



# Finding Meaning Through Semiotic Study on Nineteenth Century Mosques in Agam, Sumatra Barat

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**Abstract.** Nineteenth-century mosques in Agam, Sumatra Barat, are an example of tangible heritage that can picture how Islam religion and Minangkabau custom blends in Sumatra Barat, especially in Agam Kecamatan. These mosques are Masjid Bingkudu, Masjid Kubang Putih, Masjid Pincuran Gadang, and Masjid Siti Manggopoh. From various elements the mosques have, it can draw meanings to know how Minangkabau custom and Islam religion unite. The method to get the meanings is by Peirce's semiotics with his sign triangle model. With this method, each sign in the mosques split into representamen, object, and interpretant, which can explain the meanings. By combined interpretations from all signs that made with Peirce's sign triangle, we know how Minang custom and Islam religion blends. It can harmonically cohere, it can be seen in mosque's elements.

**Keywords:** Mosque · Islam Religion · Minangkabau Custom · Interpretation · Semiotic · Peirce's Sign Triangle

## 1 Introduction

One of material culture made by human is mosque. As building, mosque is one of the manifestations of Islamic architecture [1]. In Islam, architecture is generally used for worship, celebration of religious events, and teaching. Islam does not put any rule of how mosque made, physically. The whole world can be a mosque, which means Muslims are allowed to worship everywhere as long as they follow the rules of worship [2]. One function of the mosque is to accommodate prayer needs. In connection with mosques and architecture, according to Haris [1], mosques mainly used as places of worship and are one aspect of material culture. Ancient mosques in Indonesia generally had local culture influence. This is enough to describe the acculturation of culture that occurred in Indonesia, which directly or indirectly appeared in the building style, of each mosque. In Islam, there is an order to build a, but there is no specific provisions on the form so that Muslims tend to be free to build and customize the style of the building. Thus, the concept of the mosque emerged as a cultural product that described the characteristics of the related society [1]. Mosques in Indonesia architecturally have their own characteristics that are different from the mosque architecture in countries

with majority Muslim populations. One of its character is a multilevel roof; square plan with front or side porches; solid and high foundation; and has a large ditch on the front or side [3]. Many of these characteristics are found in Javanese mosques, some of which are also found in many mosques in Sumatra.

In Indonesia, art expressions in mosque architecture can be seen clearly in the style of the building. The mosque building style in Indonesia is very diverse because each mosque built based on different geographical conditions, local culture and technology, so each mosque has its own characteristic [1]. One area which has ancient mosques with a distinctive building style is Agam, Sumatra Barat. This study takes 4 mosques built in the nineteenth century. Those four mosques are Masjid Bingkudu in Kecamatan Baso, Masjid Kubang Putih in Kecamatan Banuhampu, Masjid Pincuran Gadang in Kecamatan Matur, and Masjid Siti Manggopoh in Kecamatan Lubuk Basung. Those four mosques are still use by the locals for praying, Quran study, and other activities commonly carried in the mosque.

Kabupaten Agam is one of the oldest occupied area in Sumatra Barat. Before, Agam region was formerly known as Luhak Agam. The Minangkabau area which inhabited first was Luhak Nan Tigo, consist of Luhak Tanah Datar, Luhak Agam, and Luhak Limapuluh Koto. Therefore, the *luhak* has a long history so the local custom is exist deeper on its people than other regions in Sumatra Barat. The cultural heritage that is present in the three *luhaks* can represent indigenus Minangkabau customs and the influence of strong Islamic religion, without many other cultural influences. This study chose Agam because it has a larger number of ancient mosques than the other two *luhaks*. Compared to Luhak Tanah Datar and Luhak Lima Puluh Koto, Luhak Agam has greater number of ancient mosques.

The nineteenth century period was chosen because in this century, Islam in the Minangkabau region was no longer at the dissemination stage, but was already in the development stage. At this time, major Minangkabau people are Muslim already, and had new local cultures related to Islamic values, such as surau education. Furthermore, there was Padri War in 1821–1838 [4]. Padri War is an unique and paradoxical event because it shows great conflict between custom and religion. This research also prove that during the Padri War, there is still a part of the Minangkabau community that blends custom and religion well, that can be prove by the mosques built in that time.

