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A Comparative Study of the Early Minangkabau and Bawean Settlers in Gombak Traditional Villages: A Case Study of Kampung Simpang Tiga and Kampung Sg. Chinchin

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Abstract: *This paper comparatively examines key features of the early migrations of the Minangkabau (particularly the Minang community) and Bawean settlers to the state of Selangor, using Kampung Simpang Tiga and Kampung Sungai Chinchin as case studies. Preliminary research in these two traditional villages reveals a noteworthy presence of Minangkabau and Bawean communities, which interestingly reflect patterns of Sumatran migration into Malaya in the 19th and 20th centuries. This study explores, through historical analysis and fieldwork, the communities' trajectories of migration, social integration, and economic contribution to their localities. There is yet an adequate comparative study that has been made to analyse these two dominant Indonesian settlers who were living relatively near to each other, albeit in separate settlements. By analysing their respective patterns of settlement, adaptation, and identity-making using socio-cultural and historical approaches, the paper highlights how both communities had lasting social and economic impacts in the areas they inhabited.*

Keywords: Bawean Community; Minang Community; Traditional Villages; Gombak

1. Introduction

Long before formal borders defined the region, Selangor had already become a meeting point for waves of movement, power struggles, and maritime migrations shaping its early identity. Historically, the name 'Selangor' appeared in the Malay Annals, better known as *Sejarah Melayu*, when Tun Sri Lanang mentioned some districts or places in modern-day Selangor in the text, such as Klang, Jeram, Langat, and Selangor (Kuala Selangor) (Winstedt, 1934). All these territories were under the control of the Malacca Sultanate following the Portuguese takeover of Malacca in 1511, which forced the last Malaccan Sultan (Sultan Mahmud) and his family to flee to neighbouring islands until they ended up in Bintan. He ruled from there, roughly from 1512 to 1526 (Barnard, 2016). When his prince, Sultan Alauddin Riayat Shah II, founded and ruled the Sultanate of Johor, Klang and Kuala Selangor were put under the Sultanate of Johor's dependencies. Initially, in the 17th century, a noticeable number of Malay Bugis settlers from Sulawesi flocked to the Selangor riverine areas (Daud, Mustaffa & Hassan, 2021).

This presence, however, became much more intensified following the Sultanate's succession dispute between Raja Kechik of Siak and the newly crowned Sultan Abdul Jalil IV (former Bendahara during the administration of Sultan Mahmud II) as outlined by Suwannathat-Pian (1993). Eventually, Raja Kechil of Siak had successfully wrested the throne from Sultan Abdul Jalil IV through the help of Minangkabau warriors. The former Sultan was later assassinated on his way to Pahang. This situation angered Raja Sulaiman, who was the son of the late Sultan Abdul Jalil. He then asked for military assistance from the Bugis warriors to remove Raja Kechil of Siak from the throne. Eventually, Raja Sulaiman wrested the throne in 1722, and as a return for the Bugis's help, Daeng Marewah was made the Yamtuan Muda of Johor. Since then, the Bugis started to exert their influence within the Johor administration (Rahmat, 2019).

On other occasions elsewhere, in the early 1700s, the local ruler of Klang with the title Tuk Engku Kelang, a relative of Sultan Abdul Jalil Riayat Shah of Johor, gave the right to rule over Kuala Selangor to a prominent Malay leader of Bugis descent named Arung Pasarai (Omar, Bungo, Hussin & Bidin, 2012). The rulership over Kuala Selangor then passed to Raja Siti after the former passed away. After some time, Raja Lumu (son of Daeng Chelak, Yamtuan Muda II of the Johor Sultanate) replaced Raja Siti over the rulership of Kuala Selangor in the mid-1700s. At this time, Kuala Selangor, Jeram, and Kelang were still under the Sultanate of Johor's loose authority. However, by 1766, Raja Lumu was crowned the first Sultan of Selangor by the 16th Sultan of Perak, Sultan Mahmud II, in Kota Lumut, thereby ending Johor's overlordship over Selangor. He adopted a new name and title, namely Sultan Salehuddin (Andaya, 1974). Since then, the descendants of the Sultan have ruled over the State of Selangor to this day.

