



URBAN SUFISM: THE EXISTENCE OF SUFISM IN URBAN AREAS

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Abstract

The aim of the study discussed in this article is to identify and map the various forms of Sufism that have arisen in urban areas during modern times. While Sufism has traditionally been associated with rural areas and perceived as traditional and backward, new movements have emerged in metropolitan cities that seek to attain closeness to God through Sufism. A literature review was conducted to gather information related to this topic, including in-depth studies of established forms of Sufism such as Tariqah, as well as institutionalized Sufism that is organized by educational institutions, religious foundations, and community organizations. The researcher found that there are three typologies of Sufism that have developed in urban areas: orthodox Tariqah, marginal Tariqah, and modern Sufi fellowship.

Keywords: Existence, Sufism, Urban.

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1. Introduction

Sufism is usually known among rural communities (rural). Sufism organizations: read tarekat and develop in the countryside through prayer halls, pesantren, and study groups. Recently, a new movement emerged in which urban communities (urban) became interested in Sufistic approaches to appease their souls that were alienated from spirituality, which is natural (Hussain, 2019).

Alienation is a feeling of wonder, alienation, and loneliness because what it does is not up and down, and it's a free choice, but because of outside forces that are unknown and unwanted based on one's feelings and healthy ideas autonomously. This indication occurs due to a dualistic-atomic-mechanistic-materialistic point of view (Puhakka, 2021).

For example, subject-object, facts-values, man-nature, man-God, "I"- "other", bourgeois-proletarian, sacred-profane, sacred-secular, east-west, forward-backward, man-woman. By itself, objectivism will often collide with subjectivism so that, like a machine without feelings, to deny the individual (depersonalization) means to reduce the meaning of humanity (dehumanization) and results in a person's inability to recognize himself and the meaning of his life (Javanmardi et al., 2023).

The urban public is subject to this "alienation" and is looking for a solution to the cases they are facing. Modernity does not satisfy the people who live in it; something is missing, and they must find it again. Something missing may have been embedded in their life, or modernity has taken away the measure of spirituality that is present in every human being (Rowe et al., 2020).

This development began to be seen seasonally, such as television shows every month of Ramadan, commemorations of Islamic holidays, and religious soap operas broadcast by several television stations. This situation is strengthened by the many artists and public figures who "migrated," leaving the glamorous lifestyle for a "syar'i" life with the appearance of the Muslim clothes they wear and the halal jobs they engage in (Levin et al., 2020).

According to some circles, including Komaruddin Hidayat, the emergence of this new phenomenon is caused by four things. First, as a means of searching for the meaning of life, second, as a means of intellectual struggle and enlightenment, third, as a means of psychological therapy, and fourth as a means of following trends and developments in religious discourse (Burhani, 2020). Of the four reasons, Nurcholish Madjid agrees more with the first reason, namely, as a place to search for the meaning of life. Every human being is born in a state of fitrah. So everyone will appear within themselves to return to the origin of events in any way and form. One option might be to participate in religious recitations, attend recitations or gather with pious people such as congregations of tabligh and others.

Literature Review Traditions of Sufism

According to the treasures of the Indonesian language, tradition means everything, such as customs, teachings, and so on, which are passed down from ancestors. Some inform that tradition comes from the word traditium, namely everything transmitted, passed down from the past to the present (Asmuni, 2021). Based on these two sources, it is clear that tradition has a core as the legacy of the past, which is preserved, carried out, and believed to be today. These traditions or habits can be in the form of values, social norms, patterns of behavior, and other customs, which are manifestations of various aspects of life (Rahman et al., 2023).

At a very early stage in the Sufism movement, mystics discovered secret meanings in the letters. The groups of letters found at the beginning of the twenty surahs of the Qur'an inspired these mystics to come up with an amazing allegory. Most great Sufis have discussed this matter (Melvin-Koushki, 2023). Even in distant parts of the Islamic world, such as Indonesia, many texts on musings on mystical symbolism can be found. Based on mystical interpretations of the letters of the Arabic alphabet, mystics developed secret languages to hide their thoughts from the reach of the common people. The so-called balabailan language (Ruslan et al., 2022)

Sufism is rooted in the word Sufi. In Iraq, the person who first used the word Sufi was a zahid named Abu Hasyim al-Kufi. Terms such as abid, nasik, zahid, and later Sufi used for worship experts were only known after generations of companions and tabi'in (Safia et al., 2023). The mystics in every ethnic group or religion generally symbolize their spiritual wandering as a journey. Although there are other symbols, travel is the more common one. Sufis longing to wander in search of God call themselves wanderers (salik, traveler) (Malis et al., 2023).

