

THE ORIGIN OF PLACE NAMES IN KURUNJI DISTRICT

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| Abstract | <p><i>This study investigates the origin of place names in the Kuranji Sub-district, Padang City, arguing that these toponyms are not arbitrarily assigned but deeply embedded in socio-historical contexts and cultural memory. The research aims to identify the causes, meanings, and functions of these names, with particular focus on those formed during and after Indonesia's independence struggle. Employing a qualitative historical method, the study emphasizes oral history and oral tradition as primary sources, supported by written documentation where available. Data were collected through interviews with 18 informants—including traditional leaders, religious figures, and retired local officials—selected based on their intergenerational knowledge and active roles in community narratives. The findings reveal that the place names in Kuranji reflect a wide range of thematic origins, including flora, personal figures, ethnic groups, activities, objects, and geographic features. These toponyms serve not only as spatial identifiers but also as repositories of collective identity, resistance history, and indigenous knowledge. Despite challenges such as memory bias and lack of written records, oral narratives proved essential in reconstructing local historiography. This study underscores the urgency of documenting oral traditions before they are lost to time and generational transition. By integrating toponymy with oral history, the research contributes to the preservation of intangible cultural heritage and enhances scholarly understanding of how place names function as carriers of historical consciousness in West Sumatra.</i></p> <p>Keywords: <i>Kuranji, District, Toponymy, History, Cultural.</i></p> |
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INTRODUCTION

The place names found in the Kuranji Sub-district of Padang City have persisted since the Dutch colonial era and remain in use today. Despite their continued relevance, there exists a notable lack of written records explaining the historical background or rationale behind their origins. This absence underscores the significance of oral history and tradition as critical sources in reconstructing historical narratives. Oral history serves as both an independent method and a complementary documentary source, while oral tradition plays a pivotal role in preserving events that were never formally recorded (Kuntowijoyo, 2003).

As noted by Vansina, oral tradition itself constitutes a form of history (Vansina, 2014). Consequently, integrating these two types of sources becomes essential in understanding the historical dimensions of local toponyms. In historical scholarship, the study of place name origins falls within the discipline of toponymy, a subset of onomastics. A related discipline, anthroponymy, focuses on personal names and attributes such as noble titles, academic credentials, and genealogical markers (Rucihat, 2011, p. xi).

Vansina further categorizes such investigations into the etiology of names, exploring the causes and origins of phenomena (2014, p. 9). Beyond historical interest, toponymy serves practical functions: the standardization of geographic names facilitates logistical processes in areas such as postal delivery, telecommunications, cartography, tourism, and administrative governance. Inaccuracies in naming can result in miscommunication or location errors.

In addition to its academic significance, toponymy also has several practical implications in the modern administrative and spatial planning context. This standardization facilitates the inventory of such features and supports various practical needs, such as postal services, logistics, telecommunications, transportation, tourism, cartographic surveys, and administrative governance.

Mispronunciations or errors in naming can lead to confusion and misidentification of locations. Toponymy is useful for standardizing and formalizing the naming of geographical features. This standardization facilitates the inventory of such features and supports various practical needs, such as postal services, logistics, telecommunications, transportation, tourism, cartographic surveys, and administrative governance. Mispronunciations or errors in naming can lead to confusion and misidentification of locations.

Despite Indonesia's rich cultural diversity and vast geography, studies on place names remain limited. Many areas in the country either lack official names or share similar names, which can cause confusion. For instance, the name Koto Baru appears in multiple locations across West Sumatra such as Padang Panjang, Limapuluh Kota, and Pesisir Selatan. In this context, toponymic research is highly valuable for promoting administrative clarity, particularly in border areas that may be prone to disputes with neighboring regions or countries.

Therefore, documenting and disseminating information about the historical origins of place names is imperative. Over time, the number of individuals with direct knowledge of these origins is decreasing due to aging. Thus, toponymic research in West Sumatra is not only relevant but also urgent, as it offers insights into the cultural and historical identity of local communities.

This study specifically focuses on the Kuranji Sub-district as a microcosm of place-naming practices in West Sumatra, where oral traditions continue to play a crucial role in preserving local historical consciousness. By examining the linguistic, cultural, and historical aspects of place names in this area, the research contributes to the growing discourse on indigenous knowledge preservation, spatial identity, and the role of oral history in historical reconstruction. The findings are expected to serve as a reference for future studies in toponymy and cultural historiography in Indonesia.

Despite the vast diversity of Indonesia's cultural and linguistic landscape, scholarly studies on local toponymy remain limited and underrepresented in academic discourse, particularly at the regional level. Most existing research tends to focus on macro-level national or provincial names, leaving smaller localities such as those in sub-districts like Kuranji largely unexplored. This research thus aims to address this gap by highlighting the toponymic landscape of Kuranji through a lens that combines oral tradition, historical analysis, and cultural preservation.

