

## **Jambi Malay Community Religious Tolerance Pattern in Social Interaction Amid Religious Pluralism**

Abdul Halim<sup>1, a</sup>, Idrus Ruslan<sup>2</sup>, Pahrudin HM<sup>3</sup>, Edy Kusnadi<sup>4</sup>, Mohd. Kailani<sup>5</sup>,  
Zaki Mubarak<sup>6</sup>

<sup>12456</sup>Universitas Islam Negeri Sultan Thaha Saifuddin, Indonesia <sup>3</sup>Universitas  
Nurdin Hamzah, Indonesia

<sup>a</sup>abdulhalim@uinjambi.ac.id

### **Abstract**

This study is intended to analyze the patterns of social interaction and tolerance of various Malay communities in relation to the Batak tribe in Bagan Pete, Jambi City. As it is known that Jambi City is a plural area because of its open characteristics, even long before Indonesia's independence. Theoretically, a plural area has the potential to cause conflict, while on the other hand, as social beings, humans always interact with other humans. Bagan Pete is the most pluralistic area in Jambi City, especially with the presence of Jalan Lintas Timur and Terminal Alam Barajo which makes many migrants live in this area, especially Batak people who are generally Christians. This research was conducted qualitatively, primary data collection was conducted through interviews with ten respondents and data analysis was carried out through data reduction, data presentation and conclusions. The results showed that the social interaction of the Malay community with the Batak people was carried out through cooperation, opposition, competition, and accommodation. As for tolerance, it is carried out through respect for the Malays towards the religious differences of the Batak people, although there is still controversy, it is carried out through positive practices in the form of increasing understanding of family religion through recitation, Islamic schools and reciting the Islamic tutor.

**Keywords:** pluralistic area; social interaction; religious tolerance; controversies

### **A. Background**

Jambi City is a plural area in light of the fact that the composition of the population consists of various religions and ethnicities (HM & Darminto, 2021). Religiously, the residents of Jambi City are people who embrace various religions, namely Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism with Islam as the majority religion. In terms of ethnicity, the population of Jambi City consists of diverse ethnic groups such as Malay, Chinese, Indian, Batak, Bugis, Arab, Sundanese and Javanese, of which the majority are Malays. This religious and

ethnic plurality in Jambi City is not something new, but it has been going on long before Indonesia's independence, precisely during the Malay Kingdom and Jambi Sultanate (Halim & HM, 2020).

Conceptually, the existence of a plural city of Jambi is reminiscent of its impact on people's lives. According to Novri Susan (2019), the plurality of a region has the potential to cause divisions or conflicts among the people in it. Countries along the lines of England, for example, have a long history of conflict with Scots and Welsh tribes, as well as France, which continues to have a dispute with the Bretons. Heterogeneous regions in Indonesia encounter the 'effect' of the plural predicate as well, as happened in Ambon, Palu, Poso, Sampit, Banyuwangi and so on. In short, the conflict has become something that is unavoidable in a society that is in a socially heterogeneous category.

Among the many sources of conflict (ethnic, economic, and political), religion is believed to be the cause of the most paradoxical social conflict. As a source of conflict, conflicts over the establishment of places of worship are the main cause of social disputes in the religious realm which often lead to destruction and arson in Indonesia (Crouch, 2013; Suaedy, 2007, p. 247; Yunus, 2014). This comes to the fore due to the fact that the existence of religion in society is represented through multiple faces (Kimball, 2008). On the one hand, religion appears with a positive grimace through a set of morals and values that are good for its adherents, but on the other hand, religion appears with a negative grimace due to the reason it is the source of a series of conflicts that occur in light of the fact of the misunderstanding of its adherents in understanding it and their exclusive attitude. The existence of this dual-faced religion raises a lot of debate among experts and scholars. Religion has been acknowledged as a basic need for humans due to the reason that in history there has never been a society without religion (Agus, 2006, p.33; Haji Naaseri and Bogheyri, 2019). As in religion which has an important role in human life. For example, religious beliefs and values can motivate people to take certain actions, despite in the event that those actions are the most extreme (Halim & HM, 2020). Religion has the ability to make positive and negative contributions to society (Rumagit, 2013, p.59). The positive contribution of religion has the ability to foster a sense of brotherhood and cooperation between communities. Nevertheless, religion has the ability to make a negative contribution as well in the manner of triggering conflicts between religious communities. In the same context, religion can at one time galvanize peace, the way of salvation, unity and companionship, but on the other hand, it is something as well that is considered relentless, propagate conflict, and not infrequently has become a source of problems (Takdir, 2017).

As part of social beings, the residents of Jambi City certainly cannot be separated from their interactions with each other, including the Malay community with other ethnicities, such as Javanese, Batak, Chinese and Bugis. This is in line with the social portrait summarized by Aristotle (384-322 BC) through his concept of *zoon politicon* which means that humans as creatures basically always want to get along in society (Gintis, Schaik & Boehm, 2015). Humans cannot realize their potential only by themselves; therefore, they need other people for this, including

in fulfilling their needs. This reassures a process of social interaction, which humans cannot do alone hence they need other people to meet their needs.

As social beings, the plural society of Jambi City is never separated from social interaction and will never be able to live without the role of other individuals. Social interaction is the key to all social life in light of the fact that without social interaction, there will be no life unitedly (Halim & HM, 2020). The mere physical encounter of individuals will not result in the companionship of living in a social group. Such life companions will only occur if individuals or groups of people work together, talk to each other, and to achieve a common goal, conduct competition, dispute and so on. Thus, it can be said that social interaction is the basis of social processes, which refers to dynamic social relationships (Halim & HM, 2020). Interaction can generally be achieved smoothly when there are similarities in language, culture, including religion. Religion is not only seen as a way of worshipping God and all the rules and teachings contained in the scriptures. Nonetheless, differences in beliefs and symbols possessed by adherents of these religions have the ability to be a separator between social groups. Therefore, apart from being used as a unifying means for religion, it can as well be a trigger for conflict.

Conceptually, humans do have an instinct to relate to other humans. As mentioned by Abraham H. Maslow (1984) as well as Bell and Pei (2020) in the concept of hierarchy, humans need self-respect, that is, they are valued as human beings and as citizens. Thus, humans need to fulfil needs such as being accepted by others and becoming members of other groups. This condition requires what is known as tolerance which is still a complex problem in the life of a plural society, as well as the most important part to avoid social conflict (Akhmedov & Azizova, 2020). Actions related to intolerance are still common and show that people often cannot accept the presence of other groups in their area.

In the context of a society that has plurality in all aspects (religion, race and class), harmony which is the result of tolerance becomes something to be expected (Bakrac, 2015). The harmony of religious life is defined as a condition in which all religious groups have the ability to live together without diminishing their basic rights as human beings in achieved their religious responsibilities. Therefore, each plural region has a mechanism or method that they practice socially to avoid dispute or conflict. Related to the above, it is interesting and important to see how the pattern of religious tolerance is accomplished by the Jambi City Malay community in their social interactions.

## **B. Literature Review**

### ***Social Interaction Concept***

Social interaction is a dynamic social relationship, involving the relationship between individuals, between groups and between individuals and groups (Halim & HM, 2020). Social interaction is the key to all social life due to the reason without social interaction, life collectively will not work (Hartanto & Hidayat, 2019). In living their lives, individuals do not only meet physically, but also have to experience things such as working together, talking to each other, fighting, and so on to determine common goals. Social interaction between

individuals in groups occurs in society as well where the interaction is conspicuous when there is a clash between individual and group interests, for example in deciding a conflict between people with different beliefs. On the occasion of the social process takes place, the basis is social interaction. The ongoing process of interaction is based on numerous factors, among others, factors of imitation, suggestion, identification, and sympathy (Fuad, Indriyany & Mahpudin, 2022). These factors can move independently or in a collective circumstance. Despite the fact that there are main factors in the interaction process, it cannot be denied that in reality these factors are enigmatic to distinguish. Social interaction that is social is not personal due to the reason from a social interaction it takes two or more individuals thus in social interaction there is a process of mutual adjustment.

There are certain conditions for interaction to occur. Social interaction will not be possible if it does not meet two conditions, they are the abide of social contact and the abide of communication (Hartanto & Hidayat, 2019).

Social contact comes from the Latin word "con" or "cum" which means together and "tangan" means to touch, thus, precisely touching together, both physically, contact will occur in the form of touching limbs. Communication is the basis or the second condition for the occurrence of social interaction due to the fact that without communication humans will not be able to react to each other. Communication is formulated as a means of storing messages or meanings. This communication can be oral or written and can use symbols in language as well, clothing, banners, and other forms.

Social interaction is a process in which people communicate to influence each other in thoughts and actions. Social interaction occurs in society and has a variety of associative or dissociative forms (Fuad, Indriyany & Mahpudin, 2022). The associative social processes are divided into three forms, such as cooperation, accommodation, and assimilation, whilst dissociative social processes are divided as well into three forms, they are: Competition, Contraction, and Conflict.

