

THE ROLES OF *NINIK MAMAK* ON THE VICTORY OF MAHYELDI AND AUDY IN THE 2020 ELECTION IN AGAM REGENCY, WEST SUMATERA.

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ABSTRACT. This article analyzes the influence of *ninik mamak* (traditional leaders) on the victory of Governor Mahyeldi and Vice Governor Audy in the 2020 West Sumatra Governor Election in the Agam District. The influence of *ninik mamak* in shaping public perception can be observed in the political contestation during the West Sumatra gubernatorial election on December 9, 2020. The research aims to analyze how the influence of *ninik mamak* contributed to the success of the Mahyeldi and Audy pair and to identify the factors that enabled Mahyeldi and Audy to mobilize *ninik mamak* in the 2020 gubernatorial election in Agam, West Sumatra. This research utilizes a qualitative method with a descriptive approach. The results of this research indicate that *ninik mamak* socializes and communicates the vision and mission of Mahyeldi and Audy to the community through deliberation and consensus. *Ninik mamak* serves as a link between the interests of the candidates and the community or vice versa. They convince their descendants and influence the perception of voting for their descendants. The factors contributing to Mahyeldi and Audy's ability to mobilize *ninik mamak* include identity factors. Mahyeldi, being a native of the Agam District, a *Datuak* within his community, a religious scholar or "buya" and representing intellectual elements based on his track record as the Mayor of Padang. Similarly, Audy, being an intellectual, played a role in this mobilization. Therefore, this became an asset for Mahyeldi to engage *ninik mamak*.

Keywords: Agam District; Governor Election; Social Capital; Ninik Mamak

ANALISIS PENGARUH *NINIK MAMAK* DALAM KEMENANGAN PASANGAN MAHYELDI DAN AUDY PADA PEMILIHAN GUBERNUR TAHUN 2020 DI KABUPATEN AGAM PROVINSI SUMATERA BARAT

ABSTRAK. Artikel ini menganalisa tentang pengaruh *ninik mamak* atas kemenangan Gubernur Mahyeldi dan Wakil Gubernur Audy pada Pemilihan Gubernur Sumatera Barat tahun 2020 di Kabupaten Agam. Pengaruh *ninik mamak* dalam mempengaruhi persepsi masyarakat dapat dilihat dalam kontestasi politik pada pilgub Sumatera Barat pada 9 Desember 2020. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk menganalisis bagaimana pengaruh *ninik mamak* dalam kemenangan Pasangan Mahyeldi dan Audy dan untuk mengidentifikasi faktor yang mempengaruhi Mahyeldi dan Audy dapat memobilisasi *ninik mamak* pada pilgub tahun 2020 di Kabupaten Agam, Sumatera Barat. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode Kualitatif dengan pendekatan deskriptif. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa *ninik mamak* mensosialisasikan dan menyampaikan visi misi Mahyeldi dan Audy kepada masyarakat melalui musyawarah dan mufakat, *ninik mamak* menjadi penghubung kepentingan calon dengan kaum dan suku ataupun sebaliknya, *ninik mamak* meyakinkan anak kemenakan dan mempengaruhi persepsi memilih anak kemenakannya. Adapun faktor kenapa Mahyeldi dan Audy dapat memobilisasi *ninik* karena faktor identitas, dimana Mahyeldi merupakan putra daerah Kabupaten Agam, seorang *Datuak* dalam kaumnya, seorang alim ulama atau buya serta mewakili unsur cerdik pandai yang mana *ninik mamak* juga melihat sepak terjangnya selama menjadi Walikota Padang, begitupun Audy yang merupakan seorang cendikia. Sehingga hal ini menjadi modal bagi Mahyeldi untuk dapat melibatkan *ninik mamak*.

Kata Kunci: Kabupaten Agam; Pemilihan Gubernur; Modal Sosial; Ninik Mamak

INTRODUCTION

Nagari is a traditional Minangkabau governance system characterized by democratic principles and grassroots development, guided by the philosophy of "Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah" (ABS-SBK), meaning that customs in Minangkabau are an implementation of Islamic teachings, emphasizing egalitarianism (equality among individuals), conservatism with regards to origin, territory, and religious beliefs, and fostering a self-governing community leading to the unity of customary law societies (Abdul Rozaki, 2005).

The Minangkabau community also implements a leadership system comprising three elements known as Tigo Tungku Sajarangan, consisting of the penghulu (traditional leaders), Alim Ulama (religious leaders), and Cadiak Pandai (individuals involved in various professions such as bureaucrats, politicians, scholars, and so forth). This leadership system operates through the Nagari Customary Council or Kerapatan Adat Nagari (KAN), which is the highest institution governing customs in the Nagari (Alridho Putra, 2021).

