)

\*The bracketed numbers include husbands who have died. The bracketed total is greater than the total number of wives due to wives' remarriage.

**Table 6.** Postmarital Residence

postmarital residence	number of households
matrilocal	18
neolocal	7
Total	25

**Table 7.** Households of Sisters

number of sisters	cases	total
3	2	6
2	4	8
Total	6	14

As noted, 25 out of 44 village women are from Kg. Padang Binjal. This is 57% of the total. Of these, 18 cases (41%) practice uxorilocal residence and there are 6 families who live in the wife's mother's household. The matrilocal residence custom of *adat perpatih*, therefore, seems to be deeply rooted and actively practiced. However, nearly half (19) of village women come from outside Kg. Padang Binjal. There are 14 cases in which neither wife nor husband are from Kg. Padang Binjal (see Table 8), some of whom settled in the village following the brothers or sisters who came earlier. In other cases, some families immigrated to Kg. Padang Binjal to acquire rubber land or to seek work at the rubber estate near the village.

**Table 8.** Husband/Wife Home Village Combination

types of combination	number of case
wife from Padang Binjal	21
husband from Padang Binjal	5
both wife and husband from Padang Binjal	4
both wife and husband from outside	14
Total	44

### **Traditional Economic System**

The central feature of *adat perpatih* is that it is women who own the subsistence property and hence people's economic livelihood is based on women's property ownership. Lewis (1962:329) describes the traditional subsistence economy as follows. In the traditional socio-ecological system, the major economic contribution to the household was made by the woman. She controlled the subsistence property, the rice fields and gardens, and she supported her household with food she raised. Formerly, the man collected forest produce and fruit for sale to provide cash for the household. He also performed tasks for his wife such as house building and repairing irrigation canals and he assisted some with agricultural work. But the man had no control over his wife's subsistence property. His contribution to family support was therefore minor when compared with that of his wife.

Needless to say, this description is an ideal type of *adat perpatih* and the meaning of 'traditional' was always under negotiation. As a cause of change, Lewis (1962:330) points to increasing population pressure on the land and the growing economic importance of rubber. Overpopulation in the 1950s and the lack of agricultural land in the district resulted in greatly fractionated rice holdings, and women became tenant farmers to supplement returns from their meager holdings. In Inas, two-thirds of the villagers were forced to buy rice for a part of the year in 1959. The chief source of household cash was rubber tapping, the principal occupation of village men. Over half the households owned rubber land and whereas the average rubber holding was 5.1 acres, the shrinking rice acreage averaged only 1.9 acres per household. The great majority of the households (over 70%) cited returns from rubber tapping as their primary source of cash income. Thus, Lewis predicted that rubber would further supplant rice as the mainstay of household economy.

### **The Economic System of Kg. Padang Binjal**

What are the differences between Inas community of 1959 and the present situation in Kg. Padang Binjal? The most marked difference seems to be the shift from a mixed economy of rice cultivation and rubber to a mono-economy based on rubber. Here, the case of Kg. Padang Binjal is closer to that of Kuala Pilah (Azizah

1988:144). In Kuala Pilah, the rice fields were abandoned in the 1980s, 30.5% of households were engaged in rubber tapping and vegetable gardening, and only 14% were full-time farmers. The ratio of those depending more on remittances from their employed children was rapidly increasing. According to Azizah, while 47 of the total 200 households lived on their own income, 121 (60.5%) received remittances of between M\$ 20 and M\$ 700, and 37 households (18.5%) depended totally on remittances. Nineteen households lived totally on pensions (M\$ 77-700), and 73 households (36.5%) lived partly on pensions. Therefore, the number of those households in which either remittances or pensions provided living expenses amounted to 152 households (76%). Azizah concluded that the village economy was no longer a peasant economy but was rather based on remittances and pensions, and that this economic shift, which took place over the last 15 years, had reduced the importance of *adat* land and also had a marked effect on social relationships in the village, especially male-female relationships. The balance of power was now weighted in favor of the male (Azizah 1988: 148). Contrary to the case in Kuala Pilah, about 60% of the villagers do not depend on remittances or pensions in Kg. Padang Binjal (see Table 9). The ratio of households that receive remittances from children is 36.4%. However, in most cases, such remittances are not regular, and the amount varies between M\$ 5 and M\$ 250. Considering the fact that the most remittances are between M\$ 50 and M\$ 100, the degree of dependence on remittances and pensions in Kg. Padang Binjal is not as heavy as the case of Kuala Pilah.

