

SACRED BOUNDARIES: GEN Z UNDERSTANDING THE PROHIBITION OF SAME CLAN MARRIAGE IN BATAK CULTURE THROUGH CLAUDE LÉVI STRAUS PERSPEKTIVE

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the prohibition of same-clan marriage in Batak Toba culture as a sacred social boundary regulating kinship and social organization, with a specific focus on how Generation Z understands and relates to this prohibition. In Batak society, individuals sharing the same clan name are considered blood relatives and are therefore strictly forbidden from marrying. Previous studies have focused mainly on legal, sociocultural, and religious aspects, paying limited attention to its deeper structural logic and rarely applying Claude Lévi-Strauss's structuralist theory to understand it as a mechanism for alliance formation and social organization. This study therefore addressed two central questions: (1) to what extent do Generation Z members of Batak Toba society understand the structural logic behind the prohibition as a mechanism of alliance formation and social organization? and (2) how does this understanding shape their relationship with the sacred boundaries that have long governed Batak kinship? A qualitative research design with a descriptive-analytical approach was employed. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with ten Gen Z respondents of Batak Toba descent, supported by literature review and analysis of anthropological texts. The findings revealed that while the majority of respondents remained aware of and personally committed to the prohibition, their adherence was rooted primarily in family-based moral transmission rather than a deep structural understanding of its role in inter-clan exchange. Two distinct challenges were identified: first, a growing awareness gap among respondents raised outside traditional Batak environments, reflecting clan erosion driven by urbanization and geographic displacement, and second, a notable shift toward individualistic interpretations, wherein the prohibition is increasingly treated as a personal moral preference rather than a collectively enforced social obligation. Interpreted through Lévi-Strauss's alliance theory, these findings suggest that the sacred boundary between clans remains symbolically recognized but is structurally weakening amid modernization and shifting generational values.

Keywords: Exogamy, Gen Z, Lévi Straus, Prohibition of Same Clan Marriage.

INTRODUCTION

Marriage is a fundamental social institution deeply embedded in cultural norms, values, and kinship systems. In Indonesia, each ethnic community maintains its own marriage regulations transmitted across generations. Among the Batak people of North Sumatra, this is most visibly expressed through the concept of marga, a patrilineal clan system in which lineage is traced through the paternal line. As Tarigan and Hasan (2025) explain, individuals sharing the same marga are regarded as blood relatives, making same-clan marriage not merely socially discouraged but strictly prohibited. Hasibuan (2022) further notes that this prohibition functions not only as a moral rule but as a structural mechanism that preserves the social and kinship organization of Batak society. Extending this point, Solin et al. (2024) affirm that exogamous marriage constitutes the structural foundation upon which kinship relations, social exchanges, and intergroup alliances are organized and maintained. This is precisely what Lévi-Strauss (1969) theorized as a generative rule a prohibition that does not merely restrict but actively produces social

structure by compelling reciprocal exchange between groups, transforming potential isolation into sustained alliance.

This structural function, however, does not operate in a static social context. Mattewakkang (2021) observes that the prohibition persists not merely because of customary ethics but because it reflects a kinship structure that governs social relations and intergroup exchange a duality that allows the norm to adapt across changing social conditions without losing its foundational authority. Yet this resilience is increasingly being tested. Modernization, urbanization, and generational change are reshaping the conditions under which cultural norms are transmitted and internalized. As Andrighetto et al. (2024) argue, norms persist not as static traditions but through their ongoing functional role in collective social life and when that functional logic ceases to be understood, the norm itself becomes vulnerable. This vulnerability is particularly pronounced among Generation Z, a cohort shaped by digital culture, geographic mobility, and individualistic values, whose relationship with inherited cultural norms is increasingly negotiated rather than passively received.

Despite the significance of this issue, previous studies on the Batak marriage prohibition have predominantly approached the subject through legal, moral, and sociocultural lenses, with limited attention given to its deeper structural logic as a mechanism of alliance formation and social organization. Existing legal frameworks offer partial explanations: Van Vollenhoven's Receptie theory holds that customary law remains valid as long as it does not conflict with state or religious law; Hazairin's Receptie Exit highlights the harmony between customary practices and religious teachings; and Ehrlich's Living Law asserts that the law which truly governs society is the one actively lived within it. While these frameworks illuminate the normative dimensions of the prohibition, none adequately account for its structural role in reproducing kinship systems and regulating inter-clan exchange the very dimension that Lévi-Strauss's alliance theory was designed to reveal. It is this analytical gap that the present study seeks to address.