Despite Indonesia's vast geographic landscape and rich cultural diversity, scholarly research on local toponymy remains scarce, especially at the sub-district and village levels. Existing studies have generally focused on macro-level toponyms such as provincial,

regency, or national place names leaving micro-level sites underexplored (Zuriati, 2004; Rucihat, 2011).

Furthermore, most toponymic research tends to emphasize linguistic classification, without fully addressing the historical, socio-political, and cultural dimensions embedded in place names. Very few studies incorporate oral tradition as a primary source for historical reconstruction. This study addresses that gap by combining oral history with historical analysis to examine the cultural and political significance of place-naming practices in Kuranji Sub-district. In doing so, it contributes not only to the field of onomastics but also to local historiography and indigenous knowledge preservation.

Theoretically, this study is grounded in the field of onomastics, particularly toponymy, which examines the origins, meanings, and functions of place names within historical and socio-cultural contexts. Toponymy, as emphasized by Rucihat (2011), serves not only as a linguistic reflection but also as a spatial representation of collective memory and socio-political processes. This research also draws upon oral history theory, especially the work of Jan Vansina (2014), who argues that oral tradition when transmitted through consistent communal narratives constitutes a valid historical source.

Moreover, the methodological framework is informed by Kuntowijoyo's (2003) perspective that historical interpretation must integrate cultural patterns and collective consciousness embedded in everyday life. Together, these theoretical perspectives provide a comprehensive lens to explore how local communities in Kuranji construct, remember, and preserve their spatial identities through place names.

While oral history and tradition serve as essential sources in contexts with limited written records, they are not without challenges. Oral sources often rely on memory, which can be selective, influenced by personal experience, or shaped by communal narratives over time. As Vansina (2014) notes, the validity of oral tradition depends on intergenerational transmission and the consistency of accounts across different informants.

Therefore, this study treats oral testimonies not as absolute facts but as socially constructed memories that require cross-verification with written records and other oral accounts. By acknowledging the subjective nature of oral data, the research adopts a critical approach that recognizes both its richness in cultural context and its limitations in historical precision. This reflexivity ensures that oral narratives are interpreted within their appropriate cultural, temporal, and political frameworks.

Therefore, this study aims to examine the historical and cultural origins of place names in the Kuranji Sub-district by identifying their linguistic meanings, tracing their genealogies, and categorizing them thematically. It also seeks to demonstrate the role of oral tradition in preserving historical memory in the absence of written records.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative historical research method that emphasizes oral sources as its primary data. According to (Kuntowijoyo, 2003), historical methodology involves the systematic collection, evaluation, and interpretation of evidence to reconstruct the past. In this context, oral history and oral tradition are not only complementary but essential, especially in regions where written documentation is limited (Vansina, 2014).

The research was conducted through several stages. The first stage involved collecting written references from major libraries in Padang, including UIN Imam Bonjol, Andalas University, Padang State University, and the Regional Library. These materials provided theoretical and contextual background to support the interpretation of oral sources (Zed, 2002). The second stage focused on conducting interviews with selected informants from the Kuranji Sub-district. Informants were chosen based on their knowledge, seniority, and social roles ranging from traditional leaders and religious figures to retired local officials.

Informants were selected through purposive sampling, based on their knowledge of local history, involvement in community leadership, and familial ties to historical events or locations in Kuranji. A total of 18 informants participated in the study, including traditional elders (*ninik mamak*), religious leaders, retired local officials, and elderly residents with generational memory of place names. Selection criteria emphasized narrative coherence, age (preferably above 60 years) and active engagement in preserving oral traditions. This approach ensured that the data collected represented diverse perspectives while focusing on individuals with the most credible and detailed recollections of historical place-naming practices.

Interviews were conducted in Minangkabau and Indonesian languages, and all sessions were recorded using digital audio devices to ensure data accuracy (Thompson, 2012). Collected oral testimonies were then cross-referenced with available written records and historical documents. In cases where written corroboration was absent, oral narratives were retained when they reflected consistent communal memory, in line with Vansina's (2014) principle of collective validation through intergenerational transmission.

The final stage was the analysis and synthesis of historical data into a structured narrative. Verified place names were categorized thematically based on their origin such as from flora, objects, personal names, ethnic groups, geographic features, or social events. The interpretation followed an etiological framework, which seeks to explain the cause or origin of a phenomenon (Rucihat, 2011; Vansina, 2014). By integrating oral tradition with documentary research, this study reinforces the validity of local narratives in historical scholarship, particularly in documenting intangible cultural heritage and indigenous spatial knowledge (Ahimas- Putra, 2005)

As with most oral history research, this study faces several methodological limitations. First, reliance on elderly informants posed challenges related to memory lapses, inconsistencies, and potential romanticization of past events. Second, the absence of written documentation for many of the place names made it difficult to triangulate oral narratives with archival sources. While cross-referencing was conducted among multiple informants, the subjective nature of oral tradition means that interpretations may still carry cultural or personal bias.

