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institutionalizing multiple  
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social environment:  
Ampangnaopat among  
Simalungunese, Indonesia

by Erond L. Damanik

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**Submission date:** 16-Apr-2023 02:05AM (UTC+0700)

**Submission ID:** 2065385529

**File name:** out\_and\_institutionalizing\_multiple\_kinship\_relationships\_i.pdf (1.28M)

**Word count:** 11689

**Character count:** 67623






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To cite this article: Erond Litno Damanik (2021): Reaching out and institutionalizing multiple  
kinship relationships in the social environment: *Ampangnaopat* among Simalungunese, Indonesia,  
Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment, DOI: [10.1080/10911359.2021.1968558](https://doi.org/10.1080/10911359.2021.1968558)



To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10911359.2021.1968558>

 Published online: 25 Aug 2021.

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### 3

## Reaching out and institutionalizing multiple kinship relationships in the social environment: *Ampangnaopat* among Simalungunese, Indonesia

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#### ABSTRACT

In this study, I will show that the determinant of the stability and continuity of kinship in the social environment is the contribution made by the four basic frameworks (*ampangnaopat*), an element of marriage ritual among the Simalungunese, Indonesia. The four basic frameworks of kinship are the basis of functional and mutual bonds, which was established in response to the challenges of social dynamics. The study was motivated by the absoluteness of the four basic frameworks in the marriage ritual, a cornerstone of the triangular and pentagon kinship pattern. The study was conducted qualitatively, using a pragmatic approach, referring to the Radcliffe-Brown structural-functionalism paradigm. The data were collected through participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and visual documentation. Field data is recorded in verbatim transcripts, and bias is reduced through comparisons between subjects. The study found four basic frameworks, the primary elements of kinship, a legitimacy mechanism focusing on the mother-to-be, with mutual support at its core, as well as determinants of the stability and continuity of social relationship. The four basic frameworks, the conclusions of the study, are reaching out and institutionalization of multiple functions, based on triangular as well as pentagonal patterns of mutual relations to support all aspects of life. Responding to social dynamics, locality, and continuity of kinship is forced through presence and participation at every moment of rituals and ceremonies. The institutionalization of functions is highly dependent on ties that bind more mutual and functional kinship units.

#### KEYWORDS

*Ampangnaopat*; institutionalizing; kinship; multiple; subject classification codes; include these here if the journal requires them

### Introduction

The formation of kinship begins at marriage. However, each ethnic group has a special mechanism in line with their respective social dynamics. The study is motivated by the absoluteness of the four basic frameworks of kinship (*ampangnaopat*) at a marriage ritual, focusing on the mother-to-be (*inang nabayu*). Kinship, more specifically for the Simalungunese, not only functions during ceremonies, but also covers all life processes of its members, including reproduction, childcare, socialization, economy, education, work, and even social and political movements. Social bonds and relationships are established during the marriage, maintained for life, and perpetuated after death. This study focuses on

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the initial formation of kinship through marriage rituals. The object of study is emphasized on four basic frameworks, the primary elements of kinship to legitimize mother-to-be, multiple institutionalizations of functions in the groom's family. The focus of the problem is emphasized on the role of the four basic frameworks in dealing with social dynamics, why and how important the maintenance of kinship.

According to the perspective of Simalungun marriage, the legitimacy of a mother-to-be at the husband's residence requires special preconditions. New kinship is said to be legitimate if the mother-to-be has received recognition from four relatives of her husband. The four relatives are the primary elements, the support for the family to stand upright. The four basic frames are depicted by the analogy of a basket (*ampang*) which has four (*opat*) legs. The basket can only stand upright if it is supported by four leveled legs. The basket is an analogy of the nuclear family, its continuity in a dynamic social world requiring initial support from the relatives of the husband. The nuclear family stands in the middle, and the four elements of the initial kinship surround it; parent-in-law (*simatua*), the father's older brother (*bapatua*), siblings (*13* *ha*), and husband of the father's sister (*kela*). This study emphasizes the implications and consequences of kinship in the real world, its urgency, and its significance for social life.

The essence of legitimacy is the recognition of the position and function of the new mother as well as the assignment of kinship to social life. Legitimacy is the first phase and the layer of kinship, existing between the mother-to-be recipient (*boru*) and the giver family (*tondong*). Recognition of the position and function of the prospective new mother is the basis for the formation of the nuclear family. This acceptance has social implications, namely the birth of a new order, in which the nuclear family becomes an inseparable part of the triangular-patterned relationship (*tolusahundulan*). The nuclear family is not only tied to all relatives of the husband, but also those of the mother-to-be. This institutionalization is the second phase and layer of kinship in the real world.

The third phase and layer of kinship are seen during the death of the mother. The nuclear family that lost their mothers, their continuity in the social world requires wider support. The offspring of the mother is considered to have lost strength, channels of blessing, and fulfillment of light, and, thus, their kinship must be restored. Restoring the situation upon the mother's death, the kinship is assigned primarily to the first grandson and granddaughter during the death ritual. Kinship in the third phase and layer transforms from a triangle into a *1* pentagon (*limasaodoran*), marking the transition of status, position, and social function. The pentagonal relationship is the institutionalization of the kinship function of the conjugal family after maternal death. The three phases and layers of kinship are mechanisms and resolutions in dealing with social dynamics, the utilization of relationships to support all life activities. Critical phases of kinship are continually restored through rituals and ceremonies of joyful and sorrowful occasions, moments where one evaluates and introspects all of their successes and failures in life.

Kinship is based on a sense of belonging and emotional bonds to encourage solidarity, the basis of collaboration (*haroan*) for all life processes. Solidarity (*ahap*) only grows if each structure reflects a more functional relationship, namely a balance of obligations and rights to the social world. Solid solidarity appears in a cohesive order as well as a basis for collaboration, an abstraction of mutual attitudes, behaviors, and actions. Kinship is not temporary, but rather permanent lasts for life, and includes all life activities. The quality of



the relationship is reflected in the failure or success of communal life. Functionality reflects the success of communal life, while dysfunctionality reflects a failure in life. The functioning of structures, therefore, is a determinant of the stability and continuity of kinship in the social world

The study is motivated by the absoluteness of the four basic frameworks of kinship, one of the elements of the marriage ritual in the Simalungunese. A mother-to-be is sent by her parents to her future husband's house wearing a dress of departure (*hiouparpaikkat*). Furthermore, the parents bring an initial introductory attire (*hioupartinandaan*), consisting of traditional men's hat (*gotong*), and women's headdress (*bulang*), sarongs, and scarves (*surisuri*). All traditional accessories are handed over to each unit of the framework, symbolizing the assignment of responsibility to the husband's family and relatives. The four basic frameworks serve as recognition for the mother-to-be, marking the validity of the new nuclear family, as well as the formation of kinship in the social world. The moment of kinship in the marriage ritual focuses on the mother-to-be, whereas the *sayurmatua*'s ritual focuses on the first male and female grandchildren.