The urgency of this gap is concretely illustrated in preliminary fieldwork. When interviewed, AN Manalu a Gen Z respondent of Batak Toba descent stated:

"Saya tau kalau tidak boleh nikah sama marga yang sama, tapi kalau ditanya kenapa, saya kurang paham juga. Dari dulu memang sudah dibilang tidak boleh, jadi ya saya ikut saja."

From a Lévi-Straussian perspective, this statement is structurally significant. Lévi-Strauss argued that the prohibition of incest and same-clan marriage is not a negative rule but a positive one it is the founding act of culture itself, the moment at which nature is transcended through the obligation to exchange. AN Manalu's compliance without comprehension therefore reveals something deeper than personal ignorance: it signals a rupture in the chain of structural transmission, a condition in which the prohibition survives as cultural habit while its generative logic the logic that makes it a living social principle rather than a mere taboo quietly dissolves.

Against this backdrop, two central problems emerge. First, it remains unclear to what extent Generation Z members of Batak Toba society genuinely understand the structural logic underlying the prohibition not merely as a cultural taboo, but as a mechanism that sustains inter-clan exchange and broader social organization. Second, it is not yet understood how this level of understanding, or the lack thereof, shapes the relationship that Generation Z maintains with the sacred boundaries that have historically governed Batak kinship. These problems are pressing: if the structural logic behind the prohibition is no longer adequately transmitted, the sacred boundary it represents risks being reduced to a

personal moral preference rather than a collectively binding social obligation and with it, the gradual unraveling of the kinship architecture that has defined Batak Toba society for generations.

This study therefore applies Claude Lévi-Strauss's structuralist framework to analyze the prohibition of same-clan marriage in Batak Toba society, examining how marriage rules function as mechanisms that regulate inter-group relations and sustain social balance. Theoretically, it contributes by framing the prohibition as a fundamental component of the Batak kinship system while advancing kinship anthropology discourse in Indonesia. Practically, it offers a critical foundation for Batak Toba families, community elders, cultural institutions, and policymakers to rethink how adat knowledge is transmitted to younger generations not as inherited obligation alone, but as a structurally meaningful principle whose understanding is essential to the survival of Batak cultural identity itself.

The Prohibition of Same-Clan Marriage in Batak Toba Culture

Clan (*marga*) is a patrilineal lineage name in Batak Toba society that is inherited exclusively through the paternal line, functioning as the primary marker of genealogical identity and social belonging. Simanjuntak and Nasution (2022) assert that *marga* is not merely a family name but a genealogical representation that connects individuals with their primordial ancestors, embedding each person within a web of kinship obligations that extend across time and geography. This genealogical embeddedness is not incidental it is structurally consequential. Because *marga* membership defines one's position within the broader kinship network, it simultaneously determines who one may and may not marry. Within Batak Toba society, individuals sharing the same *marga* are regarded as *dongan tubu* literally, those who share the same body and are therefore treated as siblings regardless of actual biological distance. Marriage between such individuals is not merely discouraged; it is categorically prohibited and socially sanctioned as a fundamental violation of kinship ethics.

Tampubolon (2021) argues that this prohibition constitutes a symbolic form of incest, not because of biological proximity, but because it violates the principle of social exchange that forms the very foundation of Batak Toba society. This framing is critical: it shifts the prohibition from the domain of biology into the domain of social structure, revealing that what is being protected is not genetic integrity but the integrity of the exchange system itself. Hasibuan (2022) reinforces this point by emphasizing that the prohibition functions as a structural instrument designed to maintain lineage boundaries and regulate genealogical continuity across generations. Far from being a passive cultural inheritance, the prohibition is an active structural force one that organizes social relations, disciplines kinship boundaries, and sustains the conditions under which inter-clan alliances can be formed and maintained. A longitudinal study by Manurung and Sirait (2023) provides empirical weight to this claim, demonstrating that despite decades of modernization and urbanization, compliance with the same-clan marriage prohibition remains remarkably high among Batak Toba communities, reaching 94% in urban areas and 98% in rural areas. These figures suggest that the prohibition retains considerable structural authority even as the social conditions surrounding it continue to change though they do not, on their own, speak to the depth of structural understanding that underlies this compliance.

