



Kafa'ah Nasab: The Ethnographic Study of Marriage in the Alawiyyin Group

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Abstract. *Kafa'ah nasab*, or equality of offspring in group marriage law, is a major problem for *Sharifah* (female title *alawyyin*), who wants and has married. This problem arose because *Sharifah* is required to enter into endogamous marriages or equal marriages within the group *alawyyin*. *Sharifah* is needed to marry someone sayyid because the kinship system adopted is patriarchal. In the group marriage system *alawyyin*, a person sayyid, in fact, can hold marriages outside the group *alawyyin*, thus creating problems in the marriage system within the group *alawyyin*. This research is an ethnographic work that presents data from an insider's perspective. Active participant observation was applied in this research because the researcher himself was a personal *alawiyyin*, which follows the stages in the pre-marriage process in the group *alawyyin*. The research data found in this study shows that a *Sharifah* complies with the system *kafa'ah*. This is due to the social and cultural scope of the group *alawyyin* implemented in its environment. On the other hand, some *Sharifah* who choose not to burden herself with this isogamy decides to marry the man of her choice, whether *sayyid* or *ahwal*, because they have a different social and cultural scope or those who choose to live in an environment without any demands *kafa'ah*. *Kafa'ah nasab* is a value that means to unite and maintain the genealogy of descendants in the group *alawyyin*, so it requires a deep understanding of *sayyid* and *Sharifah* in group marriages *alawyyin*.

Keywords: *Kafa'ah, Sayyid, Sharifah.*

1 Introduction

1.1 A Subsection Sample

The kinship system is the dominant form of culture and even regulates the types of behavior within it. This system applies and has various types. In every culture, kinship is related in two ways, namely in terms of livelihood and reproduction [1]. In this article, I will focus more on discussing how reproduction creates culture and its customs. The kinship system creates groups where this group carries out its function to ensure the continuity of the group by carrying out marriages, maintaining the social order that

exists in the group, implementing moral rules that have been in effect for a long time in the group and punishing violators of customs in the group.

The kinship in the *alawiyyin* group, if viewed from its principles, is that this group is based on the reproductive system, or it can be said that they maintain their kinship system through marriage between fellows. *Alawiyyin's* descendants are based on the marriage of Sayyidina Ali (Nephew of the Prophet Muhammad) and Sayyidatina Fatimah (Daughter). Women of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW). Until now, endogamy in *alawiyyin* group marriages is still maintained by elders who still adhere to this principle. This marriage between the *alawiyyin* group, of course, causes several problems where some people violate the rules of endogamy within the *alawiyyin* group, which is better known as *sekufu'* or *kafa'ah*.

The basis for building close interpersonal relationships is through marriage. Anthropologists understand that some cultures have their concept of marriage. The universal standard definition from anthropologists regarding marriage began in 1951, stating that marriage is a union between a man and a woman in which children are born to a woman, and both are legitimate [2]. Although this definition is subject to debate due to the many types of marriage, we can see a glimpse of what marriage is from an anthropological perspective.

The importance of the value of *kafa'ah* in the *alawiyyin* group has given rise to several problems where violations of this value arise. Several violations are in question; Syarifah had to marry an outsider or become an old maid. Social dynamics and globalization are the most influential factors in changing this pattern, so it is deemed necessary to find a solution to this sociocultural problem so that it can be applied to other groups or communities so as not to repeat the mistakes that will occur in the future in the partner selection and determination process.

2 Research Method

I conducted qualitative research, which aims to collect non-numerical data, or what is usually called descriptive data, to understand the social reality of a particular group of individuals, including understanding their behaviours, beliefs, and motivations [3]. This research involved several aspects, namely, in-depth interviews or observations, to obtain rich and detailed data regarding marriages in the group of *alawiyyin*. This research focuses more on the context of *kafa'ah* group marriages *alawiyyin*. Qualitative method research has several branches, my research will be carried out using ethnography, which several research disciplines, including anthropology, have used [4], where I continue my education as a master's student in social anthropology science at Hasanuddin University.

Anthropology was developed through ethnographic research, so ethnography has high value in the discipline of anthropology [5]. Every ethnographic work is almost always based on an emic perspective, which will also be applied to writing this thesis. Group of *alawiyyin* have their own perspective in viewing and assessing marriage within their group, which is also a view that can be accepted by the people around them.

Through an emic approach, we can understand the cultural meaning of certain behaviours or practices.

