

Contestation Between Islamic Law and Patrilineal Traditions: Insights from the Toba Batak Community

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine how the Toba Batak Muslim community maintains its cultural identity in the face of complex dynamics while adapting to Islamic principles in the face of urbanization and economic change by examining the pattern of relationships between Islamic law and customary traditions. Three regions—traditional rural areas (Humbang Hasundutan, Tapanuli Utara, Samosir, Toba), multireligious communities (Asahan, Tanjung Balai, Labuhanbatu), and large cities (Medan, Bandung)—are the focus of this qualitative study using a case study methodology. The study's findings highlight three key trends in the interaction between Islam and customs: harmony, compromise, and adaptation. The adaptation trend is evident in individuals from the place of origin who endeavor to maintain practices with minimal impact from Islamic law. A negotiation pattern has developed among individuals in diverse religious contexts who want to reconcile local customs with Islamic principles. Simultaneously, a pattern of harmony is observed in metropolitan areas, where individuals successfully reconcile traditions with Islamic tenets within a contemporary framework. Economic conditions and social mobility significantly influence these trends. Individuals with superior economic advantages often prioritize religious ideals, whereas others with economic constraints rely more on customs as a social mechanism. Social mobility facilitates the adaptation of traditional values to be more flexible and inclusive of Islamic beliefs, particularly in metropolitan settings. This study suggests that economic factors and social mobility act as catalysts in transforming the link between customs and religion within the Toba Batak Muslim community. Research recommendations emphasize the significance of locally-based religious education, inclusive discussion between indigenous and religious leaders, and economic empowerment to foster harmony between traditional beliefs and Islam.

Keywords: *Toba Batak Muslims; Customary Traditions; Islamic Law; Adaptation; Negotiation; Harmony.*



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Abstrak

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk melihat bagaimana masyarakat Muslim Batak Toba mempertahankan identitas budayanya dalam menghadapi dinamika yang kompleks sambil beradaptasi dengan prinsip-prinsip Islam dalam menghadapi urbanisasi dan perubahan ekonomi dengan meneliti pola hubungan antara hukum Islam dan tradisi adat. Tiga wilayah - daerah pedesaan tradisional (Humbang Hasundutan, Tapanuli Utara, Samosir, Toba), komunitas multiagama (Asahan, Tanjung Balai, Labuhanbatu), dan kota-kota besar (Medan, Bandung) - menjadi fokus studi kualitatif ini dengan menggunakan metodologi studi kasus. Temuan penelitian ini menyoroti tiga tren utama dalam interaksi antara Islam dan adat istiadat: harmoni, kompromi, dan adaptasi. Tren adaptasi terlihat jelas pada individu-individu dari tempat asal yang berusaha untuk mempertahankan praktik-praktik dengan dampak minimal dari hukum Islam. Pola negosiasi telah berkembang di antara individu-individu dalam konteks agama yang beragam yang ingin mendamaikan adat istiadat setempat dengan prinsip-prinsip Islam. Pada saat yang sama, pola kerukunan juga terlihat di wilayah metropolitan, di mana individu-individu berhasil mendamaikan tradisi dengan prinsip-prinsip Islam dalam kerangka kerja kontemporer. Kondisi ekonomi dan mobilitas sosial secara signifikan mempengaruhi tren ini. Individu dengan keunggulan ekonomi yang lebih tinggi sering memprioritaskan cita-cita agama, sementara yang lain dengan keterbatasan ekonomi lebih mengandalkan adat istiadat sebagai mekanisme sosial. Mobilitas sosial memfasilitasi adaptasi nilai-nilai tradisional agar lebih fleksibel dan inklusif terhadap keyakinan Islam, terutama di lingkungan metropolitan. Penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa faktor ekonomi dan mobilitas sosial berperan sebagai katalisator dalam mentransformasi hubungan antara adat dan agama di dalam komunitas Muslim Batak Toba. Rekomendasi penelitian menekankan pentingnya pendidikan agama berbasis lokal, diskusi inklusif antara tokoh adat dan agama, dan pemberdayaan ekonomi untuk mendorong keselarasan antara kepercayaan tradisional dan Islam.