Associative social processes are social processes that are in the social reality of their members in a circumstance of harmony that leads to patterns of cooperation. In social reality, there are regulations controlling the behaviour of its members. If members adhere to the rules, the pattern of social harmony leads to cooperation between members that will be conceived. Associative processes are divided into three (Fuad, Indriyany & Mahpudin, 2022), such as:

- a) Cooperation is a collective endeavour between individuals or groups of people to achieve something or several common goals. This form of cooperation develops when people have the ability to move to achieve a common goal and there must be an awareness that this goal in the future has benefits for all. There must be something pleasant as well in the division of labour and the remuneration to be received. Cooperation functions on the occasion of people realising that they have common interests and at the same time have enough knowledge of themselves to fulfil in useful cooperation.
- b) Accommodation. Accommodation can be used in two understandings, such as to point out a situation and to point out a process. The accommodation that shows in one situation, means the fact that there is a balance in the

interaction between individuals and human groups related to social norms and social values that apply in society. Concurrently, accommodation is seen as a process if it shows human endeavours to diminish a conflict to achieve a balance.

- c) Assimilation. Assimilation is a social process represented by endeavours to diminish the differences that exist between individuals or human groups and comprises endeavours as well to enhance the unity of actions, notions, and mental processes by taking into account interests and towards a common goal. This means that assimilation is the process of adjusting the properties retained by the surrounding environment and making a difference that exists as a unified society. Assimilation will arise when groups of people with different religions interact directly with each other for a long time hence the religions of each group change and adapt to each other with the environment without having to change religions.

Dissociative Social Process is a circumstance of social reality in a state of disharmony as a result of a conflict between members of the community triggered by a social disorder. This situation bestows increment to social disintegration as a result of conflicts between members of the community. Dissociative social processes include: (Fuad, Indriyany & Mahpudin, 2022):

- a) Competition. Competition can be interpreted as a social process, where individuals or groups of people compete for profit through the environments of life that at some time become the centre of public attention by attracting public attention or by sharpening existing prejudices without using violence. This competition itself produces several forms of competition, such as: Economic competition arises due to the fact of the limited inventory of producers when compared to the number of consumers, whilst many parties need it. In the world of trade, indeed, competition is focused on the struggle for the number of clients, in the world of production, competition is usually focused on efforts to fight for raw materials and marketing areas to control the competitive markets and trade land. 2) Cultural competition, this competition occurs when traders from outside accomplish buying and selling of numerous religions who at any time from the religion expand their religion. Competition in the sphere of culture can as well involve competition in the religious sphere and community institutions such as education. 3) Competition to achieve certain positions and roles in society. This competition often occurs in certain agencies, each party wants to seize the top position. 4) Racial or race competition. This competition is motivated by certain race attitudes to dominate certain areas.
- b) Controversy. controversy is a different social process between competition and opposition or conflict which is characterized by symptoms of uncertainty about one's self or plans and hidden loathes hatred or doubt about one's personality. In its pure form, controversies is a hidden mental attitude towards other people or towards the cultural elements of a particular group. This hidden attitude can turn into hatred, but not to the point of conflict.

- c) Dispute and Friction Conflict is a social process in which each interacting party tries to destroy, get rid of, and defeat each other, for numerous reasons such as hostility. The root of this problem, such as first, differences between individuals, and differences in notions and consciences will conceive clashes between individuals. Second, cultural differences, are personality differences between individuals depending on the cultural patterns that become the growth and progress of the individual. Third, differences in interests, this is between social individuals, happen quickly for a while and will change the values that exist in society, and this causes groups to have different views.

### ***Concept of Religious Tolerance***

Tolerance implies a willingness to accept the reality of different opinions about the truth that is held. It has the ability to respect other people's beliefs about the religion they embrace and give freedom to practice what they adhere to without syncretism and not on the principles of the religion they adhere to. Tolerance comes from the word tolerate which means to allow or be patient without protesting the behaviour of other people or groups, tolerance as well means respecting, protecting, and cooperating with others (Mansur, 2012: 1).

According to Jamaludin (2015, p.109-111), the principle of tolerance between religious communities is to achieve a peaceful state, such as first, freedom of religion. This freedom is the most important human right in life, particularly the freedom to choose one's belief/religion. Freedom in this case is not demanding but freeing to adhere to what is considered the most correct. Second, there is respect for the abide of other religions. A tolerant attitude in which it gives freedom and mutual respect to the differences in the teachings that are held. Third, agree in disagreement.

Tolerance in practice consists of two forms, such as religious and social (Tambunan, 2018). Religious tolerance is tolerance that is accomplished regarding beliefs related to religious teachings, particularly the emergence of notions to favour opportunities for people other than their religion to worship in accordance with their beliefs. Whilst social is tolerance related to society. This is important not only to maintain peace but at the limits determined by the teachings of each religion.

Tolerance between religious communities can be manifested in the following forms: a) Mutual respect; b) Giving freedom to adherents of other religions in carrying out worship according to their religion and beliefs; c) Help in social life (Akhmedov & Azizova, 2020).

Nevertheless, inter-religious communities can be realized as mentioned above, but that does not mean achieving this tolerance by intertwining social interests and beliefs. In achieving tolerance there are certain limitations.

Tolerance is a positive notion, particularly in Indonesia, a country based on Pancasila, which provides and guarantees freedom for its citizens to embrace a religion and belief they desire without any coercion. This has been stated in the

1945 Constitution article 29: 2, that: The state guarantees the independence of each resident to embrace their own religion and to worship according to their religion and belief (BP-7 Pusat, 1993: 7; Iskandar, 2016). The state does not only protect and gives freedom but also supports and provides assistance to religious people to advance their religious life without causing conflict and harm to people of other religions.

The abide of tolerance between religious communities is crucial, in light of the fact that the abide of tolerance can conceive harmony between religious communities. Tolerance is the beginning of harmony, without tolerance there cannot be mutual respect, love, and mutual cooperation between religious communities.

The principle of tolerance between religious communities to achieve a state of peace is first, freedom of religion. This freedom is the most important human right in life, such as the freedom to choose one's belief/religion. Freedom in this case is not demanding but freeing to adhere to what is considered the most correct. Second, there is respect for the abide of other religions. A tolerant notion gives freedom and mutual respect to the differences in the teachings that are held. Third, agree in disagreement or agree on differences (Jamaludin 2015:109-111). Tolerance has two forms, such as religious tolerance and social tolerance. Religious tolerance, specifically tolerance related to beliefs related to religious teachings, particularly the emergence of a notion to provide opportunities for people other than their religion to worship according to what they believe. Whilst social tolerance is related to society. This is important due to the fact that each teaching.

#### **Research Method.**

This research was conducted using a qualitative research approach, such as an approach that gives researchers the opportunity to be able to describe and interpret in detail in order to get a holistic understanding (Lichtman, 2013; Marvasti, 2004, p. 7). According to Yin (2004, pp.103-118), secondary data for qualitative research is collected through documents and archival transcripts and other physical types of equipment, whilst primary data is through interviews and direct observation. This research takes secondary data from media reports and releases from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), whilst secondary data is attained from direct observations and interviews with the research object. Interviews were conducted with ten informants who were directly involved with the object of research, they are community members living along Jalan Lintas Timur Bagan Pete, Alam Barajo District. Data analysis was accomplished qualitatively, such as: reducing data by sorting secondary and primary information according to the research context, displaying data by displaying data attained from informants and explaining it, and drawing conclusions by abbreviating the results of the analysis accomplished according to the research problem (Miles and Huberman, 1992, pp.88-90, Rithcie et. al., 2013).

#### **Discussion**

##### ***A. Malays Social Interaction Pattern in Jambi City***

As mentioned before that interaction is a characteristic of humans who are mentioned as social beings (zoon politicon). Conceptually, the forms of social interaction can be in the form of cooperation, competition, dispute (conflict) and accommodation. The four main forms of social interaction do not need to be a continuity, such as the interaction that begins with cooperation, then competition and culminates into a dispute to finally arrive at an accommodation. Nevertheless, it is good to examine the process of this interaction in its continuity.

