

Women’s Morals or Customary Panopticism? Re-examining the *Sumbang Duo Baleh* in Minangkabau, West Sumatra, Indonesia *

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Abstract

The shariatization of customs and regional regulations on women form an interdependence between morality, sexuality, and the nation. Currently, there are at least fifteen Shari’a regulations in West Sumatra that target women’s bodies and expressions. This study employs a reflective approach, drawing from personal experience in the Minangkabau context, and critically examines the concept of *sumbang duo baleh*—a set of twelve female characteristics deemed inappropriate according to custom. Aiming to trace the roots of these regional regulations or Shari’a policies in West Sumatra, especially those regulating women’s activity and expression, the analysis focuses on three key issues: *First*, custom-discursiveness and shariatization of the body and morals of Minang women nowadays. *Second*, the portrait of women in the *sumbang duo baleh*, critical factors, and how women’s characters are projected into custom ideals. *Third*, moral construction through the gaze mechanism and its implementation in the Shari’a regulations. This systematic analysis reveals underlying gender injustice in the way individuals are positioned within the framework of *sumbang duo baleh*.

Fenomena syariatisasi adat dan lahirnya beberapa Perda syariah membentuk keterikatan yang kompleks antara isu moralitas, seksualitas, dan negara. Saat ini, setidaknya terdapat lima belas peraturan syariah di Sumatera Barat yang menyangkut tubuh dan ekspresi perempuan. Kajian ini merupakan analisis kritis atas tekstualisasi *sumbang duo baleh*—dua belas karakteristik perempuan yang dianggap tidak pantas menurut adat, serta refleksi kritis atas pengalaman personal hidup bermasyarakat di Ranah Minang. Kajian ini bertujuan menelusuri akar gagasan peraturan daerah atau kebijakan syariah di Sumatera Barat, khususnya yang berkaitan dengan pengaturan aktivitas dan ekspresi perempuan. Untuk itu, analisis kajian ini fokus pada tiga isu kunci: Pertama, wacana adat dan syariatisasi tubuh dan moral perempuan Minang saat ini. Kedua, potret perempuan dalam *sumbang duo baleh*, faktor kritis, dan bagaimana karakter perempuan diproyeksikan ke dalam cita-cita adat. Ketiga, konstruksi moral melalui mekanisme tatapan dan implementasinya dalam Perda syariah. Pembacaan sistematis ini mengungkap adanya ketidakadilan gender yang mendasari bagaimana individu diposisikan dalam kerangka *sumbang duo baleh*.

Keywords: *Adat Basandi Syarak – Syarak Basandi Kitabullah (ABS-SBK)*; Minangkabau customs; panopticism; *sumbang duo baleh*; women’s moral

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Introduction

“Di Minangkabau semua padusi atau perempuan sampai bundo kanduang adalah Muslimah. Maka kewajiban itu (memakai jilbab) adalah sama di hadapan Allah. Tolong dicamkan wahai anak-anak padusi Minang. Bahwa azab neraka itu pasti ada dan sangat pedih, dan bahan bakarnya adalah manusia dan batu.” (In Minang, all women are Muslim. Therefore, their obligation (to wear the *hijab*) is the same before Allah. Please pay attention, O daughters of Minang. The punishment of hell will definitely happen, and it is very painful, and its fuel is humans and stones). (Jamil 2018, 2019a, 2019b).

Above is one excerpt of how women “should be” quoted from three customary books discussing ideal Minang women. In West Sumatra today, custom and Shari’a (Islam) are the two primary tools governing the ideology of society’s moralism. Several academic publications show how Minangkabau wisdom manifested in the form of agreement *Adat Basandi Syarak – Syarak Basandi Kitabullah*,¹ commonly known as ABS-SBK, became a catalyst for unifying Minang and Islamic identities (Guyanie and Tamtowi 2022; Huda 2013; Rohidin et al. 2023; Sudarto 2008; Taufik 2024), and inspire many Shari’a regulations that are often politicized as women’s self-protection (Huda 2013; Salim 2013). One of the custom products that specifically discusses women’s propriety and impropriety is *sumbang duo baleh*.²

In feminist critical consciousness, local customs and wisdom can be a double-edged

sword: dominating or liberating women. What often happens is traditional views and (shariatization of) local wisdom tend to lead to the subordination of individual women to their final status, closing their free choices and vitality to see themselves as historical creatures who are constantly becoming. One of the impacts is the psychosocial rules (not always written rules) for Muslim and non-Muslim women to wear the *hijab*. My previous study showed that the shariaization of local wisdom increasingly emphasizes the regulation of women’s sexuality in the name of custom glorifying (Sulistyati 2022).