The urgency and significance of the study are related to four fundamental social dynamics; (1) degradation of kinship in line with decreasing quality of marriage; divorce, adultery, and childlessness, including trends of staying unmarried, (2) gradation of the quality of the kinship structure and function; disintegration, disharmony, individualism, pragmatism, and transactional, (3) kinship reorientation in real social life, and (4) efforts to discover and develop kinship mechanisms that are more functional and mutual.

Based on the description above, the main assumption of the study is that the four basic frameworks are a mechanism of commissioning and institutionalizing kinship functions, the basis of mutual bonds and relations, the resolution of facing the challenges of the social dynamic. This formula is built on three secondary assumptions; (1) kinship formation reflects the institutionalization of functions focused on the husband's family, (2) determinants of kinship stability and continuity in the social world, and (3) resolution in dealing with social dynamics.

This study in particular is relatively new in Simalungunese. None of the references discusses similar themes or written so systematically and academically. Reference is available providing a manual for the procedures of rites of passage. The data source, thus, relies on participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and visual documentation over the course of a year. The study was carried out qualitatively using a pragmatic approach and analyzed based on the Radcliffe-Brown structural-functionalism. The theoretical framework and state of the arts are described below.

### Theoretical framework

Kinship studies are always eye-catching and are timeless. Scholars have been exploring these studies for a long time and continue to develop them in response to social dynamics. In the past, particularly in the early 20th century, studies tended to focus on kinship formation and its cultural and social implications. Some notable studies were by Morgan (1871), Radcliffe-Brown (1922), Malinowski (1922), Levi-Strauss (1969), and Evans-Pritchard (1940), and Murdock (1949). One of the oldest kinship studies was by Levi-Strauss, which focuses on the culinary triangle of marriage rituals (Holy, 1996; Overing et al., 2015). Marriage has

implications for the family system to institutionalize the rights and obligations of parents, children, grandchildren, and relatives, including limitations on reproduction, care, socialization, and social order (Goode, 1963). Through the family, each descendant has social relations in the kinship tree (Fox, 2001; Hendry, 1999). The husband-wife relationship does not stand alone but reaches out to conjugal and extended families (Cherlin, 2012).

The study focuses on four basic frameworks of kinship, analyzed based on the Radcliffe-Brown structural-functionalism paradigm. The idea of structural-functionalism, actually rooted in the thoughts of Comte (1998) and Spencer (1896), was systematically applied by Durkheim (1938) and perfected by Malinowski (1939) and Radcliffe-Brown (1940, 1952). The Radcliffe-Brown paradigm is built on three basic premises; (1) the interdependence of social units in the community system, (2) the integrity of the system determines the parts, and (3) the balance of functional relations linking each part.

Compared to Malinowski who separated structure and function, Radcliffe-Brown combine the two, structural-functionalism (Merton, 1949; Berger & Luckman, 1991; Ritzer, 1988). According to Radcliffe-Brown, the function is an institution, a determinant of the stability of a structure. The life process marks the functioning of structures. Function reflects the role of the entire life process (Radcliffe-Brown, 1940), in the attitudes, behaviors, and social actions of a person (Kuper, 1959). All the three, attitudes, behavior, and actions are the abstraction of relations, norms, and cultures that make up social systems (Davis, 1959). Humans are organisms, consisting of a set of integrated and comprehensive networks to create an order of life (Davis, 1959).

The Radcliffe-Brown view makes two main points; (1) the functioning of institutions in all social systems, and (2) the relation between reality and the needs of organisms during the life process (Radcliffe-Brown, 1922). The two main points, from the perspective of evolutionary biology, constitute a selection mechanism for survival, based on kin support, closeness, and social protection (Davis, 1959). Conversely, according to Malinowski, the structure is an institution of interaction and association, while the function is psychological and biological uses (Kaplan & Manners, 1974; Keesing, 1971; Manners & Kaplan, 1968). Marriage, for example, plays a role in legitimizing structure (Levi-Strauss, 1969) as well as creating functions (Dousset, 2011; Kottak, 2006; Malinowski, 1922; Parsons, 1943). Marriage is not focused on the institutionalization of sexual relations or reproductive mechanisms-the most important thing, being the formation of kinship structures and functions (Beattie, 2013; Damanik, 2018; Farley, 2005; Furstenberg, 2020; Shenk & Mattison, 2011; Smith & Preston, 1982).

The kinship system contains social organization, building blocks which consist of family, marriage, and kinship, connecting separate groups, and observing the activities of their members (Kottak, 2006). The kinship system is a mechanism and consideration of normative, interpersonal behavior as well as operational guidance (Verdon, 1981). Marriage plays a role in configuring the structure and function of kinship (Franklin & McKinnon, 2001; Read, 2001), as well as cultural linkages (Carsten, 2000; Shapiro, 2018). Function forms the morphology of structure, physiology, and development (Ritzer, 1988, pp. 81–82). The structure, thus, is “the whole,” which consists of “the parts” which establish “a patterned and long-lasting relationship” and have implications for the whole social system (Marzali, 2006, p. 128).

Contemporary kinship studies, parallel to social dynamics, require critical analysis (Riggs & Peel, 2016). Social dynamics have an impact on value gradations or potential ramifications for shifts in marriages and families (Brown, 2015). Social relations extend to economic activities, law, education, employment, and social movements, including politics (Maleta, 2015; Marohabutr, 2016). Contemporary kinship studies in the United States and Europe, for example, do not correlate with family function (Parkin, 1997; Turner, 2013). In Minangkabau, kinship fails to organize solidarity in the farmers' resistance to entrepreneurs (Patrojani & Afiff, 2018). In the Tobanese, kinship is used to evaluate relatives and non-relatives (Bruner, 1992; Pelly, 2021), while in the Karonese it is the basis of descent and alliances that are strengthened through traditional rituals (Singarimbun, 1975).

