

# The Experiences of Perceiving Social Support from Matrilineal Kinship after Parental Divorce

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**Abstract--** *An extended family is one source of social support that can help people adjust to psychological distress, such as parental divorce. This article aims to describe the experience of individuals from the Minangkabau ethnicity who have a matrilineal kinship system in getting social support from the extended family of mothers after parental divorce. These objectives will be revealed in three parts, namely the source and form of support, the consequences, and the meaning of support for individuals. This study uses a qualitative phenomenological approach with the interview method as the primary data collection technique involving three participants. The results of the interpretation are strengthened by member checking by the participants. The results showed that the extended maternal family's social support involved the grandmother and siblings who worked together in providing support. The forms of the supports are quite varied according to needs. The primary support comes from "harta pusaka" (heritage property) in the form of certainty of residence, other assistance related to meeting the financial needs of the divorced families. The presence or absence of social support is very dependent on the quality of relationships between members of the family. The consequences of social support are demands for immediate independence, a sense of hesitation because they have become a family burden, and compliance or conflict. Finally, social support is interpreted as diverse by individuals, which can be explained by the Symbolic Interactionism Theory. This study also provides an additional description of the matrilineal kinship relations in the current Minangkabau society.*

**Keywords--** *perceiving social support, parental divorce, matrilineal, kinship, qualitative study*

## I INTRODUCTION

Parental divorce has negatives effects on children's well-being (Amato, 2001; Amato & Keith, 1991b; Reifman, Villa, Amans, Rethinam, & Telesca, 2001). That effect was hanging on until children grow adults (Amato & Keith, 1991a) and affect their mental health (SIMBI, Zhang, & Wang, 2020 Auersperg, Vlasak, Ponocny, & Barth, 2019; Sands, Thompson, & Gaysina, 2017). But they were also known that social support provided by family, especially nuclear family, give a better prognosis for children after parental divorce. Social support helps children getting more resilience (Jacobs & Sillars, 2012) and has better self-control (Hamama & Ronen-shenhav, 2012). They also

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have more opportunities on careers (Jackson & Fife, 2017), academic achievement (Modecki, Hagan, Sandler, & Wolchik, 2015) and intimate relationships (Jackson & Fife, 2017; Mustonen, Huurre, Kiviruusu, & Haukkala, 2011).

Social support moderating psychological distress caused by parental divorce to adjustment in three ways: giving the main effect, buffering stressor, and increasing success of seeking help in the coping process (Buchwald, 2017). Sources of social support can be achieved from the social network, such as friends, kin, nuclear family, extended family, neighbors, and professionals. Those resources variance that helps children adjusting parental divorce cannot separate from cultural background. Since the 1990s, Amato and Keith (Amato & Keith, 1991c) already found that children from minority ethnicities in America, such as Hispanic and African-American, have a better outcome than white Americans because they supported by the collectivist tradition. That tradition has familism value that guides every member of the extended family to take care of others first before themselves (Cross, 2018; Garey, Hansen, & Macdonald, 2002). Involving members in an extended family means a person has more resources than if only involving the nuclear family.

After a divorce, child custody generally goes to the mother, so she often becomes the primary caregiver for her children. Mothers who get support from their extended family have better hopes to get positive outcomes for their children. In that case, mothers of the matrilineal kinship system, have a better chance to get social support from their relatives. The word "matrilineal" comes from two words, namely "mater," which means "mother" and "linea," which means "line." Matrilineal society is a society that follows the lineage drawn from the mother's side (Knight, 2008; Stark, 2013). In this kinship system, the welfare of a child has not become the biological father's responsibility, but rather the communal responsibility of the mother's relatives, led by the elder women (matron) (Knight, 2008). One of the tribes that applies a matrilineal kinship system, even become the largest in the world, is the Minangkabau located in West Sumatra, Indonesia. The difference between Minangkabau and other matrilineal tribe is that the Minangkabau community places the mother's brother (a man called *Mamak*) as the leader of the extended family, instead of matron.

Matrilineal society emphasizes the importance of bonds between siblings, rather than marital relations, so divorce will not affect the welfare of children. The reason is that the emotional ties between father-children are not too close in the first place. Also, the children have the certainty of getting social support from the mother and the extended maternal family. Besides, the inheritance system of the "*harato pusako*" (properties such as houses, land, fields, and ponds) in this kinship is derived based on maternal lines; that is, women have access to a house and economic resources that can protect themselves and their children from neglect after divorce.

Nowadays kinship system in the Minangkabau no longer reflects the matrilineal kinship pattern as described above (Amir, 2003). The influence of the Dutch colonialism, the inclusion of Islamic teachings and intervention from the central government, led to a shift in social roles in society. The Dutch introduced a new concept that divides the form of heritage property into two: "*harato pusako tinggi*" (old ideas similar to heritage property) and "*harato pusako randah*" property known as livelihood assets. The livelihood assets obtained not from processing communal property (the heritage property), but from other sources such as salaries as a Dutch government

employee, trading profits, and other income from other services profession (Kato, 1978). The livelihoods property is not subject to customary law so that they can be passed from fathers to his children, whether boys or girls. Islamic teachings also introduce the concept of the biological father's responsibility to his children, making Minangkabau men more likely to prioritize biological children over nephews (Anjela & Razif, 2014; Schrijvers & Postel-Coster, 1977).

The children, who were formerly become the communal responsibility of the mother and maternal relatives, turned to become the responsibility of the mother and biological father in the structure of the nuclear family (Natin, 2008). That is, if there is a divorce between husband and wife, Minangkabau children have the potential to feel the adverse effects as well as children from the non-matrilineal kinship system.