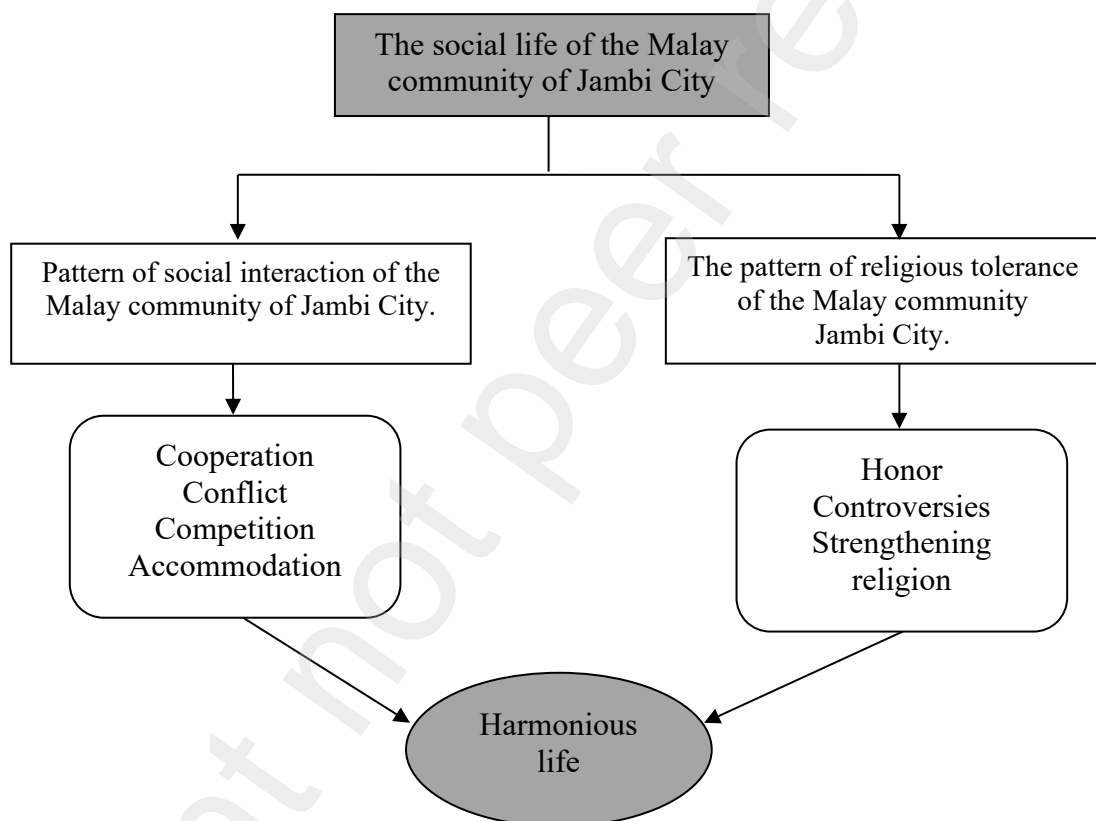


Figure 1. Harmonious Life in Malay Jambi Community

The interaction that exists between the Malays and the Batak people in Bagan Pete can be categorized as social tolerance. According to Hayat (2012: 176) and Velthuis et. al (2021), social tolerance is tolerance related to social activities or relationships with fellow human beings. Social tolerance occurs unconsciously in daily activities such as trading (in the market), working, and building public facilities together. It can be in matters of technology as well, *siskamling* together, social gathering, and many more. The social aspect in question is the abiding of



togetherness which is part of the characteristics of humans as social beings. In certain situations, or conditions, they do something together, they cooperate with other humans in an endeavour to realize the role of humans as social beings. As social beings, humans have the nature of cooperating and competing at the same time. In the event that humans work together and compete openly, then social harmony will be created. Tolerance in numerous aspects of life that exists in the community is expected to create a harmonious, amicable and balanced life among community members. In the event that tolerance in society is not well established, there will be consequences such as brawls between students in big cities, brawls between citizens, diminishes or conflicts between religions and between ethnicities and so on. Moreover, it is cited that tolerance in life in society, among others, is in the form of mutual respect and appreciation between community members which is shown by cooperation and willingness to help others without discriminating against ethnicity, race or class.

Based on research conducted by researchers, social interactions that occur in the Bagan Pete Malay community of Jambi City have good cooperation with the Batak tribe, mutual respect for one another, a high spirit of mutual cooperation and seeing each other. The cooperation in the end tends to become a conflict. This conflict arose after the Batak tribe increasingly settled in Bagan Pete and formed their tribal groups, causing interactions to begin to drift apart with the Malay community. Disputes began to occur such as the problem of values and norms adopted by the two tribes, as well as the problem of teenagers. Nonetheless, moreover to conflict and cooperation, competition or striving can be seen in education as well, economy, culture, as well as in position and role. The three forms of social interaction that occurred in Bagan Pete above, it can as well lead to an accommodation process, with understanding and tolerance from both parties between the Malay community and the Batak tribe.

#### 1. Social Interaction in The Form of Cooperation.

Social interaction activities begin with the activities of two or more people involving the notions, values, and expectations of each (Soekanto, 2013). Moreover, related to social interaction as stated by Netelenbos (2020) forms of social interaction are social realities based on individual motivation and social actions, where the individuals involved give subjective meanings, and have goals or meanings.

In the context of social interaction, the Malays and Batak involved in the interaction are two different community groups. Groups and communities that have a history, structure and plans or goals to be achieved.

In the event traced back, the presence of the Batak tribe in Bagan Pete cannot be separated from the existence of the East Cross Road which is the Jambi City Outer Ring Road. The existence of this causeway is intended to connect Jambi City with South Sumatra and Riau by land, particularly for public transportation, without entering the city. Prior to the existence of this road, Jambi City's connection with the surrounding areas was traversed through the Paal 10 highway through the city. Most of the Batak tribes do work along Jalan Lintas Timur Bagan Pete, either as food vendors, vehicle repair shops, tire repairs, travel, and various other transportation businesses. At first the Batak tribe had a social need to join

themselves as a big Bagan Pete family. The Malays and the Batak live side by side, between them there are social ties through social institutions, such as the economy, youth organizations, youth, also government.

The participation of the Batak in numerous social activities with the Malays such as village meetings or social activities and visiting each other at that time were commonplace and went well. On national holidays, for example, the Batak and the Malays work together to commemorate or celebrate together, such as August 17 and New Year. Cooperation is seen between the Malays and the Batak in mutual cooperation activities as well to improve the village or RT, build social places and help each other when there are activities between the two tribes.

Based on the research conducted by the researchers, data were attained regarding the routine activities of all community members consisting of distinct ethnic groups in Bagan Pete unitedly building patrol posts and *RT* halls. Another activity is cleaning the environment of each *RT* together thus it is always clean from the community to avoid ailment.

The cooperation of the Bagan Pete community was seen as well when one of the residents of the Malay Tribe held a wedding ceremony for his son. Residents from other ethnic groups, such as the Batak and Javanese, participated to help make the event a success as well, and they indeed joined the committee, starting from preparing the reception to its implementation.

The close relationship between the two tribes can be seen as well from the willingness of the Malays to include the Batak in the management of the *RT* structure (Neighbourhood Associations), which is dominated by Malays. Social interaction as well takes place between the Malays and the Batak on the occasion of people getting sick or dying, where they visit each other.

Thus, it can be seen that the social interaction between the Malays and the Batak at first was quite familiar and included in an atmosphere of harmonious cooperation. Despite the fact that there is an unsafe atmosphere due to the frequent theft of Malay people's property, they realize that this is more about the actions of certain individuals, not due to the reason of their ethnic status.

## 2. Social interaction in the form of dispute (conflict).

Individuals and groups who are aware of differences such as in physical characteristics, emotions, cultural elements, behaviour patterns with other parties have the ability to strop differences and lead to conflict. Feelings play an important role in stropping these differences in such a way that each side tries to dismantle the other. Feelings usually take the form of anger or hatred that cause urges to hurt or attack the other party or to suppress and dismantle the opposing individual or group.

Encounter or conflict is a social process in which individuals or groups try to fulfil their goals by opposing the encounter party accompanied by threats and/or violence. The causes or source of the conflict include differences between individuals, cultural differences, differences in interests and social change.

The rapid development in Bagan Pete, particularly in the immigrant community, which is marked by the establishment of housing complexes, has led to the emergence of groups in society. The immigrant community (Batak Tribe)

brings new socio-cultural values to the midst of the village environment. The norms brought by the immigrant community in general and the Batak Tribe tend to be different from the norms found in the midst of the local (Malay) community. This condition, in turn, has the potential to create a feeling of unacceptability among the Malays.

The atmosphere of cooperation described earlier has changed slightly, particularly since the establishment of numerous shops and economic centres along the Bagan Pete East Cross Road, the relationship between the two tends to be increasingly strained. The Batak people are increasingly living in Bagan Pete and their lives are getting more settled, while on the other hand, the Malays are still not able to get out of the economic crisis that surrounds their lives.

The increasing number of residents who come from the Batak tribe in Bagan Pete, the stronger their sense of unity and oneness. This can be seen from the association of youth and Batak students, which numbered approximately 100 people. In sports activities that usually join the Malays and other ethnic groups, now the Batak tend to be with their fellow tribes.

### 3. Social Interaction in The Form of Competition

Warfare or competition as stated by Soekamto (2013) is a social process, in which individuals or groups of people compete for profit through areas of life that at a certain period become public attention, both individuals and groups of people by attracting public attention or by sharpening existing prejudices without using threats or violence.

The competition between the Malays and the Batak in Bagan Pete, based on research, is not notorious. This is due to the fact that the two tribes are different in terms of work, the Malays generally work as farmers and office workers, whilst the Batak work as entrepreneurs. Thus, they strive in their respective fields in fulfilling their lives.

Nevertheless, the nuances of competition still abide between these two tribes. In the economic field, the presence of Jalan Lintas Timur Jambi City provides an opportunity for Malays to establish places of business. Apart from being rented out, these places of business are as well used by the Malays themselves. In spite of the fact that before this highway was built, the Malays relied more on agriculture as a source of livelihood. Concurrently, there are some Batak people as well who set up a place of business in the location purchased from the Malays. Therefore, there is competition between them to get buyers or customers from the businesses they do.

### 4. Social interaction in the form of accommodation

Even though inequality and sometimes conflict mingles the social interactions that take place between the Malays and the Batak in Bagan Pete, these situations usually end in accommodation. The understanding of accommodation refers to a situation and refer to a process.

In the context of social interaction between the Malays and the Bataks in Bagan Pete, there are forms of accommodation as well. The presence of the Batak tribe provides benefits for the Malays in Bagan Pete, among others, in the form of

an increasingly diverse profession and community expertise related to motor vehicles. Before the arrival of the Batak tribe, many Malays were not familiar with, let alone mastered, the diversity of equipment and techniques for repairing motor vehicles. The arrival of the Batak tribe with numerous professions in the sector of vehicle repair opened the eyes of the Malay people to the abundance of equipment and expertise related to land transportation.

