

Christian-Muslim Relationships in Medan
and *Dalihan na tolu* –
A Social Capital Study
of The Batak Cultural Values
and Their Effect on Interreligious Encounters

Godlif J. Sianipar

Christian-Muslim Relationships in Medan
and Dalihan na tolu –
A Social Capital Study
of The Batak Cultural Values
and Their Effect on Interreligious Encounters

by

Godlif J. Sianipar

A thesis submitted
in fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Newcastle

Australia

November 2011

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. I give consent to this copy of my thesis, when deposited in the University Library, being made available for loan and photocopying subject to the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968.

Signed

Date

Abstract

Interreligious disharmony between Christians and Muslims seems prevalent in the world. Indonesia, one of the democratic nations in the globe, offers no exception. In the last two decades, disharmonious encounters have been escalating in the country to a point where people commit violence towards adherents of other religions. Despite this phenomenon, few studies have addressed the issue. The literature suggests that the problems are related to three distinct areas: the history of the country, the method of evangelizing and socio-economic and political issues. The current study was conducted in the framework of the theory of multiculturalism – a contemporary social theory which has been developed by Amitai Etzioni and Bikhu Parekh – not only to address the issue of interreligious disharmony but also to promote interreligious encounters when a society is divided. The participants in this study were Batak married people in Medan City, North Sumatera – Indonesia. The value of the kinship system among the Bataks in Medan, called *Dalihan na tolu* was regarded as their social capital and the impact of this culture on interreligious encounters was investigated, along with the values of religion. Using concurrent mixed methods, a model of interreligious encounter in Medan City was created and analyzed based on the quantitative data from 1,539 respondents. From the quantitative analysis, the study has found cultural influences to be stronger than religious influences in promoting interreligious encounters among the Christian and Muslim Bataks in Medan. This finding suggests that the social capital of *Dalihan na tolu* plays a greater role than religious influences in promoting harmony. The qualitative analysis affirmed this finding. *Dalihan na tolu* promotes harmonious relationships between those of different religions indirectly by reminding the Bataks of the cultural

values which put respect, love and harmony first in the kinship system. While some religious teachings could be a barrier to interactions, the value of the kinship system appears to transcend the values of a particular religion. Overall, this study proposes the use of communal values to promote interreligious encounters in Indonesia or in particular in Medan and thus, to create a more harmonious society which pulls together otherwise disengaged members through shared values.

Contents

Abstract.....	iv
 Chapter One: Introduction.....	1
Interreligious Encounters in Medan	2
The Bataks and Their Cultural Values	3
Multiculturalism and the Good Society	5
The Theoretical Framework of the Study	6
Some Expectations from the Study	9
Organization of the Thesis	10
 Chapter Two: The Bataks: In Their Village and In Medan City	13
Introduction	13
The Batakland in North Sumatera.....	13
The History of the Bataks	15
The Social Traditions of the Bataks	21
The Bataks and Their Religious Tradition	28
The Bataks in Medan City.....	33
Summary	37
 Chapter Three: Social Capital	39
Introduction	39
The History of Social Capital.....	39
The Definition of Social Capital	41
Some Criticisms of Social Capital	43

Some Limitations of Social Capital	46
Is Dalihan na tolu a Form of Social Capital?	47
Summary	52

Chapter Four: Perspectives on Interreligious Relationships

Introduction	54
Religion in Society	54
Causes of Christian-Muslim Disharmony	56
Causes of Christian-Muslim Disharmony in Indonesia	60
Opposing Colonialism Equals Opposing Christianity	61
Issues of Religious Proselytizing	62
Socio-economic and Political Issues	64
Promoting Christian-Muslim Encounters	66
Strengthening the Religious Belief	66
Good Social Welfare	67
Distinguishing Ideological Orientations	68
Interreligious Dialogue on Global Issues	70
To Forgive and to Forget.....	71
The Theory of Multiculturalism and A Good Society	73
Summary	79

Chapter Five: Methodology.....