However, in every decision-making process related to customary policies, primary attention is

always given to one entity, namely Ninik Mamak, Penghulu, or Datuak, who is “diamba gadang nan kadi anjuang tinggi” (respected and elevated), “pai tampaek batanyo, pulang tampek babarito” (the one always sought for guidance before taking any action) by their descendants, and Ninik Mamak is respected and revered, serving as a source of guidance for their descendants and a respected figure in the community, often consulted after completing duties for the lineage. This is how Ninik Mamak’s position is honored in society (Meri Handayani, 2018). In Minangkabau society, Ninik Mamak plays a crucial role in resolving various issues within the community, ranging from inheritance matters to governance actions known as Basako and Bapusako. According to the concept of Basako, each clan or group possesses immaterial wealth in the form of leadership titles called sako in Minangkabau. Meanwhile, the term “Bapusako” refers to the material assets owned by each clan or group, which are often considered as high-value ancestral property (Prabu, 2022).

Legitimacy serves as a management instrument for Ninik Mamak when carrying out their key roles as the spearhead for their clan. With legitimacy, Ninik Mamak is empowered to wield traditional authority that significantly influences their clan members and has a significant impact on them. The existence of these traditional leaders can be central, and this power can be a strong foundation in the local political context. Ninik Mamak also has legitimate authority to influence the political dynamics within their clan or community. This is due to the fact that Ninik Mamak fundamentally holds these rights within the framework of Minangkabau customs (Asrinaldi, 2017). Because Ninik Mamak, as a traditional leader, maintains control over their community without resorting to any form of coercion, whether physical or non-physical.

The Ninik Mamak, traditional leaders esteemed within Minangkabau society, and the Kerapatan Adat Nagari (KAN) or Nagari Customary Council, a village-level traditional council, are intricately linked components of the traditional governance system in West Sumatra. While the Ninik Mamak wield individual influence and authority, often serving as respected elders within their villages, they also play pivotal roles within the KAN, where their collective wisdom guides community decisions and policies (Umar & Riza, 2022). As members of the KAN, Ninik Mamak contribute their knowledge of customary practices and community dynamics to the council’s deliberations, ensuring decisions align with the values and traditions of Minangkabau culture. Conversely, the decisions made by the KAN may impact the authority and role of Ninik Mamak within their villages, reflecting the symbiotic relationship

between individual leadership and collective governance structures in preserving cultural heritage and maintaining social cohesion (Bukhari, 2021).

During general elections, an interesting phenomenon emerges: the involvement of ninik mamak in practical politics at the local political level. The presence of local political elites, particularly Ninik Mamak, traditional leaders within Minangkabau society, holds significant sway over the outcomes of local leadership elections. Beyond their ceremonial roles, their endorsement of candidates can profoundly influence public opinion and shape electoral outcomes. With deep-rooted respect and authority, their involvement extends beyond formal politics, permeating various aspects of community life and governance. On December 9, 2020, simultaneous local elections were held in West Sumatra, including the Governor and Deputy Governor elections. The Governor election was contested by four pairs of candidates who officially registered with the General Election Commission (KPU) and were declared to have met the requirements: Mahyeldi-Audy, Nasrul Abit-Indra Catri, Fakhrizal-Genius Umar, and Mulyadi-Ali Mukhni (Perdana Putra, 2020).

Against the backdrop of the victory of the number 4 pair, Mahyeldi-Audy Joinaldy, with the highest vote count of 726,853 votes, and their subsequent election as Governor and Deputy Governor of West Sumatra Province for the 2020-2025 term, followed by the pair Nasrul Abit-Indra Catri with a vote count of 679,069 votes, then the pair Mulyadi-Ali Mukhni with a vote count of 614,447 votes, and lastly, the pair Fakhrizal-Genius with 220,893 votes.

From the results of the Mahyeldi-Audy vote count, questions arise, what were the factors that led to the election of Mahyeldi and Audy? where their votes were superior to their competitors, even though all four pairs of candidates were outstanding figures and the best sons of West Sumatra, experienced in politics and governance, as evidenced by the backgrounds and track records of each pair of candidates.