The potential for neglect of women and children is even more significant when Minangkabau women are currently losing the heritage property that could have been used as a social security system. Indonesian Government Regulations that require certification of every state land make "*harato pusako tinggi*" that previously could not be sold, become prone to be traded. (Ok-Yun, 1996; Shah, 2006). So that women losing their economic resources and begin to depend on their husbands.

This article will describe how the experience of Minangkabau participants in gaining social support from maternal relatives in the context of the matrilineal kinship system at this time. Researchers will focus on how participants describe the social support received or not received from matrilineal kinship in adapting to various stressors after parental divorce. The question posed is whether the participants received social support from matrilineal kinship after the divorce?. If participants feel supported, what kind of support do they accepted? And what does this support mean for participants?

## II METHOD

This study used the interpretative phenomenological analysis approach involving three participants; Annisa, Rima, and Putri. Participants were recruited through the spreading information by word of mouth delivered by researchers to students at a university in the city of Padang, West Sumatra, Indonesia. The announcement that was distributed contained information about the research objectives, namely: exploring experiences of dealing with parental divorce. The criteria inclusion used is students from Minangkabau ethnicity (counted from maternal lineage) whose parents had divorced before he or she was 18 years old. The researcher also added the criterion: "The participant is known to be active in lecture activities and has a satisfactory cumulative academic achievement index (above 3.00 from 4.00)." The additional criteria are intended to capture participants who appear to be able to adapt. At first, the researchers got four proposed names, but when contacted, only three people were willing to be involved in this study. One person refused to participate because they could not take the time to take part in the interview.

After the agreement, the three participants received an explanation of the research procedure, including the possibility of repeated interviews and requests to conduct member checking at the end of the data collection process. The signature evidence of the agreement is written in the informed consent sheet. Although one participant claimed

not perceived social support from maternal relatives after the parents' divorce, the data obtained from her was still used as a comparison for two other participants, namely Annisa and Rima. The background explanation of the participants can be seen in Table 1.

This study using an interview with a semi-structured guide as a primary data collection. The research and the interview guidance as a research tool is already passed Institutional Review Board from Research Ethics Committee of Psychology Faculty of Gadjah Mada University, Indonesia. After the first interview, the researcher immediately transcribed to verbatim and interpreted the participant's statements, then identified sentences that the researcher did not understand, later to be asked to the participants at subsequent meetings. Researchers conducted in-depth interviews twice for each participant, and the third interview was used to perform member checking.

After feeling understood all of the participant's statements, the researcher went on to carry out data analysis. The researcher first conducts an exploratory interpretation of the participant's comments and then decides on a temporary theme for the description. Examples of statements accessed from verbatim:

*"I hate, I hate (because) that person (mother's relatives) only thinks that I had prospered living with dad. Well, I hate it, because actually, I was not that prosperous. I was just an average."*

The researcher made an exploratory statement as follows: "**Participants felt that her relatives did not understand her.**" Next, the researcher gave a temporary superordinate theme in the form: "**relations between participant-maternal relatives.**" Researchers deliberately provide superordinate themes in advance to identify similar topics and differentiate them from other themes, for example, with the "**participant-mother relationship**" theme that appears when participants tell of their relationships with their mothers.

Furthermore, the themes found were viewed in more detail and grouped into emerging themes following the similarity based on exploratory statements made by researchers based on verbatim. For example, several themes that emerge in the relationship between the participant and maternal relatives: "**tenuous relations,**" "**feeling unsupported,**" "**not helped because the father is able.**" After getting superordinate themes and emerging themes that compose them, the researcher conducted member checking by showing print-out of the results of the analysis made based on the researchers' interpretation of the participant's statements, to each participant. Participants can raise objections for further discussion with the researcher if the descriptions made by the researcher are not in line with the participant's intention for the statement. If the participants agreed, they were asked to sign an agreement which states that they have read and agree to the interpretations made by researchers.

The next step is to compare superordinate themes that describe the phenomena experienced by the three participants with theoretical explanations obtained from the related literature. For example, the findings "**there is always a place to go home**" appear after seeing the same pattern in the three participants regarding the context of residence after parental divorce and knowledge of the existence of "*Rumah Gadang*" (heritage in the form of a house) for Minangnese women based on literature.

The phenomenological approach with semi-structured interviews provides rich data, although, in practice, the researcher is constrained by the different languages of the researchers. Initially, participants were willing to use

“*bahasa*” (formal Indonesian language), but participants seemed challenging to express their thoughts and feelings. Finally, researchers invited participants to use the local language (Minangnese). After that, the data, mainly related to participants' perceptions, becomes easier to obtain. Language differences make researchers have to be careful in interpreting, so the researchers decide to discuss in advance with colleagues who have the same cultural background as participants. The discussion helped the researcher understand the participant's statement, not just knowing the meaning but also more sensitive to the participant's emotional content.

### III RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Of the three participants, Annisa and Rima were participants who could share their experiences in perceived social support from maternal relatives. Social support in the form of material, obtained by Annisa and Rima, is the "Rumah Gadang" (a family-owned house that is derived from maternal lineage). Also, participants get another material support from “*harta pencaharian*” (assets obtained from professional work that do not involve the use of inheritance) from maternal relatives.

Participants also perceived social support in the form of emotional support (support that makes individuals feel welcomed and cared for) and informational support (social support in the form of knowledge that can help participants overcome problems, solely in the way of advice) from maternal relatives. The following are the main findings that emerged in the study.

"There is always a place to go home": The inheritance of a "Rumah Gadang" provides a guaranteed place to live.