These many layers of royal entanglements and maritime rivalries show a Selangor whose political formation was never closed off from outside influences. What this shows is that behind the military alliances and royal disputes, Selangor's early development was already shaped by the movement and influence of maritime Southeast Asian communities even long before colonial economic migration began (Oetami & Ali, 2022 and Wahab, 2019). Selangor became rather appealing to those *merantau* from Sumatera and across the Java Sea. By understanding this mixed history, it would help us to assess the later Minangkabau and Bawean arrivals not just as historical newcomers but as participants in earlier waves of migration, community-building, and expected assimilation and respect for local rule. Essentially, their kampung roots in Gombak did not appear in isolation but were built on a region already shaped by past migrations and changing forms of identity.

2. Methodology

Using the method of historical and fieldwork research, this paper aims to comparatively investigate how the locality (Mukim Setapak) gradually embodies a complex socio-cultural diversity that presents itself in the form of architectural buildings or sites, local cuisines, traditions, and languages. The complexity or diversity in people's day-to-day lives can be reconstructed through archival research and fieldwork activities in the area. Specifically, this study intends to discover these early settlers' migration trajectories and patterns and how they started to settle down and eventually contributing to the State's economic developments during the period under study. In so doing, the study will utilise a wide range of primary documents from the day, coupled with oral interviews involving the residents from diverse age groups. Additionally, this study also incorporates ethnographic techniques in examining people's day-to-day activities.

3. Migration Trajectories and Settlements in Gombak

The above-mentioned geopolitical scenario has revealed one interesting observation, which is the presence of native Malays from surrounding Indonesian Islands in the Malay Peninsula. As briefly discussed above, some of these native Malays were coming to Malaya partly due to the invitation by the local Malay nobles as mercenaries against their political opponents. This migration was also driven by some socio-economic factors since Malaya, for instance, in the late 19th century and early 20th century witnessed a boom in tin mining and commercial economies, thus enticing foreign nationalities to come to the country (Kinney, 1975). Due to political and socio-economic reasons, a significant number of Malays from the Indonesian Islands found their way to Malaya. This paper, however, will focus specifically on two major Indonesian settlers, namely the Minangkabau and Bawean communities residing in the Mukim Setapak district of Gombak (Selangor). These communities represent the two major early Indonesian settlers in the district, compared to other categories of Indonesian migrants, i.e., Rawa, Mandahiling, Kerinchi, and Batu Bara, to name a few. Although they differ in specific cultural and or certain religious practices and historical trajectory, their eventual proximity within the Gombak district offers a rare chance to observe how migrant traditions adapt or persist when transplanted into the same socio-economic setting.

To begin with, it appears to the researchers that the Minangkabau settlers, at least by the early 20th century, had already settled in various parts of Selangor, primarily around the riverine areas (i.e., Kuala Lumpur and Gombak). In this way, local researchers like Omar, Bungo, Hussin, and Bidin (2012) have specifically mentioned the roles of the Minangkabau community in building up early settlements in various districts of Selangor, including Gombak. They argued that, for instance, Kampung Changkat was said to have been opened by Maha Raja Ula Hj. Mohd Arshad, better known as Raja Kuning, in the 1880s. He was originally said to hail from Pariaman, Sumatera. Similarly, the authors mentioned that Kampung Simpang Tiga was opened by Tuk Kah in the 1890s. He also originally came from Minangkabau. Furthermore, Wandi (1995) noted that Haji Kuning was working in the paddy fields and farms in the area. Kampung Simpang Tiga, in particular, reflects this connection between Minangkabau migration and rural agricultural expansion in Gombak. The agricultural labour performed by these early settlers was more than economic. It actually rooted their presence into the land through visible cultivation and mosque-based community life, supporting the many settlement models found across West Sumatera, as also noted by Bahrin (1967).

