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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Dispute Resolution: Pentagonal Relationships in the Simalungun Ethnic Group

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Abstract: This article aims to explore and discuss dispute resolutions among the ethnic Simalungun in Indonesia. The problem is focused on the pentagonal relationship in social structures. The theoretical basis refers to Radcliffe-Brown structural-functionalism. The data was collected through observation and in-depth interviews. The observed disputes occurred in four different villages of Haranggaol, Purbatongah, Rayahuluan, and Merekraya. In-depth interviews were conducted with 18 families involved in the dispute. The focus of disputes includes cultivation boundaries, inheritance rights, theft, and elopement. The descriptive-qualitative approach is used to analyze problems. The study found that the pentagonal relationship of the *Lima Saodoran* structures has roles and functions that span the entire life process. The novelty of the study is that the structure of *Boru*, *Boru ni Boru*, and *Sanina* are central figures acting as peacemakers to mediate disputes. The study concludes that the quality of the pentagonal relationship in a resolution lies in the retrospection of functions according to the primordial position of the structure. The quality of a stable pentagonal relation impacts the stability of the structure, whereas dysfunction has an impact on structural collapse.

Keywords: dispute, resolution, pentagonal relationships, Simalungun, Indonesia

Dispute resolution in court is a common phenomenon in humans everywhere in the world. The court and all its apparatus are a means of investigating, analyzing, and ending disputes. In court, the resolution involves judges, prosecutors, lawyers, and witnesses. Disputing parties submit evidence to either incriminate or avoid presumptions. However, not all disputes are resolved in court. In rural communities, disputes tend to be resolved through consensus by utilizing the relational function in social structures. The inclusion of the pentagonal relationship in resolution is the optimization of structural functions that span the entire life process.

This study focuses on four disputes that occurred in rural communities in the ethnic Simalungun,

North Sumatra Province. The four disputes were not submitted to the court but were resolved through mechanisms of pentagonal relationship bound in the structure of the '*Lima Saodoran*' (five hands in hand), the Simalungun ethnic social organization. The four disputes with different objects occurred during 2019 in four regions in Simalungun Regency. The structure consists of family collectivity consisting of five structural units that are bound since marriage (*partongahjabuon*). The five structural units are *Tondong ni Tondong* (giver of wife to the nuclear family, *Hasuhuton*), *Tondong* (nuclear family), *Boru* (family of recipients of wives), *Boru ni Boru* (family of the recipient of wife from Boru), and *Sanina* (family

of the same clan as a nuclear family). In the social implementation, the structure creates relationships with a pentagonal pattern. Nevertheless, the structure is formed at the time of marriage, and the relationship of the structure covers the entire life process of the five structural units.

This study analyzes the pentagonal relationship of the structure in the settlement of four disputes among ethnic Simalunguns. The four disputes are (a) cultivation boundaries, (b) inheritance rights in the family, (c) theft, and (d) elope. The four disputes are found in four different villages (*nagori*) in Simalungun Regency: Haranggaol, Purbatongah, Rayahuluan, and Merekraya. Each dispute is briefly described below.

Cultivation Boundaries Dispute

The first dispute occurred during February-July 2019. The dispute occurred between the Siboro and Saragih families in Haranggaol. Siboro had claimed three meters of Saragih field from the boundary agreed on the days of his parents. The Saragih field has not been used for two years and is covered with weeds because Saragih has moved to another village. One of Saragih's relatives who settled in Haranggaol reported land annexation via cellular. Saragih came to see the boundary of his field.

The field border is believed to have shifted as far as three meters from the previous boundary. Saragih went to Siboro to ask for an explanation. Siboro did not accept and insisted that the boundaries did not shift from before. The owner of the surrounding fields has been consulted. However, both of them did not accept the community's advice. Saragih continued to claim that Siboro had annexed three meters of his field. The annexation led to quarrels and threats of homicide and arson. Although disputes over land boundaries have been reported to the village head (*gamot*) and the headman (*pangulu*), they did not receive any resolution. In April 2019, Saragih threatened to kill Siboro. A fight broke out in the courtyard of Siboro's house. During the dispute, quarrels, verbal abuse, and curses could not be avoided. Saragih even threatened to burn Siboro's house. Villagers are unable to reconcile both parties.

Although the dispute was not submitted to the court, in May 2019, the two families made peace. Peace is mediated by the pentagonal relationship, especially the *Boru* and *Boru ni Boru* units of the Saragih and Siboro families. Peace was carried out at Siboro's

house to discuss the boundaries of the fields and end a meal together. After the meeting, the boundaries of the fields were again determined by making a permanent sign made of iron.