Table 1. Recapitulation of Votes for Candidates for Governor and Deputy Governor of West Sumatra

Candidates	Supporting Party	Total votes	Percentages
Mulyadi-Ali Mukhni	Partai Demokrat dan PAN	614.447	27,42%
Nasrul Abid-Indra Catri	Partai Gerindra	679.069	30,30%
Fakhrizal-Genius Umar	Partai Golkar, Partai Nasdem dan PKB	220.893	9,86%
Mahyeldi-Audy Joinaldy	PKS Dan PPP	726.853	32,34%

Source: West Sumatra Provincial General Election Commission (2023)

Based on the table above, it is evident that Mahyeldi-Audy obtained the third highest electability percentage after the pairs Mulyadi and Nasrul Abit. According to the electability survey data, the winning candidate should have been the pair Mulyadi-Ali Mukhni. However, based on the vote count recapitulation data, the Mahyeldi-Audy pair occupied the first position with the highest vote count and were elected as the Governor and Deputy Governor of West Sumatra for the 2020-2025 term. Mahyeldi-Audy received the most votes in 10 areas in West Sumatra, namely Agam Regency (60,463 votes), Dharmasraya (35,879 votes), Padang City (152,741 votes), Padang Panjang (11,274 votes), Payakumbuh (22,003 votes), Sawahlunto (10,887 votes), Solok City (19,974 votes), Sijunjung (35,807 votes), Solok Regency (19,974 votes), and Tanah Datar (59,501 votes).

Table 2. Electability of Candidates for Governor and Deputy Governor

No	Candidates	Electability
1	Mulyadi-Ali Mukhni	49,5%
2	Nasrul Abit-Indra Catri	21,3%
3	Fakhrizal-Genius Umar	6,25
4	Mahyeldi-Audy Joinaldy	17,1%

Source: Indonesian Poltracking Survey Institute (2023)

District of Agam is one of the districts located in West Sumatra Province. The Agam District has high traditional values and culture (Andro Putra Ramadhan, 2017). Therefore, the author is interested in conducting research in this area, especially since Mahyeldi-Audy obtained the second highest vote count after Padang City, namely in the Agam District. It is known that Mahyeldi Ansharullah holds the title Datuak Marajo and Audy Joinaldy holds the title Datuak Rajo Pasisia Alam, which were bestowed upon them in August 2020. Nasrul Abit also holds the title Datuak Malintang Panai, and Indra Catri, the candidate for deputy governor, also holds the title Datuak Malako Nan Putiah. Datuak is a customary title given to someone who, by tradition, is entrusted to lead a tribe. The presence of datuak in the election arena on one hand indicates the expansion of the role of datuak from being merely traditional leaders to becoming local political actors (Afrianto, 2020).

This research aims to analyze the influence of cultural actors, namely ninik mamak, in the victory of the Mahyeldi-Audy pair, and to see if the title of datuak held by political actors becomes a supporting factor in the victory of the Mahyeldi-Audy pair as Governor and Deputy Governor of West Sumatra for the 2020-2025 period. This research uses the Social Capital theory according to Robert David Putnam, which includes aspects of social life consisting of networks, norms, and beliefs that encourage participants to

cooperate more efficiently in achieving common goals. Based on the background explanation above, the researcher also compares several previous studies relevant to the research to be conducted, namely the research by Nelta Ardila (2017) on the Dynamics of Political Participation of Ninik Mamak in the Muara Panas Nagari Solok District Simultaneous Regional Election in 2015. This study examines how Ninik Mamak participates in the Regional Election. The results of this research found that the Muara Panas Nagari community still recognizes the presence of ninik mamak in the community and trusts them; the words of ninik mamak are proven in terms of tradition and also political aspects.

Table 3. Recapitulation of Votes for Candidates for Governor and Deputy Governor of West Sumatra in Agam Regency

No	Candidates	Votes
1.	Mulyadi-Ali Mukhni	56.199
2.	Nasrul Abit-Indra Catri	54.198
3.	Fakhrizal-Genius Umar	14.987
4.	Mahyeldi-Audy Joinaldy	60.463

Source: Agam Regency General Election Commission (2023)

Ninik mamak has the ability to influence their descendants because of the close relationship between ninik mamak and their descendants, which has been strong and long-lasting. This relationship still has a significant impact to this day, making it easier for ninik mamak, who holds a respected position and is prioritized by their descendants, to influence the voting decisions of their descendants in the 2015 Solok District Simultaneous Regional Election. The difference with the research conducted by the author is that Nelta Ardila's research tends to see the influence of ninik mamak on the vote count they will give in the 2015 Solok District Simultaneous Regional Election, while the author's research focuses on how Ninik Mamak's influence contributed to the victory of the Mahyeldi-Audy pair in the 2020 West Sumatra Gubernatorial Election in the Agam District.

