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Landscape character of Minangkabau Nagari: customary law-based Assessment of Padang Limau Sundai, West Sumatra, Indonesia

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Abstract

Rural landscapes in Indonesia are shaped by environmental processes and customary institutions, yet landscape studies often emphasize physical features while overlooking indigenous governance systems. This study identifies the landscape character of Nagari Padang Limau Sundai, South Solok Regency, West Sumatra, by integrating Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) with Minangkabau customary law. A qualitative case study approach was applied using field observation, spatial documentation, and secondary data review. The analysis followed the LCA process of delineating and clustering landscape units, using the seven key elements of Undang-Undang Nagari as culturally grounded indicators. The results show that Padang Limau Sundai is characterized by a settlement corridor along the Batang Sangir River, forested hills, agricultural mosaics, clustered hamlets, and communal institutions. These characteristics are expressed through customary organization of governance centers, circulation routes, productive land, traditional housing, burial areas, and religious facilities. The findings demonstrate that the landscape character of Padang Limau Sundai reflects long-term interactions between ecological conditions and adat-based territorial organization. Integrating customary law into LCA provides a context-sensitive approach to interpreting Indonesian cultural landscapes and strengthens understanding of rural landscape identity and continuity.

Intisari

Lanskap perdesaan di Indonesia dibentuk oleh proses lingkungan dan institusi adat, namun kajian lanskap sering menekankan karakteristik fisik dengan mengabaikan sistem tata kelola masyarakat adat. Penelitian ini mengidentifikasi karakter lanskap Nagari Padang Limau Sundai, Kabupaten Solok Selatan, Sumatera Barat, melalui integrasi Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) dengan hukum adat Minangkabau. Pendekatan studi kasus kualitatif diterapkan melalui observasi lapangan, dokumentasi spasial, dan telaah data sekunder. Analisis mengikuti proses LCA melalui deliniasi dan pengelompokan unit lanskap dengan

menggunakan tujuh unsur utama Undang-Undang Nagari sebagai indikator yang berlandaskan budaya lokal. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Padang Limau Sundai dicirikan oleh koridor permukiman di sepanjang Sungai Batang Sangir, perbukitan berhutan, mosaik lahan pertanian, kelompok permukiman, dan institusi komunal. Karakteristik tersebut tercermin dalam pengaturan adat terhadap pusat pemerintahan, jaringan sirkulasi, lahan produktif, rumah tradisional, kawasan pemakaman, dan fasilitas keagamaan. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa karakter lanskap Padang Limau Sundai merupakan hasil interaksi jangka panjang antara kondisi ekologis dan organisasi teritorial berbasis adat. Integrasi hukum adat ke dalam LCA memberikan pendekatan yang kontekstual untuk memahami lanskap budaya Indonesia serta memperkuat pemahaman terhadap identitas dan keberlanjutan karakter lanskap perdesaan.

Kata kunci: *: landscape character assessment; lanskap budaya; pengetahuan masyarakat adat; perencanaan lanskap; analisis spasial.*

1. Introduction

Rural landscapes extend beyond physical configurations of topography, soil, and vegetation; they are socio-ecological systems shaped by long-term human–environment interactions and place-based identities (Antrop, 2018; Termorshuizen & Opdam, 2021). Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) provides a systematic framework for identifying, delineating, classifying, and describing landscape character based on the interaction of natural and human factors (Swanwick, 2002; Tudor, 2014; Wascher et al., 2020). However, conventional LCA primarily emphasizes observable physical and perceptual characteristics, potentially overlooking indigenous normative systems, unwritten legal frameworks, and socio-cultural institutions that shape landscape organization.

The Minangkabau landscape of West Sumatra, Indonesia, provides an important context for examining this limitation. Its distinctive landscape integrates natural features, settlements, agricultural areas, communal forests, and vernacular architecture within the socio-territorial system of the *Nagari* (Asrina et al., 2017). The *Nagari* is not merely an administrative unit but a historically rooted territorial community governed by kinship, communal land tenure (*tanah ulayat*), and customary institutions (Benda-Beckmann & Benda-Beckmann, 2013). Following the post-1999 decentralization era, the *Kembali ke Nagari* movement reaffirmed the *Nagari* as a central social and territorial institution.

