

# SUICIDE, CHURCH DISCIPLINE, AND SOCIAL-CULTURAL SANCTIONS

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## Abstract:

*Because suicides are not a single factor, but the causes are plural and the variants or types are the same, so the approach to it is also varied. In this paper the author attempts to approach it from the sociological perspective of Émile Durkheim. Apart from that, he also approaches these cases from a pastoral point of view and traditional Batak culture. Because suicide is caused by a weak social solidarity, it is deemed necessary to take steps towards social cohesion. This study aims to describe and identify the social issue of suicide. Achieve this with qualitative research with participatory methods and phenomenology. The results of the research, namely pastoral perspectives and traditional culture can complement sociological perspectives to explain suicide (more) completely and its contribution to reforming pastoral services in the Protestant Batak of Christian Church (HKBP) and traditional Batak culture*

## Keywords:

*Suicide, erklaren, sociological perspective, church strategy, socio-cultural sanctions, and public knowledge.*

## INTRODUCTION

Study of actual context which is based on empirical facts or events of everyday life is one of the core *points* of feminist sociology that was initiated and developed by Dorothy Smith.<sup>1</sup> The empirical facts (of course

<sup>1</sup> Dorothy E. Smith, *The Everyday World As Problematic: A Feminist Sociology* (Boston: Northeastern

not abstract but concrete) include (for example) the suicide bombing at the Makassar Cathedral on Sunday, March 28, 2021, the experiences of two students of the HKBP Pastor School, and excerpts from the author's own experience in a villages that tend to be thick with their traditional culture. The study of the three suicides above did not intend to ignore cases at the global level, for example according to Jeremy Seabrook, the cause of death of children and adolescents in the United States apart from vehicle accidents and homicides is suicide.<sup>2</sup>

Regarding the above, the writer is reminded of his childhood experience in his hometown in Marubun Lökkung village, Dolok Silau sub-district, Simalungun Regency, North Sumatra province. The village is in a four to five hour drive from the Medan city command. The author's father, a church elder, Zakaria Purba (+) once told about the background of a grave location there. At that time the writer had the chance to question the existence of a tomb that was different from the one opposite which was clean, well groomed, bright and beautifully flowered and had many varied signs of the cross. Meanwhile, that one tomb exuded a aura *dark*, neglected, bush, forest, unmarked, and sinister. My father (Batak language, it is mean: *amang*) said that the grave on the edge of the cliff was the grave of people who had committed suicide and *sipele begu* (Batak language, it is mean: idol worship / no official religion recognized by the government).

Because they committed suicide, their graves were also isolated, exiled (alienated) from the graves of people who died normally and were religious. Since then it seems to have internalized in the author a sociological subject of life. Humans in social relations often want distinctions that are sacred and profane, moral and immoral, dark and light, and so on. It seems that humans love the effort to differentiate themselves as the core of social games as a dichotomy between individuals and societies.<sup>3</sup> Individuals who violate the collective agreement of a society will be socially or culturally alienated at life and death. The author sees this empirical fact, there are humans who are objectified

University Press, 1987).

<sup>2</sup> Jeremy Seabrook, *Kemiskinan Global: Kegagalan Model Ekonomi Neoliberalisme* (Yogyakarta: Resist Book, 2006).

<sup>3</sup> Haryatmoko, *Membongkar Rezim Kepastian: Pemikiran Kritis Post-Strukturalis* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2017).

because of their disobedience to community habits or order.