One of the contestations of custom and the free choice of Minang women can be seen in the study by Fahmi Marh et al. (2022) about women who play *calempong*.³ Traditionally, they are subordinated because women playing music in public spaces is considered inappropriate, especially without being accompanied by male family members. However, some respect them as emancipated women. The *calempong* performance, in this context, represents Minang women who break through traditional values autonomously.

Apart from Marh’s, studies on morality in Minangkabau tend to be affirmative and promotive rather than critically reflective. The related topics that academics have extensively studied are character and moral formation (Gani 2020; Juliana and Ismaniar 2022; Morelent et al. 2021; Sari and Mayar 2021; Syaputra et al. 2020); applied psychology (Iskandar, Mardianto, and Putra 2014; Rahmat et al. 2022) and the

¹ *Adat Basandi Syarak—Syarak Basandi Kitabullah* (ABS-SBK) means that customs (*adat*) must be based on the Shari’a, which at the same time as the shari’a itself is based on the holy book—the al-Qur’an.

² *Sumbang duo baleh* means twelve inappropriate characters.

³ In the Minang tribe, this musical instrument is known as *talempong*. But according to some other sources, specifically in Nagari Unggan (in Sijunjung, Dharmasraya) call it *calempong* (some call “*calempong* Unggan”).

symbolization of *sumbang duo baleh* in works of art and literature (Astuti 2019; Putri, Syofiani, and Isnanda 2020). Meanwhile, this study is intended to continue and deepen the existing studies by offering a feminist critical lens on the well-established custom by highlighting the often-overlooked implications of the *sumbang duo baleh* on contemporary gender dynamics in Minangkabau.

This qualitative study conducts a feminist discourse analysis of the *sumbang duo baleh* from the customary text entitled *Sumbang 12* as its primary source. To enrich the analysis, this study utilizes secondary data from two discussion broadcasts from the official YouTube channel featuring Minang cultural experts' opinions. The analysis is framed through Michel Foucault's thought on disciplined body to investigate how Minang women are represented and regulated to achieve a more critical and reflective understanding. This study examines explicitly the *sumbang duo baleh* text version (not *sumbang duo baleh* as an oral rule), which has been in existence since 2018, because of two key considerations: first, the textualization of its values tends to target women's bodies narrowly. Second, as a derivative series of ABS-SBK—which has now politically become the official life guideline for the people in West Sumatra, it is highly probable that the textual version has also undergone similar political adaptations.

In the same way, at the axiological level, this study aims to trace the thought roots of local regulations or Shari'a policies in West Sumatra, especially those related to regulating women's movement and expression. To achieve this, this study systematized three issues that formed the flow of this study. The first is the conceptualization phenomenon framework of custom

and body discipline concept of Minangkabau women nowadays. The second is the depiction of women in the *sumbang duo baleh*, critical factors, and how women's characters are projected into custom ideals. The third is the discussion on how custom constructs shame through the gaze mechanism and its implications for the Shari'a regulations that have emerged in West Sumatra. This study should contribute to the reflective and critical academic review of the concept of custom regarding the bodies because both women and men need to question the constructions believed to be "truth."

Custom-discursiveness and Shariatization of the Body and Morals of Minang Women

The two words that best describe the reality of West Sumatra norms today are "*adat*" (custom) and "*syarak*" (Shari'a/Islamic law). Even though historically customary and religious groups have rejected and defeated each other (Syarifuddin 1984; Zuriati 2007), the unification of the two ultimately resulted in the ABS-SBK consensus (Abdullah 1966; Arrasuli 2003; Azra 2017). Since the New Order ended, the value of ABS-SBK has practically grown in political decisions and Shari'a regulations in West Sumatra (Huda 2013; Salim 2013; Taufik 2024). Until very recently, in June 2022, the Parliament of the Republic of Indonesia formalized the West Sumatra Province Law, which legally accommodates ABS-SBK as a character and basis for life. It has become necessary in every aspect of West Sumatra society's everyday life.