Matrilineal people use "*harta pusaka*" (heirlooms) in the form of houses or rice fields as a symbol of matrilineal kinship. Heritage assets can only be inherited based on maternal lineage and cannot be traded. It is believed to be a social safety net for women and children (Hanani, 2013). All three participants felt the benefits of matrilineal culture in terms of certainty of residence. Before her parents divorced, Rima had occupied a "*small house*" (a house outside the "Rumah Gadang" which was built for married girls), allocated by the extended family for her mother. They began to occupy the house after her parents failed to try their fortune overseas as satay traders in Jakarta. Usually, after a divorce, children must move out from the house they live in because it must be sold to be divided in half between ex-husband and ex-wife, or because a single mother can no longer afford to pay rent. However, the existence of a “*Rumah Gadang*” provides certainty of residence because the house is the property of the mother.

With the status of an inheritance, the house can only be used and cannot be traded. Even when his mother remarried and experienced economic hardship with his new family, though, the house could not be sold. The advantage gained by the participants from the situation is the participants always have a home to go, it also reduces the adaptation tasks that participants must go through due to environmental changes that usually follow the divorce event itself.

*The treasure is already there. The land, and the house built on it, was allocated to mama. But what she had to do? She can't occupy it because she moved to Jambi. About inheritance property (I do not worry), it always there. (Rima, II: 229).*

Annisa, and her mother, also occupied "Rumah Gadang" owned by her maternal family in the Maninjau with her grandmother (from maternal relatives) before her parents divorced. Similar to the story of Rima, Annisa's family also "returned" to "Rumah Gadang" after failing to obtain welfare in an overseas area. Before deciding to stay there, Annisa's father had changed jobs several times, from private bank employees, public transportation drivers to odd jobs. Annisa's family has also moved several times to live following her father, from Aceh, Medan, and Palembang (towns in Sumatera Islands, Indonesia) before finally deciding to stay in Maninjau, her mother's hometown.

As was the case with Rima's family, when Annisa's parents divorced, her father had to leave home without bringing anything because the house they lived in belongs to the mother's family. Annisa goes to school and plays with friends she knew before her parents divorced as usual. Even though Annisa had moved around a lot from time to time to follow her parents to migrate, at least she didn't have to undergo a double adaptation between changes in family structure and living environment at one time.

*"(After my father left) I am just doing activities, as usual. Anyway, there is my mother, so what I didn't get from my father is replaced by my mother. Even though I was sad because my father was no longer there, but I got used to it after sometimes." (Annisa, CL: 8).*

Annisa's adaptation to parental divorce is facilitated by the mother's ability to replace the father's role in providing love for Annisa. If previously Annisa was very close to her father, after getting divorced, Annisa became closer to her mother and felt far away from her father, who lived far apart.

*"Because I live with my mother, from the moment of divorce until now, I got more attached (to her). Because I often, together with mothers, I am getting closer to her and spacing at my father. Thus my relationship with mother, yeah, become very close like that." (Annisa, I: 169)*

Different case with Putri who occupy her parents' house (not belong to her maternal family). She holds the house bought by her father from his income as an employee in a state-owned company in Padang. According to Minangkabau customary rules, such a home is not subject to regulations as a matrilineal inheritance, meaning that the house may be sold and divided between father and mother in the event of a divorce. However, it turns out that the matrilineal inheritance tradition is inherent in the Putri's family, his father decided to give that house to Putri as the only daughter, instead of selling and sharing it with his ex-wife. Her father verbally provides the house for Putri, even though he still has two other sons. There was a shift in the status of the home from "harta pusaka rendah" (non-matrilineal property) to "harta pusaka tinggi" (matrilineal ownership as an inheritance for daughter). This shifting can happen in such circumstances, but it will be different to shift "harta pusaka tinggi" to "harta pusaka rendah".

Putri herself seemed to realize her rights to the house, several times referring to the house as her own, not shared with her siblings. For example, when Putri asked her father to sell the old house (the house that was occupied when his parents were together) and bought a new home that she would own.

*"I do not want to stay here anymore. All-day I live alone, buy a little house is also fine. Home for me alone, I will occupy it by my self." (Putri, I: 267).*

Putri even had to deal with her biological mother, who demanded this property over the house. Mother sued my father through a court for selling his old home without her consent. To defend her rights, Putri was trapped in a triangular conflict between father, mother, and herself. The daughter sided with the father against the mother, who intends to seize the house without caring about her. The following excerpt is from the conversation between the Princess and Mother.

*"While crying, I begged to mama, "Ma ... please don't (do that) ma, If you don't want to consider papa, please think about me, ma. What will happen to me later?." Then I met my aunt, grandmother, and mother's younger siblings to go to (persuade) mama. "I don't care, it's not my business, I just want 250 million rupiahs (half the house price) for me," said Mama. "I don't want to know where Ukok (Putri's father) got the money, whether he wants to sell her house (which is currently occupied by Putri), whether he wants to sell himself, whether he wants to sell his child, I don't want to know!" she said. Then Putri said, "Ma, don't you feel pity to me? Where do I will live then? How's my lecture going, ma? I want to start college. I will work for us later, too," said Putri. (Putri, I, 536)*

After all, the court won the father by considering several conditions, one of them because the house was occupied by Putri, her daughter, not by the father himself. In that case, the court's decision also seems to support the matrilineal tradition, which prioritizes the good for the child. According to the court officials, a house that comes from joint property will be given to the ex-wife and children after divorce, even though the house is obtained from his livelihood (non-matrilineal property), not sold and divided.

