



Consistency of Dalihan na Tolu vs. Same-Clan Marriage: The Intersection of Customary Law and Islamic Theological Doctrine

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Abstract

This research aims to analyse the interaction between the customary law of Dalihan Na Tolu and the doctrine of Islamic theology in the context of same-clan marriage in the Batak community, which has rarely been explored in depth. The urgency of this research arises from the need to understand how the Batak community manages conflicts between deep-rooted customary values and universal Islamic teachings, especially in the face of modernity and globalisation. This study aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals' focus on promoting just, peaceful, and inclusive societies (SDG 16). The methodology employed is descriptive qualitative, with primary data collection through extensive literature studies and document analysis related to Dalihan Na Tolu and Islamic doctrine. Secondary data involves a review of literature from related journals, books on Islamic theology, and reports on the social dynamics of the Batak community. Data analysis was conducted using the Miles, Huberman, and Saldana model, which includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing, followed by source triangulation for validation. The results show that there is a complex dynamic between maintaining customary values and adapting to Islamic teachings, with the community progressively seeking ways to integrate and adjust both. The discussion reveals that despite value conflicts, the Batak community demonstrates flexibility in facing changes. Recommendations from this study are the need for a more inclusive and flexible approach in customary and religious policies, and the importance of dialogue between customary and religious leaders to achieve harmonious solutions. This research provides valuable insights into cultural sustainability and social identity in the multicultural context of Indonesia.

Keywords: Dalihan na Tolu, Same-Clan Marriage, Intersection, Islamic Theology.



Introduction

In North Sumatra, the presence of the Batak ethnic group is highly prominent, comprising approximately 44.75% of the total population of the province according to the 2010 Population Census (Jayani, 2021). This ethnic group is divided into several sub-ethnic groups that have a significant influence on the social and cultural dynamics of the region, including Tapanuli/Toba, Mandailing, Karo, Simalungun, and Pakpak (Arifiah & Siregar, 2022; Novita et al., 2022). These distinctions illustrate the rich cultural diversity and the importance of understanding each kinship structure and social system adopted, particularly the Dalihan Na Tolu system.

The Dalihan Na Tolu system, translated as 'three-legged stove,' plays a crucial role in maintaining the social structure of the Batak community (Aini & Akmal, 2022; S. M. Harahap & Hamka, 2023). This system consists of three main pillars: Mora (the family from the wife's side), Kahanggi (siblings and relatives of the same clan), and Anak Boru (relatives from the female side). Each pillar has important social functions and underscores the importance of harmony and balance in maintaining order and social unity within Batak customs.

However, challenges arise from the practice of intra-marga marriage, where individuals from the same clan choose to marry (Suryani & Triganda Sayuti, 2022). This practice is considered 'sumbang,' a term indicating something deemed inappropriate because it blurs the lineage lines that should be clearly separated within the traditional Dalihan Na Tolu structure (Aji et al., 2021; A. S. Harahap & Hasibuan, 2016). This phenomenon leads to direct conflict with long-standing customary principles.

In South Tapanuli, where almost 98% of the population is Muslim, the phenomenon of intra-marga marriage is more prominent. Although Islamic teachings allow marriage between members of the same clan, the Dalihan Na Tolu tradition requires clan differentiation to maintain the integrity of the customary social structure (A. S. Harahap et al., 2023). This creates a clash of values between custom and religion that requires sensitive and accurate resolution.

To accommodate such marriages, customary policy in South Tapanuli often requires individuals who marry within the same clan to change their clan through a customary court process. The duration of the clan change process through a customary court in South Tapanuli can vary geographically and by clan, and it also depends on how quickly the required conditions are met. In this process, important customary figures such as Harajaon and Hatobangon ensure that the clan change is carried out respecting long-standing customary principles (S. A. Harahap, 2022; Lubis, 2020). While allowing the marriage to proceed, this clan change also reflects the complex adjustments between maintaining tradition and accommodating social change.

This clan arrangement is not merely a formality but has profound implications for social position and participation rights in customary rituals. Individuals who marry within the same clan and do not undergo this clan change process often face social consequences, such as being barred from participating in customary activities or even being asked to move away from their hometown.

This highlights how deeply traditional values are integrated into the daily lives of the Batak people. Interestingly, despite tensions between customary and religious values, both value systems tend to be treated as parallel entities within Batak society. This reflects how cultural adaptation can incorporate elements from both sources of values.

The conflict between custom and religion becomes highly relevant for cultural experts and researchers. Previous researchers have emphasized that while society is more open to change today, traditional values still play a significant role in shaping social and personal identity (Alzahrani, 2022; Kurniati et al., 2023).