Kata kunci: Muslim Batak Toba; tradisi adat; hukum Islam; adaptasi; negosiasi; harmoni

INTRODUCTION

The Toba Batak community is recognized as one of Indonesia's indigenous groups characterized by a robust patriarchal kinship system. The traditional values constitute the primary identity intrinsic to the social conduct of the Toba Batak people, particularly in the realm of marriage (Muslim Pohan, 2018). The Toba Batak community is recognized as one of Indonesia's indigenous groups characterized by a robust patriarchal kinship system. The traditional values constitute the primary identity intrinsic to the social conduct of the Toba Batak people, particularly in the realm of marriage. The problem becomes increasingly intricate as the Toba Batak Muslim minority endeavors to preserve their traditional identity amidst the imposition of Islamic law (Tanjung et al., 2024).

The attributes of the Toba Batak Muslim population residing outside their traditional homeland suggest a shift in their perception of traditional values and Islamic jurisprudence. A key issue is the practice of marriage, which attempts to reconcile conflicting norms (Wekke, 2013). This not only involves a compromise of legal standards but also cultivates a

distinct social dynamic, one that seeks to preserve family harmony despite variations in both customary and religious norms (Tamba et al., 2024). This study aims to explore how the Toba Batak Muslim community navigates these challenges and negotiates their social identities within a pluralistic society.

Batak inheritance law upholds the patrilineal norm, which emphasizes lineage through males. In Batak society, the patrilineal system preserves lineage that is passed down through the father or son, meaning that the surname used is the paternal surname. In Batak culture, the status of fathers and men is regarded as superior to that of women; thus, the rightful heirs to inheritance are the children. Another example is the role of women as *parhobas* or servants within Toba Batak society, which is constrained by the prevailing patriarchal structure. Women play a crucial role in the preservation of cultural traditions and values, as well as in the externalization, objectification, and internalization of culture within society. The concept of social construction acknowledges that social reality is dynamic and subject to change over time. The position of women as *parhobas* must be reevaluated to promote greater equity and equality, given the persistent gender inequity in society (Fredriko, 2024).

Worldwide, literature concerning the contestation of Islamic law and patrilineal customs (Hourani, 1985) can be categorized into three tendencies. First, the correlation between social and political life (Nurdin et al., 2021). Political and social influences shape the application of both customary law and Islamic law in specific societies (Setiaji & Ibrahim, 2018). In several countries, customary law is considered superior to religious law in matters of inheritance and familial authority (Kumara, Anis Rizki; BW, Muh. Kurniawan; Pradana, 2024). Second, the correlation between patterns of religiosity and cultural traditions, contestation arises when society attempts to implement patrilineal customs within Muslim familial frameworks, particularly in the inheritance distribution that favors sons (Kasim & Nurdin, 2020). Third, the correlation between religious practices and religious doctrines, this study frequently examines the disparities in interpretations of patrilineal concepts and the conflicts between customary law and Islamic sharia within family structures (Santika & Eva, 2023).

This research seeks to elucidate how the Toba Batak Muslim community reconciles the disparities between Islamic marriage law and patrilineal customs by examining the patterns that emerge in their lives. Second, it aims to explore the factors that enable the community to maintain familial harmony despite the inherent disparities between customary law and sharia. In Toba Batak heritage, the culture of solidarity is strong, exemplified by the philosophy of *si sada lungun, si sada las ni roha*, which signifies shared pain or joy. The Toba Batak people employ the concepts of *marsitoguan* and *marsiurupan* to address the states of grief and joy. *Marsitoguan* refers to mutual guidance and support, while *marsiurupan* denotes mutual assistance. The core principle of these concept is mutual supports (Firmando et al., 2023). Third, this study aims to examine the ramifications of this contestation on the social and cultural identity of the Toba Batak Muslim community, both locally and globally.

This study argues that the conflict between Islamic law and patrilineal traditions in Toba Batak Muslim community results in three kinds of social life: adaptation, negotiation, and harmony. The adaption pattern predominates in groups residing in the Toba Batak customary region, where traditions serve as the primary norm, particularly in Humbang Hasundutan, Toba, Samosir, and North Tapanuli. The negotiating pattern is evident among individuals residing in regions characterized by religious diversity, such as Asahan, Batubara, and Labuhanbatu, where they endeavor to reconcile Islamic norms and law. The harmony pattern is most prominent among the Toba Batak Muslim population living in major urban centers like Jakarta and Bandung, where traditional customs are increasingly flexible and aligned with Islamic principles. This study seeks to elucidate how the Toba Batak Muslim community reconciles the disparities between patrilineal customs and Islamic jurisprudence in their daily lives.