Additionally, access to informants was occasionally constrained by health conditions, relocation, or reluctance to discuss sensitive historical episodes, such as the PRRI conflict. These limitations, however, were addressed by employing careful source validation and by situating oral accounts within broader historical and social contexts to maintain scholarly rigor.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Discuss Oral History Limitations

Geographical, Population, and Social Conditions of the Kuranji Community

Kuranji Sub-district is one of eleven administrative regions in Padang City. Geographically, it is situated between Koto Tengah Sub-district to the north, East and North Padang Sub-districts to the south, Pauh Sub-district to the east, and both Nanggalo and Koto Tengah Sub-districts to the west. The elevation ranges from approximately 8 to 1,000 meters above sea level, encompassing both lowland and highland terrains (BPS Kuranji, 2013).

Owing to its extensive area, stable climate, and fertile plateau supported by both technical and non-technical irrigation systems Kuranji has traditionally served as one of the city's main agricultural zones. Compared to other sub-districts in Padang, Kuranji possesses the largest area of arable land. The principal crops include rice, secondary staples such as corn (63 hectares) and cassava (22 hectares), and a wide array of vegetables, notably eggplant, cucumber, and long beans.

In recent decades, Kuranji has undergone a rapid transformation from a predominantly agrarian landscape to a semi-urbanized area. As Padang City expands inland to accommodate metropolitan development, Kuranji has become an increasingly strategic buffer zone. This sub-district hosts vital infrastructure, including the city's main

water supply sources and new residential and administrative developments. Consequently, large portions of former farmland have been converted into housing complexes, commercial centers, and office buildings. Despite these changes, Kuranji retains key elements of its traditional socio-economic structure.

Residents, once primarily engaged in agriculture, have gradually shifted toward service and trade sectors. The ongoing urban expansion has altered not only land use patterns but also the community's demographic composition and social dynamics. The population of Kuranji is characterized by ethnic diversity, with Minangkabau being the predominant group. Social life in the area is strongly influenced by customary institutions such as the *ninik mamak* (clan elders) and *penghulu* (traditional leaders), who continue to play an active role in community governance.

This blend of traditional leadership and modern administrative structures exemplifies the hybrid socio-political character of the sub-district. As urbanization continues, Kuranji faces dual challenges: the preservation of its cultural heritage and the sustainable management of its natural and spatial resources. These developments underline the urgency of documenting the historical and socio-geographical transformations taking place in the region.

History Of Kuranji Sub-District

Kuranji Sub-district was originally part of Padangpariaman Regency and was known as Pauh Sub-district, comprising three *kanagarian* (traditional administrative units): Limau Manih, Pauh V, and Pauh IX. With the administrative expansion of Padang Municipality, Government Regulation No. 17 of 1980, dated March 21, 1980, incorporated the Pauh Sub-district into the Padang Municipality. It was subsequently divided into two sub-districts: Pauh Sub-district, which included Limau Manih and Pauh V, and Kuranji Sub-district, which encompassed Pauh IX. During Indonesia's struggle for independence, the Kuranji area was considered part of Padang Luar Kota (Outer Padang).

It served as a key battleground in the fight to reclaim and defend the sovereignty of the Republic of Indonesia. In the early post-independence period, this area frequently witnessed significant events in the national resistance effort. On February 5, 1946, Indonesian fighters established the Padang Luar Kota Struggle Council, with Kuranji chosen as its headquarters. Following the formation of the *Badan Keamanan Rakyat* (BKR) which later evolved into the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI) Kuranji played a crucial and strategic role for the resistance fighters against the Dutch. It became one of the major bases of freedom fighters in West Sumatra. The founding meeting of the Struggle Council was held at the Lubuk Lintah Mosque, located in what was then the *kanagarian* of Pauh IX.

At this historic meeting, Ahmad Husen was appointed commander of the resistance. Initially, the Council's base was in Kampung Kalawi, but due to security concerns, it was relocated to Kalumbuk a more secluded area of Kuranji. *Surau Batu* in Kalumbuk served as the Council's headquarters (Husen, 1991, pp. 313–314). Following the Council's establishment, Kuranji, particularly Kalumbuk, became increasingly recognized as a stronghold of the resistance in Padang.

The Council later collaborated with the People's Security Army (*Tentara Keamanan Rakyat*, TKR), also led by Ahmad Husen, further strengthening its influence. Under Husen's leadership, the resistance launched numerous attacks on Allied and Dutch forces. The guerrilla tactics employed by Ahmad Husen and his troops earned them a fearsome reputation. They frequently achieved victories, including a significant success on February 21, 1946, when they destroyed the Allied-Dutch headquarters in Rimbo Kaluang. Following this battle, the troops came to be known as *Harimau Kuranji* (Kuranji Tigers), a nickname that quickly spread among the local population.

While the people of Kuranji provided full support to the fighters, the Allies considered them a formidable and terrifying force, offering rewards for the capture of their leader. As Husen moved his headquarters to Kuranji, the area became a frequent

target of Allied raids. Civilian homes were often destroyed as a warning to residents against supporting the fighters. Despite these acts of intimidation, the local population continued to aid the resistance, and Allied forces repeatedly failed to locate the freedom fighters. Kuranji's reputation as a resistance center only grew.

