

Beyond Coexistence: Intersecting Realms of Faith and Policy in Mentawai, Indonesia

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Abstract

This study explores the relationship between the indigenous religion of the Mentawai people, Arat Sabulungan, world religions (Christianity, Catholicism, and Islam), and the state, focusing on intersubjective recognition among these entities. The research employs a qualitative ethnographic approach, conducted in Matotonan village, South Siberut subdistrict, West Sumatra. Primary data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with key informants and observations, while secondary data included literature reviews of relevant journal articles, books, research reports, and news. The findings reveal the complexity and nuances of religious conversion, the socio-cultural dynamics influencing the negotiation process of Arat Sabulungan and world religions, and the role of state policy in shaping the religious landscape and identity of the Mentawai people. This article demonstrates that the socio-cultural life of the Mentawai people, especially in Matotonan village, shows that recognition of Arat Sabulungan extends beyond intercultural relations into the anthropological realm. Followers of Arat Sabulungan (Sikerei), world religions, and government employees have constructed themselves as subjects through intersubjective recognition. This research contributes to understanding the complex dynamics between indigenous religions, world religions, and state policies. It applies Axel Honneth's theory of intersubjective recognition, highlighting the need for inclusive policies, cultural education, and legal recognition to support and preserve indigenous religions like Arat Sabulungan.

Keywords: Arat Sabulungan; Indigenous Religion; intersubjective recognition; Mentawai people.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi hubungan antara agama adat masyarakat Mentawai, Arat Sabulungan, agama-agama dunia (Kristen, Katolik, dan Islam), dan negara, dengan fokus pada pengakuan intersubjektif di antara entitas-entitas tersebut. Penelitian dilakukan di desa Matotonan, kecamatan Siberut Selatan, Sumatera Barat, dengan pendekatan etnografis kualitatif. Data primer dikumpulkan melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur dengan informan kunci dan observasi, sementara data sekunder mencakup tinjauan literatur dari artikel jurnal, buku, laporan penelitian, dan berita yang relevan. Temuan penelitian ini menunjukkan kompleksitas dan nuansa konversi agama, dinamika sosial budaya yang mempengaruhi proses negosiasi Arat Sabulungan dan agama-agama dunia, serta peran kebijakan negara dalam membentuk lanskap keagamaan dan identitas masyarakat Mentawai. Artikel ini juga membuktikan bahwa kehidupan sosial budaya masyarakat Mentawai, khususnya di Desa Matotonan, menunjukkan bahwa rekognisi terhadap Arat Sabulungan tidak hanya terjadi pada hubungan antar budaya tetapi juga dalam ranah antropologis. Penganut Arat Sabulungan (Sikerei), penganut agama-agama dunia, dan pegawai pemerintah mengkonstruksikan dirinya sebagai subjek melalui rekognisi intersubjektif. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada pemahaman tentang dinamika kompleks antara agama adat, agama dunia, dan kebijakan negara. Penelitian ini menerapkan teori pengakuan intersubjektif Axel Honneth, menyoroti kebutuhan akan kebijakan inklusif, pendidikan budaya, dan pengakuan hukum untuk mendukung dan melestarikan agama-agama adat seperti Arat Sabulungan.

Kata Kunci: Arat Sabulungan; agama leluhur; pengakuan intersubjektif; Masyarakat Mentawai.

INTRODUCTION

The indigenous religion of the Mentawai people is Arat Sabulungan. The encounter between indigenous religions and world religions (Christianity, Catholicism, and Islam) has been a source of deep trauma for the Mentawai people. They often hide their Indigenous religious identity, preferring to display an identity associated with world religions while still practising Arat Sabulungan doctrines. Despite the official adoption of Christianity, Catholicism, and Islam by the Mentawai people since 1954, the principles of Arat Sabulungan remain integral to their daily lives (Delfi, 2013b; Panjaitan, 2017; Reeves, 1999).