Based on those reasons, this study aims to reveal the meaning that the mosques carry on its building style through the semiotics method. Semiotic itself, according to Preucel [5], is a multidisciplinary field that study how humans produce and understand signs. These triangles are part of Peirce's trichotomy. Peirce's trichotomy [5] alludes the relationship of signs to their objects. The meaning finding is about to understand how customs and religious blends in the Minangkabau people, especially in nineteenth century Agam.

The Minangkabau tribe is a known as people who had strong custom and religion in their daily life. One popular proverb from Minangkabau is 'adaik basandi syarak, syarak basandi kitabullah', which means 'custom is based on the *Shari'a*, *Shari'a* is based on the Al-Quran' [4]. This proverb shows that custom and religion blends well in Minangkabau culture. How customs and religion cohered can be proven from its people's material. Those mosques in this study had elements in the building that can be

reviewed by semiotic method to find out its meaning. Especially with the Peirce sign triangle. This sign triangle is used in studying the elements in the mosque. The review can explain the meaning or interpretant contained in each element in the mosques.

## 2 Method

The research method applied in this research is Sharer and Ashmore method of archaeological research, and supported by the implementation of its semiotic triangle sign Peirce. Sharer and Ashmore mention that archaeology research is divided into seven stages, consist of formulation, implementation, data collection, data processing, analysis, interpretation, and publication. These seven stages are interrelated as cycles. The application of cultural semiotics within Peirce's sign triangle is carried out at the analysis stage.

Based on that method, this research will first examine the building style of the mosques, and then interpret the elements in its building style by semiotics to picturing cultural meanings in nineteenth century Agam.

## 3 History of Islam and Minangkabau Mosque, Cultural Customs and Religion Values, and Peirce Semiotic

### 3.1 Islamic History in Minangkabau

The original Minangkabau area is *luhak nan tigo*. This area located around Mount Marapi, and is considered the center of Minangkabau culture [6]. Islam came in Sumatra Barat at the end of the 14–15th century, and influenced Minangkabau kingdom. In 684 AD there is China news that reported there is no Arab community in Minangkabau. Based on the Tome Pires, in the 16th century, there have been many Islamic kingdoms already in Sumatra. Some others kingdoms that are not convert to Islam yet, possibly adopting non-Hindu beliefs [3].

Evidence that Islam already existed in Minangkabau at the end of the 15th century was found in an ancient manuscript from Kerinci which tells the story of Siak Lengih Malin Sabiyatullah from Minangkabau to introduce Islam in Kerinci [4]. Previously, Sumatra had interacted with Arabs long before Islam existence, because spices in Sumatra attracted Arabs. Gradually, Islamic settlements emerged in Aceh, then continued to Minangkabau. Pagaruyung was a kingdom that got great Islam influenced in the 16th century. The Islam influence was brought by travellers and religious teachers from Aceh or Malacca. In the 17th century, Pagaruyung became an Islamic kingdom, with the first Islamic king named Sultan Alif. Since then, the title of officials became Islamic; imam, khatib, *bilal*, and *mualim*. Marsden [7] who travelled in the 18th century on Sumatra, said that the people of Minangkabau Kingdom were all Muslims. He also mentioned that the Malay people are not religious fanatics, not showing antipathy to another religion.

In the nineteenth century, there was also a great war in which the conflict was based on the disagreement of the religious people with the custom people, namely the Padri War. Padri War was triggered by the emergence of bad habits in the lives of Minangkabau

people, like gambling, drinking liquor [4]. The dignitaries cannot prevent, some even participate. The Padri consisting of ulama intends to improve this situation. One of them is Tuanku Koto Tuo from Agam who teaches Islam based on the Qur'an and hadith. Ulama scholars who try to uphold Islamic values in the midst of the Minangkabau indigenous alliance as a group we now know as Padri. In their resistance to the indigenous people, they encountered difficulties because the indigenous people were assisted by the Dutch.

### 3.2 Custom Value of Minangkabau

Custom or custom values of Minangkabau are norm that applies in Minangkabau society with their respective meanings. The word 'custom' (or *adat*) itself is still unclear. *Adat* may come from Arabic which means tradition, at the same time it may also come from Sanskrit which is combination of a which means no, and *dato* which means objects or material, so custom means something that is intangible [8]. Custom is something that comes from God, like the *Shari'a*. However, custom only functions in the life of the world, not brought to the hereafter as *Shari'a* [9]. Based on this explanation, it can be concluded that the Minangkabau people consider custom important because custom is a rule from God as a way of life in the world.