The importance of further research in this context can provide deeper insights into how tradition and modernity can coexist. The urgency of research on Dalihan Na Tolu and same-clan marriage is not only crucial for understanding the internal dynamics of the Batak community but also in a broader context, helping to understand how communities in Indonesia adjust their traditions in the face of globalization and social change.

In the context of Dalihan Na Tolu, justice within the Batak customary system is prominently observed in the matrimonial regulations that prohibit marriage within the same clan, aimed at maintaining social balance and genetic harmony among clan members. This reflects how justice is implemented in indigenous societies, not only reinforcing cultural identity and continuity but also ensuring social justice among its members.

This emphasis on justice resonates with the goals of Indonesia's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) number 16, which advocate for Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions, highlighting the importance of ensuring fair and inclusive access to justice for all. Within the Batak community, the application of customary justice principles through Dalihan Na Tolu not only reaffirms the sovereignty of customary law within their social structure but also demonstrates how justice can be integrated into traditional values while responding to the challenges of modernity and the demands for universal justice as advocated by the SDGs.

This study aims to explore ways in which the Batak community maintains their identity while being responsive to the demands of the times. Thus, this study is expected to provide valuable insights into the interaction between custom and religion, and how these elements affect social integration and cultural sustainability within the Batak community. This research also reflects the need to integrate the concept of 'marakkang maranggi', meaning that each clan has its narrative, highlighting that each clan has a unique role and function within the traditional structure of Dalihan Na Tolu.

Literature Review

This research explores how the Batak customary structure, known as Dalihan Na Tolu, interacts and sometimes conflicts with the principles of marriage within Islam, particularly regarding the practice of same-clan marriage. Dalihan Na Tolu, a kinship system that reinforces social divisions and roles within the Batak community, prohibits marriage between individuals from the same clan as it is considered to disrupt social and spiritual balance (Firma Harianja & Sudrajat, 2021; Habeahan & Prayitno, 2022; Muda & Suharyanto, 2020). On the other hand, Islam does not forbid same-clan marriage as long as the parties involved are not mahram and meet all valid marriage conditions. This study aims to delve into how these two systems—strong customary law and Islamic theology—can clash or complement each other in a society that maintains both strong customary and religious identities, highlighting the complex dynamics between tradition, law, and religion in the social life of the Batak community.

In this context, the researcher gathered 1,000 previous studies using the Publish or Perish application. Once the data was collected, the researcher conducted network analysis and density analysis using the VosViewer application.

The complex relationships among various aspects of marriage within Islamic theology are reflected through interconnections between legal, social, and theological fields. Concepts such as "Islamic marriage," "Islamic jurisprudence," and "Islamic theology" are central in the network, indicating their presence as main focal points in previous research. These nodes are connected to other elements such as "child marriage," "marriage law," and "marriage practice," indicating that previous studies often explored the legal implications and practices of marriage within a broader Islamic social and legal context. The emphasis on "theology" and "Islamic teaching" links discussions about religious norms to everyday life practices, showing how theological interpretations influence practical applications in the lives of Muslims.



This research, focusing on the interaction between Dalihan Na Tolu customary law and Islamic theological doctrine in the context of same-clan marriage, can uncover new insights in this complex network. The analysis highlights the importance of understanding how marriage is regulated not only through the prism of religious law, but also through interactions with the customary norms specific to an ethnic group, such as the Batak community. By understanding the relationship between the node "Islamic theology" and marriage practices in previous research, a better understanding of how Islamic theology traditionally responds to and possibly interacts or conflicts with customary practices like Dalihan Na Tolu, which has its own rules and symbolism in determining social structure and marriage, can be obtained.

In the density analysis of a thousand previous studies about marriage in Islamic theology, topics such as "theology," "Islamic marriage," and "Islamic jurisprudence" dominate. High-density areas indicate a strong focus on merging theological understanding with life practices, exploring how Islamic teachings are applied in the context of marriage. Other aspects like "child marriage," "marriage law," and "Islamic philosophy" are also prominent, indicating that marriage is viewed not just as a personal or social union but also as an entity rich with legal, ethical, and philosophical implications. This interconnectedness shows that studies on marriage within an Islamic context often investigate how religious norms shape marriage practices and policies, focusing on how religious teachings are interpreted and applied across various cultural and geographic contexts.

