

Dalihan Na Tolu: A Cultural Framework for Religious and Social Harmony in Padangsidimpuan

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Abstract

This research aims to examine the role of Dalihan Na Tolu values in creating harmonious social-religious relations in Neighborhood I of Losung Village, Padangsidimpuan. Dalihan Na Tolu, as the kinship system of the Angkola Batak community, is believed to be not only a guideline in the family structure, but also affects the pattern of social interaction involving various religious backgrounds. This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study method, where data is obtained through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. The results showed that Dalihan Na Tolu values are actualized in people's daily lives through mutual respect, help, and maintaining the boundaries of each other's beliefs, both in social interactions, religious events, and death moments. This finding indicates that local wisdom plays a strategic role in building a harmonious and tolerant society culturally and religiously. Thus, Dalihan Na Tolu can be understood as an effective form of cultural articulation in maintaining religious social harmony in the midst of diversity.

Keywords: *Dalihan Na Tolu; Religious Harmonization; Padang Sidimpuan*

Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji peran nilai-nilai *Dalihan Na Tolu* dalam menciptakan harmonisasi hubungan sosial keagamaan di Lingkungan I Kelurahan Losung, Padangsidimpuan. *Dalihan Na Tolu*, sebagai sistem kekerabatan masyarakat Batak Angkola, diyakini tidak hanya menjadi pedoman dalam struktur keluarga, tetapi juga memengaruhi pola interaksi sosial yang melibatkan berbagai latar belakang agama. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode studi kasus, di mana data diperoleh melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi, dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa nilai-nilai *Dalihan Na Tolu* diaktualisasikan dalam kehidupan sehari-hari masyarakat melalui sikap saling menghormati, tolong-menolong, serta menjaga batas-batas keyakinan masing-masing, baik dalam pergaulan sosial, acara keagamaan, maupun momen kematian. Temuan ini mengindikasikan bahwa kearifan lokal memainkan peran strategis dalam membangun masyarakat yang harmonis dan toleran secara kultural dan religius. Dengan demikian, *Dalihan Na Tolu* dapat dipahami sebagai bentuk artikulasi budaya yang efektif dalam merawat kerukunan sosial keagamaan di tengah keberagaman.

Kata Kunci: *Dalihan Na Tolu; Harmonisasi Agama; Padang Sidimpuan*

Introduction

Relationship between culture and religion is an inseparable part in shaping social structures. Culture acts as a local identity that regulates patterns of social interaction and behavior, while religion provides value and moral guidance in living life. The relationship between the two forms a distinctive social system, where religious practices are colored by local values and vice versa, local wisdom gains moral legitimacy through religious values. In this context, the harmony of society is largely determined by the successful integration between local culture and religious values embraced by community members (Syafitri, 2025).

In the city of Padangsidimpuan, known as the center of Batak Angkola culture, the relationship between culture and religion forms a harmonious social system. Batak traditional values, such as deliberation, mutual cooperation, and mutual respect between social and religious groups, are still very strong in coloring the dynamics of daily life. Religions, both Islam and Christianity, which are the two dominant religions in the area, are practiced within a cultural framework that respects diversity. The relationship established between religious communities is not only built on the basis of normative tolerance, but also through concrete social practices, which reflect a common understanding of the importance of peaceful coexistence (Safira Indah, 2025).

One of the cultural value systems that plays a big role in creating socio-religious harmony in Padangsidimpuan is *Dalihan Na Tolu*. This system is a concept of kinship of the Batak Angkola community which consists of three pillars: *somba marhula-hula* (respecting the wife), *manat mardongan tubu* (taking care of each other), and *elek marboru* (loving the woman). This concept is not only applicable in the family sphere, but is also actualized in broader social relationships, including in building interreligious relationships. *Dalihan Na Tolu* is an ethical foundation that teaches about appreciation, openness, and balance in establishing relationships with others, including those of different religions (Firmando, 2021).