This study employs a qualitative ethnographic approach to elucidate the cultural attributes of individuals or groups within the Toba Batak Muslim community (Wijaya et al., 2018), particularly in the context of the contestation between Islamic law and patrilineal traditions. The initial phase involves data collection, comprehensive interviews, direct observation, and the examination of relevant documents. Data was gathered from key informants, including married couples, traditional leaders, and researchers, as well as from materials pertinent to the research issue. The second stage is transcription, during which data from interviews and observations are converted into textual format. This transcription facilitates subsequent analysis. The third stage is coding, which involves organizing data into meaningful units based on relevant themes. Themes include devotional practices, cultural customs, and social interactions within the Toba Batak Muslim community. The fourth stage involves theme development, where the primary themes classified in the previous stage are further analyzed to discern patterns of social existence. This stage identifies patterns of adaptation, negotiation, and harmony in the lives of individuals confronted with legal and customary disputes. The fifth stage involves synthesizing data and literature, wherein empirical findings are contrasted and connected to relevant literature on Islamic law, patrilineal traditions, and analogous social phenomena. The final phase involves formulating conclusions. These conclusions are derived from the findings of a comprehensive thematic analysis encompassing worship practices, cultural traditions, and social interactions within the Toba Batak Muslim community. The conclusions aim to offer new insights into how the Toba Batak Muslim community manages the discrepancies between Islamic law and patrilineal customs in their daily lives.

Table 1. Concept of Religious Patterns within the Toba Batak Muslim Community

| Concept | Indicators |
|-----------------|--|
| Worship Pattern | Religious doctrines, worship practices and attendance in houses of worship |

| | |
|---|---|
| Relationship Patterns and Cultural Traditions | Support for customary and religious traditions |
| Patterns of Socio-Religious Interaction | Inter-community relations, intra-community and social interaction |

DISCUSSION

Adaptation Patterns of the Toba Batak Muslim Community

The adaptation pattern of the Toba Batak Muslim community is predominantly observed among those residing in the Toba Batak customary regions, where traditional norms continue to underpin social life. Concrete examples of this pattern can be found in regions with a non-Muslim majority, such as Tarutung, Humbang Hasundutan, Samosir, and Toba. The Toba Batak Muslim community in these areas upholds traditional customs, including the patrilineal division of family roles, the observance of customary ceremonies, and reverence for *hula-hula* (maternal relatives), while simultaneously fulfilling Islamic religious obligations. (Interview with Irfan Hidayat, November 11, 2024)

We adhere to a robust Toba Batak tradition. This custom has become integrated into our daily lives, influencing both traditional rites and familial decision-making processes. Although we are Muslims, conventions frequently manifest more prominently in daily life than religious practice.

For the Toba Batak Muslim community, adherence to tradition remains vital. All societal conduct is invariably tied to customary practices. Despite their Islamic faith, understanding and adherence to customs often surpass their knowledge and application of Islamic teachings. This strong commitment to custom stems from the community's reverence for ancestral teachings, which ensure that all members adhere to shared traditional behaviors. (Interview with Syaiful Bahri Purba, November 11, 2024.)

The community continues to uphold the traditions passed down by our ancestors. In inheritance distribution, sons are prioritized as they are seen as the clan's successor. This tradition is crucial for preserving kinship ties, especially within the Batak patrilineal framework. Moreover, traditional ceremonies such as weddings and the presentation of ulos are consistently conducted on a grand scale to honor our ancestors and extended family.

Regions that strictly uphold Toba Batak customs are typically characterized by high engagement in traditional activities, motivated in part by fears of societal sanction. This context significantly influences the limited theological understanding observed in these communities. (Interview with Lamhot Sihite, November 11, 2024).

Although a Muslim presence exists, Islamic religious rituals are not consistently prioritized. For instance, congregational prayers are not consistently observed, and religious education for youth is not significantly prioritized. Numerous religious activities are often sidelined due to the dominant role of traditional practices or competing social obligations. Additionally,

our environment largely lacks a Muslim presence, leading to a scarcity of religious infrastructure such as mosques or Islamic educational institutions.

A large portion of Toba Batak Muslim community continues to follow customary interpretations of Islamic law that are perceived as immutable.