They stepped forward from one level to another. They call these levels of spiritual or psychological ascent maqamat. The path they take they call Tariqah. At the same time, the ultimate goal is to achieve fana' fillah (al-fana fi' l-haqqi). That is the awareness of their melting into the Divine Ocean. This tarekat or way of tasawuf is so important that the science of tasawuf is often called the science of mysticism (Wijaya & Ahmad, 2022). In Javanese literature, mystical teachings expressed in songs (poetry) are called suluk literature. This shows how big the influence of Sufism is on the development of Javanese literature (Acri, 2019).

The Sufis, as we observe or see directly. Usually use words to express the feelings they feel. Some are in poetry, sayings, or expressions that are difficult to understand, and some are in ordinary writing. Things like this seem to have become a tradition or habit for most Sufis. On the other hand, Sufis also have a medium to spread Islamic da'wah.

Such as recitations and special book studies in which the hadroh musical instrument is accompanied (Fiske, 2020).

2. Method

The type of research used is library research, whose object of study uses library data in the form of books as a data source. With steps to collect all books, journals, and scientific papers related to the topic of discussion. Then it is classified based on the primary and secondary needs level from the research literature. The qualitative approach is systematic research, used to study or research an object in a natural setting without any manipulation or hypothesis testing. All materials are classified as primary and secondary materials. Primary sources are all data directly related to the research theme. At the same time, secondary sources are supporting data and supporting tools in reading primary data. All reading sources are read, critically analyzed, and narrated to obtain valid conclusions (Sari et al., 2022).

3. Result and Discussion

Forms of Sufism in the Cities

Based on the opinion of Julia D. Howell, three styles of Sufism have grown in big cities in Indonesia. The three forms of Sufism are trying to overcome the spiritual crisis of modern urban society. The three forms of Sufism are; First, the orthodox congregation, second, the marginal congregation and the third, the modern Sufism association. These three forms of Sufism have their congregations and markets (Jamil, 2020). It could be that the same person inhabits each typology, or they follow the three typologies simultaneously. There is no obstacle in the Sufism of its followers to join and do the tarekat with different practices. Because it is a characteristic of Sufism which is egalitarian, democratic, and liberal. The followers of the tarekat are not bound by one particular group in determining the reference, teacher, and institution they want to take on the spiritual path (Yüksek, 2021).

Orthodox Order

An orthodox congregation is a group of Sufis (tarekat) organized in one body that must meet several requirements. First, the teacher is a spiritual guide. The two students who initialize with the teacher referred to. Third, the zawiyah or prayer hall is a meeting place for teachers and students. And the four teachings are valid and refer to the lineage of the previous tarekat teachers (Smith et al., 2023).

The discourse on orthodoxy is related to the adherents of orthodox and the criteria used in determining a sect, ideology, or sect to become orthodox. This problem depends on the situation and conditions, perhaps in one era or regime, one stream is considered orthodox, and in the next period, because of the transfer of power, the heterodox may become

orthodox. As happened during the Abbasid period, the ahlussunnah school was an ideology that was considered deviant, but after being replaced by the next dynasty, ahlussunnah was considered an orthodox ideology. Likewise, in the early 70s, modernism was an ideology considered heretical and contrary to religion, but recently modernity has become inevitable and a necessity.

In the context of tarekat in Indonesia, orthodoxy is held by existing social institutions or organizations, including the Jami'ah Tariqah Mu'tabarrah an-Nahdiyah (JATMAN), which is under the auspices of Nahdatul Ulama, the Tarbiyah Islamiyah Association. This organization developed in West Sumatra, and Jami'ah al-Wasliyah is based in North Sumatra. Of these three organizations, only the first, JATMAN, is working actively to verify the tarekat that is developing in Indonesia (Smith, 2021).