Inheritance Rights Dispute

A dispute occurred with one of the Purba clan family in the village of Purbatongah. The family has six children, four males and two females. The six siblings are all married. Their father died in 2008, whereas his mother died in 2017. The parents' inheritance was distributed to the six children under the customary law of Simalungun ethnicity: the youngest son receives the house and land; the eldest son receives a field larger than four other sons; the two daughters receive land smaller than the sons. The oldest male and female grandchildren each receive a piece of land. In addition to land, each child inherits clothing, equipment, jewelry, and others. Except for the youngest son who lives in the village, five of his siblings had already resided in another village. The inheritance distribution agreement was witnessed by a pentagonal relationship after the mother died in 2017, which stated that the inheritance, especially fields and houses, should not be sold outside of the six siblings. In March 2019, without informing his siblings, the youngest son sold the house to someone else. The youngest son intended to move to Pematangraya, the new capital of Simalungun Regency, to trade.

The sale of the house marked the beginning of a dispute between the six siblings. The other five brothers were angry and annoyed at the youngest one. Quarrels could not be avoided, both towards the youngest son and the buyer. The same anger was conveyed to witnesses who took part in signing the sale and purchase agreement. One family member intends to buy back a house that has been sold. However, the price rose from the original price. The dispute continued for six months, with family members refusing to greet each other and attend invitations. Disputes were resolved with the involvement of a pentagonal relationship. The resolution process took five months. In November 2019, the disputing parties made peace. The house was returned to the family according to the sales price. The parents' house, which was supposed to belong to the youngest son, now belongs to one of the daughters. At the time of peace, the land owned by the youngest man was also transferred to his brothers. The youngest man has moved to Pematangraya and works daily as a trader.

Stealing Dispute

The third dispute was the theft of chili peppers on the Saragih clan's fields in Rayahuluan village. It occurred in June 2019. A young man from Sinaga clan stole chili peppers on the Saragih fields. While in the fields, Saragih saw his chili peppers stolen and damaged. From the fields, Saragih returned to the village. Along the way, he tells everyone he encountered theft in his fields.

At night, in a coffee shop, someone stated that Sinaga had sold chili peppers even though he did not have them on hand. Saragih looked for Sinaga and found him in another coffee shop. Sinaga refused to be accused of stealing Saragih's chili peppers. Saragih felt disappointed and angry, cursing, and slapping Sinaga. A fight broke out in a coffee shop. Sinaga hit Saragih with a piece of wood. Saragih started bleeding from the head. He was taken to a Community Health Center (*Puskesmas*) in Rayahuluan. Saragih's children met Sinaga at his home. However, Sinaga escaped from the back door of his house. The next day, two men, Saragih's sons, came to the house and threatened to kill Sinaga. This dispute received public attention. Family disputes can be resolved after the pentagonal relationship conducted an intervention and mediation.

Elopement Dispute

A 27-year-old man from the Garingging clan in Merekraya eloped with a 21-year-old girl. Both had been dating for two years and intended to get married. However, the girl's family, the Damanik clan, did not approve of the marriage because the girl was still studying at a college in Medan. The young man was a farmer, and a high school graduate in his village. The young man met with the girl in Medan and brought her to Pematangsiantar. Both of them stayed at the house of Great-aunt (*Inangtua*), one of male relatives.

In Pematangsiantar, the marriage must take place, considering the girl was already two months pregnant. Even though the marriage had been carried out, the woman's parents still did not approve of it and even demanded a divorce. The girl's parents intended to convict the man who impregnated their daughter. The man is considered to have tarnished the dignity of the woman's family in the community. Disputes were resolved two months after marriage. The pentagonal relationship has a central role as a mediator to the elopement dispute.

Pentagonal Relationship

A brief description of the four disputes above is an example of a case that often occurs in rural communities. All four disputes were observed by chance during the study with a different theme. Initially, only two disputes were observed, in Haranggaol and Purbatongah. However, at the same time, two other disputes arose not far from the study location. In the end, the four disputes became the object of this study. All four cases attracted attention because the solution made use of a pentagonal relationship. The resolution involves the *Lima Saodoran* structural units as mediators and peacekeepers. The involvement of the structure in dispute resolution has not been studied before. Existing studies emphasize the structure of the *Lima Saodoran* in traditional ceremonies. Specifically, the study uses a structural-functionalism view to analyze the function and structure of the *Lima Saodoran* as a dispute resolution. This study becomes a resolution model outside the court to create social cohesion by using the social relationship that still exists in rural communities.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical reference used is structural-functionalism (Radcliffe-Brown, 1922). Theoretical considerations are based on the causal-functional understanding of the *Lima Saodoran* structure in the contemporary era to find morphology, physiology, and development. The pentagonal relation originates from the structure of the *Lima Saodoran*, which includes every aspect during the life process. One aspect of life is dispute resolution. Radcliffe-Brown's structural-functionalism explanation reaches causal-functional and dispute resolution mechanisms. Structural-functionalism is an approach that explains certain social units that have certain implications on the whole social system (Marzali, 2006).