Some families attempt to adhere to Islamic law, particularly in areas such as inheritance distribution and marriage execution. However, they often encounter pressure from extended relatives to conform to traditional norms. To maintain family unity, many choose a path of compromise by integrating Islamic principles into traditional ceremonies, such as implementing marriage contracts in accordance with sharia while also incorporating traditional rites.

This flexibility is evident in the accommodation of traditional beliefs that may conflict with Islamic jurisprudence. In the customary inheritance system, rights are primarily granted to male descendants as bearers of the family lineage, whereas Islamic law mandate a proportional division of inheritance as outlined in Qur'anic verses (QS. An-Nisa: 11). Social cohesion with the non-Muslim majority in the region also shapes these adaptive practices. The Toba Batak Muslim community maintains religious and cultural plurality while retaining an Islamic identity, largely through embracing religious pluralism and participating in communal traditions shared across faiths. This adaptation pattern facilitates the preservation of positive relations with the broader community while allowing traditional and religious identities to coexist.

Table 2. Adaptation Patterns of the Toba Batak Muslim Community

| Concept | Indicators | Level of Abstraction |
|---|--|----------------------|
| Worship Pattern | Religious doctrines, worship practices and attendance at houses of worship | Low |
| Relationship Patterns and Cultural Traditions | Support for customary and religious traditions | Adaptive |
| Patterns of Socio-Religious Interaction | Inter-community relations, intra-community and social interaction | Adaptive |

Negotiation Dynamics of the Toba Batak Muslim Community

The negotiation pattern is prominently observed among the Toba Batak Muslim community residing in regions characterized by religious diversity, including Asahan, Tanjung Balai, and North Labuhanbatu. In these areas, the Toba Batak Muslim population faces the challenge of reconciling strong customary practices with adherence to Islamic law. Living within a milieu shaped by multiple religions and cultures compels that these communities to develop strategies that preserve cultural identity while

fostering social harmony. (Interview with Asril Marpaung conducted on November 14, 2024).

We consistently endeavor to uphold our traditional customs while adhering to Islamic principles. In weddings, we continue to perform traditional practices, such as the presentation of ulos and traditional dances, while also ensuring that the marriage contract complies with Islamic law. We do this to honor Batak traditions while fulfilling religious duties.

The Asahan people, who are deeply rooted in the Toba Batak culture, strive to maintain equilibrium by conscientiously observing religious teachings while actively participating in customary activities. Results from an interview with North Labuhanbatu resident Sontong Siregar (personal communication, November 16, 2024).

Challenges exist; yet, we consistently value deliberation. In weddings, we organize customary ceremonies to ensure gender segregation. This aligns with Islamic principles while also honoring the cultural values that define our identity.

These communities frequently encounter new challenges in their efforts to reconcile cultures and religions values. As contributed by Mr. Sontong Siregar:

In Batak traditions, inheritance is typically bestowed upon males as clan heirs. Islamic law ensures that all children, including daughters, are entitled to their rights. We often address this issue through family deliberation. We seek a consensus that respects tradition while ensuring the fulfillment of Islamic rights. For example, daughters may still receive inheritance, though the proportion might be adjusted according to custom. This approach ensures that no party feels disadvantaged, thereby preserving familial unity.

Social interactions with individuals from different faiths have influenced cultural and religious practices, leading to the perception that religion is no longer a barrier to coexistence.

Interfaith social interaction is common in this area due to the diversity of the community. We still respect local customs and traditions, such as attending traditional events or religious celebrations of other communities. However, we also maintain Islamic principles, for example by avoiding haram foods or drinks. In this way, we can still establish a positive relationship without compromising our identity as Muslims. The key is flexibility and mutual respect. We don't need to abandon tradition or religion, as long as there is goodwill and deliberation, both can walk side by side.

In the realm of marriage, the Toba Batak Muslim community in these regions often negotiates customary laws that mandate diverse ceremonies and practices. Traditional rituals are preserved alongside Islamic practices, such as gender segregation at festivities and the proper execution of marriage contracts in accordance with Islamic law. This negotiation dynamic is also visible in inheritance distribution. While Batak customs prioritize male heirs as successors of the clan, Islamic law mandates equitable distribution among all heirs. In these communities, family discussions often lead to

agreements that respect customary values while also incorporating Islamic principles to reach mutual understanding.