**Table 9.** Sources of Household Income

sources	number of households
Income from household head's work	26 (59.1%)
household head's work + Remittances	13 (29.6%)
household head's work + Pensions	2 (4.5%)
Remittances	2 (4.5%)
Remittances + State welfare aid	1 (2.3%)
Total	44 (100%)

\*This table is based on Azizah (1988:144).

In Kg. Padang Binjal, 34 people (46.6%) engage in rubber tapping (see Table 10). That is, 25 households, 56.8% of total households, earn money from rubber. Twenty-four of the 34 rubber tappers are women. There are also 8 elderly women who have retired from rubber tapping. If these 8 women are included in the list of rubber tappers, a total of 32 women lived on rubber tapping. This amounts to 72.2% of the total number of women. Therefore, it can be noted that village women have penetrated into rubber production which traditionally was men's work, and that the ratio of men and women in this occupation is now reversed. Today, women still play an important role in the household economy of Kg.

Table 10. Composition of Households by Occupation

occupation	*formerly		currently		total
	male	female	male	female	
army	5	-	2	-	2
policeman	5	-	-	-	-
special constable	3	-	-	-	-
rubber tapping	8	8	10	24	34
driver	-	-	5	-	5
school teacher	-	-	2	-	2
Drainage Dept.	2	-	-	1	1
Public Works Dept.	1	-	1	-	1
shopkeeper	-	-	3	-	3
fruit seller	1	-	-	-	-
estate laborer	-	-	-	1	1
traditional healer	-	-	1	-	1
pensioner	-	-	4	-	4
unemployed	-	-	1	18	19
Total	25	8	29	44	73

\*This category includes those over fifty-five years old (retirement age) and those who have died.

Padang Binjal, although there has been a shift from rice to rubber cultivation.

The number of people who own more than 3 acres of rubber land is 24. The average acreage per person is 1.84 acres, and the average per household is 3.05 acres. Men own 30.7% of rubber land and women, 69.3%, that is, two times more than men. The proportion of hereditary rubber land compared with total rubber holdings is only 5% (7 acres), which means that most rubber holdings are individually acquired lands (*harta carian*). While 33 people do not own any rubber land, there are 40 landowners, out of whom 28 are women. The number of households who own no rubber land is 8 out the total of 44. Of these households, 3 are elderly people who totally depend on remittances and welfare, 2 are shopowners (*kedai kopi*), and 2 live on the employed husbands' salaries. Finally there are 2 households in which wives share tap other people's rubber land (see Table 11).

While the total acreage of rice fields is 42.25 acres, that of rubber holdings is 134.3 acres which is 3.2 times more than that of rice land. The average acreage of rice holdings for a woman is 1.53 acres, whereas that of rubber holdings is 3.3 acres, which is 2 times more than for rice. Furthermore, the average acreage of rice holdings per household is 0.96 acres, whereas that of rubber holdings is 3.05 acres which is 3 times more than for rice. Of the total acreage of hereditary clan land, 24.25 acres are rice fields, and 7 acres are rubber land. That is, the ratio of rice fields vis-à-vis the total acreage of hereditary clan land is 57.4%, whereas for rubber land it is only 5%. This shows that the great majority of hereditary clan land is rice

**Table 11.** Acreage of Rubber Holdings by Gender of Owner

acreage	male (acreage)	female (acreage)	total
0	17 (0)	16 (0)	33 (0)
2/3 acre	0 (0.0)	3 (2.0)	3 (2.0)
1	1 (1.0)	1 (1.0)	2 (2.0)
1.3	1 (1.3)	0 (0.0)	1 (1.3)
1.5	1 (1.5)	1 (1.5)	2 (3.0)
2	2 (4.0)	4 (8.0)	6 (12.0)
2.5	0 (0.0)	1 (2.5)	1 (2.5)
3	4 (12.0)	11 (33.0)	15 (45.0)
5	0 (0.0)	3 (15.0)	3 (15.0)
5.75	1 (5.75)	0 (0.0)	1 (5.75)
6	1 (6.0)	1 (6.0)	1 (12.0)
7	0 (1.0)	1 (7.0)	1 (7.0)
8	0 (0.0)	1 (8.0)	1 (8.0)
9	0 (0.0)	1 (9.0)	1 (9.0)
9.75	1 (9.75)	0 (0.0)	1 (9.75)
Total	29 (41.3)	44 (93.0)	73 (134.3)