Of course this is clearly different from the feminist sociology perspective of Dorothy Smith above. Instead, he is concerned with the effort to place every individual as a subject in social relations.<sup>4</sup> Related to this, Steve Taylor about the study of *suicide* in a sociological perspective, Durkheim also said that the case of suicide should be localized, not just generalized, because what we want to emphasize is the *micro-social contexts*, so this study cannot be too abstract, broad or global.<sup>5</sup> Global issues are usually more abstract. However, according to Michel Foucault, in his book on knowledge and method, he said that abstraction (derived from Latin abstraction, *abstract here takes*, it mean: withdrawal) is a process that the mind to arrive at a universal concept.<sup>6</sup>

## TWO STORIES OF MINISTRY

This ministry experience is related to a suicide case in the church. Saldo Hutabarat (a teacher of the HKBP congregation) and Pesta Ambarita (a HKBP deacon) tell the following stories:

### **Suicide, events without liturgy and pastoral services.**

During brother Saldo Hutabarat's ecclesiastical ministry which started from 2007 to 2020, before he finally continued his studies at the HKBP Pastor School in Pematangsiantar, it was said that two congregation members had committed suicide at HKBP Tebing Tinggi in Tebingtinggi, North Sumatra province. Both people are single. The local community and the family said that the cause was problems in the relationship. Because her boyfriend left her, she was desperate to commit suicide.

In general, suicide is understood as a deliberate act that causes one's own death. This is often done because of despair and mental disorders, although this is not always the case. When this news was announced to the church, the church emphasized its attitude, namely not carrying out the *mangagendai* (funeral liturgy).

<sup>4</sup> Dorothy E. Smith, *The Everyday World As Problematic: A Feminist Sociology*, 98

<sup>5</sup> Steve Taylor, *Durkheim and The Study of Suicide* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982), 39-40

<sup>6</sup> Michel Foucault, *Pengetahuan Dan Metode: Karya-Karya Penting Foucault* (Yogyakarta: Jalasutra, 2011), 7

The church only prays for and comforts the families who are left behind without any liturgical events served by the pastor or church elders. The burial ceremony was only carried out without singing and the normal customs were held when a community member died. When about to be removed from the house, the corpse was removed from the window. With the intention that no one will commit suicide anymore. Afterward, the community held a special ritual, in which a chicken was beaten to death in the coffin. After that the dead chicken is put in a crate and then closed. His grave was also exiled and made in a ravine, with an uncertain state of the chest. The essence of this particular ritual is the hope that suicide will not occur again in their community.

### **THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON SUICIDES.**

The development of social media lately has a bad impact on the household life of Mr. Johan Sitorus (+) and Mrs. Boru Sitompul. Before this family, especially the wife, got to know the social media Facebook, this family was doing well, working together seriously both in their own fields and on other people's fields as daily payroll workers. This family is working hard to support their six children who are still in primary school and toddlers. But since the wife got to know social media, especially Facebook, this mother is often complacent and doesn't care about her children. Absorbed online or *facebook's it*, then the child is not considered anymore. The husband objected and rebuked his wife, but the wife ignored him. Annoyed at the wife's treatment, her husband went to run away. But the wife quickly chased after her husband who was not far from home and she managed to pick him up back. This incident did not change the wife's habit of still communicating online with this other dream man. In fact, her habit became so bad that her husband ran away for a second time but was also able to be picked up again.

It is true that the development of online social media is increasingly having a dual impact on humans, especially families, constructive and destructive. The wife is so deeply immersed in the online communication network that she is no longer able to escape from the bondage / temptation of Facebook (fb). The wife is asleep, via *fb* he returned to find his former lover. The communication with *the ex is getting closer and the old love comes back*. As a result, the husband and children are no longer ignored. A great fight ensued between the husband and wife. It seems that the wife unconsciously said, "*Ai na guttur ma ho, so hepeng you hubaen*

*manuhor the package, na sent to the ex ki do*" (Batak language, it is mean: You are too angry, it's not your money that I used to buy a package, my ex's money is ok) . Like being struck by lightning in broad daylight, the husband was surprised to hear these words. Feeling that he is no longer loved and burning with jealousy, finally the husband is desperate to end his life by drinking Bionasa's poison.