The consequence is the rise of religious sentiments in the political and cultural spheres, simplifying ABS-SBK into a single meaning.

There is favoritism of one religion and one belief in it, one ideal of clothing for women, one definition of *'awrat* (parts of the body to be covered), and criteria for good and bad women. Based on the track record of the regulations that have been traced, the implementation of Islamic law in West Sumatra began with an appeal to Muslim women to dress—which subtly became an obligation—and the enforcement of rules and behaviors considered “Islamic.”

In 2001, out of 22 provinces in Indonesia that had begun implementing Shari'a regulations, West Sumatra was the only province that obliged women to wear Muslim clothing. According to data from the Padang Legal Aid Institute (LBH Padang, oral statement, 2023), there are at least fifteen Shari'a regulations in West Sumatra that target women's bodies and expressions—excluding Shari'a regulations for other issues. This monopoly of knowledge over religion (Islam) that is Shari'a-centric and symbolic is what distances society from its social *élan vital*.

The ABS-SBK perspective has now received a legal umbrella from the West Sumatra Provincial Law. Therefore, it has political differentiation by relying on cultural autonomy. It confirms that in the domestic realm of Minangkabau, the authenticity of customary morals based on Shari'a (Islam) is the highest value that cannot be questioned. Consequently, cultural conversation is only possible if it is based on the holy book (the Qur'an). This essentialist view underlies the politics of conservatism in customary practices, which in the West Sumatran elite's popular terms is referred to as "Minangkabau cultural identity." This situation is easily used to strengthen male masculinity, which, in the Minangkabau matrilineal system, is often analogized with *abu*

di ateh tunggua (ashes in the fireplace, which is a depiction of the Minang men's fragility).

The contestation of the Minang men's desire for masculinity is one of the important issues to consider. Meiyenti and Afrida (2018) stated in their article that many Minang men are neglected in their old age. They experience a kind of imbalance between obligations and rights in kinship relations, where men's social responsibilities are not accompanied by control of economic resources—which in the Minangkabau matrilineal system are completely controlled by women. The position of men (husbands) is not considered so important by women's families (wives).

Therefore, to compensate for those insecurities, society forms local concepts that can strengthen men's personalities in social spaces, one of which is as a 'doorstop' (Jelly, Afrizal, and Delfi 2019). This term implies the social function of the husband (doorstop), who fences and protects his wife (room/house) from the outside world. However, the doorstop analogy cannot work alone except by forming a stigma against widows. Five of the most frequently played stigmas are *jadi baban* (burdensome person), *kancang ka laki-laki* (coquette woman), *ndak pandai balaki* (bad wife), *maracak kudo pandai* (riding a horse that is already skilled—this meaning refers to the widow that already skilled in sexual service), and *pambuek malu* (shameful person). All of them seem to show how important the husband's presence is in protecting the wife's dignity, and becoming a widow means losing the doorstop as well as the glory of her femininity.

The counter-stigma attached to the femininity of ex-wives/widows above could be a form of the masculine protest of ex-

husbands/widowers for the fact that their masculinity is not attached to ownership. Both lineage ownership and economic access belong to the wife. The vulnerability of male masculinity is often projected and actualized through a form of control over others, namely female femininity. Thus, bodily and morality are often not natural processes but rather part of power in the realm of custom and culture.

However, power here does not work as an ideology but as a discourse, so the body and morality are also discursive issues. Male vulnerability and the stigmatization of widows, as described above, show that there is a contestation of relations within the space of custom and society. However, coincidentally, the unify of Shari'a and matrilineal system provides little benefit to the desire for masculinity. From observations in several traditional discussion forums, there is no control and regulation of women's bodies and morals as being interpreted solely negatively; on the contrary, discourse on women's bodies and morals is ultimately interpreted positively within the framework of maintaining women's dignity.