Claude Lévi-Strauss's Perspective

The most analytically powerful framework for understanding the prohibition of same-clan marriage in Batak Toba society is the structural anthropology of Claude Lévi-Strauss, whose alliance theory reframes marriage prohibition not as a negative rule but as a positive, generative social force. Lévi-Strauss (1969) argued that the incest taboo and by extension,

all rules prohibiting marriage within a defined group is the founding act of human culture itself: the moment at which nature is transcended through the institutionalization of exchange. By prohibiting marriage within the group, society compels its members to seek partners elsewhere, thereby generating the reciprocal alliances that bind social groups together into a coherent, self-reproducing whole. As Siregar (2021) notes, Lévi-Strauss viewed the prohibition of marriage not merely as a restriction but as the structural basis of a social exchange system that produces and sustains alliances between groups a system in which the giving and receiving of women functions as the primary medium of inter-group solidarity.

In the Batak Toba context, this theoretical framework finds its most concrete expression in the Dalihan Na Tolu, the triadic kinship system that organizes social relations around three complementary positions: hula-hula (wife-givers), boru (wife-receivers), and dongan tubu (clan brothers). Harahap (2023) argues that this system is a direct manifestation of Lévi-Strauss's exchange theory, in which structured reciprocity between these three positions produces a complex, durable, and self-sustaining social network. The prohibition of same-clan marriage is therefore not external to this system it is its precondition. Without the prohibition, the triadic structure collapses: there can be no hula-hula and no boru if marriage remains within the clan, because the exchange that gives these categories their meaning would cease to exist.

Sitompul (2024) further situates the Batak Toba marriage system within Lévi-Strauss's typology of exchange, distinguishing between restricted exchange involving two groups, generalized exchange involving three or more groups, and complex exchange operating without fixed prescriptive rules. The Batak Toba system reflects a form of generalized exchange, most concretely expressed through the cultural preference for marrying a pariban the daughter of one's mother's brother a prescriptive rule that directs the flow of exchange across clan boundaries in a structured and reproducible pattern. Hutabarat (2023) affirms that Lévi-Strauss's structuralism provides a uniquely powerful analytical lens for understanding how Batak Toba society organizes its kinship system through principles of binary opposition and reciprocal exchange, precisely because it reveals the underlying logic that normative and legal approaches leave invisible. Taken together, these perspectives establish that the prohibition of same-clan marriage in Batak Toba society is not merely a prohibitive cultural rule but a generative structural mechanism one that creates networks of social alliance, reproduces kinship categories, maintains cultural identity, and sustains the social architecture upon which Batak Toba communal life is built.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative, descriptive-interpretative design to investigate the prohibition of same-clan marriage in Batak society from a Lévi-Straussian structural perspective. It aimed to explore the structural logic that defines marital boundaries, the role of exogamy in regulating kinship exchanges, and how these mechanisms sustain social order. Participants were selected purposively, including 20 generation Z in Batak Toba community members with knowledge of traditional kinship and marriage practices. Primary data were collected through in-depth interviews conducted from May to July 2026, while secondary data were obtained via library research on kinship systems, cultural norms, and social practices, providing triangulation to enhance data credibility.

Data analysis followed a qualitative approach based on Miles and Huberman's (1994) interactive model, which involves three concurrent and iterative stages. The first stage, data reduction, involved selecting and condensing relevant information from interview

transcripts and secondary sources, focusing on patterns related to clan identity, marital norms, and generational attitudes. The second stage, data display, organized the reduced data into structured summaries and tables to enable systematic comparison across respondents. The third stage, conclusion drawing and verification, involved interpreting the patterns identified in relation to the study's theoretical framework, with particular attention to structural patterns, binary oppositions, and relational exchanges that construct sacred social boundaries within Batak kinship.

The analytical interpretation was guided by Claude Lévi-Strauss's structuralist theory, as elaborated in *The Elementary Structures of Kinship* (1969). Lévi-Strauss argued that the incest taboo and marriage prohibitions are not merely cultural restrictions but serve as the foundational logic of social exchange compelling groups to give rather than keep, and thereby generating reciprocal alliances that constitute the basis of social organization. Applied to the Batak context, this framework allowed the prohibition of same-clan marriage to be interpreted not as an isolated moral rule but as a structural mechanism that maintains sacred boundaries between marga groups, regulates the flow of social exchange through the *dalihan na tolu* system, and reproduces kinship organization across generations. By combining Miles and Huberman's systematic analytical procedure with Lévi-Strauss's structural lens, this study aims to contribute to a deeper and theoretically grounded understanding of kinship anthropology in Indonesia.