*Adat* for the Minangkabau is a whole culture that can change. There is proverb *stated kain dipakai usang, adaik dipakai baru* (cloth that used will worn out, custom used will freshen out), which illustrate that custom is something that long-lasting and dynamic. Minangkabau do not know dictatorial and totalitarian leaders. This is supported by the concept of *nagari* as an autonomous region that has its own head [10]. Based on such governmental system where *ninik mamak*, *cadiak pandai*, and the *alim ulama* are seated in parallel, can be seen that the Minangkabau people positioning custom and religion as two things that equally important.

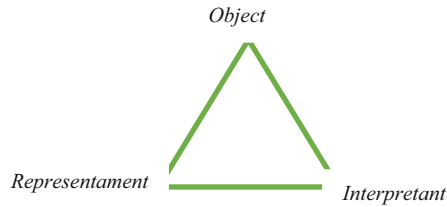
### 3.3 Islamic Value in Minangkabau

The application of Islamic law, or *Shari'a*, or *syarak* in the Minang language, is close related to the religion of Islam. *Syarak* literally means 'the road to the place of drinking, the path that must be followed' [8]. Therefore, even though Islamic values are firmly embedded in the Minangkabau community, it cannot be denied that custom still stick strong in their life, and it cohered synergically with Islam.

Islam is a religion that embraced by the major Minangkabau people. The value of Islam in the Minangkabau community includes the *Shari'a* and the laws that are clear in the Qur'an and hadith [11]. Islam is a religion that emphasize the concept of *aqidah*, oneness of God, and worship, and there is no tolerance with those concepts. While in social affairs, Islam is more accommodative, as long as do not contradictive to Qur'an. Thus, the process of cultural adaptation in Indonesia, which is often considered as syncretic, cannot be avoid. Moreover, the spread of Islam in Indonesia take place through a cultural approach, of which the previous culture influence was a Hindu-Buddhist [11].

### 3.4 Peirce's Semiotic

The theory used in this study is the semiotic theory. According to Preucel, semiotics is a multidisciplinary field about how humans produce and understand signs. Signs



**Fig. 1.** Peirce theories of trichotomy

are ideas, words, images, sounds, and objects that affect the communication process. Therefore, semiotics can be applied in many disciplines, one of which is archaeology, which using material culture as a sign. Semiotics is useful for expressing the character, origin, and evolution of signs. Overall, the sign system has a function for humans to describe meaning in their world; expressing similarities between cultures. Semiotics are interested in how the mind works in understanding signs. Its related to archaeology that semiotic can be used to trace the origin and evolution of material culture [12].

Charles Sanders Peirce is known as one of the great philosophers of America. According to Peirce, semiotics as a science is something important and the basic types of several possibilities of semiosis, with semiosis, which is meant here are the types of signs [5].

Peirce's semiotic was also developed by Danesi and Perron, who mentioned human as homo culturalists, namely creatures who always seek for meaning (meaning-seeking-creature). Peirce also thinks that semiosis is exist in all forms of activity in the whole universe. One of his contributions to science is a metaphysical theory called synechism; the view that the universe exists as a continuous unit and increases the complexity and relevance of semiosis [5].

One of the most widely used Peirce theories is trichotomy. Peirce has a theory of signs and relationships between signs which includes three interrelated elements that consist of: signs, objects, and interpretants. These three elements are depicted in the sign triangle (Fig. 1).

In this sign triangle, there is a relationship between signs. This relationship is divided into three icons, indices and symbols. Following are the differences in each of these relationships according to Preucel [5]:

- *Icon*, is sign that refer to certain objects based on their characteristics and similarities.
- *Index*, is a sign that shows something that is the cause of that object.
- *Symbol*, is sign that point to a particular object based on the relationship of certain ideas.

Based on these explanations, this study use the Peirce sign triangle regarding the relationship of the sign with the objects of icon, index, and symbol in making interpretations of the elements of the style of mosque building.

#### **4 Nineteenth Century Mosques in Agam, Sumatra Barat**

The archaeological data used in this study are four ancient mosques that built in the nineteenth century in the Agam.

#### 4.1 Masjid Bingkudu

The Masjid Bingkudu placed in Jorong Bingkudu. The north and east are bordered by community gardens, and the south and west are bordered by footpaths. The name registered in BPCB Sumatra Barat is the Masjid Raya Bingkudu, because this mosque is fairly large. Another name for this mosque is the Masjid Bengkudu. The owner of this mosque is Nagari Balai Gurah, while the management is BPCB Sumatra Barat. The Masjid Bingkudu was built by Haji Salam, Lareh Canduang, in 1823 AD.