After failing in the struggle for marital assets, Putri's mother, with her third husband and her children, returned to grandmother's hometown in Muaro Labuah, occupied the "Rumah Gadang" owned by her family with her grandmother. That is, Putri's mother also has a certainty of residence because of the existence of the inheritance from her family. The tradition of a matrilineal kinship system that inherits heritage in the form of a home to the daughters can provide guaranteed housing and protect them from homelessness when experiencing unfavorable situations, including divorce (Mulder, Jan, & Marjolijn, 2012).

*"Emergency aid"*: Mother's relatives are a source of support when nuclear families are having trouble

After the divorce, the mothers of Rima and Annisa became single parents without regular jobs who could meet the needs of their children. That's when the extended family intervened to provide the needed social support. The Rima's maternal family has a hereditary business which is currently managed by *Mamak* (mother's brother) together with grandmother and Umi (mother's sister). They run banana leaf supplier business for the Padang city area. Every day *Mamak*, with several workers, goes around the city of Pariaman to collect banana leaves, and Umi is in charge

of packing before being distributed to their regular customers in Padang. At least twice a week, *Mamak* delivers the merchandise to Padang and always makes time to stop by Rima's house to see his sister (Rima's mother) and his nephew. Without being asked, *Mamak* always gives a little pocket money for Rima and siblings. Even though it was a bit, Rima interpreted the *Mamak* gifts as a form of attention.

*"He (Mamak) gave me pocket money ... even though it was only around twenty thousand and twenty-five thousand rupiahs, I was very grateful. It is a form of attention for me. (Rima, I: 110)*

Besides getting financial support from *Mak Dang* (call for *Oldest Mamak*), Rima's mother also received financial support from *Mak Etek* (call for youngest *Mamak*), who migrated to Kalimantan, to meet the educational needs of Rima and her siblings.

*Mak Etek is my mother's youngest brother, always provide social support in the form of financial assistance. Mom will ask him for help when the condition is tight as if we need a large amount of money for us to pay education needs (Rima, I: 111).*

Rima also received social support in different forms from other maternal relatives. *Mak Tuo* (a call for the mother's big sister) is a person who is always willing to take care of participants and siblings when left by their parents, both before the divorce and after. When Rima decided to stay in her own house with her brother, who was still in elementary school instead of following a mother who migrated to Jambi province with her husband, *MakTuo* provided her to spend the night every two days. *Mak Tuo's* presence makes Rima feel calm because there are adults who are watching them. Her presence helps Rima to adapt to the changes in her life, which previously lived with her mother to become a single person plus a supervisor for her sister. The following is a participant's statement explaining the form of *Mak Tuo's* support in the form of her willingness to accompany the participant and his younger sibling.

*Fortunately, Mak Tuo comes once every two days to accompany you to sleep, so it's quite brave to stay only with my brother (Rima, CL: 22).*

The support provided by *MakTuo* can be categorized as instrumental support. Instrumental support is a kind of support that directly overcome practical difficulties (Buchwald, 2017), namely by facilitating the needs of Rima and her family. In this case, by replacing the mother's role in supervising Rima and her brother. The emotional support in the form of warmth and closeness was obtained from Umi, the youngest sister of the mother. According to her, "Umi is a mother like, who is warm and close, even closer than my mother." Umi is also able to play the role that should be performed by Rima's mother. The form of support for Umi and its meaning for participants is stated in her statement as follows.

*"She is like my mother. She understands (me); she is playing a mother role in substituting a part that my Mom couldn't do." (Rima, II: 187 - 187).*

During that time, Rima's interaction with her parents was an interaction that caused her frustration. The parents tend to discredit each other in front of her. That situation makes her did not feel comfortable being around them. Her disappointment can be seen from the statement as follows:



*"The thing is if we gather with Papa, he is busy blaming Mom; if we hang out with Mom, she jokes daddy. So that's what makes me uncomfortable when they both act like that" (Rima I: 142)*

*"Anyway, the condition of the house is not very healthy if Mama Papa was in one room like that, (their fighting) made no good for us." (Rima I: 150)*

When with Umi, Rima feels as she has a grown-up mother who cares more about her feelings rather than focusing on their problems like her parents do. Answering the researcher's questions about what made her feel emotionally closer to Umi, participants proposed the following answers.

*"She won't ask, Umi never asks. "Ami, how's Ami feeling?" No, No. Instead, she tried to carry out how to make me laugh. If possible, she was trying to make me forget the wrong things. Also, she always checked my situation, "Rima, did you eat?" or "Have you prayed?." "Lets us make a 'bakwan' (a snack made from fried vegetable, egg, and flour)." She always has a way to spend leisure time with working things." (Rima II: 197).*

Rima described Umi as someone who was understanding and knew without having to ask. Umi is also considered to be able to feel Rima's sadness and always has a way to cheer her up by keeping her busy doing activities instead of discussing her problems.

Rima's need for the presence of a mature parent was also seen when she described what she liked from Umi's husband (uncle), who was a lecturer. According to Rima, his uncle was kind to her, often supported her by giving advice, and had a cheerful and funny disposition that made Rima feel the figure of a father. Likewise, Rima also got from her paternal uncle, who often invited discussion and communication, something that was not obtained from her biological father. This warmth and conflict-free activity and conversation makes her feel "safe" and maybe "normal" to interact with authority figures. This condition is a contrast to her interactions with the parents, which always contain problems and conflicts.

Rima receives a lot of social support from relatives in various forms (instrumental, informational, and emotional and companionship), both directly and through mothers. For Rima, the mother's relatives act as a substitute for the role of parents when they are distracted by divorce-related events such as remarriage and geographical distance. The following is Rima's statement that illustrates the meaning of support given by his extended family.

