

## Negotiation of The Ma'rifah Community Identity In Forming Sufistic Sholihan In Seuruway Community of Aceh Tamiang

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### Abstract

*This article is based on a variety of Seruway Aceh society phenomenon which is separated into two communities. One of them becomes a representative of the majority and the other as a representative of a minority. Ma'rifah community is a minority that got discriminative treatment from the majority one. Nevertheless, this community was able to expand as a majority. The article is aimed at explaining the relation of the Ma'rifah community in forming Sufistic identity in religious social space in Seruway Aceh and it is aimed at explaining its effect on the variation of religious practice. The research is the social anthropology of the ethnographic approach. The data were collected through interview, subject for the research was determined by using purposive sampling. The results show that; first, the Ma'rifah community is successful in developing familial relationships, a close friend and using power relations as capital in forming Sufistic habitus. Second, the Ma'rifah community presented an effect on religion variant, it is not only between majority and minority, but Ma'rifah community itself is separated into several communities, a part of them still in Sufistic ideology which is opposite of majority, and some others negotiate to be part of the majority.*

**Keywords:** Ma'rifah Community, Shari'a Community, Sufistic Identity

### Abstrak

*Artikel ini beranjak dari fenomena keberagaman masyarakat Seuruway Aceh yang terbelah dalam dua komunitas. Sebagian komunitas menjadi representasi dari mayoritas, dan sebagian lain menjadi bagian dari minoritas. Komunitas Ma'rifah adalah minoritas yang mendapatkan perlakuan diskriminatif dari kelompok mayoritas. Meskipun demikian, komunitas ini mampu berkembang menyamai mayoritas. Dengan demikian, kajian ini bertujuan untuk menjelaskan tentang relasi yang dibangun komunitas Ma'rifah dalam membentuk identitas sufistik di ruang sosial keagamaan Seuruway Aceh dan dampak terhadap variasi praktik keagamaan. Penelitian merupakan bentuk sosio-antropologi dengan pendekatan etnografi dengan teknik pengumpulan data melalui wawancara dan interview, serta penentuan subjek menggunakan purposive sampling. Hasil kajian ini memperlihatkan bahwa pertama, komunitas ma'rifah berhasil membangun relasi kekeluargaan, sahabat dekat, dan penggunaan relasi berkuasa sebagai modal dalam membentuk habitus sufistik. Kedua, komunitas Ma'rifah memberi dampak varian beragama, tidak hanya antara mayoritas dan minoritas, tetapi komunitas Ma'rifah sendiri terbelah dalam beberapa kelompok, sebagian tetap dalam ideologi sufistik yang bertentangan dengan mayoritas, dan sebagian lain melakukan negosiasi untuk dapat menjadi bagian dari mayoritas.*

**Kata Kunci:** Komunitas Ma'rifah, Komunitas Syariah, Identitas Sufistik

## Introduction

The study focuses on the effort of Ma'rifah community with a heterodox<sup>1</sup> Sufi ideology and a shari'a community that prioritizes Shari'a aspects in religious. In socio-religious life, the ma'rifah community is a minority,<sup>2</sup> while shari'a is the majority group. The existence of fundamental differences in religion makes these two communities often lead to conflict. As a majority, the shari'a community feels more superiority and its beliefs are considered normative and profane truths. Conversely, if a minority has a different belief, it will be considered as a heretical community so that it will get provocative and repressive treatment.<sup>3</sup>

Related to religious life in Seuruway, the majority group opposes the religious practices of the Ma'rifah community because it is considered to be deviant. As Pak Imam emphasized that Mariah was a group with no clear religious understanding. They sometimes often equate God with beings in the understanding of Wahdah al-Wujud. Is not that teaching has been considered heretical in Aceh?<sup>4</sup> It is not enough to build stereotypes, the majority group then resorted to political relations by bringing in the provincial Ulema Consultative Assembly (MPU) group and the border of the local Islamic Shari'a Service

<sup>1</sup>Ali Mansur terming heterodox Sufis, which is a Sufi group that is more concerned with mortal experience than shari'a and often gives rise to strange and controversial words. See, Ali Mansur, "Pemikiran Tasawuf Ortodoks di Asia Tenggara; Telaah atas Kontribusi al-Raniry, al-Sinkili, dan al-Makassari," *Syifa al-Qulub* 2, no. 1 (2017): 42.

<sup>2</sup>Martin van Bruinessen term the minority as "splinter". In this case, Martin distinguishes the "splinter" group from the "orthodoxy". Martin van Bruinessen, "Sectarian movements in Indonesian Islam: Social and cultural background", *Ulumul Qur'an* 3, no. 1 (1992): 205. Troeltsch mention minorities by term "individualism religious" (Troeltsch, 1993). For Troeltsch, Religious individualism is a sect that emerged as an attempt to reject the orthodoxy tradition of the church. Even though it is different from terming a sect or sect, the point is that this group appears in majority rule, which is considered as the only form of understanding of truth. Ernst Troeltsch, *The Social Teaching of The Christian Churches* (London: 1931).