This research, which focuses on same-clan marriage within the context of Dalihan Na Tolu, finds that this issue is seldom touched upon from a theological perspective in the existing literature. Most previous studies tend to explore same-clan marriage within a cultural and social order framework, often overlooking how Islamic theological values can influence or conflict with this practice. Although Dalihan Na Tolu as a customary system has deep social implications, its theological aspects are often neglected, showing a gap in research that integrates Islamic theological doctrine with customary practices. This study attempts to fill this gap by examining the interaction between customary law regulating same-clan marriage and Islamic theological interpretation, providing new insights into how religious and customary values can interact in marriage practices. In addition to the previous analyses, the author also sorts through several relevant prior studies such as:

In research by Manurung et al. (2023), the method of speech act analysis was used to study communication during the Batak Toba tribe wedding ceremonies in Jangga Toruan Village. This study shows that communication rituals in marriage reflect the social structure and values of the Batak Toba community, especially the respect for the Dalihan Na Tolu structure. These findings are juxtaposed with this research's focus, which examines the interaction between customary law and Islamic theology in the context of same-clan marriage, providing additional insights into how customary values are maintained and enacted in significant social rituals.

Research by Nasution (2022) explores the use of ethnozoology in traditional Mandailing tribal wedding ceremonies in North Sumatra. Through an ethnographic approach, this study reveals that the biological elements used in wedding rituals not only have symbolic meaning but are also deeply integrated with the beliefs and values of the community. This provides a new perspective that complements this research in understanding how customary elements can interact and be influenced by religious norms, showing that marriage is not just a social contract but also a medium for preserving and expressing cultural identity.

The study by Saptomo and APHA (2020) titled "Siregarization of Kahiyang-Bobby," discusses inter-tribal marriage and how it relates to the concept of Dalihan Na Tolu and patrilinealization. This study uses a qualitative descriptive method to understand the dynamics of custom change in the context of modern marriage. Their findings show how custom adaptation can occur in response to social changes and the need to integrate customary values with a broader context. These findings are relevant to this research, which also explores how customary traditions and religious values can clash or adapt in the context of same-clan marriage, highlighting the dynamics of adaptation and resistance in customary practices.



Research by Siregar (2019), focusing on the Batak Toba wedding ceremony between consumerism and life goals, explores how modern marriage practices can be influenced by economic factors while still rooted in customary and religious values. Through a qualitative approach, this study provides insights into how the wedding ceremony becomes an arena where material demands meet the maintenance of cultural identity. The results depict the contemporary dilemma in maintaining the integrity of customary rituals amidst modernity pressures, which also shows intersections with this research in the context of how customary and religious values are managed in societies undergoing social and economic transition.

Methods

In this study, a qualitative descriptive approach was selected to delve into the interaction between the customary law of Dalihan Na Tolu and Islamic values related to same-clan marriage in the Batak community (Edmonds & Kennedy, 2020; Weyant, 2022). This study utilizes primary data sources including verses of the Quran that pertain to marriage and Islamic principles, as well as articles discussing Dalihan Na Tolu as a reflection of Batak customs. Secondary data sources include books on Islamic theology, academic journals on customary law and Batak culture, and current reports documenting the social and religious dynamics within the Batak community. Data collection was conducted through extensive literature study, utilizing digital libraries, journal databases, and news sources to gather and review relevant literature (Creswell & Creswell, 2022).

The data analysis technique used in this study is the Miles, Huberman, and Saldana model, which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing (Miles et al., 2020). This approach allows the research to systematically identify, categorize, and extract key themes from the collected data, as well as to develop a deep understanding of how Batak customary views and Islam interact in the context of same-clan marriage. Data reduction is conducted through the selection, focusing, and simplification of excerpts from the source texts. Data display involves organizing information for further analysis, while conclusion drawing integrates findings to form a comprehensive understanding of the research subject.

To ensure data validity, this study employs source triangulation, involving the use of various types of data and sources of information. This triangulation aids in validating the research findings by comparing the results obtained from primary and secondary data sources, minimizing bias and enhancing the credibility of the data and analysis produced (Flick, 2022). In this way, the study aims to provide an objective and balanced analysis of how customary and religious values may conflict or integrate within social and legal practices in the Batak community.

Results and Discussion

The Quranic Literature on Islamic Marriage

Marriage in Islam is meticulously governed by the Quran, which provides clear guidelines about the processes and principles that Muslims should follow when entering into marriage (Boron, 2024). The holy book not only establishes the laws that govern marriage but also emphasizes the importance of building a harmonious and ethical household (Fuadi et al., 2024). The verses related to marriage cover not only legal aspects and the rights of the spouses but also the spiritual and moral aspects that should be considered by everyone involved.

