

# GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION THROUGH FKUB IN AN EFFORT TO OVERCOME THE DYNAMICS OF ETHNIC SIMALUNGUN IDENTITY IN PEMATANG SIANTAR CITY

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**Abstract.** Indonesia, built from and in diversity, has been an independent country for 74 years, but may still be in the process of becoming a nation. The process of inter-ethnic acculturation continues through inter-ethnic or religious marriages. Inter-religious harmony is a form of peaceful socialization born of tolerance for religious diversity. The city of Pematang Siantar has many groups consisting of ethnic Batak who inhabit the North Sumatra region, which is also known as the Pematang Siantar area, while religious groups come from Muslim, Christian, Chinese and Buddhist ethnicities. Researchers see the importance of examining how young people of various ethnic cultures identify themselves in the land of the Batak people and as Indonesians in constructing social identity as part of the Indonesian Nation, studies that are explored directly in communities with certain cultural settings will provide input on how identity is built so that psychological concepts are obtained that better describe behavior in local cultural settings. To find out government communication through Religious Harmony Forum (FKUB) communication in an effort to overcome the dynamics of ethnic simalungun identity in Pematang Siantar city. To find out the role in the implementation of government communication through communication of the Religious Harmony Forum (FKUB) in an effort to overcome the dynamics of Simalungun ethnic identity in Pematang Siantar City. To find out whether there is a risk if the government does not take part in efforts to overcome the dynamics of Simalungun ethnic identity in Pematang Siantar City. The research used in this study is qualitative (case study). The emergence of protests by ethnic Simalungun to the government (mayor) of Pematang Siantar, due to dissatisfaction with various City Government policies, especially in the field of culture, which are considered to have harassed Simalungun culture and ethnicity. The dynamics of Simalungun ethnic identity in the city of Pematang Siantar are shown by the increasing number of Simalungun elements, as well as non-Simalunguns who sympathize with the protests and demands of the Simalungun people. Simalungun ethnic identity allegedly did not get a harmonious position, treatment and involvement in the implementation of development in the city of Pematang Siantar

**Keywords:** government communication; cultural diversity; identity dynamics

## I. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia, built from and in diversity, has been an independent country for 74 years, but may still be in the process of becoming a nation. The process of inter-ethnic acculturation continues through inter-ethnic or religious marriages. However, intolerance and conflict between ethnicities and religious adherents also still exist (Damanik [1]). North Sumatra, which consists of 13 ethnicities, certainly also has the potential for conflict, although until now it has never been triggered in real terms [2]. This is as stated by President Joko Widodo that there is no history of division in North Sumatra despite the various ethnicities and customs that exist in the area [3]. Furthermore, President Jokowi Widodo stated that North Sumatra is a miniature Indonesia consisting of various ethnicities and religions that until now have lived in harmony and have never had conflicts. The role of social sciences, including psychology, needs to be strengthened to maintain harmonization of diversity and in development planning, as well as its implementation throughout Indonesia.

Inter-religious harmony is a form of peaceful socialization born of tolerance for religious diversity. Inter-

religious harmony is one of the main sticks in maintaining a good atmosphere relationship, peaceful, not quarreling, not moving, uniting hearts and agreeing between different religious communities to live in harmony. Inter-religious harmony is a popular issue these days. Not all religious people can accept and live peacefully as neighbors with different views [4]. The diversity of tribes, cultures, ethnicities and religions forms the colorful excitement of social life. Inter-religious harmony becomes an important value because it involves aspects of culture, principles of life, ethnic groups, beliefs and values that are adopted to become a benchmark for living together [5].

The city of Pematang Siantar has many groups consisting of ethnic Batak who inhabit the North Sumatra region, which is also known as the Pematang Siantar area, while religious groups come from Muslim, Christian, Chinese and Buddhist ethnicities. Batak Ethnicity and Religion is not a single community because each sub-ethnicity has relatively different diversity and dynamics; one of which is language differences [6]. Although there is enough diversity, including the use of different languages, the basic cultural values of the

various sub-ethnicities are relatively the same, namely using a patrilineal system in organizing group membership, using clans, speech culture, which is in accordance with the kinship system [7].