The situation of ethnicity also influenced the separation of kinship, such as between the Mandailing and Angkola in Medan, 1922–1925 (Hidayat & Damanik, 2018). In a pluralist society, kinship is commodified based on an ethnic situation to seize and dominate the social world (Damanik, 2018). Commodification is a social reality prevalent in many countries, such as in the United States (Glazer & Moynihan, 1963; Greif & Saviet, 2020; Parsons, 1943), China (Baker, 1979), Africa (Hage, 2006; Jackson, 2015) and Oceanic countries (Gardner, 2008; McConvell & Gardner, 2016). Genealogies and lineages also influence kinship (Itao & Kaneko, 2020). Compared to affinal commitment which creates differentiation of structures, relationships, and complexity of responsibilities (Simpson, 2013), consanguinity breaks through cultural and social elements (Piang et al., 2017). Kinship, thus, transformed and made possible by four factors: (1) mobilization and reliability of institutional resources (Peletz, 1995), (2) relative values (Franklin & McKinnon, 2001), (3) cultural linkages (Carsten, 2000), and (4) analytical approaches (Verdon, 1981).

Kinship is a social construction (Radcliffe-Brown, 1952) and not a cultural construction (Schneider, 1984). As a social construction, kinship contains the social relations between ego, parents, and siblings, and functions on five main aspects; (1) allocation of rights; residence, group membership, and inheritance, (2) source of social obligations; moral support, material dependence, and assistance, (3) regulation of sexual relations, (4) basis for kinship terms, social order and behavior predictions, and (5) economic, political and religious activities (Hage, 2006; Jackson, 2015; Rauscher, 2016). In other words, kinship is a group: (1) based on the axiom of amity, (2) forming systems and diversity of structures, (3) covering clans, lineages, and ethnicities, and (4) creating solidarity (Jones, 2000, 2017).

The essence of kinship is social capital (Aryal, 2018; Ottenheimer, 2007) as well as social and cultural relations (Dousset, 2011; Linton, 1936). Kinship encourages a strong sense of belonging and emotional bond to strengthen solidarity (Sapolsky, 2017). Structure and function describe rights and obligations based on privileges in the family, intersubjectivity, love, loss, and social distance (Read, 2001). Kinship structures, both closest and farthest, for example, reflect social relations that influence the life process, including the biological essence which includes collaboration, partner preferences, and conflict (Wilson, 2016). The structure reflects the function and the quality of function affects the authority of the structure. The stability and continuity of kinship, thus, depending on the balance of structure and function, implementation of obligations and rights between related parties.

Kinship is not “hanging without a Rope” (Steedly, 1983, p. 3) rather requires a bond between relatives. Like clothes, kinship requires patches, accessories as well as millennials, an illusionary net that hides something behind. The illusion net is a customary ritual, a place for restoration, evaluation, and retrospection to increase magical properties and sanctity of



kinship (Muda & Suharyanto, 2020). Tradition contains unwritten local regulations, limits, and practices of daily life (Henley & Davidson, 2008; Purwanto & Haryono, 2019), a source of legitimacy for kinship structures and functions. Violation of customary provisions raises God's anger, has an impact on life failure, family breakdown, and even kinship rifts (Djalins, 2015; Tambak & Damanik, 2019). Kinship is always strengthened throughout life and preserved after death.

The description of the state of the arts above in this study contains three fundamental differences; (1) kinship formation in the marriage ritual is legitimized by four basic frameworks that focus on the husband's family, recognition of the position and function of the mother-to-be, (2) the four basic frameworks are the foundation of the nuclear family relationship with a triangular and pentagonal pattern, and (3) kinship confirmed through marriage ritual and restored through death ritual. Marriage is the union of two large families, the giver, and recipient of the wife and the entire conjugal family (Damanik, 2016a, 2017b, 2019) and reaches all aspects of life (Damanik, 2016b, 2020; Purba & Damanik, 2019; Saragih et al., 2019; Van Wormer, 2019).

The kinship formation in the marriage ritual shares a blueprint with the death ritual (Tambak & Damanik, 2019). The mother-to-be is the focus of the initial kinship formation in the marriage ritual, whereas the first grandson and granddaughter are the focus of kinship restoration in the *sayurmatua* ritual. The ritual is the most ideal conception of death, where all the biological offspring of the mother are married and bore grandchildren (Damanik, 2016a). The role of the four basic frameworks in the ritual of marriage and death is symbolized through the dress of departure and the last attire (Purba & Damanik, 2019). Both, the formation and restoration of kinship are accompanied by the provision of advice, suggestions, and proverbs, accompanied by melancholic music (Damanik, 2017a, 2019, 2020). The four basic frameworks, thus, form the bases of the triangular and pentagonal-patterned kinship (Damanik, 2021).

The Radcliffe-Brown structural-functionalism paradigm is considered relevant in analyzing the focus of the study based on two considerations; (1) the functioning of institutions in all social systems and (2) the relationship between reality and the needs of organisms during life. The stability of the four basic frameworks affects the continuity of the kinship function in facing social dynamics, manifested through functional and mutual attitudes, behaviors, and actions.

## **1** **Methods**

The study was conducted qualitatively (Creswell, 2014) with a pragmatic approach (Creswell, 2007), adapted to the Radcliffe-Brown structural-functionalism paradigm. The qualitative study is intended to explore the initial formation of kinship, according to narrative text and detailed explanations of informants in natural situations. This study is therefore intended to investigate as well as understand the phenomenon in the social world (Schutt, 2016, 2017). A pragmatic, nomothetic-based, and causal-functional approach (Ritzer, 1988), views kinship formation, including structure, function, and social implications, as an abstraction of behavior based on social experiences (Berger & Luckman, 1991; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).



The qualitative method in this study follows a mixed-methods design (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004) by considering two main points: (1) obtaining the best information about the object of study (Greene & Hall, 2010), and (2) complete single information when one source is inadequate (Creswell & Plano Clark's, 2011). Furthermore, the Radcliffe-Brown paradigm of structural-functionalism Radcliffe-Brown is used by considering two things; (1) exploring and discussing the initial formation of kinship, and (2) analyzing the interrelationship between the structure and function of kinship in the social world. Based on these two considerations, kinship formation is seen as a conceptual model of underlying human behavior (Goodenough, 1976) and covers all aspects of social life (Berger & Luckman, 1991).