The spatial organization and resource management of the *Nagari* have historically been structured by Minangkabau customary law (*adat*), guided by *Alam Takambang Jadi Guru*. These customary principles regulate relationships among settlements, agricultural lands, water systems, burial grounds, and other community spaces (Asrina et al., 2017; Satria & Sahayu, 2022). Customary institutions also remain relevant to contemporary landscape governance through communal land management and collective decision-making (Irawati et al., 2024; Wahid, 2023). Thus, the present landscape cannot be understood solely through physical attributes; its spatial organization also reflects inherited customary practices and institutions.

Despite this role, customary law remains insufficiently integrated into formal landscape assessment. Previous studies have documented the physical and cultural characteristics of Minangkabau landscapes, while anthropological and legal studies have examined *adat* institutions, but few have systematically translated customary principles into spatial assessment frameworks (Asrina et al., 2017). Applying conventional LCA without accounting for these systems may therefore describe visible landscape characteristics while overlooking the institutional mechanisms underlying their spatial organization and continuity.

To address this methodological gap, this study integrates Minangkabau customary law with LCA by operationalizing seven essential elements of the *Nagari*, as delineated in the *Undang-Undang Nagari*, as culturally grounded spatial indicators: (1) *Basasok Bajarami*—territorial boundaries and governance centers; (2) *Bapandam Bapakuburan*—burial grounds; (3) *Balabuah Batapian*—mobility, accessibility, and water access; (4) *Bakorong Bakampuang*—settlement clusters; (5) *Basawah Baladang*—agricultural land; (6) *Barumah Batanggo*—housing; and (7) *Babalai Bamusajik*—communal and religious institutions. These

elements are used as culturally grounded indicators within the LCA process rather than as principles for village tourism or heritage conservation.

Using Nagari Padang Limau Sundai, South Solok Regency, as a case study, this research adapts the LCA framework by embedding these customary principles into spatial analysis. The study aims to identify the landscape character of Padang Limau Sundai by synthesizing natural, cultural, and perceptual characteristics with the seven *Nagari* elements, providing a context-sensitive approach to understanding rural landscape identity, continuity, and resilience.

2. Methodology

This study employed a qualitative case study approach to assess the landscape character of Nagari Padang Limau Sundai by integrating Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) with Minangkabau customary law. The case study approach was used to examine the relationship between landscape characteristics and customary practices within their real-life context (Yin, 2018).

Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) was selected as the principal methodological framework because it provides a systematic process for identifying, delineating, classifying, and describing landscapes according to the interaction of natural and human factors (Swanwick, 2002; Tudor, 2014). However, rather than directly applying the standard variable lists commonly used in LCA, this study adapted the framework by incorporating the seven key elements of Undang-Undang Nagari as locally grounded indicators of landscape character. In the case of Nagari Padang Limau Sundai, the present landscape cannot be understood solely through topography, hydrology, or land cover, because its spatial form has also been shaped by customary institutions, settlement traditions, and inherited land-use practices. Accordingly, this study adapts the LCA approach to incorporate cultural principles that have historically structured the Minangkabau landscape.

