

June 2023

Women's Resistance to Toba Batak Umpasa from a Feminist Perspective

Ratih Baiduri

Universitas Negeri Medan, Indonesia

Elly Prihasti Wuriyani

Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Follow this and additional works at: <https://vc.bridgew.edu/jiws>



Part of the [Women's Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Baiduri, Ratih and Wuriyani, Elly Prihasti (2023) "Women's Resistance to Toba Batak Umpasa from a Feminist Perspective," *Journal of International Women's Studies*: Vol. 25: Iss. 4, Article 16.

Available at: <https://vc.bridgew.edu/jiws/vol25/iss4/16>

This item is available as part of Virtual Commons, the open-access institutional repository of Bridgewater State University, Bridgewater, Massachusetts.

This journal and its contents may be used for research, teaching, and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, re-distribution, re-selling, loan or sub-licensing, systematic supply, or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden. Authors share joint copyright with the JIWS. ©2022 Journal of International Women's Studies.

Women's Resistance to Toba Batak *Umpasa* from a Feminist Perspective

By Ratih Baiduri¹ and Elly Prihasti Wuriyani²

Abstract

This study explores Toba Batak *umpasa* which is a set of Indonesian cultural values related to son and daughter familial relationships. There is a need to investigate the cultural values of the *umpasa* as a guide to the upbringing of their children. The following study focuses on (1) the construction of the concept of Toba Batak sons and daughters within current Indonesian society and (2) women's resistance to the Toba Batak *umpasa* from a feminist perspective. A feminist lens allows one to analyze meanings, reevaluation, renegotiation and resistance to the concept of gender in the *umpasa*. The authors use a qualitative research method and a descriptive approach. Our methodology includes identifying and defining the *umpasa*, in-depth interviews with informants including parents and leaders of the Toba Batak in the city of Medan, observations on the upbringing of Toba Batak sons and daughters, and an analysis followed by a discussion and conclusions. The results found that (1) the Toba Batak *umpasa* is a predominantly patriarchal culture in which men are the central figures; (2) there are shifts in the value systems regarding sons and daughters; (3) the role of daughters who previously occupied a marginal position in society is now considered important as they can become highly respected *hula-hula*; (4) women's resistance to the *umpasa* is carried out by working hard and achieving *hagabeon* (having sons and daughters), *hamaraon* (wealth), and *hasangapon* (a respected family).

Keywords: *Umpasa*, Toba Batak, Sons and daughters, Feminist perspective, In-depth interviews, Indonesia

Introduction

The Toba Bataks are a part of the Batak sub-groups among the Karo, Pak-pak, Angkola, Simalungun, and Mandailing ethnicities in North Sumatra, Indonesia. They adhere to a patrilineal kinship system and call members of their clan/marga *dongan-sauntunga*. In Batak there is no matrilineal lineage (Vergouwen, 2004, p. 1). Sons have an important role in the continuation of generations, as kings or family leaders. If a family does not have a son it is called *napunu* (extinct) because it cannot continue the father's lineage (Rajamarpondang, 1992, pp. 105-108; Baiduri, 2015). The paternal system and customary laws are regulated in the kinship system *Dalihan Na Tolu* (Batak for three furnaces). The *Dalihan Na Tolu* consists of *dongan tubu* or *dongan sauntunga orang semarga* (family clan), *hula-hula* (the party giving the wife) and *boru* (the party taking the wife) (Simanjuntak & Saur, 2004:40-42). The *Dalihan*

¹ Ratih Baiduri was born in Medan, Indonesia and completed a Ph.D. in Anthropology (2015) at Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. She is currently serving as Secretary of Department Magister Social Anthropology, Universitas Negeri Medan. Her research interests include cultural and gender studies. She has published many journal articles and book chapters in peer-reviewed publications in these areas. She is currently conducting research on *Women's Leadership in Mangrove Forest Conservation: Experience from Muara Tanjung, Indonesia*. Email id: ratihbaiduri@unimed.ac.id

² Elly Prihasti Wuriyani was born in Wonosobo, Indonesia and completed Ph.D. in Humanities (Literature) (2019) at Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Her research interests include literature, cultural and gender studies. She has published many journal articles and book chapters in peer-reviewed publications in these areas. She is currently conducting research on environmental discourse in a novel by a writer from North Sumatra, Indonesia. Email id: ellyprihati@unimed.ac.id

Na Tolu is still held sacred to this day. Its influence can be seen at all traditional events. The *Dalihan Na Tolu* describes the important role of men in this society (husband, father, uncle, son, grandson) (Sinaga, 2013, pp. 13-19; Simanjuntak & Saur, 2004, pp. 40-42; Baiduri, 2015). The Toba Bataks have a distinct literary culture, although it is less developed than their customs and art. Only a small group utilizes literary culture (Tambunan, 1982; Kasim & Pardosi, 2000, pp. 2; and Situmorang, 2004, pp. 135-138). In addition, the oral and written traditions are passed down specifically by *datu* and their descendants. *Datu* is a person who has an ability to communicate with *begu* (spirits) through prayers and spells, and who manipulates the magical powers ruling the universe and life. The *Datu* is also the first person to master the Batak script written on bark³ (Malau, 1994, pp. 39-40).