The data were collected through participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and visual documentation according to the qualitative paradigm (Patton, 2014; Rossman & Rallis, 2003) focused on five marriage rituals between August 2019-January 2020 and two *sayurmatua* rituals during August-October 2020. Observation centered on the rituals of the four basic frameworks of kinship analyzed based on the cultural interpretation (Geertz, 1973). Furthermore, the interview focused on the meaning, urgency, and significance of the four frameworks in legitimizing kinship, while documenting the course of the ritual. Eighteen research informants, consisting of seven ritual leaders (*borujabu*), seven ritual organizers (*hasuhuton*), and four administrators of traditional institutions and Simalungun scholars (*maujana*). Also, the four basic frameworks were interviewed to find out the roles, functions, and cultural and social implications based on the knowledge and experience of the individual. The link between the marriage ritual and the *sayurmatua* is intended to obtain answers as formulated in the assumptions of the study.

Sources of informant data can be objective and biased. However, validity, given the choice of methodology and rhetoric, was found in all approaches (Creswell & Plano Clark's, 2011). Reduction of subjectivity and bias was carried out through comparisons between informants. All data were transcribed verbatim, and then conceptualized, coded, categorized, and displayed (Schutt, 2016, 2017) analyzed in a narrative-interpretive manner (Creswell, 2014) according to Radcliffe-Brown's view.

## Results and discussion

Five marriage rituals during August 2019-January 2020 and two death rituals during August-October 2020, specifically focused on the four basic frameworks of kinship, showing the same reality; (1) the obligation of the woman giving the traditional clothes to four relatives of the husband; consists of parent-in-law, father's older brother, siblings brothers, and husband of the father's sister, (2) the symbolization of kinship in the form of complete traditional clothing, which is worn to the bride and groom and the parents of the prospective husband, while three other relatives, the clothes are handed over without being dressed, (3) four relatives, in exchange for giving recognition and acceptance in the form of advice, messages, hopes and proverbs on the position and the function of the mother-to-be at a later date, (4) recognition of a mother-to-be is acceptance of the position and function to accompany and continue the function of the mother-in-law when she dies, (5) the institutionalization of functions in the marriage ritual focuses on the prospective mother, while the death ritual focuses on the first grandson and granddaughter, (6) kinship designation of prospective mothers is the basis of a nuclear family with a triangular pattern, while

assignment of kinship to the grandchildren is the basis of conjugal families with a pentagonal pattern, and (7) kinship formation in marriage rituals is restored through death rituals after maternal death.

Regarding the four basic frameworks of kinship; (1) parents-in-law are important and central figures who guide and inspire the nuclear family. Parent-in-laws function as a source of social order, collective reference, and social motivation in the new nuclear family environment. The nuclear family is a new family whose role is to continue kinship in the future, (2) the father's older brother, a figure who accompanies parents in making important decisions in the family. His presence at every important moment is eagerly awaited, sitting on the right side to advise the nuclear family, (3) siblings brothers, biological siblings who function as a forum for deliberation, short and long term planning, figures who accompany the nuclear family at every important moment, and (4) the husband of the father's sister, the executive figure or person in charge of important moments in the nuclear family. Based on this explanation, the four basic frameworks of kinship are close relatives of the nuclear family, a source of collective reference, a means of deliberation, social planning, and the people in charge of important moments. The four relatives are the earliest kinship format focused on the nuclear family. In the social world, the nuclear family is considered to lack power without the support of its relatives. Anggara Damanik, personal communication, August 22, 2020, explained as follows:

"For marriage ceremonies, both in the birthplace and the diaspora, the *ampangnaopat*, the four basic frameworks of kinship, must be carried out. *Ampangnaopat* is an analogy, a basket that cannot stand perfectly without the support of its four legs. If one leg fails, the basket would be unlevelled and would not stand upright. In other words, the nuclear family cannot stand perfectly without the support of the four initial kin units. The marriage ceremony is the confirmation of the nuclear family. However, kinship formation is confirmed through the *ampangnaopat* mechanism, one of the ritual components in the marriage ceremony."

Rituals of marriage, death, and kinship according to the Simalungun perspective are related and explain four main things; (1) the importance of kinship in a patrilineal society and clan exogamy. Cross-cousin (*marborutulang*) is the mechanism and preference of pairs most recommended to ensure the sustainability of bonds and hereditary relationships. Uncle's sons and daughters are second-generation kinships, customary tolerance for marriage ties based on blood relations or consanguinity. A mother expects an uncle's daughter to become the wife of her child so that the sustainability of kinship can be maintained. In another case, even though a son does not marry his uncle's daughter, kinship can be formed utilizing collecting the dowry (*bonaboli*). At this moment, the mother and son depart for the uncle's house, to apologize and approve of the marriage plan. The family structure and the position of the mother are, thus, especially important, as the focus and determinant of kinship. Regardless of whether a cross-cousin marriage is preferred, the four basic frameworks play a role in legitimizing kinship.

Furthermore, (2) the most recommended marriage custom is when the mother-to-be is sent to the house of her prospective husband and fulfil her traditional obligations (*pinaik-kat*). Through this model, the union of a husband and wife and two extended families has direct implications for kinship formation. In two other models, the mother-to-be is approved by her parents but the customary obligations (*nantiasokan*) are delayed, and the

case of eloping (*marlualua*) has negative implications for ties and kinship relations. Delay is tolerated through the fulfillment of the customary debt mechanism at a later date (*mangadati*). Certain marriages that violate customary provisions such as incest (*mardawanbegu*), sexual relations outside marriage (*marjabuuhur-uhur*), and forced marriage (*nanirobot*) have no implications for kinship. The roles of the four basic frameworks of kinship only appear in the three marriage models mentioned above.

Furthermore, (3) the customary provisions on the validity of marriage and kinship are carried out through two mechanisms, (1) recognition of the mother-in-law as a new mother marked by the fastening of a traditional hat (*marpanayog*), and (2) affirming the nuclear family to the public through a traditional reception as well as the introduction of kinship (*parunjukon*). Close relatives are structures that have direct marital relations focusing on the nuclear family (*hadehade*), and vice versa are distant relatives (*dihadiha*). At the moment of recognition and affirmation of the nuclear family, the four basic frameworks play a role in legitimizing kinship. Finally, (4) kinship restoration after maternal death in death rituals. In front of the mother's body, the four basic frameworks assign kinship to the grandchildren, the embryo of the conjugal family, the basis of the pentagonal pattern of relations. The loss of a mother is not seen as the end of kinship, but rather its perpetuation in the grandchildren, the third generation of the social world.