Arat Sabulungan has experienced significant changes with the introduction of world religions (Delfi, 2013b; Glossanto, 2019; Markus, 2016; Wahyuni, 2024; Yulia, Zulfa, & Naldi, 2018). The turmoil in religious life began with the government's 1954 decision to ban Arat Sabulungan through Decree Letter Number 167/PROMOSI/1954. This policy forced the Mentawai people to abandon their Uma, central gathering places for religious rituals, which were demolished, and sacred items were stored inside. The state's imposition of world religious civilisations became more intense, exemplified by the Three Religions Meeting in 1954, which attempted to eliminate Arat Sabulungan by requiring the Mentawai people to choose between Islam and Christianity. Concrete problems for Arat Sabulungan adherents included threats and harassment from the police, forced relocation, and the secretive practice of rituals (Febrianti, 2021). The government closely monitored the Mentawai people (Delfi, 2013a) and the prohibitions, threats, and intimidation they experienced resulted in long-term trauma.

Existing studies have not adequately addressed the crucial aspects of the relationship between Arat Sabulungan, world religions, and the state, particularly regarding intersubjective recognition among followers of Arat Sabulungan (Sikerei), world religions, and government employees. Existing studies do not examine fundamental problems in the relationship between Arat Sabulungan, world religions, and the state. Two trends from existing studies can be mapped. First, studies analyse the relationship between Islam and Arat Sabulungan (Delfi, 2012, 2013b, 2017; Kurniawan, 2019; Rozi & Taufik, 2020; Wahyuni, Busro, Sabna, & Karista, 2023; Wirman, Ilham, Ananda, Fatimah, & Reflinaldi, 2021). Second, studies tend to analyse the existence of Arat Sabulungan in modern times (Ardhanari, Nugrohadi, & Viphindartin, 2021; Hanani & Nelmaya, 2022; Krissandi, Widanarto, & Utami, 2019; Tatubeket, Agustina, & Efi, 2019; Yulia, Zulfa, & Kaksim, 2019; Yulia et al., 2018). From these two tendencies, the state and world religion's recognition of Arat Sabulungan is not discussed carefully. Likewise, studies on state recognition of indigenous religions in Indonesia have been widely researched. Samsul Maarif and Ismatu Ropi's studies have shown that (Maarif, 2017; Ropi, 2017). A new study that can be developed is state recognition following the Constitutional Court decision Number 97/PUU-XIV/2016 concerning the Population Administration Law. According to the Constitutional Court and the Government judges, religion is essential to understand by referring to policy data and related discourse. According to Sikerei, religion is also important to describe as they know and practice it.

This article complements previous studies that did not carefully analyse the relationship between Arat Sabulungan, world religions, and the state. Specifically, it seeks to answer two questions: First, what is the relationship between indigenous religion, world religion, and the state in Mentawai? Second, what is the intersubjective recognition between Sikerei, followers of world religions, and government employees? The answers to these questions provide an in-depth understanding as a basis for policy formulation and social engineering to maximise the recognition of indigenous religions in Mentawai, Indonesia.

Guided by Honneth's theory of intersubjective recognition, this article argues that the recognition of Arat Sabulungan by both world religions and the state in Mentawai extends beyond mere cultural

acknowledgement into forming an anthropological basis for socio-political engagement. This study moves beyond the Taylorian intercultural recognition paradigm by basing its analysis on Axel Honneth's concept of intersubjective recognition. According to Honneth, recognition occurs not only at the level of intercultural relations but also extends to the anthropological realm. Through the process of intersubjective recognition, humans construct themselves as subjects. The subject construction process occurs at three levels: the realms of love, law, and solidarity (Honneth, 2020). Love expresses intimate relationships between people, helping individuals develop self-confidence. The law allows individuals to create respect for themselves, while solidarity forms an attitude of respect as part of a collective community of values.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research was conducted in Matotonan village, South Siberut subdistrict, Mentawai Islands district, West Sumatra. Two main reasons underpinned the decision to select Matotonan village as the research location. Firstly, Arat Sabulungan continues to exist in Matotonan village, where most of the population is Muslim, with a small portion being Catholic. Both Islam and Catholicism in Matotonan village can accommodate Arat Sabulungan. Secondly, Matotonan village's location in Siberut Island's interior provides a vivid illustration of the encounter among the state, world religions, and Arat Sabulungan.

The research data comprises field data of a qualitative ethnographic type, divided into primary and secondary data categories. Primary data were obtained from fieldwork using interview and observation techniques. Secondary data consists of literature reviews related to the research topics, including journal articles, books, research reports, archives, and news in various media.