land. However, village people own three times more rubber land than rice land. And more households own rubber land as compared with rice land. The total of rice land, rubber land and homestead land equals 232.6 acres. The percentage of rice land within this total is 18%, and that of rubber is 58%. That shows that about 60% of the total lands held by village people is rubber land. And the total acreage of hereditary clan land (rubber land + rice fields + homestead land) is 48 acres (20.6%). Given these numbers, it can be seen that, in Kg. Padang Binjal, the proportion of hereditary clan land, the existential base of *adat perpatih*, is only 20% of total village lands, and that most hereditary clan land is rice land (50.5%) which is no longer used and has little economic value.

## DISCUSSION

In Kg. Padang Binjal, the matrilineal system has not collapsed, although some tendency towards disintegration can be observed. Among the basic principles of the matrilineal system, the matriclan (*suku*) and matrilineal inheritance still exist in many parts of Negeri Sembilan including Kg. Padang Binjal. However, the *raison d'être* of the matrilineal system has become significantly changed, as is indicated by the abandoned rice fields, most of which are hereditary clan land. The economic importance of hereditary clan land has decreased to a marked degree. This decline in the economic value of hereditary clan land is a direct result of the infiltration of capitalist economic institutions. In Negeri Sembilan, capitalization of agricultural production, that is, the introduction of cash crops such as rubber has spread

rapidly<sup>10</sup>). However, little hereditary clan land has been transformed into rubber land. Land development along with the introduction of rubber has not much affected hereditary clan land. The land taken for the government's development schemes were mostly jungle and any uncultivated land around the villages. If landholding itself has not been affected, how has this capitalization of agriculture influenced other crucial factors with the potential to affect the existence of matrilineal society, such as the problems of population increase and land shortage?

There seem to be two responses to these problems. One is to sweep the surplus population out of the village. The other one is to find new land for them. The problem with the former solution is how to get the surplus population out. In Minangkabau society of West Sumatra, migration (called *merantau*) has become one important solution to population pressure and land shortage. An aspect of the traditional 'rite of passage' for youth survives in *merantau*. It has come to be regarded as a key cultural indicator of the Minangkabau, deeply embedded and institutionalized in Minangkabau *adat* (Kato 1982). On the other hand, according to Khadijah (1978:202-203) who studied migration and matriliney in Negeri Sembilan, factors facilitating labor migration and emigration in Negeri Sembilan have not been culturally institutionalized ones such as *merantau*, but rather economic reasons like those driving migrants from other states in Malaysia. What is characteristic about Negeri Sembilan is that migration is not confined to unmarried men and married couples, but includes unmarried women as well. Thus, the driving forces behind labor migration and emigration were not internal factors such as the release of surplus population through a culturally institutionalized *merantau*, but were related to external factors such as the various land development and industrialization policies initiated by the government (Khadijah:13). Especially in Negeri Sembilan, the problem of land shortage was solved by government schemes which offered land designated for rubber production to village people. In 1951 in pre-independence Malaysia, the Rural and Industrial Development Authority (RISDA) was founded by the government to enhance the economic standing of small rubber landowners and to finance loans for developing new land into rubber plantations. In 1956, the Federal Land Development Authority (FELDA) was established to promote economic development among rural Malays (Norhalim 1976:159; Shamsul 1986:203)<sup>11</sup>). At that time, the Malayan Communist Party was increasing its guerrilla activities and a state of Emergency (1949-1956) was proclaimed in Malaya. Many village youths in Rembau joined the police or the special constabulary. Between 1951 and 1957, when many left these forces, undeveloped lands were preferentially sold to them at a special price of \$ 55 per acre (Norhalim 1976:148). At that time also, the rubber prices increased rapidly because of a rubber boom resulting from the Korean War. In Kg. Padang Binjal, there were eight cases where people acquired rubber lands from the government in this way in the late 1950s and early 1960s. At least five of these lots were acquired by village men who had just retired from the police force or the army. In Rembau, between 1957 and 1974, 736 families joined FELDA Schemes in Peninsula

Malaysia, 688 of whom settled in Negeri Sembilan FELDA Schemes. In Kg. Padang Binjal, 17 families have joined such schemes to date, 10 of whom are led by village women.