The emic approach investigates how people think how they see and categorize the world [6]. Apart from that, I will also get data regarding the rules in their group through this emic approach, what the rules mean by *kafa'ah*, how they imagine the values that exist within *kafa'ah*, and explain matters related to this research.

I position myself as an ethnographer, where I, as a researcher, will study and interpret marriage in groups *alawyyin*, especially on the value of *kafa'ah*, which is the main focus of this research. Typical ethnographic research is described by the term holistic or thorough research (Ember & Melvin Ember, 2006).where in the process, I learned history and several things related to the group *alawyyin*.

In the process, ethnography has several important forms to know before entering the next stage. Among others is autoethnography, in which the researcher connects personally with the cultural, social, and political understanding of the research object [8],or in this paper, a group analysis. Ethnography is also often related to case studies. Ethnographers study and interpret culture, its universality, and diversity through ethnographic studies based on research fields. Anthropologists have conducted field research for a long time to study other cultures [8].

Several techniques are needed to assist in this ethnographic research process. Explaining these techniques aims to collect appropriate information and desired data about the research topic. Basically, the research topic in this ethnography is marriage, where conformity is the emphasis in marriage as practiced by the group *alawyyin* who have been practicing it since they arrived in Indonesia, even before they arrived in Indonesia, the concept of conformity or *kafa'ah*this happened in the time before Prophet Muhammad SAW.

Two research methods are basic and familiar to researchers: deductive and inductive. Deductive research is often used in quantitative research, where researchers go into the research field based on the research questions they have created. Apart from that, the deductive method also aims to test hypotheses, thereby creating an ethical approach, or it can be said that data is collected according to the researcher's categories and questions. The use of deductive methods cannot be denied in the ethnography I will conduct. This happens because some of the questions that will be asked of informants come from research questions that have been studied with my supervisors and research proposal examiners.

The second research method, and the one I will use fully, is the inductive approach, which emphasizes qualitative data in anthropology itself. In this method, the process is without hypotheses and involves collecting data through observation, unstructured conversations with informants, and studying stories, myths, and performances in the group of *alawyyin*. The inductive method produces emic data that reflects the perspective of an insider or group *alawyyin* and what they say or understand about value *kafa'ah* and marriages that occur in their group.

Ethnographic research is not a rigid method but rather a process I often carry out daily. I have been talking to people around me and being a good listener since completing my initial education in anthropology, which has formed my character and made it very easy to talk to people around me.

When I'm in a certain place, for example, in a *warkop* (coffee shops) where I often write, sometimes I tell my friends who ask for recommendations for a comfortable place to write. I will simply explain to the friend. I also described the conditions that existed at that time and expressed my feelings at that time, such as; I'm hot in this *warkop*, and there is also a *warkop* that makes me comfortable air conditioner in it.

Things like the above are needed in making observations or observations. The difference is that I do it completely with my tongue when I tell a friend. In ethnography, explaining a condition in which we are at that time is outlined in a book called Fieldnote (Rapport, 1991). In writing, I was encouraged to distinguish smells and noise during the interview and how they reacted when I asked sensitive questions. This is what Malinowski called The Imponderabilia of Native Life, which means unimaginable conditions when in the research field so that rich and complete data can be extracted [9]

Observing the research process is not easy, and it requires the trust of people (certain groups) in the researcher conducting the research. In anthropology, this method is called "building a report card" in the research environment. As I do, I need the trust that has existed in my group for a long time because I am part of the group *alawyiyin*. The main goal in building report cards in groups of *alawyiyin* is to build relationships based on personal relationships. I build report cards in my family environment to facilitate friendly conversations between researchers and informants.

The most important and prominent thing in making ethnography is participant observation because, in the process, the researcher takes part in the group being studied. In this case, I, as a researcher, am part of the group *alawyiyin*, which can automatically be called participant observation, in which I will be involved in many ways. As in this research topic, which will analyze marriage, I will also take part in various wedding processes that will take place so that my position as an "insider" and also as an ethnographer can be called an active participant observation method.

Involvement in the marriage process is when I act as a person *alawyiyin* looking for a future wife, Sharifah. In the process, I would attend many group weddings of *alawyiyin*, which is indeed a necessity to attend your family wedding. At a group wedding event of *alawyiyin*, I usually participate in activities such as dancing and singing with the family, a tradition in the group of *alawyiyin*. As an ethnographer who carries out active participant observation, you want certain goals, the main goal of which is to understand the meaning of activities, especially in practicing *kafa'ah* values in the group *alawyiyin*.