Furthermore, the negotiation pattern is reflected in the everyday social lives of Toba Batak Muslims who engage in interfaith interactions. While they continue to participate in local practices, including traditional and non-Muslim religious ceremonies, they uphold Islamic tenets by, for instance, refraining from consuming forbidden items. This approach enables them to maintain harmonious relationships with surrounding communities while preserving their Islamic identity. The Toba Batak Muslim communities in Asahan, Tanjung Balai, and North Labuhanbatu demonstrate significant adaptability to diverse social environments through this negotiation strategy, preserving both their customary and religious values in tandem.

Table 3. Negotiation Dynamics of the Toba Batak Muslim Community

| Concept | Indicators | Abstraction |
|---|--|-------------|
| Worship Pattern | Religious doctrines, worship practices and attendance at houses of worship | Moderate |
| Relationship Patterns and Cultural Traditions | Support for both customary and religious traditions | Moderate |
| Patterns of Socio-Religious Interaction | Inter-community relations, intra-community and social interaction | Moderate |

Harmony Framework of the Toba Batak Muslim Community

The harmony pattern is particularly evident among the Toba Batak Muslim community residing in major urban centers like Medan and Bandung, where traditional customs are more fluidly aligned with Islamic principles. The diversity and pluralism of metropolitan life facilitate a contextual reinterpretation of cultural practices without abandoning religious commitments. (Interview with Khairul Fahmi, November 20, 2024).

In major urban centers like Jakarta, the lifestyle of the Toba Batak Muslim population is notably more adaptable. Conventional customs are preserved, although modified to align with Islamic principles. In marriage, we still use traditional symbols such as gifts or ulos, yet the core rituals, including the marriage contract, are carried out strictly according to Islamic law. There exists a harmony between customs and religion.

The majority of community members acquiesce, recognizing that urban life necessitates adjustment. Nonetheless, discussions persist within families in order to reach consensus, particularly when some members are staunch traditionalists.

In metropolitan areas, the Toba Batak Muslim population generally exhibits greater receptiveness to cultural diversity. They actively participate in interfaith initiatives, including community gatherings and social events, while upholding Islamic principles, such

as engaging in recitations, adhering to halal-haram guidelines, and attending congregational prayers. This enables them to coexist with other groups while maintaining their religious identity. This serves as an exemplary model for other communities. This harmonious design demonstrates that we can coexist in diversity while retaining our uniqueness.

In the context of matrimony, Toba Batak Muslim in urban areas frequently incorporates traditional elements, such as the presentation of *ulos* or modest ceremonial practices, while ensuring that the marriage process complies with Islamic law, including the formalization of the marriage contracts according to sharia principles. This practice reflects their efforts to strike a balance between tradition and faith within the social fabric of urban life.

Moreover, this harmonious pattern is evident in their approach to the patrilineal kinship system. While Batak tradition prioritizes clan succession through paternal lineage, many Toba Batak Muslims in urban settings have adopted a more equitable interpretation of Islamic inheritance law, which mandates distribution among all heirs. Such decisions are typically based on familial consensus that both respects customary values and upholds Islamic principles of justice. Urban living also shapes the social interaction dynamics. The Toba Batak Muslim population in urban areas has greater receptivity to cultural and religious diversity. They engage in diverse interfaith social events while upholding their Islamic practices, including congregational prayers, attending recitations, and adhering to halal-haram principles in daily life. This multicultural environment fosters a cohesive identity that reconciles religious commitments with cultural traditions.

The Toba Batak Muslim community in urban areas successfully preserves its ancient customs while practicing Islam in ways that are relevant to contemporary society. This adaptability allows them to coexist with various cultural groups, enriching both religious and ethnic identities. Interviews conducted for this study confirm that, through thoughtful adaptation and negotiation, the community effectively harmonizes its cultural heritage with Islamic values. This fosters inclusive and respectful relations within a diverse social setting.

Table 4. Harmony Patterns within the Toba Batak Muslim Community

| Concept | Indicators | Abstraction |
|---|--|-------------|
| Worship Pattern | Religious doctrines, worship practices and attendance in houses of worship | Fanatic |
| Relationship Patterns and Cultural Traditions | Support for customary and religious traditions | Moderate |
| Patterns of Socio-Religious Interaction | Inter-community relations, intra-community and social interaction | Moderate |

The Toba Batak Muslim community navigates complex social dynamics as it strives to adhere to Islamic teachings while preserving patrilineal customs. This study identified three primary patterns in their negotiation of the tensions between Islamic and customary law: adaptation, negotiation, and harmony. These patterns exhibit complementary interactions and reflect the evolving stages of community adjustment across varying sociocultural contexts.