After drinking the poison in the back of the house, he stumbled into the house, vomiting, foaming at the mouth and finally lying on the floor. Smelling poison, the wife realized that her husband had drunk poison. She ran backwards, hiding the poison bottle, cleaning up her husband's vomit. He did this in the hope that the church would care. After cleaning all traces of poison, casually go to the shop to buy sweetened condensed milk. Arriving home, the community was already busy seeing the situation of the husband who was screaming in pain. Some massaged their bodies, some applied oil, some drank garlic liquid because people thought they had a sitting wind. Because the pain was unbearable, the husband finally said that he had been drinking Bionasa. Finally, many people suggested that they should be taken to the nearest midwife. But the midwife refused and referred to the hospital in Padangsidempuan, South Tapanuli. After a week in the hospital, he still could not be cured, until he died.

Because it was getting late at the funeral home, finally the next morning he was buried without any service from the church. Regret always comes late, now the wife is struggling alone to raise six children *na sapsap mardum i* (Batak language, it is meaning: it is hard to find food).

### **THE SUICIDE BOMBING IN THE AREA OF THE MAKASSAR CATHEDRAL CHURCH**

This case is discussed in this article with *verstehen* that the cases *suicide* are a global, national and local phenomenon - it seems that some of these phenomena are intertwined. Regarding this global reality, all parties deserve to wonder (as part of a reasoning process, although it does not always end with an answer to the question) what is wrong with our world so that some individuals or communities are desperate to easily kill themselves and their fellow humans. Why do some humans have the heart to make beasts of humanity?

Many things happen beyond human control, making him live in

uncertainty. In the last week of March 2021 Indonesia was shocked by a bomb terror. A suicide bombing took place at the gate of the Makassar Cathedral Church, South Sulawesi, on Sunday, March 28, 2021, at 10.30 p.m. Not alone, the perpetrators of the suicide bombing were a married couple. The two of them are young and referred to by the police as “millennials”. Usually terrorists of this kind ride on motorbikes. The police identified them as husband and wife from Rizaldi’s statement. Rizaldi said that he married the young couple in September 2020. Rizaldi was arrested by the police in January 2021. Rizaldi was arrested with Zulfikar, his son-in-law who was shot dead by the police. According to police statements, Rizaldi and Zulfikar were members of the Jamaah Ansharut Daulah (JAD) network identified in connection with the Jolo bombing in the Philippines in 2018.

Regarding this husband and wife couple, the police said that they both served as doctrine providers, prepared jihad with suicide bombings and bought materials. to be blended into a suicide bomb. The police found evidence that the two perpetrators often attended recitation sessions at Villa Mutiara, Cluster Biru, Makassar. And, provide the doctrine of jihad before preparing a suicide bombing.

In preparation for the detonation they had chosen the right time, which was at 10.30 pm. At precisely that hour when the suicide bomb exploded and killed both of them, it was time to switch the schedule for Palm Sunday mass between the second and third mass. Their preparations were thorough and seemed to have been planned for quite some time. So, at the intermediate time when people go out and enter the church, they have planned a suicide bombing. The evil plan to blow himself up in the area of the Makasaar Cathedral Church when the interim mass was thwarted by suspicious security officers. But they failed to enter the church gate which was guarded by officers, both of them were held for a moment then exploded and killed both of them. Dozens of victims, including church security officers, were injured, including burns.

After the suicide bombing, the police arrested four people who were in the suicide bombing network. The four of them are residents of Bima, West Nusa Tenggara. Since 2018, suicide bombings involving family or family members have started to appear in Indonesia. In their attacks on selected objects, generally this family uses motorbikes.

The suicide bombing terror that occurred in Surabaya on 13-14 May 2018 is the beginning of our awareness of this threat to humanity at

the national level. On Sunday morning, May 13, 2018, three suicide bombings exploded at three churches in Surabaya while services were being held. The six suicide bombers at the three churches were killed and 15 people died. A total of 57 people experienced serious to minor injuries. Not only sporadically in three churches, plans for suicide bomb attacks were carried out in many places in Surabaya and its surroundings. On Sunday, May 13 2018, at night, a homemade bomb exploded at the Wonocolo Rusunawa, Sidoarjo. In that incident three bomb assemblers were killed after blowing themselves up.