In this study, the structure referred to is *Lima Saodoran* that has implications for the pentagonal relation in dispute resolution. Structural-functionalism is a response to the historical and diachronic evolutionary approach (Marzali, 2006). Structural-functionalism combines Durkheim's (1938) functionalism, embryonic from Comte (1988), and Spencer's (1896) thought with structuralism (Malinowski, 1922, 1926; Radcliffe-Brown, 1952). However, Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown have their differences. Malinowski's (1939)

approach emphasized culture and separates structure from function. He believed that functions are uses related to human psychological and biological needs. Social structures, for example, are useful in meeting the psycho-biological needs of individuals in society. Social structure is a basic need to gather and interact (Malinowski, 1939). Malinowski's approach assumed that all human activities aim to meet the instinctive needs associated with all of their social life (van Baal, 1988; Kaplan, 2000; Keesing, 1999; Koentjaraningrat, 1981; Sjaifuddin, 2005). Human behavior develops more solidly, is institutionalized, and becomes a social institution through engineering. Based on this approach, the structure of *Lima Saodoran* is seen as a need for gathering and interaction that is strengthened through marriage.

Radcliffe-Brown's (1952) structural-functionalism combines structure with function. The function is the contribution of social institutions to the stability of the structure. The Radcliffe-Brown approach focused on the relationship between individuals in society, that a behavior that can be observed and not on the values contained in culture (Kuper, 1977). Human behavior is abstracted into conceptions of values and norms that make up the model (Davis, 1959). Humans are seen as networked organisms that create comprehensive and integrative values and norms (Davis, 1945). The arrangement of networks in a structure binds all social units during the organism's life. Although organisms undergo tissue changes, the composition is permanent. As long as the network is permanent, human interactions and activities are well integrated. The functioning of the structure marks the process of life. Functions reflect contributions during the life process (Radcliffe-Brown, 1940). Functions are not separated from the structure, they are complementary to each other (Berger & Luckman, 1991; Ritzer, 1988). Based on this approach, the pentagonal relation is the abstraction of the stability of functions in the structure of *Lima Saodoran*.

Social structure is the arrangement of social units that are interrelated by marriage. Marriage is the basis of the family, the smallest social unit in society (Evans-Pritchard, 1940). Marriage forms a network of kinship that is eternal and related during the life process. A family is not considered such biologically, personally, or materially, but rather emphasizes functioning according to social position. The structure is neither lineage nor association. The structure is a

functional relationship between structural units that interact with each other. The structure is a mechanism for positioning socio-cultural values at a position that is considered suitable to guarantee the functioning of the organism for a relatively long period (Hendropuspito, 1989). Based on this approach, the pentagonal relation is the mechanism of positioning functions in the structure of *Lima Saodoran*. Solid functions support the existence of structure during the life process. Humans are not rigid determinists. Structure shapes people from the choice between structured alternatives (Merton, 1949). The structure is the basis for the configuration of socio-cultural activities and the general determination of the system in society.

The structure has implications on the formation of norms, institutions, ethics, and kinship systems. The structure is all units and networks in a patterned and durable relationship (Marzali, 2006; Sutrisno, 2005). Relationships and networks in the structure are the embodiment of a value system, models, and technical ways to do things (Nasikun, 1993). The social system develops according to the general standard of community evaluation to define behavior in an institutionalized role. The institutional structure is a fundamental element of the social system for human survival (Evans-Pritchard, 1940). Based on this explanation, the structure of *Lima Saodoran* is the institutionalization of the functions of the pentagonal relation. The institutionalization of pentagonal patterned functions is the embodiment of social systems, values, and norms that determine behavior throughout life.

Radcliffe-Brown's structural-functionalism approach contributes to three main points: (a) social morphology, forms of social structure, (b) social physiology, functioning social structures, and (c) development of social functions, the origin of social structures (Radcliffe-Brown, 1952; Ritzer, 1988). The morphological analysis contributes to the classification of structures; physiology contributes to the mechanism of work and the involvement of social institutions that influence each other, and analysis of development contributes to the embryo of social structure.

Radcliffe-Brown's structure-functionalism thinking reflects social anthropology, namely, 'comparative theoretical study of forms of social life among primitive people' (Radcliffe-Brown, 1951:15). Radcliffe-Brown's thinking is a comparative perspective of sociology with a nomothetic approach, a causal-

functional explanation for finding generalizations and general provisions (Marzali, 2006; Ritzer, 1988). The theoretical framework above is used in analyzing dispute resolution, which is focused on three basic frameworks of Radcliffe-Brown: morphology, physiology, and function development. The basic assumptions are formulated as follows: (a) involving the pentagonal relation in dispute resolution is the implementation of the functions of *Lima Saodoran* structure, (2) the stability of the pentagonal relation has implications for the stability of structure that spans the entire life process, and (3) the development of functions in *Lima Saodoran* structure shows the pentagonal relationship in a network is permanent and complementary.