The Masjid Bingkudu stands surrounded by fields belonging to Jorong Bingkudu residents. This building was built with west entrance. There is a pool in the south and a female dormitory building in the east. In the northern part of the mosque, there is one tomb of Syech Ahmad Thaher, founder of Ulumi Syriah's Madrasah, an Islamic school. This madrasa was built in 1922, then closed in 1977. In 1992, the madrasa was reopened and runs until now. In addition to one tomb in this yard, there are also several other tombs located on the roadside before the entrance to the mosque.

The main material used by this mosque is wood. The outside wall of the mosque is painted in light blue. This mosque is glued by pegs, not using nails. On the walls of the mosque and on the crossbar in the prayer room there are Minangkabau carvings. The main building of the Masjid Bingkudu is  $21 \times 21$  m, with walls made of wood and painted blue. On some parts of the outer wall there are decorative items.

There is 25 pillars in the main prayer. This composition consist of 1 main pillar (*tiang macu*) and 24 support pillars. These pillars are divided into five rows, each row has five columns. The main pillar is located in the center of the room, precisely in the third row and third column. The main pillar has a hexagonal shape and has a dark blue section at the bottom. At the bottom of this pillar, there are rhombus ornaments. The truss is smaller, has a hexagonal shape so it looks relatively round. Between the pillars, there is a wooden board across the top that connects one pole to the other. These boards are carved with decorations painted red and gold.

The pulpit (*mimbar*) of the Masjid Bingkudu is shaped like an L, not rectangular like other general pulpit. With the shape of a pulpit like this, khatib can climb the pulpit from two sides. This pulpit is made of wood and has carvings on various sides.

The roof of the main building of the Masjid Bingkudu is quadrangular pyramid-shaped with three overlays and is made of tile material in dark grey. In intercropping, there is a space. This space is a board with round holes for ventilation. It has *mustaka* with small dome-shaped roof. This is a new part added to the mosque.

The minaret of Masjid Bingkudu was built around 1957, is a replacement for the old minaret. This minaret has an octagonal plan and has a height of 11 m. Although it was built separately, the main building and the minaret seemed united because the two buildings were connected by the same porch. The minaret is also blue with windows under the dome roof. At the bottom of the dome roof and overlapping roof, there is a glass window. The minaret also has an overlapping roof with a dome above it. There are no specific decorations in this minaret.

#### 4.2 Masjid Kubang Putih

Masjid Kubang Putih is located in Jorong Kubang Putih. It is on the edge of the highway. This mosque was built in 1810. The name Kubang Putih was taken from the name of

the *nagari* where the mosque was built. Now owned by the *lorong*. Overall, the style of building this mosque is quite influenced by Dutch architecture. This mosque faces to northwest.

The main building of the Masjid Kubang Putih consists of the main prayer room and the foyer which is connected to the mosque minaret. The main building of Masjid Kubang Putih is rectangular with a size of  $23.75 \times 21.20$  m. This building has a relatively high pit and a mobile porch. The walls of the outer building are made of walls and are ivory yellow. The walls of the building are painted white.

The main prayer room is a rectangle that has four pillars that have been described previously. The walls are white, the bottom half has white tiles. This space is divided into three parts; mihrab section, male *shaf* section, and female *shaf* section. The mihrab section are  $7.8 \times 2.5$  m wide with two pillars in the center. Mihrab is between the two pillars, measuring  $1.35 \times 2.85$  m, and 3 m high. In this section there are two pulpits, the Imam prayer area, and a shelf for store Qur'ans. Male *shaf* and female *shaf* are divided into 1:1 proportions with an hijab (separator) curtain.

The pulpit is made of concrete material, and is colored like a mosque's wall, which is white. The Masjid Kubang Putih pulpit has a simple and many ornaments. If seen from the number of years printed on the top of the pulpit that reads 1911 and 133 (Arabic numerals), there is a possibility that this pulpit was made in 1911 AD.

The main building roof of the Masjid Kubang Putih consists of two blocks. The uppermost arrangement is in the form of half the pyramid, as many as 4 pieces, while the bottom arrangement is pyramid-shaped.