Furthermore, the research conducted by Prabu Dwiki (2022) on the Role of Ninik Mamak in the Legislative Election Process in the Koto Nan Gadang Nagari Payakumbuh City. This research shows how ninik mamak contributes to the success of five elected legislative candidates in the Koto Nan Gadang Nagari. Based on the ethnic origin or personal relationships with the candidates, the role of Ninik Mamak leads them to actively support the five elected legislative candidates. However, there is a difference with the research conducted by the author, where Prabu Dwiki's research tends to see the role of ninik mamak in supporting the five chosen candidates based on their ethnicity or personal

relationships. Whereas the author tends to see the overall influence of Ninik Mamak in the victory of the Mahyeldi-Audy pair in the 2020 West Sumatra Gubernatorial Election in the Agam District.

Based on the background of the research, it is therefore interesting to see the social capital played by cultural actors who participate in and are involved in local politics in the 2020 West Sumatra simultaneous regional elections. The focus of this research is on the influence held by Ninik Mamak in the victory of Mahyeldi and Audy and the factors that influenced Mahyeldi and Audy to mobilize ninik mamak in the 2020 gubernatorial election in the Agam District. Ninik, as a traditional leader who is respected and elevated, allows ninik mamak to influence the vote count in the Regional Election, especially contributing to the victory of the Mahyeldi and Audy candidate pair in the 2020 West Sumatra Gubernatorial Election.

METHODS

This research utilizes a qualitative approach because the researcher aims to understand phenomena related to the research subject. Secondly, the researcher intends to ascertain how the phenomenon occurs naturally. Thirdly, the researcher perceives that there is little knowledge about this phenomenon. Fourthly, research serves as the primary information gatherer. Fifthly, the researcher acknowledges that this research requires a more detailed and in-depth understanding (Sugiyono, 2022). The data sources in this research are both primary and secondary. Primary data in this research are obtained through direct interview results. Meanwhile, secondary data comes from literature reviews and documents regarding the influence of ninik mamak during elections. The determination of informants utilizes the Purposive Sampling Technique. Research informants consist of:

1. Ninik mamak from the Agam District, consisting of the Nagari Customary Council (KAN) and the Minangkabau Customary Council (LKAAM), to understand the involvement of ninik mamak during local elections, especially in Mahyeldi and Audy's victory during the 2020 gubernatorial election.
2. The electorate, consisting of representatives of Religious Figures, Youth Figures, and the General Public, to understand how ninik mamak can persuade the community to support Mahyeldi and Audy.
3. Political Observers of West Sumatra Province to support data regarding the influence of ninik mamak in West Sumatra, especially in the Agam District, in customary and local politics.

The data is then validated using data authenticity tests, utilizing source triangulation and method triangulation. This can be done by comparing information from various sources or by using different sources to support or refute each other. Also, triangulation is done by using several different data collection techniques to obtain consistent data.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Analysis of the influence of Ninik Mamak in the victory of the Mahyeldi-Audy Pair in the 2020 Gubernatorial Election in the Agam District, West Sumatra Province

Norms

In Regional Regulation of West Sumatra Province Number 7 of 2018 concerning Nagari, Article 1 Number 2 states that Ninik Mamak is a person appointed as a customary leader by the clan or tribe in a nagari concerning matters of upholding customs, guiding descendants both morally and materially, preserving ancestral property, and having responsibility in marriage and dispute resolution among descendants (Maulana, 2023).

The position of Ninik Mamak in the community is highly respected and valued, given their role as decision-makers in every decision that affects the interests of the Minangkabau community. Therefore, the behavior of the community must be in harmony with and approved by Ninik Mamak, and their kinship or matrilineal relationships should have a significant contribution within the community, both within the clan and within the nagari. Their roles should be in line with Minangkabau customs, aiming to maintain the smooth functioning of governance at the local level. Ninik Mamak is considered as a bridge between the nagari government and the community, both in the context of governance and nagari development, ensuring smoothness and the achievement of appropriate goals with the support of Ninik Mamak's presence (Wahyudi, 2022).

According to the norms prevailing in Minangkabau, where the position of Ninik Mamak is as a figure who is followed a step ahead, elevated a notch, highly respected, and revered as a customary leader. Based on the data, it is evident that the position of Ninik Mamak is influential in the Agam District, where Ninik Mamak still maintains their function and role as customary leaders, and the community still adheres to norms such as following the words of Ninik Mamak as esteemed, respected, and revered figures in Minangkabau society.