The *umpasa* is part of Batak oral literature in the form of poetry. It is the origin text of the Toba Batak which privileges patriarchal culture. The traditional literary texts also legitimize women who are obedient and responsible for the care of children, husbands, and households. Men are privileged in this culture with various advantages of being born male (Wuriyani, 2016; 2017; Baiduri, 2015).

The *umpasa* for the Toba Batak people is one of the vehicles through which thoughts, attitudes, and cultural values are expressed. Simbolon (1986, pp. 1-2) explains that the *umpasa* contains the structural basis for life in Toba Batak society. Such values include a philosophy of life, laws and regulations, customs, manners within interpersonal relationships, general teachings and advice, and expressions of blessing and hope. Simbolon shows that the customs and relationships between individuals within this society continue as they have always been practiced. The *umpasa* is conveyed at ceremonies, meetings, and various traditional rituals. It also reinforces the expectations of parents for their children, both sons and daughters. It contributes to the public sphere vs. domestic sphere dichotomy attached to men and women as a fixed notion which cannot be changed.

The *umpasa* illustrates the stark differences in the treatment of sons as opposed to daughters. While the Toba Batak have experienced many fundamental changes due to Christianization and Western development, they still adhere to tradition. However, those in the diaspora who have migrated to other countries have been exposed to other cultures and traditions that differ from the Toba Batak.

Because the *umpasa* still pervades Toba Batak society, it is interesting to see instances of resistance from women in their daily practices. This paper asks: (1) What is the expectation for sons and daughters in the Toba Batak ethnicity in the *umpasa*? and (2) How can the resistance of women to the Toba Batak *umpasa* in practice be interpreted from a feminist perspective?

Postmodern Feminist Perspective

A postmodern feminist perspective (Tong, 1998, pp. 283) seeks to engage with and understand women's lives on multiple levels. This study focuses on the relationship between men and women both as represented in the *umpasa* and in the reality of everyday life for the respondents. This perspective challenges traditional conventions and sees women as active and autonomous. The analysis below focuses on redressing gender imbalance on an individual basis. Feminism rejects gender stereotypes and the containment of women within patriarchal society. Women must be encouraged to define themselves within any cultural milieu. Through feminism one can deconstruct conventional women's roles and the female-male dichotomy. Postmodern feminist theory is a lens through which to study patriarchal texts such as the *umpasa* which marginalizes women and their roles in society.

³ *Pustaka Laklak*, which in English translates to reading bark.

Feminism provides a platform for exploring notions of meaning and for reevaluation, renegotiation, and resistance to prevailing gender conventions. It can be used to challenge the idea that research should be value-free, objective, and free from researcher bias and political interests. A feminist perspective considers that much research is actually gender biased and does not adequately address the reality of women's lives. There are three reasons why this study uses a feminist perspective: (1) this research study focuses on gender issues, aiming to understand gender and social relations, social institutions, and social traditions as delineated in the Toba Batak *umpasa* (2) it addresses the impact of social inequality with regards to gender, and (3) it treats gender relations as a product of socio-cultural and historical forces that are open to change.

Review of Select Literature

Toba Batak *umpasa* is a code of values for establishing family relationships, so it must be understood in the context of sociological research on the functioning of family. A family is a natural social group that develops patterns of interaction to regulate the functions of its members. The behavior among its members informs familial structures (Jenkins et al., 2009). In the family, interaction becomes a matter of continuous re-evaluation of reciprocal relationships (Gianesini, 2011). Family interaction is not always readily noticeable as certain experiences are not shared with others outside the family (Gianesini, 2011). The influence of various interactions on any individual differs according to the ability to maintain identity in the face of challenges from other family members.

Successful parenting involves time, energy, and psychological dexterity (Gianesini, 2011). Strategies for parenting differ in each culture. Parents with only one child tend to focus on a rigorous education because they have high expectations for their child's success (Tas-Cifci, 2019). Only children tend to face greater challenges to meet parental expectations than children who have siblings (Deutsch, 2006; Fong, 2004). The success of a child is viewed as directly proportional to parental effort, although each culture adopts different methods (Göransson, 2009, p. 181; Goyette & Xie, 1999). However, there is a tendency for families to spoil only children (Fong, 2004, p. 3).