Regarding the case above, the writer does not intend to explain it in detail, but instead tries to explain it from a sociological perspective in a limited portion but which is considered relevant for this paper. Feminists (theologians) are not even interested in understanding the origins of social pathology above, but are more interested in the question of how to deal with it.<sup>7</sup>

### ANALYSIS WITH DURKHEIM'S SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

The suicides mentioned above are then analyzed from a sociological perspective. A sociological perspective is a study or approach to *suicide* with empirical analysis and a point of view *micro-social context*, not macro or general, related to social life where the case occurs.<sup>8</sup> Society and individuals are connected entities. For Durkheim society is better than individuals.<sup>9</sup> But sometimes if not often, people are cruel to individuals, for example: *First*, it is no longer common knowledge that chicken thieves can be battered by the masses. *Second*, cruel cultural sanctions from the community or indigenous peoples (Batak) against people who commit suicide. *Third*, administrative and theological sanctions (ecclesiastical tactics) against congregation members who commit suicide. But what happens in the case of the suicide bombing is the opposite, the individual is cruel to society. So, both individuals and communities need a solid and reconciliatory attitude and one core thing that cannot be forgotten is the awareness of oneself as part of the community, public space, or wider society.

<sup>7</sup> Marie-Claire Barth-Frommel, *Hati Allah Bagaikan Hati Seorang Ibu: Pengantar Teologi Feminis* (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2017), 272

<sup>8</sup> Steve Taylor, *Durkheim and The Study of Suicide*, 22,26,30

<sup>9</sup> Hotman M Siahaan, *Pengantar Ke Arah Sejarah Dan Teori Sosiologi* (Jakarta: Erlangga, 1986). 145

For Durkheim, the interaction between individuals in society is very important as an antidote to human alienation from their own intimate environment. So that suicide attempts can be minimized or even stopped altogether. This intimate environment can be family, community, church, hometown or place where he or they work. Regarding this, it seems relevant to examine Paul Widjaja's opinion, for him, intercultural communication needs to be increased into intercultural interaction. Furthermore, he wrote based on Antonius Bunjamin's opinion that the lack of dialogue and interaction between religions is one of the factors causing the spread of radicalism in Indonesia.<sup>10</sup> Of course that includes the suicide bombing at the gate of the Makassar Cathedral on Sunday, March 28, 2021 as mentioned above.

For Durkheim, because *suicide* is caused by weak social solidarity and imbalance in social relations,<sup>11</sup> the division of labor which should strengthen social cohesion, each person needs the expertise or specialization of his fellow man, but instead alienates the individual / labor force / proletariat, hence the division of labor *must ensure it* that guarantees social justice, a more decent life, joy, physical / mental / mental health, recreation, and so on. This means that workers have the opportunity to enjoy the results of their hard work during their service and have a guarantee in old age. If this is not the case, then the individual will be uprooted from the roots of the consensus of the community or society. He or their group would revolt against the bourgeoisie establishment, sometimes even committing suicide. So, suicide is not the only cause, it is not always caused by *heartbreak* and severe poverty, because there are also rich people who commit suicide, and there are also those whose love is rejected but they do not commit suicide.

According to Durkheim, it is through the division of labor that social cohesion occurs in society. It is related to "mechanical solidarity". This solidarity seems close to the context of the company (factory) with its machines working mechanically, a solidarity born from the awareness that every proletariat forms a system whose turbines are the bourgeoisie. In fact, on the other hand or from a different perspective, the proletariat, who actually moves a lot, becomes a *turbine* or *generator* company. So,

<sup>10</sup> Paulus Wijaya, *Meretas Diri, Merengkuh Liyan, Berbagi Kehidupan. Bunga Rampai Penghargaan Untuk Pdt. Aristarchus Sukarto* (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2020), 348-249

<sup>11</sup> EC Cuff, WW Sharrock dan DW Francis EC Cuff, WW Sharrock, *Perspectives in Sociology* (New York dan London: Routledge, 2005), 70

two intertwined awareness, namely personal awareness and *collective consciousness*, gave birth to this social cohesion.