Additionally, Bungo and Hussin (2011), in their joint article, argued that the presence of the Minangkabau community in Kuala Lumpur and the State of Selangor as a whole has a direct correlation with the community's '*adat merantau*', or inter-land migration culture. Given this fact, therefore, it is not so surprising to observe that many Malays of the Minangkabau clan settled in various parts of the Malay Peninsula. The authors further mentioned that in the context of Kuala Lumpur, one renowned Malay of Minangkabau descent by the name of Haji Mohd. Thaib bin Haji Abdul Samad, for instance, had arrived in Kuala Lumpur around the 1870s at the age of 18 and subsequently, in his adult age, had accumulated considerable wealth from his involvement in local economies, i.e., shop-retail and landowners. This particular example illustrates how *adat merantau* was not limited to village-scale movements but became integrated into emerging urban economies. It also complicates the assumption that the Minangkabau presence was primarily agricultural or marginal.

Another example of a local figure of Minangkabau descent of equal fame was Khatib Koyan bin Abdullah. It is interesting to learn that he not only held the position of Setapak's headman but also owned a sizable amount of land stretching from Batu Dua to Batu Sembilan Gombak (Salleh, Abdullah, Ab Jalil & Shaharil, 2022). In the 1920s, he also ventured into tin-mining business activities along the Gombak River towards Kuala Lumpur. Furthermore, there was a Minangkabau settlement in Kampung Tengah Batu 6 Gombak. One of the early settlers in the village was the father of Pak Saad, who came from Melampah, Bonjol, Minangkabau. He had reportedly left behind a vast expanse of land, stretching from Setapak to Batu Enam. At present, Pak Saad and his son Pak Ahmad inherited these ancestral lands. Unlike the more temporary forms of settlement sometimes associated with other migrant groups, the Minangkabau legacy in Setapak and Gombak reveals a pattern of intergenerational rootedness. Inheritance of land and title signals a deepening of presence that goes beyond initial migration (Bungo & Hussin, 2011 and Omar et al., 2012).

In the early days of Kuala Lumpur, when tin mining was an important economic activity, the city was divided into two settlements, with the Malays occupying the northern part of the city and the Chinese in the southern part (Gullick, 1955). There were two main Malay villages in the northern part of the city, including Kampung Rawa, which was located around the site of the Bank Bumiputera headquarters and Jalan Melaka today, and Kampung Jawa, which was located around the site of Masjid Jamek at present, as well as Kampung Semarang in Jalan Kuching, where *Kompleks Bank Negara* is now situated. At that time, the Malays in Kuala Lumpur consisted of several different ethnic groups, such as Bugis, Rawa, Jawa, Minangkabau, Mandailing, Batu Bara, and Kampar (Bungo et al., 2012). The position of the leader who represented the overall Malay population was referred to as *Dato Dagang* (Gullick, 1990). This diversity among the Malays complicates any reading of urban Malaya as ethnically rigid. It shows instead a series of internal negotiations of leadership, space, and identity among groups who were technically Malay but socially distinct.

As for the Bawean community, its migration to the Malay Peninsula was part of a larger pattern of movement within Southeast Asia. It was greatly influenced by the traditional *merantau* culture of the archipelago, as highlighted by Sari and Ramli (2021). The islanders, often referred to as 'Boyanese' in older records, as documented by Jalani (2018), were driven by both socio-economic reasons and the promise of opportunities in British Malaya and Singapore. Stories of wealth, along with pressures from the Dutch colonial policy on their homeland in the 1900s and times of hunger, especially during the Japanese occupation, pushed many Baweanese to seek work abroad, as argued by Aziri and Wahyudi (2019) and Sidik (2017). The arrival of steamships also made this journey easier, a factor noted by Abdul Rahim (1999). When they arrived, especially in cities like Kuala Lumpur and Singapore, Bawean migrants often gathered in shared lodging houses called *Pondok*. Compared to the Minangkabau, whose settlement in Gombak often followed kinship lines, Baweanese settlement was more collective and institutional, with the *Pondok* playing a central role in sustaining community life. This difference in settlement style hints at variations in how each group adapted to displacement and urban pressures.