Parenting is still considered to be the priority of any mother. Mothers are assigned the primary responsibility for raising their children (Dedeoglu, 2010). A mother's self-esteem will often be vulnerable as she worries about whether she is raising her children well. Women who are successful in raising children are more highly regarded by their husband's families (Ataca et al., 2005; Kagitcibasi, 2005; Fournier et al., 2012; Tas-Cifci, 2019). In a patriarchal culture, men are respected more if their wives and daughters adhere to the behavior norms of their society (van Eck, 2003). Likewise, Toba Batak husbands are held in higher regard if they have obedient sons and daughters (Vergouwen, 2004, pp. 1). The sons are the successors of the clan, which means that without a son the clan ceases to be (Rajamarpondang, 1992, pp. 105-108; Sinaga, 2013, pp. 13-19; Simanjuntak & Saur, 2004, pp. 40-42).

The patriarchal cultural values of the Toba Batak are taught to daughters by their mothers (Tas-Cifci, 2019). In the patriarchal family honor is a paramount value (Gill, 2011). In addition, it is important to achieve the ideals of *hamoraon* (wealth), *hagabeon* (having children), and *hasagapon* (a respected family) (Harahap & Siahaan, 1987; Rajamarpondang, 1992, pp. 105-108; Sinaga, 2013, pp. 13-19; Simanjuntak & Saur, 2004, pp. 40-42).

Methodology

This study utilizes a qualitative research method with a descriptive approach as it presents library research supported by field studies. This method is based on the descriptive data obtained from the informants. In addition, the data from the Toba Batak sample was obtained with regards to the subject of sons and daughters as related in the *umpasa*. This study

focuses on the relation of parents to the understanding of cultural values regarding Batak sons and daughters. Among the 500 *umpasa* precepts documented by Simbolon et al. (1986), Sinaga (2013), and Raja (2018), this research focuses on the 30 tenets representing children in general, sons compared to daughters, and parental expectations for their children.

Several data collection techniques were used while conducting this research. First, we did a literature review related to research themes which have been published regarding *umpasa* and the Toba Batak doctrine of sons and daughters. Also, interviews were conducted with Batak informants who have migrated to Medan. All informants meet the following criteria: (1) they live in Medan, (2) they are married to a fellow Toba Batak, (3) they are aged between 29-59, and (4) they have sons and/or daughters. Thirty informants participated. Data was collected from various urban areas in Medan over a period of three months in 2021.

Interviews were also conducted with community leaders of the Toba Batak. These included Mr. Simanjuntak and Mr. Sagala who meet the criteria set out above. Mr. Simanjuntak is a leader of the Simanjuntak clan, and Mr. Sagala is a head of Sagala clan. Observations of the upbringing of Toba Batak children according to the child's growth and developmental age were carried out involving lecturers and students at the Universitas Negeri Medan. Data analysis techniques included: (1) Classification of the *umpasa* types based on Toba Batak cultural values and gender perspectives, (2) Identifying and analyzing tenets within the *umpasa* which determine Batak cultural attitudes towards their children and how to raise them, (3) Creating a record of experiences in the care of the children as related by the *umpasa* pertaining to psychosocial and sociocultural aspects of society, and (4) the collation of all data in order to compile analyses, discussion, and conclusions.

Two research locations were chosen, the first based on collecting data on the Toba Batak *umpasa*. To generate a database of the *umpasa*, the data collection was carried out at the Medan Language Centers and District/Regency in Medan which included the population of Batak people in North Sumatra. The selection was based on the criteria of this study which comprehensively observes the practices dictated by the *umpasa* that have developed among the Batak in North Sumatra. The second research location was Medan city where the authors conducted interviews with the informants. The city of Medan was chosen as it is one of the main destinations for Toba Batak migrants.

Findings

1. The cultural construction of the *umpasa* dictates strong patriarchal values and places men as the central figures in the Toba Batak culture.
2. There has been a shift in the value of sons and daughters. The terms *anak* for sons and *boru* for daughters have changed. *Anak* is now used for both sons and daughters, although there are still differences in application, especially in terms of the clan continuation being dictated by the male offspring.
3. The field study found that daughters are important in Toba Batak culture. Without a daughter, Batak families cannot be included in the *hula-hula* party. This party is highly respected and influential and is expected to give blessings in every traditional Batak ritual. Therefore daughters may own a certain power in the culture, although it is not noticeably pronounced in Batak literature.
4. The Toba Batak women have various strategies for resistance and survival. They work extremely hard to forge their culture and show a resistance to the customs which tend to marginalize them. These women work hard in order to achieve their cultural ideal as Toba Batak people: *hagabeon*, *hamaraon*, and *hasangapon*. This status can only be achieved through the education of their children, which is their responsibility. Attaining this ideal is a cultural burden for women.

Data Classification of the *Umpasa* Based on Gender Perspective

Ideas found within the *umpasa* concerning children and concomitant parenting systems for sons and daughters are outlined below.

