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culture in malls celebrates the energy and critique that urban youth express, Lopez y Royo's own modeling, blogging and fashion activism has focused on the ageism that saturates the fashion industry in the UK and Europe. This informed her concluding insights that the Indonesian fashion industry has similar biases against representations of the aging or greying female form. Her arguments also resonate with Ayu Saraswati's (2013) careful analysis of the intersection of race and beauty in Indonesia.

Lopez y Royo's personal experience and perspective shape this book most intimately. Her enthusiasm for Indonesian fashion is palpable. While the book is less an analysis than a joyful introduction to a field, Lopez y Royo deftly achieves her primary goal of inviting readers into a large, diverse scene that, as she says, merits much more intellectual and global attention.

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Études régionales

Rebecca Fanany and Ismet Fanany, *The Elderly Must Endure: Ageing in the Minangkabau Community in Modern Indonesia*. Singapore: ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, 2018, xii + 309 p. ISBN: 978-981-4818-46-9 (paperback), 978-981-4818-47-6 (pdf).

Anyone at an advanced age certainly experiences ageing as a natural aspect of human existence. Our modern world is facing a significant increase in the number of elderly people as a result of advances in the provision of health services, food quality, and medical research. However, experiencing old age as a cultural phenomenon is highly dependent on the community or country one lives in as a result of diverse local factors, including religion, traditional custom, geographic and socio-cultural environments, and State's political policies.

Indonesia, as many other States in the world, is also facing an increasing number of old persons. In a heterogeneous and multiethnic State such as

Indonesia, the multiple ways elderly people are treated, perceived, and cared for can depend on either national or local culture. *The Elderly Must Endure* focuses on the Minangkabau elderly people in the 21st century. The book is the result of a 'long-term study' among the Minangkabau of West Sumatra and presented in a fascinating ethnographic report style. Rebecca Fanany and Ismet Fanany conducted an in-depth interview with several elderly people and numbers of their extended families, both in West Sumatra and overseas (*rantau*), to describe 'the experience of ageing in modern Minangkabau society' which constitutes the 'forefront of social change with the understanding that this will offer insight into similar forces that are being experienced all around the country by older individuals of all backgrounds and cultural origins' (p.18).

The Minangkabau ethnic group, whose principal homeland is central Sumatra's highlands (now mostly including West Sumatra Province) is one of more than 300 ethnic groups living in Indonesia and the sixth largest (around 6.5 million or around 2.7%) of the country's total population. This ethnic group has long attracted the interest of transnational scholarship mostly due to academic curiosity about the reconciliation of *matrilineal* kinship and *patriarchal* Islam. Many scholars have explored the socio-historical factors that made this 'eccentric blend' possible and what forms of socio-cultural practices are generated by this 'dichotomous' system of kinship.

Since the 1970s, as a result of the global advancement of the women's movement and feminist theory, a considerable body of works on Minangkabau has developed that focuses on matrilineal and Islamic principles which are considered the principal ingredients of Minangkabau culture. The tradition of *merantau* (voluntary migration) that is practiced by Minangkabau people is often considered as the result of this 'culture of paradox', to borrow Jeffrey Hadler's words (2008), and often referred to describe the socio-cultural dynamics of this ethnic group, which is considered to have made important contributions to the struggle for independence and postcolonial politics of Indonesia. The book under review departs from a similar type of curiosity. It explores how the Islamic but matriarchal Minangkabau society treats their elderly in modern Indonesia.

As far as my bibliographical investigation indicates, elderly have become a focus of scholarly observation recently because there is an inclination in Minangkabau society to send their elderly family members to the nursing home (*panti jompo*) which is considered not to be in accordance with its cultural and religious values which are fundamentally based on notions of respect, love, and devotion to parents, as well as a strong sense of communality. For example, Alfian Miko in his study of the treatment of elderly Minangkabau in nursing homes (2017) – an extensive study of elderly Minangkabau that is strangely not referenced in this book – shows that since the 1990s more and more Minangkabau of an advanced age have been sent by their families to nursing homes.

Using a qualitative approach, Rebecca and Ismet Fanany (an American-Minangkabau couple who became a researcher at Melbourne's Central Queensland University and a professor at Deakin University respectively) are specifically interested in issues of cultural resonance represented in the person of the elderly Minangkabau in the context of various social factors that characterize the modern Indonesian experience, such as language and religion, and also the nature of the environment and the interaction of the elderly with their own family members and communities. According to the authors, such considerations are of great importance considering the fact that the numbers of elderly people in Indonesia have increased significantly, which brings about various effects, politically, economically, demographically, and socio-culturally.

The book focuses on the ways the elderly (aged 60 years upward) with Minangkabau cultural background perceive themselves and their families in the context of modern Indonesia and to which extent their perceptions replicate the situation they observe among their own parents and grandparents (p.19). To get a more precise landscape of the experience of being elderly in the Minangkabau cultural context, the authors throughout the body of the book present case studies of some Minangkabau families with elderly members who live in the *rantau* and also in the homeland (*kampung*) to illustrate in more detail the changes and challenges faced by old individuals nowadays and the ways such changes have affected their way of life.