<sup>3</sup>Syarifuddin Latif, "Meretas Hubungan Mayoritas-Minoritas dalam Perspektif Nilai Bugis," *Al-Ulum* 12, no. 1 (2012): 98

<sup>4</sup>Interview with Pak Imam Seuruway, Aceh Tamiang District, Aceh Province.

to anticipate the development of the ideology of the Ma'rifah community, the majority carried out internal strengthening through routine fiqh study sessions every Friday night, and external resistance carried out by authorized institutions.

But it is unique, although it is considered heretical and prohibited its development, the Sufistic ideology of the Ma'rifah community shaped the diversity in Seuruway, so that the tendency of the community turn towards Ma'rifah community. The public is more interested in the study of Sufism than fiqh. The absence of the community in the learning activities is evidence of community rejection that is not real towards fiqh which according to the community is "confusing" because it always prioritizes the khilafiyah in religion. Based on this, this study aims to find out the patterns of Ma'rifah communities in building the relationships in forming Sufistic identities with Seuruway people and variants of religious practices as a result of the formation of the Ma'rifah ideology.

The study of Sufistic formation is not recent. Some of them can be read in the following articles: Kiki Muhammad Hakiki entitled, "Local Religious Identity; Case Study of mysticism". This study highlights the existence of Sufis as a minority with various discriminatory treatments, but they still exist.<sup>5</sup> Ian Chalmers research entitled *The Islamization of Southern Kalimantan; Spiritual Sufi, Ethnic Identity, Political Activism*. Using a phenomenological approach, Ian Chalmer highlights the existence of Sufis in the dynamics of diverse tribes in Kalimantan.<sup>6</sup> Study of Syaifan Nur and Dudung Abdurrahman with the title "Sufism of Archipelago: History, Thought, and, Movement. This research focuses on Sufis in the archipelago in terms of historical aspects, thoughts, and movements. Using socio-

<sup>5</sup>Kiki Muhammad Hakiki, "Politik Identitas Agama Lokal (Studi Kasus Aliran Kebatinan)," *Analisis* 11, no. 1 (2011).

<sup>6</sup>Ian Chalmers, "The Islamization of Southern Kalimantan; Sufi Spiritual, Ethnic Identity, Political Activism," *Studia Islamika: Indonesian Journal for Islamic Studies* 14, no. 3 (2007): 371-417.

anthropological approaches, Syaifan Nur found that Sufi movements in the archipelago not only preserved their religious traditions, but they engaged in education, economics, and politics.<sup>7</sup> In addition, M. Rohman Ziadi's research entitled *Tariqa and Politics; the study of the living sufism of the Hizib Nahdhatul Wathan*. This study examines the movement of Hizib in politics.<sup>8</sup> Kajian, M. Iqbal Maulana, titled *Spirituality and Gender of Sufis Women*.<sup>9</sup> Seeing from some of these studies, there is no similarity with this study, both in terms of objects and research locations.

### Research Method

This research was conducted in the Seuruway sub-district of Aceh Tamiang. The choice of location as a locus of research because religious life practiced by the community is very diverse. This diversity triggers them to struggle to form their respective ideologies as habitus and continue to develop and actively influence the social structure of the majority community. The research is qualitative research with an interpretive paradigm that can be classified as a socio-anthropological, specifically ethnographic approach.<sup>10</sup>

The data collection method is conducted in two ways; observation of practice and religious interaction of each community, semi-structured interview and documentation in the form of management learning schedules. Data collection applying purposive sampling consisting of Ma'rifah communities, including Pak Ngah, Wak Cedek, Tgk. Syahrul and Shari'a figures who have authority in religious activities consisting of Imam of Sungai Kuruk, Imam of Gedung Biara and Imam of Lubuk Damar. The village was

chosen due to the development of the Ma'rifah community was more rapid and the number of followers was even higher compared to other villages. Data analysis is carried out through the following stages.

*First*, recording all the findings of the phenomenon in the field through ethnographic observations, in-depth interviews and documentation studies in the form of daily field notes. *Second*, examining the results of observations, interviews to classify important and ordinary data. This is performed repeatedly to avoid mistakes in concluding. *Third*, describing data that has been clarified for further analysis by taking into account the focus and purpose of the research. *Fourth*, making a final analysis for writing a research report. Those are a series of the data analysis process is carried out.

### The Condition of the Ma'rifah Community in Seuruway

The social and religious life of the Seuruway community is diverse. This can be seen in the religious practices, it is not only the understanding of the Shari'a that has been developed but even it is also found some study groups that are classified in the development of Sufism studies or in this study called the Ma'rifah community. The naming of Ma'rifah for the group was because in various discussions they often termed themselves with "Ma'rifah people", as well as being used as a boundary with other communities. In other words, they use the term "Ma'rifah" to distinguish their "Ma'rifah community" from their counterparts (the shari'a community).