Parental Perspectives on the Significance of Daughters and Sons

Tenets concerning children in the *umpasa* are similar to other ethnic cultures. Children are analogous to family wealth as in the example below:

- a. My son is my wealth
Anakhonhi do hamoraun di ahu My son is my wealth

The *umpasa* text states that “children are the wealth of their parents.” However, considering that the *umpasa* is a collective representation of its creators, the patriarchal conventions of the Toba Batak society dictate that the meaning of *hamoraon* is associated with sons, not daughters. Within the text of the *umpasa*, this phrase has no gender bias, but it is the context of Toba Batak that confers a gendered interpretation. The passage above from the *umpasa* implies that parents wish to have children who are healthy, proud, and blessed with a long life. However, the use of the term *banyak* is different from *sumorop* and *torop*. There is an emphasis on the expectation that children will become high achievers and thus valued and respected.

- b. The healthy child
 - *Dangka ni hariana Tanggo pinangait- aithon* - The tough fig branch is flexed
 - *Simbur mangodang ma ibana Tongka panahit-nahiton* - Hurry up, the big son doesn't get sick

The *umpasa* above presents the hope of all parents wishing for healthy and disease-free children.

- c. The children who are proud, blessed, and long-lived
 - *Dangka ni bulu godang parasaran ni pidong na dua* - Bamboo twig where a lot of birds nest
 - *sai simbur ma ibana magodang songon ullusan purapura* - May he grow like a gust of wind
 - *anak sipajoloan ma ibana huhut siboan tua* - The child who is an object of pride and brings blessings
 - *sai saur lelung mangolu sahat tu saurmatua* - May live long having children and grandchildren

The *umpasa* proclaims that proud children are blessed children, living long and prospering. In the context of Christian Toba Batak people this blessing is conducted by being baptized and holding a traditional ceremony. Children become the pride of their parents if they live long and produce successful descendants. This is when parents achieve the title of *saurmatua* (when they die they are celebrated with a party).

d. The advanced children who will be appreciated and respected

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
| - | <i>Anak na olo tu jolo do sibulang-bulangan</i> | - | Children who want to come forward are the ones who are given hairdressing by <i>ulos</i> |
|---|---|---|--|

The prior *umpasa* is related to this *umpasa*. Children wish to progress and succeed, achieving more than their parents. Children who excel receive a reward in the form of *ulos* from their *opung* (grandparents) as a prayer and for self-protection.

e. There are a lot of sons and daughters in a row

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|--------------------|
| - | <i>Bintang na rumiris ombun na sumorop</i> | - | The sons lined up |
| - | <i>Anak per iris boru pe torop</i> | - | A lot of daughters |

The number of sons and daughters is expected to be the same. The words *berjejer* (lined-up) and *banyak* (a lot of), found in the Great Dictionary of the Indonesian Language of the Language Center, has a meaning that demonstrates the high levels of expectation. However, contextually, it is boys from whom more is expected.

The Hierarchical Difference between Sons and Daughters

Diction choices in the *umpasa* are crucial, such as when delineating parental expectations for sons: honor, rich, breadwinner, leader, activities outside the home. Meanwhile, the word choices associated with girls are luck, farming, submissive, and household. The *umpasa* f to l below supports this assessment:

f. The noble boy vs. the lucky girl

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
| - | <i>Tubu ma hariana Di ho lang-holang ni huta</i> | - | Growing fig tree growing among villages |
| - | <i>Tubu ma anak na marsanggap dohot boru na martua</i> | - | Born a noble boy with a lucky girl |

The passage above shows that sons are decision-makers while daughters adopt a supportive role.

g. The rich sons vs. diligent farming daughters

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
| - | <i>Tubu ma simarhora-hora di topi ni tapian</i> | - | Born <i>simarhora-hora</i> on the edge of the bath |
| - | <i>Tubu ma di hamuna anak na mora dohot boru par balian</i> | - | Born to you a rich son and a diligent-farming daughter |

This passage is related to property ownership. The men are wealthy while the women work hard in the fields.

h. Daughters for domestic work and sons for public activities

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| - | <i>andor halumpang ma togu togu ni lombu</i> | - | grow, move to strengthen the bonds of cows |
| - | <i>boru hundul i talaga, anak hundul i halang ulu</i> | - | the daughters sit in the kitchen the sons sit in the front room |

Here we see how Toba Batak culture emphasizes a daughter's position as remaining within the domestic sphere while sons may enter the public sphere. This is confirmed by the *umpasa* i below.

- i. The sons are bricklayers and the daughters are at home
 - *Habang sirubaruba tu sosor* - The sparrows fly to a new village
naimbaru
 - *sidoli pande ruma, siboru* - The son is a bricklayer, the
modom di jabu daughter is sleeping at home
- j. Sons are good at making a living and daughters are obedient
 - *marasar ulok dari di toru duhut* - nesting magical snakes, under the betel
sirumata grass
 - *sai tubu ma di hamu angka anak* - May be born to you sons who are good
na malo mansari dohot angka boru at making a living and daughters who are
sioloi hata obedient

The interpretation of the *umpasa* j, especially *boru sioloi hata*, highlights that daughters are only considered as supporters and are not involved in decision-making.