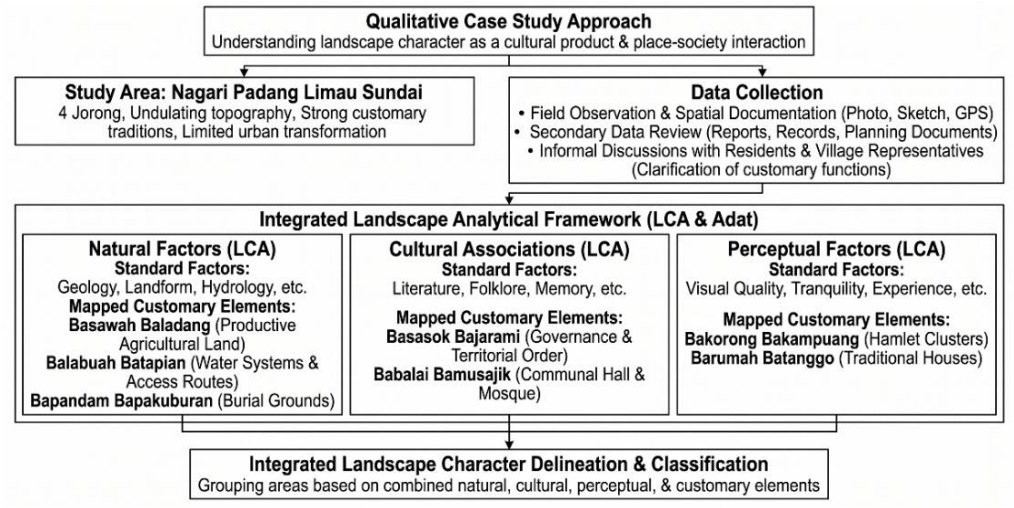


Figure 1. Research Design Diagram (Modification from Tudor 2014)

2.1 Study Area

The study was conducted in Nagari Padang Limau Sundai, located in Sangir Jujuan District, South Solok Regency, West Sumatra, Indonesia, as shown in Figure 2. The Nagari covers approximately 45 km² and lies at elevations between 244 and 560 m above sea level. The area is characterized by undulating to hilly topography, forest margins, river corridors, agricultural land, and dispersed rural settlements. Such environmental conditions create a landscape typical of the interior Minangkabau region, where settlement and land use have historically adapted to terrain and water availability. Nagari Padang Limau Sundai was purposively selected because it retains relatively strong customary traditions and has experienced limited urban transformation, allowing traditional spatial structures to remain legible in the present landscape. Administratively, the Nagari consists of four *jorong* (hamlets): *Tanjung Durian, Koto Ranah, Ranah Sungai Bamban,* and *Sibalabeh Ateh.*

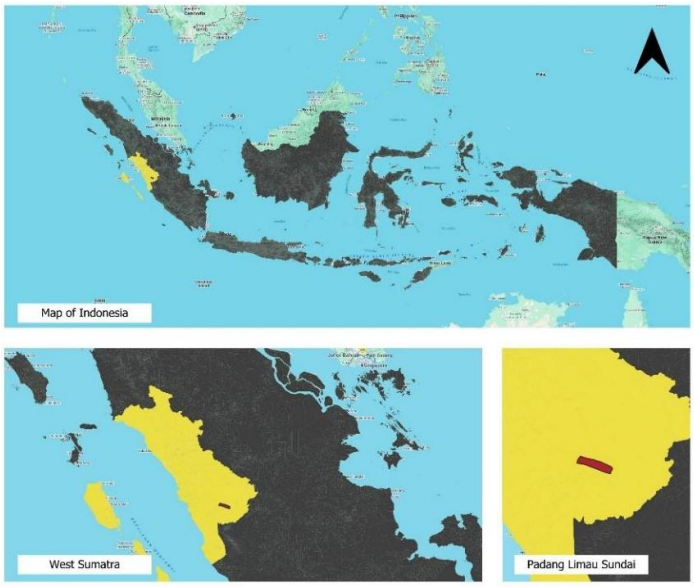


Figure 2. Case Study site in Padang Limau Sundai, West Sumatera, Indonesia

2.2 Data Collection

Data were collected through field observation, spatial documentation, and secondary data review. Field surveys were conducted from January to March 2026, to record topography, hydrology, settlement morphology, agricultural areas, circulation networks, communal facilities, burial grounds, and surrounding forest landscapes. Photographs, sketch notes, and geo-referenced site observations were used to document representative features and spatial relationships. Secondary sources included village administrative reports, demographic records, planning documents, and previous studies related to Minangkabau culture and landscape history. Informal discussions with residents and village representatives were also undertaken to clarify the customary functions, local meanings, and historical significance of specific places. These discussions were used to strengthen contextual interpretation rather than as formal interview data.