*Thank you so much. I mean, like, yes, I'm still grateful even though the divorced, I still have a supportive extended family. If we don't know what to do, we always know where to go. For example, if you can't get a place to live, I still clear to where I will go. Also, when there is a problem, and I need help from parents (but they couldn't make it), I know where to go anyway. So, thank you. (Rima II: 219).*

Different from Rima's experience, who received more variety of support from her relatives, Annisa only received financial support from maternal relatives, mainly from grandmothers. For other needs such as emotional, informational, and companionship support, Annisa received more from her nuclear family, namely, mother, father, and brother. Grandma has a widow pension money that is routinely received every month for one and a half million

rupiah. That money is used to meet the daily needs of grandmothers, mothers, Annisa, and her brother. After divorce, her father does not spend enough money to meet the needs of his children. Annisa's father was only able to send money around two hundred thousand rupiahs per two months, and even then, it's not routine. In contrast, the UMR (regional minimum wage) in the Maninjau area at the time (around 2012) was one million and one hundred and fifty thousand rupiahs per month. Even though the grandmother's pension is used, the one responsible for allocating it is *Mamak* (mother's brother) by one condition, that the mother is willing to take care of the grandmother at home.

*“My mother's brother said that my Mom should take care of Grandma, and our living expenses are taken from Grandma's pension fund. My tuition fee was also taken from that fund. The important thing is to take care of Grandma.” (Annisa, I: 135).*

Besides grandmother, *Mamak* and other mothers' siblings also provide help for Annisa's family, especially financial assistance, when the grandmother's pension runs out prematurely. That situation usually triggers a conflict between the mother and her siblings (will be explained in the next section).

Both Rima and Annisa admit that her biological father did not provide much financial support for the family, even before the divorce occurred because he did not have enough income to meet their daily needs. Both of them brought their families back to the wife's family's house because they failed to earn a living overseas. Annisa's father brought his wife and children back to Maninjau after moving several times and changed jobs, and Rima's father returned to Padang after failing to sell satay in Jakarta.

After the divorce, the fathers also only send money with an insignificant amount of money to meet the needs of their children. Thus, the family's living costs are entirely borne by the maternal relatives and the savings owned by the mother because the mothers do not have any professional work. Even though they do not have their income, Rima and Annisa's family can be said not to be neglected after divorce because they get enough help from relatives of their mothers to support their daily lives.

Different circumstances with Putri. Since her parents divorced, she is lives with her biological father, who is quite capable of meeting all of her needs. Putri claimed that she had never received any support from her maternal relatives. The absence of the maternal family's help makes her feel disappointed because she thought that her relatives did not carry out their functions as people who should be responsible for her welfare.

*“My mother's siblings, a person calls “Ninik Mamak,” who was supposed to pay attention to me, their nephew, apparently did not carry out their duties at all. My Mamak does not carry out his role, and he is useless, just talking. When my parents got divorced, they said, they will take care of us, their nephew, the reality is different, he is no use at all.” (Putri, II: 62).*

Putri considered that the maternal relatives did not provide any social support because they thought that her prosperous father had fulfilled Putri's needs. In contrast, maternal relatives were not sufficiently able to provide financial assistance because their income was not as high as his father's income. Even before the divorce, the mother's family gets a lot of financial support from her beneficial father.

*“Yes (papa) like to help my mother’s family, for example, in terms of money. Papa is the one who finances the living cost and education of Mama’s youngest brother (Putri, I: 39).*

In addition to not getting financial support, Putri also felt she did not get any other form of social support from her maternal family because they only interpreted happiness as material adequacy. Even though what Putri needed from them are attention and care.

*“In the past (the mother's family) was considerate, but since my mother and father divorced, It is no longer, it has ... changed everything; one hundred eighty (degrees) changed. They only know one thing, that I live with papa, my papa is precious, so I must be already happy. Their nephew lives with her father, the father got a good job, he must have money, that's all the family cares about, so they don't care (about my feeling) (Putri, II: 684).*

Putri needs emotional support, especially when Putri conflicts with her stepmother, who is married by the father. Putri tried to confide in finding a solution, but her extended family did not provide the answer she hoped. Her disappointed can be seen in the quotation statement as follows:

*“I tell them (mama's brothers) that my father’s wife is evil. I told them that I don’t like staying at home with her. But their answer is, "You should fight like this and this..." That is not the solution I was expecting from them. At that time, I hope they answer like, "Yes, if you don’t feel comfortable staying there, come here, stay in Bandar Buat (a place of the maternal family house).” But that is not the answer that came out from their mouths. It's been a long time, I also forgot what they said, but certainly, their answers did not match with my expectations] (Putri, II: 64)*

Instead of perceiving emotional support, the maternal family often makes Putri feel uncomfortable because they continually talk about her parents' divorce issues in the past, which makes Putri withdraw from them. Putri assessed that her parents' divorce caused her mother's family, which has initially been close and loved her, to become far away. Putri determined that this happened because her father no longer provided financial assistance to the mother's family as usual, so they no longer loved her. The conflict between Putri and her mother also contributed to the estrangement of maternal kinship.

What happened to Putri described something contrary to the matrilineal culture, first because Putri lived with her father instead of her mother. Second, because the mother's relatives do not provide any assistance to her, even though the child should be the responsibility of the mother and the mother's relatives, an explanation for this situation might be because Putri's father was not a Minangnese. He is a descendant of the Batak Mandailing tribe (another tribe of Indonesian) who had a patrilineal kinship, so he felt that he had a responsibility towards his children.