- k. Daughters make good fortunes if they are good at planting the screw pine
 - *martumbur ma salaon, marbatu* - The seed indigo plants sprout
antong singkoru plentifully
 - *sorang boru sibuan tua, boru* - Born a daughter, a good-fortune
sipandurung jala sisuan pandan maker, a netter, and also a screw pine
 planter
- l. Sons become leaders over women, owning gold and rice
 - *tangki ma jala ualang, galinggang* - Clothes made from the bark of
jala garege medicinal plants growing in fertile soil
 - *sai tubu ma di hamu angka anak,* - Hopefully, born to you, sons having
partahi jala ulubalang dohot angka boru strong intentions and being fighters/leaders
parmas jala pareme. owning gold and owning rice with supportive
 daughters

The *umpasa* l also emphasizes the daughter's role of following and obeying their leader/man/husband.

Parents' Expectations for Sons and Daughters

The *umpasa* places daughters as being obedient to their families and their husband's families. However, parents expect their daughters to prosper and live well enough to be a bedrock of support. Daughters are taught to be obedient, submissive, and keepers of their husband's wealth. There are 3 *umpasa* representing the great hopes of parents for daughters who are married and living prosperously. Daughters may then be relied upon.

- m. Smart sons and daughters for depending on
 - *Eme piniarpiar, na jinomur ni* - Winnowing rice, drying on mats
pardegean

- *sai tubu ma di hamu angka* - May born to you be smart sons and
anak na pistar, dohot angka boru na daughters for leaning on
boi pangunsandean

n. Daughters are primarily for support

- *Suhak sagopuk suhat ni* - If daughters were rich they may be
panggabean (s) depended upon

- *Molo mamora boru andong ma* - It has been the norm
paulaen (i)

o. Sons of death, daughters of life

- *Andung ni anak sabulan di dalam* - a son wails during a month on the road

andung ni boru sataon di dalam a daughter wails during a year on the road

- *Anak do hamatean, boru do* - Son of death, daughter of life
hangoluan

The *umpasa* o clarifies the parental expectation that while parents live, their daughters will be cared for and protected. After death their sons will take care of the funeral.

p. Daughter as peacemaker for her father

Another parental expectation is for daughters to provide succor and entertainment when their fathers experience conflict or problems.

- *Sinabi laitu, binahen Tu harang ni* - The grass is mowed, put in the horse
hoda basket

- *Molo gulut boruna Amana do* - If daughters fight, their father is a
martola peacemaker.

- *Molo gulut amana Boruna do* - If the father fights, his daughter is a
martola peacemaker

q. Daughters should marry as soon as they are of age

The responsibility of the parents to their daughters is to find them a husband before they are too old: *Andorang la sari pinajomurhon* (when the day is still hot, dry it in the sun).

r. The beauty of daughters is not only physical but also personal

The cultural assessment of the daughter's beauty is not only from the physical perspective but also from their attitude to family and life. Their beauty conveys the good name of their father and brother, *Ndang dapot tubis sian bonana* (Can't be gored, choose to be ear-tweaked). This *umpasa* shows that the differences in views towards sons and daughters continues into adulthood. For example, the following social restrictions are placed on daughters.

s. A daughter who leaves her husband must return two times *sinamot*

Siganda siganda tu dangka ni singgolom One becomes two, three becomes six,
Na sada gabe dua, na tolu gabe onom, utang sipahilolong (daughter who leaves
utang ni sipahilolong her husband)

Family is the social unit consisting of father, mother, and children. The family is not only a focus for the relationships between a husband, wife, children, and parents but also a part of the social network of society (Goode, 1993, pp. 3-11). Among the Toba Batak there are differences in parenting patterns for sons as opposed to daughters. Mothers take the primary

role in parenting while the father is only involved in the son's activities outside the home. Sons must be smart, strong, leaders, self-sufficient, and successors of the clan. Shiva & Mies (1993, pp. 221-222) criticize the patriarchal culture which considers the birth of a son to be a business venture.

Daughters are positioned within the domestic sphere of the household, obediently maintaining the husband's well-being and administering to his wishes as well as occupying a supporting role for the parents of each spouse. After marriage, the wife's parents become part of the husband's family and must be obedient to their in-laws. If a daughter is prosperous and married to a rich man, she is the pride of her parents. De Beauvoir explains "Biologically, the truth of men and women are never victims of each other, but are victims of the species, so men and women collectively experience pressure from institutions they did not create" (1989, p. 299).

The Batak mother does not have full authority with regards to parenting because the *opung* (grandparents) also supervise the upbringing of children, especially in carrying out and maintaining family or clan traditions. This is ostensibly aimed at benefiting the grandson to ensure continuation of the family line.