Introduction	80
The Research Design.....	80
The Research Questions.....	84
Participants.....	84

The Survey Respondents	84
The Respondents' Socio-demographics Data	85
The Respondents' Identity as Batak.....	86
The Respondents' Religious Preference and Their Practice	87
The Respondents' Participation in Organisations	88
The Informants	88
The Research Instruments	91
Ethical Considerations	93
Data Collection.....	93
Data Processing and Analysis: Quantitative and Qualitative.....	95
Quantitative Data and Analyses	95
Qualitative Data and Analyses	97
Summary	97
 Chapter Six: Quantitative Analysis	 99
Introduction	99
Factor Analysis	99
Results	104
Dalihan na tolu (DNT) as Social Capital	104
Internal Reliability.....	106
Social Trust	106
Social Help	108
Social Bonding	109
Religious Behaviour.....	111
Internal Reliability.....	112
Faith Implementation	113
Causes of Extreme Religious Beliefs	114

Interreligious Knowledge.....	116
Internal Reliability.....	117
Knowledge of Christianity	118
Knowledge of Islam and other Religions	118
Interreligious Encounter.....	121
Internal Reliability.....	122
Encounter in Civic Engagement.....	122
Encounter in Civic Discussion	124
Interreligious Disharmony	125
Internal Reliability.....	126
Interreligious Disharmony in Indonesia.....	127
Interreligious Disharmony in Medan	129
Trust in Public Services.....	129
Correlations Among the Composite Variables	133
Social Capital	133
Religious Behaviour.....	135
Interreligious Knowledge.....	137
Interreligious Disharmony.....	137
Interreligious Encounter.....	138
Multiple Regression Analysis	138
Multiple Regression of Encounter in Civic Engagement.....	140
Multiple Regression of Encounter in Civic Discussion	142
Identifying Multicollinearity	143
Structural Equation Modeling Analysis	144
The Measurement Model for Interreligious Encounter in Medan	146
Summary	160

Chapter Seven: Qualitative Analysis	162
Introduction	162
Cultural Priority: Social Capital.....	163
Dalihan na tolu as the Social Capital of the Bataks	163
Social Trust	163
Dalihan na tolu Helps Solving Conflict	166
Social Help	172
Social Bonding	176
Religious Priority: Religious Influences	179
Causes of Extreme Religious Beliefs	179
Interreligious Disharmony in Indonesia.....	183
Interreligious Disharmony in Medan	187
Encounter in Civic Engagement.....	189
Dalihan na tolu and Interreligious Relationship in Medan	193
Summary	197
 Chapter Eight: Discussion and Conclusions	 199
Introduction	199
Discussion of the Findings	199
Research Questions	200
Research Question One	200
Research Question Two	201
The Social Capital of Dalihan na tolu	201
1. Social Trust	202
2. Social Help	203
3. Social Bonding	203
Religious Influences	204

Research Question Three	206
Research Question Four	207
Limitations of the Study.....	209
Suggestions for Further Research	210
Conclusions	211
 References	 213
 Appendices	 229
Appendix A: Information Statement for Survey Participants	229
Appendix B: Survey	231
Appendix C: The Medan City Map and Its Population in 2010	258
Appendix D: Population in Medan Since 1920	259
Appendix E: Consent Form for Interview Participants	262
Appendix F: Interview Schedule	264
Appendix G: Consent Form for Guided Small Group Discussion Participants	265
Appendix H: Guided Small Group Discussion Schedule	267
Appendix I: Correlations Factor of Social Capital	268
Appendix J: Correlations Factor of Religious Behaviour	270
Appendix K: Correlations Factor of Interreligious Knowledge.....	271
Appendix L: Correlations Factor of Interreligious Encounter	272
Appendix M: Correlations Factor of Interreligious Disharmony.....	273
Appendix N: Goodness-of-fit Summary for Modified Measurement Model	274
Appendix O: Human Research Ethics Approval	276
Appendix P: Consent Form for Various Religious Leaders.....	278
Appendix Q: Letter of Approval from FKUB North Sumatera	279

List of Figures and Tables

1. Figures

Chapter One: Introduction

FIGURE 1.1: The Theory of Interreligious Encounter in Medan	8
---	---

Chapter Two: The Bataks: In Their Village and In Medan City

FIGURE 2.1: The Map of the North Sumatera Province	14
--	----

FIGURE 2.2: Relation of the three pillars in the DNT system	24
---	----

Chapter Four: Perspectives on Interreligious Relationships

FIGURE 4.1: The Theory of Interreligious Encounter in Medan	76
---	----

Chapter Six: Quantitative Analysis

FIGURE 6.1: The Hypothesized Theoretical Model for Interreligious Encounter Among the Bataks in Medan	148
---	-----