In understanding the process of forming and building a person's identity with his ethnic background, it is necessary to know the views of the leaders of the ethnicity to get a comprehensive understanding of Batak ethnicity and its relation to identity as an Indonesian. Thus, based on the philosophical assumptions of interpretative qualitative studies, it is necessary to dig deeply in the understanding of cultural figures from various sub-ethnic figures in Medan through FKUB. Considering that religious harmony is a very dynamic and pluralist condition, it can be a big problem in social and religious life [8], in the reform era a Joint Regulation of the Minister of Religion and the Minister of Home Affairs on Harmony and Tolerance between Religious Communities in Building the Integrity of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI) No. 8 and No. 9 of 2006 established FKUB (Religious Harmony Forum). FKUBs are forums established by the community and facilitated by the government with the aim of building and empowering religious communities for the harmony and welfare of religious communities. FKUB is a forum or space that holds the mandate and maintains religious harmony. Its benefits are designed as a common home for each religion. In addition, FKUB functions as an orderly administration of the establishment of houses of worship as well as a facilitator of people's aspirations. Its prestige is under the umbrella of state law so that it frees up several things including it is not difficult to coordinate with interfaith, financially and facilitated by the government.

For the diversity of tribes, ethnicities and religions in Indonesia, FKUBs were formed at the provincial and city levels, with the hope that in addition to bridging the aspirations of the community and the government, it is also a vehicle for accelerating the resolution of people's problems. FKUB, especially Pematang Siantar City, has a function that affects the harmony of religious communities in the vicinity. In resolving a difference or conflict, the right communication strategy is needed.

Researchers see the importance of examining how young people of various ethnic cultures identify themselves in the land of Batak people and as Indonesians in constructing social identity as part of the Indonesian Nation, studies that are explored directly in communities with certain cultural settings will provide input on how identity is built so that psychological concepts are obtained that better describe behavior in local cultural settings. The condition of Simalungun Pematang Siantar City, which is good in terms of economy, education and nature, should make the community more peaceful and feel safe, it turns out that the emergence of inter-religious conflicts does not make some people feel harmonious. On the other hand, the government pays attention to efforts to maintain interfaith harmony, FKUB was formed. FKUB is a very interesting organization, because it is the only community organization under the government that specializes in maintaining religious harmony, and there has been no research on this focus.

## II. RESEARCH METHODS

The research used in this study is qualitative (case study). Case studies are research with problem characteristics related to the background and current conditions of the object under study in the form of individuals, groups, institutions or certain communities. The purpose of a case study is to investigate in depth about a particular subject [9].

This research is in the form of descriptive field research, which describes what it is or provides a clearer picture of government communication through communication (FKUB) in an effort to overcome the dynamics of Simalungun ethnic identity in Pematang Siantar City. So that the results of this study are expected to be able to describe what happened. The descriptive approach aims to obtain an in-depth description of the speech, writing and observable behavior of an individual, group, community, or organization studied in a comprehensive perspective [10].

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research used in this study is qualitative (case study). Case studies are research with problem characteristics related to the background and current conditions of the object under study in the form of individuals, groups, institutions or certain communities. The purpose of a case study is to investigate in depth about a particular subject. This research is in the form of descriptive field research, which describes what it is or provides a clearer picture of government communication through communication (FKUB) in an effort to overcome the dynamics of Simalungun ethnic identity in Pematang Siantar City. So that the results of this study are expected to be able to describe what happened. The descriptive approach aims to obtain an in-depth description of the speech, writing and observable behavior of an individual, group, community, or organization studied in a comprehensive perspective [10].

Around Holing Island then developed into villages where people lived. These areas later became the jurisdiction of Pematang Siantar City, namely: Holing Island became Pematang Village,; Suhi Kahean became Sipinggol-pinggol Village, Malay Village, Martoba, Sukadame and Bane. Suhi Bah Bosar became Christian, Karo, Tomuan, Pantoan, and Martimbang Villages, Siantar Bayu became the City Center Village. In 1907, the position of the king of Siantar became a landschap by the Dutch Colonial. Furthermore, the Dutch formed the Simelungun en Karolanden afdeeling, with the capital in Seribudolok, and since 1910 it was moved to Pematang Siantar. As a result, Pematang Siantar turned into a migration area for various non-Simalungun foreign ethnicities such as Chinese, Indian, European, and local ethnicities such as sub Batak Toba, Karo, Mandailing, Angkola, Pakpak, Nias, Malay, Javanese, Minang, and others. On July 1, 1917 based on Stad Blad No.285 Pematang Siantar turned into a Geemente which has its own autonomy.

Since January 1939 based on Stad Blad No.717 it changed to Geemente which had a Council. During the Japanese era it changed to Siantar Estate and the Council was

abolished. After the Proclamation of Independence Pematang Siantar returned to being an Autonomous region. Based on Law No.22/1948 the status of the geemete became the city of Simalungun district and the mayor was concurrently appointed by the Regent of Simalungun until 1957. Based on Law No. 1/1957 turned into a full Kota Praja and with the issuance of Law No.18/1965 turned into a Municipality, and with the issuance of Law No.5/1974 on the principles of government in the region turned into Pematang Siantar level II area until now.