Several previous studies have shown that local wisdom plays a major role in creating inclusive social spaces in a multicultural society. Studies such as by Siregar (2020) and Nasution (2022) confirm that local cultural practices that are firmly rooted in the Angkola Batak community contribute to social stability and peace between religious communities. However, there have not been many studies that specifically discuss the role of *Dalihan Na Tolu* as a value framework in creating harmonization of socio-religious relations in urban areas such as Padangsidimpuan, especially in the context of daily interactions between Muslim and non-Muslim communities.

Therefore, this study aims to examine how the values of *Dalihan Na Tolu* are implemented in the socio-religious life of the Padangsidempuan community, focusing on Ward I of Losung Village as an area that represents multireligious life in harmony. This research is expected to contribute to the understanding of the role of local culture in maintaining harmony between religious communities, as well as a reference for strengthening tolerance based on local values in other regions in Indonesia.

Method

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study type to understand in depth the practice of social harmonization between religions in Ward I of Losung Village, Padangsidempuan City. Primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews, direct observations, and documentation involving various elements of society from different religious backgrounds. The interview technique was conducted openly to capture the views, experiences, and perceptions of the public regarding interfaith social interaction. Observation is carried out by paying attention to daily activities, religious activities, and social events that involve joint participation between Muslims and non-Muslims. Documentation is used to complete information, in the form of activity records, village archives, and field photos. The collected data is analyzed through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn, resulting in a complete and in-depth picture of local values such as *Dalihan Na Tolu* in creating social cohesion. The analysis was carried out descriptively to explore the meaning and social dynamics that live in society.

Results and Discussion

***Dalihan Na Tolu* In The Padang Sidempuan Community**

Social interaction is an important foundation in forming a harmonious social life. In the context of the Padangsidempuan community, interactions between individuals are not just ordinary relationships, but also reflect cultural values and social norms that have been inherited from generation to generation. In Ward I of Losung Village, interactions between residents with different religious backgrounds, both Muslim and non-Muslim, are intertwined in various aspects of life, such as daily activities, environmental cooperation, and community deliberation. This pattern of interaction takes place in an atmosphere of peace, respect, and tolerance (Zendrato et al., 2024).

Islamic teachings emphasize the importance of building social relationships based on affection, mutual help, and respect for differences. Islam not only regulates interactions between fellow Muslims, but also provides guidelines for interacting fairly and peacefully with non-Muslims. In Losung Village, these values are reflected in daily life, where the Muslim community is open and respectful of non-Muslim neighbors. The forms of interaction that emerge also include joint community service, attending

invitations, and congratulating each other on important religious moments (Novebri & Resdilla Pratiwi, 2022).

Dalihan Na Tolu as the philosophy of life of the Batak Angkola community has an important role in framing the pattern of social and religious relations. The three main elements of *Somba Marhulahula* (respect for the wife), *Elek Marboru* (love for the woman), and *Manat Mardongan Tubu* (care for the brothers) are not only applicable in the traditional structure, but also extend in building social harmony. The values of *Dalihan Na Tolu* are the basis for how society establishes relationships between individuals in a balanced and dignified manner, including when dealing with differences in beliefs (Muda & Suharyanto, 2020).

The presence of *Dalihan Na Tolu* in the community of Padangsidempuan contributes greatly to creating a tolerant and harmonious social climate. The values of respect, affection, and prudence in establishing relationships make people tend to avoid conflict and choose dialogue and deliberation. This can be seen in the interaction of the residents of Losung Village who are kept awake in various religious momentums such as during cross-family weddings or condolences for death, where all elements of society are present and help each other regardless of religion.

Thus, it can be affirmed that *Dalihan Na Tolu* not only becomes a cultural identity, but also serves as an important instrument in maintaining socio-religious relations. When these traditional values are integrated with inclusive Islamic principles, a social order is created that is able to live in harmony in diversity. The people of Losung Village are a real example of how local cultural heritage can be aligned with religious values in creating a social life that is peaceful, respectful, and tolerant of differences in beliefs.