***Sumbang Duo Baleh* and How Women are Projected**

Minang women are the key to lineage and heirs to heirloom property. However, this privilege also comes with several norms that define and discipline them. On the one hand, they are safeguarded in terms of their welfare by cultural customs, but conversely, traditional realities reveal that they are regarded as secondary beings (Saputri et al. 2024). One of the custom tools imposed on women is *sumbang duo baleh*.

Sumbang means inappro-priateness or oddness. In Minangkabau, it means an inappro-

priate act to see according to one's nature. Although these twelve *sumbang* are claimed to be universal in that all Minang people can do, both in the *Sumbang 12* book and in several text sources, the implementation of inappropriateness tends to target women. Here was quoted one of the podcast conversations hosted by the Center for the Preservation of Cultural Values (BPNB) with a Minangkabau cultural expert:

Host: ... We've been talking about women, so are there actually any taboos for men?

Expert: It's not that there aren't any, but maybe I would tend to solve the women's issues. I prefer to start with *sumbang duo baleh*, which actually applies to all women, especially if the woman is engaged to be married. There are many things that women shouldn't do as they please (Katik 2020).

Some Minang people believe in twelve (considered) shameful behaviors known as *sumbang duo baleh*. The twelve attitudes or characters of women that are considered shameful are as follows: First, *sumbang duduak* or sitting inappropriately. Sitting that is considered reprehensible is cross-legged and straddling. The femininity of Minang women is thought to be lost if they do that. In addition, women are also considered to misbehave if they sit close to many men. However, women and men will be considered rude if they sit with older people as they please—without being invited first (Jamil 2018:65–66).

Second, *sumbang tagak* or standing inappropriately. Women's dignity is considered to be tarnished if they stand inappropriately or awkwardly. Some examples are bending over because their calves, thighs, and chest can be seen, standing in a crowded place alone, and standing in a higher place such as the roadside because the wind may lift their clothes or skirts (Jamil 2018:70).

Third, *sumbang diam* or staying inappropriately. In this context, several conditions are considered appropriate for women: 1) When a woman sleeps in a house with only one man without anyone else, even if it is their father, uncle, or brother. The reason for this prohibition is that it may lead to indecent acts; 2) When a woman only lives alone in the house without relatives to accompany her; 3) When a woman lives in other people's place in the same village/town while she has a home because this may generate negative assumptions; 4) When entering the room of a father, parent, or married siblings without permission (Jamil 2018:72–73).

Fourth, *sumbang bajalan* or walking inappropriately. This is an appropriateness that Minang women do when walking, including looking back frequently while walking, rushing, or running. A woman walking alone at night without lighting or in a deserted place is also considered inappropriate. Also, a woman should not walk or ride with a man who is not her *mahram* (Jamil 2018:79).

Fifth, *sumbang kato* or speaking inappropriately. A Minang woman is said to misbehave if they speak in a way that does not follow Minangkabau ethics, such as speaking loudly, swearing, laughing loudly, and making excessive jokes. Joking is especially inappropriate when done by women with men and older people (Jamil 2018:12).

Sixth, *sumbang caliak* or seeing inappropriately. It is considered inappropriate for a woman to look at something excessively and to look at inappropriate content, such as: 1) looking at someone repeatedly or being fixated by someone; 2) looking at something in amazement; 3) looking at a bathing suit; 4) looking with big eyes, especially older people; and (5) watching porn (Jamil 2018:84).

Seventh, *sumbang bapakaian* or dress appropriately. It is considered inappropriate for a Minang woman to look like men, wear torn, open, tight clothes, and show their intimate parts (Jamil 2018:88).

Eighth, *sumbang bagaua* or inappropriately socializing. If a Minang woman hangs out and sits with men (even if they are her relatives), associates themselves with negative friends, and hangs out at crossroads or in crowded places, she will be considered mischievous (Jamil 2018:90–91).

Ninth, *sumbang karajo* or working inappropriately, namely doing work often associated with men, such as climbing, lifting hefty objects, and doing 'extreme' sports such as football, boxing, etc. Minang women should only carry light objects because carrying heavy objects is a man's job. This distinction aims to maintain a woman's dignity (Jamil 2018:95).

Tenth, *sumbang tanyo* or asking inappropriately. Some examples are when a woman demands an answer hastily when asking, pitting one another against another, asking too many unnecessary questions, and fighting or arguing (Jamil 2018:99–100).