Data collection was conducted through interviews, observation, and documentation. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with seven key informants: Ali Umran (Village Head), Saharman (Village Secretary), Aman Majan (Sikerei), Aman Nalangi (Sikerei), Hendrizal (Islamic figure), Markus (Catholic figure), and Abdullah (community member). Observations focused on actualising Arat Sabulungan's teachings, interactions among various Matotonan people, community attitudes towards Sikerei, respect for nature, and symbols synonymous with Arat Sabulungan. Observations also took place in the upper reaches of Matotonan village, where the people lived before moving to government-made houses (Barasi). Currently, this upstream area is used for plantations and pig breeding. Documentation techniques involved extracting data from journal articles, research reports, books, magazines, newspapers, and archives relevant to the research topic, obtained from libraries, the internet, and existing archives.

Data analysis employed the Miles and Huberman approach. Firstly, data codification involved naming the research results after simplifying, abstracting, and transferring rough data from recordings or field notes, likely producing themes or classifications of research results. Secondly, research findings were presented as categories or groupings. Miles and Huberman suggest using matrices and diagrams in addition to narrative presentation to enhance effectiveness. Thirdly, drawing conclusions involved interpreting the empirical material by noting regularities, patterns, explanations, configurations, and propositions, and comparing them with relevant findings and concepts.

To ensure focus, all stages of data analysis were conducted by dialoguing the data with theories presented in the theoretical framework, such as Honneth's recognition theory. Honneth's recognition theory was used to analyse the state's recognition of Arat Sabulungan. Honneth emphasises that a political community providing adequate space is essential for individuals to realise their potential fully. Adequate space means recognising the existence of each subject. When a community fails to acknowledge a subject's

existence, the subject cannot fully realise their potential (Honneth, 2020). Therefore, it is necessary to improve the societal structure to support the actualisation of every subject within it (Runesi, 2015). One primary requirement for improving this structure is recognising or acknowledging the subject's existence in society (Pariyatman, Santoso, & Madjid, 2022). Thus, Honneth's recognition theory is considered crucial for becoming a social grammar for the presence of religion in public spaces.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Arat Sabulungan and World Religions

The Mentawai people have embraced world religions such as Islam, Christianity, and Catholicism, which are administratively recorded in their population data. Nevertheless, beliefs originating from the Arat Sabulungan tradition, including rituals, virtues, and prohibitions, still exist and are closely tied to the Mentawai people's daily lives.

The exact timeline of Islam's entry into Mentawai is unclear, but it is believed to have begun with land traders on Mentawai's outskirts. These Muslim traders from West Sumatra engaged in barter trade with the Mentawai people, exchanging rattan and lontar (Nelmaya & Deswalantri, 2021). Since the 18th century, Islam has been spreading in Mentawai, initially through the efforts of the Minangkabau people, who converted the Mentawai people to Islam (Delfi, 2012). During the Japanese colonial era, there was a prohibition against teaching religion. However, Islamic converts continued their efforts, resulting in a few Mentawai people converting to Islam (Delfi, 2013b).

In 1975, the da'wah council in Siberut documented significant Islamic missionary activities. The preachers, supported by Saudi Arabia and Kuwait in collaboration with the Indonesian Da'wah Council, played a crucial role in converting the Mentawai people to Islam, particularly in South Siberut (Delfi, 2012). The group that brought Islam to Mentawai was related to the preacher group. Because the preaching of Muslims is easy to understand, it makes the Mentawai people want to embrace Islam. The spread of Islam in Mentawai was also carried out through marriage and welfare assistance to the Mentawai people (Wirman et al., 2021).

Mentawai people who were successfully persuaded to convert to Islam were also given scholarships to study Islam in Tanah Tepi, such as in Padang Panjang, Pariaman, Bukittinggi, and Padang. After completing the lessons and having gained knowledge about the Islamic religion, they were sent back to villages in Mentawai to teach the knowledge they had gained while they were in West Sumatra to Mentawai people who had not yet or had just converted to Islam (Delfi, 2012).