Based on the description above, there are two main theses; (1) the marriage ritual is not understood as simply the union of a husband and wife, the legitimation of sexual and reproductive relationship, but is also oriented toward the kinship ties between two large families, the wife giver and wife recipient families, and (2) the death ritual as a mechanism for the perpetuation of kinship after maternal death. Kinship is established mutually, reaching all life processes in the social world, including after death. Matulesy Damanik's, personal communication, September 27, 2019, explained as follows:

"In fact, in Simalungun, the four basic cornerstones are the mechanism for recognizing and approving kinship in the mother-to-be. Female presence in the male's family not only signifies the beginning of the formation of the nuclear family but also most importantly the initial phase of kinship formation. In the initial phase, kinship is legitimized by the male family's structure; parent-in-law, father's older brother, siblings, and husband of the father's sister. A mother-to-be is legitimized by the four structures before entering the social world, the relationships having triangular and pentagonal patterns. All layers of structure-function for real social life, reaching all aspects of life and surviving during and the afterlife."

The position of the mother is very central in kinship; (1) basis and formation of kinship, (2) reproduction and channels of blessing, and (3) reference to inheritance law, socialization, and social arrangements. A mother is, thus highly valued and respected. The existence of the nuclear family tends to last for as long as the mother is still alive. On the other hand, maternal death has implications for the destruction of the foundation, weakening, cutting off of blessings, and the fading of the light. This understanding paves the way to respectful attitudes, behavior, and actions toward the mother and all her siblings. A mother is a foundation, source of strength, blessing, and light for social life.

The four basic frameworks of kinship, based on the explanation above, have implications for two broader structural components; (1) kinship with a triangular pattern, which consists of the wife giver family, the wife recipient family, and relatives of the same clan. The triangular pattern of kinship is a forum for the nuclear family to gain both material and immaterial support in the social world, and (2) kinship with a pentagonal pattern which



includes wife giver to *tondong*, wife recipient from *tondong*, *hasuhuton*, *boru*, and a brother from the same clan. The kinship with the pentagonal pattern is a forum for raising material and immaterial support for the conjugal family. Maternal death is not considered a breakup of kinship, but rather is continued and perpetuated by grandchildren. However, the grandchildren and all their siblings cannot live on their own, and they would need greater support as well.

The kinship of the Simalungunese based on this study has a mechanism of formation and recovery to reach social life during life and after the death of one's parents. Three levels of kinship according to this study; (1) *ampangnaopat*, (2) triangular pattern, and (3) pentagonal pattern, reflect continuity in the social world. The first level is the basic relationship based on the husband's family, while the second level is the relationship between the wife giver and recipient families with a triangular pattern, based on the nuclear family, whereas the third level is the relationship forged after maternal death with a pentagonal pattern, based on the conjugal family. In this hierarchy, the first level affects the second and third levels. Social experience at the first level has an impact on the stability of kinship at the next level. Kinship, in other words, requires synchronization between each level so that the structure can function properly. Figure 1 is the relationship structure and function of kinship in the Simalungunese.

The magical powers of kinship are implemented in the obligation to worship the wife giver family, respect for siblings, and politeness toward the wife recipient family. The wife-giver is a source of advice, whereas siblings are a source of deliberation, and *boru* is a source of strength. The wife-giver's role is to bless, the brothers are to support, and the wife recipients are to implement. The function of kinship covers all joyous and sorrowful occasions alike. The denial of this tradition not only undermines kinship but also marks the beginning of the destruction of the nuclear family, which will both lose support and be shunned out by the social world. The stability of kinship in the social world can only be upheld if the foundation is firm and strong. On the other hand, kinship becomes

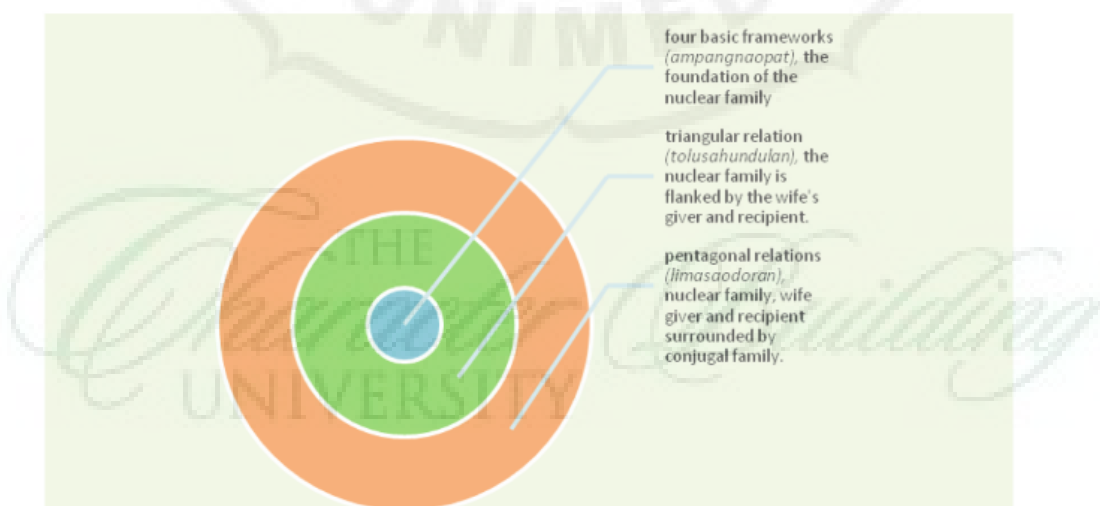


Figure 1. The essence of the kinship of the Simalungunese.



fragile, withering, and crumbling if the foundation is fragile. This understanding inspires the need for the legitimacy of kinship in the internal nuclear family and the conjugal family.