"We must obey Ninik Mamak, because in our tradition it is clear that in Minangkabau, Custom is Based on Sharia, Sharia is Based on the Qur'an, and in the Quran, it is also explained in Surah

An-Nisa Verse 59. Where in that verse it means that we must obey Allah and the Messenger and those in authority among us. Ninik Mamak is our leader, so if we are already obedient to Allah and obedient to the Messenger, we must also follow and obey the words of our leader (Ninik Mamak) which, in quotation marks, means we must obey the words of Ninik Mamak as long as it is a positive matter in making decisions made through consultation”¹

Referring to that, it certainly becomes an opportunity for Ninik as a customary leader to realize their interests, where Ninik Mamak utilizes the traditional values that have been developed for a long time to support Mahyeldi and Audy during the 2020 Gubernatorial Election.

From the interviews conducted regarding the influence of Ninik Mamak according to the prevailing norms in Minangkabau, especially in the Agam District, it is evident that the community still highly respects Ninik Mamak, even though there may be Ninik who do not fulfill their duties, but there are still many Ninik Mamak who fulfill their roles properly. The obedience of descendants depends on the demeanor of the individual Ninik Mamak themselves. If the Ninik Mamak successfully demonstrates their authority as a customary leader, then the influence of Ninik will also be strongly felt. This is the capital for Ninik Mamak because indirectly the prevailing norms can strengthen their legitimacy among the community, still placing Ninik Mamak in the position of customary leader or cultural actor, in line with the response shown by descendants and the community who still follow the words and guidance given by Ninik Mamak as a customary leader.

Trust

With the significant role held by Ninik Mamak as a customary leader in the community and their clan, it is a force capable of bringing change to the region. West Sumatra, especially in the Agam District, which is one of the areas that still strongly uphold its customs and culture, is due to the fact that the custodians or Ninik Mamak still maintain their dignity and authority as customary leaders, so the community still believes in the words of their leaders (Ninik Mamak).

In the perspective of Karl D. Jackson (Jacksons, 1990), a traditional leader has traditional authority. This authority refers to the interaction between individuals or groups, where an individual influences (R) others and then the influenced (E) take that message as the basis for their behavior

without evaluating the request from (R) based on their own standards or personal judgment. (E) acts because they believe that there is a reciprocal obligation that has existed in the interaction, has been going on for a long time, and has a strong sense of loyalty between (R) and themselves (E). Referring to Jackson's view, trust is formed from a long-standing reciprocal relationship. Similarly, the trust given by the community in the Agam District to their leader (Ninik Mamak) occurs because the custodians still maintain their authority as customary leaders, as evidenced by the role of Ninik Mamak as a protector, guardian, and leader of the clan.

“Our relationship with the community is very enthusiastic because we often provide guidance, education, and training to the community in the field of customs. So because we always hold deliberations, meetings, or clan gatherings and training for the community, our closeness is still very strong”²

In line with what was stated by Syamsu Nahar Datuak Rajo Nan Panjang:

“In Kabupaten Agam, the role of Ninik Mamak is still trusted by the community. Because whatever decisions are to be made, whatever will be handled in Nagari Koto Tengah or Tilatang Kamang Agam, these officials will consult with Ninik Mamak. The influence of Ninik Mamak is still valued by the government in Kabupaten Agam, and until now, the role of Ninik Mamak can still be maintained”³.

Based on interviews with the General Election Commission (KPU), it is evident that Ninik Mamak is always involved in local elections, with the aim of increasing voter participation in the Agam District community. Ninik Mamak conveys to the community, their descendants, and convinces them to come to the polling stations and exercise their voting rights. The KPU hopes that the socialization conveyed to the KAN, LKAAM, will also be conveyed to the Datuks, and later the Datuks will also socialize it to their descendants.

Putnam states that trust has a positive impact on social life, as demonstrated by relationships based on mutual trust in a social network that strengthens cooperation norms. Trust is considered a crucial element in building social capital. In a society with a high level of trust or a broad range of trust, strong social capital will be formed (Field, 2018).

The researcher observed that the trust of the community in the Agam District towards a figure like

¹Wawancara dengan Rahmad Gusril (Masyarakat Pemilih Kabupaten Agam Kecamatan Tilatang Kamang Nagari Koto Tengah)

The Roles of *Ninik Mamak* on the Victory of Mahyeldi and Audy in the 2020 Election in Agam Regency, West Sumatera
(Kintan Aghna Khaira, Makmun Wahid, Moh. Arief Rakhman and Rio Yusri Maulana)

²Wawancara dengan H.I Datuak Tan Kabasaran (Ketua KAN Nagari Panampuang Kecamatan Ampek Angkek Kabupaten Agam)

³Syamsu Nahar Datuak Rajo Nan Panjang (Ketua Kerapatan Adat Nagari Koto Tengah Kecamatan Tilatang Kamang Kabupaten Agam)

Ninik Mamak is still very strong, thus the relationship between Ninik Mamak and their descendants and the community will also be established. Where Ninik Mamak still plays a role as a protector of the big wooden house in the midst of the village, a strong trunk that provides support, a lush foliage that provides shelter from the rain and heat. Ninik Mamak plays a role as a protector and guardian. This means that tasks are carried out, prohibitions are upheld. That's the position of Ninik Mamak as a figure who is still highly trusted in the Agam District. And on average, the people of the Agam District, when making choices, usually consult the character and views of Ninik Mamak.