In mid-May 1946, the Allies surrounded Kalumbuk the base of the Padang Luar Kota resistance. Although the Council's headquarters was briefly captured, the Harimau Kuranji troops swiftly repelled the enemy. This account highlights Kuranji's pivotal role during the Indonesian War of Independence. Once a humble indigenous village, the area rose to prominence as a strategic defense base. Its location offered significant advantages for both defense and offense against the Dutch and Allied forces.

In addition, Kuranji provided vital logistical support, with its abundant agricultural resources and forest connections to the Bukit Barisan mountains. Hidden footpaths crisscrossing the region linked Kuranji to other resistance zones in the interior.

History of Place Names in Kuranji Sub-District

Research conducted in Kuranji Sub-district, Padang City, reveals numerous local place names spread across nine administrative urban villages (*kelurahan*), including: Surau Balai, Sarang Gagak, Simpang Anduring, Cubadak Ampo, and Parak Jigarang in Anduring Village; Rumah Tiga Ruang, Karang Ganting, Kampuang Kalawi, and Cubadak Air in Lubuk Lintah Village; Taratak Paneh, Tanah Sirah, Kunci, and Durian Tigo Batang in Korong Gadang Village; Koto Tinggi, Durian Taruang, Kampung Lalang, and Tunggang in Pasar Ambacang Village; Tui, Tapat, and Kandang Gabuo in Kuranji Village; Lolo, Rimbo Tarok, and Lapau Manggih in Gunung Sarik Village; as well as Sungai Sapih, Lolong Karan, Balai Baru, and Pilakuik in Sungai Sapih Village. From these, a number of place names were selected as samples for deeper analysis, as they carry significant linguistic, cultural, and historical meanings. The following are select examples with their respective etymologies:

1. Parak Jigarang

The name Parak Jigarang is derived from the first person to settle in the area, Haji Daim, who was popularly known as Haji Garang. He was a member of the Chaniago clan from the Lake Singkarak region. Although the exact time of his settlement is unknown, local accounts suggest that it began during the Dutch colonial period. Ratna, one of his descendants, shared that since her childhood the area had always been known as "Parak Jigarang," which translates to "Haji Garang's Field." Haji Daim was known for his tireless work in clearing land (*manaruko parak*), eventually settling and farming there.

This diligence earned him the nickname "Haji Garang," meaning a hardworking pilgrim. After settling, he invited his family to join him, and as the land became cleared and livable, other ethnic groups such as Tanjuang, Guci, and Malayu also began to settle in the area. Over time, Parak Jigarang became a more populated settlement. Historically, Parak Jigarang was a notable resistance zone during the Indonesian War of Independence, frequently witnessing armed clashes. Many residents supported the Harimau Kuranji troops led by Ahmad Husen.

During the PRRI conflict, Parak Jigarang was seen as a Rimbo troop base and a supporter of the movement. The central government's army often attacked the area, suspecting it of harboring rebels. In an effort to remove its rebellious stigma, a local fighter named Jamaluddin Wak Ketok temporarily renamed the area Pajir, but today it is once again widely known as Parak Jigarang.

Parak Jigarang is known as one of the resistance areas in Kuranji District. During the Indonesian War of Independence, this area frequently became a battlefield. Almost every day, the locals would find dead bodies, both from the Dutch and Indonesian armies. Many residents of this area joined the people's militias and became loyal supporters of the *Harimau Kuranji* forces (2002, pp. 143–146) under the leadership of Ahmad Hussein. Many of the people from Parak Jigarang died defending the independence of their nation.

2. Surau Balai

Surau Balai has existed since the colonial era and was previously part of the Padangpariaman Afdeeling, explaining the prevalence of Pariaman dialect and expressions such as Cik Elok, One, and Ajo among locals. Following the enactment of Law No. 5 of 1979 on Regional Governance, Surau Balai became part of Kelurahan Anduring in the Kuranji Sub-district. The name Surau Balai comes from the presence of a surau (small mosque) and a balai (village hall) once located by the main road.

The surau still stands today, renamed as Mushalla At-Taqwa, while the balai has long disappeared. According to a local elder, Pi Inah, these two buildings were the origin of the area's name. During Indonesia's struggle for independence, and again during the PRRI rebellion, many homes in the Surau Balai area were burned down by Dutch and central government forces, respectively. These attacks were retaliation for local support of independence fighters and later, PRRI sympathizers. Despite the destruction, the surau remained untouched. The community's strong ties to Islamic organizations, particularly Masyumi and Muhammadiyah, reinforced its political and ideological resistance during both periods.