Methods

The study was conducted qualitatively with a pragmatic methodological approach (Creswell, 2007, 2014). The reality of disputes in this study is seen as single and double, believing that disputes are objective and subjective, unbiased, and impartial. Research questions determine the choice of methodology and rhetoric because validity is found in all approaches (Creswell & Plano-Clarks, 2011). The pragmatism approach is an ideal choice because it follows a mixed-method design (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Various perspectives can provide the best information about the problem (Greene, 2008), or use when single information from one source is insufficient (Creswell & Plano-Clarks, 2011). A pragmatic approach refers to a nomothetic view that is causal-functional to understand problems holistically (Ritzer, 1988). Understanding is formed based on the informant's detailed narrative in the natural environment (Creswell, 2014). Structure, -*Lima Saodoran*-is the basis of a pentagonal relation in dispute resolution that is examined based on the experience of the bound units (Berger & Luckmann, 1991; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

This study uses the Radcliffe-Brown structural-functionalism paradigm to understand dispute resolution in the Simalungun ethnicity. The study focused on the functionalism of the pentagonal relation, which is bound to the *Lima Saodoran* structure. In this case, the function is parallel to a conceptual model underlying human behavior (Goodenough, 1976), the realization of structure in dispute resolution. The functional mechanism of the pentagonal relation has

implications for the morphology, physiology, and structure development of *Lima Saodoran*.

The data was collected through observation and in-depth interviews. Both were carried out during 11 months of dispute in four regions and four different dispute objects. Every dispute was observed in-depth and comprehensively. Observations and interviews in one area were sometimes continued by research assistants because the development of disputes in other areas gave rise to variations. The observation was focused on four families in dispute to find patterns and relational mechanisms of resolution that involved the structure of *Lima Saodoran*. The role of the unit structure is separated to find the urgency of the involvement of the pentagonal relation. The interview focused on the nature of the structure, roles, and functions of the 18 families involved during the reconciliation process. All dispute details, patterns, mechanisms, functions, and roles are recorded and used for material analysis. The results of observations and interviews are used as a basic framework for discovering morphology, physiology, and function development. The qualitative-descriptive analysis is used to understand resolution. The analysis focuses on the pentagonal relation functions of the structure for social life.

Results

The four disputes examined were cases that were resolved involving the pentagonal relation of the *Lima Saodoran* structure. The resolution went through a long process and was divided into two parts:

1. Resolution without involving a pentagonal relationship. Resolution attempts were made on four cases by both disputing parties, but no resolution was made and even had an impact on disharmony-the threat of killing and burning houses, insulting each other, not greeting each other, not attending a traditional party, or even passing a dispute to the police or court. Disputes target family members and spread to relatives. Family relationships are cracking and getting worse. Resolution without involving a pentagonal relationship is carried out during the first two to three months after the dispute occurs.

2. Resolution involves a pentagonal relationship. The disputes's poor development for two to three months became a pentagonal relation initiative to get involved. Engagement is based on observing the absence of reconciliation signs. Engagement can be done from the beginning of the dispute if it leads to destructive actions such as bloody disputes, murder, stabbing, beatings, and even burning houses.

Based on the quantity of pentagonal relationships, involvement is distinguished as follows: (a) involving three relationships, namely *Boru*, *Boru ni Boru*, and *Sanina*, or (b) involving five relationships: *Boru*, *Boru ni Boru*, *Sanina*, *Tondong ni Tondong*, and *Tondong*. The inclusion of a pentagonal relation is caused by two things: (a) initiative to mediate the two parties to the dispute, or (b) the family in question. However, the tendency for involvement is based on initiative. Involvement, both initiative and requested, shows the attitude of the pentagonal relation towards the dispute. Both of them reflect the social closeness that is implemented in a solid social relationship. Involvement is motivated by relationships created since marriage. Engagement is the same as in any ceremony or ritual that every unit of the relationship must be present and contribute. Contributions to each life process illustrate the closeness and relational quality of *Lima Saodoran*'s structure in life.

Although the pentagonal relation has been aware of the dispute from the start, it cannot directly involve itself. The pentagonal relationship gave the disputing families the time needed for reconciliation. During reconciliation, the pentagonal relationship remotely monitored and observed the process and progress from afar. Although they did not involve themselves from the beginning, disputes were discussed internally in the pentagonal relationship. On several occasions, *Boru* and *Boru ni Boru* were sent to inquire about the dispute's progress. Meetings were held during the night or in the afternoon at homes, fields, festivities, or stalls. The involvement of the pentagonal relationship in resolution is sometimes undesirable. In the case of house sales and theft, for example, families would refuse to intervene in the pentagonal relationship because it is considered a private matter.

The intervention of the pentagonal relationship sometimes creates new problems with disputing families because they are considered as interfering in

other people's business. Often, pentagonal relationship experience interference. However, both *Boru* and *Boru ni Boru* always make approaches, calming, and providing alternative reconciliation. Self-involvement is based more on a sense of affection (*holong*) and common grounds (*sapangahapan*). The disputing families feel neglected if the pentagonal relationship does not provide an alternative to their current dispute. Conversely, the pentagonal relationship seems ignored if they are not allowed to be involved in the reconciliation process.