In general, people believe that it is psychological factors that cause people to commit suicide. But Durkheim rejects this, Norway has the largest number of mentally ill people in nine Western countries (Norway, Scotland, Denmark, Hannover, France, Belgium, Wurtenburg, Saksen, and Bavaria), but in fact, Norway is not the country with the most number of citizens who have committed Implications for the hermeneutics of religious books.

Furthermore, Durkheim examines cases of suicide from a sociological perspective. He rejects the old theory of suicide, rejects psychological factors as the sole cause to poverty. For Durkheim, rich people have a higher suicide rate than poor people.<sup>12</sup> In general, there are four types of suicide as a social pathology, namely: *Selfish suicide* (occurs when social integration is too weak), *altruistic suicide* (occurs when social integration is too strong, for example a soldier struggles and sacrifices his life for the safety of his nation; doctors and / or paramedics sacrificed their lives for the safety of Covid-19 patients?), *anomic suicides* (happened because regulation was too weak), and *fatalistic suicides* (occurred when regulation was too excessive).<sup>13</sup>

Based on the research, Stengel formulates as written by Steve Taylor that the suicide rate has been found to be positively correlated with the following factors: male gender, increasing age, widowed, single and divorce status, childlessness, high population density, living in big cities, high living standards, economic crisis, consumption of alcohol and drug additives, heartbreak in childhood, mental disorders and physical illness.<sup>14</sup> According to Taylor, the sociological perspective in studies is *suicide* not without weaknesses, because it is open to a socio-psychological approach to cases related to micro contexts, not to macro contexts that *meticulous* are statistically and too general.<sup>15</sup>

In the two or even three suicides with a background in ecclesiastical ministry, the church stated that it did not carry out the *mangagendai* (funeral liturgy). This attitude is based on the HKBP's Strategy and

<sup>12</sup> EC Cuff, WW Sharrock, *Perspectives in Sociology*, 147

<sup>13</sup> EC Cuff, WW Sharrock, *Perspectives in Sociology*, 69-72

<sup>14</sup> Steve Taylor, *Durkheim and The Study of Suicide*, 24

<sup>15</sup> Steve Taylor, *Durkheim and The Study of Suicide*, 39-40

Shepherding Rules which are linked to the 6th of *Tora*: “*Don’t Kill!*”. The person who committed suicide was clearly committing the act of murder, namely killing himself. He follows his own will to die, even though theologically only God created humans who have the right to do so. Since he is not God, he has no right to do so. Thus, a person who has committed suicide has clearly tried to *occupy God’s position* and / or take God’s prerogative.

Through article 15 of the Confession of HKBP on the *Warning of the Dead*, HKBP believes and testifies that death is the end of human life in this world, he quit all his work. It is Jesus Christ who has risen who raised people from the dead. He is Lord of the living and the dead (Rom 14: 7-9). It is something that doubts the people - it is questionable - if the church members commit suicide.

The theological question is: What about people who die by suicide, will that also be resurrected? *Ruhut-ruhut Parmahanion dohot Paminsangon* (Shepherding and Strategy Rules) of HKBP’s article IV.4.A.4 said: “*Na so jadi mangagendai na mate maningkot, ia so ala sahit jiwa manang ala na solpoton. Siapulan do ianggo sisolhot ni naung mate i.*”<sup>16</sup> It is mean: It is prohibited to serve liturgical departures of bodies who have committed suicide, except because of mental illness and epilepsy. But their families should be held consolation services until they reflect the fact that they have been able to accept the fact of the loss of their loved ones. From the formulation (quote) of RPP HKBP and HKBP Confession above, it cannot be concluded that people who die due to suicide will not be resurrected by the Lord Jesus. However, it is necessary to examine how the doubts of the people above are analyzed from a sociological perspective?