In establishing an orthodox congregation, in the JATMAN tradition it is referred to as mu'tabarrah, JATMAN imposes four criteria that must be met: first, paying attention to Islamic shari'ah in its implementation; secondly, following a muttasil sanad diploma; Third, follow the course of life from ahl al-sunnah wa al-jama'ah; and the fourth binds the congregation and requires it to stick to one of the four schools of thought.

Based on the results of the last congress, JATMAN determined several tarekat which belonged to the mu'tabarrah group and did not meet the mu'tabarrah criteria (ghayru mu'tabarrah). Among them are: 1. Abbasids. 2. Ahmadiyah. 3. Akbariyah. 4. 'Alawiyah. 5. Baerumiyah. 6. Bakdasyiyah. 7. Bakriyah. 8. Bayumiyah. 9. Buhuriyah. 10. Dasuqiyah. 11. Ghoibiyah. 12. Ghozaliyah. 13. Haddadiyah. 14. Hamzawiyah. 15. Idrisiyah. 16. 'Idrusiyah. 17. 'Isawiyah. 18. Jalwatiyah. 19. Justiyah. 20. Kal-Syaniyah. 21. Khodliriyah. 22. Kholwatiyah. 23. Kholidiyah wan Naqshbandiyah. 24. Kubrowiyah. 25. Madbuliyah. 26. Malamiyah. 27. Maulawiyah. 28. Qodiriyah wan Naqshbandiyah. 29. Rifa'iyah. 30. Rumiyyah. 31. Sa'diyah. 32. Samaniyah. 33. Sumbuliyah. 34. Sha'baniyah. 35. Syadziliyah. 36. Syathoriyah. 37. Syuhrowiyah. 38. Tijaniyah. 39. 'Umariyah. 40. 'Usyaqiyah. 41. 'Ottoman. 42. Uwaisiyah, and 43. Zainiyah. Apart from these forty-three, the tarekat is ghayru mu'tabarrah.

The orthodox congregation may be in a city, or city people may congregate with an orthodox congregation on the city's outskirts. Orthodox tarekat in cities are temporal, tarekat activities, especially remembrance, take place in the homes of congregations who are willing and dedicate their homes to become their tarekat's zawiyah, and some tarekats are also established to build their zawiyah or prayer hall in urban areas permanently (Charalambous, 2020). Among the congregations that interest urbanites are the Qadiriyyah and Naqshbandiyah orders. The Qadiriyyah wa Naqshbandiyah Order has three branches with its murshid, one of which is in Suryalaya, Tasikmalaya,

West Java, with the murshid KH. Shohibul Wafa Tajul Arifin. Then there is the Naqshbandiyah Khaidiyah order led by Kadirun Yahya based in Baitul Amin Sawangan Bogor, West Java, and the Naqshbandiyah Haqaniyah congregation from Cyprus via America brought by Shaykh Hisham Kabbani, Khalifah Shaykh Nazim Haqqani, and this tarekat has been developing in Indonesia since 1997.

In terms of the congregation, members of the tarekat were people who previously had an order in their area of origin, then lived in the city and tried to find the same or similar group to continue their spiritual activities in the city. It could also be a city person who has lived in a city since childhood or a descendant of the first person. Their motivation may be due to an anomaly or because they follow a family tradition that leads a religious life by entering a tarekat (Kurniawan et al., 2022).

Orthodox congregations in cities are congregations that can adapt to urban culture. Acculturation of modern instruments and habits of city people will attract congregations to unite. This effort is made so that the congregation survives and is sustainable in following the teachings of the tarekat (Bucuvalas, 2019).

As far as possible, the habits of village people and their teachers in congregating are renewed in urban orthodox congregations. The impression of slums in tarekat prayer hall will not be found in the city, and this is an absolute prerequisite for a zawiyah in the middle of a metropolitan city, a vegetarian menu that is relied on by the cook will not be salable for urban society; they attach importance to cleanliness and health factors in everyday life. Communication needed to provide information about congregational activities can no longer be limited to word of mouth. The use of technology is an integral part of this (Sulkowski & Ignatowski, 2020).