The minaret is located east of the main building. Twelve in shape with a dome roof and three balconies on the minaret body. *Mustaka* above this dome is a new feature, in the form of a vertical pole that has three levels. In some parts of the minaret's body, there are several decorations. Access to this minaret is through the porch of the main building of the mosque.

### 4.3 Masjid Pincuran Gadang

Masjid Pincuran Gadang placed in the Pincuran Gadang valley. The name of this mosque was taken from the valley where this mosque is located, Pincuran Gadang valley. The word *pincuran* itself means a water spring, and *gadang* means big. In accordance with the existence of two large water springs in this valley. According to information from BPCB Sumatra Barat (2018), this mosque was built in 1885, while according to local residents, this mosque was built in 1825. The Masjid Pincuran Gadang is located in the middle of the Pincuran Gadang valley, so that the mosque complex is located between rice fields, water springs and valleys. The entrance is in the northwest facing the mosque. Near this mosque there are two springs which are streamed into the mosque's ablution room.

The mosque building is surrounded by a square wall with 0.5 m high, 28 m length and a 26 m width, while the entrance to the mosque compound is located on the south side. The mosque building itself is composed of three rectangular shapes. The rectangle in the center is the largest square with a size of  $15.5 \times 15.5$  m, this is used as the main prayer room. The rectangle on the west side measures  $5.5 \times 7.5$  m, this part functions as a mihrab. The rectangle on the east side measures  $4.9 \times 4.8$  m, this part now functions

as a place of women's prayer. On the outer edge of the building, there is a shallow ditch with 40 cm wide, that drains water from the spring of Batu Baselo north of the mosque. This ditch surrounds the entire building. The main prayer hall is  $15.5 \times 15.5$  m in size, not including mihrab. Mihrab itself measures  $5.4 \times 5.4$  m.

Pillars in the Masjid Pincuran Gadang has the same pattern and is made of wood. The pillars in the main prayer room consists of 1 main pillar (*tiang macu*) and 8 octagonal pillars. These pillars line three rows. The main pillar is located in the center of the room, with a larger size and a slightly different pattern from the truss, decorated with flower carvings and distiller Arabic calligraphy. Meanwhile, in the women's prayer room there was only one pillar in the middle of the room, a pillar similar to a support pillar in the main room.

The pulpit currently in use is a duplicate of the original rotten and damaged pulpit. The new pulpit is made of wood, just like the original pulpit, but this new pulpit is lacquered. This pulpit is in the form of a hexagon, with horizontal and vertical gratings on its sides. This horizontal grid consists of 33 wooden sticks on each side as many as 3 sides, as a symbol of remembrance activities which generally amount to  $33 \times 3$ .

The roof of the main building of the Masjid Pincuran Gadang consists of three parts, according to the three-square plan in the building. The westernmost quadrangle has a dome-shaped roof. The rectangle in the middle has a three-roof roof. The eastern quadrangle has a pyramid-shaped roof. These three roofs are made of zinc roof.

The Masjid Pincuran Gadang minaret is located separately from the main building. It has rectangular shapes with a height of 3.5 m and around a circle of 4 m. This minaret is painted white. The roof of the minaret is made of zinc. The minaret door is made of wood and with the same color as the door of the mosque.

#### 4.4 Masjid Siti Manggopoh

Masjid Siti Manggopoh was built around 1884, on the initiative of Sheikh Abdul Muthalib known as Ungku Batu Bidai. At that time, this mosque also functioned outside the function for the place of recitation and prayer. However, it also includes community institutions. This mosque is used as a place for deliberations for the Manggopoh ethnic group, the mosque is also used as a martial arts training center led by Asik Bagindo Magek, Siti Manggopoh's husband. Siti Manggopoh herself was a woman born in Nagari Manggopoh, who was also a hero in the Manggopoh War, a war against the Dutch. Besides that, it is also a place for drafting a war strategy when fighting the Dutch under the leadership of Pak Cik Angku Padang. In front of the mosque, there is a tomb complex of warrior figures who died in the War of Manggopoh 1908.

The main building of the Masjid Siti Manggopoh is located in the west of the tomb. This building is connected to the ablution located in the east. The main building with a building where ablution has its own roof, and the roof shaped different. This main building has a closed pit. On the wall of the room, there were calligraphy drawn directly on the wall. This calligraphy is around the room.

In the main room of the Masjid Siti Manggopoh there are five pillars. Four pillars are on four sides of the room, with one main pillar (*tiang macu*) in the middle of the room. This main pillar is rectangular in shape at the bottom of the seams and octagon



at the top. On this main pillar, there are many more motives than the motif on the truss. Cylinder-shaped truss, green and yellow.