2.3 Analytical Framework

Data analysis adopted the general approach of Landscape Character Assessment, which aims to identify and classify areas with distinct landscape character based on combinations of physical, cultural, and perceptual attributes (Swanwick, 2002; Tudor, 2014). In this study, the landscape of Nagari Padang Limau Sundai was first delineated into areas sharing similar landform, land use, settlement structure, accessibility, and cultural functions. Areas with comparable characteristics were then grouped into landscape character units or clusters.

Table 1. Comparative Framework between Landscape Character Assessment and *Nagari* Key Elements

No	Factors	Landscape Character Assessment (Tudor, 2014)	Nagari Key Elements (Minangkabau Customary Law)
1	Natural Factors	Geology, landform, hydrology, climate, soils, vegetation, biodiversity	*Basawah Baladang* (productive agricultural land); *Balabuah Batapian* (water systems and access routes); *Bapandam Bapakuburan* (burial grounds located according to land suitability)
2	Cultural Associations	Literature, folklore, memory, historical associations, symbolic meanings	*Basasok Bajarami* (governance and territorial order); *Babalai Bamusajik* (communal hall and mosque as cultural institutions)
3	Perceptual Factors	Visual quality, tranquility, remoteness, sensory experience	*Bakorong Bakampuang* (hamlet clusters creating settlement identity); *Barumah Batanggo* (traditional houses shaping visual character)

Rather than relying solely on Tudor's (2014) standard LCA factors, the analysis used the seven key elements of Undang-Undang Nagari as culturally specific indicators of landscape character: (1) governance system, (2) burial grounds, (3) accessibility and water access, (4) settlement clusters, (5) agricultural land, (6) housing, and (7) communal-religious institutions. These elements were aligned with three broad LCA dimensions: (1) natural factors, including agricultural land, water systems, access routes, and burial grounds; (2) cultural associations, including governance structures and communal-religious institutions; and (3) perceptual factors, including settlement clusters and traditional housing forms. This integration positions customary governance, norms, and inherited spatial practices as analytical dimensions of rural landscape character, reflecting the interaction between ecological conditions and adat-based territorial organization.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 General Conditions of the Study Area

Nagari Padang Limau Sundai is in Sangir Jujuan District, in the northern part of South Solok Regency, West Sumatra, Indonesia. The Nagari covers approximately 45 km² and is situated around 15 km from the regency capital. It is bordered by Sangir Batang Hari District to the north, Nagari Bidar Alam to the east, Nagari Padang Ganting to the south, and KPGD District to the west. The physical environment is dominated by hilly terrain and forest-edge landscapes, with elevations ranging from 244 to 560 m above sea level. Soil conditions are relatively fertile and support both perennial and seasonal crops. Perennial crops include coffee, clove, and cacao, while seasonal cultivation consists mainly of vegetables and subsistence crops. In addition, the Nagari contains approximately 2,244 ha of community forest that remains relatively well preserved. This forest contributes to watershed functions by maintaining springs and river flows that supply water to residents.



Figure 2. Landscape of Padang Limau Sundai

Despite the availability of natural water resources, accessibility to these sources remains uneven due to terrain constraints and distance from settlements. As a result, some households rely on private wells for domestic water needs. Population data indicate approximately 1,567 inhabitants distributed across 365 households. Livelihoods are dominated by agriculture, agricultural labor, construction work, mining labor, and temporary migration for employment. Limited road infrastructure and dependence on bridges crossing the Batang Sangir river continue to influence mobility and access to markets and services. These conditions indicate that the Nagari remains a predominantly rural settlement whose landscape character is strongly influenced by both environmental constraints and traditional socio-economic systems.