Based on the experience of the three participants, it can be concluded that extended family support can mitigate the impact of parental divorce (Kang, 2019) through direct support to participants, as well as through assistance provided to single mothers in meeting the needs of children. The situation offers better opportunities for children to get positive outcomes so that they are more able to adapt and free from maladaptive behavior (Lamela, Figueiredo,

Bastos, & Feinberg, 2016; Layne, 2015; Parent, Jones, Forehand, Cuellar, & Shoulberg, 2013). The extended family assistance make mothers possible to maintain supervision for their children and prevent them from negatives environmental influenced (Moore & Buehler, 2011). In short, social support provided by an extended maternal family can improve maternal care quality.

But the extended maternal family support only arises when the biological parent cannot carry out his role. For example, the Rima experience of receiving a lot of support provided by her maternal family after her mother left for Jambi following her new husband. Another example is Annisa, who also received financial aid because her parents were unable to meet these needs.

Nuclear families are the primary source of social support

It has been explained above that the extended maternal family has a role as a source of social support for parental divorced children. But actually, the primary support is still mother and siblings. Participants Annisa and Rima both stated that the mother is the person who is most concerned with their welfare and tries to meet the needs of their children's lives with whatever they have. Only if forced, their mother will ask for help from her brothers. The following is Annisa and Rima's statement that illustrates the significant role of mothers as a primary caregiver after divorce.

*"It's great that Mama is here, ma'am, like how she used all her saving golds (Rima started to cry) ... she had around 28 gr gold, and she was willing to sell (to make the ends met) until she has no more because she sells it." (Rima I: 102). "Mom asked for help only when it's very tight as if we need a large amount of money for us." (Rima I: 110)*

*Mother is the one who never disappointed me, she always assisting me and meet all my needs, for example when I need money, she always tries to fulfill it (Annisa II: 110)*

Besides mothers, the primary support was also obtained from their eldest siblings. Both participants have an older brother or sister who is willing to work after graduating from high school to support their mother and younger siblings. When they have a job, they are quite generous in giving their income to the mothers and siblings, not only to cover their daily needs but also to fulfill secondary needs. The following excerpts from Annisa and Rima's statements that describe the support received from their eldest siblings.

*"... right after he graduated from high school, he then worked a few times, so he sends money to me, giving me pocket money during high school. When I was in High School, I felt I have the most money in my whole life because besides being offered by my brother, my mother also gave me money. He sent me around one million and five hundred rupiahs per month, even more at several times." (Annisa I: 201).*

For Annisa, that amount of money is very significant, because the average pocket money around is only two hundred thousand rupiahs a month. Even so, she did not then waste her money on snacks but saving it to attend English lessons. In contrast to Annisa's older brother, who prefers sending cash, Rima's sister uses her income to take her family on a picnic. This activity is not something that can be held by Rima and her family in the past.

*“If my older sister is received a monthly salary, we are all taken along to Bukittinggi (one of the tourist destinations in West Sumatera, Indonesia), or we go to Mifan (Waterpark, another tourist destination) together. It was so refreshing, and it was a bit happy.” (Rima, I: 128).*

The support provided by the parents and older siblings to the participants cannot be separated from the presence or absence of conflict between them. Annisa said she was very close to her mother and older brother from childhood until the time this study was conducted. They are accustomed to telling each other about their situations and problems. Although living far apart because participants took higher education and her brother migrated, their communication remained smooth with the help of a cellphone.

The same relationship also happened to Rima with her mother and siblings, far apart, but still, keep in contact. Although she claimed to feel not too close to her mother because previously, she had often been left overseas, at least at this time, Rima did not have any conflict with her. Judging from the situation of her relationship with her mother in the past, Rima views her current conflict-free relationship with her as something positive. Rima felt very resentful of her mother because she was the one who filed for divorce from father. Especially at that time, her mother immediately established a romantic relationship with another man after divorce. Rima's relationship with her sister has also been very close since childhood, although occasionally quarreling and reconciling. It is this closeness that fosters the care of the mother and siblings to the participants.

In contrast, Putri's relation with her mother and older brother is not as good as Annisa and Rima. The conflict between Rima and her mother began when her mother refused to bring her after the divorce. She felt abandoned by her departure mother. Their relationship had improved, but then deteriorated, and even worse, when she was caught in her parental conflict over the joint property.

Since she was little, Putri felt that she was not too close to her mother because she was jealous that her mother paid more attention to her brothers than her. Even mothers were often jealous and competed with Putri to get the attention of fathers who were considered to spoil her. Putri also does not feel close to her brother for the same reason. Poor relations between Putri and her mother and brothers prevented her from getting social support from both sources, even worse, from her extended maternal family. It can be concluded that the quality of relations manifested in providing social support.

The consequences of social support for the recipient

Social support given by extended maternal relatives to mothers and their children is not free from impacts such as unwritten obligations that must be done by recipients to providers. If the requirement was violated, it would lead to a relational conflict between them.

Recipients of support feel required to be independent immediately

Even though they receive a variety of social support from extended maternal family, the relief is temporary. Only provided until the nuclear family capable of overcoming their problems. For example, Rima's extended family gave a lot of help to Rima's mother and siblings when they were still in school. The assistance began to decrease when his eldest sister had graduated from high school and started working to support her nuclear family. After her

sister got married and could no longer provide for her mother and siblings, her relatives encouraged her mother to remarry. The purpose of the marriage is the mother will have a partner who helps her support the children. Rima described the powerlessness of the mother to reject the family's advice, as well as Rima, who could not do anything even though she never really wanted her mother to remarry.