The burning of homes appears to be closely tied to the incident at Simpang Haru on November 27, 1945. This incident took place at the Technical School (*Ambach School*) in Simpang Haru and involved a clash between Dutch troops and school administrators. The Dutch forcibly seized the school to use it as a shelter for refugees mostly Dutch nationals and Europeans who worked for Dutch companies. During this incident, Dutch soldiers assaulted several teachers and school staff.

The violence sparked outrage among Republican supporters including soldiers, militias, and youths who then launched an attack. Although the Dutch were able to repel the assault, it resulted in significant damage and casualties on their side. In retaliation, the Dutch launched sweeping operations, burning homes in various areas. The main goal of these raids was to capture Republican soldiers, militia members, and youths involved in the resistance. However, the operation failed to yield results. Thousands of homes were destroyed, and many young people lost their lives (Zed et al., 2002, pp. 193–194)

Pi Inah, who during the conflict served as a courier, health volunteer, and logistics provider, vividly recalled the brutality of the central army's operations in Surau Balai. In addition to torching homes, they also arrested many civilians who had no involvement in the conflict, both young and old.

3. Tiga Ruang

Tiga Ruang, located away from the main road between Simpang Anduring and Simpang Kalawi, was originally known as Kampung Rumah Tiga Ruang (Village of the Three-Room Houses). The name refers to three rumah gadang built by the Sikumbang clan from Saning Bakar, Solok. Each house had three rooms, and the area gradually evolved into a dense residential settlement. Another version suggests that the ancestors came from Tanah Garam, Solok, and settled in Belimbing.

A descendant later moved to what is now Tiga Ruang, and locals named the area based on his origin. Tiga Ruang was a Masyumi and Muhammadiyah stronghold, and during the PRRI period, residents dug bunkers as hiding places. Due to its isolated location and dense vegetation, the area served as a safe haven for PRRI fighters.

A few years ago, a delegation of community leaders from Saning Bakar, Solok including their *ninik mamak* (traditional elders) visited the area. The main purpose of the visit was to reconnect with family members and to gather information in order to verify stories circulating within the community. These visitors claimed they had familial ties with the people of Tiga Ruang in Padang.

This family connection was based on shared oral histories regarding their origins. Not long after the visit, residents of Tiga Ruang in Padang made a return visit. Since then, both communities have grown increasingly confident that they are indeed relatives. The

original residents of Tiga Ruang in Padang also became more certain that their ancestors came from Saning Bakar.

An alternative version claims that the ancestors of Tiga Ruang residents originated from *Tanah Garam* in Solok. They initially migrated to Kuranji, near what is now the Belimbing soccer field. After some time clearing the land, they built a *rumah gadang* with three rooms. This house became well-known in the area, and its residents came to be known as *people of the Three-Room House*.

As their family expanded, some members moved and settled in a new area called Belanti. Since people in Belanti did not know where they came from originally, they referred to them as the *Three-Room House people*. Eventually, one family member married someone from Guci, a village that would later become known as Tiga Ruang. At the time, this area had no official name and was sparsely populated. The arrival of someone from the *Three-Room House* family drew attention from the local community, who became curious about their origins. Once it was confirmed that the newcomer was from the *Three-Room House* family, the area was named *Kampung Rumah Tiga Ruang* (Muhlis: Interview, in Tiga Ruang)

Since the independence era, this area was known as one of the strongholds of the Islamic political party Masyumi. Additionally, the Muhammadiyah organization had a significant following here. Therefore, it's not surprising that in the 1955 general election, Masyumi won in the area, given Muhammadiyah's strong support for the party.

During the Revolutionary period (*Masa Pergolakan*), nearly every household in this area dug large holes either in their yards or underneath their homes to serve as hiding places during armed conflict. At that time, the area was widely known as *Kampung Masyumi*, since almost all its residents were loyal supporters of the influential Islamic political party in West Sumatra. It is therefore safe to say that the people of Tiga Ruang supported the PRRI (Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Indonesia).

As a result, this area was frequently raided by government troops in search of PRRI fighters and sympathizers, commonly referred to as *tentara rimbo* (jungle soldiers). However, their efforts often failed. The secluded and recessed location of Tiga Ruang, far from the main road, made it an ideal place to hide especially since the area was still covered with dense vegetation at the time. Furthermore, the local population actively protected PRRI fighters and their supporters.

4. Kampung Ampang

Kampung Ampang, located in Kelurahan Ampang, is home to Tanjung, Guci, Koto, and Chaniago clans. Its residents, mostly originating from Sulit Air, Solok, migrated in the 1950s seeking economic opportunities and became traders. The people of Kampung Ampang mostly trace their origins to Sulit Air in Solok. According to records by Ahmad Aidil and colleagues, the origins of the Kampung Ampang community can be traced back to the early 1950s. During that time, members of the Guci clan from Sulit Air migrated to Padang and its surrounding areas. This migration involved crossing the Bukit Barisan mountain range and descending into the wide lowlands that stretch to the western coast of West Sumatra.