Apart from that, the efforts made by the preachers were to be gentle with Sikerei, even accommodating the practices of Arat Sabulungan. Da'i Islam understands that Sikerei's presence is very strategic as a guardian of the balance of the socio-cultural system in Mentawai. Some Sikerei converted to Islam but did not carry out rituals in accordance with Islamic law. The preachers tend to let it go while respecting Sikerei's choice to become bicultural, become followers of Islam, and continue to carry out the Arat Sabulungan ritual. Even Islamic preachers consider Sikerei to be more invested in maintaining the stability of his preaching. Sikerei is only an intermediary object. The main thing is the younger generation through education. The preachers did not give the option to choose one, which would be potentially counterproductive (Wirman et al., 2021).

Even though some Mentawai people have converted to Islam, many still show their belief in spirits. The practice of Arat Sabulungan still exists. For example, they still believe that spirits can cause a person's illness. Even though you have been treated at a community health centre, it is common for disease healing

to involve Sikerei. They take medicine from the village midwife and continue to carry out healing rituals with the help of Sikerei. The healing ritual involves an essential element contrary to Islamic law: food derived from pork and other primates. Pigs are difficult to abandon due to their natural availability and ease of finding. In some cases, this is a recommendation from Sikerei (Wirman et al., 2021).

Through *puaranan sasareu* (outsider way of life), some Siberut people have accepted Islam. Siberut Mentawai people who have accepted Islam do not always abstain from consuming pork. If there were no rules in Islam prohibiting eating pork, more Mentawai people would likely follow Islam because this prohibition of Islamic law was the reason why the Mentawai people converted to Catholicism. However, some people understand that pork is haram. However, their understanding of the word *haram* differs from that of Muslims. Muslims in Siberut often say that pork is haram, but on the other hand, they are *mananam* (delicious) (Delfi, 2013b).

People who have converted to Islam do not hide but fully admit that they like eating pork. Some Mentawai people still eat pork during various life activities and rituals during their life cycle. Especially when there is a big party, some Mentawai people who have embraced Islam always kill pigs and eat them. Apart from eating pigs, they also care for and sell them when someone wants to buy them for healing or other rituals.

Each person constructs their truth claims through language regarding their identity. The meaning of truth exists when this identity is discussed. The sense of identity can change according to space and time. Because identity is a discursive construction, the identity of the Mentawai people can change (be changed) because of the identity markers placed on them. Even though administratively, according to population data, the Mentawai people are Muslim, the implementation of the Arat Sabulungan ritual practice is still ongoing. Especially in villages along the Rereiket River, with their people grouped as Sarereiket (residents of the Rereiket Valley). The intensity of the Arat Sabulungan ritual practice for each village in Siberut is not the same. Still, various rituals related to healing from illness, birth, death, the inauguration of the *Uma*, and peace are carried out, including taboos (*keikei*) that must be obeyed during the time specified when these rituals are carried out (Delfi, 2012).

Apart from Islam, the Mentawai people also encountered Christianity. Historical records state that the initial encounter of Christians in the Mentawai region was in 1901 through traders and many sailors who stopped in Sikakap and Sipora through German missionaries sent by the Dutch colonial government who brought the *Zending* effort (Tulius, 2013). Two pastors, August Lett and A. Kramer, became the first mandate holders of the Protestantism efforts of the Mentawai community until 1914, with North Pagai Island (Sikakap) as the centre. They focus more on *Zending* efforts on activities such as providing medical services, education and light carpentry businesses (Glossanto, 2019; Zalman, 2018).

However, the *Zending* efforts carried out at that time were not very fruitful because Arat Sabulungan was still very strongly embraced by the Mentawai people. Apart from that, what made the *Zending* mission less fruitful was the Mentawai people's rebellion against Dutch colonialism. The forced labour order to build horse roads around the island imposed by the colonials made the Mentawai people hostile to any white newcomers. One of the victims of this resistance was Pastor August Lett, who is considered to have paved the way for the Dutch colonial entry into Mentawai.

After that, the *Zending* effort was continued by Pastor F. Borger, who lasted for 20 years. The presence of Pastor Borger, who is quite active in his work and carrying out his duties, means that he is considered to have significantly impacted *Zending* efforts in Mentawai. It was recorded that on July 9, 1916, 11 residents declared their Christianity under the direction of Pastor Borger. This event was the momentum for the birth of the Mentawai Protestant Christian Church in Nanemlehu (Markus, 2016).