FIGURE 6.2: The Factor of Religious Influences (RELIGION) in One-Factor Model.	151
---	-----

FIGURE 6.3: Testing of Social Capital (SOCIAL) and Interreligious Encounter (ENCOUNTER) as the Second Half of the Measurement Model.	153
---	-----

FIGURE 6.4: The Theoretical Model for Interreligious Encounter Among the Bataks in Medan	154
--	-----

FIGURE 6.5: The Modified Model for Interreligious Encounter among the Bataks in Medan	156
---	-----

2. Tables

Chapter Five: Methodology

TABLE 5.1: The Matrix of Strategies for Mixed Methods.	83
---	----

TABLE 5.2: Sample Distribution to the Survey Respondents in 21 Districts in Medan – Indonesia Based on Religious Adherents Population	86
TABLE 5.3: Religious Preference, Occupation, Sex and Age of Informants for In-depth Interview in 2010 in Medan	89
TABLE 5.4: Religious Preference, Occupation, Sex and Age of Informants for Guided Small Group Interview in 2010 in Medan	90
TABLE 5.5: The Likert Format.	92

Chapter Six: Quantitative Analysis

TABLE 6.1: Factor loadings, item communalities and alpha coefficients for the three factors of Social Capital	107
TABLE 6.2: Descriptive statistics for three composite factors of Social Capital	110
TABLE 6.3: Factor loadings, item communalities and alpha coefficients for the two measures of Religious Behaviour	113
TABLE 6.4: Descriptive statistics for two composite measures of Religious Behaviour	115
TABLE 6.5: Factor loadings, item communalities and alpha coefficients for the two measures of Interreligious Knowledge	119
TABLE 6.6: Descriptive Statistics for two composite measures of Interreligious Knowledge	120
TABLE 6.7: Factor loadings, item communalities and alpha coefficients for the two measures of Interreligious Encounter	123
TABLE 6.8: Descriptive Statistics for two composite measures of Interreligious Encounter	124
TABLE 6.9: Factor loadings, item communalities and alpha coefficients for the three measures of Interreligious Disharmony	128
TABLE 6.10: Descriptive statistics for three composite measures of Interreligious Disharmony in Indonesia	130
TABLE 6.11: Summary of Factor Analysis for the Survey Data	132
TABLE 6.12: The Correlations of Composites Variables	134
TABLE 6.13: Standardized (Beta) and Unstandardized (b) Regression Coefficients and Standardized Errors for the Regression Model of Encounter in Civic Engagement on the Ten Variables	141

TABLE 6.14: Standardized (Beta) and Unstandardized (b) Regression Coefficients and Standardized Errors for the Regression Model of Encounter in Civic Discussion on the Ten Variables	142
TABLE 6.15: Fit Indices of Tested Measurement Models	153
TABLE 6.16: The Summary of SEM Selected Goodness of Fit Indices for Interreligious Encounter Among the Bataks in Medan	157
TABLE 6.17: Standardized Residual Covariance for SEM Model for Interreligious Encounter Among the Bataks in Medan	158
TABLE 6.18: Standardized (β) and Unstandardized (b) Regression Path Coefficients, Standardized Errors and R-square of the Theoretical and Modified SEM Models for Interreligious Encounter Among the Bataks in Medan.....	160

Acknowledgements

I would like to say thank you to:

1. The Indonesian government who supported me to do this study with the DIKTI Scholarship program.
2. The Indonesian Carmelite Religious Order in Malang, East Java.
3. My dearest supervisors: Prof (Em.) Terry Lovat, Dr. Ann Taylor and Dr. Kerry Dally.
4. My dearest colleague priests in Maitland-Newcastle Diocese and in Sydney, especially Msgr. Allan Hart, Fr. Harry Hughes, Fr. Tony Braddy, Fr. Anthony Scerry O.Carm.
5. My dear friend: Dr. Lamtiur Tampubolon.
6. My dearest Catholic families in Newcastle and Sydney.
7. The respondents and informants of this study.
8. My dear students in ‘Anthropology class of 2010’ the Catholic University of North Sumatera “St. Thomas Aquinas” in Medan.
9. My family in Medan: G.M. Sianipar (Father) and Brothers-Sisters.

I am most grateful to all of you for your supports and prayers.