These *Pondok* acted as community hubs, offering temporary housing, a sense of belonging, and ways to find jobs, as observed by Sarifin and Sukimi (2016) and Sidik (2017). This system greatly helped new arrivals in settling down and establishing themselves in a new land. Old census data shows a notable Bawean presence in Malaya. For instance, in 1947, there were 20,400 Boyanese in Malaya, with over 70% living in Kuala Lumpur, showing a strong attraction to city areas, a fact highlighted by Abdul Rahim (1999). Within the Gombak district

of Selangor, Bawean communities settled in particular areas. While Kampung Simpang Tiga is historically linked to Minangkabau settlers, clear academic information about a specific Bawean community in the village is limited in published research. This suggests that if Baweans were present there, their numbers might have been smaller, or they became part of the larger Indonesian migrant community without being specifically mentioned in historical writings. This gap in the historical record invites further investigation. It is possible that the Baweanese presence in Simpang Tiga was spatially marginal or absorbed into dominant village networks. Alternatively, their historical footprint may exist in oral traditions not yet captured by written sources.

The formation of these particular settlements often involved a process of collective land acquisition and the development of communal living arrangements. Early migrants frequently engaged in land-clearing activities to prepare areas for agricultural purposes. Common agricultural pursuits included the establishment of rubber smallholdings or market gardening. Beyond agriculture, many Bawean migrants also engaged in urban occupations, a trend discussed by Osni (2021). Their labour and skills contributed to the growth of towns and cities across Malaya, as outlined by Sari and Ramli (2021). Consistent with finding that early Baweanese diasporic traditions centred on institutions like mosques and *tareqat*, as Abdul Rahim (1999) has shown, our research team's visits to the Masjid Sungai Chinchin in Kampung Sungai Chinchin, coupled with interviews with Sheikh Muhammad Nor al-Kholidi's (founder of the kampung) family, community members, and the masjid bureau, confirmed its role as a concrete example within these focused areas. The historical continuity of such religious institutions suggests a settlement model that fused spiritual life with local authority, allowing communities like the Bawean to build legitimacy through mosque-based leadership rather than just economic integration.

This mosque is over a century old, indicating a long-standing community presence; it also includes a madrasah (a religious school) and a mausoleum, suggesting a well-established religious and communal infrastructure. Records show that the Madrasah Nurul Muhammadiyah was constructed in 1894 on *wakaf* land (endowed property) donated by the Sultan of Selangor at that time, as highlighted by Denan (n.d.). This act of donation signifies official recognition for the Bawean community at a very early stage of their settlement in the region. This particular record is a valuable piece of evidence for the early and formal establishment of a Bawean presence in Kampung Sungai Chinchin. These Bawean communities are situated in the Gombak district, an administrative area within Selangor (Pillai, 2016). The history of Gombak itself is rooted in early Malay settlements, and its later development was intertwined with the bigger economic growth of Selangor, as demonstrated by the significant presence of Minangkabau and Bawean migrants in local economies, i.e., tin mining, rubber plantations, and paddy cultivation, to name a few. That both Minangkabau and Bawean migrants established lasting links to specific settlements in Gombak indicates how migration patterns converged around local economies and Islamic institutions. These settlements were not accidental but reflected practical and spiritual strategies of place-making.

The arrival and settlement of the Bawean people added to the existing social and economic fabric of the district, contributing to its diverse population and economic activities. Their land acquisitions and agricultural practices, though often small-scale, formed part of the bigger economic landscape of Selangor. The development of infrastructure in Gombak, such as roads and basic amenities, also benefited from the labour of Bawean migrants, particularly those involved in construction and transportation (Kow, 1974). In contrast, Kampung Sungai Chinchin in Gombak shows a clearer Bawean presence (Kacong Explorer, 2021). Although its

founder, Syeikh Muhammad Nur Al-Kholidi, was a Mandailing from Sumatera Utara in 1894, the village eventually became home to a majority of Indonesian migrants (Denan, n.d.).

