

Revealing the Secret of Ugamo Malim in Batak Land

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Abstract: *The purpose of this is to describe the strategy, existence and sentiment of the minority parmalim community of Batak Toba ethnic community in the Huta Tinggi village of Laguboti Toba Samosir. The method applied in this research is ethnography with the type of social humanities research. The data were obtained by conducting observations, interviews, documentation, and document studies which were then processed by using Spradley's data analysis techniques. The results obtained from this study are that the strategies of parents, youth and parmalim leaders, then the existence of ugamo Malim spread throughout Indonesia. There are 139 people who live in Laguboti, Huta Tinggi village. The believers of this belief are spread in 38 regions which are passed on by the young parmalim. The sentiments of society are normal as well.*

Keywords: *ugamo malim; strategy; existence; sentiment*

I. Introduction

Indonesia is famous for its rich diversity. The diversity is in the form of culture, race, ethnicity, belief, religion, and language. The cultural differences that each tribe has are one of the greatest wealth of Indonesia. The variety of cultures is caused by the difference in geographical location spread across 34 provinces in Indonesia (Muzaki, 2018).

Each province in Indonesia has unique and different cultural potentials, one of them is that in its society which consists of various tribes and cultures. Each tribe in an area has a culture that is defensive and developed from generation to generation, both verbally and in writing as in the Batak Tribe. The Batak tribe is part of the largest tribes in Indonesia. The majority is found in the province of North Sumatra. The Batak tribe consists of several types, they are Toba Batak, Karo Batak, Simalungun Batak, and so on.

The Batak Toba tribe has special features that highlight the richness of culture, one of them is belief. It can be said as a guide to people's lives, namely conceptions that are stated but the implications of their place in the midst of nature and about the ins and outs of their world (Haviland translated by Soekadijo, 1985:229). The beliefs held by a society are the currents or directions that will be the views of the people who adhere to them. The Batak Toba people strongly adhere to the traditions and customs of the Ancestors. This can be seen by the existence of traditional beliefs which still survive today. This belief is known as Ugamo Malim.

Ugamo Malim is a local belief of the Batak people who came as a movement to reject the missionaries who came to spread religions such as Christianity, Catholicism, Islam in the Batak lands. Malim in Batak language means holy. Meanwhile the designation for adherents of this religion is dubbed as Parmalim. From the Batak parmalim language, it is divided into two words, they par and hamalimon. The meanings of the two words are par (follower) and hamalimon (holiness). Thus, it can be concluded that the meaning of parmalim is the followers of holiness. The Malim religion has faith in Debata Mulajadi Na Bolon or the Almighty God who created all things. Ugamo Malim was founded in 1921, by a prominent figure of His Majesty the King of Naipospos. His Majesty King Naispospos was a disciple of Sisingamanjagara XII. King Mulia Naispospos was given a message by his teacher,

Sisingamanjagara XII, to build a place of worship which is called Bale Pasogit as a substitute for Bakkara which had been destroyed by the Dutch colonialists. Then the Bale Pasogit was formed and founded in Hutatinggi Village as one of the villages in Toba Samosir Regency, precisely in Laguboti District and became the center of the Ugamo Malim ritual.

Based on the results of the 2010-2015 population censuses from BPS data and also the data from the North Sumatra provincial government, it is known that there are only 300 adherents of this belief in North Sumatra. This number is reduced from the previous year's data due to the external influences. Although the number of parmalims decreases from time to time, Ugamo Malim still exists to this day although it does not escape various challenges in maintaining the identity and teachings of Parmalim as well as challenges to survive.

Based on the previous research results about Ugamo Malim, Elena Simatupang and Flansius Tampubolon (2022) discussed the stages of the Saturday Marari ritual, the function of the Saturday Marari ritual and local wisdom contained in the Saturday Marari ritual.

Furthermore, Arafat Iskandar Lamahu (2020) discussed the dimensions of the religion of Ugamo Malim and looks at the discourse on the development of Ugamo Malim, previously comprehensively Ibrahim Gultom (2018) in his dissertation discussed the ritual of Ugamo

Malim, the concept of safety and sources of law in Ugamo Malim. Previously, Agung Suharyanto (2016) discussed the background of the entry of Ugamo Malim, Huta Tinggi as a center for ritual activities and the aspects that caused it to develop and be centered and accepted by the surrounding community.

None of the research results above them specifically examines the pattern of the parmalim strategy in maintaining its culture and religion, the existence and sentiments of the parmalim community in the context of social change about religion. Therefore, this study is related to conducting a review of the existence of Ugamo Malim in the midst of an increasingly rapid globalization.

II. Review of Literature

The method type used in this research is the social humanities research method by using an empirical research approach which aims to reveal the strategy, the existence and the sentiment of the parmalim community. The research was carried out offline (outside the network), and the data search was carried out through interviews and observations face-to-face, that is by preparing descriptive research instruments. The data analysis techniques used in determining the validity of the data accurately were carried out in the research, namely ethnographic interview analysis, domain analysis, taxonomic analysis and component analysis (Spradley, 1997).