The mosque’s pulpit is made of wood, and is still original. However, to prevent damage, this pulpit have additional layer of wooden boards to protect the original carvings. The original carving is made of white board.

The roof is three-tiered with triangle shape; with a minaret-like top and two under it. The entire roof is made of zinc roof. The shape of the minaret at the top is an octagonal shape with windows on each side.

## 5 Architectural Review in Nineteenth Century Mosque in Agam

### 5.1 Architectural Review

#### 5.1.1 Roof of the Main Building





Based on that analysis of the roof elements in the four mosques in Agam (see Table 1), there is two patterns of the roof shape of an ancient mosque in Agam. The first pattern is three-tiered roof, triangle shaped. The second pattern is half-pyramid shaped, which just found in Masjid Kubang Putih. This difference is likely influenced by the period of construction of the mosque. Although it was built in the same century, the Masjid Kubang Putih was built relatively more recently than the other three mosques.

If the three-tiered roof pattern is continued to the semiosis process, the process is as follows.

The three-tiered and triangle-shaped form of *tumpang* (*representamen*) is an index that characterizes the roof of 19th century mosques in Agam Regency (*object*). This characteristic shows that the building shaded by overlapping roofs is a mosque (*interpretant*) building. In 19th century Minangkabau, buildings other than mosques, such as traditional houses or custom halls, have *gonjong* roofs.

This process is continued by with next semiosis step in which the mosque building (being *representament*) becomes a symbol of a triangular shape on a roof (*object*). This

**Table 1.** Physical Description of Roofs

Mosque Name	Photo	Physical Description
Masjid Bingkudu		Three-tiered roof, triangle shaped
Masjid Kubang Putih		Two-tiered roof, the topmost structure is consist of 4 half-pyramids, while the bottom structure is also pyramid-shaped.
Masjid Pincuran Gadang		Three-tiered roof, triangle shaped
Masjid Siti Manggopoh		Three-tiered roof, triangle shaped with minaret-shaped <i>mustaka</i>

three-tiered triangle shows the existence of a sacred or holy (*interpretant*) element. A triangle on the roof is a form that symbol of going upwards or towards God.

### 5.1.2 Pillars Composition

Based on that analysis of the pillar composition in the four mosques in Agam (see Table 2), description of the pillar composition can be concluded to two patterns. First one is patterns with one main pillar in the center, with another pillars with an odd number as total. The second pattern is the composition with an even number as total pillars. This difference is likely influenced by the period of construction of the mosque. Although it was built in the same century, the Masjid Kubang Putih was built relatively newer than the other three mosques.





If the pillars composition pattern is continued to the semiosis process, the process is as follows.

The odd number of total pillars (*representament*) is an index that shows the pillars composition of 19th century mosques in Agam (*object*). This feature shows that an odd arrangement like this allows the existence of a runway in the middle of the building (*interpretant*). A composition like this clearly shows the function of each pillar. A large pillar in the center of the room, functioned as the building’s core. Meanwhile, the supporting pillars around it have a more secondary function to support the building. These pillars have the same size and are placed in the same distance, so that the load is the same.

This process is continued by with next semiosis step in which the existence of a main pillar (being *representament*) becomes an index of the odd number of pillars (*objects*). In Islamic teachings, odd numbers are the ones that are favored by Allah (*interpretant*).

Then, the next semiosis step, the odd number that Allah like (being *representament*) becomes a symbol of an odd number (25 pillars in the Masjid Bingkudu, 9 pillars in the Masjid Pincuran Gadang, 5 pillars at the Masjid Siti Manggopoh) in each mosque

**Table 2.** Physical Description of Pillars Composition

Mosque Name	Photo	Physical Description
Masjid Bingkudu		It has 25 pillars, with 5 pillars in each row, with total 5 rows. Main pillars in the center ( <i>tiang macu</i> ) are larger than the other 24 pillars.
Masjid Kubang Putih		It has 4 pillars, arranged on 4 different sides of the mosque. The 4 pillars have the same shape and size.
Masjid Pincuran Gadang		It has 9 pillars, with 3 pillars in each row, the number of rows is 3 rows. Main pillars in the center ( <i>tiang macu</i> ) are larger than the other 8 pillars.
Masjid Siti Manggopoh		It has 5 pillars, with 4 pillars each of which is placed on 4 different side of the mosque. Main pillar in the center ( <i>tiang macu</i> ) is larger than the other 4 pillars.