After the Second World War, *Zending* activities in Mentawai became increasingly rapid, especially in the south of the Mentawai Islands. One proof of progress in spreading Protestant teachings is the birth of works such as translating the Holy Bible into the Mentawai language using the dialect of the Sikakap people. Since then, the Mentawai language (with the Sikakap dialect) has significantly spread Christianity in Mentawai. Until now, this language has been used as the official language for worship activities in churches in Mentawai.

Meanwhile, the arrival of Catholicism in the Mentawai area is relatively younger than the arrival of Islam and Christianity. In 1953, Father Aurelio Canizzaro visited the Mentawai Islands (more precisely, the area around South Siberut) to evaluate plans for spreading Catholic teachings to Mentawai. He visited several places on the mandate of Monsignor De Martino from the Padang Diocese. Some areas include: Siberut Island, Sikabaluan, Sikakap, and Sipora. Father Canizzaro's efforts to spread Catholicism continued on December 18, 1954, when he returned to Siberut with his colleague Father Angelo Calvi. They decided to settle there, and right at Christmas in 1954, the first Catholic Church was founded, which marked the beginning of the spread of Catholicism in Mentawai.

The Catholic Church that was present began its mission by providing social services to the Mentawai people in education and health. They also seek to inculturate Catholic teachings with Mentawai traditions. Inculturation is interpreted as an effort by the Catholic church to present the message of Gospel values by manifesting them in a form of expression appropriate to the local community's culture (Rukiyanto, 2019). Inculturation efforts are no longer a new thing for the Catholic church inculturation in Pope John Paul's 1985 encyclical letter, in the chapter "The Gospel and Culture", states that inculturation activities interpreted by the Catholic church are a form of incarnation of the Gospel into local Indigenous culture and vice versa, namely the introduction of culture into the life of the church itself (Paul II, 1985).

The inculturation efforts of the Catholic church gave birth to a new nuance contrary to the conditions following the Arat Sabulungan ban in Mentawai. The Catholic Church is trying to recognise the customs and traditions of the Mentawai people to give a positive impression, such as a form of appreciation and mutual understanding, and even provide space for the implementation of Mentawai culture to continue to exist. As a result, the Mentawai people, especially the island of Siberut, tend to be easier to accept and are willing to become part of Catholicism.

Arat Sabulungan and The State

Debates related to religion and belief in Indonesia are still problematic in national and state life. So, religion and belief are still unique topics of discussion amidst the growing population of Indonesia (Asniah, Ahmad, & Wahyuni, 2023; Hakiki, 2011). In its development in Indonesia, religion has divided citizens into two groups: indigenous religion and official religion (world religion) recognised by the state. This division is a form of religious politics or is interpreted as a political effort carried out by the ruling party by making religion a means of legitimising power and control over groups of citizens. The division is carried out through mobilisation, interest claims, pressure from the masses or the identity of the majority religion, political parties' power, and state infiltration using statutory policies (Maarif, 2017).

The Old Order, which defined religion as having a holy book, a prophet and international recognition, meant that Indonesia only provided exceptional services to religions recognised by the state. Even though the proposed definition of religion was never included in official state regulations (Maarif, 2017). Then the Public Belief Monitoring Institution (*Pengawasan Aliran Kepercayaan Masyarakat/PAKEM*) was formed in 1952. It monitored the position and development of belief groups so they did not leave the realm of being a belief or becoming a state-recognized religion (Sihombing, 2008).

Several figures, such as Patty and Mulder, thought that PAKEM was like a "watchdog" which always watched over faith groups, especially spiritual groups at that time (Maarif, 2017).

However, what needs to be noted in the context of development efforts through government policy SK NO.167/P.M/1954 is that the government, together with Christian missionaries, consider that the Mentawai people are a society that is still primitive, as is the existence of Arat Sabulungan, which is an indigenous religion. Through the Three Religions Meeting in 1954, the state attempted to eliminate Arat Sabulungan by giving the Mentawai people an ultimatum to choose one of the two official religions in Mentawai: Islam or Christianity. The Christian and Islamic churches are trying to replace the existence of Arat Sabulungan (Mulhadi, 2008).