*"So they (mother's family) look for (match), and found, still come from the same village too, mama has felt forced. She is in a condition where she has been cornered so that she has to accept (the marriage). Because if she didn't receive it, it would be quite substantial consequences. There is a possibility that she will be ignored by her family. "Yes, just get married, please accept, if not, we will raise our hands (won't help anymore)" That's how my mother's family said at that time ."(Rima, I: 162).*

When finally Rima's mother remarried, *Mamak* no longer routinely visited her family when delivering merchandise to Padang because he thought that there was a stepfather who responsible for the whole family. But when the mother followed her husband to migrate to Jambi and Rima had to live alone with her brother, *Mamak* returned routinely to visit her.

*"(When) mom has remarried, (Mamak) still there (visit) ma'am. Only the frequency is not as often as before. It was when Mom and her husband were still at home at that time." (Rahmi, I: 232).*

*"When my brother and I lived together at Lubuk Buaya (Rima's house), Mak Dang (the Mamak) returned visiting routinely, looking back again." (Rahmi, I: 234).*

Annisa's mother had also thought of finding a husband to help her support the children and stop relying on grandmother's pension fund. However, because her children strictly forbid her to remarry, the obligation to provide falls to Annisa's eldest brother, who immediately worked after graduating from high school. Likewise, when Annisa wanted to continue her studies after graduating from high school, Annisa relied on him too for assistance instead of her relatives.

*"Then for tuition fees, because my brother works, it means I can have it from my brother. That is why I can go to college. Then I said to my brother, "Iwan (her brother's name), I want to go to college," "Okay, I will help," he said." (Annisa I: 259).*

However, when her brother was sick and unable to pay for Annisa's tuition, the mother's relatives finally agreed to help, even though the primary assistance was still allocated from her grandmother's pension. Because a college education is considered not a basic need, such as high school education, maternal relatives seem to be somewhat reluctant to provide financial assistance to participants. The reason is that the tuition is expensive, and they prefer Annisa would getting a job instead of going to college.

*"Mak Tuo, as I said before, is a bit objection because the tuition fee is costly. Then the neighbor also asked why I did not choose to work." (Annisa, I: 378).*

It can be concluded that if needed, the mother's relatives are still willing to provide support. This phenomenon shows a shift in the matrilineal kinship, in which the role of the extended maternal family has been replaced by the nuclear family (Anjela & Razif, 2014; Syahrul, 2017).

### Feeling a burden for extended maternal families

According to the tradition of the matrilineal kinship system, the welfare of a child is the responsibility of *Mamak*. All three participants were aware of this right, reflected in Annisa's statement quoting when explaining what her mother's relatives should have done:

*"Of course they (mother's siblings) must help me because they have to provide their sisters (my mother). They are her siblings, so they must support (my mother) because it is their obligation."*  
*"(Annisa, II: 194).*

Or Rima's statement when explaining the reason why her *Mamak* regularly visits them when distributing his wares to Padang.

*"Later, on the way home, he will stop by the house to check our condition, because he was a Mamak, his position made sure his niece's life was safe" (Rima, I: 115).*

and the statement of Putri's dissatisfaction with the absence of her *Mamak* from his obligation as quoted above.

Even though they understand their right to get social support from their relatives, there is a feeling of hesitation that arises in Rima and Annisa. Especially in the form of financial support from their *Mamak*, as can be seen from the statement below.

*"I feel bad (receiving financial assistance) because Mamak also has children to support."* (Annisa I: 353)

*"I feel reluctant because Mamak also has many children who need education fees. So I aware of my position too. I don't want to make things more complicated."* (Rima I: 240)

*"Of course, I feel reluctant to Mamak, his wife, and his children. We (my nuclear family) feel we have become a burden for the extended family."* (Rima I: 244).

Those statements contradict with the participant's understanding of *Mamak's* "obligation" towards them. It seems that because the social support provided by *Mamak* is not come from managing inheritance property, but taken from *Mamak's* livelihoods. Some sources say that the obligation of *Mamak* to his matrilineal family is limited to the management of heirlooms. At the same time, the livelihood property becomes the right of his wife and his children.

The feeling of reluctance did not arise when participants talked about the "*Rumah Gadang*" as hereditary inheritance property, because the house was intended for them. Even Putri is willing to face the mother to defend her rights. From the explanation, it seems that the existence of inheritance is quite crucial for women and children, other than kinship itself. Because without inheritance, the support given by *Mamak* to the nephew doesn't seem to be optimal, because the *Mamak* must prioritize his own family first before his nephew.

### Compliance vs. conflict

The consequence of receiving social support is the hope that the recipient will carry out his role as a family member led by *Mamak*, the support provider. One of the "social expectations" of this role is to obey *Mamak's* decisions. It was briefly illustrated above about the "compliance" of Rima's mother to remarry with the candidate

offered by her relatives because marriage is considered the best solution to resolve the situation (financial problems). The obedience made the relationship between Rima and her extended maternal family harmonious.

In contrast to Rima, whose mother complies with her family's decision, Annisa's mother is less obedient to her relatives in holding the mandate to spend grandmother's pension for daily needs and caring for her. As a "reward" to use the grandmother's money for living expenses, the mother asked to take care of grandma. But because grandmother's condition is senile and often makes statements that offend the mother, sometimes she leaves her alone at home to visit the neighbors to release stress. When her siblings reprimanded Annisa's mother, she fought instead of being obedient, so then quarrels are inevitable between mother and all her siblings.

*"Well, about her (mother's) sister, maybe she is upset with things like that (when mother left grandma alone). Then when my mother was advised, she didn't accept it well. She doesn't just take it. She prefers fighting." (Annisa II: 156).*

The conflict between the mother and her siblings, although later improved, made Annisa feel angry with her maternal family and intended to take her mother away from "Rumah Gadang" immediately. Annisa's anger made her relationship with her relatives also turn out to be less warm, at least from her perception. Because Annisa can control herself well in front of her family, then their relationship can be said to be okay.