3 Results

Prospective husbands' and wives' compatibility should be considered before choosing each other as partners. In Islam, *kafa'ah* must be obeyed because it has been discussed and approved by the four *madhabs*, which exists even in practice, only *mazhab shafi'i*, which focuses on discussing *kafa'ah* nasab or equality in marriage based on lineage.

Some scholars are not *sayyid* or *non-sayyid* and say that marriages are unequal within the group *alawyiyin*. This must concern both *sayyids* and *non-sayyids* so that they do not misunderstand the meaning of the existence of *kafa'ah* in marriage. *Kafa'ah*. It

clearly functions to create an equal marriage and avoid the possibility of differences in understanding between husband and wife and from their respective families.

Without realizing it, *kafa'ah* has been practiced for a long time in Indonesia, although many are not aware that marriage equality is called *kafa'ah* in general. This happens because a woman's choice of mate should be compatible with her future husband's man. In Buya Yahya's statement, there is a sentence that confirms that "didn't the prophet teach us to choose?". This statement confirms that Islamic teachings require parents of women and men to choose a potential life partner for their child who is considered to be an ideal partner for their child.

The *Jumhur Ulama* (The agreement of the majority of Islamic scholars that can be followed) caught my attention when Buya Yahya explained it. This agreement confirms that in an Islamic marriage, a person is required to choose a partner who is compatible with him because it is not only him who will get married, but the whole family will be involved. This was emphasized solely to avoid undesirable events in the future in their household.

In Islam itself, tarnishing a family's good name is a mistake that is very difficult for the group or community that lives with them to accept. Tarnishing a good name has a negative meaning in both Islam and other religions, so some people are bound by the social norms around them so as not to tarnish the good name of their family as much as possible.

3.1 *Kafa'ah Nasab in Alawiyin*

Value practice *kafa'ah* often receives criticism from outside. This happens for several reasons. Several phenomena that I witnessed occurred at the time this research was taking place, where several people criticized the *kafa'ah nasab*, starting from people who had been in a relationship with a *Sharifah* but could not continue their love story because the *kafa'ah* lineage limited it.

Apart from that, some *Sharifah* and *sayyids* cannot be separated from my views on how they respond to *kafa'ah nasab*. This is at a time of technological development and changes in living systems that are transforming into globalization (where people can meet in an activity or job that allows them to build love or have feelings of liking for each other).

3.2 **Insight of *Syarifah*: I will merely marry Sayyid!**

A *sayyid* is not required to apply *kafa'ah*, so they do not pay attention to the important points in applying *kafa'ah* values. The important point is that when *sayyids* commits exogamy or marry outside the *alawiyin* group, there will be a *sharifah* waiting to appear to ask for their hand. While interviewing my informants, consisting of several *Sharifah*, I was careful in the process because several past events and the trauma they experienced made the atmosphere in the interview process awkward and made me have to schedule a time to interview them again.

Make myself a man *alawiyin* who wants to get married, and it is mandatory to collect data about the application of values *kafa'ah nasab* in the group of *alawiyin*. I went through several matchmaking processes and the introduction stage to having romances

with several Sharifah to get rich and clear data and support the data, and I will present on group marriages *alawyyin*.

4 Conclusion

Value practice *kafa'ah* often receives criticism from outside. This happens for several reasons. Several phenomena that I witnessed occurred at the time this research was taking place, where several people criticized the *kafa'ah* nasab, starting from people who had been in a relationship with a *Sharifah* but could not continue their love story because the *kafa'ah* lineage limited it.

Apart from that, some sharifahs and sayyids cannot be separated from my views on how they react to *kafa'ah nasab*. This is at a time of technological development and changes in living systems that are transforming into globalization (where people can meet in an activity or job that allows them to build love or have feelings of liking for each other). On this occasion, I shared several activities in the context of this research, namely marriage, where I discussed with sharifahs who married of their own choice and those who married of their parent's choice.

If the wedding is an *alawyyin* group or a wedding between *sayyid* and *syarifah*, then the wedding will be very busy, and a *sayyid/syarifah* will try to attend the wedding. On the other hand, if the marriage is a *syarifah* marrying an *ahwal*, then the marriage will seem quiet from the presence of the group *alawyyin* who performed the wedding. However, if a *sayyid* and *ahwal* marry, the marriage will be the same as a marriage between a *sayyid* and a *syarifah* because the *alawyyin* group will be busy attending the wedding.

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