The next occasion when village people had the opportunity to acquire small rubber holdings was between 1974 and the end of the 1970s. In particular, the government initiated a project called Projek Tanah Pinggir (Fringe Alienation Scheme) in 1961<sup>12</sup>. This project came to Kg. Padang Binjal and the neighboring village of Kg. Serdang in 1974. The outcome was that 150 acres of hinterland was developed into rubber land, divided into fifty lots of three acres each, and sold to the village people. Twelve people from Kg. Padang Binjal bought this rubber land, mostly located on the hilly slopes behind Kg. Padang Binjal. The government provided many facilities to enable the village people to acquire rubber land. For instance, fifteen year loans for which villagers were only required to repay M\$ 33 every month. The government, in cooperation with RISDA, also provided many kinds of support until village people were able to actually start tapping rubber. However by this time, rice cultivation had ceased and the rice fields were already abandoned in Kg. Padang Binjal. Hence the issue of land shortage decreased in importance through the shift in the villagers' economic dependence from rice cultivation to rubber. Unlike the case of rice cultivation, the need to actually own the rubber land is not so important for viability in daily economic life because people can make a living as share tappers working at other people's rubber land. Furthermore, it is not so easy to expand holdings of rice land to cope with population increases by reclamation because the potential supply of land suitable for rice cultivation is far more restricted than that of rubber due to factors of location and so on. Compared with rice, rubber can be cultivated on almost any form of land, such as jungle or hill slopes behind the villages, and it thus contributes greatly to solving the problem of land shortage. Unlike the case of Minangkabau society in West Sumatra, the modernizing programs of the government, such as the various land alienation programs under the New Economic Policy (NEP), encouraged people to migrate or emigrate and helped address problems of population pressure and land shortage<sup>13</sup>.

How was the system of matrilineal inheritance influenced by the capitalization of agriculture and the introduction of rubber cultivation? Before the introduction of rubber, most land was hereditary clan land (*harta pusaka*), and controlled by women<sup>14</sup>. However when the British introduced rubber to Rembau in the early twentieth century, rubber land was registered in the names of men. Since then, there have been two patterns of land ownership and inheritance (Azizah 1988:136). Hereditary clan lands are inherited by women according to the rules for matrilineal inheritance law within *adat perpatih*, while individually acquired lands such as rubber small holdings come under the jurisdiction of Islamic law, *Sharia*, in which both men and women have the right of inheritance. In Rembau, the acquisition of rubber small holdings began from the end of the 1940s to the early 1950s (Nolhalim 1976:147). In Kg. Padang Binjal, the first residents to obtain rubber small holdings

were retired policemen and servicemen, from 1950s into the 1960s. After this period, it was again predominantly males who obtained rubber small holdings through the FELDA and Fringe Alienation Schemes. According to the statistics for 1977 (Khadijah 1978:166-167), the total area of rubber land in Negeri Sembilan was 812,685 acres, which was equivalent to 49.4% of the total area of the state, whereas that of hereditary clan land was 34,565 acres, that is, only 2.1%. Ten years later (1986), the percentage of hereditary clan land had not changed (Azizah 1988:136), and most of this land was rice fields. On the other hand, according to the same statistics for 1977 (Khadijah 1978:172-173), the area of rubber land in Rembau was 24,622 acres (24.2%), whereas by 1987 it was 32,858 acres (35.2%), which was more than a 10% increase. In 1977, rice field holdings were 8,374 acres (8.2%), whereas they were 7,877 acres (7.7%) in 1987, a decrease of about 500 acres<sup>15</sup>. The percentage of hereditary clan land stayed about the same. However, the ratio of hereditary clan land to total cultivated land in Rembau decreased. This is because lands which were not based on hereditary rule have drastically expanded. The same trend can be seen at the state level. In Kg. Padang Binjal, the percentage of hereditary clan land, most of which is rice land, is about 20% (48 acres) of the total land holdings of villagers, whereas rubber holdings occupy about 60% (134.3 acres) of total land holdings. This indicates a considerable expansion of non-hereditary land, the use of which is controlled by men. However, 69% of total village land holdings are actually in women's hands. This means, in many cases, village men have bequeathed their land to wives or daughters. In fact, most village men said that they would give non-hereditary land to their daughters. Women can expand their hereditary clan land by re-registering non-hereditary land given by men into hereditary clan land. However, the statistics for Rembau and Negeri Sembilan quoted above show no such cases. In any event, there seems to exist a strong *adat* sentiment among village men that it is appropriate to give land to women who are thought to be in a weaker position socially and hence in need of protection.