3.2 Key Nagari Elements in Minangkabau Culture

In Minangkabau society, the Nagari is more than an administrative village; it is a customary socio-spatial unit governed by traditional law. The Undang-Undang Nagari, part of Undang-Undang Adat Nan Ampek, outlines the essential elements required for the formation and continuity of a Nagari. These principles provide a useful framework for interpreting landscape organization because they combine governance, settlement structure, production systems, and communal institutions.

The seven key elements are: *Basasok Bajarami* (governance system), *Bapandam Bapakuburan* (burial grounds), *Balabuah Batapian* (access routes and water access), *Bakorong Bakampuang* (hamlets and settlement clusters), *Basawah Baladang* (agricultural land), *Barumah Batanggo* (housing and social order), and *Babalai Bamusajik* (communal hall and mosque). Although originally formulated as customary requirements, these elements can also be interpreted as spatial components that shape the cultural landscape. The continued relevance of these elements in Padang Limau Sundai demonstrates that customary law remains embedded in everyday spatial practice. Thus, the Nagari can be understood as a landscape system where legal norms and territorial organization are closely interconnected.

3.3 Major Factors Forming Landscape Character

The landscape character of Nagari Padang Limau Sundai is primarily formed by the interaction of two dominant factors: natural conditions and cultural institutions. From an environmental perspective, the presence of hills, forest cover, rivers, caves, and karst formations gives the Nagari a strong natural identity. These features not only define visual quality but also influence settlement location, agricultural use, and circulation patterns. From a cultural perspective, Minangkabau customary principles continue to regulate how land is occupied and used. Traditional spatial values encourage settlement concentration in appropriate areas, maintenance of agricultural land, and protection of forest resources. This supports earlier findings that Minangkabau landscapes are strongly shaped by social values rooted in environmental adaptation (Asrina et al., 2017).

As a result, Padang Limau Sundai may be characterized as a natural rural landscape preserved through customary governance. Unlike landscapes transformed solely by market forces or modern infrastructure, this Nagari retains a spatial logic based on long-term coexistence between community and environment. Landscape Character Identification Based on the Seven Nagari Elements. The landscape of Nagari Padang Limau Sundai reflects the continued influence of Minangkabau customary principles that historically guided settlement formation, land allocation, social organization, and communal life. These principles remain visible in the present spatial structure of the Nagari and can be interpreted through the seven key elements of Undang-Undang Nagari, see Figure 3.