Another factor that helped form accommodation was the awareness of the Batak people living in Bagan Pete that they were newcomers to or living in the area. This awareness, in turn, manifests itself in a notion of relenting and restraint in matters that might cause conflict with the Malays. Moreover, the hospitality of the Batak people to the Malays and their tolerance were as well factors that led to the creation of accommodation in Bagan Pete.

### **B. Pattern of Religious Tolerance of the Jambi City Malay Society**

Humans cannot let go of their nature as social beings (zoon politicon) who certainly live in a heterogeneous society. The diversity of human life requires an attitude of being willing to accept and appreciate every difference that exists. Humans must be able to coexist peacefully and respect each other, appreciate each other, and accept each other amidst the diversity of cultures, ethnicities, religions, and freedom of expression thus tolerance is needed (Sari, 2018). Along with a notion of tolerance, residents of a community have the ability to live side by side in peace, harmony, and work together in overcoming numerous issues that occur in their environment. Tolerance is indeed based on an attitude of respect for human dignity, conscience and beliefs as well as the sincerity of others regardless of religion, ethnicity, class, ideology, or views.

As the majority group and the first inhabitants of the Bagan Pete area, the Malays realize that differences in society always abide, including in the context of religion. Moreover, it is related to the abiding of Jambi City which has long been known as an open and plural area. This means, in the Bagan Pete Malay community, there has been a deep understanding of social differences, including religion hence they have the ability to respect them for a long time. This is as stated in the following excerpts from interview with the following respondent (Zulfahri, teacher, 67 years old):

“I have been living here since 1987. I mean, I have been living here in Bagan Pete long before this Eastern Highway was built and growing rapidly as it is today. In order to this day, there has never been a problem with the relations between the Malays and the Batak people here. In spite of the fact that the Malays are predominantly Muslim, and the Batak people are mostly Christians, we still live in harmony side by side. We know that Jambi City has always had a variety of people. Hence, for us, it does not matter what religion, what ethnicity, as long as it does not interfere with the social life of the people here.” (Bagan Pete, August 42021).

Another respondent (Putri Wati, 60 years old) who has lived in Bagan Pete since 1995. Mrs Putri Wati who works as a trader said that the Bagan Pete people

live in a harmonious atmosphere in their social relations with other residents who are different. As a Malay citizen, Mrs Putri Wati stated that she never had an issue with the presence of Batak people who are mostly Christians living in Bagan Pete. Along with reference to her, the city of Jambi is open to anyone, indeed since ancient times, this city has been inhabited by numerous tribes and religions. In fact, some of their close neighbours are Batak and work in a vehicle repair shop in Lintas Timur, but thus far they have lived in harmony and peace.

The form of tolerance based on historical facts of the pluralistic Jambi City is getting stronger in the statements of other respondents (Siti, Housewife, 50 years old). Along with reference to the respondent who lives not far from Lintas Timur Bagan Pete, the social life of the people of this region is fine and remains harmonious. This respondent has lived in Bagan Pete since 1982 and has never found any disharmony in social relations between Malays and immigrants, particularly Batak people. All members of society have the ability to live side by side with one another, regardless of ethnicity and religion.

In general, the social life of the Bagan Pete community, particularly related to inter-religious tolerance is going well. The Malay community who make up the largest part of the population composition of Bagan Pete realizes that differences in ethnicity and religion are a necessity for Jambi City as an open sphere. This condition has existed long before Indonesia's independence as a consequence of the position of Jambi City which is in the heart of Sumatra Island and has direct access to the ocean. Therefore, the Bagan Pete Malay community inherited the values of social and religious tolerance from their predecessors in interacting with numerous religious and ethnic differences.

Generally, the Malay community in Bagan Pete has no issue with the abode of the Batak people, who are predominantly Christian, in light of the fact that they have inherited an attitude of tolerance from their ancestors. This is closely related to the abode of Jambi City, which has long been known as an open and plural sphere. Nonetheless, in the Bagan Pete Malay community, there is still a sense of worry about the abode of the Batak people, who are predominantly Christian in their area. This concern is related to religion, particularly for young people who are starting to interact thoroughly in numerous social activities. Socially, the Bagan Pete Malays do not really mind the Batak 'immigrants' in their environment. Nevertheless, religiously they remain vigilant about the possibility of disruption of the religion held by their young people. This is as stated in the following excerpts from interviews with respondents (Siti Aminah, 50 years old, trader).

“Socially, frankly, I have no problem with my neighbours who are Batak and have different religions from us. I can still hang out and greet each other's. In fact, socially we have the ability to trade with each other as well. But frankly, I am just worried about religion, particularly since I'm a mother who has several teenage children. Along the lines of the others, my children indeed hang out with their friends as well who are Batakese. Whether at school, during games or during play. I am just worried that my children will be influenced by the religious practices of their Batak friends. Particularly

now that there are many games and sports that involve children and teenagers, they can be intermingled.” (Bagan Pete, August 52021).

Another respondent (Asio, 56 years old) said the same thing. According to the father who works as a private employee, his concern for the religion of his children has likewise become a matter of his mind regarding his Batak neighbors. Indeed, it is not a concern that their children will have different beliefs from him, but a concern that their children will not understand Islam better. This is due to the reason that the children are quite intensive in socializing and interacting with their Batakese friends, either due to the fact that they are in the same school or playmates.

Conceptually, the phenomenon of concern in the Bagan Pete Malay community regarding the presence of Batak people in their environment can be categorized as a contradiction. Controversy is a social process that differs between competition and opposition or conflict which is characterized by symptoms of uncertainty about a person or plans and hidden dislikes, hatred or doubts about one's personality. In its pure form, controversy is a hidden mental attitude towards other people or towards the cultural elements of a particular group. This hidden attitude can turn into hatred, but not to the point of conflict.

Despite the fact that it can be categorized as a form of controversy, the Bagan Pete Malay community does not decipher it into hatred for their neighbouring Batak people. That is, the controversy is not manifested in offensive forms to outsiders. On the other hand, the Bagan Pete Malays indeed use this controversy phenomenon as a means of strengthening self-defense (defensiveness) through increasing understanding of Islam in the family and school environment.

As previously mentioned, in light of the fact that the Bagan Pete Malay community does not have a problem with the abode of Batak people in their environment, religiously there are still concerns. This controversial phenomenon is based on the concern of the Bagan Pete Malays about the religion their children adopt. Therefore, as a form of self-defense, they deepen their children's religious understanding through regular recitations, taking rigorous religious activities and sending their children to Islamic schools. This endeavour is conceived hence their children are not far from Islamic values, despite the fact that in their daily life they have the ability to get along with their friends who are Batak ethnic and Christian.

The form of controversy that is practiced positively by the Bagan Pete Malay community is as shown in the following excerpts from interviews with respondents (Maya Astria, 45 years old, farmer):

“As a Muslim, indeed, I am still worried about the religion of my children due to the reason that they hang out with their Batak friends. It is possible that my children will be far from the religion we follow. Thus, sometimes comes to mind for me and our family. But I certainly do not hate my Batak neighbour. Therefore, it is their right to live and work anywhere, including in this Pete Bagan. Hence my worries do not happen, I send my children to Islamic schools around here. Moreover, in the afternoon my children as well take part in the Quran at the religious teachers in this area. This is our way

for my children to stick with their religion and have a correct understanding of Islam.” (Bagan Pete, August 5, 2021).

The other respondents, Saipul, 42 years old, and Andika, 35 years old, said the same thing. Along with reference to these two fathers who work as motorcycle taxi drivers and construction workers, the Bagan Pete community is indeed diverse in religion and ethnicity. As a parent, he is worried as well that his children will be influenced by his friends' religion due to the reason that he hangs out with friends who are not of the same religion. In behalf of this, he and his family regularly attend recitations at the nearest mosque and prayer room and take part in religious activities held in their neighbourhood. This endeavour is expected to protect his family from the possibility of misinterpreting religion due to association with different societies.

Another respondent, Si'am (40 years old), who works as a repairman on the Bagan Pete East Cross Route, said the same thing as well. Along with reference to this father who has lived in Bagan Pete since 1998, he does not realize his concern for the religion of his children by hating his Batak neighbours. Along with reference to him, anyone has the right to live anywhere in the country, including in Bagan Pete. The important thing he does is how keep his children in the values of Islam, as the religion they have adhered to since their ancestors. Therefore, his children routinely every afternoon attend Quran activities at the nearest Ustaz's house, despite the fact that his children attend public schools. This is what he has the ability to do thus his children still know Islam well, despite they hang out with their Batak friends.

### **Conclusion.**

As a plural area, the social interactions that exist between the Malay community and the Batak people in Bagan Pete are achieved in the form of cooperation, dispute (conflict), competition, and in the form of accommodation. As a society that lives in a pluralistic area, the Malays of Jambi City have great respect for the Batak people, who generally have a different religion from theirs. Nevertheless, there is an aspect of controversy that persists regarding their children's religious concerns. Improving children's religious understanding through recitations, Islamic schools and religious events is a positive practice for the Malay community to deal with their contradictions.