Based on the description above, the four basic frameworks of kinship reflects six basic things in the social world; (1) the basis of moral, economic, and social support in the social world, (2) a forum for exchanging information, opinions, advice and all matters relating to life activities, (3) a means of establishing bonds and relationships according to social dynamics, (4) resolution dispute, (5) integration, social harmony and cohesion in the social world, (5) personal and collective references, sources of motivation, and kinship construction to understand the social world, and (6) a forum for restoring ties and relationships over both failures and successes in life. Ferry Purba's, personal communication, October 02, 2020, confirmed the following:

"The four corners of kinship, namely *ampangnaopat*, actually form the basis of life in this world. For the Simalungunese, when they start living in the social world, good or evil is seen in basic kinship relations. In reality, kinship is a way to forge tighter bonds, both in joy and sorrow. Kinship, in other words, includes; (1) a forum for consensus, energy, and social support, (2) helping hands in a state of joy or sorrow, when having a dispute or having a bad relationship with others, and (3) relatives are the closest people one could have in their social life."

9 The process of social life is a description of activities in the social world and throughout life. Life activities reflect both joy and sorrow. During life, humans often exhibit helpfulness, mutual gifting, mutual support, and mutual assistance, both material and immaterial. All of this forms the essence of social life, which is summarized in functional and mutual attitudes, behaviors, and actions. The formation of kinship through marriage rituals thus serves an important role in two basic matters; (1) a forum to create an integrative order, a basis for cohesion and collaboration, and (2) a means of binding functional and mutual relations. The first statement indicates the existence of a collective identity, common ownership, and solidarity, balance of obligations and rights based on privileges and social distance within the family. The stability of kinship encourages a strong sense of belonging and emotional bonds to increase solidarity, a social order which fosters collaboration.

The second statement emphasizes social construction, a kinship that establishes ego relations with parents and siblings, both in nuclear and conjugal families. Kinship contributes to the allocation of obligations and rights, social boundaries, sexual relations, attitudes, social behavior, and actions, including all forms of economic, political, and religious activities. Functional implementation contributes to kinship authority. Functionality appears in life indulgences and success, while dysfunctionality appears in life failures; fragile solidarity, low sense of belonging, and declining kinship values. Failure in life is often associated with physical disease, crop failure, material loss, bankruptcy, theft, dispute, or other forms of suffering. Matulesy Damanik's, personal communication, September 27, 2019, emphasized the following:

"Kinship according to Simalungunese is the formation of bonds and relations among relatives, both in the nuclear and conjugal family. The motivation for kinship is collaboration. Kinship in other words reflects nepotism, the mainstreaming of primordialism. Individuals are responsible for collective success. There are many cases in Simalungun today where kinship tends to deteriorate; declining manners, inheritance disputes, infidelity, divorce, childlessness, poor

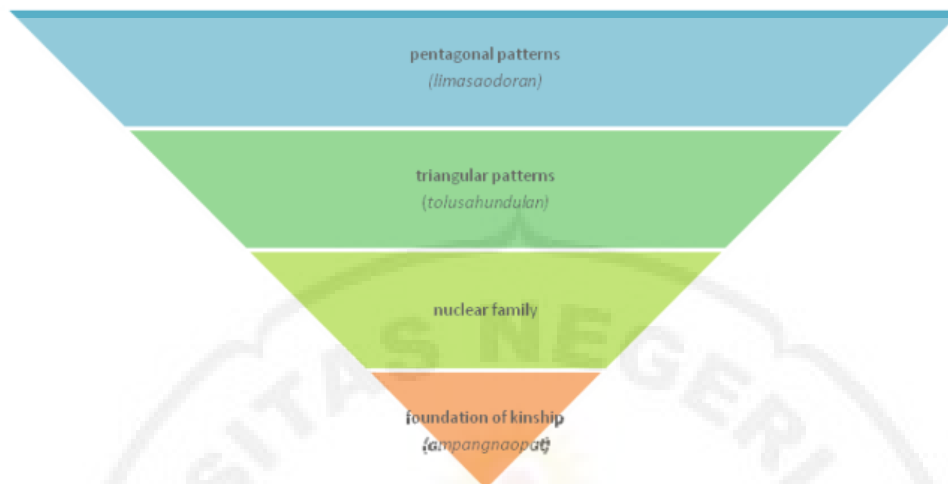
financial conditions, or being influenced by the politicization of ethnic identities. Kinship is often considered less important and is merely a traditional ritual from a bygone era. The loss of kinship ties is seen in the increasing frequency of crimes, disputes, incest, abortion, hunger, and other sufferings. All of this reflects the waning sense of belonging, emotional bonds, and **19** parity in the social environment. All this rottenness reflects the gradation of kinship structure and function in the social world.

Kinship **is** a matter of collective human life, mutual support for communal success. Each individual and family has contributions and expectations for kinship. The contribution is reflected through material and immaterial participation, while expectations contain both expectations and benefits. The greatest expectation of kinship is the balance of obligations and rights in the social world. Each structure reflects a function, manifested in obligations and rights. Denial is bad for kinship dysfunction. Both material and immaterial presence and support are an implementation of obligations and rights. The traditional Simalungun expression clearly states: “to live according to one’s ability.” Kinship, thus, is not merely focused on material obligations and rights, but also the immaterial aspect of it. Kinship units who are less well off financially, for example, contribute opinions or energy instead on both, joyful and sorrowful occasions.

Based on this understanding, kinship must be established from marriage and preserved after death. *Ampangnaopat* is the momentum of kinship binding at the earliest before living real life, the foundation of triangular and pentagonal kinship. Basic kinship consists of four relatives; the triangular pattern involves twelve families and the pentagonal one involves twenty-four families. *Ampangnaopat*, thus, is the foundation for the twenty-four families that support the nuclear family. Mutual support reflects social capital when living in a dynamic social world. Kinship, thus, is an accumulation of multiple structures and functions. The combination of the three kinship layers **forms the facade of Rumahbolon, the traditional house of** Simalungunese, an analogy of the nuclear family. When it comes to social dynamics, greater involvement of the family means greater support. **Figure 2** is inverted pyramid-shaped kinship layers and levels of Simalungunese.

The explanation above reflects the function of the four basic frameworks in a normal marriage. However, sometimes marriages do not run normally, for example, the prospective daughter-in-law is rejected by the prospective parents-in-laws. For this phenomenon, four basic frameworks reflect dysfunction and have six consequences; (1) the four basic frameworks are the basic elements and support for the nuclear family. Without the legitimacy and affirmation of the four basic frameworks, nuclear family does not have a clear structure and function in traditional and social settings. In a sense, the nuclear family loses kinship support to carry out traditional activities, as well as social, moral, and material support; (2) a prospective wife who is not legitimized and confirmed by the four basic frameworks, the marriage is automatically postponed or canceled. For example, the prospective in-laws reject the prospective daughter-in-law. Delays or cancellations have implications for the loss of triangular relations, namely the potential for greater support for nuclear families.

