

Mandok Hata Local Wisdom as a Tool for Conflict Resolution in the Batak Tribe

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Abstract. Conflict within the group frequently focuses solely on resolving the conflict without regard to the aftereffects of the conflict. As a consequence, reconciliation efforts are required, which in this case is the Batak tribe's local wisdom. This paper examines the local wisdom of mandok hata and conflict resolution in the Batak Tribe, with a focus on the experiences of New Year's celebrations. According to the findings of interviews and observations, the mandok hata tradition is a synthesis of Batak culture and religious traditions, specifically the church. The mandok hata tradition is regarded as a successful reconciliation method for repairing relationships after a conflict. Furthermore, the elderly as conciliators are thought to play an important role in the reconciliation's continuation.

Keywords : Batak Tribe; Conflict; Local Wisdom; Mandok Hata; Reconciliation.

1 Introduction

Conflict is something that is undeniably present and alive in society. Every person has had to deal with conflict, both individually and as part of a group. Human conflicts, ethnic conflicts, religious conflicts, resource conflicts, political conflicts, and civil conflicts are some of the types of conflicts that occur between human relationships (Adegbonmire, 2015). These conflicts arise from structural conflicts, conflicts of interest, value conflicts, psychological social conflicts, and data conflicts (Nababan & Aulia, 2022). As a consequence, the community will be unable to avoid the conflict itself, whether as a group or an individual conflict, and can only manage the conflict in a positive direction, despite the fact that it frequently leads to negative outcomes.

Negotiation, mediation, and arbitration are all common methods for resolving disputes, whether with or without the assistance of a third party. However, in conflict resolution, the focus is frequently solely on reducing tensions on both sides. As a result, a stage of reconciliation is required, where the reconciliation encourages both parties to repair the relationship as it was previously. According to Lattu, a person receives reconciliation when the victim receives justice, whether through the courts or through cultural reconciliation. Reconciliation is not only concerned with logic and legal implications, but also with spirituality. Regarding reconciliation as a spiritual experience, it leads people to a new way of life, which can inspire others (Izak Lattu, 2013).

Reconciliation entails more than simply making peace and forgetting. Reconciliation, on the other hand, is about seeking the truth, acknowledging, and forgiving. The focus of Heffebower's reconciliation theory (Heffebower, 2000) is on a conciliator who will later act

as an intermediary between the conflicted parties. The chosen conciliator is expected to be wise, to have the same status as, but preferably superior to, the opposing party, to be trusted by both parties, to be able to listen to both parties personally, and to propose a solution. This is crucial in reconciliation efforts because the more relevant the context in which advice is given, the more likely the disputants are to follow the conciliator's advice.

According to Heffebower (Heffebower, 2000), the reconciliation process must include the following steps: (1) admitting mistakes and disappointments (bringing disagreements to light); and (2) resolving disagreements (2). Restore balance. This step is completed by asking each party to disclose what is required for the relationship to be restored; (3) clarify future intentions. This third step entails asking each party what needs to be done so that conflicts do not reoccur in the future; (4) creating a summary and writing down the results of the agreement; and (5) signing, celebrating, and then following up. Several Truth and Reconciliation Commissions, for example, have been established in various countries to learn what really happened, hear the voices of victims, and try to learn so that similar incidents do not occur in the future. (Pakpahan, 2013). Although some of the reconciliations appear to bring up the past, remembering painful things invites victims and perpetrators to confront dark events in the form of deep conflicts together.

The Batak tribe does the same thing, particularly during the New Year's celebrations. The Batak tribe has a tradition of *mandok hata*. Mandok hata literally means "talking" not only on New Year's Eve, but also at almost every other event (Manesah, 2019) gathering event like speaking in public at weddings, funerals, childbirths, giving advice, consolation, venting, and life philosophy (Sibarani & Gulo, 2020). In the context of the new year, Mandok Hata means speaking in front of the entire family gathering about gratitude, apologizing for mistakes made during the year, and digging up conflicts and disappointments that have been buried in the past year. Everyone gathered there had to speak, and since there was no set rule regarding the time limit for speaking, it was no surprise that this event would take a long time. (Muharrami, 2021).

Previously, several studies on mandok hata and reconciliation were conducted, including the Sarcasm Identification of Batak Toba Culture in the Mandok Hata New Year Celebration by Ulya Muharrami in 2021. The study's findings explained that the different types of sarcasm can be found in the Mandok Hata program when analyzed through videos. The following study, Theology of Memory as a Basis for Reconciliation in Conflict, was conducted in 2013 by Binsar Jonathan Pakpahan, and the findings show that healing of old wounds can occur when remembering is done honestly and the memories are brought into communal property, ultimately freeing individuals from their bitter memories. The difference between this study and previous studies is that the topic of discussion is not reconciliation and mandok hata. This study will concentrate on local wisdom, with the mandok hata tradition being a form of conflict resolution practiced by the Batak tribe, particularly during New Year's celebrations.