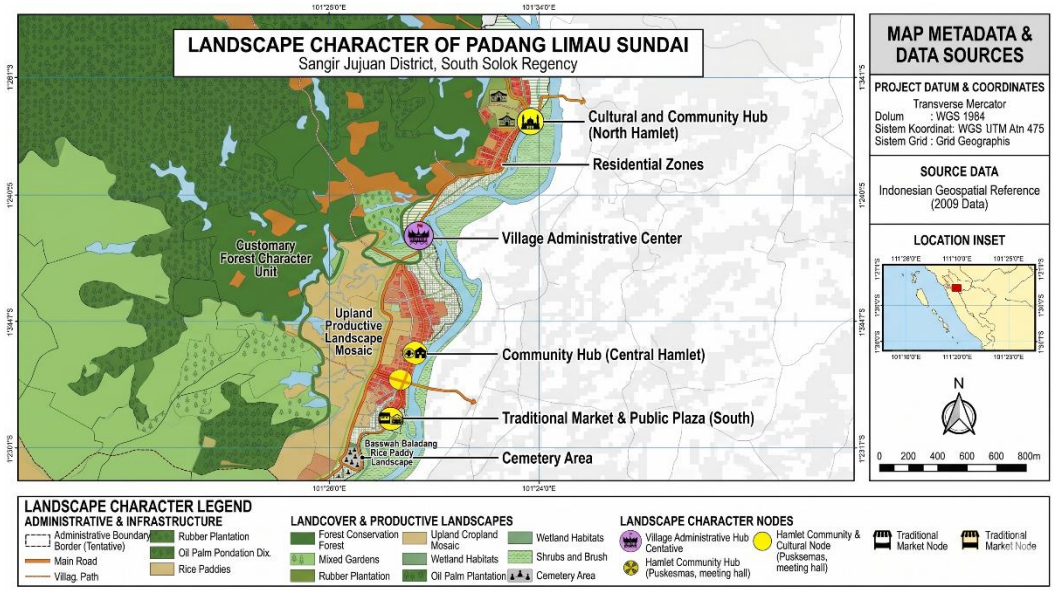


Figure 3. Landscape Character Map of Nagari Padang Limau Sundai

3.3.1. Basasok Bajarami (Governance & Teritorial Order)

This principle refers to the existence of governance and social order within a Nagari. In Minangkabau tradition, a settlement develops gradually from taratak to dusun, then koto, and finally nagari, indicating increasing social and political complexity. In Padang Limau Sundai, the administrative center is located in Jorong Koto Ranah, which occupies a relatively central position and functions as the focal point of governance. This arrangement reflects the importance of leadership and collective coordination in organizing territorial life.

3.3.2 Bapandam Bapakuburan urial Grounds)

This principle emphasizes the provision of burial space as an essential component of settlement life. Traditional Minangkabau ecological wisdom is reflected in the saying: *"Nan lurah tanami bambu, nan lereang tanami tabu, nan gurun buek ka parak, nan bancah jadikan sawah, nan munggu kapakuburan, nan gauang ka tabek ikan, nan padang kapaimpauan,nan lambah kubangan kabau, nan rawang payo kaparanangan itiak"* Meaning : The lowlands are planted with bamboo, the slopes are planted with sugarcane, the dry land is made into gardens, the wet land is turned into rice fields, the elevated ground is used for burial grounds, the flooded areas are made into fish ponds, the wide open plains are used for gathering, the soft ground becomes wallows for buffalo, and the marshland is used for grazing ducks.

In Padang Limau Sundai, cemetery areas are located at the outer margins of settlement zones on higher or less productive land. This indicates that burial placement follows customary land suitability principles while maintaining symbolic separation between living and sacred spaces.

3.3.3 Balabuah Batapian (Water Systems &Access Routes)

This principle relates to circulation routes and access to water. Roads, paths, bridges, rivers, and bathing places historically formed the connective infrastructure of a Nagari. In Padang Limau Sundai, settlements are linked through local roads and bridges crossing the Batang Sangir river, while earlier communal bathing functions were associated with springs and riverbanks. The continued importance of these routes shows that mobility and water access remain fundamental determinants of landscape structure.

3.3.4 Bakorong Bakampuan (Settlements Area)

This principle refers to the existence of clustered hamlets and community-based settlement units. It is reinforced in the adat expression: *Guno korong tampek mahinggo sumbang jo salah, guno kampuang mambateh dago jo dagi*. "The function of the hamlet is to identify wrongdoing, and the function of the village is to maintain order and boundaries." Padang Limau Sundai consists of four jorong that remain socially and spatially distinct while forming one Nagari. Settlement clusters are semi-concentrated along accessible land and river corridors, demonstrating how social organization influences settlement morphology.

3.3.5. Basawah Baladang (Agricultural Land)

This principle highlights the importance of agricultural land as the economic foundation of the Nagari. A traditional saying states: *Mambuek Sawah gadang Satampang Baniah, Makanan Urang Tigo Luhak, Dek Pandai niniak baragian sampai kini baitu juo*. Creating vast rice fields from a handful of seed, as food for the people of the three traditional regions of Minangkabau; through the wisdom of the ancestors in dividing and managing the land, it remains so until today." Agricultural land in Padang Limau Sundai is located between settlement areas and surrounding forest, forming a productive transition zone. Rice fields, gardens, coffee, cacao, and clove cultivation remain important components of the rural landscape and demonstrate the long-standing agrarian orientation of Minangkabau society.