Socio-Religious Interaction of Communities

The social interaction of the community in Ward I of Losung Village, Padangsidempuan, shows a harmonious social relationship between Muslim and non-Muslim residents. Daily activities such as greeting each other on the street, having casual conversations at coffee shops, and helping each other in social activities reflect fluid and intimate relationships between individuals. This familiarity is formed even though each resident has a different busyness and background. In the context of *Dalihan Na Tolu*, this condition reflects the basic value of *elek marboru* (loving the boru), where each individual practices mutual respect and empathy in daily life.

This harmony also shows how *the philosophy of Dalihan Na Tolu* functions as a social glue. Society, although it does not explicitly mention these principles, still practices its values in social practice. For example, in relations with interfaith neighbors, people practice the principle of *somang maranak* (loving the children or young groups), where the older generation sets an example of how to coexist peacefully. This harmonious

relationship is not only based on physical proximity, but also on a heritage of cultural values that have been instilled for generations.

In the reality of the social life of the Losung people, there is a collective awareness to maintain religious boundaries, but not to ignore the value of brotherhood. For example, when receiving food from non-Muslim citizens, the Muslim community still shows respect by accepting it politely, even though they do not consume it if they feel it is not in accordance with the sharia. This attitude is a form of applying the principle of *manat mardongan tubu* (caution in social relations), which is a spirit in maintaining peace without having to sacrifice identity and beliefs.

Parents in the environment also play an important role in fortifying their children from negative influences, without severing social relations with others. They inculcate religious and cultural values, and teach how to treat people from different backgrounds in a polite and measured manner. This is in accordance with the function of *Dalihan Na Tolu* as a value system that emphasizes character education from an early age, by instilling moral and social responsibility for the younger generation.

Thus, social interaction in Losung Village can be said to have succeeded in combining Islamic values and local wisdom of *Dalihan Na Tolu* in one solid social harmony. *Dalihan Na Tolu* is not only a structure of kinship relationships, but also a relevant social ethical framework in maintaining harmony between religious communities. The people of Padangsidempuan, in their daily practices, have shown that differences do not have to be an obstacle to living in harmony, as long as the values of mutual respect are upheld.

Social interaction between religious communities in Ward I of Losung Village, Padangsidempuan City, shows an inclusive and harmonious social reality. Societies consisting of Muslims and non-Muslims carry out daily social life in an atmosphere of mutual respect and uphold social ethics. The communication pattern that is built is fluid but is maintained within the boundaries of each religious value. Phenomena such as greeting each other on the street, talking at coffee shops, and helping out activities between residents show that social ties are not broken by differences in beliefs.

The practice of interaction reflects the appreciation of local values of *Dalihan Na Tolu*, namely *somba marhulahula* (respect for the wife's family), *elek marboru* (protecting the daughter/wife's family), and *manat mardongan tubu* (courtesy to fellow brothers). These values are transformed into social ethics that are inherent in the daily life of the Batak Angkola community, including the residents of Losung Village. These three principles are culturally the normative framework for establishing harmonious relationships, even inter-religious relationships, because the focus is on maintaining balance and mutual respect in the social structure.

Although social relations seem harmonious, the Muslim community in the environment still holds strict religious principles, especially in maintaining the faith. This is reflected in the attitude of caution when receiving food from non-Muslims. If the food does not come from

packaging that is clearly halal, then they do not consume it. However, the form of appreciation is still given in the form of a polite and friendly reception. This attitude shows the integration between the values of tolerance and commitment to religious teachings, which are part of local wisdom in multicultural life.