Each ethnic group has local wisdom values, which can be derived from local traditional culture, cultural adoption from outside (including religious values), or cultural adaptation from outside to local traditions. Furthermore, according to Istiawati (Istiawati F.N., 2016), local wisdom is the way people behave and act in response to changes in the physical and cultural environment. A concept that exists in society, grows, and develops in people's consciousness on an ongoing basis, ranging from those related to sacred life to those related to profane life (daily part of life and is mediocre in nature).

Local wisdom is also frequently used as a medium in conflict resolution because it is accepted by the community. Because it is accepted by the community, local wisdom is also frequently used as a medium in conflict resolution. For example, in a study conducted by

Bakri (Bakri, 2015) where Conflict Resolution was carried out through the Pela Gandong Local Wisdom Approach in Ambon City, local wisdom was used as social capital in conflict resolution in the form of entrusting kyai (religious figure) in resolving internal conflicts in Lekok District, Pasuruan Regency (Triadiyatma, 2016), and also local wisdom in Du'a Moan Watu Pitu (Nasa & Nuwa, 2022).

Conflict resolution and reconciliation are inextricably linked because reconciliation is one of the stages of conflict resolution, namely the peace-building process. According to Ralf Dahrendorf Effective conflict resolution (Bakri, 2015), is dependent on three factors. First, both parties must acknowledge the reality of their situation and the conflict that exists between them. Second, the interests at stake must be organized in such a way that each party understands the demands of the other. Third, both parties agree on the game rules, which serve as the foundation for their interaction.

This researcher uses a qualitative approach in which data is gathered through surveys, interviews, and observations. The researcher also used non-participant observer observations to obtain documentation and behavior around the informants in order to strengthen the data. To ensure the credibility of the data obtained from informants and analyzed using Miles and Huberman's Flow model, which has three activities, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing, source triangulation and method triangulation are performed (Miles et al., 2014).

2 Results and Discussion

Each culture has its own wisdom for dealing with life's problems, including wisdom for rebuilding a conflicted society. This type of wisdom is often referred to as local wisdom. In this case, local wisdom is the mandok hata tradition practiced by the Batak tribe during the New Year's celebration. According to the findings of the research, the origins of the mandok hata tradition in this new year celebration are unknown. However, one thing is certain: the tradition of mandok hata in the celebration of the new year predates the arrival of religion in Batak land, which was animism and dynamism at the time. Mandok hata is a tradition passed down from generation to generation by the Batak tribe that selects the turn of the year (New Year's celebration) on January 1 at 00.00 WIB every year. Mandok Hata is performed at the turn of the year for a variety of reasons, including thanksgiving, preparation for starting life in the new year, and moments of family gathering from abroad. First and foremost, the gratitude in question is a blessing from God, the universe, *Mulajadi Nabolon* (the name of God before the arrival of Christianity in the Batak lands). This gratitude is expressed at family gatherings, which are typically carried out by *saompu* (big families ranging from great-grandchildren to the youngest generation). However, because of the times and the situation, the Batak tribal community only performed the Mandok hata event with the main family, both in their hometowns and abroad.

The thanksgiving that is performed at the same time as expressing prayers and good wishes in the new year in preparation for starting a new life in the new year, the Batak tribe believes that in order to step into a better day, one must solve problems and improve relationships with others. As a result, the sentence is frequently mentioned in mandok hata .. *molo tung adong nahurang lobi dipambahenan nami di ari naung salpu, mangoku sala ma hami asa sai anggiat boi mangalangka tu taon naimbaru dohot dame nang las ni roha..* which

means if there are shortcomings and mistakes that have been made, I apologize so that I can enter the new year with a peaceful heart.

Second, Mandok hata is accomplished in preparation for beginning a new life in the new year. It had something to do with reconciliation. Preparing for a new year's start is intended to resolve problems and disagreements that have arisen throughout the year. They will attempt to improve relations with other family members, which is understandable given that there are parties to the dispute and elders who can bridge the relationship between the two parties or in reconciliation; these elders are known as conciliators.