Various efforts continue to be made to limit the space for faith groups to operate by issuing regulations governing PAKEM's position in Law No. 1 of 1961 concerning Basic Provisions for the State Police and Law No. 15 of 1961 concerning Basic Provisions of the Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Indonesia which aims to provide more intense authority in supervising belief groups as well as a narrower definition of religion to emphasise who must be recognised and served by the state as well as an effort to intimidate belief groups (batman groups).

Likewise, what happened to followers of Arat Sabulungan, as experienced by Aman Majan and Aman Nalangi, explained what they had experienced as Sikerei in Matotonan village. They said that they were afraid of the police. The police arrived carrying firearms and entered the settlement by force, burning various ritual equipment stored in the *Uma*. They were also forced to move to settlements provided by the government. The existence of prohibitions and threats implemented the Arat Sabulungan ritual even more closely and secretly at that time (Febrianti, 2021). The lives of the Mentawai people are often followed by strict supervision from the government (Delfi, 2013b). The prohibitions, threats and intimidation they experienced resulted in trauma, at least for the next generation who experienced difficulties during those times.

During the New Order era, initially, belief groups were considered equivalent to religion as seen in the regulations issued by the MPR in 1973 concerning Outlines of State Policy (*Garis-Garis Besar Haluan Negara/GBHN*) that 'belief' and 'religion' were expressions of belief in the Almighty God who were the same. Equally valid. Religion and belief can be said to be equivalent (Elsam, 2017). Along with its development, still during the New Order period, TAP MPR RI IV/MPR/1978 was issued, which became one of the steps in implementing belief in Almighty God by the basis of just and civilised humanity, so that a circular was issued which stated that five (5) religions are recognised, protected and served are Islam, Protestantism (Christianity), Catholicism, Hinduism and Buddhism (Elsam, 2017). It does not stop there, creating a religion column on the Identity Card (*Kartu Tanda Penduduk/KTP*) and forcing belief groups to join one of the official religions to get services and protection from the state. This discrimination is carried out against belief groups (Findi, 2017).

The Three Religions Meeting in 1954 and various implementations of central government policies became dark history for followers of Arat Sabulungan in Mentawai. The Mentawai people are forced to choose one of the official religions recognised by the state to gain access to welfare programs from the state. They were forced not to include Arat Sabulungan in their population data and replaced it with Islam, Christianity or Catholicism. The Mentawai people hide their indigenous religious identity to remain considered Indonesian citizens.

Regarding the experience of discrimination, which always makes indigenous religions inseparable from historicity, which continually perpetuates religious politics, not only in the field of religion. Religious politics also penetrates the aspect of marriage by issuing marriage regulations. Marriage can be valid if it

is based on a recognised religion, as stated in the Minister of Home Affairs decision in 1989. Education has also provided room for discrimination against indigenous religions. The failure to facilitate education for followers of Indigenous religions in educational institutions and the obligation for followers of Indigenous religions to study religious education recognised by the state is a form of state neglect of Indigenous religions.

The reform era has become a bridge for faith groups to express their existence. From a Human Rights (HAM) perspective, faith groups should receive protection and need to speak out about fulfilling their rights as citizens. So far, the state's attention to indigenous religions can be seen in the issuance of Law No. 23 of 2006 concerning Population Administration, which gives adherents of indigenous religions the authority to register their identity in civil registration as a belief group. However, the religion column on the Identity Card (*Kartu Tanda Penduduk/KTP*) and Family Card (*Kartu Keluarga/KK*) remains blank. The problems faced by faith groups touch all aspects, from social, cultural, economic, political, and other elements. However, the current situation is that the position of the Administering Law conflicts with the 1945 Constitution: this can be seen in the failure to fulfil the rights of every person to recognition, guarantees, protection and fair legal certainty.