Local accounts and popular sources strongly suggest that Baweans constitute a significant part, if not the majority, of this Indonesian migrant population in Kampung Sungai Chinchin (Jalan-Jalan Channel, 2024). Similarly, the early Minangkabau settlers in Kampung Simpang Tiga made their presence felt throughout the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Many of their descendants continue to live in the village to this day. In short, these settlements in Gombak, like others across Malaya, represent the outcome of Minangkabau and Bawean migration, driven by the need for work and helped by existing social connections. Both the Minangkabau and Bawean settlements in Gombak grew not only from the need to survive but also from how each community made use of religious space, kinship ties, and everyday labour to slowly anchor themselves in the local story of Selangor.

4. Socio-Cultural Integration and Identity

The way Minangkabau and Bawean communities integrated into society in Gombak and Malaysia was a complex process. It involved both adapting to the new society and keeping their own cultural practices. Early on, both the '*rumah dagang'* and the *Pondok* system provided a strong social structure that helped the Minangkabau and Baweans navigate city life and keep their community ties (Sidik, 2017). This shared living arrangement helped them undertake and pass on their unique customs, language, and religious traditions. In Gombak, particularly in villages like Simpang Tiga and Sungai Chinchin, these systems did not merely serve as housing; they acted as informal institutions that organised communal support and daily interactions. Over time, several factors influenced the integration of Minangkabau and Bawean communities into the general Malay society. Economic considerations, along with their shared Islamic faith and similar cultural practices, shaped their inclusion, integration and assimilation in larger Malay society.

On the same note, studies by Pillai (as cited in Abdul Rahim, 1999) point out that marriage with local Malays, relatively easy access to education, and government policies that favoured indigenous Malays were important for Minangkabau and Bawean migrants to become part of the Malay identity, especially for later generations. This process often led to a gradual yet smooth blending into a bigger Malay identity. Cultural communication also helped in this integration. Shared cultural similarities with other Malay sub-ethnicities, such as language differences, local foods, traditional martial arts, and religious practices, helped close any initial cultural gaps (Azman, Mohd Zain & Hassan, 2019). The common bond of Islam was especially unifying, allowing Minangkabau and Baweans to easily participate in religious life and community structures within Malaysia. As seen in Sungai Chinchin, for example, the central role of the mosque and madrasah created continuity between the migrants' spiritual heritage and the local Islamic structures they joined.

However, it is also important to note here that this integration did not mean they were completely giving up their identities. Instead, it was a process of adapting and changing. While many Minangkabaus and Baweans adopted Malay customs and identified as Malay, elements of their Minangkabau and Bawean heritage remained. This can often be seen in family names, certain phrases they use, and the memory of their homeland. Oral interviews with descendants in the *kampungs* reveal that while younger generations might no longer speak regional dialects, there remains an awareness of their lineage and a pride in their ancestral origins. The changing Malaysian social and political setting, especially after independence, with its focus on Malay

identity, shaped how Minangkabau and Baweans saw and expressed their own distinct heritage vis-à-vis their local Malay counterparts. Additionally, the conditions for citizenship brought in after the Federation of Malaya in 1948, which were stricter than during the Malayan Union period, further affected the legal and social ways migrants integrated (Mohamed, 2010).

Despite a strong tendency towards assimilation, distinct Minangkabau and Bawean identities often persisted within their communities. They maintained connections with their homeland through various means, including sending remittances back to their families and undertaking visits (Sari & Ramli, 2021). They also preserved specific cultural practices that were unique to their heritage. These included traditional forms of *pencak silat* (a martial art) and traditional music (Kacong Explorer, 2022). In Kampung Sungai Chinchin, the mosque remains a focal point of these cultural continuities, not only through worship but also through commemorative events tied to figures such as Sheikh Muhammad Nor Al-Kholidi (even though he was a Mandailing, a different *suku kaum*), reinforcing a Bawean communal memory. While they socially integrated into the bigger Malay society, elements of their distinct Minangkabau and Bawean cultural heritage continued to exist and be practised within their communal enclaves. This demonstrates a balance between assimilation and the preservation of unique cultural traits.