Putri, who has never felt received social support from maternal relatives, said she was disappointed and angry. It made her withdraw from them, shown by the reduced intensity of her visit recently compared to the beginning of his parents' divorce.

*"Earlier, when my parents have just divorced, I was still close to my (maternal) family, always happy to meet them, and playing with my cousins. But then I know what their real nature is. So the more often I meet them, the more uncomfortable I am. Meeting him is uncomfortable, meeting her is unpleasant, so I keep away from them." (Putri, II: 257).*

Putri's statement described the relationship, which made her uncomfortable even though there was no open conflict. At the time of the interview, Putri said that for two years, she had not visited her extended maternal family in the Idul Fitri holiday (Moslem holiday) even though the day was identified as the moment for a family to strengthen the relations between members.

Using the perspective of social identity theory, providing support in the same kinship group (in-group) is inseparable from the social role that attached to the provider position in the group. The absence of a leader from his role can threaten the sustainability of the relationship as happened to Putri (Halabi & Nadler, 2010; Lakey & Cohen, 2000).

#### **IV CONCLUSION**

It can be concluded that the frequency of social support provided by the extended maternal family to participants is quite varied; some even do not get. The form of the help provided also varies according to needs, but the main thing is financial support for mothers who are not working. Participants interpret support, no matter how



small it is, as a manifestation of recognition of their existence as family members. They feel that extended maternal families should assist members in need, but on the other hand, they also feel a burden for their relatives. Family support is interpreted as a form of attention, and the lack of it will be construed as ignorance and neglect of those threatening family relationships.

Another finding in this study is about the recent matrilineal kinship system in Minangkabau. The experience of the three participants in gaining social support from her maternal relatives shows that there was a shift in the kinship system that has initially been communal, become nuclear. The extended maternal family is no longer become the primary caregiver for children as prearranged. They become a secondary support provider that only functions if the nuclear family experiences difficulties. The Minangnese does not change the matrilineal system to another one. They still maintain their role as matrilineal families who take care of each other, at least until the nuclear family back on track as a support system for the children. The existence of the “Rumah Gadang,” which is still maintained by the Minangkabau community, turns out to play an essential role in the welfare of the participants after the parental divorce because of the inheritance functions as social security.

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Table 1. Background of participants

	<b>Annisa</b>	<b>Rima</b>	<b>Putri</b>
<b>Age</b>	21	22	23
<b>Birth order</b>	2nd child of 2 siblings (1 brother)	2 <sup>nd</sup> child of 4 siblings (one older sister and two little brothers)	2 <sup>nd</sup> child of 3 siblings (1 older brother and one little brother) and have two other sisters from the same mother but different father.
<b>Parental divorce description</b>	When Annisa was 12 years old, her parents had a big fight, and through the mother's family meeting, her father was asked to leave home. Divorce was dropped by a personal letter, but there is no official divorce decree from the court.	When her father dropped the “ <i>talak</i> ” (the words using by Muslim man to his wife as a sign of the end of the marriage) and started living separately, Rima was 10 <sup>th</sup> years old. The Divorce happened after her parents returned from overseas (Jakarta), but kept it a secret until her mother filed for an official decree through a court when Rima was 14 <sup>th</sup> years old.	At the age of 15 <sup>th</sup> , her father caught the mother having an affair and was reconciled by the maternal family, but then her mother ran away with her boyfriend and her father sued for divorce. The process was kept secret from Putri until later she knew this information from relatives and neighbors.
<b>Fathers' occupation</b>	Barber	Clothing seller	An employee of the state-owned enterprise
<b>Fathers' income</b>	More or less Rp. 2.000.000 per month (regional minimum wage standard was Rp. 1.800.000)	More or less Rp. 2.000.000 per month	More or less Rp. 7.000.000 per month
<b>Mothers' occupation</b>	House-wife	House-wife and part-timer seller of Lontong (a traditional breakfast food in Sumatera Barat)	House-wife
<b>Fathers' marital status after divorced</b>	Has remarried a widow with three children (but does not have a child with his current wife)	Single, never married since divorced from the participants' mother.	Has been married twice after divorcing from the participants' mother. (The second wife died of illness and is currently married to a widow with one child, but does not have a child with his current wife)
<b>Mothers' marital status after divorce</b>	Single, ever had a closeness with other men after divorce but never remarried.	She remarried but has no children from her current marriage.	Has been remarried twice after divorcing from the participant's father. Has one child from the second husband, divorced, and has one other child from the third husband.

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<b>Post-divorce living arrangement</b>	Occupying “Rumah Gadang” (a maternal property home) with her mother, grandmother, and brother in Maninjau, one of the cities in West Sumatera. At present, participants are also live in a boarding house because she is studying in a different town.	Occupying “ <i>Rumah Gadang</i> ” in Padang, West Sumatera, accompanied by “ <i>Maktuo</i> ” (mothers’ sister) at night, because, her mother migrated to Jambi (another province next to west Sumatera) following her husband. She brought her two younger siblings, while her older sister followed her husband to Kalimantan (another island of Indonesia). At present, she also lives in a boarding house because of study.	Occupy the house that his father bought after he sold the old house that he acquired while still married to his mother. She had lived with a stepmother (father's second wife) after her father remarried, but conflicted, so the father decided to rent a house with his wife. She also lived with her sister-in-law when her brother married, but then they moved after having children. His younger brother lives with his paternal grandmother in Pasaman (another town next to Padang, West Sumatera).
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