Labeling Sufi community with ma'rifah has actually been done by Martin van Bruinessen. Bruinessen in his study of the existence of Sufi communities in Indonesia also called "ma'rifah community" for the community. It is not only Bruinessen but Martin also termed the "shari'a community" as a match.<sup>11</sup> Besides, in terms of

<sup>7</sup>Saifan Nur and Dudung Abdurrahman, "Sufism of Archipelago: History, Thought, and Movement," *Esensia* 18, no. 2 (2017): 123.

<sup>8</sup>M. Rohman Ziadi, "Tarekat dan Politik; Studi Living Sufism Tarekat Hizib Nahdlatul Wathan," *Living Islam* 1, no. 2 (2018): 232.

<sup>9</sup>M. Iqbal Maulana, "Spritualitas dan Gender: Sufi-sufi Perempuan," *Living Islam* 1, no. 2 (2018): 360.

<sup>10</sup>Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice* (California: Atanford University Press, 1990), 54.

<sup>11</sup>Through ethnography, researchers study cultural events by presenting the life outlook of the subject under study. See,

teaching, Bruinessen tends to call the ma'rifah community "splinter" due to the ideas of mysticism which are championed tend to be "strange" and deviate from the understanding of the majority.<sup>12</sup> This is also as stated by Elizabeth that in addition to appearing in a controversial splinter flow, they also always try to spread their religion towards the majority.<sup>13</sup> In other words, the ma'rifah community has always fought for the truth of its Sufi ideas and shaped its influence on religious life in Seuruway. Indeed there is no definitive information on when the ma'rifah community formed in Seuruway as a long-standing disposition. However, its existence is inseparable from a long history of ongoing mysticism and continues to try to shape social structures that have been formed with social norms.<sup>14</sup>

Apart from these problems, the Sufistic idea for the ma'rifah community is an identity and truth which becomes a religious system, then practiced repeatedly in different social structures. This social structure formed by Sufistic identity in sociological studies is termed habitus.<sup>15</sup> But changing the standard and within a community is not easy. Various problems as a form of resistance will emerge. Moreover, the minority is dealing with the majority, of course, the existence of the ma'rifah community has led to various resistance from the shari'a community. The dispute between the two communities usually occurs for two reasons. *First*, seepage from the feud of Shari'a-ma'rifah in classical times through modern agents whose Islamic

movements are connected with classical Sufi religious movements.<sup>16</sup> The ma'rifah community tends to display philosophical understandings of Sufism which recognize the union of God with humans (*wahdah al-wujud*). *Secondly*, ma'rifah and shari'a have formed religious communities that have fixed boundaries so that there are no more gray areas or obscuring.

Initially, the struggle between the ma'rifah and shari'a communities was only in the discussion of the two elites, not accompanied by action. But because the shari'a feels more authoritative, the resistance is more open. The priest and his instrument often blaspheme the existence of the ma'rifah community as a group that deviates from the mainstream truth. The idea of *wahdah al-wujud*<sup>17</sup> which was developed was considered to be contrary to the wishes of the Qur'an and Hadith, moreover, their presence often ignored routine religious rituals, so the more open rejection of the shari'ah community towards ma'rifah. However, the pattern of rejection by the shari'a community did not have an impact, the existence of the ma'rifah community continued to spread its Sufi teachings. These conditions force the shari'a community to take a firmer attitude. The shari'ah community took the fight by bringing in institutions that had the religious authority to try the ma'rifah leaders in public. Like, reporting Wak Cedek for religious irregularities to the Syar'iyah court in 2015 and a call to Tgk Syahrul to be tried at the sub-district office in the same case on February 20, 2015. As a result of the decision, the ma'rifah community was claimed to be heretical and prohibited from spreading.

The decision then impacts on the existence

James P. Spradley, *Metode Etnografi*, translated by Misbah Zulfa Elizabeth (Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, 1997), 10.

<sup>12</sup>Martin van Bruinessen, *Rakyat kecil Islam dan Politik* (Yogyakarta: Yayasan Bentang Budaya, 1999), 243. See also, Abbas Langaji, "Dinamika Aliran Keagamaan Sempalan: Tinjauan Perspektif Sosiologi Agama," *Proceeding Annual International Conference on Islamic Studies (AICIS XIII)*: 1736.

<sup>13</sup>Martin van Bruinessen, "Sectarian Movements in Indonesian Islam: Social and Cultural background," *Ulumul Qur'an* 3, no. 1 (1992): 206.

<sup>14</sup>Elizabeth K. Nottingham, *Agama dan Masyarakat*, Translated by Abdul Muis Naharong, 7th edition (Jakarta: Raja Grafindo Persada, 1997), 155.

<sup>15</sup>Fazlur Rahman, *Islam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 137.

<sup>16</sup>Pierre Bourdieu, *Arena Produksi Kultural: Sebuah Kajian Sosiologi Budaya*, translated by Yudi Santoso (Yogyakarta: Kreasi Wacana, 2012), xvi.