The main problem faced by followers of indigenous religions today is related to the inclusion of beliefs in the religion column on KTP/KK. The changes in the 2006 Review of the Administering Law have shown that the state's position does not favour followers of indigenous religions. The state does not provide protection and recognition in determining personal status, such as leaving the religion column blank for followers of indigenous religions, which is an essential form of personal status. Several items in the regulations are not based on the principles of the rule of law, which gives rise to inequality and discriminatory rights for citizens. Several violations that are considered capable of injuring the rights of every citizen include violations of the rights to education, employment, birth rights, marriage rights, and so on. However, in terms of regulations, recognition of the existence of groups and followers of indigenous religions has been stated in the law.

The Constitutional Court decision Number 97/PUU-XIV/2016 has provided fresh air for followers of indigenous religions to believe in and freely express their religious rituals. This can be seen by the opportunity for followers of indigenous religions to include their true indigenous religious identity in population data. The freedom that followers of indigenous religions have obtained after previously having their rights as citizens limited. This is undoubtedly a form of progress in state recognition in legally fulfilling the rights of followers of indigenous religions.

The combination of the dictions "religion" and "belief" in population data illustrates that the two dictions have been declared equivalent. So, there are no restrictions in processing population data that must fill in actual religious identity. Examined further, it is also hoped that this decision will not only fulfil the rights of followers of Indigenous religions in population administration but also that followers of Indigenous religions will be given the same religious rights as those intended for followers of Indigenous religions. Just as the state fulfils the rights of followers of official religions, the rights of followers of indigenous religions must also be fulfilled by the state.

However, the critical note is that the separation of the dictions "religion" and "belief" in population data is seen as a form of confirmation that the state still perpetuates discriminatory attitudes. The concepts of religion and belief are still considered different things, so defining religion is still a problem in recognition politics in Indonesia.

Intersubjective Recognition of Arat Sabulungan in Mentawai

Increasing inequality and social injustice are of particular concern to social sector researchers. Indonesia still faces the problem of unequal access to several sectors, such as education, health and medical services, employment opportunities, and infrastructure, thereby triggering social inequality and injustice. As an expert in social justice studies, Axel Honneth put forward a theory of normative monism that explores the alternative approach to redistribution recognition, which Nancy Fraser first initiated. This differs from Fraser, who believes that redistribution and recognition have their own space but must go hand in hand. Honneth criticised redistribution and recognition as inseparable unity because redistribution has become the basis that builds the substance of recognition itself.

Looking at phenomena related to social struggle, Honneth uses redistribution and recognition, manifesting in three domains: love, law, and solidarity (Honneth, 2020). The realm of love looks at human relationships regarding affection, attention, and recognition in the social environment. The legal domain explains the relationship between legal recognition and protection between groups or individuals. The realm of solidarity describes social relationships that create a sense of togetherness and support. The fulfilment of love, law, and solidarity can affect self-confidence, self-esteem, and social relationships.

Love relationships are an essential form of recognition in building self-confidence. In this realm, recognition aims to create awareness of one's existence while acknowledging other people's existence in the same intersubjective environment. In the context of Mentawai society, love is seen when the Sikerei realise the importance of education, especially for their children. This awareness is a form of recognition that Sikerei is also part of the same life as the Mentawai people. Having to face the challenge of difficult access to education does not reduce the Sikerei's enthusiasm to support their children's education.

Apart from awareness of education, a reality that is new in the lives of the Mentawai people, such as an attitude of openness towards outsiders (*sasareu*). Give each other recognition and appreciation. Sikerei takes a role in proving how love exists as a relationship of recognition for Arat Sabulungan. Sikerei has acknowledged his existence and the existence of others. Previously, the Sikerei preferred to live in the *Uma*, which they built in the upstream area and only went down to the *Barasi* built by the government at a particular time. Now, Sikerei is ready to settle in the *Barasi* settlement with his family and tribe. Is Sikerei willing to pay in *Barasi* and actively involved in traditional ceremonies and celebrations held by the village government.

National policy has provided space for Sikerei to express its existence in the socio-cultural life of the Mentawai people. Law Number 6 of 2014 concerning Villages has been made legal for the Matotonan village government to introduce local laws that consider the teaching values of Arat Sabulungan. Various Village Regulations have been adapted to the needs of the Mentawai community. To maintain the existence of the values taught by Arat Sabulungan, the village government divided Matotonan village into three areas: residential areas, plantations, and pig farms. This policy provides space for the continued availability of pork as an integral part of the Arat Sabulungan ritual. Every social problem related to the law is not immediately brought to the police station. It was first resolved wisely based on Arat Sabulungan's values at the village hall by involving various levels of society.