Congregational teaching from teacher to student has transformed from a pedagogy culture to andragogy. Congregations can get guidance on life in a congregation through books published for their circle so that members can learn on their own through books or journals packed academically. This tradition is very attractive to tarekat adherents because most of them are educated and have little time to study face-to-face with the appointed caliphs, where they carry out initiations or initiations (Dhala & Johnson, 2021).

Marginal Order

Marginal congregations are congregations that are in between outside orthodoxy. It is suspected that it is marginal because it does not accommodate any form of the orthodox congregation, moreover, it produces certain mechanisms and regulations in pursuing the spiritual path. This flow is common and is spoken with splinter gestures. Typical splinter movements are groups or movements that intend to separate themselves from the "mainstream"

community, which tend to be exclusive and are often critical of established ulemas (Du Quenoy, 2020).

An association of people exploring the path to God by bringing a new understanding of self-purification with a method or direct experience. From this understanding, it can be understood that marginal congregations do not have a parent in sticking to their teachings but make new creations in living their spiritual life. The legitimacy of the guru of this tarekat depends on his strength in convincing his congregation of the spiritual strength he has (Bensaid, 2021).

Recently, religious life in Indonesia has been marked by the emergence of several new religious movements outside the mainstream religious traditions, such as Ahmadiyah, Eden Community, or the practice of bilingual prayer by Yusman Roy. The emergence of this new religious movement has indeed sparked pros and cons. On the one hand, it is considered a departure from the mainstream of established religious traditions. While on the other hand, it is considered a response to mainstream religion, which is no longer in favor of spiritual seekers. The seekers of spiritual enjoyment think that mainstream religions have failed to provide space for spiritual development (Solahudin & Fakhruroji, 2019).

The public response to their birth has varied. However, what is important to note, specifically in Indonesia, is that the emergence of these movements is related to the existence of two important conditions that mutually influence each other, namely the strengthening of the spirit of Islamic conservatism and the opening of a climate of freedom of religion after the collapse of the New Order regime. However, the climate of freedom that emerged with the collapse of the old regime was also an undeniable factor in the strengthening of conservative, even radical, groups. As a result, the freedom to express different religious interpretations also faces the wall of conservatism and radicalism. Finally, the climate of freedom is squeezed by the increasingly prominent pressures of conservative and radical groups (Cini, 2023).

Martin van Bruinessen defines a marginal religious movement with the term splinter, the discourse on "split movement" means departing from an understanding of "orthodoxy" or "mainstream" (mainstream); because the splinter movement is a movement that deviates or breaks away from orthodoxy. Without the yardstick of orthodoxy, the term "split" is meaningless. To determine which is "off", we must first define the orthodox "mainstream". In the case of the Indonesian Muslim community today, orthodoxy may be seen as represented by authoritative clerical bodies, such as the MUI, then the Muhammadiyah Tarjih Council, the NU Syuriah, and so on (Barton et al., 2021).

From the view of "concerned" Muslims, what goes astray is heretical, whether there is a fatwa or not. In this vision, Ahlus Sunnah wal Jama'ah is orthodox "mainstream" Islam, and those who deviate from it are aberrant and heretical. The difficulties with this vision

became clear at the beginning of the 20th century when there was a major conflict between modernist and “traditionalist” Muslims. From the point of view of the traditional ulema, who indeed consider themselves to represent Ahlus Sunnah wal Jama’ah, the modernists are disjointed and misguided, while the modernists accuse their opponents of deviating from the straight path (Ali & Maravia, 2020).

If we seek objective criteria for defining and understanding splinter movements, we should avoid debates about truth and error. The splinter movement also considers itself more righteous than its opponent; usually, they feel more confident about the truth of their understanding or position. Therefore, the criteria I will use are sociological, not theological. A typical splinter movement is a group or movement that deliberately separates itself from the “mainstream” community, those who tend to be exclusive and are often critical of the established clergy (Wilson et al., 2021).

Besides orthodoxy under the rule of religious organizations, this is now strengthened by laws that can decide whether a religious ideology or movement is considered marginal, splintered, or has deviated from the true line of one of the religions recognized by the law.

Modern Sufi Communion

Modern Sufi associations are modern institutions that have developed in an urban society that offer Sufism lessons in an academic and structured manner. The enthusiasts of this third group are the upper middle class, both economically and intellectually. Teachers with academic qualifications study Sufism here, so it can be told that the tasawuf developed is philosophical tasawuf (Thaver, 2023).