Theologically, the Quran teaches that marriage is not merely a legal contract between two individuals, but a sacred bond that is recognized and blessed by Allah. Marriage is considered one of the most recommended Sunnahs of the Prophet Muhammad, and it is emphasized as



a means to preserve love, tranquility, and fidelity between husband and wife. Here, the author has compiled several verses that discuss the ideal Islamic marriage:

Table 1. Quranic Verses in the Context of Marriage

No.	Verse	Description
1	"And do not marry polytheistic women until they believe..." (Al-Baqarah, 2:221)	This verse asserts that a Muslim should not marry a polytheist until they have embraced Islam, emphasizing the importance of faith as a prerequisite for marriage.
2	"And marry those among you who are single and the fit ones among your slaves, male and female..." (An-Nur, 24:32)	This verse encourages the marriage of those who are unmarried and emphasizes that partners should meet the criteria of being suitable or fit for marriage.
3	"Good women are for good men, and good men are for good women..." (An-Nur, 24:26)	This verse highlights that the qualities of goodness and decency are essential criteria in choosing a partner, where good individuals are destined for other good individuals.
4	"And do not marry women whom your fathers had married..." (An-Nisa, 4:22)	This verse states the prohibition of marrying women who have been married to one's father, as part of the rules regulating marriage prohibitions within the family.
5	Hadith: "A woman is married for four things: her wealth, her status, her beauty, and her religion. Choose the one with religion, and you will be prosperous." (Sahih Bukhari)	This Hadith guides Muslims to prioritize religion over other factors such as wealth, social status, and beauty when choosing a partner.
6	Hadith: "If someone comes to you and you are pleased with their religion and character, marry them off. If not, there will be fitnah (corruption) on Earth and great destruction." (Sunan Abu Dawud)	This Hadith emphasizes the importance of religion and character in choosing a partner and warns of the negative consequences if these two aspects are ignored.

In the context of Islamic marriage, the Quran provides various guidelines regulating the choice of a partner and the procedures of marriage, thus creating a harmonious family order in line with the principles of faith. The first verse from Surah Al-Baqarah (2:221) explicitly prohibits marriage to polytheistic women until they embrace Islam. The Tafsir by Hamka highlights the importance of faith as the primary basis in choosing a partner, as faith is the foundation that will bring blessings and harmony to the household (Hamka, 2012). Quraish Shihab adds that marriage to non-Muslims could lead to complications in practicing religion and raising children in Islamic teachings (Shihab, 2015). According to Al-Maraghi, this prohibition serves to protect the integrity of faith and minimize belief conflicts within the family (Maraghi, 1910).

Moreover, An-Nur (24:32) encourages Muslims to marry off those who are single and ensures that prospective brides and grooms are suitable in terms of religion and morals. The Tafsir Muyassar interprets suitability in the context of the ability to perform the responsibilities of a spouse according to Islamic law (Al-Qarni, 2008). The brief Tafsir by the Indonesian Ministry of Religion adds that this verse also underscores the importance of considering the welfare of slaves, showing social justice in Islam (Kemenag, 2016). Ibn Katsir emphasizes that marriage should aim to preserve honor and form a pious family (Katsir, 2018).

An-Nur (24:26) states that good women are for good men and vice versa, implying that moral purity and goodness are the main criteria in choosing a partner. The Tafsir by Fakhr al-Din al-



Razi explains that this verse asserts the compatibility between spouses in terms of morals and spirituality as the basis for a stable marriage (Al-Razi, 2012). According to Thabathaba'i, this verse also emphasizes that a person's goodness attracts a like-minded partner, supporting the creation of a household environment conducive to spiritual growth (Thabathaba'i, 1991). Al-Zamakhshari adds that the relationship between spouses in Islam should be based on kindness and mutual respect (Al-Zamakhshari, 1995).

An-Nisa (4:22) prohibits marrying women whom one's father has married, indicating the importance of maintaining boundaries and respecting existing family relationships. The Tafsir by Al-Jazairi stresses that this prohibition aims to protect family honor and prevent unhealthy relationships (Al-Jazairi, 2003). According to Jalalain, this prohibition also reflects norms of decency that must be preserved within the family structure (As-Suyuthi & Al-Mahally, 2015). Al-Baydawi adds that this law ensures that there are no intergenerational conflicts or competition within the family (Al-Baydawi, 2011).

In terms of Hadith, additional guidance provided by Prophet Muhammad emphasizes that women are married for four things: their wealth, status, beauty, and religion, but he advised to marry the one who is religiously committed to be successful. This underscores that religion should be the primary consideration, as it influences the overall marital life (Abdul Baqi, 2016). A Hadith narrated by Sunan Abu Dawud states that if someone with satisfactory faith and character proposes marriage, they should be married off; otherwise, it could lead to fitnah (corruption) and widespread harm. This Hadith reaffirms the importance of religion and character as the foundation for choosing a partner, highlighting that societal stability depends on stable households rooted in Islamic values (Sajastani, 1994).