<sup>17</sup>Wahdah al-Wujud understood by the ma'rifah community in Seuruway, a level where one would feel that he gained the power of Allah by eliminating his human characteristics. From that, Wahdah al-Wujud is often depicted in the form of mystical abilities which have reached that level. Information interview with Tgk. Finally, at the Seuruway Monastery Village.

of the ma'rifah community; they are often socially discriminated against. Despite being in a discriminating community of domination, the ma'rifah community continued to actively spread their Sufi ideologies in the Seuruway community. In this case, the authors see that after discrimination, the ma'rifah community is spread in a variety of ways. Some of the ma'rifah communities do it in private and some are open. Closed activities as carried out by Wak Cedek, he prefers his private garden as a location to carry out activities of teaching the teachings of forming Islamic ma'rifah in socio-religious life on Seuruway. The activity of spreading Sufistic teachings through open recitation was carried out by Tgk. Syahrul and Tgk Taib. Both carry out activities in community homes in turn. Both activities are also known by the community when and where these activities are carried out.

From the observational data that the authors get, the different patterns of distribution have an impact on the shifting Sufistic ideology of each actor. This is because the interaction between certain ma'rifah figures with their community then occurs a new identity with symbols and meanings that are different from before. Although they are still at the level of ma'rifah, the Sufistic symbols that are understood and explained differ by each character. These differences form the barriers of each community.

Although it has implications for change, all of that is done as an effort so that the Sufi ideology developed can be accepted by the majority community.

From this difference then occur several Sufi styles on Seuruway, namely: moderate Sufis and radical Sufis. The moderate Sufi means that the ma'rifah community still maintains the ideology of heterodox Sufis as habitus, but in its spread, this community tends to accept and carry out various religious activities of the ma'rifah community. This Sufi-style community was developed by Tgk. Taib, including one of Tgk Syahrul's students. This Sufi community began to be accepted by

shari'a groups as religious elites in Seuruway as evidenced by the participation of several shari'a elites as members of the community and active in various religious activities, such as attending recitals, and recitation.

The radical Sufi that is meant is the ma'rifah community while maintaining the heterodox Sufi ideology and rejecting shari'a ideology, as developed by the majority community. For example, Wak Cedek remained consistent in his initial understanding; Sufi practices continued to be made the most dominant and major in religion. In fact, in his belief, the practice of such a thing is considered the most correct and ideal. However, so that his ideas do not cause resistance from minority groups, he makes various local traditions part of his understanding. For Wak Cedek, the tradition of eating together at the beach and releasing offerings into the middle of the sea in "the ritual of kenduri laot" is part of the teachings of ma'rifah. Wak Cedek and his followers joined together with the elite of the ma'rifah community to carry out the "kenduri laot" procession.

Likewise Tgk. Syahrul and Pak Ngah remained in their initial principles, maintaining their ma'rifah's understandings. Their religious ideologies are considered deviant, even heretical by the shari'a community. However, there are differences between the two ma'rifah figures. The presence of Tgk. Syahrul despite being opposed to the understanding of the shari'a community (majority), but he can always influence the majority of members so that the number of people who follow his teachings increases. Pak Ngah continues to be abandoned by his followers because it is considered unreasonable. For example, Pak Ngah teaches them to have more faith with the Prophet Jesus than the Prophet Muhammad. For Pak Ngah, the Prophet Jesus brought the teachings of monotheism, in contrast to the Prophet Muhammad who tended to the teachings of the Shari'a. This understanding then influences him in interpreting prayer. Because the Prophet Jesus did not bring the Shari'a, then the

prayer for Pak Ngah is a remembrance that does not need Shari'a provisions.

The depiction of religious life in Seuruway shows diversity, it is not only between the ma'rifah and shari'a communities but internally the ma'rifah community also shows diversity. The most prominent diversity among the ma'rifah communities is seen in religious ideas and practices.

The existence of such diversity recognized or not will lead to interaction between communities which will ultimately present conflicts of interest or strengthen the identity of each community, especially when each community claims to be the truest and represent the truth of the majority. As a result, successful societies in strengthening are groups that have a large budget; of course, each community will compete to collect budget to be able to dominate. This is where the presentation of negotiations between each community to fight for social religion. In particular the existence of the ma'rifah community, besides having to face the shari'a community, also faces internal ma'rifah with different ideologies informing Sufistic habitus in Seuruway.

Judging from the rapid development of the ma'rifah community in the social conditions controlled by the shari'a community, of course, there are specific strategies that are played in raising capital to form new structures with Sufistic ideology as habitus. In other words, the achievements of the ma'rifah community certainly cannot be separated from the influence of the relationship being built, the relationship is the capital to shape the influence to a larger space.

### **Sufistic Understanding of the Ma'rifah Community in Seuruway**

From the description above it can be seen that the existence of the ma'rifah community besides being different from the shari'a community, they are also different from each other. The opposition does not only occur at the level of understanding but leads to claims of truth between communities.