Eleventh, *sumbang jawek* or answering inappropriately. This is when a woman answers questions impolitely and in a way that can cause disputes (Jamil 2018:102–3).

Twelfth, *sumbang kurenah* or acting up. A woman is considered rude or acting up if she is bossy, speaks unclearly, and whispers in a crowd (Jamil 2018:104–5).

"In the Minangkabau realm, what is more real is supervision," said a Minang cultural figure after explaining the twelve points of *sumbang duo baleh* in a podcast interview (Katik 2020). In textbooks and meeting forums,

local activists always imply that custom supervision is not only intended for women. However, "... supervising women is prioritized because women are jewelry that must be guarded, cared for, and tightly covered so they are not damaged," said the Head of Bundo Kanduang West Sumatra (Thayib 2022).

So far, *sumbang duo baleh* has not been institutionalized and has not had a visible impact, but its supervision has become a discourse that subtly dominates women's bodily expressions. Sexual supervision in custom is carried out to prevent shame—as a moral law. At the same time, shame also arises because of the supervision of women's sexuality. In the Minangkabau matrilineal context, supervision and maintenance of shame (negative discourse) is considered an expression of attention and protection (positive discourse) to the glory of women as *bundo kanduang*⁴ (Sulistiyati 2022).

The twelve inappropriate characters of *sumbang duo baleh* in Minang customs are intended to ensure that women live, act, and express themselves according to their feminine "nature" (Jamil 2018; Katik 2020; Thayib 2022). Meanwhile, the nature of women, according to ABS-SBK, is based on Islamic Shari'a values. This is why when we read point by point in the *Sumbang 12* book, Shari'a law, verses of the Qur'an, or hadith are used as the legitimation. Is the citation of verses and customary concepts about women in *sumbang duo baleh* always appropriate? Here is an interesting example to

illustrate how the logic of Shari'a is used to emphasize the point of *sumbang karajo* (the ninth *sumbang*).

Shari'a allows women to work, but not all jobs can be done by women. Women are allowed to work and earn a living from the skills or abilities they have, both physical and non-physical. They can be teachers, cooks, assistants, programmers, clerks, tailors, etc., as long as all these professions remain within the *Shari'a law regulating* them as women. However, *Islam forbids them to 'charm'* any man except their husband. In other words, *Islam prohibits* women from highlighting and showing their attractive sides to men. It is called *tabarruj* in Shari'a terms (Jamil 2018:96).

The nature of women must be based on the true nature of women themselves. Women are essentially created from *the rib* of the Prophet Adam. *Allah implies* that women *must be under the armpit of their husbands*. That is why in Minangkabau, the term gender does not work; Minang has long understood this concept. Women can't climb trees, right? We have given them their rights and portions. Likewise, work is by *the nature of women*. In our custom, it is okay if a husband does housework as long as he does not live with his parents and has *no friends or neighbors to see*. If seen, *society will judge* the husband as afraid of his wife, so he does his wife's duties. That will be a disaster because his friends will laugh at him (Katik 2020).

The words have under-lined above contain at least three discourses: 1) the interpretation of the prohibition by Islam; 2) the myth of the creation of women from Adam's rib; and 3) the concern of other people's conversations. There is clearly a risk to women's self-actualization in public spaces when these three discourses are continuously played. The assumption is that there is a hierarchical relationship of masculinity-femininity based on religious interpretations attempted to be realized culturally. Masculinity is identified with the main body (Adam), so it is only fitting to take control over femininity, which is identified with the body

⁴ *Bundo kanduang* is a term given to a woman who leads a family. Literally, *bundo kanduang* means true mother. Socioculturally, it describes the figure of a wise woman who preserves *adat* (customs) —which is translated as the continuer of Minangkabau descent, character, and ethics.

part (rib). Meanwhile, if masculinity and femininity are equal, the image of masculine superiority must be defended from conversations that can weaken it in social spaces.