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## **Jambi Malay Community Religious Tolerance Pattern in Social Interaction Amid Religious Pluralism**

Abdul Halim<sup>1, a</sup>, Idrus Ruslan<sup>2</sup>, Pahrudin HM<sup>3</sup>, Edy Kusnadi<sup>4</sup>, Mohd. Kailani<sup>5</sup>,  
Zaki Mubarak<sup>6</sup>

<sup>12456</sup>Universitas Islam Negeri Sultan Thaha Saifuddin, Indonesia <sup>3</sup>Universitas  
Nurdin Hamzah, Indonesia

<sup>a</sup>abdulhalim@uinjambi.ac.id

### **Abstract**

This study is intended to analyze the patterns of social interaction and tolerance of various Malay communities in relation to the Batak tribe in Bagan Pete, Jambi City. As it is known that Jambi City is a plural area because of its open characteristics, even long before Indonesia's independence. Theoretically, a plural area has the potential to cause conflict, while on the other hand, as social beings, humans always interact with other humans. Bagan Pete is the most pluralistic area in Jambi City, especially with the presence of Jalan Lintas Timur and Terminal Alam Barajo which makes many migrants live in this area, especially Batak people who are generally Christians. This research was conducted qualitatively, primary data collection was conducted through interviews with ten respondents and data analysis was carried out through data reduction, data presentation and conclusions. The results showed that the social interaction of the Malay community with the Batak people was carried out through cooperation, opposition, competition, and accommodation. As for tolerance, it is carried out through respect for the Malays towards the religious differences of the Batak people, although there is still controversy, it is carried out through positive practices in the form of increasing understanding of family religion through recitation, Islamic schools and reciting the Islamic tutor.

**Keywords:** pluralistic area; social interaction; religious tolerance; controversies

### **A. Background**

Jambi City is a plural area in light of the fact that the composition of the population consists of various religions and ethnicities (HM & Darminto, 2021). Religiously, the residents of Jambi City are people who embrace various religions, namely Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism with Islam as the majority religion. In terms of ethnicity, the population of Jambi City consists of diverse ethnic groups such as Malay, Chinese, Indian, Batak, Bugis, Arab, Sundanese and Javanese, of which the majority are Malays. This religious and ethnic plurality in Jambi City is not something new, but it has been going on long

before Indonesia's independence, precisely during the Malay Kingdom and Jambi Sultanate (Halim & HM, 2020).

Conceptually, the existence of a plural city of Jambi is reminiscent of its impact on people's lives. According to Novri Susan (2019), the plurality of a region has the potential to cause divisions or conflicts among the people in it. Countries along the lines of England, for example, have a long history of conflict with Scots and Welsh tribes, as well as France, which continues to have a dispute with the Bretons. Heterogeneous regions in Indonesia encounter the 'effect' of the plural predicate as well, as happened in Ambon, Palu, Poso, Sampit, Banyuwangi and so on. In short, the conflict has become something that is unavoidable in a society that is in a socially heterogeneous category.

Among the many sources of conflict (ethnic, economic, and political), religion is believed to be the cause of the most paradoxical social conflict. As a source of conflict, conflicts over the establishment of places of worship are the main cause of social disputes in the religious realm which often lead to destruction and arson in Indonesia (Crouch, 2013; Suaedy, 2007, p. 247; Yunus, 2014). This comes to the fore due to the fact that the existence of religion in society is represented through multiple faces (Kimball, 2008). On the one hand, religion appears with a positive grimace through a set of morals and values that are good for its adherents, but on the other hand, religion appears with a negative grimace due to the reason it is the source of a series of conflicts that occur in light of the fact of the misunderstanding of its adherents in understanding it and their exclusive attitude. The existence of this dual-faced religion raises a lot of debate among experts and scholars. Religion has been acknowledged as a basic need for humans due to the reason that in history there has never been a society without religion (Agus, 2006, p.33; Haji Naasari and Bogheyri, 2019). As in religion which has an important role in human life. For example, religious beliefs and values can motivate people to take certain actions, despite in the event that those actions are the most extreme (Halim & HM, 2020). Religion has the ability to make positive and negative contributions to society (Rumagit, 2013, p.59). The positive contribution of religion has the ability to foster a sense of brotherhood and cooperation between communities. Nevertheless, religion has the ability to make a negative contribution as well in the manner of triggering conflicts between religious communities. In the same context, religion can at one time galvanize peace, the way of salvation, unity and companionship, but on the other hand, it is something as well that is considered relentless, propagate conflict, and not infrequently has become a source of problems (Takdir, 2017).

As part of social beings, the residents of Jambi City certainly cannot be separated from their interactions with each other, including the Malay community with other ethnicities, such as Javanese, Batak, Chinese and Bugis. This is in line with the social portrait summarized by Aristotle (384-322 BC) through his concept of *zoon politicon* which means that humans as creatures basically always want to get along in society (Gintis, Schaik & Boehm, 2015). Humans cannot realize their potential only by themselves; therefore, they need other people for this, including in fulfilling their needs. This reassures a process of social interaction, which humans cannot do alone hence they need other people to meet their needs.

As social beings, the plural society of Jambi City is never separated from social interaction and will never be able to live without the role of other individuals. Social interaction is the key to all social life in light of the fact that without social interaction, there will be no life unitedly (Halim & HM, 2020). The mere physical encounter of individuals will not result in the companionship of living in a social group. Such life companions will only occur if individuals or groups of people work together, talk to each other, and to achieve a common goal, conduct competition, dispute and so on. Thus, it can be said that social interaction is the basis of social processes, which refers to dynamic social relationships (Halim & HM, 2020). Interaction can generally be achieved smoothly when there are similarities in language, culture, including religion. Religion is not only seen as a way of worshipping God and all the rules and teachings contained in the scriptures. Nonetheless, differences in beliefs and symbols possessed by adherents of these religions have the ability to be a separator between social groups. Therefore, apart from being used as a unifying means for religion, it can as well be a trigger for conflict.

Conceptually, humans do have an instinct to relate to other humans. As mentioned by Abraham H. Maslow (1984) as well as Bell and Pei (2020) in the concept of hierarchy, humans need self-respect, that is, they are valued as human beings and as citizens. Thus, humans need to fulfil needs such as being accepted by others and becoming members of other groups. This condition requires what is known as tolerance which is still a complex problem in the life of a plural society, as well as the most important part to avoid social conflict (Akhmedov & Azizova, 2020). Actions related to intolerance are still common and show that people often cannot accept the presence of other groups in their area.

In the context of a society that has plurality in all aspects (religion, race and class), harmony which is the result of tolerance becomes something to be expected (Bakrac, 2015). The harmony of religious life is defined as a condition in which all religious groups have the ability to live together without diminishing their basic rights as human beings in achieved their religious responsibilities. Therefore, each plural region has a mechanism or method that they practice socially to avoid dispute or conflict. Related to the above, it is interesting and important to see how the pattern of religious tolerance is accomplished by the Jambi City Malay community in their social interactions.

## **B. Literature Review**

### ***Social Interaction Concept***

Social interaction is a dynamic social relationship, involving the relationship between individuals, between groups and between individuals and groups (Halim & HM, 2020). Social interaction is the key to all social life due to the reason without social interaction, life collectively will not work (Hartanto & Hidayat, 2019). In living their lives, individuals do not only meet physically, but also have to experience things such as working together, talking to each other, fighting, and so on to determine common goals. Social interaction between individuals in groups occurs in society as well where the interaction is conspicuous when there is a clash between individual and group interests, for example in

deciding a conflict between people with different beliefs. On the occasion of the social process takes place, the basis is social interaction. The ongoing process of interaction is based on numerous factors, among others, factors of imitation, suggestion, identification, and sympathy (Fuad, Indriyany & Mahpudin, 2022). These factors can move independently or in a collective circumstance. Despite the fact that there are main factors in the interaction process, it cannot be denied that in reality these factors are enigmatic to distinguish. Social interaction that is social is not personal due to the reason from a social interaction it takes two or more individuals thus in social interaction there is a process of mutual adjustment.

There are certain conditions for interaction to occur. Social interaction will not be possible if it does not meet two conditions, they are the abide of social contact and the abide of communication (Hartanto & Hidayat, 2019).

Social contact comes from the Latin word "con" or "cum" which means together and "tangan" means to touch, thus, precisely touching together, both physically, contact will occur in the form of touching limbs. Communication is the basis or the second condition for the occurrence of social interaction due to the fact that without communication humans will not be able to react to each other. Communication is formulated as a means of storing messages or meanings. This communication can be oral or written and can use symbols in language as well, clothing, banners, and other forms.

Social interaction is a process in which people communicate to influence each other in thoughts and actions. Social interaction occurs in society and has a variety of associative or dissociative forms (Fuad, Indriyany & Mahpudin, 2022). The associative social processes are divided into three forms, such as cooperation, accommodation, and assimilation, whilst dissociative social processes are divided as well into three forms, they are: Competition, Contraction, and Conflict.