This is evident from the efforts of each ma'rifah community to interpret the ma'rifah ideology in the religious social activities of the Seuruway community and create boundaries as a form of self-characterization. Deviations from these limits can be considered out of the community.

The differences among the ma'rifah community can be classified in several aspects, namely: Interpretation of the scriptures, and the meaning of prayer. The use of scriptural interpretation is as a study of the internal distinction of ma'rifah. In various arguments, they always convey texts to fight the stereotypes built by the shari'ah community, as well as serve as a way to build a stereotype of the shari'ah.

Methodologically, the interpretation of the scriptures among the ma'rifah community can be said to be the same. They prioritize the aspects of the inner meaning of the Qur'an rather than the meaning of the *zahir*, some even leave the meaning of the verse *zahir*. But the inner limits are meant to be different in interpreting and actualizing sacred texts in real life. Tgk Syahrul interpreted the Qur'an must see the inner side of the Qur'an. The verse interpreted does not follow the meaning of the word, but rather follows the symbols of mysticism. For example, *uf* (al-Isra[17]: 23) is the same as *ah* (written in the form of "ا") which means <sup>l</sup> is the genitals of the father and <sup>o</sup> genital mother. According to him, that is why it is forbidden to say *ah* to both parents for mentioning their sex. Likewise in Surah al-Ikhlās, which means: *qul huwa Allahu Ahad* means adam, *Allahu al-Samad* means Ibrahim, *lam yalid* means Noah; *lam yulad* means 'yesus'; and *wal lam yakun lahu kufuwan Ahad* means Moses.

While Wak Cedek tends to see the inner limits of the Qur'an in the form of presenting God, it is not the meaning of the verse. According to him, the meaning of the verse cannot be used as a guide because it is only a story and a lifestyle. For example, verses about hypocrites and polytheists, for Wak Cedek it is impossible for them to be used as a guideline with various mistakes made.

Likewise the verse about the story of the Prophet Joseph and Zulaikha, for Wak Cedek, the verse explains about Zulaikha's lust. So, these verses must be from their nature by presenting God because they are all His words.

Meanwhile, Pak Ngah has also a different opinion. In interpreting the Qur'an, it tends to exchange the meaning of *lafaz* into other languages that are adapted to its teachings. For example, *zalikaa al-kitab la raiba fih*, the word "raiba" in the verse does not mean doubt but is missing. Missing is meant unseen. This shows that Allah as the owner of the Qur'an recognizes the unseen meaning of the Qur'an. In contrast to Tgk. Thaib, interpreting the Qur'an is not only from the inner aspect but must be combined from both of them. Their basic assumption is that the Qur'an includes what is *zahir* and mental. For the ma'rifah community, the meaning of *zahir* is meant to be the textual meaning of the verse, while the inner meaning is another sign behind the textual meaning or more commonly known as the *ta'wil*.

The issue of worship which is the main focus of the ma'rifah community, as well as the differentiator from the shari'a community is prayer. In the Ma'rifah community, the meaning of prayer is very diverse. Pak Ngah tends to interpret prayer as a form of remembrance. In his opinion, prayer is remembrance and remembrance is prayer. In this case, Pak Ngah distinguishes prayer as a pillar of religion and remembrance. As a form of a pillar of religion, prayer is a provision of the Prophet Muhammad, in the form of practices carried out by the shari'a community, while in the form of dhikr, prayer is a form of the teachings of Prophet Isa As, which is done by presenting in the heart as a form of monotheism, as ever performed the Prophet Isa. For Pak Ngah, prayers that can be said: "*amar ma'ruf nahi munkar*" are prayers with remembrance, while the practice of prayer is only ordinary rituals that do not affect one's mind.

The same meaning is also stated by Tgk. Syahrul, but there is a difference between the

meaning of remembrance according to Pak Ngah and Tgk Syahrul. For Tgk Syahrul, prayer in the form of *dhikr* is to present God within. To be able to do this, one must make the readings in prayer with the meaning of nature (Sufi symbols). That is the reason for Tgk. Syahrul cannot pray together with the Shariah people or follow the Imam of the Shariah because they do not understand the nature of prayer. In contrast to Wak Cedek, in interpreting prayer divides into three stages, namely: prayer as a pillar of religion, *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar*, and remembrance. The three stages are the levels that must be taken by someone. Prayer as a pillar of religion is only done by lay people, *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar* is done by people who start to take the path of ma'rifah, while *li dzikri* prayer is performed by people who reach the highest level in ma'rifah. But in this case, Wak Cedek is somewhat not clear to explain the practices of the three prayer stage models. While Tgk. Thaib does not mean prayer in a different sense. For Tgk. Thaib prayer is a combination of the three sections above (pillar of religion, *amar ma'ruf*, and *dhikr*). The three may not be separated but it is to be understood in the form of solemnity in doing prayer.