The Prevalence of Conventional Traditions and the Constraints of Religious Instruction

The prevalence of customary practices frequently plays a significant role in shaping the identity of specific communities, such as the Toba Batak Muslim community (Ritonga, 2012). Conventional traditions encompass social, cultural, and familial dimensions, as well as influence individuals' perceptions of religion. The limited scope of religious education further amplifies the impact of these traditional customs (Davie et al., 2018). In traditional societies, customary practices often serve as the primary foundation governing social and cultural life (Arimbawa & Santhyasa, 2010). Conversely, religious education plays a vital role in shaping the religious identity of both individuals and communities (Mikraj & Fathoni, 2024). Within the Toba Batak Muslim community, the strong presence of local customs often presents challenges to the full integration of Islamic principles (Pulungan, 2003).

The Toba Batak traditional system, rooted in patrilineal lineage, is both resilient and central to the community's social identity (Butarbutar, 2019). Traditions including inheritance distribution, reverence for *hula-hula*, and the use of *ulos* in various ceremonial events carry both spiritual and social significance. These customs are often regarded as the primary basis for preserving the extended family cohesion (Manuputty & Debby Makaruku, 2024). As a result, community members may prioritize customary obligations over religious doctrines, especially when customs are seen as fundamental to maintaining clan integrity. Limited access to religious education, particularly in rural areas such as Humbang Hasundutan, contributes to a low public understanding of Islamic teachings. In these settings, children are more likely to receive instruction in local customs and traditions than in formal religious education. This educational gap is reflected in the lack of adequate infrastructure, such as mosques, religious schools, and other educational facilities, which restricts opportunities for individuals to deepen their understanding of Islam.

The interaction between strong customary practices and limited religious education frequently results in a suboptimal synthesis of values. The community seeks to preserve its cultural heritage while simultaneously facing difficulties in adhering fully to Islamic principles. The entrenched customs and the inadequate religious education are two interrelated aspects. When religious education is inadequately reinforced,

customary traditions often dominate and shape the manner in which individuals interpret and practice their religious teachings (Krämer & Schmidtke, 2014). Consequently, efforts to achieve a balanced integration between customary practices and religious beliefs must involve targeted investment in education, intercultural communication, and sustained collaboration between indigenous and religious authorities.

The Social Context of the Non-Muslim Majority and Societal Pressure to Conform to Customs

Toba Batak Muslims residing in non-Muslim-majority communities frequently encounter societal pressure to conform to the dominant cultural norms. In this setting, *adat* is perceived not merely as a cultural tradition, but also as a symbol of collective identity that reinforces the community's solidarity. However, societal pressure to conform customs often presents challenges for Muslim individuals or groups, particularly when these customary norms conflict with Islamic principles. In regions such as Toba, Samosir, Humbang Hasundutan, and North Tapanuli, where the predominant population is non-Muslim, the Toba Batak custom function as a social norm that all community members, including Muslim minorities, are obliged to adhere to. This environment limits Muslims' access to institutions or communal spaces that support Islamic religious practices. Muslims who deviate from these customs are often perceived as disrespectful toward ancestral traditions and may experience social exclusion. For example, a Muslim who declines to follow a particular customary practice may be regarded as showing disrespect to their extended family or broader community. In such settings, societal expectations to uphold tradition frequently outweigh religious considerations. The lack of support from the social environment for Islamic practices compels individuals to rely more heavily on custom as a means of preserving communal belonging and identity (Warsah, 2018).

Toba Batak community's customs function as social norms and a means to strengthen group cohesion. In non-Muslim-majority societies, these customs often regarded as safeguards of cultural continuity, serving to protect the group from perceived external influences. This academic is accompanied by considerable social pressure to sustain the tradition (Yayasan Jurnal Perempuan, 2016). A Muslim attempting to implement Islamic law in inheritance distribution may face resistance from extended family members who advocate for customary distribution norms (Tarigan et al., 2023). For Muslim communities, traditions serve as a double-edged sword: adherence facilitates social integration, yet may also obscure religious identity. This pressure intensifies when an individual is perceived as disregarding customs (Salim, 2016), this may be perceived as an act that undermines familial bonds and sullies the clan's reputation. Individuals often perceive customs and religion as distinct or even opposing constructs. Nonetheless, there is considerable potential to reconcile these two

values, as demonstrated in many Batak Muslim communities in other areas (Fitriyani & Nurhajati, 2018). A lack of understanding, however, often traps individuals in a binary view that separates custom from religion, thereby impeding the pursuit of harmony in daily life (Setyabudi, 2022).