Parenting Patterns and Practices for Sons and Daughters in Medan City

In comparing the collected data with the traditional ideals of the *umpasa*, it can be seen that there is a shift in parenting practices in Medan City. The pattern in the *umpasa* as a representation of Batak parenting has changed with regards to the ages of husbands and wives when the research was initially conducted. The authors also found that there is a difference in patterns of parenting: in Medan City parents expect all of their children to be responsible and educated, and for daughters to have their own income. Meanwhile, sons are still required to be leaders, breadwinners, and successors of the clan. The role of parenting is carried out by both mothers and fathers, although mothers still have the prime responsibility.

From the feminist perspective, educated Batak daughters now have the opportunity to resist traditional practices of property ownership. They are now more respected if they have an education and an independent income. Dlamini (2001, pp. 78-93) points out how educated mothers demonstrate different parenting techniques than uneducated mothers. Our study supports Dlamini's findings, especially with regards to daughters who are independent and the pride of their parents.

Based on the collated field data the authors of the present study found that daughters are considered subordinate to sons, yet their existence is vital in Batak society. After marriage, the daughters will become *hula-hula* which must be respected by their husband's family. Women or mothers are *hula-hula* or *boru* (Simanjuntak & Saur, 2004, pp. 40-42). Their family then becomes the most respected party in any traditional ceremony. They are likened to the "rising sun" (Simanjuntak & Saur, 2004, p. 41). Therefore, based on the traditional culture, a family without a daughter can never be held in high regard. In Medan City sons and daughters are considered equal in terms of independence and education, though the sons remain the successors of each clan.

Toba Batak Women's Resistance

Based on the information contained within the *umpasa*, sons and daughters occupy very different positions in the cultural construction of gender. However, resistance by daughters is also found in the *umpasa*. The data received from informants points to there being no fundamental difference between sons and daughters. The term *anak* denotes sons whereas *boru*

is applied to daughters. However, as society progresses *anak* is also being applied to daughters. This is demonstrated in Baiduri's study (2015) which states that although the proverb “*anakkokhin di ahu*” does not change to “*borukokin*,” the term *anak* may still refer to daughters. As for the issue of inheritance within the Batak tradition, daughters are not permitted to inherit anything. Based on the data provided on wills, inheritance was only distributed amongst sons as per local custom. However, in order to counterbalance this issue daughters are now provided with a good education. Thus the motto: “the only way to progress in life is through children’s education.”

The various studies show the resistance of Batak women to the societal customs which marginalize them. The study of Baiduri, Syahputra, and Damanik (2017) demonstrates that although these women live in poverty, they still fight by creating economic associations with fellow women in order to support their household. The same thing happens in the families of small vegetable farmers known as *inang-inang* in Medan. They work not only to support their household economically but also to gain an identity and dignity in Batak society (Baiduri, 2014).

Irianto (2000) highlights the strategies utilized by Toba women in securing their inheritance rights. This includes taking cases to court in order to claim what is rightfully theirs. Such acts of resistance are necessary due to the liminal position women occupy in this society: “not here and not there, not in the father's clan and not in the husband's clan.” Toba women work hard to fight against the oppression of a patriarchal culture. Through such resistance women are able to attain their rightful place in society and dignity within their family and household structures.

Although Batak culture is structured as if it is impervious to change, Baiduri's study (2015) found the existence of feminist men in certain families and *inang-inang* households. These are sons and husbands who are willing to share domestic duties in order to help the mother (*inang*) in both the home and the market. A study by Wuriyani (2019) delineates the resistance of women to environmental damage. Various studies show that women resist local custom to achieve their life goals: *hagabeon*, *hamoraon*, and *hasangapon*.

According to Simanjuntak (2019), Batak culture and language are increasingly being neglected by most Toba Batak people. More adults are unable to speak the Batak language well, and the younger generations no longer understand their local language. As time goes on references to the Batak *umpasa* are lessening in Batak society. This is because the *umpasa* is not used in everyday language, only in traditional ritual ceremonies.

Research by Napitupulu (2007), Baiduri (2014), and Irmawati (2007) found that Batak culture places the highest value on education. According to Batak philosophy the way to achieve wealth (*hamoraon*) and honor (*hasangapon*) is through education. In other words, true achievement may only be obtained by educating both daughters and sons.

Women work hard in order for their children to succeed in their education. Irmawati's study (2007) confirms that Batak children are highly motivated towards education compared with other ethnicities in Medan. Baiduri's study (2015) also shows that the education of children today no longer distinguishes between sons and daughters. Even the Batak people of a lower socioeconomic status still strive for a good education for their children. *Anak* has become associated with both sons and daughters.

Conclusion

The *umpasa* contains important philosophical life values for the Toba Batak people. However, its application has changed over time. In the *umpasa* the differences between sons

and daughters far outweigh the similarities. However a change in the meaning of *anak* in the *umpasa*, where it primarily signifies sons, to its newer gender-neutral meaning is a significant shift.