Based on this, the broader position of Ninik Mamak can certainly influence and convince other individuals' political choices such as their descendants and the community. The influence of Ninik Mamak is still respected by the government in the Agam District, and the role of Ninik Mamak can still be maintained. Ninik Mamak utilizes the legitimacy that has been established to direct their descendants to support Mahyeldi and Audy. The closeness of Ninik Mamak to the community is still very strong, therefore the community believes in what is conveyed for implementation, both for personal and community purposes.

Based on the research results, it is evident that the people of the Agam District still highly trust and respect Ninik Mamak. Mahyeldi's victory in the Agam District depends on the position of the KAN in the Nagari, as the KAN still plays a crucial role in influencing public perception. The KAN still influences the political conditions in Minangkabau, as political figures also hold titles (Sako) and ancestral land or clan heritage (Bapusako) issues still involve the KAN. Ninik Mamak still plays an important role in influencing perceptions or how these individuals influence a candidate. Because if the position of the KAN in an area is still respected within the clan or community because the KAN's position is central, as Ninik is still listened to, as a place to seek advice and guidance in leading their descendants. These Datuks are the ones who are relied upon, especially in areas where the political culture is still not active, or where they simply follow what their leaders say, as well as in Agam's villages where traditions are still very strong. Ninik Mamak utilizes the legitimacy or trust given by the community or clan as a customary leader to provide guidance and views. The words of Ninik Mamak are still considered as long as they are aimed at good and positive intentions.

Connections

According to Putnam, the development of social networks among individuals in social capital has

benefits in the context of managing shared resources because it can promote coordination and collaboration for mutual benefit (Sidiq, 2019). Putnam believes that in social capital, social relationships, trust, and surrounding norms contribute to forming a network that plays a crucial role. Putnam defines social capital as a form of social organization such as individual and familial networks, blended with norms and values that shape externalities for the entire society (Putri, 2017).

The existence of networks in social life is crucial. Having relationships with others can facilitate various activities. If these networks develop well and are used for positive purposes, they can have positive impacts on individuals and their environment. However, if networks are exploited for wrongful purposes, they can have negative impacts on someone's life. Based on the research location in West Sumatra, particularly in Agam regency, there are distinctive features in customary relationships and kinship systems. West Sumatra is known for the robustness of its customary relationships, including the application of a matrilineal kinship system that determines lineage through the maternal line. This system allows communities to establish their lineage. The tribal leader is called "ninik mamak," which has existed since ancient times as a result of conflicts between customary and religious groups. The network possessed by a ninik mamak is very strong, especially towards their nephews and nieces. In the past, a ninik mamak's presence for their nephews and nieces even exceeded that of their biological father. For example, in decision-making, nephews and nieces often seek the advice of their ninik mamak more than their biological father. The strength of the ninik mamak's network in preserving customs and their community, including in the area where the researcher conducted the research, namely Agam regency.

The position of the ninik mamak, higher than other positions in society, is a place to lean on and inquire about various issues faced by the community in a Nagari. Seeing the role of the ninik mamak as the leader of the community, and the community's norms and trust in the figure of the ninik mamak, certainly provides potential for the ninik mamak to mobilize these resources through their network.

From the research findings, it was found that the ninik mamak and other community elements held consultations to unite opinions in supporting Mahyeldi as Governor. The ninik mamak involved all elements such as the wise, religious scholars, influential women, and the younger generation. The involvement of all ninik mamak in Agam regency in unifying opinions to support Mahyeldi, done through consultations among the ninik mamak, could be a

leap forward and a resource for Mahyeldi and Audy.