Associative social processes are social processes that are in the social reality of their members in a circumstance of harmony that leads to patterns of cooperation. In social reality, there are regulations controlling the behaviour of its members. If members adhere to the rules, the pattern of social harmony leads to cooperation between members that will be conceived. Associative processes are divided into three (Fuad, Indriyany & Mahpudin, 2022), such as:

- a) Cooperation is a collective endeavour between individuals or groups of people to achieve something or several common goals. This form of cooperation develops when people have the ability to move to achieve a common goal and there must be an awareness that this goal in the future has benefits for all. There must be something pleasant as well in the division of labour and the remuneration to be received. Cooperation functions on the occasion of people realising that they have common interests and at the same time have enough knowledge of themselves to fulfil in useful cooperation.
- b) Accommodation. Accommodation can be used in two understandings, such as to point out a situation and to point out a process. The accommodation that shows in one situation, means the fact that there is a balance in the interaction between individuals and human groups related to social norms and social values that apply in society. Concurrently, accommodation is

seen as a process if it shows human endeavours to diminish a conflict to achieve a balance.

- c) Assimilation. Assimilation is a social process represented by endeavours to diminish the differences that exist between individuals or human groups and comprises endeavours as well to enhance the unity of actions, notions, and mental processes by taking into account interests and towards a common goal. This means that assimilation is the process of adjusting the properties retained by the surrounding environment and making a difference that exists as a unified society. Assimilation will arise when groups of people with different religions interact directly with each other for a long time hence the religions of each group change and adapt to each other with the environment without having to change religions.

Dissociative Social Process is a circumstance of social reality in a state of disharmony as a result of a conflict between members of the community triggered by a social disorder. This situation bestows increment to social disintegration as a result of conflicts between members of the community. Dissociative social processes include: (Fuad, Indriyany & Mahpudin, 2022):

- a) Competition. Competition can be interpreted as a social process, where individuals or groups of people compete for profit through the environments of life that at some time become the centre of public attention by attracting public attention or by sharpening existing prejudices without using violence. This competition itself produces several forms of competition, such as: Economic competition arises due to the fact of the limited inventory of producers when compared to the number of consumers, whilst many parties need it. In the world of trade, indeed, competition is focused on the struggle for the number of clients, in the world of production, competition is usually focused on efforts to fight for raw materials and marketing areas to control the competitive markets and trade land. 2) Cultural competition, this competition occurs when traders from outside accomplish buying and selling of numerous religions who at any time from the religion expand their religion. Competition in the sphere of culture can as well involve competition in the religious sphere and community institutions such as education. 3) Competition to achieve certain positions and roles in society. This competition often occurs in certain agencies, each party wants to seize the top position. 4) Racial or race competition. This competition is motivated by certain race attitudes to dominate certain areas.
- b) Controversy. controversy is a different social process between competition and opposition or conflict which is characterized by symptoms of uncertainty about one's self or plans and hidden loathes hatred or doubt about one's personality. In its pure form, controversies is a hidden mental attitude towards other people or towards the cultural elements of a particular group. This hidden attitude can turn into hatred, but not to the point of conflict.
- c) Dispute and Friction Conflict is a social process in which each interacting party tries to destroy, get rid of, and defeat each other, for numerous reasons such as hostility. The root of this problem, such as first, differences between

individuals, and differences in notions and consciences will conceive clashes between individuals. Second, cultural differences, are personality differences between individuals depending on the cultural patterns that become the growth and progress of the individual. Third, differences in interests, this is between social individuals, happen quickly for a while and will change the values that exist in society, and this causes groups to have different views.

### ***Concept of Religious Tolerance***

Tolerance implies a willingness to accept the reality of different opinions about the truth that is held. It has the ability to respect other people's beliefs about the religion they embrace and give freedom to practice what they adhere to without syncretism and not on the principles of the religion they adhere to. Tolerance comes from the word tolerate which means to allow or be patient without protesting the behaviour of other people or groups, tolerance as well means respecting, protecting, and cooperating with others (Mansur, 2012: 1).

According to Jamaludin (2015, p.109-111), the principle of tolerance between religious communities is to achieve a peaceful state, such as first, freedom of religion. This freedom is the most important human right in life, particularly the freedom to choose one's belief/religion. Freedom in this case is not demanding but freeing to adhere to what is considered the most correct. Second, there is respect for the abide of other religions. A tolerant attitude in which it gives freedom and mutual respect to the differences in the teachings that are held. Third, agree in disagreement.

Tolerance in practice consists of two forms, such as religious and social (Tambunan, 2018). Religious tolerance is tolerance that is accomplished regarding beliefs related to religious teachings, particularly the emergence of notions to favour opportunities for people other than their religion to worship in accordance with their beliefs. Whilst social is tolerance related to society. This is important not only to maintain peace but at the limits determined by the teachings of each religion.

Tolerance between religious communities can be manifested in the following forms: a) Mutual respect; b) Giving freedom to adherents of other religions in carrying out worship according to their religion and beliefs; c) Help in social life (Akhmedov & Azizova, 2020).

Nevertheless, inter-religious communities can be realized as mentioned above, but that does not mean achieving this tolerance by intertwining social interests and beliefs. In achieving tolerance there are certain limitations.

Tolerance is a positive notion, particularly in Indonesia, a country based on Pancasila, which provides and guarantees freedom for its citizens to embrace a religion and belief they desire without any coercion. This has been stated in the 1945 Constitution article 29: 2, that: The state guarantees the independence of each resident to embrace their own religion and to worship according to their religion and belief (BP-7 Pusat, 1993: 7; Iskandar, 2016). The state does not only protect



and gives freedom but also supports and provides assistance to religious people to advance their religious life without causing conflict and harm to people of other religions.

The abiding of tolerance between religious communities is crucial, in light of the fact that the abiding of tolerance can conceive harmony between religious communities. Tolerance is the beginning of harmony, without tolerance there cannot be mutual respect, love, and mutual cooperation between religious communities.

The principle of tolerance between religious communities to achieve a state of peace is first, freedom of religion. This freedom is the most important human right in life, such as the freedom to choose one's belief/religion. Freedom in this case is not demanding but freeing to adhere to what is considered the most correct. Second, there is respect for the abiding of other religions. A tolerant notion gives freedom and mutual respect to the differences in the teachings that are held. Third, agree in disagreement or agree on differences (Jamaludin 2015:109-111). Tolerance has two forms, such as religious tolerance and social tolerance. Religious tolerance, specifically tolerance related to beliefs related to religious teachings, particularly the emergence of a notion to provide opportunities for people other than their religion to worship according to what they believe. Whilst social tolerance is related to society. This is important due to the fact that each teaching.

### **Research Method.**

This research was conducted using a qualitative research approach, such as an approach that gives researchers the opportunity to be able to describe and interpret in detail in order to get a holistic understanding (Lichtman, 2013; Marvasti, 2004, p. 7). According to Yin (2004, pp.103-118), secondary data for qualitative research is collected through documents and archival transcripts and other physical types of equipment, whilst primary data is through interviews and direct observation. This research takes secondary data from media reports and releases from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), whilst secondary data is attained from direct observations and interviews with the research object. Interviews were conducted with ten informants who were directly involved with the object of research, they are community members living along Jalan Lintas Timur Bagan Pete, Alam Barajo District. Data analysis was accomplished qualitatively, such as: reducing data by sorting secondary and primary information according to the research context, displaying data by displaying data attained from informants and explaining it, and drawing conclusions by abbreviating the results of the analysis accomplished according to the research problem (Miles and Huberman, 1992, pp.88-90, Ritchie et. al., 2013). This research was carried out with an ethical approval commitment from Universitas Sultan Thaha, Jambi, Indonesia with the reference number B.99/D.III.1/PP.00.0/01/2023 which was also gained by the participants.

### **Discussion**

#### ***A. Malays Social Interaction Pattern in Jambi City***

As mentioned before that interaction is a characteristic of humans who are mentioned as social beings (*zoon politicon*). Conceptually, the forms of social interaction can be in the form of cooperation, competition, dispute (conflict) and accommodation. The four main forms of social interaction do not need to be a continuity, such as the interaction that begins with cooperation, then competition and culminates into a dispute to finally arrive at an accommodation. Nevertheless, it is good to examine the process of this interaction in its continuity.