Defending masculine superiority in Minangkabau customs also means regulating women so they do not show themselves excessively in public spaces. It is not only about women's abilities and better sides—such as the reason for the *sumbang karajo* that quoted above—that are regulated in public spaces, but also what women wear. Another symbolization of Shari'a that is believed to overcome the moral degradation of society is Muslim dress for women. "Covering the *'awrat* will clearly protect women from the dangers of men's gazes and lust," (Jamil 2019a, 2019b). This sentence is present in the context of explaining the obligation to wear the *hijab* for Minang women.

This statement contains—and also invites—more significant critical issues. Semantically, there is a tendency for men not to feel responsible for their gaze and lust. On the contrary, women are the ones who need to be responsible for controlling what men should control.⁵ A similar reason for explaining why Minang women are prohibited from combing their hair in public, as Katik (2020) said, "This is a boomerang for men who are not good at heart. The woman's hair can be used to cast a spell, bewitch the woman, or as a gambling tool."⁶

There are quite a few custom narratives that show masculine superiority and feminine

⁵ As a clarification, I mention "men" in this case, not in a tendency to generalize all men. I have to use "men" in this sentence simply to follow what is stated and criticize the logic stated in the *Sumbang 12* book.

⁶ There is a belief among the Minangkabau people that if a man accidentally sees a woman combing her hair, it is a sign that he will win the lottery.

inferiority in a biased and paradoxical way. One of them is analogous to the following proverb: "*Jan dipabauakan antimun jo durian. Jan dipadakekan api jo rabuak. Antimun kok rusak diduri durian. Rabuak kok hanguih dibaka api,*" (Jamil 2018:91). This proverb suggests women's nature, which is analogous to cucumbers (*antimun*) and dry objects (*rabuak*), while the nature of men is like durian and fire. If cucumbers are combined with durian, the cucumbers will be destroyed by the sharp thorns of the durian. Likewise, if dry objects are brought close to the fire, the dry objects will be entirely burned by the fire. This proverb explains the urgency of Minang women avoiding inappropriately socializing (*sumbang bagaua*). As such, women must always be careful wherever, whenever, and with any man.

Referring back to the BPNB podcast conversation quoted at the beginning of this section, the question is, why custom prefers to regulate women's bodies and sexuality (downstream subjects) instead of trying to control men's egos and sexual desires (upstream subjects) in the cases of depravity above; and why society's morality is unfairly imposed on women's bodies.

Moral Construction through the Gaze Mechanism and Its Implementation in the Shari'a Regulations: Women amid Custom Panopticism

A Minang proverb says, "*Kalau karuah aia di hulu, karuah juo sampai kamuaro. Kalau kuria induaknya rintiak anaknyo.*"⁷ In a customary book entitled *bundo kanduang*, this proverb is

⁷ This proverb contains a basic meaning: "Parents will determine the character and behavior of their offspring in the future. Good parents will give birth to good children, and vice versa."

only interpreted as "If women are despicable, then despicable children will also be born" (Jamil 2019a:24). In fact, the metaphor above essentially means and refers to both parents and grandparents and relatives; emphasizing the context of origins in the kinship relations concerned. Then, the question is why the metaphor is now connoted only to women or mothers.

In examining the role of women within the Minangkabau society, it is essential to draw parallels with other matrilineal cultures, such as the Perpatih society in Malaysia. Women in the Perpatih community experience a unique blend of empowerment and constraint, where their status is derived from their maternal lineage, yet they are simultaneously subjected to societal expectations that dictate their behavior and roles. This duality reflects a broader trend in matrilineal societies, where women's identities are intricately linked to cultural norms and practices that can both elevate and restrict their agency. As emphasized by Kassim (1992), while matrilineal systems provide women with certain rights and privileges, they also impose rigid expectations regarding conduct and morality, similar to the dynamics observed in Minangkabau culture. This comparative perspective highlights the complexities of gender relations in matrilineal societies, where the interplay of tradition and modernity continues to shape women's experiences and sexualities.

Throughout various periods in history, women's sexuality has been viewed as threatening, a potential source of illness, and a protector of moral standards in society to the nation-state (Weeks 2013). The projection of women in *sumbang duo baleh* can be read as a means of complex customary discipline. There are twelve traits that Minang women must avoid to avoid feeling ashamed of being seen as

unworthy. The shamefulness of women characterizes their dignity. The greater their sense of shame, the more dignified she is. The significance of shamefulness is established by, borrowing Sharyn Graham Davies' term (2014), forming a kinship of shame that regulates women's bodies, sexuality, and morality to maintain their family's reputation, relatives, and even their traditional communities.