Based on field study, the functions of the pentagonal relationship in the *Lima Saodoran* structure, specifically dispute resolution, are described as follows:

1. The *Boru* and *Boru ni Boru* units are mediators of the dispute. This unit, despite being aware of the dispute, cannot directly intervene. It first encountered *Sanina* to obtain sources and progress of the dispute. Only then that the *Boru* and *Boru ni Boru* units met with families in dispute. The information obtained became an inspiration during the next steps: (a) without involving a pentagonal relation or (b) involving a pentagonal relation. *Boru* and *Boru ni Boru* in both alternatives play a central role a resolution. *Boru* and *Boru ni Boru* initiatives require sacrifices in terms of time, energy, mind, and even material.
2. The *Sanina* unit cooperates with *Boru* and *Boru ni Boru*, mediating disputes on both sides. First, both units obtain certainty of the dispute's embryo, alternatives that have been implemented as well as the progress of dispute. From this stage, the three units design the following reconciliation. Based on the four disputes examined, there is a tendency of involvement by the nearest neighbor or the village apparatus, the village chief, and an elder. Involving the village apparatus, besides making witnesses available during the reconciliation process, also provides jurisprudence for a settlement. The reconciliation efforts were carried out at the home of one of the disputing families or the home of the village apparatus. Before reconciliation, the *Boru*, *Boru ni Boru*, and *Sanina* units had received permission to act as mediators from both disputing parties. At this

stage, other pentagonal relationships, *Tondong* and *Tondong ni Tondong* were not involved. Although not involved, the three previous units delivered the results of the meeting. Usually, when reconciliation is reached, it ends with the distribution of betel (*demban*) and shared meals to perpetuate the reconciliation.

3. The *Tondong* and *Tondong ni Tondong* units are only involved if the resolution efforts by *Boru*, *Boru ni Boru*, and *Sanina* failed. In this stage, the three relation units appear before the *Tondong* and *Tondong ni Tondong*. The meeting was intended to discuss the progress of the dispute and reconciliation that was most likely to be done. Of the four cases examined, two cases involved *Tondong* and *Tondong ni Tondong* relationship, house sales, and eloping with a girl. The petition made by *Boru*, *Boru ni Boru*, and *Sanina* to *Tondong* and *Tondong ni Tondong* also considers the risk of disputes, which may lead to destructive actions. The five relationship units plan reconciliation with all possible consequences. If a resolution has been found, the *Boru*, *Boru ni Boru*, and *Sanina* units carry out the said resolution. At this stage, reconciliation refers to negotiations and consensus. The structure is present in the disputing house, distributing betel, and worshipping. Acceptance of betel is a positive signal for reconciliation, whereas the rejection of betel means refusal to make peace. In the four cases examined, reconciliation was achieved after involving the structure.
4. Reconciliation still failed despite involving all the pentagonal relationship. This reality led to an eternal rift between the two disputing families. Both became eternal enemies: they do not greet each other, do not reprimand each other, do not attend each other's parties, and so forth. Although reconciliation fails, the pentagonal relation is not considered to have failed in carrying out its functions. The main points of the pentagonal relation are involved in mediating peace among disputing families. Involvement shows primordial closeness for each bound structure. Involvement in the implementation of functions is according to a social position in the structure. This understanding implies that the failure of

reconciliation will be tested overtime. Disease, crop failure, poverty, and other forms of liver failure are believed to be risks of rejection of advice and obstruction due to the failure of reconciliation.

Based on the above description, it was found that the reconciliation of field boundaries and theft involved the role of *Boru*, *Boru ni Boru*, and *Sanina*, whereas the sale of houses and elope with girls involved the roles of *Tondong* and *Tondong ni Tondong*. The involvement of the pentagonal relationship in reconciliation reflects minor or major, the level of dispute for the structure of the *Lima Saodoran*:

1. Cultivation boundaries and theft are minor disputes. Although the dispute demanded attention from all pentagonal relationship, *Tondong*, and *Tondong ni Tondong* were not involved. Both of them only served to advise *Boru*, *Boru ni Boru*, and *Sanina* as mediators. Other cases parallel to these two were quarrels, beatings, and robberies. Sales of houses and eloping with a girl are considered major disputes.
2. A parent's house is an inheritance that should not be sold. The house is considered a historic meeting place in the family's internal affairs. Sales of houses are considered to eliminate the traces of parents in the family. Every family member born at home has the same responsibility even though, according to the law, the house is left to the youngest son. Based on this understanding, the pentagonal relationship participates in understanding the wound afflicted on the internal family. All pentagonal relationships are obliged to intervene so that the dignity of the house is returned to the primordial position so that family members can live cohesively.
3. Eloping with a girl is a major dispute. Marriage is a framework to form a nuclear family and at the same time perpetuate pentagonal structures and relationships. Youth who run away are not considered irregularities because the Simalungun marriage custom opens a forum for elopement (*marlualua*) if consent is not obtained from either family. The exogamy clan system in Simalungun prohibits the

marriage of fellow clans (*mardawanbegu*), or the marriage of fellow family members who have a blood relationship (incest). The pentagonal relation must restore the situation so that the new pentagonal relation in the new nuclear family is harmoniously established. Based on this understanding, if a marriage is neither incest nor *mardawanbegu*, the pentagonal relationship has the responsibility to 'make amends' with all the consequences that they might expect. If the marriage is not restored, the new pentagonal relationship has failed to work harmoniously and is deemed as the beginning of failure in life.