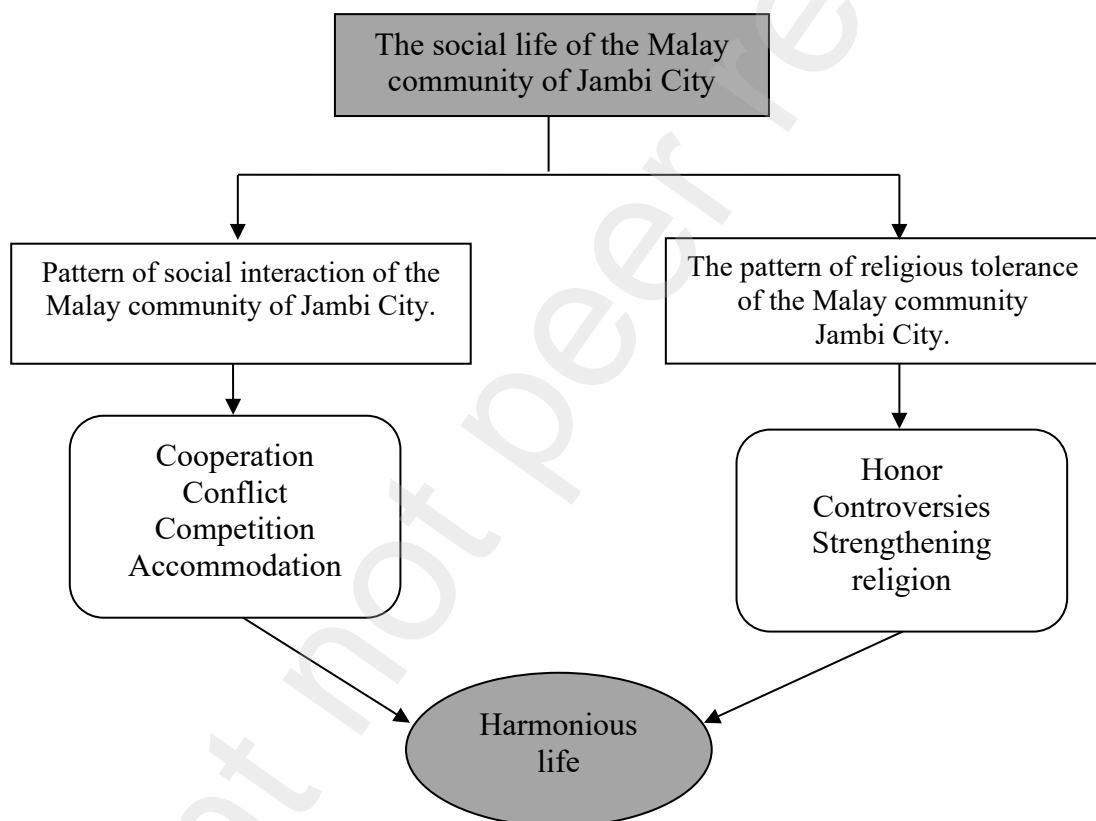


Figure 1. Harmonious Life in Malay Jambi Community

The interaction that exists between the Malays and the Batak people in Bagan Pete can be categorized as social tolerance. According to Hayat (2012: 176) and Velthuis et. al (2021), social tolerance is tolerance related to social activities or relationships with fellow human beings. Social tolerance occurs unconsciously in daily activities such as trading (in the market), working, and building public facilities together. It can be in matters of technology as well, *siskamling* together, social gathering, and many more. The social aspect in question is the abiding of

togetherness which is part of the characteristics of humans as social beings. In certain situations, or conditions, they do something together, they cooperate with other humans in an endeavour to realize the role of humans as social beings. As social beings, humans have the nature of cooperating and competing at the same time. In the event that humans work together and compete openly, then social harmony will be created. Tolerance in numerous aspects of life that exists in the community is expected to create a harmonious, amicable and balanced life among community members. In the event that tolerance in society is not well established, there will be consequences such as brawls between students in big cities, brawls between citizens, diminishes or conflicts between religions and between ethnicities and so on. Moreover, it is cited that tolerance in life in society, among others, is in the form of mutual respect and appreciation between community members which is shown by cooperation and willingness to help others without discriminating against ethnicity, race or class.

Based on research conducted by researchers, social interactions that occur in the Bagan Pete Malay community of Jambi City have good cooperation with the Batak tribe, mutual respect for one another, a high spirit of mutual cooperation and seeing each other. The cooperation in the end tends to become a conflict. This conflict arose after the Batak tribe increasingly settled in Bagan Pete and formed their tribal groups, causing interactions to begin to drift apart with the Malay community. Disputes began to occur such as the problem of values and norms adopted by the two tribes, as well as the problem of teenagers. Nonetheless, moreover to conflict and cooperation, competition or striving can be seen in education as well, economy, culture, as well as in position and role. The three forms of social interaction that occurred in Bagan Pete above, it can as well lead to an accommodation process, with understanding and tolerance from both parties between the Malay community and the Batak tribe.

#### 1. Social Interaction in The Form of Cooperation.

Social interaction activities begin with the activities of two or more people involving the notions, values, and expectations of each (Soekanto, 2013). Moreover, related to social interaction as stated by Netelenbos (2020) forms of social interaction are social realities based on individual motivation and social actions, where the individuals involved give subjective meanings, and have goals or meanings.

In the context of social interaction, the Malays and Batak involved in the interaction are two different community groups. Groups and communities that have a history, structure and plans or goals to be achieved.

In the event traced back, the presence of the Batak tribe in Bagan Pete cannot be separated from the existence of the East Cross Road which is the Jambi City Outer Ring Road. The existence of this causeway is intended to connect Jambi City with South Sumatra and Riau by land, particularly for public transportation, without entering the city. Prior to the existence of this road, Jambi City's connection with the surrounding areas was traversed through the Paal 10 highway through the city. Most of the Batak tribes do work along Jalan Lintas Timur Bagan Pete, either as food vendors, vehicle repair shops, tire repairs, travel, and various other transportation businesses. At first the Batak tribe had a social need to join

themselves as a big Bagan Pete family. The Malays and the Batak live side by side, between them there are social ties through social institutions, such as the economy, youth organizations, youth, also government.

The participation of the Batak in numerous social activities with the Malays such as village meetings or social activities and visiting each other at that time were commonplace and went well. On national holidays, for example, the Batak and the Malays work together to commemorate or celebrate together, such as August 17 and New Year. Cooperation is seen between the Malays and the Batak in mutual cooperation activities as well to improve the village or RT, build social places and help each other when there are activities between the two tribes.

Based on the research conducted by the researchers, data were attained regarding the routine activities of all community members consisting of distinct ethnic groups in Bagan Pete unitedly building patrol posts and *RT* halls. Another activity is cleaning the environment of each *RT* together thus it is always clean from the community to avoid ailment.

The cooperation of the Bagan Pete community was seen as well when one of the residents of the Malay Tribe held a wedding ceremony for his son. Residents from other ethnic groups, such as the Batak and Javanese, participated to help make the event a success as well, and they indeed joined the committee, starting from preparing the reception to its implementation.

The close relationship between the two tribes can be seen as well from the willingness of the Malays to include the Batak in the management of the *RT* structure (Neighbourhood Associations), which is dominated by Malays. Social interaction as well takes place between the Malays and the Batak on the occasion of people getting sick or dying, where they visit each other.

Thus, it can be seen that the social interaction between the Malays and the Batak at first was quite familiar and included in an atmosphere of harmonious cooperation. Despite the fact that there is an unsafe atmosphere due to the frequent theft of Malay people's property, they realize that this is more about the actions of certain individuals, not due to the reason of their ethnic status.

## 2. Social interaction in the form of dispute (conflict).

Individuals and groups who are aware of differences such as in physical characteristics, emotions, cultural elements, behaviour patterns with other parties have the ability to strop differences and lead to conflict. Feelings play an important role in stropping these differences in such a way that each side tries to dismantle the other. Feelings usually take the form of anger or hatred that cause urges to hurt or attack the other party or to suppress and dismantle the opposing individual or group.

Encounter or conflict is a social process in which individuals or groups try to fulfil their goals by opposing the encounter party accompanied by threats and/or violence. The causes or source of the conflict include differences between individuals, cultural differences, differences in interests and social change.

The rapid development in Bagan Pete, particularly in the immigrant community, which is marked by the establishment of housing complexes, has led to the emergence of groups in society. The immigrant community (Batak Tribe)

brings new socio-cultural values to the midst of the village environment. The norms brought by the immigrant community in general and the Batak Tribe tend to be different from the norms found in the midst of the local (Malay) community. This condition, in turn, has the potential to create a feeling of unacceptability among the Malays.

The atmosphere of cooperation described earlier has changed slightly, particularly since the establishment of numerous shops and economic centres along the Bagan Pete East Cross Road, the relationship between the two tends to be increasingly strained. The Batak people are increasingly living in Bagan Pete and their lives are getting more settled, while on the other hand, the Malays are still not able to get out of the economic crisis that surrounds their lives.

The increasing number of residents who come from the Batak tribe in Bagan Pete, the stronger their sense of unity and oneness. This can be seen from the association of youth and Batak students, which numbered approximately 100 people. In sports activities that usually join the Malays and other ethnic groups, now the Batak tend to be with their fellow tribes.

### 3. Social Interaction in The Form of Competition

Warfare or competition as stated by Soekamto (2013) is a social process, in which individuals or groups of people compete for profit through areas of life that at a certain period become public attention, both individuals and groups of people by attracting public attention or by sharpening existing prejudices without using threats or violence.

The competition between the Malays and the Batak in Bagan Pete, based on research, is not notorious. This is due to the fact that the two tribes are different in terms of work, the Malays generally work as farmers and office workers, whilst the Batak work as entrepreneurs. Thus, they strive in their respective fields in fulfilling their lives.

Nevertheless, the nuances of competition still abide between these two tribes. In the economic field, the presence of Jalan Lintas Timur Jambi City provides an opportunity for Malays to establish places of business. Apart from being rented out, these places of business are as well used by the Malays themselves. In spite of the fact that before this highway was built, the Malays relied more on agriculture as a source of livelihood. Concurrently, there are some Batak people as well who set up a place of business in the location purchased from the Malays. Therefore, there is competition between them to get buyers or customers from the businesses they do.

### 4. Social interaction in the form of accommodation

Even though inequality and sometimes conflict mingles the social interactions that take place between the Malays and the Batak in Bagan Pete, these situations usually end in accommodation. The understanding of accommodation refers to a situation and refer to a process.