5. Comparative Reflections on Minangkabau and Bawean Experiences

The Minangkabau and Bawean communities in Gombak are a significant, but often overlooked, thread in Malaysia's rich migration history. The movement from Sumatra and the Bawean Islands to places like Kampung Simpang Tiga and Kampung Sungai Chinchin throughout the 20th century reflects how the *merantau* tradition continued to shape patterns of settlement across Southeast Asia. As shown through archival materials, published research, oral interviews, and visual sources, the movements of Minangkabau and Bawean migrants reveal how they became part of local Malay society and contributed in varied ways to the shaping of Malaysia’s economic landscape.

The case of Kampung Simpang Tiga further illustrates the early presence and continued influence of Minangkabau settlers. Archival records and oral interviews revealed that many Minangkabau migrants who came through the late 19th and early 20th centuries were actively involved in shaping the socio-economic layout of the mukim. They opened early settlements, cleared lands for agriculture, and initiated small-scale rubber plantations near the Gombak River (Bungo et al., 2012). Other places in the locality such as Kampung Chubadak, Kampung Kerdas, and Kampung Gombak Utara were all closely connected to the Minangkabau settlement pattern. Notably, the economic life of these villages was deeply tied to the surrounding geography, especially the river, which allowed for tin mining, irrigation for paddy fields, and rubber tapping (Bungo & Hussin, 2011). Moreover, one influential figure, Khatib Koyan, who served as Penghulu of Setapak for nearly four decades, played a major role in shaping both the demographic and administrative history of the locality. He was officially recognised by the British administration for his leadership and was closely involved in the development of the Setapak and Batu mukims (Bungo et al., 2012). He also reportedly brought more migrants from his hometown in West Sumatra to settle in the surrounding areas. This pattern of chain migration further expanded the cultural footprint of the Minangkabau in Gombak.

On the Bawean side, the settlement in Kampung Sungai Chinchin is a critical example of how a single institution, such as a mosque and its adjoining madrasah, became a long-term cultural anchor. Beyond its religious function, the mosque served as a meeting point, educational hub,

and symbol of a rooted migrant community. The existence of Madrasah Nurul Muhammadiyyah since 1894, built on land endowed by the Sultan, is a strong testament to the early recognition and communal organisation of the Bawean settlers (Abdul Rahim, 1999; Jalani, 2018). Additionally, in contrast to the more business and mining-oriented Minangkabau in Simpang Tiga, the Bawean in Sungai Chinchin displayed a more institutional pattern of settlement with a strong emphasis on religious and communal cohesion (Sarifin & Sukimi, 2016). While both communities share common threads of Islam and migration, their early historical imprints reveal different pathways of settlement: one through economic mobility and the other through religious consolidation and social organisation.

In Kampung Simpang Tiga, oral history accounts gathered from elder residents suggest that older generations retained Minangkabau dialects in informal conversations and family rituals, although younger generations have increasingly adopted localised forms of Malay. Similarly, Minangkabau culinary traditions, such as *rendang* and *dendeng*, remain prevalent in daily meals and festive occasions, subtly preserving ancestral memory in domestic life. Meanwhile, in Kampung Sungai Chinchin, despite visible assimilation into the Malay mainstream, Bawean language and ritual practices can still be traced in community events and within households. Several stalls in the area continue to serve Bawean-style food distinct from standard Malay fare, often characterised by the heavy use of spices and specific cooking methods (Jalani, 2018). Moreover, the mosque remains a gathering place where Bawean oral traditions, Quranic recitations, and communal decisions reflect a form of cultural resilience. It is not unusual to hear Bawean words interwoven in religious classes or during Friday sermons, especially among older congregants (Abdul Rahim, 1999).