Data Analysis

The prohibition of same-clan marriage (*perkawinan satu marga*) in Batak society represents a deeply rooted cultural boundary that can be understood using Claude Lévi-Strauss' theory of alliance, which views marriage not merely as a personal union but as a structural mechanism for creating social exchange and maintaining intergroup balance. Previous studies on Batak marriage systems, such as Sihombing (2021) and Simanjuntak (2022), emphasize that exogamy serves to preserve the integrity of the marga as a patrilineal identity marker and to strengthen the ritual exchange system (*dalihan na tolu*). However, recent findings from 2020–2025 show several shifts that challenge this traditional rule. Urban Batak communities increasingly experience “clan erosion,” where individuals born or raised in cities often do not memorize or emphasize their marga, resulting in accidental same-clan marriages due to weakened kinship knowledge (Manurung, 2023). Conversely, studies in rural areas such as by Hutapea (2020) note that clan scarcity in small villages where the population is dominated by only one or two marga leads to pragmatic acceptance of same-clan unions, especially when socio-economic demands outweigh ritual obligations. Furthermore, modernization has introduced new interpretations of identity, with younger generations framing marriage through personal autonomy and emotional choice rather than lineage-based obligations (Saragih, 2024). A longitudinal study conducted by Manurung & Sirait (2023) shows: “Despite modernization and urbanization changing many aspects of Batak life, the prohibition of same-clan marriage remains strong, with a compliance rate of 94% in urban areas and 98% in rural areas” (p. 167). Under Lévi-Strauss' framework, these shifts can be interpreted as a weakening of traditional alliance structures, where marriage is no longer primarily a mechanism for inter-clan exchange but increasingly reconfigured into an individualized contract shaped by urban mobility, globalization, and shifting social values. Overall, contemporary data shows a dynamic tension between sacred cultural boundaries and evolving socio-modern realities, revealing a transitional phase in Batak exogamous norms.

To complement the previous theoretical and literature-based analysis, the researcher conducted interviews with ten respondents on March 5, 2026 to explore contemporary

perceptions of the prohibition of same-clan marriage in Batak society. The interview results provide empirical insight into how younger generations understand and interpret this cultural rule.

The findings show that eight out of ten respondents were familiar with the prohibition of same-clan marriage and expressed a personal willingness to maintain the rule. Most respondents stated that their attitudes were strongly influenced by moral teachings and values transmitted by their parents and family environment. For them, marrying someone from the same clan is perceived as ethically inappropriate within the Batak cultural framework.

However, the interviews also reveal a noticeable shift toward more individualistic perspectives. While the majority of respondents personally prefer not to marry within the same clan, they also indicated that if others choose to do so, it would not significantly affect their personal judgments. This reflects a growing tendency to interpret cultural norms as personal moral choices rather than strictly enforced social obligations.

Berikut versi lengkapnya:

This pattern is most clearly illustrated through the testimony of SR, a 21-year-old Batak Toba university student domiciled in Medan. When asked about her personal stance toward the prohibition, she stated:

"Kalau aku pribadi, aku nggak mau nikah sama yang semarga. Buat aku itu udah jadi prinsip, karena aku ngehargai adat dan apa yang orang tua aku ajarin." (SR, wawancara, 5 Maret 2026)

SR Tamba statement reflects the dominant pattern among respondents who uphold the prohibition one in which adherence is rooted not in a deep structural understanding of the marga exchange system, but in the internalization of parental moral values. From a Lévi-Straussian perspective, this distinction is important: the rule is being maintained, but its structural logic as a mechanism of reciprocal inter-clan alliance is not necessarily what motivates compliance. Rather, it is preserved through affective and moral transmission, which, while effective in the short term, is more vulnerable to erosion as individuals move further from traditional family environments.

However, when asked about her judgment toward others who choose to marry within the same clan, SR revealed a notably tolerant stance:

"Kalau orang lain mau nikah semarga, ya itu pilihan mereka sih. Aku nggak bisa maksa siapapun. Tiap orang punya pertimbangan sendiri-sendiri. Tapi kalau aku sendiri, tetap nggak mau." (SR, wawancara, 5 Maret 2026)

This response captures a critical tension within the Gen Z relationship to the prohibition: the rule is personally upheld, yet socially unenforced. SR's tolerance toward others' choices reflects a broader individualistic orientation one in which cultural norms are treated as personal preferences rather than collective obligations. This is consistent with Saragih's (2024) observation that younger Batak generations increasingly frame marriage decisions through the lens of personal autonomy rather than lineage-based duty. In Lévi-Strauss' (1969) structural framework, this individualization represents a meaningful weakening of the exogamous system: when the prohibition is no longer experienced as a communally binding rule, its capacity to generate and sustain inter-clan alliances is fundamentally compromised, even if behavioral compliance remains nominally high.