Overall, the tafsirs by scholars illustrate that an ideal marriage in Islam is one that is founded on strong faith, moral and spiritual compatibility, and suitable social and economic conditions. Scholars like Ibn Katsir and Al-Razi emphasize that a strong religious foundation in marriage helps the couple to face life's challenges with patience and wisdom, while nurturing a higher purpose of marital life, which is to achieve blessings from Allah and happiness in this world and the hereafter (Afiyah & Hadi, 2022; Shaikh, 2022; Suleman et al., 2023). They also state that harmony in the household can be achieved when both partners have a deep understanding of each other's rights and duties, in accordance with the Islamic Shariah that prioritizes justice, compassion, and care.

Dalihan Na Tolu: Consistency of Custom in Marriage Rituals

Dalihan Na Tolu, a profound and integral concept in the customs of the Batak tribe, represents three important pillars that support the entire social order and traditional life. These pillars include Mora (the family from the wife's side), Kahanggi (siblings and relatives of the same clan), and Anak Boru (siblings from the female side) (Daulay, 2022; Prayoga & Zuska, 2022). This concept not only reflects the structure of social organization but also guides interactions in many aspects of life, including important ceremonies and rituals such as marriage. In marriage, Dalihan Na Tolu plays a crucial role in ensuring that all customary elements are respected and maintained, preserving balance and harmony in the proceedings and inter-clan relationships.

Marriage within the context of Dalihan Na Tolu is not just the union of two individuals, but also the union of two large families bringing their own traditions, values, and expectations. This custom emphasizes the need for involvement and approval from all pillars of Dalihan Na Tolu, which ensures that every aspect of the marriage is conducted according to the norms and ethics of the Batak community. This process creates a broad support network, strengthening social bonds and ensuring cultural continuity. The consistency of customs in marriage rituals reflects the Batak community's commitment to preserving and respecting their cultural



heritage, ensuring that each marriage not only fulfills individual needs but also maintains broader social and cultural integrity.

Table 2. Consistency of Dalihan Na Tolu in Marriage Rituals

No.	Element	Description
1	Dalihan Na Tolu	Represents three pillars in Batak society: Mora (maternal uncles and maternal male relatives), Kahanggi (members of the same clan), and Anak Boru (relatives from the female lineage). These pillars are crucial in maintaining the social structure and are heavily involved in marriage rituals and community events.
2	Exogamy in Marriage	Marriages within the same clan (endogamous marriages) are generally prohibited to avoid the social consequences and the ritually 'sumbang'—considered a marriage without moral or social substance, akin to 'empty rice'. This rule is strictly enforced in areas like Toba, while in regions more influenced by Islam such as Angkola, adjustments like changing the woman's clan can be made to allow marriage.
3	Cultural Variations	Enforcement and interpretation of 'sumbang' vary significantly by region. For example, in Toba, rules are stricter compared to Angkola, where Islamic influence has slightly tempered strict adherence to traditional exogamy requirements.
4	Legal and Social Implications	Those who violate this norm by marrying within the same clan face significant social sanctions, including exclusion from rituals and community events, emphasizing the integration of traditional laws with social order and cultural identity in Batak society.

In sum, the consistency of Dalihan Na Tolu is as follows: Dalihan Na Tolu, a profound kinship concept in the Batak society, reflects three crucial pillars that uphold their social structure: Mora, Kahanggi, and Anak Boru (Dilinar Adlin & Nugrahaningsih, 2019). Each pillar plays a vital role in maintaining order and harmony in traditional life, particularly in highly respected marriage rituals. In this context, Mora refers to the wife's family, Kahanggi to siblings and relatives of the same clan, and Anak Boru to the male siblings of sisters.

The concept of Dalihan Na Tolu emphasizes the importance of maintaining balance among these pillars to ensure that every customary and social activity proceeds smoothly. In the Batak society, marriage is an example where not just two individuals are united, but also two families that bring their respective traditions, values, and expectations (Silalahi, 2019; Sitompul et al., 2022). The marriage procession becomes a means through which both families can solidify social bonds and strengthen family networks.

However, there is a strict prohibition against intra-clan marriage within the Dalihan Na Tolu system. Such marriages are considered 'sumbang', which means lacking moral or social substance, akin to empty 'rice stalks' (Aji et al., 2021; I. Nasution & Hasibuan, 2023). This prohibition is based on the belief that marriage within one's own clan would lead to an ambiguous position in the social structure and potentially disrupt the long-standing balance of customs. In our opinion, the realism of this belief depends on the perspective applied. Within a tribal context, it is certainly realistic as this tradition has been passed down through generations and avoids the 'sumbang' or inappropriateness of same-clan marriages. However, from an Islamic standpoint, such marriages do not contravene any religious beliefs. It is important to note that to understand the ethnographic context, researchers must follow local beliefs and remain objective, avoiding subjective judgments of a tribe's customs.