Based on the description above, this study found four important points: (a) the involvement of the pentagonal relationship in resolving disputes is a basic human nature cohesive to social life. Pentagonal structures and relationship are bound by shared feelings (*Sapangahapan*) to realize social cohesion; (b) inclusion of pentagonal relationship in reconciliation depends on the destructive effect of disputes on the existence of the *Lima Saodoran* structure; (c) *Boru*, *Boru ni Boru*, and *Sanina* are the key mediators to reconciliation. All three are central figures in mediating disputes. All three are peacemakers in the pentagonal relationship. All three make selfless sacrifices, regardless of retribution or gifts. This sacrifice is relevant to the social position in the structure; and (d) the main core of the resolution is peace. Every pentagonal relation according to social position contributes to the creation of reconciliation. Pentagonal relationships sacrifice time, energy, mind, and material resources.

The mechanism and process of a resolution involving the pentagonal relationship are the embodiment of the function of the *Lima Saodoran* structure. The involvement of the pentagonal relationship does not look at the size of the dispute, the sacrifice of material or resources, the expected opportunities, and others. The involvement of the pentagonal relation is based on the implementation of social functions contained in the structure. Substantively, involvement refers to the mechanism of making the girl a 'new mother' (*Inang Nabayu*) in Simalungun ethnic marriage. Marriage is not understood as an exchange between a girl and a boy, or the joining of the large families of a girl and a bachelor, instead of as a mechanism to make a girl a 'new mother' in the nuclear family. The recognition

of a girl as a 'new mother' according to the customary law of Simalungun marriage is part of the customs of *Marparnayog* and *Marunjuk*. The customary provisions of the 'new mother' have implications for the pentagonal relational function and form the basis of validation for structure. The appreciation of the pentagonal relation to the structure reaches the entire life process, both in joy and sorrow.

Discussion

The pentagonal relationship should get involved in peacemaking, the highest formulation of reconciliation for disputes. Reconciliation is born from the process of deliberation involving the *Lima Saodoran* structure. The involvement of the pentagonal relationship in reconciliation is based on the conception of *Lima Saodoran*. The basis of the relationship is 'Saodoran', that the life process does not work alone, but rather is supported by other social units that go hand in hand. 'Saodoran' is the basic framework, mechanism, and principle throughout the life process.

The *Lima Saodoran* consists of five structural units that underlie the pentagonal relation. The five relationship consists of: (a) *Tondong ni Tondong*, the giver of wife to the nuclear family, (b) *Tondong*, nuclear family, (c) *Sanina*, the family from the same clan as the patrilineal nuclear family, (d) *Boru*, recipient of a wife from a nuclear family, and (e) *Boru ni Boru*, recipient of a wife from the *Boru* (Clauss, 1982; Damanik, 2016, 2017a; Dasuha, 2011; Djahutar, 2019; Jansen, 2003; Liddle, 1971; Mailan, 1977; Oudemans, 1973; Pakpak, 1997; Purba, 1997; Saragih, 1980, Sinaga, 2004; Sumbayak, 2005; Tambak, 2019). Although it is called *Lima Saodoran*, it does not refer to only five families but rather consists of family collectivity, which is bound by a marital relationship. Table 1 is an explanation and outline of the pentagonal relationship of the structure.

The structural functions of *Lima Saodoran* reflect interrelated pentagonal relationship (Damanik, 2017c, 2018). The pentagonal relationship not only serves to legalize marriage but is fundamental in the recognition of 'new mothers' (Damanik, 2019b). Pentagonal relationship functions in every activity of life, whether in joy and sorrow. Structural contributions are in the form of economic assistance, logistics, response, advice, and thoughts (Damanik, 2017d). The urgency

Table 1*The Outlines of the Pentagonal Relation of the Lima Saodoran Structure in the Simalungun Ethnic Group*

| Unit structures | Basis relation | Social functions | Pattern of relation |
|---------------------------|--|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| <i>Tondong</i> | Nuclear family, recipients of wives from <i>Tondong ni Tondong</i> | Source of advice and blessing | Worshipping |
| <i>Tondong ni Tondong</i> | Giver of wife to the nuclear family | Fulfill of advice and blessing | Worshipping |
| <i>Sanina</i> | Family from the same clan as nuclear family | Source of deliberation | Respectful |
| <i>Boru</i> | Family of recipients of wives from a nuclear family | Resources | Guidance |
| <i>Boru ni Boru</i> | Recipient of a wife from the <i>Boru</i> | Fulfill of resources | Guidance |

of a pentagonal relation is reflected in traditional dance (*tortor*) (Damanik, 2017g) and fashion (Damanik, 2017b, 2019a). In disputes, the pentagonal relationship appears guilty if the dispute becomes prolonged.

The involvement of the pentagonal relation is the manifestation of vigilance (*Sapangahapan*) in the structure of *Lima Saodoran*. Vigilance comes from delicate (*Ahap*), the basis of behavior implemented delicately (*Marahap*). This cultural morality is an appreciation of the true nature and existence of life-based on 'truth is the basis' (*Habonaron do Bona, HdB*), a Simalungun social ethnic philosophy (Damanik, 2017e). The main part of HdB is a virtue of life-based on compassion, according to '*Habonaron*', the original ethnic religion of Simalungun (Damanik, 2017e).