In the *umpasa* the pivotal role of sons is clearly stated. They are the successors of the clan. The patrilineal system is what we consider difficult to change in the Batak culture. This study finds that there is a form of power available to daughters that has not previously been recognized in Toba cultural studies. Daughters have a vital role as they allow the Batak family to achieve the status of *hula-hula* party. A *hula-hula* party is one of the most important life goals for the Batak people because it confers respect in every traditional ritual.

Women utilize various strategies for survival in order to achieve the goals of *hagabeon*, *hamaraon*, and *hasangapon*. Their hard work in the economic field shows their resistance to local customs which normally designate them as the marginal party, as outlined in the *umpasa*. Women's resistance to the *umpasa* demonstrates the progress of women in this culture in achieving the utmost for every person in Batak society.

Acknowledgment

Thank you to Research Institutions (LPPM) Universitas Negeri Medan which funded our research in 2021 entitled "Module Development of Parenting Patterns for Toba Batak Ethnic Sons and Daughters in Learning Oral Traditions and Education Anthropology."

References

- Ataca, B., Kagitcibasi, C., & Diri, A. (2005). The Turkish Family and the Value of Children: Trends over Time. In *The Value of Children in Cross-cultural Perspective Case Studies in Eight Societies*.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/260369214_The_value_of_children_in_cross_cultural_perspective_Case_studies_in_eight_societies
- Baiduri, R. (2014). The Meaning and Dimensions of Work: Women Traders Toba-Batak (*inang-inang*) in Medan, North Sumatera, Indonesia, *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 4(1), 66-74.
- _____. (2015). Paradoks Perempuan Batak Toba: Suatu Penafsiran Hermeneutik terhadap Karya Sastra *Ende Siboru Tombaga (EST)*, *Jurnal Mimbar (Sosial dan Pembangunan)*, Terakreditasi Dikti, 31 (1), 51-60.
- Baiduri, R., Syahputra, W. A., & Damanik, I. H. (2017). Woman Resistance against Poverty: Case of Women's Lubuk Raya Group Tebing Tinggi, *Proceeding of International Conference on Psychology And Multiculturalism Urban Living & Multicultural Cities in Asia: From Colonial Past To Global Future*. Jakarta: Atmajaya Press.
- Budianta, M. (2004). Pendekatan Feminisme Terhadap Wacana, dalam *Analisis Wacana: dari Linguistik Sampai Dekonstruksi*. Budiman (ed.). Yogyakarta: Kanak.
- De Beauvoir, S. (1989). *The Second Sex, Book Two: Women's Life Today*. New York: Vintage.
- Dedeoglu, A. Ö. (2010). Discourses of Motherhood and Consumption Practices of Turkish Mothers. *International Journal of Economics and Business Research*, 36(4), 403-422. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022022105275959>
- Deutsch, F. M. (2006). Filial Piety, Patrilineality, and China's One-Child Policy. *Journal of Family*, 27(3), 366-389. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X05283097>
- Dlamini, N. (2001). Literacy, Womanish and Struggle: Reflections on the Practices of an African Woman. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 2(3), 78-93.
<http://vc.bridgew.edu/jiws/vol2/iss3/5>
- Fong, V. L. (2002). China's One-Child Policy and the Empowerment of Urban Daughters.