The difference between ma'rifah in the meaning of prayer has implications for the implementation of the practice of prayer. Even it is for a legal or not legal limit. For the group that recognizes the prayer of remembrance tends not to follow the activity of prayer in the *meunasah* because it is considered not by the will of God and it is not valid.

Judging from the Sufistic teachings developed by the ma'rifah community, it is clear that there are deviations from the majority religious ideas and differences within each ma'rifah community. This shows that each community has a habitus that will be formed in the social and religious life in Seuruway. Therefore, forming Sufistic Islam as a habitus would naturally have to struggle with other habitus which is also regarded as truth.

## Ma'rifah Community Builds Capital in Forming Sufistic Identity with Social Seuruway Communities

To examine the formation of the Sufi identity of the ma'rifah community means to study the formation of habitus. The formation of habitus is very closely related to the environmental conditions around the agent. Habitus is a subjective factor within the actor, while the social space around the actor is an objective structure that cannot be separated because it is dialectical which will also affect the practice or action to be carried out by the actor. Ma'rifah and Shari'ah communities are two sides of the structure formed in Seuruway. The two contradict each other and struggle in the structure of a social organization. The ma'rifah community as a minority group is always actively spreading its Sufistic identity in the social environment of the Seuruway community. Likewise, the Shari'ah community always tries to limit the formation of Sufistic Islam.

In spreading Sufistic identity, the ma'rifah community must understand the situation or a context. This is because the ma'rifah community is as agents do not act in a vacuum, but rather in concrete social situations governed by a set of objective social relations. This social situation is theoretically Bourdieu called the arena. The arena is a space or structure with its functional principles, with its power relations.<sup>18</sup> Although they appear to be autonomous, structurally they remain homologous with each other. Likewise with the Seuruway community, in their religious life, they have been governed by the majority authority of the shari'a community.

Thus, for the ma'rifah community to form its habitus in social conditions it must have a set of strategies as capital to attract the interest of the

community. There are a set of strategies that are used by the ma'rifah community, namely family relations, close friends, and the use of power relations. These three elements are the capital of the ma'rifah community in fighting over the arena of power in Seuruway. This process is done through relational rather than structures that have been formed. In this case, the agent's position is determined by the relative amount and weight of the capital they have. The greater the capital owned, the greater the benefits obtained. Bourdieu discusses four types of capital, namely: economic, cultural (various legitimate knowledge), social (valuable relationships between individuals) and symbolic capital of one's honor and prestige.<sup>19</sup>

Family relationships are part of the social capital used by the ma'rifah community. In this case, the ma'rifah community always tries to influence people who have family relations with the ma'rifah figure. This pattern of recruitment mechanism is similar to the mechanism used by religious sects in the West in the 1960s that utilized "existing social networks and interpersonal ties." To borrow the words of Lorne L. Dawson (in Samsul Rijal's quote), the model used is "friends recruit friends, family members recruit other family members, and neighbors recruit neighbors".<sup>20</sup> A study of followers of Sun Myung Moon (the Moonies) by John Lofland and Rodney Stark, for example, found that conversion to this Christian sect was largely determined by affective ties between sect activists and prospective members. Lofland and Stark show that the entry of people into religious sects is not solely driven by the appeal of ideology, but because they see friends and family in the group. Although some prospective members are still unsure of a religious group or sect, their association with their new friend there makes

<sup>18</sup>Reymond Pandapotan Sianturi, "Komunitas Virtual Kristen; Era Baru Eklesia dalam Konteks Virtual dan Kontribusinya Bagi Kebebasan Beragama di Indonesia," *Gema Teologi* 38, no. 1 (2014): 87 - 114.

<sup>19</sup>Pierre Bourdieu, *Arena*, xviii

<sup>20</sup>Syamsul Rijal, "Menarik Anak Muda Muslim: Studi terhadap Sistem Rekrutmen Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia di Makassar, Sulawesi Selatan," Research Report Presented at Annual Conference on Islamic Studies ke 10, Banjarmasin, 1 – 4 November 2010, 749.



them accept the ideas of the movement.<sup>21</sup>

The pattern of recruiting members from the family starts with influencing the wife, then the child, son-in-law, close and distant relatives. This effort is not only aimed at adding members but as a way to influence others. This is as done by the parts of the ma'rifah community class. Tgk Syahrul began to spread his teachings to close relatives, for example, his children, then the child came to the other relatives to be willing to attend the invitation held at his home. The unique phenomenon of the spread carried out Tgk. Syahrul, if the destination village does not have a brother, then he will create a new brother, by marrying one of the women in the village. Like the spread of teachings to the Gelung. Initially Tgk. Syahrul found it difficult to enter the village, but after marrying the village priest's daughter, Tgk. Syahrul felt free and free to spread his understanding, even affecting the priest. As stated by Tgk. Idris (Imam of Gelung Village): In the beginning, Syahrul could not start the teaching in our place, but after marrying the priest's daughter he began to start teaching and other activities. Strangely, the village priest who was an active person in various religious activities with us is no longer present. After we investigate it turns out he has become his daughter-in-law's student.