The Elderly Must Endure is composed of eleven chapters in which the authors describe the cultural characteristics of the Minangkabau ethnic group, Minangkabau cultural views of the elderly and the changing generational views. A comparison is made between those who live in the *rantau* and in the *kampung*, those who live in rural areas and in urban areas, and those who live with families and in modern nursing homes. Besides the influences of *adat* (custom), the authors pay special attention to two other aspects affecting the phenomenon of ageing among the Minangkabau: religion (Chapter 4) and language (Chapter 5). But the authors seem to not have extensively explored the *lapau* (coffee house) as a place of elderly male association in contemporary West Sumatra. As a Minangkabau reader, I am not surprised about the authors' explanation that 'the Minangkabau community has strong expectations that older people will be interested in and wish to participate in religious activities' (p.84). It has become a common proverb in Minangkabau to say '*Kalau lah baun tanah, bapanyaklah lai pai ka surau*' (litt: 'if you already smell of soil, you must often visit the prayer house'). Older people in Minangkabau (and Muslims in general) rarely ignore this message, even among those who lived as *parewa* (the men in Minangkabau society who are considered less pious and distanced themselves from religious groups in favour of traditional *adat*) in their younger ages.

The authors found that language use among older Minangkabau speakers shows three inclinations: those who mostly use the Minangkabau language, those who exhibit bilingualism, and those who tend to use only Indonesian. This is influenced by the level of education and occupation, place of residence (living in the homeland or in the *rantau*), and marriage configuration (marriage with another Minangkabau person or with someone from other ethnic group). The first inclination was found among the Minangkabau elderly who live in their own *kampung*, the second tends to be found among those who live in the *rantau* or an urban area, and the last is most common among those who have a spouse from another ethnicity (pp.102-4). By discussing the ‘language attrition’ phenomenon among elderly Minangkabau, the authors argue that ‘language ability in the elderly has often been viewed in terms of language attrition, especially in the context of bilingualism’ (p.101). Actually, bilingualism is a common phenomenon found among the Minangkabau people, especially among the educated people and traders. When the Minangkabau speak with foreigners, they tend to use what is called ‘bahaso Malayu Tinggi’ or ‘bahaso gaduang’ (‘high Malay’), as noted by J.L. van der Toorn in the late 19th century in Fort de Kock (now Bukittinggi) (see: Suryadi 2006). That kind of language register corresponds to modern Indonesian. Therefore, language use among the Minangkabau is highly dependent on their interlocutor.

Modernity has significantly transformed views about traditional cultural concepts, institutions, and practices in many Minangkabau families, especially among the Minangkabau *perantau* (migrants) who have long left their homeland, as their emotional bonds with traditions and culture of their ancestors have waned. Today, elderly Minangkabau are deeply influenced by this wandering tradition, either in the *rantau* or the homeland, which continues and has contributed to the rise of nuclear families. This inclination has stretched the unique traditional *mamak-kamanakan* (uncle-nephew) relationships in Minangkabau culture and changing the traditional patterns of relationships between other family members, which in turn changes the structure and ideal patterns of relationships among individuals in extended families of traditional Minangkabau society. Changes of perception about the traditional cultural values and practices in the modern Indonesian society have also affected the Minangkabau people, which in turn has changed the perception and treatment of older people in many Minangkabau families.

This book provides a fruitful cultural landscape of being elderly in the Minangkabau cultural context amidst the rapid social changes of contemporary Indonesian society. In my feeling, it seems to be a self-reflection of one of its authors (Prof. Ismet Fanany), a Minangkabau intellectual *perantau* who has spent most of his life and ageing overseas, which resonates with his ‘longing for home’. This ethnographic study has taken into account many aspects of Minangkabau ethnicity, tangible and intangible, to get a clear insight of the

experiences of its elderly and the problems they face in modern Indonesia today. Although the authors do not offer a clear solution to overcome these problems, this book is highly beneficial not only to scholars but also for the policy makers in Indonesia.

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Richard Fox, *More than Words. Transforming Script, Agency, and Collective Life in Bali*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2018, 264 p. ISBN: 9781501725357.

Writing and letters in Bali are not just ways to transmit, preserve and disseminate ideas and simple or complex messages and literature. In Bali, writing goes far beyond these more or less 'universal' simple reasons why people resort to putting things on paper, or nowadays in the mobile telephone or computer. Letters and writing assume more 'exoteric' and 'esoteric' roles in Bali which not only linger on but assume new and vibrant new roles on the island. We have little idea when exactly all this started and how or why, and it is refreshing that the author does not seem to turn this into a problem of great importance. Nor, for that matter, does the author seem very concerned about the number of people still fluent in Balinese script. The author is concerned about the multiple roles of the script in Bali rather than with abilities to read and interpret texts. Indeed, the book deals with the present. One thing becomes crystal clear from the book. On no other island in the Indonesian archipelago is the local, traditional script as vibrantly alive as on Bali and there is no reason to assume that this situation is about to change.

The question, of course, is why this is so and what the specifics are of the role or roles script and writing play in the religious, political, educational and every day life of the Balinese people. Richard Fox has written the present book to elucidate what is going on in Bali and he has managed to do so in an attractive and readable way. One of the key elements that needed to be explained and elaborated is the idea of 'religion' which, in Bali, is a question that cannot be answered in any easy way, as religion, ways of social and political life and the notion of interplay with esoteric and eschatological