Architecture also serves as a visual reminder of these identities. In Simpang Tiga, remnants of traditional Minangkabau houses, though few in number, bear gabled roofs and structural layouts that resemble styles from West Sumatra (Bungo & Hussin, 2011). While many of these homes have been replaced by modern concrete structures, residents interviewed recalled that cost and material scarcity made traditional designs harder to sustain. However, the symbolic value of these forms continues to resonate. In contrast, Bawean identity in Sungai Chinchin is often expressed through the maintenance of religious facilities, tomb sites, and communal halls, rather than through housing style. The mausoleum of Sheikh Muhammad Nor Al-Kholidi remains an important pilgrimage point for the local community and serves as a historical landmark reminding them of their founder's roots and leadership (Jalani, 2018). Together, these expressions of cultural continuity, be it in speech, food, prayer, or built environment, reflect how identity is maintained not just through grand political structures but through everyday acts and spatial memory within the kampung.

The tin-mining industry, especially along the Gombak River corridor, presented considerable opportunities for early Minangkabau migrants who either worked independently or leased land from the colonial government. Archival documents reviewed during fieldwork showed records of mining licence applications submitted by locals in Mukim Setapak as early as the 1900s (Bungo et al., 2012). These records, while sparse, help confirm oral testimonies that economic pursuits were not random but rather strategic engagements with colonial infrastructure. Furthermore, the establishment of a rubber estate near the New Amherst site close to Gombak was linked to the economic ecology shaped by these migrant groups (Wong, 2023). The factory, later constructed near today's Plaza Idaman, likely served as a processing centre for rubber collected from smallholdings cultivated by both Minangkabau and Bawean families. In addition to wage labour and agriculture, some Minangkabau settlers took on administrative or leadership roles. Figures such as Khatib Koyan not only engaged in commerce and mining but

also mediated between colonial authorities and local villagers. Such roles further expanded the influence of Minangkabau elites in the area's social structure.

For the Bawean community, while their economic engagements were less concentrated in land-based ventures, their presence was strongly felt in supporting urban transportation, construction, and small-scale agriculture. Some residents were hired to tap rubber trees, while others ran small food stalls or worked as craftsmen (Jalani, 2018; Sarifin & Sukimi, 2016). The cumulative effect of these small-scale occupations helped build up Gombak's semi-rural economy, particularly in areas adjacent to Sungai Chinchin. In both cases, these communities did not merely adapt to the economy; they brought with them new ways of working, trading, and using the land that slowly took root in the colonial setting. Their contributions reflect a historical agency that deserves more attention in studies of Selangor's early 20th-century development.

6. Conclusion

The integration of Minangkabau and Bawean communities into Malaysian society was a multi-faceted process, influenced by various contributing factors. Several elements facilitated their assimilation into the bigger Malay identity. These included shared cultural similarities, a high rate of intermarriage with local Malay communities, common religious practices (Sunni Islam), and established communal living structures. The Minangkabau and Bawean, being Muslims, found it easier to integrate into a predominantly Malay-Muslim society, as their religious beliefs aligned with the majority. They often adopted Malay customs and the Malay language, particularly in public life and for administrative purposes. This assimilation process was further aided by the expansive concept of Malay identity in Malaya, which historically encompasses various Nusantara Muslim groups, including those from other parts of the Indonesian archipelago.

Lastly, by meticulously documenting their journey and contributions, this paper hopes to set a precedent for a more inclusive Malaysian historiography that truly reflects the nation's diverse foundations. Thus, this research offers a historical account that not only explains how Minangkabau and Bawean identities kept changing and staying the same but also puts their experiences right within the bigger picture of migration patterns all over Southeast Asia. By doing this, it is hoped that more people will be encouraged to explore the many diverse groups that truly make up Malaysian society.

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