

## Articles

### The Traditional Decision-making Process of *Berkaul* in Tanjung Emas, West Sumatra: Its Nature and Significance

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*Berkaul* is a traditional practice associated with the rice cultivation cycle in West Sumatra, Indonesia, intended to seek consensus within the local community about agricultural practices and management of water for irrigation. *Berkaul* is deeply rooted in the *adat* and worldview of the region but is much less commonly practiced today than in the past and has disappeared in many parts of the region. This article describes the process of *berkaul* in Tanjung Emas, West Sumatra, places it within the context of Minangkabau *adat* and tradition, and considers its value in fostering participation, empowerment, and social inclusion in the context of rural development.

**Keywords:** *adat*, agriculture, *berkaul*, empowerment, Indonesia, irrigation, Minangkabau, participation, rice, West Sumatra.

#### Background

Indonesia is unique in the variety of its cultures, languages, and people. While this diversity is perhaps most apparent between different ethnic groups, considerable differences are also observable within a given ethnic group at the local level. The customs that are traditional in a particular community in Indonesia are intertwined with the particular *adat* (local law and customs) practiced in that area and shape the institutions of regional society.

*Adat* maintains a position of particular importance in West Sumatra among the Minangkabau people, who pride themselves