These migrants arrived in Padang both in groups and individually. Upon arrival, they spread to various places such as Kuranji, Belimbing, Gunung Nago, and Ampang. Like many other migrants, their primary goal in moving to Padang was to seek a better livelihood. As is common among residents of Kelurahan Ampang in general, the main occupation of the Kampung Ampang community is trading. They have engaged in trade since their arrival in Padang, and this remains their primary livelihood today.

According to local folklore, the name *Kampung Ampang* began to be recognized by the community following the PRRI (Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Indonesia) movement in the late 1950s. The name of the village is derived from an *Ampang* (a guard post) that was located at *Simpang Tiga* (a three-way junction) not far from the village itself. This guard post was deliberately built by local residents to monitor

and prevent "outsiders" from entering the area, which at the time was known as one of the PRRI strongholds. Back then, the *Ampang* area was part of the *Kanagarian Pauh Sembilan* (Nellis, Interview in Ampang). Together with *Kuranji*, this region formed a unified area that was historically known as *Pauh XIV*, consisting of 14 *nagari* (traditional villages), each led by a *datuk* (traditional leader). Of these 14 *nagari*, nine were located within *Kanagarian Pauh IX*.

Following the implementation of Government Regulation No. 129 of the year 2000, which concerned the administrative division between the Kuranji sub-district and *Nagari Pauh Sembilan*, the Padang City Government designated *Simpang Tiga*, located in *Nagari Pauh Sembilan*, as a new administrative area named *Ampang*. A new urban village (*kelurahan*) called *Kelurahan Ampang* was also established in this area.

According to Nellis, during the Indonesian War of Independence, this village played a crucial role for the Indonesian military. It served as a hiding place for guerrilla fighters. Through this area, Indonesian guerrillas could reach *Simpang Haru* without fear of encountering Dutch troops. At that time, *Simpang Haru* was a strategically important zone for the Dutch due to its access to multiple key locations. The secluded location of *Kampung Ampang*, set back from main roads, made it an ideal hiding place for the Republic's guerrillas. For this reason, the area was spared from the widespread burning campaigns carried out by Dutch forces.

5. Koto Tingga

Located at the border between Kuranji and Pauh, Koto Tingga was once known for its fertile agricultural land, now transformed into student housing due to the expansion of Andalas University. Originally settled by the Koto ethnic group, the name Koto Tingga reflects both its inhabitants and possibly its geographic location. Two interpretations exist: one sees Koto Tingga as "the place inhabited by the Koto people," while another interprets *tingga* as "left behind," referencing administrative neglect. Historically, the area served as a reconnaissance post for Harimau Kuranji, with fighters signaling from across the river to Bukit Kuranji.

When an area becomes accessible to people from all walks of life, various changes are bound to occur and the same is true for Koto Tingga. In the past, when this area was still a productive agricultural zone, the majority of the community earned their living as farmers. However, with the ongoing changes particularly the conversion of farmland into residential areas the livelihoods of the local people have naturally shifted as well. Today, many of the original residents of Koto Tingga work as boarding house (*kos*) owners or run small shops selling daily necessities to students and boarders living in the area.

In addition, these developments have transformed the community into one that is much more open and inclusive. This is understandable, given that society is a dynamic social entity. Nonetheless, it cannot be denied that these changes have also gradually eroded the traditional cultural roots that once formed the foundation of community life. As one resident of Koto Tingga noted, the growing number of newcomers has brought changes and blends in community practices such as social gatherings, prayer recitations (*tahlilan*), and the celebration of religious holidays. Many of the small details and customary practices that used to be a part of local traditions have faded as a result of cultural mixing.

For instance, in public events and village celebrations (*perhelatan nagari*) in Koto Tingga, traditional arts from Pauh IX are rarely showcased anymore, with people now preferring modern forms of entertainment. Moreover, many young people no longer recognize or engage with their traditional culture, due in large part to the lack of active efforts to transfer or regenerate these traditions among the younger generation.

While today Koto Tingga is inhabited by people from a variety of ethnic backgrounds and regions, it was once occupied exclusively by people of the Koto ethnic group. According to Azwar, this is the origin of the name "Koto Tingga" itself. "Koto" refers to the ethnic group, and "tingga" in the Minangkabau language means "inhabited" or

“occupied.” Thus, Koto Tingga was originally named to signify “the place inhabited by the Koto people.” In linguistic terms, *Koto Tingga* carries referential meaning it refers directly to the ethnic group that originally lived there.

From a historical perspective, the origin of the name, based on the ethnic group, can be linked to the genealogy and migration history of the ancestors of the people of Koto Tingga and Pasar Ambacang more broadly. These ancestors, who came from Solok Selayo, eventually expanded their settlement and established a new *nagari* (village) called Pauh IX now the Kuranji District. This *nagari* was inhabited by nine different ethnic groups, each living in their own section or hamlet (*tapiian*), one of which was Pasar Ambacang, the *tapiian* of the Koto ethnic group. This suggests that the first area occupied in Pasar Ambacang by the Koto people was most likely Koto Tingga.