The structure of *Lima Saodoran* is the development of the concept of the 'triangle Culinaire' (Levi-Strauss, 1969) in Simalungun ethnic marriage. Marriage has implications for social institutions, systems of interaction, customary law, and the term of address (Levi-Strauss, 1963). In the ethnic Simalungun, the conception of Levi-Strauss is parallel to the '*Tolu Sahundulan*' (three equal sittings), the basic framework of the nuclear family. A nuclear family is not sufficiently binding on a relationship in the basic scope but instead reaches larger social units. In this case, the '*Tolu Sahundulan*' mechanism was expanded to become *Lima Saodoran*, an extended family according to the Simalungun. The structure has implications for dynamic social roles and functions:

'with whom he sits' and 'with whom he's hand in hand' (Damanik, 2016).

The structure of *Lima Saodoran* is a manifestation of a functional relationship with a pentagonal pattern. Function in a holistic and complementary patterned structure. Disruption to either structural unit has an impact on the fracture of the entire relationship. A dispute in one of the structural units is a dispute for the entire structure. Disturbances or disputes have implications for obstruction of blessings for the entire set of structures. The blessing comes from upstream (*Tondong ni Tondong*), flows to the central (*Tondong*), channeled to the left or right (*Boru* and *Sanina*), and empties downstream (*Boru ni Boru*). Upstream refers to God (*Naibata*), central is the nuclear family, left and right are relatives, and downstream is the community. A dispute thus reflects the rift in the relationship between God, the nuclear family, and relatives.

The pentagonal relation is the character of the paddy community (*wet cultivation*), the balance of the cosmos between a patrilineal mountain and a matrilineal river (Sumardjo, 2010). The paddy community tends to look horizontally at the mountains rather than vertically at the sky. The mountains area is a source of water, a vital component of life that supplies blessings to all humans living along the river. Downstream is the sea, the collectivity of relatives who receive blessings from the river. Mountains are upstream of the rivers that distribute blessings to the central, left, and right rivers ending downstream. Upstream or central disturbances have

an impact on the obstruction of blessings to left and right and downstream. Relatives expect harmony and integration in the nuclear family as well as God upstream so that the flow of blessings is not interrupted. *Tondong ni Tondong* and *Tondong* are manifestations of the 'visible God' (*Naibata Na Taridah*) on earth.

The river-based pentagonal relationships is life orientations that are not limited in space and time. Every relation contributed to tirelessly. A dispute on one of the pentagonal relationships requires function recovery. Recovery is another word for self-introspection, a deep reflection on the primordial position in the structure. In this case, the primordial position is *Tondong ni Tondong* and *Tondong* is a source of advice and blessing, *Sanina* is a source of deliberation, whereas *Boru ni Boru* and *Boru* are resources. Behavior towards *Tondong ni Tondong* and *Tondong* is worshipping, towards *Sanina* is respectful, and towards *Boru* and *Boru ni Boru* is guidance.

The *Lima Saodoran* structure and pentagonal relationships illustrate the interrelations of social life:

nuclear family, society, and the cosmos. The signs of nature in the form of joy and sorrow indicate social life related to the cosmos. Life success, disputes, conflicts, and chaos are a reflection of the cosmic imbalance (Damanik, 2016). *Lima Saodoran*, is a miniature and concrete picture of society. A dispute in one of the relationship units causes extraordinary shocks to the other units. Each dispute is resolved collectively so that social cohesion is achieved. Prolonged disputes or the lack of resolution have an impact on disharmony. Dysfunction thus has an impact on disharmony, or structural fractures.

Pentagonal relation is a combination of two structures that underlie the nuclear family. The first building has a triangular pattern that includes *Tondong*, *Sanina*, and *Boru*. The second building is a trapezoidal pattern, which includes *Tondong ni Tondong* and *Boru ni Boru*. The trapezoidal building resembles an ark that carries the nuclear family across a vast ocean. The combination of the two forms an intact pentagonal-patterned building, a facade of the *Rumahbolon*, a traditional Simalungun house. Social life is centered