## CONCLUSION

In the above discussion, I have focused on the existence of hereditary clan land and matrilineal inheritance which are basic principles of the matrilineal system, *adat perpatih*, in Negeri Sembilan, and on how far capitalism has changed the matrilineal tradition. As we have seen, hereditary clan lands have continued to exist without decrease or increase, and continue to be inherited matrilineally. The existence of hereditary clan land seems to be important for the maintenance of *adat perpatih* as a whole. For instance, there is no hereditary clan land in new villages settled under FELDA Schemes even though the villages are within the state of Negeri Sembilan. In these new villages, land is owned by men who, after their death, distributed this among wives and children according to Islamic law. Settlers have abandoned matrilineal customs at the new villages (Nolhalim 1976:166,169). In Negeri Sembilan, the number of such new villages has been increasing year by

year. And also, in older villages, non-matrilineal aspects have been expanding gradually. The ratio of hereditary to non-hereditary land is not only decreasing year by year in Kg. Padang Binjal, in Rembau, and in Negeri Sembilan, but the functions of hereditary land as a source of livelihood has also come to an end, as is apparent in abandoned rice fields. Kahn (1974:102-104) once said about the Minangkabau in Sumatra: 'While ideologically matriliney and Minangkabau *adat* remain important for most Minangkabau, in fact there is little substance to matrilineal organization. In a very real sense Minangkabau social and economic organization is no different from that of other Sumatran groups.... The great difference, I would suggest, is ideological.... This elaborate ideology concerning Minangkabau *adat* is retained only because there is no pressure against it. If, for example, agriculture in West Sumatra underwent a revolutionary transformation - i.e., if it were capitalized, then *adat* would all but disappear'<sup>16</sup>. The situation of Kg. Padang Binjal also seems to reflect his argument very well. Is his conclusion applicable to the case of Kg. Padang Binjal of Negeri Sembilan then?

*Adat perpatih* in Kg. Padang Binjal now has little substance in the sense of matrilineal inheritance, and it is almost like an 'empty shell' (Kato 1982:223), because there is no longer any rice cultivation, which was the socio-economic basis of matrilineal society before. The capitalization of agriculture has been achieved with the introduction of a rubber economy, and this has exerted strong pressure against the previously dominant matrilineal ideology. But there still exists strong matrilineal sentiment in Kg. Padang Binjal. How can this be explained? This seems to relate to the continued existence of hereditary clan land, even though this has lost its economic value. The capitalization of agriculture has not brought a total neglect of hereditary clan land, although it has eclipsed its economic function. Hereditary clan land has not been converted into rubber land, and rice fields have not been planted with rubber. Hereditary clan land maintains at least potential economic value, and furthermore, this very existence evokes *adat* consciousness, historical sentiments from the remnants of *adat perpatih* among village people. Men sitting and chatting in a village coffee shop which looks out on the abandoned hereditary rice fields is quite an ordinary scene of village life.

Another continuing importance of *adat perpatih* are the marriage ritual and feasts (*kenduri*). The traditional marriage ritual and *kenduri* remain an integral part of village people's lives. Although many rituals have been lost because of the shift in economic life from rice to rubber cultivation<sup>17</sup>, the marriage ritual and associated *kenduri* have survived as an important facet of village life. The marriage ritual and *kenduri* require the leadership and knowledge of *adat* chiefs. Young men and women, no matter how far they live, return to get married at their own village. They ask their *adat* chief to conduct all the marriage procedures from the negotiation of the bride-price to the ceremonial arrangements. Today, although *adat* chiefs have lost power in political and economic arenas, they maintain influence over marriage ritual and *kenduri*. As long as these marriage rituals and *kenduri* survive, *adat perpatih* is also transmitted to future generations,

despite its form as an 'empty shell'.