Furthermore, (3) even if the marriage is forced to take place, the husband’s family will not be present. Absence is a bad sign that the strengthening of the triangular relationship is delayed. The kinship between the giver and the recipient of the wife becomes cracked, disharmonious and is considered the beginning of life’s problems, (4) nuclear family



**Figure 2.** Pyramid-shaped kinship layers and levels of Simalungunese.

rejected by the four basic frameworks have an impact on every life cycle ceremony in the future, where one element of kinship will always be absent in rituals and ceremonies. Every activity is considered meaningless without the presence of all kinship elements, (5) in many ways, the rejection of the four basic frameworks has implications for all life activities; career, agriculture, reproduction, disease, and others, and (6) on the other hand, the nuclear family that is not supported by the four basic frameworks establishes informal, clandestine, and secret relationships. Such behavior, even though it has good intentions, is considered self-deception and is considered wrong in kinship relations.

In essence, without the legitimacy of the four basic frameworks, it is believed that the nuclear family will experience difficulties in life. However, the Simalungun custom has another mechanism to bridge this phenomenon, namely the fulfillment of adat (*mangadati*). This mechanism is usually carried out after a certain time, either five or ten or even fifteen years after marriage. Customary debts are paid off and triangular relationships are confirmed, and pentagonal relationships can be created in the future.

Social dynamics demand kinship stability to ensure solidarity and collaboration. The development of science and technology in the era of globalization has an impact on the integrity of kinship. Globalization, on the one hand, changes attitudes, behavior, and actions of the society, thus, having implications for disintegration, disharmony, individualism, pragmatism, including transactional. However, on the other hand, it demands tighter solidarity as a basis for collaboration. Globalization is not seen as a necessity but is rather absolute according to social dynamics. The vulnerability of kinship to globalization is reflected in the gradation of values and meanings such as in developed countries, as is the case in Simalungunese. Globalization does undermine the stability of structure and function, but kinship locality forces every unit to be present and participate in joyful and especially sorrowful occasions.

Attendance is important as a form of implementation of obligations and rights in kinship. The greatest meaning of this statement is the collective memory of fellow relatives, siblings, or family. The meeting is used to release nostalgia, share information about the future, challenges, and opportunities for education, work, politics, economics,



and other social activities. Consensus regarding plans was one of the main topics of discussion. Every element that neglects its function, for example, when they are absent or not participating in traditional ceremonies, is deemed to have rejected the idea and will face a similar reckoning.

In Simalungunese, expressions of disappointment are conveyed by the following words: “let it go ... no longer remembers us as his relatives.” During the ceremony, the inability to come due to physical distance, for example, due to being in a different city, province, or country, is resolved through the appointment of a representative. The rights and obligations of representatives are communicated with the nuclear family first so as not to cause disappointment. However, at moments of mourning, especially at the death of a parent, every element of the kinship is obliged to attend and participate. In principle, rituals and ceremonies are evaluation, retrospection, and restoration of kinship relations. Hisarma Saragih’s, personal communication, October 02, 2020, describes the following:

14 “Kinship is the recognition and implementation of one’s position and role in the social world. Every structure has a function, and most importantly it contributes to social life. Kinship is a forum for asking for help, assistance, loans, education, and advocacy covering all things about social life. Kinship fades when individuals or groups fail to obtain social benefits from it. On the other hand, kinship is relatively stable if it can provide benefits to each member. All the benefits are obtained with the sincere, continuous sacrifice to support the success of group members. Ideally, kinship is a means to fulfil psychological, biological, economic, political, and social needs, without it, kinship is inevitability.”

In Simalungunese, the ritual of death is not seen as the final tribute to the body before burial, but rather a new moment to perpetuate kinship. In these moments, kinship is perpetuated through the last attire (*hiou parpudi*), the assignment of kinship to grandchildren as an embryo of the conjugal family. All conjugal families introduce themselves, their place of residence, and occupation, including personal contact numbers. All grandchildren are expected to inform each other, share their complaints and accomplishments in life, and be present in moments of sorrow and joy. All of these efforts are intended to perpetuate kinship after maternal death. The conjugal family becomes the foundation for all maternal offspring to support each other in the social world.

Based on the explanation above, the four basic frameworks are the basis of triangular and pentagon relations that focus on mothers who are oriented throughout life over all life processes. As the basis for the relationship between triangles and pentagons, it is carried out in three stages; (1) the four basic frameworks are carried out before the marriage ceremony. A prospective wife, by her parents delivered to the family of the prospective husband. The prospective wife is accepted by four elements of the husband’s family consisting of parent-in-law, the father’s older brother, siblings, and husband of the father’s sister. Acceptance as a prospective wife is marked by the submission of departure clothing. The main core of the role and function of the four basic frameworks is the legitimacy as well as the main supporter of the nuclear family on the customary and social order. In Simalungun, the kinship bound by the four basic frameworks reaches four families and all of their members.

Furthermore, (2) the relationship with a triangle pattern is carried out during the marriage ceremony. The triangular relationship is the legitimacy and confirmation of the nuclear family by the two extended families, both male and female. The triangular patterned relationship includes the giver of the wife, the recipient of the wife, and relatives of the same clan. In



this second stage, the elements of the four basic frameworks; the in-laws are transformed into *boru* in a triangular relationship, while the father's older brother, siblings, and husband of the father's sister become *sanina*. Furthermore, the entire family giving the wife is called *tondong*. Focusing on the new nuclear family, the wife giver is a source of advice and blessings, *sanina* is a source of consensus, while *boru* is a source of energy. The legitimacy of the triangular relationship is the support for the nuclear family in real social life. In a sense, every problem in life, both joy and sorrow is the responsibility of both parties. In Simalungun, kinship that is bound by a triangular pattern reaches twelve families and all of their members.