As stated by Syamsu Nahar Datuak Rajo Nan Panjang:

“We gathered the *ninik mamak*, these *ninik mamak* have nephews and nieces, how many *ninik mamak* are there in Tilatang Kamang, we invited them. Invited to unite opinions, to unite opinions to support or advance Mahyeldi to become governor. So not only in Tilatang, before, all *ninik mamak* in Agam regency also held meetings, conducted consultations, and there was a consensus from the *ninik mamak* to support Mahyeldi. Indeed, there was a unanimous intention from all *ninik mamak* in Agam regency to support Mahyeldi”⁴

In line with what was conveyed by Junaidi Datuak Gampo Alam Nan Hitam:

“Yes, uniting opinions, where support will be directed. As *ninik mamak*, we hold consultations, in these consultations, we discuss where the support will be given. In the consultations, we negotiated if Indra Catri should be supported because he is also a Datuak Malako Nan Putiah from Agam, but he is only a vice governor. So, at that time, the statement emerged that if he becomes a candidate for governor, he is supported, but if he becomes a vice governor, it is less desirable. We want someone from Agam to become the governor. That is our agreement as the customary society to support Mahyeldi, we are not choosing a vice governor from Agam but rather him as the governor. Yes, clearly we unite in supporting Mahyeldi, he is from Agam so he should become the Governor and also a Datuak.”⁵

Ninik mamak and nephews and nieces in several regions in West Sumatra also issued statements of stance, support, and agreement to support Mahyeldi and Audy to become the Governor because Mahyeldi himself is a respected figure and a *ninik mamak* in his community. These statements were made during a joint declaration held on Wednesday, December 2nd, at Radja Minas By Pass Cafe, Kuranji, Padang City. Around 20 Ulama and *ninik mamak* from various Islamic organizations, among whom were prominent alumni of the 212 movement, such as Ustadz Ibnu Aqil, were present. Asrial, one of the declarants, stated: “For sure, the ulama and *ninik mamak*, according to him, will call upon the community to support Ustadz Mahyeldi” (Effison, 2020).

Ninik mamak, in supporting Mahyeldi, have their own strategies, some are overt and others covert or

indirect. Based on research results, there is a correlation between norms, beliefs, and networks that serve as resources for *ninik mamak* to gain customary legitimacy, enabling them to have a further impact, particularly in being involved in Mahyeldi and Audy’s victory in the 2020 West Sumatra Gubernatorial Election in Agam Regency. *Ninik mamak* employ various strategies to direct and influence public opinion, such as conducting consultations and involving all *ninik mamak* in Agam Regency to unite in supporting the Governor and choosing the best candidate. Furthermore, *ninik mamak* engage in consultations involving all elements of society, including Ulama, intellectuals, mothers, and young generations, to unite in supporting Mahyeldi, perceived as the suitable candidate for governor. In addition to conducting consultations to unify opinions, other strategies are also employed, such as door-to-door campaigns targeting families and nephews and nieces, and head-to-head discussions where *ninik mamak* do not directly express support for Mahyeldi but imply it. *Ninik mamak* also influence efforts to increase voter turnout in Agam Regency, directing their nephews and nieces to come to the polling stations and exercise their voting rights. The success of these socialization efforts by *ninik mamak* in influencing Mahyeldi and Audy’s vote count depends on the commitment of their nephews and nieces to go to the polling stations during the voting process.

The factors influencing Mahyeldi-Audy’s ability to mobilize *Ninik Mamak* in the 2020 Gubernatorial Election in Agam Regency, West Sumatra Province.

The political preferences of cultural actors (*Ninik Mamak*) in the 2020 West Sumatra Gubernatorial Election have their own characteristics in considering the candidates they will support and choose. The democratization system provides open opportunities, especially in the era of regional autonomy, which becomes a chance for the advancement of a region. This then creates a form of locality in the context of political space, with various elements such as ethnic identity, race, religion, and culture, all of which have equal political rights (Dede Mariana, 2008).

On the other hand, *Ninik Mamak*, as a leader within a community or tribe, holds significant influence and a crucial role in realizing democratic goals in that area. This is evident from the participation of cultural actors in choosing leaders in the West Sumatra region, especially in the Agam Regency. By observing the influence of *Ninik Mamak* in voting for Mahyeldi. Although several candidates represent traditional elements or hold traditional leadership positions, and are considered the best figures in West Sumatra, *Ninik Mamak* will still choose the best candidate among the best to lead West Sumatra.

⁴Syamsu Nahar Datuak Rajo Nan Panjang (Ketua KAN Koto Tangah Kecamatan Tilatang Kamang Kabupaten Agam)

⁵Junaidi Datuak Gampo Alam Nan Hitam (Ketua LKAAM Kabupaten Agam)

Additionally, Ninik Mamak will also consider the background and achievements of each candidate. They will support someone who is local and has emotional closeness with traditional leaders. Furthermore, the support given is based on the results of deliberations where Ninik Mamak in the Agam Regency united to support Mahyeldi for Governor. The decision resulting from these deliberations emerged because Ninik Mamak and the community wished to elevate someone from Agam Regency to the position of Governor. Despite some candidates representing Agam's local interests, Ninik Mamak has specific criteria for choosing a suitable leader.