Besides Tgk. Syahrul, the same effort was also made by Wak Cedek and Tgk. Thaib. Both of them also use family relationships to spread the Sufi ideology. Wak Cedek used all his family members to learn ma'rifatism. This is evidenced by the author's interview with his daughter and grandchildren. Both of them looked very good at discussing with researchers about the teachings of ma'rifah, moreover his grandson named Bokir. Although he was only 25 years old, he understood the teachings of ma'rifat. Likewise Tgk. Thaib made a family relationship at Sungai Kuruk III to spread his ma'rifah ideology.

In addition to family relations, the community use friendships. Friendship is also a strong bond. They are always loyal to the understanding they hold. Tgk Syahrul's followers never turn to other teachings besides Tgk. Syahrul, even for his students, Tgk. Syahrul is on the same level as "Aulia". When followers of Tgk Syahrul held a celebration, he did not want the Imam Gampong to pray, it is only Tgk. Syahrul according to him mustajabah (accepted) prayer. The same thing was proven by Pak Ngah's followers, where some of his students shifted of teachings, friends who later turned into students remained loyal to the teachings they taught.

In addition to the two forms of relationship above, the ma'rifah community also uses local power relations. Tgk Thaib used the power of the village priest who was already a follower. Wak Cedek used the power of *panglima laot*. Moreover, the presence of *panglima laot* in Seuruway is considered to be able to save fishermen from the wrath of the sea dwellers. While Tgk. Syahrul used the ruling group that still existed in his village. The existence of the Tgk Syahrul community in Gelung and Lubuk Damar was always fortified by the group. The presence of powerful people in their communities is a fear for the shari'a community, even though it is more dominant. This is evidenced when researchers try to interview ordinary people, they prefer silence than commenting on the presence of Tgk. Syahrul, even they had warned researchers to be careful. Other evidence of the role of the authorities in the Tgk. Syahrul group is a case of a dispute between a community member and Tgk. Syahrul. Initially, the community intended to expel Tgk. Syahrul from the village of Lubuk Damar, but the opposite happened, the community was driven out of Lubuk Damar.

From this description, it is seen that the influence of the ma'rifah community has an enormous influence on their followers. The problem then is, why are the Seuruway people so convinced of the ideology of ma'rifah, even though

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid., 9.

they have been formed by dominating teachings? Responding to this statement, researchers directly did not get answers from ma'rifah figures. All of them answered their interest because of the call of the soul, they were called to the soul to learn the right thing. But from the data of the recitation procession conducted, all the spreaders of Sufistic teachings in Seuruway promised supernatural power (magic) to their followers, in the form of supernatural powers and the strength to face the feared.

Tgk Syahrul described the ability to deal with tigers if they had studied ma'rifah. As stated by his loyal followers, that he was never afraid to go to the mountain alone because he was able to face all forms of wild animals and other disturbances. Wak Cedek described being able to relate to various supernatural beings, such as the abilities highlighted by the commander of laot who was also a loyal follower. Tgk Thaib promises abilities like himself that can get things are done by praying, such as the ability to stop the rain, immune to sharp objects, etc., and be able to connect with spirits. Likewise, Pak Ngah, a promise was made to his followers, if we already practiced the knowledge of ma'rifah we have the power like Syakh Siti Jenar which is unrivaled despite being opposed by the mayor of Songo.

The magic promises offered by ma'rifah figures greatly influence the Seuruway community, especially in the social and religious life, the Seuruway community is always accompanied by mystical notions, even though it is not involved in the ma'rifah community and has pursued higher education. As is the belief that the fishermen are at sea and the outbreak of various diseases is caused by the wrath of the sea watchman when the community is not willing to give offerings. These promises provide a special attraction for the community. This is due to the condition of the community as an open and mystical coastal community. Thaha called it influenced by the might of the sea then shaped social practice.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Ahmad Syafi'i Mufid (ed), *Perkembangan Paham Keagamaan Transnasional di Indonesia* (Jakarta: Kementerian Agama Badan

In addition to the magic factor, education is also one of the important factors influencing the community of Seuruway to accept the concept of ma'rifah. The lack of people who want to continue to higher education is another reason for their involvement in the ma'rifah community. From the village priest's information that the writer encountered, it was mentioned that most of the Ma'rifah followers in Seuruway never went to school, even though there were, it was only limited to elementary or junior high schools, moreover to study religious education in pesantren, they clearly did not understand

### **Ma'rifah Community as Sufistic Identity in a Variety of Religious Practices in Seuruway**

Studying variations in religious practices in Seuruway means examining the religious praxis (actions) of the Seuruway community as a result of the existence of the ma'rifah community as a structure structuring the religious life of the Seuruway community. From the results of the struggles of the ma'rifah, shari'a and internal ma'rifah communities in forming Sufistic Islam in Seuruway, a shift in religious life was practiced by the community. The shift in the religious life of the community as a result of the struggle in the formation of ideas is the tendency of the people towards the religious system of the ma'rifah community.