(*object*). These numbers have certain meanings in the teachings of Islam (*interpretant*). Based on information from the caretakers of each mosque, these number have certain meaning in Islamic teachings. Number 25 is equal to the number of 25 prophets mentioned in the Qur'an. Number 5 is the same as the number of pillars of Islam. While for number 9, there is no specific information.





**5.1.3 Pulpit (*mimbar*)**

Based on that analysis of four pulpits of the mosque (see Table 3), it can be seen the similarity of pulpit shape, like height and space of the pulpit, so any person who stand on the pulpit are easy get attention of other people on the room. With this position, the khatib who is stand on pulpit will be the most noticed in the room. Each pulpit also has decorations.

If the pattern of pulpit which it has a height, space, and decoration, continued to the semiosis process, the process will be as follows.

The place where khatib deliver lectures (*representament*) is a symbol of the pulpit as primary part of whole building in 19th century mosques in Agam Regency (*object*). The virtue in question is that the pulpit positioning khatib as the person who is prioritized or the center of attention (*interpretant*). The position of the pulpit at the front of the main prayer room (*mihrab*), facing the congregation (*jamaah*), and has a higher footing, positioning the preacher who is in the pulpit is the center of attention and as the topmost priority.

**Table 3.** Physical Description of Pulpit

Mosque Name	Photo	Physical Description
Masjid Bingkudu		L-shaped pulpit. This pulpit has five steps. The pulpit walls are full of decorations.
Masjid Kubang Putih		Rectangular pulpit with three steps. Based on the number of years on the pulpit, the existence of this pulpit is newer than the building of the mosque.
Masjid Pincuran Gadang		The pulpit is in the form of a hexagon with 33 grids on each side.
Masjid Siti Manggopoh		The pulpit is a rectangular shape with a wall with decorative carvings. This carving is closed by wooden layer for preservation purposes, but on one side of the pulpit, a small portion of this carving is displayed.

### 5.1.4 Minaret




Based on that analysis of the minarets of mosques (see Table 4), it can be seen that mosque divided into two, one is mosque with minaret, and the other one is mosque without minarets. From four mosques, three of those have minarets, and the one, Masjid Siti Manggopoh, do not have minaret. The function of the minaret on the three mosques is as a place to make the prayer call easier to reach people and as a marker of the existence of the mosque.

If the pattern of minarets continued to the semiosis process, the process will be as follows.

Building in the mosque (*representament*) is index the minarets of the mosque (*objects*). This shows that these minarets have a function to expand the sound range of azan (*interpretant*).

This semiosis process can be to the next step in which sound range of azan (being *representament*) is an index of there are minarets (*objects*). The minaret form of the serves to signify the existence of a mosque from afar, so that people can easily find out the exact existence of the mosque simply by looking at the top of the minaret from the distance (*interpretant*).

**Table 4.** Physical Description of Minaret

Mosque Name	Photo	Physical Description
Masjid Bingkudu		The minaret body is octagonal, blue-painted with windows under the dome. The roof of the minaret is three overlays with a dome above it.
Masjid Kubang Putih		The minaret body is dodecagonal (12-sided) with a dome roof and three balconies on the minaret body. In some parts of the body of the minaret, there are decorations.
Masjid Pincuran Gadang		The minaret body is octagonal and painted white. The roof of the minaret is made of zinc roof.
Masjid Siti Manggopoh	None	None

### 5.2 Integration of Minangkabau Custom and Islam Religion in Nineteenth Century Mosques in Agam

Based on the former explanation of the building elements and the semiosis study, it can be described that the nineteenth century mosques of Agam have their own patterns on each building elements, as follows:

- *Roof*. Three of the four mosques have three-tiered and triangle-shaped roofs, which show the mosque as a sacred building.
- *Pillar composition*. Three of the four mosques have an odd number of total pillars, and that numbers have certain meanings in Islamic teachings.
- *Pulpit*. The pulpit in the four mosques symbolizes pulpit as most priority. In addition, each pulpit has a style that symbolizes a meaning. Three mosques have pulpits with floral motifs, and one mosque has a style that indirectly symbolizes Islamic teachings
- *Minaret*. The minaret of three mosques symbolizes the existence of a place of worship.