In addition, the role of the family is very important in shaping the boundaries of social interaction. Parents in Losung Village are active in providing advice to their children to be able to maintain religious principles in society, especially related to interfaith associations. Parental instruction is not solely prohibitive, but educational in instilling the values of maturity, prudence, and commitment to religious identity. Thus, the process of socializing values takes place continuously in the family and social space.

Overall, these findings show that the people of Losung Village are able to construct a harmonious social space through the combination of local religious and cultural values. The values of *Dalihan Na Tolu* are not only cultural heritage, but also function as a living value system in forming interfaith social harmony. In this context, inter-religious relations are not only formed on the basis of formal tolerance, but also on the basis of strong cultural respect, so as to be able to create a peaceful and stable social life in the midst of diversity.

In a multicultural society such as in Ward I of Losung Village, the form of social interaction between religious communities is built through mutual respect and maintaining harmony in daily life. At the moment of celebrating religious holidays, such as Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha for Muslims as well as Christmas and New Year for Christians, the local community shows openness by congratulating each other and sharing food. This practice reflects a strong value of tolerance without having to obscure one's religious identity.

Caution in establishing interreligious relations is also evident from the limits maintained by Muslims in accepting food that does not have a clear origin or ingredients. However, friendly attitude is still put forward as a form of appreciation for the goodwill of fellow non-Muslim citizens. This shows the success of the community in combining religious principles with polite social ethics in multicultural life.

In situations of grief or death, the community shows a high level of collective concern. When there are families who are hit by disasters, people from various religious backgrounds are present to provide moral support, show empathy, and keep the atmosphere of the environment calm and conducive. Local traditions that avoid over-serving banquets show social awareness of the emotional and financial burden of grieving families. This pattern is a reflection of the value of mutual cooperation that is rooted in the culture of the local community.

Social interaction in this environment is also influenced by kinship bonds and long-term relationships between families. Since childhood, children from Muslim and non-Muslim families have established close relationships. Nevertheless, religious values remain the main handle in

limiting the type and depth of social relations, especially in contexts that concern differences in beliefs. Family education has an important role in shaping the awareness of these limits, as a form of internalizing religious values in the social space.

From Dalihan Na Tolu to Religious Harmonization

The concept of *Dalihan Na Tolu* is the heritage of the local wisdom of the Batak Angkola community which has been firmly rooted in the socio-cultural structure of the Padangsidempuan community. The three main elements of this system—*somba marhula-hula* (respect for one's in-laws), *elek marboru* (loving boru), and *manat mardongan tubu* (caring for others)—not only serve as a guideline in kinship life, but also extend their function in establishing social interactions in general. In the context of a pluralistic society, the values of *Dalihan Na Tolu* are an important foundation in building harmony between religious communities, especially between Muslims and non-Muslims who coexist in the region (Nasir & Rijal, 2021).

The results of the observation show that the people in Ward I of Losung Village live a social life with full openness and tolerance. Despite differences in beliefs, social relations continue to take place in an atmosphere of peace and mutual respect. Residents greet each other, cooperate in social activities, and show solidarity in various moments of life, both joys and sorrows. This interaction is not only a form of common social practice, but also a reflection of the value of *manat mardongan tubu*, which is a cautious attitude in maintaining relationships so as not to cause conflicts, especially in the midst of religious and cultural diversity.

In the celebration of religious holidays, people show a high tolerance attitude by congratulating each other and sharing food between citizens, regardless of religious differences. This practice is the embodiment of the value of *marboru elek*, which is affection and attention given to others with sincerity and empathy. The Islamic community, although maintaining limits in food consumption, still accepts these gifts kindly as a form of respect. This attitude signifies that tolerance does not have to come at the expense of religious principles, but can coexist through a thoughtful ethics of interaction (Nasution et al., 2024).

At the time of a death disaster, the community in this neighborhood shows social cohesiveness regardless of religious background. Residents were also present to provide moral support, arrange the course of the mourning procession, and maintain environmental calm to respect the bereaved families. This shows the role of the value of *somba marhula-hula*, where respect is given to those who are facing difficult situations as a form of collective empathy. Social solidarity like this emphasizes that traditional values are able to strengthen interfaith social cohesion.