Ethnographic interview analysis was obtained through questions that had been prepared for informants who had the aim of obtaining the data or the information in the research and collaborated with examination techniques. Then the data or the information obtained from the informants were analyzed, the domains were grouped (taxonomic) based on the semantic connection that is unique to each domain. The results of the grouping were then translated into more specifically to determine the internal structure of the data obtained.

III. Result and Discussion

4.1 Parmalim's Strategy to Maintain Culture and Religion as a Batak Toba Ethnic Minority Community in Batak Land

Based on North Sumatra BPS data, the number of followers of Ugamo Malim reached 500 people (0.36%) of the approximately 140,000 Toba Samosir population in 2010. The results of the 2010-2015 population censuses from BPS data and also data from the North

Sumatra provincial government, it turns out that the adherents of this religion range from 300 people in North Sumatra. There are several factors that influence the existence of Ugamo Malim in North Sumatra in the midst of current globalization. Based on the observations results through interviews with the leaders, parents, and youth parmalim, there are several strategies that are carried out to maintain Malim Culture and Religion, including:

3.2 Parmalim's Parental Strategy

The parents occupy the top position who have important roles in the survival of Ugamo Malim's teachings. They are the first educators for a child. This certainly affects the guidance and teaching given to children to continue to adhere to the teachings of Ugamo Malim adopted by their parents. The strategies used by parents in their efforts to maintain

Ugamo Malim's teachings are as follows:

- a) Malim's parents have taught the basic teachings of Ugamo Malim to the children since they already have "spirit" or reason. This will guide their initial steps to deepen and strengthen trust in Ugamo Malim.
- b) Children who have entered school age begin to be taught Hadebataon. Hadebataon is a view of the overall order of Batak life which includes the relationship between humans and the Creator, with the main teaching called "sisia ni Habatahon na marsuhi ni ampang naopat", or the four divine orders, that is Tona-Poda-Patik-Uhum.
- c) Parmalim parents also indoctrinate their children to continue upholding the teachings of Ugamo Malim by saying that "you have to survive in this Ugamo and when you leave Ugamo I as your parent do not consider you my child".

3.3 Parmalim Youth Strategy

As the nation's successor, the younger generation also has an important role in maintaining the ugamo malim teachings. Through the leaders and the institutions that believe in faith, the younger generation is guided to establish good relationships with each other. This was performed with the aim of strengthening the ties of the younger generation of Malim. The

Parmalim youth strategies to maintain their culture and religion include:

- a) Tunas Naimbaru is a Malim youth community which was founded by the second leader Ugamo Malim with the main objective of being a forum for Parmalim youths to exchange information and unite the strength of Parmalim youth.
- b) Pemuda parmalim joined the organization Young Generation of Believers in God Almighty Indonesia (GEMAPAKTI). This movement is under the auspices of the Supreme Council for Belief in God Almighty Indonesia (MLKI). With the aim of increasing strength and helping the youth of Parmalim realize their vision and mission.
- c) The existence of Parmalim, especially in big cities, which tend to be few, makes the youth of Parmalim have a harmonious relationship with the fellow followers of Ugamo Malim with a vision to maintain the existence of Ugamo Malim so as not to be lost by the flow of globalization.
- d) Parmalim youth also have the same view that they are born unable to choose religion. God chose them through this religion to glorify His name.

3.4 Leader strategy

- a) The leader of Ugamo Malim together with MLKI published a special lesson for believers. Every Saturday the Malim youths learn about the teachings of the faith in a place consisting of several students from different schools.
- b) The Leaders also openly provide information about Ugamo Malim to the wider community, one of which is by creating a special portal, that is <https://parmalim.id/> which contains the information in the form of institutions (Ugamo Malim and Pungan Parmalim).
- c) Ugamo Malim leaders also help to improve the welfare of the Parmalim congregation. This is proven, with the formation of the Parmalim Organic Farmer community.
- d) The leader of Ugamo Malim also formed the Pangampu host community. This community was established with the intention of being a place for mothers to share stories, experiences, in facing the progress of the times and how to educate children to keep walking on the right path in accordance with Malim's teachings.

All of these moves with the vision of "Swadaya Ummah" held by Parmalim. So, Parmalim can be intact until now and can stand alone without financial support or other assistance from the government because the self-reliance of the parmalim people is very strong.

3.5 Parmalim Community Existence in the Context of Social Change About Religion

The existence analysis of Parmalim is a method used to see the number of parmalim and their development in this Globalization Era. Based on the research that our team has done, there are 139 people living in Laguboti, Hutatinggi village as a barometer of Ugamo Malim's existence. The rest, adherents of this belief are scattered in 38 other branch areas.

Table 1.