The shame here works like the architectural panopticon designed by Jeremy Bentham—later adopted by Foucault as a mechanism for body discipline (Foucault 1977). In reality, this shamefulness does not only apply to women. In society, men must also avoid traits that can risk their masculine image, such as secretly helping with household chores not to be ridiculed by neighbors or friends. The difference is that the sense of shame in men can be easily projected onto women with the support of Shari'a-based custom.

At this point, customary concerns about women's inappropriate behavior (formulated in *sumbang duo baleh*) and moral degradation ultimately became considerations in the drafting of Shari'a regulations. Moreover, ABS-SBK has officially entered Indonesia's positive legal system through the West Sumatra Provincial Law. This will further strengthen the slogan that has been heard almost daily in recent years in West Sumatra: "Minang is Islam, Islam is Minang."

Thus, even if someone is born with the Minang race but is not Muslim, then they are not and are not recognized as Minang. This Minang-Islamic identity politics can have vast and intersectional implications, especially for the models and expressions of religiosity of diverse Minang women. There is a strong reason for emphasizing women as humans who are more impacted than men. Since decentralization in

1998, West Sumatra has been the first province to implement the appeal to wear the *hijab* and Muslim clothing for women. Currently, there are at least fifteen Shari'a regulations in force in West Sumatra that regulate women's bodies and expressions, as follows:

1. West Sumatra Province Circular No. 260/421/X/PPr-05/2005 concerning the Appeal to Attitude and Wearing of Muslim Women Dresses for all Offices' Heads in all West Sumatra;
2. Tanah Datar District Head's Circular No. 451.4/556/Kesra-2001 on Dress Code Recommendations for Muslim Men/Women, addressed to the Heads of Education and Manpower Offices;
3. Solok City's Regional Regulation No. 6/2002 on the Obligation of Muslim Women to wear Muslim Dresses;
4. Sawahlunto Sijunjung District's Regional Regulation No. 2/2003 on Dress Codes for Muslim Men and Women;
5. Lima Puluh Kota Regional Regulation No. 5/2003 on Obligation to Wear Muslim and Muslimah Clothing;
6. Pasaman Regional Regulation No. 22/ 2003 on Muslim and Muslimah Clothing for Pupils, Students, and Staffs;
7. Pesisir Selatan District's Regional Regulation No. 4/2005 on Dress Codes for Muslim Men and Women;
8. Agam District's Regional Regulation No. 6/2005 on Muslim Dress;
9. Padang Mayor's Instruction No. 451.442/Binsos-III/2005 on the Implementation of Teenage Quran Recital, Early Morning Prayers, and Anti-Illegal Gambling/Drugs as well as Muslims Dress Codes for all level School Students in Padang City;
10. Solok Selatan Regional Regulation No. 6/2005 on Muslim and Muslimah Dress;
11. Pasaman Barat Regional Regulation No. 7/2007 on Muslim and Muslimah Dress for Students and Employees;
12. West Sumatra Province Circular No. 800/342/BKD/2007 concerning the Appeal to Wear Baju Kurung (Suit with Long Skirt);
13. Sawahlunto Mayor Circular No. 800/604/KKD-SWL/2007 concerning the Appeal to Wear Baju Kurung (Suit with Long Skirt);
14. Payakumbuh City Regional Regulation No. 10/2008 concerning the Obligation to be Good at Reading the Qur'an for School Children and Prospective Brides;
15. Regent of Agam Regency Circular in 2014 regarding the obligation of Muslim clothing for civil servants during Ramadan.

Although the above regulations have existed for two decades, it can be emphasized that power over women's bodies and morals is not simply present in a binary and hierarchical manner through the mechanism of the government versus the governed. This power has actually worked from the grassroots, through relation-ships and not domination. *Sumbang duo baleh*, before the current text version, has existed for generations in oral and gaze forms, which are logical reflections of the relations of Minang ancestors in the past. In the modern context, these are no longer relevant.