More specifically, the case of Mr. Johan Sitorus’ suicide which has been mentioned above clearly has a background of suffering *double-burden*, namely severe poverty (Stengel in Taylor’s book calls it *an economic crisis*), jealousy and deep shame (a kind of *heartbreak*. in the research concluded by Stengel above) - in the midst of their severe family poverty, the wife establishes a love relationship (romance) with another ideal man, even though it is online. It also seems that the wife is tired of the terrible poverty. Because of that, it seems that she needs entertainment in difficult situations of family life but instead she has

<sup>16</sup> HKBP, *Ruhut-Ruhut Parmahanion Dohot Paminsangon* (Pearaja Tarutung: Kantor Pusat HKBP, 2013).

fallen into forbidden entertainment which obviously does not result in consolation or joy but is sorrow for her husband's death. Thus, the family in particular the father was alienated not only by terrible poverty but also by the shame and jealousy of his own wife. Ideally, in the context of poverty, every member of the family is intertwined in mechanical solidarity, but what exists is segregation and egoism. In this case the division of labor (role) does not produce solid social cohesion, but rather suicide and suffering economically, socially, culturally and spiritually. Therefore, the church should carry out a continuous and systematic pastoral service so that family life can return to its integrity and away from this deadly alienation. They need to be made aware that they are part of the wider community of the church - drawn pastorally and liturgically from their small, psychologically and socially stuffy world.

Of course, the situation *double-burden* above must be analyzed from a sociological perspective. Apart from severe poverty and shame and jealousy as psychological factors, it seems that the type of suicide Mr. Sitorus mentioned above is an type of *altruistic suicide*. He is uprooted or detached from his social world because of deep shame and jealousy. Hence he is alienated and his humanity is no longer socially intact, but socially divided - he feels alone without an existential intimacy. Several times he tried to escape from the family as his close circle, it seems that it reflects his social integration as the individual part of society has been weak. So it seems typical of *suicide* this is *altruistic suicide*.

In the sociological perspective of the case of suicide, Mr. Sitorus can also judge him against a background rooted in sex as a social phenomenon, it is relevant to use Foucault's analysis which views it as a *discourse* sexual. For Foucault, sex or lust is hidden in reality or history but its impact is clear.<sup>17</sup> Even sex can cause sadistic death. This discourse is sometimes immersed in classical social theory and perhaps it is due to the influence of the Victorians who are so strong in Europe and even have a global impact.<sup>18</sup>

Suicide bombing cases in Indonesia are typical of *selfish suicides*, meaning that the individual is not well integrated into the broader social

<sup>17</sup> IB Wirawan, *Teori-Teori Sosial Dalam Tiga Paradigma: Fakta Sosial, Definisi Sosial, Dan Perilaku Sosial* (Jakarta: Prenadamedia Group, 2012),256-257

<sup>18</sup> Michel Foucault, *Sex Dan Kekuasaan* (Jakarta: Gramedia, 2020),1

unit.<sup>19</sup> They often withdraw into closed groups. According to Durkheim, those who consider other people as *out-group* strictly with all the consequences, often even cruel, will live in conflict relations, and have no reason for solidarity with people outside their *in-group*.<sup>20</sup> It seems that the perpetrators are darkened by the lure of spiritual capitalism, such as beautiful angels (of course Foucault's analysis of *discourse* sexual can also enter here, but this article needs to be limited), delicious heavenly food, gold, and so on. But of course spiritual capitalism is not a single factor. The perpetrators of the suicide bombing in Makassar were a couple. Both of them are still young and the police categorize them as the "millennial" generation who seem to be often the targets / victims of the doctrine related to suicide bombings, it could be because of the lability of that generation. In addition to the lure above, there seems to be a factor of power as well, the perpetrator feels that he is in control of himself and others. It seems that he or they feel they have the power to kill themselves and their fellow humans. They legitimize a heretical doctrine or teaching that has blinded the eyes of their reason or mind. According to Foucault, power is spread and cannot be localized to a particular person or institution, including the state apparatus. He also said that pervasive power is everywhere in public relations. And two of the complex strategies of power are maneuvers and mechanisms.<sup>21</sup> So, terrorists seem to feel in control of everything, including over the National Police Headquarters and the Cathedral even with maneuvers or mechanisms, for example the scapegoat mechanism related to injustice, severe poverty that alienates a certain person / family / community.