No	Branch	Number of Souls	No	Branch	Number of Souls
1	Laguboti	131	21	Sibolga	37
2	Porsea	71	22	Mandumpang	120
3	Sihorbo	163	23	Old Labo	87
4	Sait ni Huta	216	24	Central Field	67
5	Toba Holbung	83	25	Homecoming Village	195
6	Lumban Lobu Parik	132	26	Rank	99
7	Siregar	85	27	True Intersection	107
8	Parname	198	28	Thorns	45
9	Binangalom	281	29	Tassel	121
10	Silosung	33	30	virgin	53
11	Tomok	61	31	Dumai	30
12	Hatoguan	23	32	Batam	158
13	Nagasaribu	69	33	Wonosari	31
14	Three Dolok	41	34	Tangerang	116
15	Bah Mix	84	35	Medan	127
16	Eastern	108	36	Bogor	53
17	Marihat Bandar	159	37	Ping Respond	45
18	Maligas	29	38	Mahato	52
19	Sundai lime	196	39	Sipangko	43
20	Elephant Village	30	TOTAL NUMBER		3870

Until now, Parmalim still exists and is growing. The existence of this parmalim is certainly continued by the youth of Parmalim who are their younger generation. For this reason, the Malim youths unite their vision and mission to form an organization so that the existence of parmalim is not lost to globalization by forming the Tunas Naimbaru organization and joining GEMAPAKTI. The positive impacts of this include:

1. Many parmalims have worked in state agencies. This is clear evidence of Parmalim's strategy in maintaining their existence as the Toba Batak ethnic minority.
2. Ugamo Malim curriculum is already in school. This curriculum is followed by the publication of learning modules ranging from grade 1 elementary school to grade 12 high school published by MLKI. With the teachers, it is necessary to come from followers of this belief, in this case Ugamo Malim.
3. National ID and family cards have been approved by the state.

3.6 Parmalim Community Sentiments in the Context of Social Change About Religion

Based on the research results through the interview method that has been carried out, it can be seen the level of sentiment obtained in the Huta Tinggi, Laguboti, Toba Samosir locations which can be seen in the following table.

Table 2. Huta Tinggi Community Sentiment Table, Toba Samosir

No	Community Sentiment	Amount
1	Negative Community Sentiment	4
2	Positive Community Sentiment	5
3	Neutral Community Sentiment	11

Based on the table above, several conclusions regarding the public sentiment towards Ugamo Malim are obtained as follows.

- a) The blue color indicates that many people give negative sentiments to Ugamo malim. From the value obtained, many informants gave negative sentiments as many as 4 informants.
- b) The red color indicates that many people have positive sentiments towards Ugamo Malim. From the scores obtained from the interviews, there were 5 the informants who gave positive sentiments.
- c) The green color indicates that many people have neutral sentiments towards Ugamo Malim. From the values in the table, there are 11 informants who give normal sentiments.

Thus, based on the interviews results that have been conducted, it can be concluded that the dominant value is the neutral public sentiment. This means that there are still many people outside parmalim who have good sense and views in appreciating a difference that exists in society and instilling the principles of *Dalihan Na Tolu* in life. *Dalihan Na Tolu* is a socio-cultural philosophy that concerns the Batak tribe and culture. It becomes a framework that includes blood kin relations and marital relations that link one group. So practically, all of them are considered as family and relatives who must respect and love each other.

V. Conclusion

Based on the study results, it was concluded that the strategies of Ugamo Malim's parents were:

- a) Malim's parents have taught the basic teachings of Ugamo Malim to children since the child already has "spirit" or reason. Hamalimon's teachings include Tona- Poda- Patik-Uhum
- b) Children who have entered school age begin to be taught Hadebataon,
- c) Parmalim's parents also indoctrinate their children to continue to uphold the Ugamo Malim

- teachings. Meanwhile, the Parmalim Youth strategies are:
- a) Forming Tunas Naimbaru which is a Malim youth community,
 - b) The existence of Parmalim which tends to be a little, especially in big cities, makes Parmalim youths to pursue or look for their fellow men to keep in touch. With the vision that the followers of Ugamo Malim will not be lost in the midst of globalization, this supports the closer harmony that exists between the Malim youths.
 - c) Parmalim youth also have the same view that they are born unable to choose religion. God chose them through this religion to glorify His name.
- The Ugamo Malim Leader's Strategies are:
- a) Together with MLKI, they publish special lessons for believers.
 - b) Creating a portal about information about Ugamo Malim to the wider community.
 - c) Establishing Parmalim Organic Farmers to help improve the welfare of the Parmalim congregation.
 - d) Establishing a Pangampu host community.
- The existence of the parmaling community is spread throughout Indonesia, and there are 139 people who live in Laguboti, Hutatinggi village. The adherents of this belief are spread over 38 areas of normal community sentiment. This means that there are still many people outside parmaling who have good sense and views in appreciating the differences that exist in the society and instilling the principles of *Dalihan Na Tolu* in life.

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