According to a survey of 205 Batak tribe members, 99 percent (203 people) are aware of the Mandok hata event, and 174 of them always participate in the Mandok hata event at the turn of the year. Depending on where they celebrate the new year, 29 of them will engage in these activities at times. For example, if they have to work, live alone, and are unable to return home, fall asleep because it is late, and you are in an impossible situation, such as traveling. However, upon further research, it was discovered that the person's claim that the mandok hata activity was merely a formality was due to his lack of preparation in reconciling and reiterating the problems that had occurred.

This is consistent with the findings of a survey, in which 18 people admitted to not taking the Mandok hata event's apology seriously. They are not sincere in their apologies because they believe there is still something wrong in their relationship with the other party. This is consistent with the survey results, which show that 32 of them forgive, indicating that the problem is likely to be resolved soon. They are uneasy when the elders give advice and do not appear to defend themselves, even though this is the appropriate time to clear up any misunderstandings or problems that have arisen. In general, the elders in the mandok hata event, such as the grandfather, grandmother, father, mother or older, will be the conciliators in the reconciliation process. They will try to be as objective as possible in assessing the problem and encouraging the problematic party to improve the relationship. These are commonly referred to as "poda." In Batak, Poda refers to parental advice, which includes suggestions, teachings, mandates, messages, advice, or good precepts. As a result, people who receive poda usually do so because they are thought to be good. This is what Heffelbower means when he says that the elder chosen as the conciliator is wise, has a higher status with the opposing party, is trusted by both parties, and is able to personally listen to both parties and propose a solution.

The stages of reconciliation in the mandok hata event are intended to provide opportunities for both parties to express and admit mistakes and hurt caused by the dispute. This is intended to raise awareness of whether or not there is genuine disagreement after the conflict has ended. After that, the parties will be asked to reveal what is required to restore the relationship and what their hopes for the future are. Of course, in this case, it will be closely related to preparing oneself and one's heart to welcome the new year by resolving all disputes, taking lessons learned, and preventing future conflicts from arising. If both parties have explained their positions, the conciliator will offer advice in the form of a Poda. The parties were asked for their commitment to forgive and to begin a new chapter when they received the Poda. Warm handshakes and hugs serve as symbols of brotherly love in the family. So, at this stage of reconciliation, the role of the elders is crucial because these elders play a significant role in providing a sense of security in making complaints, listening objectively, and providing poda as a solution for reconciliation.

Third, the moment of gathering and reuniting families from afar. This mandok hata event is extremely beneficial in terms of improving family relationships. This was also stated by respondents, with 192 stating that the Mandok hata event could improve previously strained

family relations. They also agreed that this event would strengthen their friendship and brotherhood ties. They frequently use this opportunity to apologize, turn over a new leaf, and clear up any misunderstandings. Especially for those who cannot meet in person and can only communicate virtually (via video calls, chats, or phone). Furthermore, respondents stated that they continued to practice the mandok hata tradition because it was regarded as good and useful (127 respondents) Implementing it due to a hereditary family habit (66 respondents) as well as a church appeal (12 respondents).

The Church's influence in encouraging the congregation to perform New Year's services in conjunction with the Mandok hata event. This is a first for several churches, including the HKBP Church (Huria Kristen Batak Indonesia), the GKPI Church (Indonesian Protestant Christian Church), the HKI Church (Huria Kristen Indonesia), the GKPS Church (Simalungun Protestant Christian Church), and others. Furthermore, others who did not receive an appeal from the church, in this case, the observance service at 00.00 WIB, which does not include the mandok hata event, modified the procedure by inserting the mandok hata event.

The social and cultural structure of the community in North Sumatra, particularly the Batak tribe in general, is the most recent empirical example of long-term collective action in relation to the establishment of kinship relationships as a source of livelihood. In terms of local implementation, it has established a family system to strengthen community unity among Toba Batak tribe communities, such as clans and associations. These customary arrangements and institutions serve as a pillar for the survival of the Toba Batak tribal community's brotherly relations, one of which is the mandok hata tradition, wherever the individual is located.

3 Conclusion

Mandok hata is a tradition passed down from generation to generation by the Batak tribe that selects the turn of the year (New Year's celebration) on January 1 at 00.00 WIB every year. Mandok Hata is performed at the turn of the year for a variety of reasons, including thanksgiving, In preparation for starting life in the new year as reconciliation, and moments of family gathering from abroad. However, because of the times and the situation, the Batak tribal community only performed the Mandok hata event with the main family, both in their hometowns and foreign land. The role of the elders in the mandok hata event's reconciliation stage is very important because these elders play an important role in providing a sense of security in submitting complaints, listening objectively, and providing Poda as a solution for reconciliation. The Mandok hata is thought to be extremely beneficial in terms of improving family relations and reconciliation, and the community hope that this tradition will be passed down to future generations.

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