Furthermore, the values of *Dalihan Na Tolu* are also transformed through the role of the family, especially in directing children to build healthy social relationships. Parents do not prohibit children from making interfaith friends, but provide direction regarding the boundaries of

interaction, especially those related to faith. This shows that value education in the family continues to go hand in hand with inclusive social practices. Traditional values become social instruments that help families balance social openness with religious identity.

This condition shows that the local wisdom of *Dalihan Na Tolu* plays a role as an effective cultural instrument in maintaining social stability and managing diversity. In the midst of the increasing issue of intolerance in various regions, the people of Padangsidempuan, especially in Ward I of Losung Village, show that local values can be internalized to build a harmonious coexistence lifestyle. This value system is not rigid, but adaptive to modern social realities, as long as its core values are maintained.

Social interaction between religious communities in Ward I of Losung Village, Padangsidempuan City, shows a pattern of harmonious relationships and is based on strong cultural values. The Muslim and non-Muslim communities in this region coexist in daily life without significant conflicts. The attitude of greeting each other, talking in public places, and the habit of helping each other shows that social relations have been built well and run naturally. These findings indicate that the proximity of local cultures and customs plays a major role in creating social harmony, regardless of differences in religious beliefs.

The results of the interview with informants Mrs. Lila and Mr. Iskandar Batubara emphasized that even though people live in a plurality of religions, they still maintain healthy boundaries of interaction. For example, the Muslim community tends to be careful in accepting food from non-Muslims, especially if it is not in packaging that is guaranteed halal. However, they still accept the gift politely as a form of appreciation for good intentions. On the other hand, non-Muslims also show sensitivity by not imposing their will or offering things that are contrary to the teachings of Islam. These interactions demonstrate the integration of the values of tolerance and religious observance within the framework of local culture.

The role of the family is also very strategic in shaping the social character of the community. Parents actively advise their children to limit their association in matters related to faith, while maintaining healthy social relationships. This attitude shows the collective awareness of the community on the importance of maintaining religious identity without harming social relations with groups of different faiths. The process of socializing these values takes place consistently in the family and community environment (Khoiruzzadi & Dwi Tresnani, 2022).

Thus, interfaith social interaction in Losung Village is not only the result of conventional social processes, but also a manifestation of the internalization of *Dalihan Na Tolu* values in the context of multicultural life. Traditional and religious values do not stand as mutually affirming entities, but instead become the foundation for forming a tolerant, mutually respectful, and stable social life.

Conclusions

Disimpulkan bahwa nilai-nilai *Dalihan Na Tolu* telah menjelma menjadi kerangka kearifan lokal yang secara nyata menopang terciptanya harmonisasi sosial keagamaan di tengah masyarakat Padangsidempuan, khususnya di Lingkungan I Kelurahan Losung. Sistem nilai ini tidak hanya mengatur relasi sosial berdasarkan struktur kekerabatan Batak Angkola, tetapi juga berkembang menjadi etika pergaulan lintas agama yang menghargai perbedaan dan menjunjung tinggi toleransi. Kehidupan masyarakat yang rukun dan saling menghormati, baik dalam aktivitas keseharian, peristiwa keagamaan, maupun momen sosial seperti pernikahan dan kematian, mencerminkan bahwa *Dalihan Na Tolu* bukan sekadar tradisi, tetapi telah menjadi fondasi integratif yang secara aktif dipertahankan dalam menghadapi dinamika modern. Keberlanjutan nilai ini memperkuat bahwa harmonisasi agama di Padangsidempuan bukanlah sesuatu yang dibentuk secara artifisial, melainkan tumbuh secara alami dari akar budaya yang telah mengakar dalam kesadaran kolektif masyarakat.

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