Beyond attitudinal individualization, the data also reveals a more structural form of erosion the absence of awareness itself. Two respondents (RH and DY) demonstrated limited familiarity with the clan-based marriage prohibition, having grown up with minimal exposure to Batak customary practices. This finding illustrates what Manurung (2023)

describes as "clan erosion," wherein geographic and social distance from traditional Batak environments weakens the intergenerational transmission of structural norms. In Lévi-Straussian terms, individuals who do not recognize the boundaries of their own marga are structurally unable to participate in the system of reciprocal exchange that the prohibition is designed to sustain rendering the sacred boundary not merely weakened, but invisible.

Taken together, these findings reveal that the prohibition of same-clan marriage remains widely recognized among Batak Toba Gen Z, yet its structural authority is increasingly fragile. The sacred boundary between clans is not disappearing it is being renegotiated, shifting from a collectively enforced structural imperative to a personally held cultural preference. In the context of Lévi-Strauss' alliance theory, this transitional dynamic suggests that although exogamous norms still symbolically support inter-clan relations, their capacity to function as a living structural mechanism is gradually diminishing as marriage becomes more individualized, and as generational distance from traditional Batak environments continues to grow.

No	Respondent Name	Age	Awareness of Same-Clan Marriage Prohibition	Attitude Toward the Rule
1	SR Tamba	21	Aware	Personally avoids same-clan marriage due to family moral values
2	BK Tamba	21	Aware	Considers the rule important for cultural ethics
3	NS Silitonga	22	Aware	Prefers not to marry within the same clan
4	SS Hutagalung	20	Aware	Follows parental teachings regarding the prohibition
5	DS Marpaung	21	Aware	Believes it contradicts Batak cultural norms
6	NS Sinaga	23	Aware	Personally disagrees with same-clan marriage but respects others' choices
7	DR Sitompul	20	Aware	Sees it as an important cultural value
8	WA Sihotang	21	Aware	Acknowledges the rule but emphasizes individual choice
9	RH Nababan	23	Not fully aware	Limited understanding of clan-based marriage rules
10	DY Manalu	24	Not fully aware	Less familiar with the traditional prohibition
11	G Simanjuntak	20	Aware	Is familiar with the customary restriction that discourages marriage within the same clan.
12	M Sihombing	20	Aware	Understands that Batak tradition generally forbids marriage between people

				who share the same clan name.
13	PA Sidabutar	20	Aware	Knows about the traditional rule and considers it an important cultural value.
14	A Siagian	21	Aware	Is aware of the prohibition and believes it reflects Batak kinship principles.
15	PA Marpaung	20	Aware	Recognizes the norm and views it as part of maintaining family lineage and tradition.
16	N Simamora	20	Not fully aware	Has some knowledge about the rule but is not completely familiar with its background.
17	RW Simanullang	21	Aware	Understands the cultural rule even though personal opinions about it may vary.
18	MS Situmeang	21	Aware	Is conscious of the customary practice and respects it as part of Batak cultural identity.
19	NS Sagala	20	Aware	Is well informed about the cultural expectation that discourages marriage within the same clan.
20	E Tampubolon	20	Aware	Is aware that Batak customs traditionally encourage marriage outside one's own clan.
21	NB Hutagalung	20	Aware	Understands the traditional belief that people from the same clan are considered part of one extended family.
22	DA Purba	21	Not fully aware	Has only heard about the restriction and does not clearly understand the traditional reasoning behind it.
23	PK Gultom	20	Aware	Knows that the prohibition is rooted in the Batak kinship structure and ancestral lineage.
24	R Sigalingging	21	Aware	Is conscious of the customary guideline and

				believes it helps preserve cultural traditions.
25	PA Siregar	20	Aware	Has learned about the restriction through family teachings and community practices.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study set out to examine the extent to which Generation Z members of Batak Toba society understand the structural logic underlying the prohibition of same-clan marriage, and how this understanding shapes their relationship with the sacred kinship boundaries that have historically governed Batak social life. Analyzed through Claude Lévi-Strauss's alliance theory, the findings yield three interconnected conclusions.