Several cases show this, including the interest of mystical learning, which is higher than sharia. This case can be seen in the study activities carried out by the Islamic community. The shari'a community invited the cleric from the Islamic Shari'a Service Office and the Aceh Tamiang Ulama Consultative Council (MPU) to carry out the recitation in Seuruway. Initially, the activity ran in several meetings, but then stopped because there were no more interested parties. In contrast to the study of Sufism carried out by the Ma'rifah Community, more and more people continue to attend.

Litbang dan Diklat Puslitbang Kehidupan Beragama, 2011), 42.

This condition has also been experienced by Ustaz Basyarullah. In the religious life of the Seuruway community, Ustaz Basyarullah is an icon of religious knowledge that is considered pious. He always conducts religious studies for people in various villages in the Seuruway sub-district. But then the activities carried out were also abandoned because the community had already moved to ma'rifah learning.

Besides, the form of the tendency of society towards the ma'rifah community is also evident from the habit of the community to discuss the ideologies of ma'rifah with its various ideologies. This condition is not only seen in the elderly group, it is also loved by young people. The writer's meeting and discussion with 25-year-old Wak Cedet's grandson seemed to understand very well the ma'rifah teachings brought by his grandfather. Likewise, the information conveyed by several other informants, shows that public interest in Sufi ideology is greater than Islamic ideology.

Another form of cultural shift due to the impact of the formation of Islamic ma'rifah is the strengthening of the local culture of Seuruway community, such as sea festivity (*kenduri laot*) which is held at the end of every safar month. For Seuruway community the tradition has been implemented for generations. For the Seuruway community, the sea festivity in addition to being a means to socialize the rules and strengthen the traditional sea institutions as well as an expression of God's relationship with humans as creatures. This activity has been carried out by the community for a long time by raising funds from the community under the responsibility of the leader of traditional sea institutions (*panglima laot*). For the Seuruway community, the festivity is a religious system that is used as a place to pray for the safety and ease of sustenance from Khalik.

The tradition of sea festivity carried out by the Seuruway community every year has ever been stopped as an effect of the application of the rules (*qanun*) Islamic Shari'a and the role

of the preachers assigned by the Islamic Shari'a service in the border area. At that time, many local traditions were abolished because they were considered contrary to Islamic law. After the social and religious system was dominated by the ma'rifah community, the Seuruway community's habitus changed from shari'a to ma'rifatan and that would affect all religious practices.

Also, the shift in religious practices in the Seuruway community is inseparable from the social capital played by the ma'rifah community. The intended social capital is to utilize the presence of the leader of traditional sea institutions (*panglima laot*) to spread the ma'rifah ideology. In this case, the author sees a negotiation between the leader of traditional sea institutions and the ma'rifah community. The ma'rifah community makes the leader of traditional sea institutions as a capital to spread Sufistic ideology, while the leader of traditional sea institutions makes the influence of the ma'rifah community to be able to re-implement local traditions related to the sea, previously stopped by the shari'a community.

Although the dominance of ma'rifah is seen in religious practices, in certain places, such as mosques and religious institutions, they are still within the authority of the shari'a community. This will continue to have an impact on various forms of contestation that will eventually proceed to conflict between communities because each community has not yet received each other, claims of truth continue to be advocated by both parties. This phenomenon shows the difference from previous studies. Although there is a closeness between the Sufi phenomena with the study of Ian Chalmers (2007), the authors see the Sufi phenomena described by Chalmers as having affiliations with other communities so that they to be a part of a majority. Unlike the practice in Seuruway, the ma'rifah community still maintains its boundaries not to be affiliated with the shari'ah community so that it always shows struggle and contestation.

## Conclusion

The above study explores the struggle of the ma'rifah community on Seuruway. Using an ethnographic approach and habitus theory shows that: *First*, the relationships built by the ma'rifah community in forming Sufistic identity in Seuruway are through family relations, friendship relations, and ruling relations. Family relations are done in the form of influencing families to participate in Sufistic teachings and activities. While friendship by influencing friends to follow and become part of the teachings of the ma'rifah community. While power relations by utilizing certain groups in society that are considered to have power and feared. This effort was carried out, in addition to ensuring personal safety from the rival, it also affected others.

*Second*, the Sufistic practices of the ma'rifah community in Seuruway had a negative and positive impact on the variety of religious practices. The negative impact is the emergence of various resistance from the ma'rifah community, such as a rejection of the teachings of Tgk. Syahrul, Wak Cedek, and Pak Ngah. While the positive impact, the presence of teachings ma'rifah Tgk. Thaib is contributing to the social relations of the Seuruway community. Tgk Thaib can create a relatively harmonious relationship between the two parties.

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