Culturally Pematang Siantar is Simalungun culture with a distinctive Simalungun ethnic identity. Evidence for this is the existence of the tombs of the Siantar kings found in Pamatang, as well as former palaces, and naming related to the Simalungun language such as bah bolon, bah binom, bah lias, and other names. The Simalungun Islamic Family Association (IKEIS) Pematangsiantar City condemned the actions of the Siantar City Government which blasphemed, harassed and insulted the Simalungun ethnicity. The form of blasphemy is that the city of Pematang Siantar as the ancestral land of Simalungun was declared by the Siantar City Government as a heritage city which was realized in pictures and paintings of a small Simalungun traditional house which then deliberately planned to erase the existence of Simalungun. Another reason according to IKEIS, the opening of MTQ in Siantar Marimbun recently featured other cultures. Then, President Jokowi's arrival to Siantar in November 2017 was not welcomed with Simalungun culture. Furthermore, the Siantar Anniversary celebration entrusts more to other parties rather than Simalungun institutions that have traditional and competent institutions. "The policy has an impact and creates anger and inner turmoil and has an impact on things that are not good," said IKEIS Chairman Lisman Saragih who was accompanied by his Secretary, Bakti Damanik and other administrators, when conveying IKEIS aspirations to the Pematangsiantar City DPRD, Monday (04/16/2018). On that occasion, IKEIS also asked the DPRD to immediately convene to address the anger of the Simalungun tribe by considering that the Mayor of Pematangsiantar had violated his oath of office by creating unrest against the Simalungun tribe and the DPRD determined an attitude in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.

The arrival of IKEIS officials was welcomed by a number of members of Commission 1 of the Pematangsiantar City DPRD, namely Secretary, Tongam Pangaribuan, Denny Siahaan, Umar Silalahi, Nurlala Sukumbang and Hotmaulina Malau. Pematang Siantar City has and is inhabited by various ethnicities such as Batak Simalungun, Toba, Karo, Java, Minang, Malay, Chinese, Mandailing, and others. In terms of belief, this city's residents each embrace a religion, such as Islam, Protestant Christianity, Catholicism, Hinduism, and Buddhism. Protestant Christians and Catholics are in the majority in Tomuan and Kampung Kristen. The majority of Muslims are in Timbang Galung and Banjar Village. Hindus are the majority in the area of Jalan HOS Cokroaminoto and Jalan Cipto Mangunkusumo. Buddhists are the majority in the downtown area of Pematang Siantar. This religious diversity is what makes the city of Pematang Siantar one of the best

cities with religious tolerance number two in Indonesia [11], having previously been number one. This is indicated by the absence of horizontal social friction or conflict between religious communities in the city of Pematang Siantar.

The motto of the city of Pematang Siantar is "sapangambei manoktok hitei", which means "working together". So it can be said that the principle of mutual cooperation in Simalungun customs has existed since ancient times [12]. Sapangambei Manoktok Hitei can simply be interpreted as "Working together to achieve the ultimate goal" for the benefit of all communities in achieving prosperity. This principle of cooperation or mutual cooperation is carried out by the Simalungun people to achieve a sense of justice, happiness and love. In addition, the word "gotong-royong" reflects the spirit of 'self-awareness', 'harmony of steps', 'communal attitude of mutual care, fostering and compassion' in Simalungun society, a legacy of attitude, wisdom of Simalungun ancestors in organizing, living ideal relationships in society, a trait and character of the communal community "Huta Adat", a traditional village in the past that has the nature, characteristics; working together, always prioritizing the attitude of mutual cooperation because this is the core purpose of a traditional huta.

This mutual cooperation attitude is emphasized by the existence of a noble goal, meaning harmony with universal human principles, equality, justice, happiness, love, and love [13]. The implication of "Sapangambei Manoktok Hitei" is the tradition of the principle of mutual cooperation or cooperation which is so thickly called "Haroan Bolon". Haroan Bolon is described by working together when planning to plant rice, division of tasks is carried out, all appropriate elements of relatives are called to deliberate, pray for work success and hope for rice yields later, eat together. At harvest time, again invited appropriate relatives, carry out harvest work, convey thanksgiving prayers according to natural beliefs, and part of the harvest is conveyed to respected relatives. With this activity, work that feels heavy will become light because it is done together, for the betterment of the community.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The emergence of protests by ethnic Simalungun to the government (mayor) of Pematang Siantar, due to dissatisfaction with various City Government policies, especially in the field of culture, which are considered to have harassed Simalungun culture and ethnicity. The dynamics of Simalungun ethnic identity in the city of Pematang Siantar are shown by the increasing number of Simalungun elements, as well as non-Simalunguns who sympathize with the protests and demands of the Simalungun people. Simalungun ethnic identity allegedly did not get a harmonious position, treatment and involvement in the implementation of development in the city of Pematang Siantar.

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