### **SOME IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY SUICIDE WITH A SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE**

At least four implications for the study of *suicide* above that would need to be considered in connection with efforts to construct a society amicable (*friendly*), social cohesion is strong / thick idealized Durkheim, in spite of the inevitability of its division of labor, as follows :

<sup>19</sup> George Ritzer, , *Teori Sosiologi: Dari Sosiologi Klasik Sampai Perkembangan Terakhir Postmodern* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2021), 159-160

<sup>20</sup> Doyle Paul Johnson, *Teori Sosiologi Klasik Dan Modern. Terj. Robert MZ Lawang* (Jakarta: Gramedia, 1988), 202

<sup>21</sup> Haryatmoko, *Membongkar Rezim Kepastian* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2017), 14-15

### Implications for public knowledge Community

knowledge in this context are customs, special rituals for people who die of suicide (when not categorized typically - four types according to Durkheim's opinion mentioned above), traditional culture, including socio-cultural sanctions on cases suicide. Studies of *suicide* with sociological perspectives seems to be a relevant study conducted (combined critically) in addition to the theological study of the same case. Since substantially *suicide* occurs because of the weakness of social solidarity, local wisdom seems to enrich insight in the context of strengthening the social cohesion of each individual throughout his life in the community. According to Saldo Hutabarat as mentioned at the beginning of this paper, Batak traditional culture does not hold relevant customs for people who died due to suicide but the community and elders or traditional kings still hold special rituals which are certainly different from the custom for those who died normally.

Culturally, the burial is carried out just like that without *tortor* (Batak dance), *mangulosi* (giving / embedding Batak traditional cloth), and eating together - within the framework of *Dalihan na Tolu* (as community knowledge of Batak ethnic). Events of abnormalities appear, for example, when a corpse is removed through the window of his residence. This symbolic action implied the intention that nothing like that would happen again. Then a chicken was provided and struck directly into the crate until it died. After that the chicken is put into the crate and closes the crate. His grave was also exiled / separated from the public grave, buried in a ravine, with an uncertain state of the chest.

The essence of the ritual is *panjoraon* (Batak language, meaning: deterrent effect) in the hope that such cases will not happen again in their community in the future. According to the author, the ritual contains *amessage* that a person who disturbs, denies or breaks the collective agreement of the community (community order) will be alienated (alienation). The ritual reflects the fact that (at times) society is cruel to individuals. So the idea of alienation from the social theory of Karl Marx and Durkheim has more or less been operational in Batak society since time immemorial (prehistoric times). According to Smith, public knowledge needs to be built not from an outsider's point of view but from an insider's perspective.<sup>22</sup> Therefore, the abnormal rituals mentioned above deserve to be appreciated as knowledge of traditional Batak society

<sup>22</sup> Dorothy E. Smith, *The Everyday World As Problematic: A Feminist Sociology*, 224

which is not arbitrary and is not without cultural meaning which has deep meaning, although the substance does not change, namely that individuals who oppose the consensus of the community / society will be alienated, church and traditional culture, which means bury humans like animals.

### **Implications for the hermeneutics of religious books**

The perpetrators of suicide bombing cases in Indonesia, seem to be motivated by the lure of *spiritual capitalism*, their lives are under the shadow or imagination of beautiful angels, the *fashion* best, delicious heavenly food- delicious, old gold, etc. - certainly not a single contributing factor. But it is deemed relevant to float the problem of *spiritual capitalism* implicatively. It seems that in other religious books, such as the Bible (New Testament) there are also impressions that are similar to the lure if they are not read with qualified hermeneutic rules. Because humans, according to Julius Ranimpi, can not be regulated or controlled by reasoning, but by the desire or its appetites, then the interpretation of religious texts should not laden with an approach that mere emotional, but rational, study by *reason* sound and prudent to *sitz im leben* or the social context of the text.