As expressed by Junaidi Datuak Gampo Alam Nan Hitam:

"Mahyeldi is a complete package, he is a Datuak, intelligent, and also knowledgeable in religious matters. My criteria as a Ninik Mamak certainly prioritize leadership that reflects the Ninik Mamak's style, which is favored by the community. Because Ninik Mamak encompasses broad wisdom and profound experience. For an official, what matters is the ability to enforce prohibitions, a skill Ninik Mamak applies in leading their descendants and can also be applied in governing. Ninik Mamak's leadership brings tranquility to the community"⁶

Echoing sentiments expressed by H.I Datuak Tan Kabasaran:

"To select a leader, it's crucial to understand the customs. We usually ask questions to candidates to gauge their understanding of customary matters. If they don't comprehend, we prefer those who do. Moreover, it's preferred if a candidate is also a traditional leader because it influences their electability. Looking at Mr. Mahyeldi, he is a Datuak, deeply religious, and a preacher. While Audy is similar, Mahyeldi's religiosity and intelligence stand out. He is widely recognized as a preacher. In Nagari Panampuang, his voice is prominent. Besides his leadership qualities, his vision and mission are embraced by the West Sumatra region, and he has accomplished a lot"⁷

The lack of support for the Nasrul Abit and Indra Catri pair is due to several factors. Firstly, Nasrul Abit is not a native of the Agam Regency. Meanwhile, although his partner, Indra Catri, is a traditional leader or Datuak who has served as the Regent of Agam Regency for two terms, he only served as a vice governor. Mulyadi, who had a high level of electability in Agam Regency, was not

elected, according to Syamsu Nahar Datuak Rajo Nan Panjang, because in the past, the community voted for him because he was a bridge between West Sumatra and the Central Government. However, with his decision to run for Governor, Mulyadi left that role, causing disappointment among the people because there was no longer a figure to act as a mediator for the advancement of the region. Although Mulyadi had high electability in Agam, the criteria desired by Ninik Mamak were more suited to Mahyeldi and Audy.

Mahyeldi represents the traditional aspect as he is a traditional leader with the title Datuak and has a good understanding of tradition. He is also a respected religious figure (buya) and preacher, as well as representing the intellectual aspect with his excellent performance as the Mayor of Padang. Meanwhile, Audy represents the intellectual aspect due to his background as an academic. This combination served as an asset for Mahyeldi and Audy to mobilize support from Ninik Mamak in the 2020 West Sumatra Gubernatorial Election. Ninik Mamak was involved in supporting Mahyeldi and Audy through meetings, deliberations, and disseminating the candidates' vision and mission to the community. They also acted as a bridge between the candidates' interests and the community. Even before Mahyeldi ran for office, Ninik Mamak had unified opinions through deliberations to support Mahyeldi for governor.

CONCLUSION

The Governor election election in West Sumatra, with a particular focus on Agam Regency, has underscored the significance of cultural figures, notably traditional elites steeped in the Minangkabau tradition, such as the esteemed Ninik Mamak. Ninik Mamak is a respected traditional leader who is elevated above their children and grandchildren. Their role was evident in the 2020 Agam Regency Governor election, where their presence influenced the community's voting perceptions. The victories of Mahyeldi and Audy cannot be separated from the involvement of Ninik Mamak in Agam Regency. They were involved in socializing the vision and mission of both candidates to the community through deliberation and consensus. Ninik Mamak also served as a liaison between the candidates and various ethnic and tribal groups and influenced the voting perceptions of their descendants.

This support was influenced by several factors, including regional considerations, the capabilities, and leadership qualities of Mahyeldi, which have been recognized since he held the traditional leadership position. Additionally, the good emotional

⁶Junaidi Datuak Gampo Alam Nan Hitam (Ketua LKAAM Kabupaten Agam)

⁷H.I Datuak Tan Kabasaran (Ketua KAN Nagari Panampuang Kecamatan Ampek Angkek Kabupaten Agam)

relationship between Mahyeldi and the traditional leaders also influenced support from Ninik Mamak. Mahyeldi is also known as a figure representing various segments of society, including as a religious leader (buya), which became a determining factor in gaining support from Ninik Mamak. However, the role of Ninik Mamak in Agam Regency does not represent all Ninik Mamak in West Sumatra. The influence and involvement of Ninik Mamak in elections or influencing community perceptions need to be specifically examined according to the local conditions of each area.

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