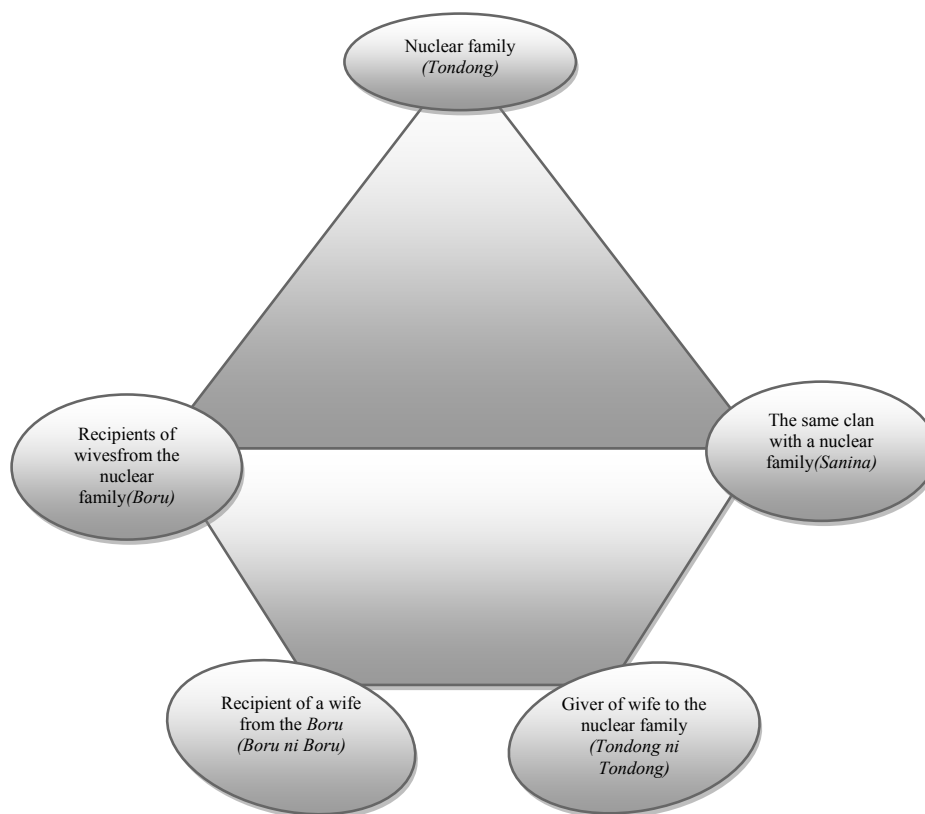


Figure 1. Pentagonal Structural-Functionality in the Simalungun Ethnic Group

on the nuclear family, which has implications for lifelong pentagonal relationships. A nuclear family can only work if the functions of each pentagonal relation are running properly (Damanik, 2016, 2017a). Figure 1 shows the merging of the two buildings that creates the pentagonal structural functionality of ethnic Simalungun.

The pentagonal relation of the *Lima Saodoran* structure is the harmonization of functions among the five integrated structural units. Social life can only work if every relationship functions harmoniously. Harmony is an embryo of social cohesion. Dysfunction is the beginning of structural destruction. Dysfunction in one structural unit results in the dysfunction of other structures. Dysfunction wants to recover one's primordial position. Recovery is a retrospection of functions according to social position. Every dysfunction wants purification down to the basic human nature, namely, coexistence. Humans need coexistence that is visible in a harmonious social relationship. Harmonious relationships are manifestations of norms and values that are conceptualized throughout life, marking the functioning of social units in the structure. The pentagonal relationship is the basis of Simalungun behavior in dispute resolutions. The pentagonal relation is parallel to the conception mode, which determines human behavior (Goodenough, 1976).

The structure is a horizontal perspective that unites the divinity of patrilineal mountains with the divinity of the matrilineal river. Morphologically, the pentagonal relationship is an outreach of the nuclear family life, which forms the facade of the traditional house of Simalungun. Physiologically, pentagonal relationships are concerned with functions implemented according to one's social position in the structure. The pentagonal relationship is the development of *Tolu Sahundulan*, the foundation of the nuclear family, which requires the support of *Lima Saodoran* throughout life.

This study found that a functional relationship with a pentagonal pattern is closely related to the structure of *Lima Saodoran* in a dispute resolution. The quality of the resolution depends on the functioning of each structural unit. A stable social function contributes to the stability of the structure, while whereas dysfunction may lead to the destruction of the structure. A stable social function is a relational closeness manifested as peacemakers in ongoing disputes. Institutional

functions are the main core of coexistence in guaranteeing a stable social life.

Conclusion

Dispute resolution involves a functional relationship with a pentagonal pattern closely related to the structure of *Lima Saodoran*. Each relation unit in the structure contains responsibilities that reach all aspects throughout life. Involvement in dispute resolution is a social commitment bound through the 'new mother' mechanism in the marriage process. The basis of a pentagonal relationship originates from *Saodoran*, which is itself based on delicate to create vigilance, a cohesive social life. The study found that the pentagonal relationship of the *Lima Saodoran* structure has roles and functions that span the entire life process. The novelty of the study is that the structure of *Boru*, *Boru ni Boru*, and *Sanina* are central figures acting as peacemakers to mediate disputes. The study concludes that the effectiveness of the pentagonal relation in resolution is the retrospection of functions according to the primordial position of the structure. The quality of a stable pentagonal relation has an impact on the stability of the structure, whereas dysfunction has an impact on structural collapse. The function of a stable pentagonal relation reflects the relational closures that are manifested as peacemakers during the reconciliation process. The conclusions of the study are limited to rural communities that perpetuate social structures and differ from urban communities who prefer the courts as a medium for dispute resolution.

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This report is my original work.

Conflict of interest:

None.

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