Examples of biblical texts that should be read carefully in terms of hermeneutic principles as well as other texts, namely Luke 13:29; 14: 15-24; Matthew 22: 1-10. In these texts and parallel verses it is illustrated literally that the Kingdom of God is a large banquet and at a glance it means that the Kingdom of God deals with the satisfaction of lust or physical needs alone, even though that is not what the narrator and / or the author of the text mean when the social context text is searched or researched.

Reading religious books with Durkheim's sociological perspective and Smith's feminist sociology will focus on contextualization efforts. Dialoging the text with the closest social context, not an abstract or too distant context, for example life after death. The social contexts of Batak, Kupang, Dayak, Papua, Java, Manado still need theological work, why should we rush to work on *the metaphysical context* (Heaven / Nirvana, etc.)? So, the word of God (sermons) is not opium that *lulls the* people, but opens the awareness that humans need the kingdom of God which is operational in daily life which is not always easy, even encounters bitterness in life that must be fought for / won.

Pastoral implications. The unity of Jesus and the Holy Spirit (*Paracletos*) is a unity of work. Unity is evident in the History of Salvation. Ideally the History of Salvation does not lead to alienation but peace (*shalom*), wholeness, unity, fellowship. This actually strengthens the bargaining position between the two concepts of humanity, namely Durkheim's social theory of *suicide* and the pastoral of suicide, that both approaches and explanations for suicide cases can complement each other. But the theory of the division of labor that alienates humans (labor, proletariat) which can lead to suicide should find its idealism in social relations *shalom*. Wouldn't active participation in the faith community overcome or anticipate suicides? If not the church and local wisdom, who else are expected to humanize humans? Humanizing pastoral is intended as an effort to attract each individual (church member) to realize that he is part of his social life or intimate community. It can be a definition of communion (*koinonia*) from a sociological perspective.

### **Implications for the church's tactics.**

The full explanation for the suicides should have implications for the church's tactics and the liturgy. The church (pastors, elders, congregation members, theologians, sociologists) should develop their understanding so that their understanding and insight into suicides will deepen. The exploration in question includes a sociological perspective on *suicide*. For Loren Townsend, *pastoral care* can take many places or opportunities in preaching and teaching. The sermon which is educative or full of Christian education becomes part of the liturgy. That means it is necessary to develop reliable research on congregation members who have died of suicide with the background of preaching containing pastoral interests with a sociological perspective - *erklarent* against suicide. Thus, perhaps their deaths (such as those categorized as casuistic above) can be compared with the death of a madman, epileptic disease (epilepsy) - listed in the RPP HKBP and mentioned above - buried with honor. The church should no longer bury humans like animals, but with respect and dignity because each individual is *imago Dei* (the Confession of HKBP 1996, article 3).

## CONCLUSION

Study of *Suicide* very important for Durkheim because he is deeply concerned with this social phenomenon. It seems to him that this phenomenon is a kind of anomaly in life in social relations. Therefore he tried to explain it from a sociological perspective. Suicide cases are not a single factor, but many of *their friends* are intertwined, including religion and culture as well as master and servant relations (subordinate power relations), relations between workers, and so on.

Suicide cases must be resolved structurally, culturally and spiritually. Overcome it with a network of cooperation. For this reason, building a friendly society, solid social cohesion, mutual visits, and caring is a necessity. Even though during the Covid-19 pandemic these social and religious humanist values for *good society* should be pursued simultaneously and even become the commitment of every citizen in all kinds of ways, for example as a form of *care*, social solidarity, and a friendly culture of visiting each other virtually. In addition, the ancestral heritage of the Indonesian nation accustoms a culture of being open to reform, for example replacing power relations in social classes, subordinating attitudes with legalism. The bourgeoisie does not have to subordinate the proletariat to mechanical solidarity.

Furthermore, intercultural communication needs to be increased into intercultural interaction. Because the lack of dialogue and interaction between religions is one of the factors causing the idea of radicalism to spread in Indonesia, it is urgent that interfaith or cross-cultural encounters be increased both online and offline for the sake of preserving solid social cohesion as aof personal awareness and *resultcollective awareness*.) which are intertwined.

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