3.3.6. Barumah Batanggo (Residential & Households)

This principle refers to housing as both shelter and social order. The phrase *bajanjang naiak, batanggo turun* ("ascending by steps, descending by stairs") symbolizes procedural order and hierarchy in social relations. In Padang Limau Sundai, houses, including surviving *rumah gadang* and newer dwellings, form an important built component of the landscape. Beyond architecture, domestic space reflects kinship structure, customary etiquette, and intergenerational continuity.

3.3.7. Babalai Bamusajik (Communal Hall & Mosque)

This principle emphasizes the presence of communal halls and mosques as centers of deliberation and spiritual life. It is closely linked to the core Minangkabau philosophy: *Adaik basandi syarak, syarak basandi Kitabullah*. "Custom is founded upon Islamic law, and Islamic law is founded upon the Qur'an."

3.4 Theoretical Contribution

This study demonstrates how customary spatial principles can be incorporated into Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) to interpret cultural landscapes. Previous LCA applications in indigenous Indonesian contexts have incorporated local knowledge through different sources. In the Kajang cultural landscape, Pasang is a written body of traditional knowledge rooted in indigenous beliefs that informs relationships between people and their environment (Awalia et al., 2017). In the Toraja context, indigenous spatial knowledge was elicited primarily through community discussions and focus group discussions (FGDs)

(Allo et al., 2026). In contrast, Minangkabau Tambo and Undang-Undang Nagari contain customary principles specifically associated with the organization of the Nagari as a territorial unit, including its essential spatial components (Asrina et al., 2017; Satria & Sahayu, 2022). This provides a more explicit basis for translating customary principles into spatial indicators within LCA.

Previous Minangkabau studies have identified several of these Nagari elements as components of settlement and landscape organization (Kosmaryandi, 2005; Asrina et al., 2017; Mayasari et al., 2023). However, they do not represent all seven elements as a unified analytical framework. This study brings the seven elements together within LCA and demonstrates their spatial expression in Padang Limau Sundai.

The findings therefore extend the understanding of landscape character beyond physical and visual attributes by recognizing customary spatial organization as an institutional dimension of landscape. Rather than treating adat as contextual background, the study demonstrates how a Nagari-specific customary framework can be operationalized to reveal relationships between ecological conditions, spatial organization, and cultural identity. This provides a culturally grounded basis for landscape planning in Minangkabau rural landscapes.

3.5 Implications for Rural Planning and Cultural Landscape Conservation

The findings have practical implications for rural development, heritage management, and environmental conservation in Minangkabau and similar customary territories. First, planning interventions in Nagari areas should recognize that settlement patterns, agricultural zones, forest areas, and communal facilities are historically structured through customary principles. This is consistent with previous studies showing that Minangkabau land is managed communally through the Nagari system, where land-use patterns and inheritance are closely connected to adat (Kosmaryandi, 2005). Research in Nagari Sijunjung similarly demonstrates that customary provisions shape settlement arrangement, agricultural land, housing, worship, and burial areas (Mayasari et al., 2023). These findings support the present study while indicating that development strategies that ignore customary spatial relationships may disrupt cultural continuity and landscape function.

Second, customary institutions may serve as important partners in landscape governance. The continued role of village leaders, religious institutions, and communal decision-making systems suggests that conservation programs can be strengthened through locally recognized governance structures. This complements evidence that customary institutions continue to influence communal land management and resource use in Minangkabau communities (Kosmaryandi, 2005; Irawati et al., 2024). At the same time, recent LCA research in the Toraja context demonstrates that incorporating indigenous knowledge and customary authority can reveal spatial relationships that conventional physical landscape assessment may overlook (Allo et al., 2026). Protection of springs, rivers, forests, and agricultural mosaics may therefore benefit from combining formal planning instruments with customary management.