In the Toba region, the prohibition against same-clan marriage is strictly observed and carefully guarded (Manalu et al., 2024; Sihaloho, 2023). The social sanctions given to those who violate



this rule are severe, including exclusion from community activities and often, a requirement to move away from their hometown. This illustrates the importance of maintaining clear and unmixed lineage lines, which are core to Dalihan Na Tolu.

Meanwhile, in South Tapanuli, where Islam has a stronger influence, traditional stipulations have been somewhat relaxed. Here, although intra-clan marriage is still considered taboo, there are processes for changing the bride's clan so that the marriage can proceed without violating traditional structures. This process involves customary courts and acknowledgment from relevant parties, showing how society adapts old traditions to new conditions.

This adaptation is not always easy or accepted by all community members. In some cases, individuals and families involved in same-clan marriages that do not go through the proper customary process may still face social ostracism or even expulsion (Hasibuan, 2022; Purba et al., 2023; Sihombing, 2022). This reaffirms how deeply traditional values are ingrained in Batak society and how complex the challenges faced by traditional communities are in bridging tradition and modernity.

The continuity of customs and adherence to Dalihan Na Tolu remains a priority in Batak society, even when faced with modern social and economic pressures. For many Bataks, maintaining the sanctity of customs is as important as following religious teachings. This reflects how traditions, in many ways, still form a solid foundation for their social identity and culture.

Marriage rituals in the context of Batak customs and culture are not just formal procedures but also crucial means of honoring and strengthening spiritual bonds among community members and with their ancestors (Octavianna et al., 2020). Every aspect of the customary marriage, from choosing a partner to conducting ceremonies, is arranged in such a way as to reflect deep cultural values and honor towards customary laws that have been passed down through generations. The respect for these rituals is crucial as it not only maintains social order but also preserves the cultural richness that characterizes the Batak community. These meticulously conducted and respected customary ceremonies ultimately strengthen the sense of community and cultural continuity, which is vital for communal identity.

The implications for the broader society are increased harmony and social stability. Marriages that are respected and conducted according to prevailing customs serve as ideal models that instill values such as loyalty, respect, and responsibility among the younger generations. This creates an environment conducive to raising children within a rich cultural and strong communal ethical framework. Thus, customary marriage ceremonies not only preserve tradition but also strengthen societal structures by promoting harmony and collective well-being. Ideally, the Batak society will continue to nurture and celebrate these ceremonies, not only as relics of the past but as living practices relevant and vital for their future.

The Dilemma of Intra-Clan Marriage: Clash of Customary and Religious Values

In Batak society, intra-clan marriage often presents significant dilemmas, creating conflicts between traditional values and religious values. The Batak customary concept, represented by Dalihan Na Tolu, regards marriage within the same clan as 'sumbang', literally meaning 'empty' or 'invalid', because it contradicts the principle of exogamy that supports genetic diversity and social strengthening between clans (Sormin, 2023). In this context, intra-clan marriage is not only seen as a violation of social norms but also as a threat to the harmonious social structure long maintained in Batak tradition.

However, in some areas strongly influenced by religious values, particularly among the predominantly Muslim Batak communities such as in South Tapanuli, the view of intra-clan marriage tends to be more flexible. Islam does not specifically prohibit marriage between individuals of the same clan, provided both parties meet the conditions of marriage under



Islamic law. This dilemma highlights how adaptations and negotiations between adherence to custom and religious teachings occur, often resulting in various forms of compromise and reinterpretation of customary practices to balance these two different value systems.

Table 3. Conflict of Values: Dalihan Na Tolu vs. Religious Values

No.	Phenomenon	Customary Law	Religious Values
1	Intra-clan Marriage	Strictly prohibited as it is considered 'sumbang' (immoral) and disrupts the balance of Dalihan Na Tolu.	Islam does not prohibit intra-clan marriage as long as both parties are not mahram and meet the requirements for marriage.
2	Sanctions for Intra-clan Marriage	Offenders are subject to customary sanctions: barred from participating in customary rites, not allowed to give opinions in customary council, and lose rights in the traditional social structure.	There are no religious sanctions in Islam for intra-clan marriage, as long as Sharia requirements are fulfilled.
3	Social Isolation	Offenders of intra-clan marriage are often isolated or asked to leave the village to preserve customary honour.	Islam prioritizes family and community harmony, thus does not encourage social isolation as long as Sharia is not violated.
4	Compromise in Modern Context	In some cases, the clan of one party (usually the woman) is changed through a customary council to allow the marriage according to tradition.	There are no rules in Islam that require changing clans; the focus is on equality and good intentions in marriage.