Social pressure to adhere to norms in a non-Muslim-majority setting has far-reaching for both individuals and communities. This pressure may induce internal tensions between the desire to adhere religious obligations and the need to maintain social relationships. As a result, efforts to harmonize custom and religion at the communal level often encounter significant obstacles.

Economic Transformation and Alterations in Conventional Values

The economic advancement in the Toba Batak region, particularly through urbanization and industrialization, has influenced community perceptions of both customs and religion (Napitu et al., 2020). In major cities such as Medan, Jakarta, and Bandung, economically prosperous segments of the Toba Batak Muslim communities often emphasize religious values as their new form of identity, replacing rituals deemed less relevant. The Toba Batak Muslim community, experiencing upward economic mobility, often gains greater access to religious education. This access empowers individuals to critically assess practices that diverge from Islamic teachings (Yuliantoro, 2015). The traditionally dominant patrilineal system of inheritance distribution has begun to be replaced by more equitable models aligned with Islamic law. Social mobility, encompassing both vertical and horizontal dimensions, introduces the Toba Batak Muslim group to a new and diverse cultural and religious milieu. Within the context of urbanization, numerous Toba Batak Muslims migrate to metropolitan areas and encounter a heterogeneous milieu (Cunningham, 1958).

In this context, they typically embrace a harmonious paradigm, wherein traditions and Islam are congruent with contemporary principles. Toba Batak Muslim families residing in Jakarta often maintain incorporating traditional features in weddings, while simplifying ceremonial rites to conform align with Islamic practices. However, social mobility also affects their relationships with the community of origin. Economically prosperous nations typically exert greater influence in shaping pertinent traditions. Individuals with elevated education and economic levels might facilitate family discussions to establish a compromise between customary practices and Islamic principles regarding the division of inheritance or other traditional rituals.

Social mobility plays a crucial role in shaping the religious diversity and customs of the Toba Batak Muslim community. In societies undergoing modernization and urbanization, traditions and religious practices are often reinterpreted to remain relevant in contemporary life. This discourse examines the influence of economic

dynamics and social mobility on the patterns of adaptation, negotiation, and harmony between traditional customs and Islamic ideals.

Improved economic conditions typically facilitate access to education, technology, and global perspectives, encouraging individuals to reexamine traditions that may be deemed outdated (Scott, 2007). The economically affluent Toba Batak Muslim population in cities such as Jakarta and Medan demonstrates increased flexible approach in following traditional rituals. This arises from their access to a deep understanding of religion and the chance to interact with other distinct cultures. Conversely, economic constraints may compel individuals to uphold traditional customs as a core component of communal identity and social cohesion (Nur Setiawan., 2023). In rural regions or areas of origin such as Toba, Samosir, Humbang Hasundutan, and North Tapanuli, traditional customs remain deeply embedded as they are regarded as social safety nets during economic instability (Elizabeth, 2007). In certain areas, economic pressures often arises tensions between traditions and religions. The financial burden of traditional ceremonies, such as weddings, can be significant, placing pressure on Muslim families. Consequently, some choose to reduce or forgo customary practices for economic efficiency (Manurung, 2015).

Nevertheless, decisions to minimize or eliminate traditional components often generate tension with indigenous groups. In non-Muslim-majority areas like Samosir or Toba, Muslim communities that deviate from customary practice may be perceived as defying social norms and criticized for lacking respect for their ancestors. Local faiths frequently exert minimal influence relative to traditional authorities. When indigenous leaders exert greater influence in social decision-making, the continuous application of religious rituals becomes more challenging. The impact of economic factors and social mobility on the Toba Batak Muslim community is multifaceted. They promote the adaptation of customary traditions to align more closely with Islamic ideals (Bovill, 1986). Conversely, they also intensify pressures, particularly for those who in precarious economic circumstances or those facing social pressure from indigenous communities.