Third, the cultural landscape of Padang Limau Sundai has potential value for education, heritage tourism, and place-based economic development. Previous research identifies Minangkabau cultural landscapes as integrated systems of natural, cultural, and spiritual values, expressed through traditional houses, agricultural land, religious facilities, and settlement patterns (Mayasari et al., 2023). The recognition of Nagari Sijunjung as a cultural heritage landscape further demonstrates the potential of such landscapes for heritage-based development. However, recent research also highlights concerns that transforming Minangkabau traditional villages into tourism destinations may commodify cultural elements and affect local authenticity (Putri et al., 2026). Tourism and infrastructure development should therefore remain landscape-sensitive and support, rather than replace, customary spatial practices.

More broadly, this case reinforces the need for rural planning to move beyond purely technical land-use regulation by incorporating cultural values, local institutions, and historical spatial knowledge. Such an approach can support development while maintaining landscape identity, cultural continuity, and the adaptive capacity of customary rural landscapes.

3.6 Limitations and Future Research

Several limitations should be acknowledged. First, this study is based on a single case study in Nagari Padang Limau Sundai. Although the findings provide insights into the relationship between customary law and

landscape character, they may not represent the diversity of Nagari landscapes across Minangkabau. Previous studies have shown that Minangkabau landscape character varies according to environmental setting, settlement structure, and cultural interpretation (Asrina et al., 2017). Variations in topography, urban influence, migration, and institutional strength may therefore produce different spatial expressions. Comparative studies across Nagari would help assess the broader applicability of the seven customary elements.

Second, the study also highlights a limitation of conventional Landscape Character Assessment (LCA). LCA provides a systematic framework for identifying landscape character through physical, cultural, and perceptual attributes, but its conventional application tends to emphasize observable landscape features. In indigenous contexts, this may overlook intangible dimensions such as customary authority, kinship, ritual, and cosmological meanings. A recent LCA study of the Toraja indigenous landscape similarly found that conventional LCA required modification to capture symbolic, spiritual, and social dimensions of the landscape (Allo et al., 2026). The present study addresses this limitation by using the seven Nagari elements as culturally grounded indicators; however, their interpretation remains dependent on qualitative observation and contextual knowledge. Future research could strengthen this approach through participatory mapping, interviews with customary authorities, GIS-based analysis, and landscape perception surveys.

Third, the study focuses on present-day landscape conditions and does not reconstruct historical transformation in detail. This limits the ability of LCA to explain how customary spatial principles have changed, persisted, or been disrupted over time. Previous research using Tambo demonstrates the value of combining historical cultural sources with contemporary landscape observation to identify changes and continuities in Minangkabau landscape character (Asrina et al., 2018). Longitudinal research using Tambo, archival records, oral histories, and historical maps could therefore clarify how modernization, migration, infrastructure development, and economic change have transformed Nagari landscapes. Future comparative studies could further test the integration of customary law into LCA across Minangkabau and other indigenous landscapes, contributing to a more context-sensitive and participatory approach to cultural landscape assessment.

4. Conclusion

This study identified the landscape character of Nagari Padang Limau Sundai by integrating Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) with Minangkabau customary law. The findings show that the Nagari is characterized by a settlement corridor along the Batang Sangir River, forested hills, agricultural mosaics, clustered settlements, and communal institutions. These characteristics are spatially expressed through the seven key elements of Nagari: Basasok Bajarami, Bapandam Bapakuburan, Balabuah Batapian, Bakorong Bakampuang, Basawah Baladang, Barumah Batanggo, and Babalai Bamusajik. Their continued presence demonstrates that the landscape character of Padang Limau Sundai reflects the interaction between ecological conditions and customary spatial organization.

The study demonstrates that incorporating the seven Nagari elements into LCA provides a culturally grounded approach for interpreting landscape character beyond observable physical and visual attributes. Rather than treating customary law as contextual background, the study shows that customary principles can function as spatial indicators through which the relationships among settlement, productive land, circulation, housing, communal institutions, and other landscape components can be understood. This adaptation contributes to a more context-sensitive application of LCA in Minangkabau cultural landscapes and provides a basis for future landscape planning and cultural landscape conservation.

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