In Batak society, the kinship system of Dalihan Na Tolu dictates the social order and customary rituals, including marriage rules. These rules are strict in preventing intra-clan marriage, seen as 'sumbang' or invalid because it could disrupt the long-maintained social balance. Such marriages are viewed not just as ethical violations but also threats to the inherited social structure. This perception stems from the belief that marriage should strengthen social networks by connecting different clans or families, not consolidating power within the same clan, which could lead to conflicts and disharmony. Numerous instances of same-clan marriages exist, yet the sanctions are seldom observed as couples who engage in such unions typically opt to relocate from the areas where these customs are enforced.

Conversely, the religious values of Islam, also embraced by many Batak people, offer a different perspective on intra-clan marriage. In Islam, marriage within the clan is not prohibited as long as both parties are not mahram and meet all the conditions set by Islamic law (Ratuloly et al., 2021). This creates a contradiction with Batak customary law, where intra-clan marriage often faces significant customary barriers and serious social consequences.

When an individual in Batak society violates this marriage rule, they often face severe social sanctions (Faza et al., 2021). They may be banned from participating in customary rituals, prohibited from providing opinions in customary meetings, and even lose their rights within the traditional social structure. These sanctions reflect the depth of disapproval of intra-clan marriage and aim to maintain the integrity and balance of the community as a whole.

Meanwhile, under Islamic values, there are no specific sanctions related to intra-clan marriage, as long as all Sharia conditions are met (Avita et al., 2022; Nasir, 2022). This includes the consent of both parties, the presence of a marriage guardian, and valid witnesses. Thus, the discrepancy between Batak customary law and Islamic values creates a dilemma for those who must choose between following ancestral traditions or their religious teachings.



Cases of social isolation also reflect the severe consequences of violating this customary norm. Individuals or couples who choose to marry within the same clan often have to leave their community to avoid conflicts and preserve family honor. This is contrary to Islamic values that prioritize harmony and family integrity, where isolation or exclusion is not considered an appropriate solution in line with Islamic teachings.

In some modern situations, the Batak community has tried to adjust customary practices to current needs, especially in areas with strong Islamic influence. Changing a woman's clan in a customary court has become a compromise solution to allow previously taboo marriages. This step shows the Batak community's efforts to align traditional customs with religious values that may be more permissive of intra-clan marriage (Nainggolan & Panjaitan, 2023).

However, such changes do not always receive full support from all community members. Some may still view these adjustments as a disregard for long-held customary principles. The conflict between the desire to maintain traditions and the need to adapt to changing social and religious contexts is a real challenge in the social dynamics of today's Batak community.

Ideally, resolving the clash of values requires ongoing dialogue and participation from all relevant parties, both customary leaders and religious figures, to find solutions acceptable to all without sacrificing cultural identity or adherence to religious values. Thus, marriage can be conducted not just as a fulfillment of customary or religious requirements but also as a means to strengthen social bonds and community harmony.

In facing the clash of values between the Dalihan Na Tolu custom and Islamic law regarding intra-clan marriage, Islamic theology offers a flexible and inclusive perspective. According to Islamic teachings, the basic principles governing marriage are the clarity and validity of its conditions, including the consent of both parties, the presence of a guardian, and fair testimony (Binarsa & Nasution, 2021; Warman et al., 2023). Islam teaches that every marriage should be based on justice, transparency, and mutual understanding between husband and wife, regardless of clan background, as long as they are not mahram. The Islamic theological response to strict customs like Dalihan Na Tolu prioritizes teachings that allow marriage as long as it does not violate Sharia boundaries, even though the local custom may have a more restrictive view.

This response also reflects the Islamic principle of adaptation and tolerance within a multicultural context. Islam encourages its followers to respect and interact harmoniously with various traditions and customs as long as they do not conflict with fundamental religious principles. In the context of the Batak community, this means that while the local custom may prohibit intra-clan marriage, Islam does not explicitly forbid it, providing room for individuals to consider religious values in their decisions. This approach offers the possibility for dialogue between custom and religion, allowing communities to explore ways in which both value systems can coexist harmoniously, possibly through customary adjustments that do not diminish the essence of both traditions. However, the Islamic theological response goes beyond flexibility in legal interpretation to also promote broader discussions on ethics and social justice. In the context of the Batak community, this could include further considerations of how customary laws and religious values can support each other to achieve greater social welfare, not just adhering rigidly to norms. This leads to the development of progressive and dynamic Islamic thought, sensitive to local contexts but also responsive to needs and challenges of the times. Dialogue between customary leaders and religious figures can facilitate this process, finding common ground that allows integration between traditional wisdom and religious principles in a way that enriches both domains.