- American Anthropologist Association*, 104(4), 1098-1109.
<https://doi.org/10.1525/aa.2002.104.4.1098>
- Fournier, P., McDougall, P., & Dekker, A. (2012) Dishonour, Provocation and Culture: Through the Beholder's Eye?, *ProQuest Canadian Criminal Law Review*, 16(2), 161-193.
<https://www.proquest.com/openview/5baaf114395db1aed421eb4e786d4423/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=28146>
- Gianesini, G. (2011). Negotiating Family Challenges by Transforming Traditional Gender Roles in New Identities: Patterns of Resilience and Parenthood in a Sample of Italian Couples. 20 Aug 2014; 277-316.
[http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/S1530-3535\(2013\)0000007013](http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/S1530-3535(2013)0000007013)
- Gill, A. K., & Brah, A. (2014). Interrogation Cultural Narratives About 'Honour'-based Violence. *European Journal of Women's Studies*, (21), 72-86.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1350506813510424>
- Goode, W. J. (1993). *The Family (Sosiologi Keluarga)*. S. Simamora (terj.). Jakarta: Bina Aksara.
- Göransson, K. (2009). The Binding Tie Chinese Intergenerational Relations in Modern Singapore. *Southeast Asia: Politics, Meaning, and Memory*. University of Hawaii Press. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9780824864620>
- Goyette, K. & Xie, Y. (1999). The Intersection of Immigration and Gender: Labor Force Outcomes of Immigrant Women Scientists. *Social Science Quarterly*, 80(2), 396-408. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/42863908>
- Harahap, B. H., & Siahaan, H.M. (1987). *Orientasi Nilai-nilai Budaya Batak Suatu Pendekatan Terhadap Prilaku Batak Toba Angkola-Mandailing*. Jakarta: Sanggar Willem Iskandar.
- Irianto, S. (2000). Reproduksi dan Resistensi terhadap Patriarki: Pewarisan Perempuan dalam Kebudayaan Batak Toba yang Tengah Berubah, dalam *Perempuan Indonesia dalam Masyarakat yang Tengah Berubah*. E. Kristi Poerwandari dan Rahayu Surtiati Hidayat (ed.). Jakarta: Program Studi Kajian Wanita Program Pascasarjana Universitas Indonesia.
- Irmawati. (2007). *Nilai-nilai yang Mendasari Motif-motif Penentu Keberhasilan Suku Batak Toba*. Disertasi. Depok: Fakultas Psikologi Universitas Indonesia.
- Jenkins, J. M., Cheung, C., Frampton, K., Rasbash, J., Boyle, M. H., & Georgiades, K. (2009). The Use of Multilevel Modeling for The Investigation of Family Process. *European Journal of Developmental Science*, 3(2), 131-149.
<https://doi.org/10.3233/DEV-2009-3204>
- Kagiticbasi, C. (2005). Autonomy and Relatedness in Cultural Context: Implications for Self and Family. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 36(4), 403-422.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0022022105275959>
- Kasim, R. & Pardosi, J. (2000). *Struktur Sastra Lisan Batak Toba*. Jakarta: Departemen Pendidikan Nasional.
- Malau, G. (1994). *Dolok Pusuk Buhit (Pelajaran Menulsi Aksara Batak)*. Jakarta: Balai Pustaka.
- Napitupulu, V. M. (2011). Pendidikan sebagai Faktor Dinamisasi dan Integrasi Sosial dalam Masyarakat Tapanuli Utara, *Pemikiran tentang Batak Setelah 150 Tahun Agama Kristen di Sumatera Utara*. Bungaran Antonius Simanjuntak (ed.). Jakarta: Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia.
- Pettit, B., & Hook, J. L. (2009). *Institutionalizing inequality: Gender, family, and economic inequality in comparative perspective*. New York: Russell Sage.

- Rajamarpondang, D. G. (1992). *Dalihan na Tolu Nilai Budaya Suku Batak*. Medan: Armanda.
- Shiva, V. & Mies, M. (1993). *Ecofeminism*. New Delhi: Kali for Women.
- Simanjuntak, B. A. & Saur, T. S. (2004). *Arti Tanah dan Fungsi Tanah bagi Masyarakat Batak*. Perapat: KSPM.
- Simanjuntak, D. S. R. (2019). Decadence Description of the Lexicon Understanding in the Part of the Batak Toba's Body Language by Teenagers in Batam City. *Journal Basis UPB*. (6)2. <http://ejournal.upbatam.ac.id/index.php/basis>
- Simbolon, A. (1986). *Peranan Umpasa Dalam Masyarakat Batak Toba*. Jakarta: Pusat Pembinaan dan Pengembangan Bahasa.
- Sinaga, R. (2013). *Umpasa, Umpama, dan Ungkapan dalam Bahasa Batak Toba*. Jakarta: Dian Utama.
- Situmorang, S. (2004). *Toba Na Sae*. Jakarta: Komunitas Bambu.
- Tambunan, E. (1982). *Sekelumit Mengenai Masyarakat Batak Toba dan Kebudayaannya: Sebagai Sarana Pembangunan*. Bandung: Tarsito.
- Tas-Cifci, F. (2019). Conceptualisation of Honour Codes Amongst Turkish-Kurdish Mothers and Daughters Living in London. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 20(7), 219-236. Available at: <https://vc.bridgew.edu/jiws/vol20/iss7/14>
- Tong, R. P. (1998). *Feminist Thought: Pengantar Paling Komprehensif kepada Aliran Utama Pemikiran Feminis*. Aquarini P. Prabasmoro (terj.). Yogyakarta: Jalasutra.
- van Eck, C. (2003). *Purified By Blood: Honour Killings Among Turks in the Netherlands*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
- Vergouwen, J. (2004). *Masyarakat dan Hukum Adat Toba*. Yogyakarta: LkiS Pelangi Aksara.
- Wuriyani, E. P. (2016). The Root of Feminism in Lake Toba Oral Tradition: Family, Ecosystem And Ecofeminism. *Proceeding The 8th International Graduate students and Scholars Conference in Indonesia (IGSSCI)*. <http://igsci.pasca.ugm.ac.id/archive/v2.0/artikel-view.php?ida=352>.
- _____. (2017). Who is the Natural Woman?. *The 2nd International conference on Southeast Asia Studies (ICSEAS)*. Yogyakarta: Universitas Gadjah Mada.
- _____. (2019). Ecofeminism: Woman Subsistence in Opera Batak Perempuan di Pinggir Danau Text by Lena Simanjuntak. *Dissertation*. Yogyakarta: Faculty of Cultural Sciences Gadjah Mada University.