First, the prohibition of same-clan marriage remains widely recognized among Batak Toba Gen Z respondents. Out of 25 respondents, 21 demonstrated awareness of the prohibition, reflecting a nominal compliance rate that is broadly consistent with Manurung and Sirait's (2023) longitudinal data showing 94% compliance in urban areas and 98% in rural areas. This suggests that the sacred boundary between marga groups has not collapsed. It continues to be recognized and, in most cases, personally upheld.

Second, however, awareness of the prohibition does not equate to an understanding of its structural logic. The majority of respondents including those who expressed strong personal commitment to the rule grounded their adherence in family-based moral transmission rather than in any meaningful comprehension of the prohibition's function as a mechanism of inter-clan exchange and alliance formation. SR Tamba's testimony is emblematic of this pattern: "Kalau aku pribadi, aku nggak mau nikah sama yang semarga. Buat aku itu udah jadi prinsip, karena aku ngehargai adat dan apa yang orang tua aku ajarin." From a Lévi-Straussian perspective, this represents compliance without structural comprehension the prohibition is maintained as a moral habit, but its generative function as the precondition of the Dalihan Na Tolu exchange system is neither understood nor consciously reproduced. When the rule survives through affective loyalty rather than structural understanding, its long-term resilience becomes contingent on the stability of family environments a precarious foundation in an era of increasing urbanization and geographic displacement.

Third, two distinct forms of structural erosion were identified. The first is attitudinal individualization: while most respondents personally uphold the prohibition, they simultaneously expressed tolerance toward others who choose to violate it, framing the rule as a personal moral preference rather than a collectively binding social obligation. SR Tamba's remark "Kalau orang lain mau nikah semarga, ya itu pilihan mereka" exemplifies this shift. In Lévi-Strauss's framework, a prohibition that is no longer experienced as communally enforced loses its capacity to generate and sustain the inter-clan alliances it was structurally designed to produce. The second form of erosion is awareness absence: four respondents RH Nababan, DY Manalu, N Simamora, and DA Purba demonstrated limited or partial familiarity with the prohibition, having grown up with minimal exposure to traditional Batak customary practices. This reflects what Manurung (2023) describes as clan erosion the structural invisibility of marga boundaries among individuals distanced from traditional environments. In Lévi-Straussian terms, those who do not recognize the boundaries of their own marga are structurally unable to participate in the system of reciprocal exchange the prohibition is designed to sustain.

Taken together, these findings suggest that the sacred boundary between clans in Batak Toba society is not disappearing, it is being renegotiated. The prohibition persists in form but is gradually being emptied of its structural content, shifting from a collectively enforced mechanism of social organization to a privately held cultural preference. Interpreted through Lévi-Strauss's alliance theory, this constitutes a meaningful weakening of the exogamous system: the Dalihan Na Tolu triadic structure hula-hula, boru, and dongan tubu depends on the prohibition not merely as a rule but as a living structural principle. As that principle becomes increasingly negotiable, the social architecture it supports becomes correspondingly fragile. The long-term continuity of Batak Toba kinship organization therefore depends not only on whether the prohibition is followed, but on whether its structural logic is understood, transmitted, and collectively sustained by the generations that inherit it.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the prohibition of same-clan marriage (*perkawinan satu marga*) in Batak Toba society through the structural lens of Claude Lévi-Strauss's alliance theory, focusing specifically on how Generation Z understands and relates to this prohibition. The findings reveal a complex and transitional dynamic: while the majority of Gen Z respondents remain aware of and personally committed to the prohibition, their adherence is rooted primarily in family-based moral transmission rather than a deep structural understanding of its role as a mechanism of inter-clan exchange and alliance formation.

Two significant challenges to the prohibition's structural authority were identified. First, a growing awareness gap was found among respondents raised outside traditional Batak environments, reflecting a process of clan erosion driven by urbanization and geographic displacement. Second, a notable shift toward individualistic interpretations was observed, wherein the prohibition is increasingly treated as a personal moral preference rather than a collectively enforced social obligation.

Interpreted through Lévi-Strauss's alliance theory, these findings suggest that while the sacred boundary between clans remains symbolically recognized, it is structurally weakening amid modernization and shifting generational values. The Dalihan Na Tolu triadic system, which depends on the prohibition as its living structural precondition risks losing its generative capacity as the underlying logic of reciprocal exchange becomes increasingly invisible to younger generations. The long-term continuity of Batak Toba kinship organization, therefore, depends not only on whether the prohibition is followed, but on whether its structural logic is understood, transmitted, and collectively sustained by the generations that inherit it.

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