An example is the case of a Christian student who was (indirectly) required to wear a *hijab* at her school in Padang in mid-2021. Before the case surfaced in 2019, in a workshop in Bukittinggi, the author sat with a mother who had a daughter who "chose" to wear a *hijab* at school even though she was not Muslim. the author asked if the decision was due to school regulations, and the mother said no. The only reason her daughter went to school wearing a *hijab* was because of "the gaze."

What is often overlooked is that the issue and conflict of women's bodies are partly born from the construction and prison of the gaze. Continuous monitoring through the gaze will make everyone who is stared at aware that they are constantly being watched. In this process, power functions automatically. Thus, the individual who is stared at will put the burden on themselves. This is exactly what happens to students who are not Muslim but wear uniforms that symbolize Islam. In socio-cultural spaces, the gaze mechanism will give birth to the actual subject who (un)consciously internalizes traditional ideas into themselves. This process has no equality because the person being stared at has no right to the gaze (Candraningrum 2011; Foucault 1977).

Regarding the phenomenon of gaze, one piece of conversation tickles the mind. In one of the discussions about the practice of *sumbang caliak* or seeing inappropriately, there is a rule that all of us, especially wives and husbands, are not allowed to stare/look at people of the opposite sex intensely. The reason is to avoid people who might happen to see us, which can trigger inappropriate comments and trigger domestic disputes. The interviewee slipped in her experience, which then invited a "cheeky question" from the interviewer, as follows:

Expert: ... Oh my, this guy's behavior, he's clearly sitting with his wife, but he's looking everywhere (at other women). He shouldn't be like that. Unless he tells his wife to look at the other woman, it's not a problem because they're looking at her together.

Host: So, is it okay if he and his wife look at other women together?

Expert: Yes, it's okay.

Host: If the husband is not with his wife, is it okay to look at other women?

Expert: Well, what if someone knows his wife, sees her husband's naughtiness, and then tells her about it?

Host: Hmm ... it's not allowed. But what if there's no one around?

Expert: Yes, it's okay just to look ...

Host and Expert: (laughs).

The intriguing conclusion that can be drawn from the conversation: first, the taboo on looking at the opposite sex in *sumbang duo baleh* does not come from an awareness of respect and commitment to one's partner (internal factor), but rather merely to avoid other people's lousy comments (external factor). Second, the expert, as the gazer, also feels stared at simultaneously. This feeling of being watched is what then makes the Expert choose not to *sumbang caliak* (seeing inappropriately) to the opposite sex. Third, the small example above implies that gaze and supervision do not only apply to or are felt by women because men also feel the same "prison." However, do women and men feel the exact impact of gaze? Fourth, what the expert did to the guy (at the beginning of the conversation) was a watchful gaze. Unwittingly, the expert has taken on the role of a supervisor, and it is through people like the Expert that the customary panopticon works on each individual's body.

Conclusion

Ultimately, although women in the Minangkabau matrilineal system have a central role and position, custom forms this privilege through several definitions and disciplines. Through investigating this customary text, this study found gender injustice in the process of (positioning) humans in the customary text of *sumbang duo baleh*—and in the minds of the heads who preserve it. If these rules and restrictions are part of the identity of Minang women, then this is where we need to re-

dismantle it. Is morality not maintained by continuously questioning the meaning of the body, conscious choices, gender relations, and so on? Although, in reality, the concept of *sumbang duo baleh* is not seen to be carried out as an idea, its dissemination (seeding ideas) works subtly in the subconscious. As long as women do not try to examine and dismantle the moral discourse of their bodies and sexuality, the shadow of injustice and violence will follow.

However, this study is not without its limitations. While my analysis primarily focuses on textual interpretations and observations on my personal experiences of living in a society in West Sumatra over the past five years, it may not yet fully capture and delve deeply into the lived experiences of most Minang women. Further, given the fluid nature of custom and evolving societal norms, the application and understanding of these traditions may vary across regions and generations, making it difficult to generalize the findings. Future research can expand on this foundation by conducting more extensive fieldwork, particularly by engaging with diverse Minangkabau women from different regions, ages, and socioeconomic backgrounds to gather broader perspectives. It would also be valuable to explore how contemporary social movements and changing global perspectives on gender equality influence the interpretation and practice of custom today.[]

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