In the context of social interaction between the Malays and the Bataks in Bagan Pete, there are forms of accommodation as well. The presence of the Batak tribe provides benefits for the Malays in Bagan Pete, among others, in the form of

an increasingly diverse profession and community expertise related to motor vehicles. Before the arrival of the Batak tribe, many Malays were not familiar with, let alone mastered, the diversity of equipment and techniques for repairing motor vehicles. The arrival of the Batak tribe with numerous professions in the sector of vehicle repair opened the eyes of the Malay people to the abundance of equipment and expertise related to land transportation.

Another factor that helped form accommodation was the awareness of the Batak people living in Bagan Pete that they were newcomers to or living in the area. This awareness, in turn, manifests itself in a notion of relenting and restraint in matters that might cause conflict with the Malays. Moreover, the hospitality of the Batak people to the Malays and their tolerance were as well factors that led to the creation of accommodation in Bagan Pete.

### **B. Pattern of Religious Tolerance of the Jambi City Malay Society**

Humans cannot let go of their nature as social beings (zoon politicon) who certainly live in a heterogeneous society. The diversity of human life requires an attitude of being willing to accept and appreciate every difference that exists. Humans must be able to coexist peacefully and respect each other, appreciate each other, and accept each other amidst the diversity of cultures, ethnicities, religions, and freedom of expression thus tolerance is needed (Sari, 2018). Along with a notion of tolerance, residents of a community have the ability to live side by side in peace, harmony, and work together in overcoming numerous issues that occur in their environment. Tolerance is indeed based on an attitude of respect for human dignity, conscience and beliefs as well as the sincerity of others regardless of religion, ethnicity, class, ideology, or views.

As the majority group and the first inhabitants of the Bagan Pete area, the Malays realize that differences in society always abide, including in the context of religion. Moreover, it is related to the abiding of Jambi City which has long been known as an open and plural area. This means, in the Bagan Pete Malay community, there has been a deep understanding of social differences, including religion hence they have the ability to respect them for a long time. This is as stated in the following excerpts from interview with the following respondent (Zulfahri, teacher, 67 years old):

“I have been living here since 1987. I mean, I have been living here in Bagan Pete long before this Eastern Highway was built and growing rapidly as it is today. In order to this day, there has never been a problem with the relations between the Malays and the Batak people here. In spite of the fact that the Malays are predominantly Muslim, and the Batak people are mostly Christians, we still live in harmony side by side. We know that Jambi City has always had a variety of people. Hence, for us, it does not matter what religion, what ethnicity, as long as it does not interfere with the social life of the people here.” (Bagan Pete, August 42021).

Another respondent (Putri Wati, 60 years old) who has lived in Bagan Pete since 1995. Mrs Putri Wati who works as a trader said that the Bagan Pete people

live in a harmonious atmosphere in their social relations with other residents who are different. As a Malay citizen, Mrs Putri Wati stated that she never had an issue with the presence of Batak people who are mostly Christians living in Bagan Pete. Along with reference to her, the city of Jambi is open to anyone, indeed since ancient times, this city has been inhabited by numerous tribes and religions. In fact, some of their close neighbours are Batak and work in a vehicle repair shop in Lintas Timur, but thus far they have lived in harmony and peace.

The form of tolerance based on historical facts of the pluralistic Jambi City is getting stronger in the statements of other respondents (Siti, Housewife, 50 years old). Along with reference to the respondent who lives not far from Lintas Timur Bagan Pete, the social life of the people of this region is fine and remains harmonious. This respondent has lived in Bagan Pete since 1982 and has never found any disharmony in social relations between Malays and immigrants, particularly Batak people. All members of society have the ability to live side by side with one another, regardless of ethnicity and religion.

In general, the social life of the Bagan Pete community, particularly related to inter-religious tolerance is going well. The Malay community who make up the largest part of the population composition of Bagan Pete realizes that differences in ethnicity and religion are a necessity for Jambi City as an open sphere. This condition has existed long before Indonesia's independence as a consequence of the position of Jambi City which is in the heart of Sumatra Island and has direct access to the ocean. Therefore, the Bagan Pete Malay community inherited the values of social and religious tolerance from their predecessors in interacting with numerous religious and ethnic differences.

Generally, the Malay community in Bagan Pete has no issue with the abode of the Batak people, who are predominantly Christian, in light of the fact that they have inherited an attitude of tolerance from their ancestors. This is closely related to the abode of Jambi City, which has long been known as an open and plural sphere. Nonetheless, in the Bagan Pete Malay community, there is still a sense of worry about the abode of the Batak people, who are predominantly Christian in their area. This concern is related to religion, particularly for young people who are starting to interact thoroughly in numerous social activities. Socially, the Bagan Pete Malays do not really mind the Batak 'immigrants' in their environment. Nevertheless, religiously they remain vigilant about the possibility of disruption of the religion held by their young people. This is as stated in the following excerpts from interviews with respondents (Siti Aminah, 50 years old, trader).

“Socially, frankly, I have no problem with my neighbours who are Batak and have different religions from us. I can still hang out and greet each other’s. In fact, socially we have the ability to trade with each other as well. But frankly, I am just worried about religion, particularly since I'm a mother who has several teenage children. Along the lines of the others, my children indeed hang out with their friends as well who are Batakese. Whether at school, during games or during play. I am just worried that my children will be influenced by the religious practices of their Batak friends. Particularly

now that there are many games and sports that involve children and teenagers, they can be intermingled.” (Bagan Pete, August 52021).

Another respondent (Asio, 56 years old) said the same thing. According to the father who works as a private employee, his concern for the religion of his children has likewise become a matter of his mind regarding his Batak neighbors. Indeed, it is not a concern that their children will have different beliefs from him, but a concern that their children will not understand Islam better. This is due to the reason that the children are quite intensive in socializing and interacting with their Batakese friends, either due to the fact that they are in the same school or playmates.

Conceptually, the phenomenon of concern in the Bagan Pete Malay community regarding the presence of Batak people in their environment can be categorized as a contradiction. Controversy is a social process that differs between competition and opposition or conflict which is characterized by symptoms of uncertainty about a person or plans and hidden dislikes, hatred or doubts about one's personality. In its pure form, controversy is a hidden mental attitude towards other people or towards the cultural elements of a particular group. This hidden attitude can turn into hatred, but not to the point of conflict.

Despite the fact that it can be categorized as a form of controversy, the Bagan Pete Malay community does not decipher it into hatred for their neighbouring Batak people. That is, the controversy is not manifested in offensive forms to outsiders. On the other hand, the Bagan Pete Malays indeed use this controversy phenomenon as a means of strengthening self-defense (defensiveness) through increasing understanding of Islam in the family and school environment.

As previously mentioned, in light of the fact that the Bagan Pete Malay community does not have a problem with the abode of Batak people in their environment, religiously there are still concerns. This controversial phenomenon is based on the concern of the Bagan Pete Malays about the religion their children adopt. Therefore, as a form of self-defense, they deepen their children's religious understanding through regular recitations, taking rigorous religious activities and sending their children to Islamic schools. This endeavour is conceived hence their children are not far from Islamic values, despite the fact that in their daily life they have the ability to get along with their friends who are Batak ethnic and Christian.

The form of controversy that is practiced positively by the Bagan Pete Malay community is as shown in the following excerpts from interviews with respondents (Maya Astria, 45 years old, farmer):

“As a Muslim, indeed, I am still worried about the religion of my children due to the reason that they hang out with their Batak friends. It is possible that my children will be far from the religion we follow. Thus, sometimes comes to mind for me and our family. But I certainly do not hate my Batak neighbour. Therefore, it is their right to live and work anywhere, including in this Pete Bagan. Hence my worries do not happen, I send my children to Islamic schools around here. Moreover, in the afternoon my children as well take part in the Quran at the religious teachers in this area. This is our way



for my children to stick with their religion and have a correct understanding of Islam.” (Bagan Pete, August 5, 2021).

The other respondents, Saipul, 42 years old, and Andika, 35 years old, said the same thing. Along with reference to these two fathers who work as motorcycle taxi drivers and construction workers, the Bagan Pete community is indeed diverse in religion and ethnicity. As a parent, he is worried as well that his children will be influenced by his friends' religion due to the reason that he hangs out with friends who are not of the same religion. In behalf of this, he and his family regularly attend recitations at the nearest mosque and prayer room and take part in religious activities held in their neighbourhood. This endeavour is expected to protect his family from the possibility of misinterpreting religion due to association with different societies.

Another respondent, Si'am (40 years old), who works as a repairman on the Bagan Pete East Cross Route, said the same thing as well. Along with reference to this father who has lived in Bagan Pete since 1998, he does not realize his concern for the religion of his children by hating his Batak neighbours. Along with reference to him, anyone has the right to live anywhere in the country, including in Bagan Pete. The important thing he does is how keep his children in the values of Islam, as the religion they have adhered to since their ancestors. Therefore, his children routinely every afternoon attend Quran activities at the nearest Ustaz's house, despite the fact that his children attend public schools. This is what he has the ability to do thus his children still know Islam well, despite they hang out with their Batak friends.

### **Conclusion.**

As a plural area, the social interactions that exist between the Malay community and the Batak people in Bagan Pete are achieved in the form of cooperation, dispute (conflict), competition, and in the form of accommodation. As a society that lives in a pluralistic area, the Malays of Jambi City have great respect for the Batak people, who generally have a different religion from theirs. Nevertheless, there is an aspect of controversy that persists regarding their children's religious concerns. Improving children's religious understanding through recitations, Islamic schools and religious events is a positive practice for the Malay community to deal with their contradictions.

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