Discussion

The global context discussion on the clash between the traditional Batak values represented by Dalihan Na Tolu and Islamic religious values can be analysed through two relevant theories:



conflict theory and social integration theory. These theories provide valuable insights into the dynamics between tradition and modernity, reflecting the situation in many multicultural societies around the world.

Conflict theory highlights how power structures and social inequalities can lead to conflicts between groups within a society (August, 2024; Kraml et al., 2022). In the context of the Batak community, conflicts arise from tensions between adherence to Dalihan Na Tolu customs, which prohibit intra-clan marriage, and the teachings of Islam, which allow such practices. The Batak custom, which relies on an exogamous structure to maintain social and spiritual balance, often clashes with religious values that emphasise individual freedom in choosing a partner, provided the conditions of Islamic law are met (Pohan, 2018; Siahaan & Yasin, 2020).

On the other hand, the theory of **Social Integration** emphasises how societies can maintain stability and harmony through the integration of diverse values and norms (Outhwaite, 2021). In this case, the predominantly Muslim Batak community in Southern Tapanuli has shown adaptability by modifying some customary aspects to allow intra-clan marriages, such as through the process of changing a clan. These efforts represent a form of integration of religious and customary values aimed at creating a new balance acceptable to all involved.

Considering how conflict and social integration theories operate within the Batak context leads to a broader discussion on the importance of a deep understanding of cultural contexts before implementing religious or customary norms. This is particularly important in the context of globalisation, where intercultural interactions are increasingly common and complex.

Adaptation to social change and the need to maintain cultural identity often demand flexible and innovative approaches. For example, the process of negotiation and dialogue between traditional leaders and religious leaders in the Batak community reflects efforts to integrate religious principles with long-standing customary values. This approach demonstrates how social integration theory can help resolve conflicts and promote social harmony.

However, challenges remain, particularly in dealing with resistance from those who may feel that certain adaptations threaten the traditional values they hold sacred. Here, conflict theory provides insights into how social power and influence shape responses to change. In many cases, the success of social integration depends on how effectively a community manages these internal differences and conflicts (Crowley et al., 2017; Gross et al., 2022; Yaari et al., 2020).

This discussion is also relevant in the contexts of education and public policy. A better understanding of how traditional societies like the Batak navigate between customary and religious values can provide valuable lessons on the importance of context-sensitive approaches to formulating policies related to multicultural issues.

Furthermore, the importance of education in enhancing understanding and tolerance among religious and customary groups cannot be overlooked. Education programs designed to promote multicultural and religious awareness can play a key role in facilitating social integration and reducing potential conflicts.

Case studies such as the Batak community demonstrate that in the era of globalisation, there is no one-size-fits-all solution. Approaches based on a deep understanding of local contexts and the specific needs of communities, integrating principles from both conflict and social integration theories, may be the best way to address the challenges faced by multicultural societies (Idrus & Halim, 2024; Lesan & Gjerde, 2020).

The novelty of this research lies in its in-depth exploration of the interactions between the traditional Batak law of Dalihan Na Tolu and Islamic theological doctrine in the context of intra-clan marriage, a theme that has rarely been comprehensively discussed in previous academic literature. This study not only reveals how the Batak community navigates between deep adherence to ancestral traditions and universal religious values but also how they integrate



and adjust customary norms in the face of modernity and religious pluralism. Further, this study offers new perspectives on the potential and limitations of cultural adaptation in tradition- rich societies, providing valuable insights into the dynamics of power, identity, and social change within the broader context of Indonesia's multicultural society.

Conclusion

The findings of this study indicate that the Batak community faces unique challenges in maintaining a balance between the traditional values of Dalihan Na Tolu and Islamic values, particularly in the context of intra-clan marriage. While the Dalihan Na Tolu tradition views marriage within the same clan as 'sumbang' (improper) and disruptive to social balance, Islamic values permit such marriages provided they meet specific conditions. The conflict between these two value systems reflects a larger dilemma faced by many traditional societies striving to preserve their cultural heritage in the face of globalization and modernity. This research reveals that despite value clashes, the Batak community is progressively seeking ways to integrate and adapt, demonstrating resilience and flexibility in the face of change.

As a recommendation, a more inclusive and flexible approach is needed in formulating policies related to customary and religious issues. Policymakers and community leaders should facilitate broader dialogue between traditional and religious leaders to develop a better understanding and solutions acceptable to all parties. Education programs designed to raise awareness of the importance of maintaining traditions while accepting change can help strengthen social bonds and reduce tensions. Additionally, further research exploring innovative ways to integrate customary and religious values can provide new insights that will enrich the discourse on cultural sustainability and social identity in Indonesia and similar communities worldwide.

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