If combined, it can be seen that there are elements of Minangkabau custom and Islamic religion in a house of worship in the form of a mosque. From this statement, a semiosis process can be carried out further to get a picture of the integration between custom and religion in the Minangkabau community, according to the formulation of the problem. Semiosis process of nineteenth century mosques in Agam Regency is as follows (Fig. 2).

The Peirce sign triangle explains indirectly that the style of nineteenth century mosque building in Agam is a sign of the harmonious blend of customs and religion in the Minangkabau region. This analysis is taken from the semiosis process through the above three triangles of the Peirce semiosis.

The following is an explanation based on the sign triangle chart above is as follows.

Mosques (*representament*) have a building style that is generally a symbol of the identity of nineteenth century mosques in Agam (*object*). The identity of the mosques is continued as that there is an Islamic community in the Minangkabau (*interpretant*) region. The Agam is considered able to represent Islam in the Minangkabau region because Agam is one of the Luhak, the oldest occupied area, as well as the one that has the most ancient mosques.

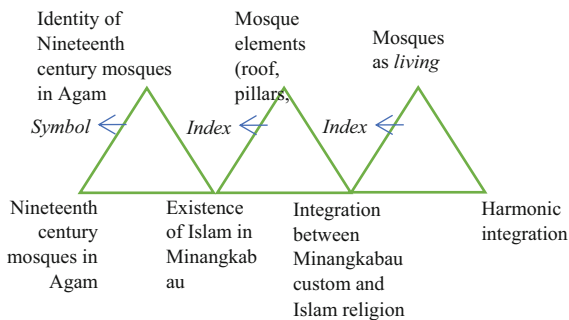


Fig. 2. Semiosis process of nineteenth century mosques in Agam Regency

This process is continued by withdrawing the second triangle, in which the Islamic community in Minangkabau (being *representament*) becomes an index of the existence of these mosques and all its elements (*objects*) such as roofs, pillars composition, pulpits, and minarets. These elements describe the Islamic society in Minangkabau, because these elements are found in mosques, Muslim house of worship, while these elements also picturing Minangkabau values. This shows that there is clearly a blend of Minangkabau customs and Islamic religion (*interpretant*).

Then, this process is continued again by drawing the third triangle. Blend of custom and religion (being *representament*) is an index that shows that these nineteenth-century mosques are still used as their original purpose, as these buildings were functioned in the beginning. In archaeology, ancient buildings that are still used as the how of the building was built are called living monuments (*objects*). Based on the living monument which clearly illustrate the combination of custom Minangkabau and Islam, and it can be seen that the combination of these two different values runs harmonically (*interpretant*).

This semiosis process can be continued to infinity, but in this study, the semiosis process is stopped in the third triangle. These three triangles are answering the problem mentioned earlier: how to custom Minangkabau and Islamic religion blends.

## 6 Conclusion

The nineteenth century mosques of Agam are sign of how strong Minangkabau custom and Islam religion stick in the Minangkabau people. This analysis is taken from the semiosis process through three Peirce sign triangles in chart above. The chart illustrates how Minangkabau custom and the religion of Islam cohered.

Referring to the analysis, there are many elements in the building of the mosque which have certain meanings in the Minang custom and/or meaning in the Islamic religion. The elements that have meaning in Minang customs include the style of the roof of the building and the pulpit. Elements that have meaning in Islam are the pillars composition and minarets.

After architectural review, the roof shape, the pillars composition, pulpits, and minarets in each of these mosques when studied semiotically with the Peirce sign triangle, get a similar meaning. Minangkabau custom and Islamic religion blends well and harmoniously. The elements of the mosque building symbolize the Minangkabau philosophy or the teachings of Islam.

The Minangkabau traditional philosophy is the norm that applies in Minangkabau society with their respective meanings. There is also the assumption that custom is a rule from God as a way of life in the world. Meanwhile, Islam as a religion that dominates the Minangkabau region seems to be able to blend harmoniously with custom, not triggering any cultural conflicts.

From this research, not only is the concept of an Islamic house of worship in the form of a mosque in the Agam, Sumatra Barat, which can show a harmonious blend of custom and religion, but the elements in the mosque building can also provide further evidence of the combination. Based on data sources in the form of four nineteenth century mosques in Agam, the elements in the mosque building have meanings that are related both to the customary philosophy or Islamic teachings. This shows that the combination of custom

and religion is implemented to small details such as roofs, pillars compositions, pulpits, and minarets.

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