In addition to these two explanations, Azwar also mentions another version of the origin of the name *Koto Tingga* that circulates among the community. In this version, *Koto* is interpreted not as an ethnic name, but as “kota” (city or settlement), referring to a residential area consisting of housing for people from various backgrounds. Meanwhile, *tingga* is interpreted to mean “left behind” or “forgotten”.

Therefore, *Koto Tingga* could mean a settlement that is often left out or overlooked. Azwar explains that this idea of being “left behind” relates to Koto Tingga’s location on the boundary between Kuranji and Pauh districts. This border location often led to confusion or neglect. Residents of Kuranji often considered Koto Tingga to be part of Pauh, while those in Pauh believed it belonged administratively to Kuranji. Because of this uncertainty, the area came to be known locally as “*Koto yang tingga*” (the Koto that’s left behind), which over time became simply *Koto Tingga*.

When we speak of Koto Tingga, we must also mention the area’s role in Indonesia’s struggle for independence. According to Azwar, stories passed down from his father and uncle both of whom fought in the resistance reveal that Koto Tingga was once a reconnaissance post. Troops from the Harimau Kuranji unit were stationed here as scouts to monitor enemy movements. He recounts that when Dutch troops were advancing to attack Harimau Kuranji forces, it was these scouts in Koto Tingga who would signal by crossing the river (*manyubarang aia*) to alert those at the Kuranji command post, also known as Bukit Kuranji. Indeed, Azwar notes, if you cross the river (*batang aia*) from Koto Tingga, you arrive in Kuranji.

6. Sungai Sapih

Sungai Sapih, both a village and a sub-district, was formerly known as Asam-Asam or Jalan Usang. Two theories explain its current name. One suggests it comes from the many small, scattered rivers in the area, described locally as *basapiah-sapiah*. The second theory relates to the belief that the village had become diminished *nagari ko tingga sasapih* meaning “this village remains only a fragment”.

The area has historical ties to Persatuan Tarbiyah Islamiyah (PERTI), which played an important role in both education and the anti-colonial struggle. Its members formed the Indonesian Muslim Militia (LASMI), with women participating as part of *Lasykar Muslimat Indonesia*, led by Amak Rasia. They contributed to logistics, medical care, and occasionally armed resistance.

In the second version, as told by Alizar Luthan, the name *Sungai Sapih* originated from a local belief or story about the *nagari* (village) that was said to be shrinking in size over time. The oral tradition conveys this idea with the phrase “*nagari ko tingga sasapih*,” meaning “this village is now only a small part of what it used to be.” In the local pronunciation, *sasapih* becomes *Seisapih*, with *sa* pronounced as *sei*.

The term caught on with the community and eventually became the name of the village. When this area was still part of the Padang Pariaman Regency, the official name was written as *Sei Sapih*. However, when the area became part of the Padang city administration, the name was standardized to *Sungai Sapih*. From the perspective of place-

naming background, this explanation falls under the category of legendary or historical naming, as it is based on widely held local beliefs.

The name *Sungai Sapih* is also closely linked to the well-known Islamic religious organization PERTI (Persatuan Tarbiyah Islamiyah), a major Islamic group in West Sumatra. According to Amir Kasim, this area served as the Padang base for PERTI. This is evident from the presence of PERTI schools, which include a Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) and a junior high school (SMP PERTI). Amir Kasim was one of the school's founders. These schools operate under the Seych Umar Khalil Foundation and focus on serving underprivileged children. In line with its vision, the PERTI schools aim to develop intelligent, religious, dynamic, and competitive generations.

The existence and struggle of PERTI Sungai Sapih did not begin only recently or after Indonesia's independence. PERTI's movement had started long before, not only in the field of education, but also during the times of resistance against Dutch and Japanese colonialism. As told by Amak Rasia, PERTI, through the Indonesian Muslim Militia often referred to as LASMI actively took part in the fight against colonial rule.

They fought by taking up arms, climbing hills, descending valleys, and engaging in guerrilla warfare. Many residents of Sungai Sapih were part of this militia, including her own husband, Sabirin. Moreover, PERTI also mobilized women who were members of the organization to support LASMI's struggle by forming the Indonesian Muslim Women's Militia, or Lasykar Muslimat Indonesia. This women's militia was led by none other than Amak Rasia herself, a strong and determined woman.

According to Rasia, the Indonesian Muslim Women's Militia (Lasykar Muslimat Indonesia) played a crucial role in supporting LASMI and the People's Army during the war. As the leader of the Indonesian Muslim Women's Militia at the time, her main responsibility was to command her fellow female fighters in assisting with tasks such as organizing communal kitchens, sourcing food supplies, and preparing meals.

In addition to their support roles, they also served as medics, helping injured members of the People's Army and LASMI forces on the battlefield. On occasion, they even took up arms themselves. Rasia recalled that she was skilled in operating a weapon known as the Karaben India, which was commonly used at the time to fight against the Dutch colonial forces.