Thus, the importance of the matrilineal system has shifted from socio-economic reproduction to Negeri Sembilan identity. However, the intensity of consciousness of Negeri Sembilan identity seems to differ among various kinds of people. Intellectuals such as teachers and students in schools and universities and politicians tend to locate their identity in *adat perpatih*. This is shown by their participation in many seminars and symposia on *adat perpatih*, some of which were sponsored by the Negeri Sembilan state government. There are also many articles about *adat perpatih* in local newspapers as well as newsletters circulated by local historians who study *adat perpatih*<sup>18)</sup>. Furthermore, administrators and people of Negeri Sembilan commonly make a nostalgic visit to the Minangkabau region in West Sumatra. On the other hand, the attachment of most village people to *adat perpatih* seems to be more sentimental. For them, consciousness of *adat perpatih* arises when they came across practical matters such as marriage rituals and the inheritance of matrilineal land. Since the Negeri Sembilan intelligentsia have more occasion to mix with other people from various places, they have become more conscious of their identity than village people. For a better understanding of contemporary *adat perpatih*, this issue of Malaysian social identity needs to be fully examined. I will discuss the matter of Negeri Sembilan identity in a separate paper.

## NOTES

- 1) The ethnographic material presented here derives from fieldwork in Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia, in 1988 and 1989. Most of the statistical data in the studied village are based on my household surveys. For ethical reasons, I am not able to list the names of villagers and places, but I am greatly indebted to many individuals, especially villagers in the research area of my study. I owe an enormous debt to Professor Shamsul A. Baharuddin and Professor Norhalim Hj Ibrahim for their kind assistance from the very beginning of my fieldwork in Malaysia. Without their help, my fieldwork in Negeri Sembilan would not have been realized. Dr. Wendy A. Smith and Professor Lamont Lindstrom took a lot of time in reading my draft paper and I am very grateful for their kind assistance and lots of useful comments. An earlier version of this article was published in Japanese in *Mareisia Shakai Ronshu* (Malaysian Sociological Studies) Vol. 2 (1989).
- 2) *Adat* generally means custom or tradition, and *adat perpatih* refers to the matrilineal system of kin-group membership and its associated matrilineal customs. The name *adat perpatih* is said to be derived from a Minangkabau legend (De Jong 1952:72). According to the legend, each Minangkabau village, called *nagari*, had two sets of *adat*, *Koto Pilian* and *Bodi Chaniago*. The two *adat* groups were called *Adat Katumanggungan* and *Adat Parapatih*, named after Kjai Katumanggungan and Parapatih nan Sabatan, respectively. Of these, *adat perpatih* was more matrilineal in nature.
- 3) For example, see Lister (1887,1890,1891), Parr and Mackray (1910), Taylor (1929,1948) Moubray (1931), and Winstedt (1934,1935,1954). For critical reviews of these studies and detailed references, see Peletz (1981,1988).