This article significantly contributes to the discourse on Islamic law and cultural practice within Muslim society, particularly regarding the intersection between Islamic matrimonial law and the patrilineal Toba Batak customary system. A key argument presented here is that Islamic law does not function in isolation; it interacts dynamically with the customary norms that are deeply entrenched in the community's existence. This highlights the complexity of implementing Islamic law within a local setting, where Muslims must navigate tensions between adhering to sharia laws and their cultural identity. This article emphasizes the significance of *ijtihad* in contextualizing Islamic law to ensure its relevance while upholding *maqashid al-syari'ah* (the purposes of sharia). The adaptability of Islam in addressing cultural issues is illustrated by the Toba Batak Muslim community's efforts to reform traditional practices, such as *sinamot*, to comply with Islamic guidelines. This article underscores the significance of local wisdom in the

execution of Islamic law. While Islamic law is universal, its implementation in society often necessitates a strategy that considers particular social and cultural contexts.

This study is particularly relevant within Indonesia's plural legal system, where Islamic law, customary law, and state law coexist, by elucidating the alignment of these three legal frameworks. This article additionally contributes to the broader discourse of the relationship between Islamic law and modernity, especially in communities with entrenched customary systems. This study enhances the scholarly literature on Islamic marital law and Toba Batak customs and supports further discourse on the harmonious coexistence of Islamic law and local traditions within Muslim culture. This article offers several pathways to reconcile Islamic marriage law with Toba Batak practices, enabling Muslim communities to adhere to Islamic doctrine while preserving their entrenched cultural values. The initial step involves aligning customary law with Islamic teachings. The Toba Batak tradition, which maintains a patrilineal system and clan exogamy, can be reconciled with Islamic law by treating the exogamous rule as a customary practice rather than a legally obligatory prohibition on marriage. Similarly, the notion of *sinamot* (traditional dowry) may continue to be observed by adjusting its value to avoid economic hardship and align with Islamic dowry principles. The role of religious institutions and the government is crucial in reconciling Islamic and customary law. The government and religious organizations, such as the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) and the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA), can serve as mediators in reconciling the disparities between Islamic law and customary law. They can promulgate fatwas or guidelines that integrate compatible customary features into Islam frameworks. This offers legal certainty for the Batak Muslim community. Legal *ijtihad* serves as a versatile option. Scholars and intellectuals can develop a legal framework that synthesizes local wisdom with Islamic jurisprudence. The fluid nature of Islamic law permits interpretations that consider local social and cultural contexts, enabling solutions that are acceptable to indigenous populations while upholding Islamic principle.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion should answer the research questions and problems. Closing is not a rewrite of the discussion and also not a summary, but a brief explanation in the form of complete sentences or in the form of points of conclusion in sequence. The consistency triangle (problem-object-conclusion) must be achieved as a check and re-check effort. If necessary, suggestions/recommendations can be included which may contain academic recommendations, concrete follow-up, or policy implications of the conclusions reached. This study highlights that the interaction between the ancient customs of the Toba Batak and Islamic law within the Toba Batak Muslim community is significantly influenced by economic conditions, social mobility, and the surrounding social-cultural environment. These three aspects generate three primary patterns: adaptation, negotiation, and harmony,

which indicate the varying degrees of societal adjustment to Islamic norms and legal frameworks. The adaptation pattern is most evident among individuals residing in their region of origin, including Humbang Hasundutan, North Tapanuli, Samosir, and Toba, where customary traditions remain deeply entrenched and Islamic legal understanding is often limited. Constrained economic conditions and limited access to religious education lead individuals to continue rely on customs as the primary reference in social and religious life. The second pattern is the negotiation pattern, characterizes Toba Batak Muslim communities residing in regions marked by religious diversity, including Asahan, Tanjung Balai, and North Labuhanbatu. The individuals in these regions actively seek to reconcile traditional customs with Islamic law through deliberation and compromise, especially in matters concerning marriage, inheritance, and daily practices. Although social mobility and access to religious education are beginning to affect this dynamic, societal pressure to conform to customary norms remains significant.

The third pattern is harmony. it is observable among the Toba Batak Muslims living in major urban centers like Medan and Bandung. A pluralistic social environment, economic advancement, and enhanced religious education promote the integrated of customs with Islamic ideals in contemporary society. The adaptability of customs in metropolitan areas enables individuals to preserve their cultural identity while upholding Islamic principles. This study affirms that economic conditions and social mobility function as pivotal catalysts in reshaping the relationship between customary law and religion values. Comprehensive religious education, interaction among traditional and religious leaders, and community economic empowerment are essential to foster greater harmonious relationship between customs and Islam among the Toba Batak Muslim community.

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