7. Kampuang Kalawi

Kampung Kalawi is a lively and strategically located area situated in the Lubuk Lintah subdistrict. It is considered a bustling area due to the numerous shops and active commercial activities found there, making it reasonable for the locals to refer to it as a commercial zone. For instance, the area hosts several mini markets, electrical stores, clothing and shoe shops, and many others. Kampung Kalawi is also considered strategic because of its wide and accessible roads. These roads connect Kampung Kalawi to Kampung Ampang and Alai to the east, and to Kampung Hilalang to the west.

According to Irwan Munir St. Rajo Bungsu, the name *Kampung Kalawi* comes from two words: *kampung*, meaning a residential settlement, and *kalawi*, which refers to a large tree that once grew in the area. The *kalawi* tree resembles a large jackfruit tree; its fruit was commonly used in cooking, especially as vegetables or fried snacks. Therefore, the name *Kampung Kalawi* can be seen as originating from a physical feature something found in the area that became its identifying characteristic, distinguishing it from other villages.

From a semantic perspective, the word *kalawi* no longer holds a purely denotative meaning (its literal definition), but rather a referential one. When locals say *Kalawi*, they are referring to the village in Lubuk Lintah, even though the tree itself no longer exists there. In fact, according to some residents, they have lived there all their lives without ever seeing what the *kalawi* tree looked like.

A significant river (*batang aia*) also flows through Kampung Kalawi. This river extends all the way to Gunung Pangilun and empties into the sea at Tabing. The water is

clean and has become a source for Padang City's municipal water company (PDAM). Moreover, the river provides large quantities of construction materials such as stones and sand, which are widely used for building foundations. It's not an exaggeration when locals say that the city of Padang was, in part, built with materials sourced from this river. Over time, the river has widened due to continuous excavation for these resources.

To many residents of Padang, the name *Kampung Kalawi* is likely familiar. It once served as the main base of the Auxiliary Police Force, known as *PB* (Polisi Bantuan), which was formed by the Indonesian police leadership to assist in maintaining public order during threats from the Allied/NICA forces. At that time, Padang was in a state of chaos, with Allied troops often acting arbitrarily to further their agenda. *PB* personnel were assigned to various police stations across West Sumatra, including those in Outer Padang (Padang Luar Kota).

Within this region, *PB* forces were deployed in areas such as Bandar Buat, Lubuk Kilangan, Kampung Kalawi, Lubuk Begalung, Balai Gadang, and Pasar Ambacang. Among these, the central headquarters was located in Kampung Kalawi, led by Nurdin Dt. Radjo Mangkuto. Kampung Kalawi also served as a key access point for independence fighters on their way to Kampung Kalumbuk, which functioned as a significant defensive stronghold. Kampung Kalumbuk was the base of the Outer-City People's Struggle Council (Dewan Perjuangan Rakyat Luar Kota), a coalition of several local militia groups.

In addition to its role in the independence movement, Kampung Kalawi is also well known in the cultural sphere for its Silat school (Paguruan Silek) named Kuciang Lia. The school was founded and led by Safripiri, titled Rajo Bujang, a respected figure and traditional leader (*Ninik Mamak*) from Kampung Kalawi. Established in 1989 with the approval of all *Ninik Mamak* from the Tapian Malayu and Tapian Bundo clans, the school was centered in the village's traditional prayer houses (*surau*). In addition to martial arts training, students at the school also received religious education.

While oral narratives provided invaluable insights into the socio-historical meanings of place names, they also presented specific challenges during data interpretation. Some accounts were fragmented or inconsistent across informants, requiring careful cross-referencing and contextualization. Memory gaps, personal biases, and the influence of communal myths occasionally blurred the boundary between history and folklore.

For example, certain origin stories of place names were told with strong emotional or ideological undertones especially those related to the independence era or the PRRI movement which complicated efforts to assess their factual accuracy. Additionally, variations in dialect and terminology sometimes created ambiguities in translation or interpretation. Recognizing these limitations, the analysis prioritized recurring themes corroborated by multiple informants and situated the oral data within verifiable historical frameworks wherever possible. This approach helped balance narrative richness with methodological rigor.

CONCLUSION

Toponymy plays a vital role in understanding how communities construct spatial identities through linguistic, cultural, and historical markers. In the case of Kuranji Sub-district, place names are deeply rooted in oral traditions that reflect local memory, resistance history, and intergenerational identity.

This study demonstrates that these names are not arbitrary but represent a form of intangible cultural heritage that deserves recognition and preservation. While oral history presents methodological challenges, it remains an essential tool in reconstructing local historiography, especially in regions with limited written documentation. By categorizing place names according to their origins flora, figures, ethnic groups, geographic features, and social events this research contributes to the growing field of onomastics and indigenous knowledge studies.

The findings underscore the urgency of documenting oral traditions as many of their bearers age and pass on. Ultimately, this study affirms that place names are more than mere labels; they are living texts that encode collective memory, cultural resilience, and spatial meaning for present and future generations.

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