The final stage, (3) the pentagon-patterned relationship is performed when the mother in the nuclear family dies. This relationship consists of the previous triangular relationship (*tondong*, *sanina*, and *boru*), and the wife giving to the *tondong* (*tondong nitondong*) and the wife receiving from the nuclear family (*boru niboru*). The pentagon relationship is confirmed and focused on grandchildren. The departure dress which was submitted to the four basic frameworks at the beginning of the marriage was transformed into the last attire. The family giving the wife asks for clothes for departure and when they are brought home, it is a sign of the end of the kinship relationship. On the other hand, if it is applied to the eldest grandchild, it marks the preservation of kinship relations. The uncle completes the role of the parents (*tondong nitondong*) while the grandson completes the role of the *boru* called *boru niboru*. Structural transformation reinforces function; *tondong* is a source of blessings, *tondong nitondong* is a source of light, *boru* is a source of energy, *boru niboru* is a source of strength, while *sanina* is a source of deliberation. The pentagon relationship is the bond of kinship between the husband's family, the wife's family, and the nuclear family that is bound by grandchildren. In Simalungun, kinship bound by a pentagonal relationship reaches twenty-four families and all of their members.

In essence, without the legitimacy of the four basic frameworks, the nuclear family loses its structure and function in a triangular relationship. Furthermore, without the triangular relation, the nuclear family loses its structure and function in the pentagonal relation. The loss of structure and function in kinship relations is the loss of customary, social, moral, and material support. Each structure reflects its function as a source of blessing, light, strength, consideration and energy. All relationships and functions are mutually oriented during life over all life processes.

Based on the explanation above, *ampangnaopat*, based on the findings of this study, are the initial kinship formation, the institutionalization of functional relations before entering the real social world. As a foundation, initial kinship formation requires legitimacy to support social life. Each relative bears the same burdens and responsibilities according to their position in the kinship. Kinship morality is not temporary, but rather permanent and covers the whole life process. Kinship formation is intended to foster brotherhood and is oriented toward mutual attitudes, behaviors, and actions to obtain enjoyment in life. Kinship, a characteristic of Simalungunese according to the findings of this study is the mechanism of bonding and relations during and the afterlife. Even though parents die, kinship can always be preserved so that functional relationships are maintained. *Ampanagnaopat*, the novelty of this study, is a kinship building block with a layered, tiered relational structure and involves many families.

This study found five basic points; (1) kinship formation, *ampangnaopat*, which develops into triangular and pentagonal relationships to reflect family support in social life, (2) mother-to-be is the basis of kinship with triangular patterned nuclear families, and grandchildren are the basis of the conjugal family with a pentagonal pattern, (3) kinship reaches

social life after the death of parents, (4) death rituals play a role in restoring kinship to interrelate, and (5) kinship in the marriage rituals shares blueprint with the death rituals. The amount of support for the nuclear and conjugal family becomes a barometer of the stability of kinship in social life.

The five findings of the study above, more specifically the first three points are relevant to the structural-functionalist paradigm of Radcliffe-Brown that the stability of the structure guarantees the function. Stability of structure and function reflects the integration between reality and human needs during life. The stability of the structure is seen in the continuity of kinship in the face of social dynamics which is manifested through functional and mutual attitudes, behaviors, and actions. However, the Radcliffe-Brown description only explains the structure and function of kinship in one generation of marriage without explaining how the kinship is after the death of the mother. The findings of the study, more specifically the last two points above, distinguish this study from Radcliffe-Brown. This study shows that, even though the mother dies, kinship is always institutionalized in the social environment. The kinship assignment focuses on grandchildren, the third generation connecting all descendants of the five structures and all of their members.

Based on the description above, the main assumption of the study has been answered that the four basic frameworks are a mechanism of commissioning and institutionalizing kinship functions, the basis of mutual bonds and relations, the resolution of facing the challenges of the social dynamic. This Statement is built on three findings: (1) kinship formation reflects the institutionalization of functions focused on the husband's family, (2) determinants of kinship stability and continuity in the social world, and (3) resolution in dealing with social dynamics. Kinship is constantly evaluated, constructed, and strengthened through traditional ceremonies to accommodate all life and post-death activities. All efforts made to strengthen kinship are closely related to social dynamics, a collective resolution to raise communal support.

The four basic frameworks, the conclusions of the study, are reaching out and institutionalization of multiple functions, based on triangular as well as pentagonal patterns of mutual relations to support all aspects of life. The study four basic frameworks, the primary elements of kinship, a legitimacy mechanism focusing on the mother-to-be, with mutual support at its core, as well as determinants of the stability and continuity of social relationship. The findings of this study theoretically support the paradigm referred to in the five exceptions in the third paragraph above. The Radcliffe-Brown structural-functionalism paradigm, according to the findings of this study, does not stop at the nuclear family but also continues in the conjugal family. In Simalungun, the nuclear family was confirmed by *ampangnaopat* through marriage, transformed into triangular and pentagonal relations, with a mechanism to outreach larger functional relations. An understanding of these findings, the practical implementation of the study, contributes to the formation of a functional order to strengthen a sense of belonging, a strong emotional bond to promote social solidarity.

## Conclusion

The four basic frameworks of kinship are mechanisms for the institutionalization of functions, a resolution in the face of social dynamics. The four basic frameworks constitute the foundations of kinship patterned triangles and pentagons, with a wider range of

relationships and support for social life. The basic characteristics of kinship are solidarity, the social capital for collaboration. Solidarity only grows well when there is a functional balance between obligations and rights according to one's social position. The collaboration reflects attitudes, behaviors, and actions in support of each other for the sake of success and enjoyment of communal life. The four basic frameworks of kinship are an appreciation of the mother's role as a foundation as well as a source of strength, a channel of blessing and light in social life. The four basic frameworks are the determinants of stability and continuity of kinship in the social world and after death. The four basic frameworks, the conclusions of the study, are reaching out and institutionalization of multiple functions, based on triangular as well as pentagonal patterns of mutual relations to support all aspects of life. In response to social dynamics, locality and continuity of kinship are forced through participation in every ceremonial occasion. Kinship is the group's building block, a collectivity based on structural and functional relations in the real world. Each member has functional attitudes, behaviors, and actions, sharing the same burden and responsibility to achieve success in life. The institutionalization of functions is highly dependent on the qualitative ties which establish more mutual and functional ties between kinship units. This study recommends the need for similar research with a wider scope to obtain the best results to encourage kinship in a more real social world.

### Acknowledgments

The author expressed his gratitude and appreciation to Simetri Institute, a non-governmental organization in Medan, who sponsored this research under Contract Number 2212 in 2019. The appreciation is also conveyed to ritual leaders (*borujabu*), ritual organizers (*hasuhuton*), Simalungun scholar institution (*maujana*), and as well as all informants.

### Funding

This work was supported by the Simetri Institute [2212 in 2019].

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