- 4) Norhalim (1988) is very critical of De Jong's treatment of *adat* and Islam in Rembau.
- 5) Some of the studies by the Dutch (Kato 1982:25) and by Maretin (1961) refer to the disintegration of the matrilineal system. There are also a number of studies asserting the likely continuity of the matrilineal system. Abdullah (1966,1971) considers the institutional conflict of *adat* and Islam as essential for the process of social integration and already embedded in the cultural concept of *adat Minangkabau*. Evers (1975) gives the interrelationship between *adat* and Islam, the fact of migration and the joint ownership of land as reasons for the durability of the matrilineal system. Kahn (1976) relates the continuity of the matrilineal system to backwardness in the capitalization of agriculture, and Benda-Beckman (1978) explains it in Sumatra the joint occupation of hereditary land. Kato (1980,1982) argues that *adat* and Islam are historically not exclusive but are in a harmonious relation essential to each other. He sees the key to the continuity of the matrilineal system in the flexibility of *adat* in the cultural institution of emigration known as *murantau*.
- 6) For the *Kaum Muda-Kaum Tua* dispute, see, for example, Nagata (1982) and Roff (1967:56-90, 254-255). Concerning the *Dakwah* movement, see, for example, Nagata (1980,1986), Shamsul (1986), Chandra (1987) and Zainal (1987).
- 7) De Jong's study is a pioneering one in this context. Every study after De Jong refers to matters of *adat* versus Islam. However, most references are very brief. For example, both Lewis (1962:1, 57-58) and Hooker (1972,1974) refer to the individuality and interdependency of *adat* and Islam. Swift (1965:9) stresses their integration, harmony and overlap, and Nordin (1976:26-27) develops this viewpoint. On the other hand, Peletz (1981:2-3, 37-41) takes a different stance, and describes the historical relationship between *adat* and Islam. That is, he describes the process whereby the two were institutionally differentiated from a harmonious relationship and thus bipolarized, from a sociological and anthropological points of view. McAllister's study (1987) appears to be the only thorough anthropological study focusing on Islam and the matrilineal system since De Jong's work. She analyses the influence of an Islamic revival called *Dakwah* upon *adat perpatih* and Capitalist relations from the viewpoint of gender and political economy and argues that the Islamic revival can be viewed as mediating the encounter between *adat* and capitalism for Negeri Sembilan women (McAllister 1988:518).
- 8) In 1977, 5,000 acres of rice fields were left uncultivated in Negeri Sembilan (Khadijah 1978:66). Today, this trend appears to be accelerating. In the district of Bintangor, few rice fields are cultivated. The same situation occurs in the district of Rembau. For a detailed study of uncultivated rice fields, see Kato (1988,1991,1994a,1994b).
- 9) For a detailed discussion of leadership and village politics in Kg. Padang Binjal, see Kuwahara (1991,1993,1994).
- 10) The state of Negeri Sembilan is the third largest in terms of the number of FELDA Schemes and their acreage. By the end of 1976, 5,019 families had joined 22 schemes and settled on a total of 106,201 acres (Khadijah 1978:63-64).
- 11) FELDA was set up in 1956, based on the Mudie Report (Report of the Mission of Inquiry into the Rubber Industry of Malaysia, Government Press) of 1954, and some state governments, including that of Negeri Sembilan, immediately undertook rubber land development projects. One of the qualifications for selection in any FELDA scheme was that the settlers must be from an agricultural background and landless or owning less than two acres of land (Norhalim 1976:164-165).
- 12) By the end of the First Malaya Plan in 1960, the government felt that existing land development programs were too slow in providing land for those in need, and thus

created a new type of land development project known as the Projek Tanah Pinggir (Fringe Alienation Scheme). A fringe alienation scheme is a land development scheme located close to an area of established agricultural settlement and is thus intended to supplement the land resources of existing farmers. This scheme differs from previous programs in the following ways; (1) fringe land schemes do not exceed 2,000 acres in size, and are situated not more than three miles distant from the settlements from which participants are selected; (2) The participants are not landless, but must have small, uneconomic holdings of less than eight acres. They are not expected to reside on the fringe holdings or work them full-time, but to attend them on a part-time basis, while continuing to farm their original holdings; (3) No subsistence allowance is paid. Under this project, 1,580 Malay families, about 5.2 % of Rembau's population, benefited from the schemes established in Rembau. The average acreage of these families were three acres. By the end of 1974, a total of 30 schemes had been opened, covering 5,089 acres (5.01% of the land acreage in Rembau). This meant that an average of 509 acres of land were distributed to about 158 families each year (Norhalim 1976:170-173).

- 13) For a detailed explanation of the NEP, see Shamsul (1986:191-192).  
 14) The Customary Land Tenure Enactment was passed by the British in 1909. Under this legislation land was obliged to be registered by western inscription, and the administration of land was transferred from the hands of the *lembaga* and *undang* to the District Officers. For further explanation, see Hooker (1970:1968-1972).  
 15)

Land in Negeri Sembilan (1973) (Khadijah 1978)

district	acreage	%
Kuala Pilah	19,126	55.3
Rembau	13,272	38.4
Tampin	2,093	6.1
Jelevu	73	0.2
Total	34,565	100.0

Land Use in Rembau in 1977 (Khadijah 1978) and in 1988 (Rembau District Office, 1989)

type	1977 (acreage)	1988 (acreage)
village land	14,890	-
rice field s	8,374	7,876
rubber land	24,622	32,858
oil palm holdings	-	20,615

- 16) Quoted from Kato (1982:223).  
 17) See Lewis (1962:62-74) for a detailed description of these rituals, and see A. Wahab (1967:23-33) concerning *kenduri*.  
 18) For example, many articles about *adat perpatih* appear in such newspapers as BERITA HARIAN, BERITA MINGGU, UTUSAN MALAYSIA, and WATAN. I attended the "Seminar Adat Perpatih" held at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia on 17-18 September 1988.

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