Modern Sufi communion can be seen as an attempt to fulfill the cosmopolitan urban needs of approaching Sufism while avoiding the negative characteristics associated with orthodox orders. Another background may be the presence of modern alliances to accommodate the conditions of city life with indications of materialization, industrialization, and everything related to the flow of goods and services that depend on market mechanisms (Chaoui, 2023).

Among the characteristics inherent in the diversity of modern urban society put forward by Harun Nasution, which Rosana confirmed, both agree that modern society is inclusive people, egalitarian, has intense social interaction, and has middle to upper intellectual levels. These four characteristics are elaborated into the following descriptions; first, it is inclusive of emerging religious sects; second, the relationship that is built between teachers and students is democratic; third, ongoing socialization and interaction, although still exclusive; these four communities are people from the upper middle class both intellectually and materially; and the five study materials that they like are the philosophical style of Sufism so that the Sufis who become idols for them are

like Ibn Arabi, Bayazid al-Bistami, Suhrawardi, Mulla Sadra and Al-Hallaj (Lamont, 2019).

The city is a place where various interests struggle. Each person pursues interests for survival and selects available facilities to satisfy those needs. In the city, people also experience various life problems that require them to move from certain social classes frequently and to their domicile. For this reason, all people are free to choose according to their individual needs, including in matters of religion (Sharfuddin, 2020).

Religion for urban people in Indonesia has not yet reached the “privatization of religion” stage: religion is not only something that everyone chooses by themselves, but people are very thoughtful about their choices and creative in connecting themselves with their religious traditions. City people have their way of practicing their religion. By forming an exclusive community through the guidance of teachers with a level of education, they believe they can fulfill spiritual and intellectual satisfaction. Among the modern forms of association developing in big cities is the Jakarta Paramadina Religious Studies Club. Paramadina, explicitly according to its founder, “Nurcholish Madjid,” is dedicated to the upper middle class both economically and academically (Tarocco, 2019).

The Paramadina waqf foundation conducts monthly and weekly activities to provide religious services for the urban middle-class community. Occupying a shophouse in the elite area of Jakarta Pondok Indah, which is easily accessible to the urban elite, Paramadina serves them in a modern way. Pilgrims or participants must pay if they want to participate in the religious packages offered, from basic-level religious packages to philosophical and spiritual religious lessons. The approach taken by Paramadina is academic and intellectual (Yoo et al., 2022).

Autonomous bodies in each social organization, such as Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama. The organization very intensely carries out religious studies that can be followed by members of the organization and the general public to increase religious knowledge. Meanwhile, organizations are structured and formed by the state, such as the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI), the Indonesian Mosque Council (DMI), and at the youth level, the Indonesian Mosque Youth Contact Agency (BKPRMI). These organizations are engaged in providing formal religious services such as fatwas against emerging religious sects, as well as training for prospective preachers and preachers in Indonesia.

The Indonesian Ulama Council carries out various forms of training in the framework of ulema regeneration. Of course, this activity also gave the deepening of religious values. Likewise, with the Indonesian Council of Mosques, the opportunity given to them is used to carry out da’wah by better using the mosque as a center for da’wah (Safei, 2021). The only

youth organization that is nationalist and under state guidance is the Indonesian Mosque Youth and Youth Contact Agency. Established during the New Order era, this organization has survived as a stronghold of *aqidah* for Muslim youths and adolescents. Their programs certainly reach members in cities and rural areas (Murod et al., 2020).

4. Conclusion

It has arisen and developed in urban Sufism, serving the spiritual void of urban communities. Communities can choose three alternatives according to their characteristics, social strata, and ability to access the spiritual network. Orthodox Orders, Marginal Orders, and Modern Sufi Communities. These three forms of urban spirituality provide spiritual services according to the needs of their followers. There are no rules for compulsory membership of one group to another. The characteristics of modern and urban society, which are egalitarian, rational, and liberal, provide space to interact with these spiritual services. The development of human spirituality will never be dry and timeless to study. Needs that have become natural since birth are always looking for forms following the demands of the times. There will always be spiritual sparks in the hands of spiritual figures in leading their congregation to draw closer to God.

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