In the realm of solidarity, the Mentawai people increasingly respect each other. Relations between tribes that were previously vulnerable to conflict have now become more mutually supportive. The village government has built *Uma* Matotonan, a gathering place for the Matotonan community from existing tribes. Various *punen* (traditional parties) at *Uma* Matotonan are held more inclusively, involving the community and can even be attended by outsiders. This reality shows respect for the Mentawai people as part of a community of collective values.

Discussion

The socio-cultural life of the Mentawai people, especially in Matotonan village, has shown the continuous integration of Arat Sabulungan in the life of the Mentawai people, even though they have to negotiate with world religious teachings and state policies. The complexity and nuances of religious conversion, including the socio-cultural dynamics that influence the negotiation process of Arat Sabulungan and world religions, as well as the role of state policy in the past and currently, have shaped the religious landscape and identity of the Mentawai people.

This study aligns with McLennan's, Dobia et al.'s, and Gee's research, which address an indigenous perspective of resilience that extends beyond an individual's ability to overcome adversity. McLennan highlights how individual and collective relationships enhance the well-being of Indigenous people and mitigate risks and hardships (McLennan, 2015). Similar research also shows how adversity includes coping with the historical and contemporary impacts of colonisation, including issues of racism and structural inequality (Dobia et al., 2013; Gee, 2016).

Christians firmly carry out *Zending* in Mentawai, which tends not to accommodate Arat Sabulungan. Meanwhile, Islam and Catholicism are more able to accommodate Arat Sabulungan. Sikerei, followers of Arat Sabulungan, are no longer found on various large Mentawai Islands. However, until now, Arat Sabulungan still exists on Siberut Island because the majority religion on Siberut is Catholicism. The inculturation of the Catholic Church in Mentawai has provided space for the Mentawai people to express their indigenous religion. Likewise, the choice of Islamic *da'wah*, which accommodates the traditions of the Mentawai people, including Arat Sabulungan, has presented a bicultural form of religion for the Mentawai people.

Different from Islam in other areas, Islam in Matotonan village is unique in understanding the haram law of eating pork in Islamic teachings. Matotonan people who have accepted Islam do not always abstain from consuming pork. If there were no rules in Islam prohibiting eating pork, more Mentawai people would likely follow Islam because this prohibition of Islamic law was the reason why the Mentawai people converted to Catholicism. However, some people understand that pork is haram. However, their understanding of the word *haram* differs from that of Muslims. Muslims in Siberut often say that pork is haram, but on the other hand, they are *mananam* (delicious) (Delfi, 2013b). People who have converted to Islam do not hide but fully admit that they like eating pork. Some Mentawai people still eat pork during various life activities and rituals during their life cycle. Especially when there is a big party, some Mentawai people who have embraced Islam always kill pigs and eat them. Apart from eating pigs, they also care for and sell them when someone wants to buy them for healing or other rituals.

Since 1952 until now, the state's recognition of Arat Sabulungan has experienced dynamics. The formation of PAKEM, the *Rapat Tiga Agama*, and various development program policies have become dark history for followers of Arat Sabulungan. The Reform Era and the Constitutional Court Number 97/PUU-XIV/2016 decision have become new hopes for followers of Arat Sabulungan for the state to fulfil their religious rights. However, the critical note is that the separation of the dictions "religion" and "belief" in population data after the decision is seen as a form of confirmation that the state is still perpetuating discriminatory attitudes. The concepts of religion and belief are still considered different things, so defining religion is still a problem in recognition politics in Indonesia.

To further support the recognition and preservation of indigenous religions like Arat Sabulungan, policy-makers should develop inclusive policies that recognise and respect indigenous religious practices, ensuring they are not forced into assimilation. This involves creating legal frameworks that protect the rights of indigenous communities to practice their religions freely. Additionally, promoting cultural

education is crucial; educational programs should be implemented to highlight the importance of indigenous religions and their contributions to cultural diversity. By integrating this knowledge into the broader educational curriculum, future generations can grow with an appreciation for the richness of indigenous traditions. Furthermore, facilitating dialogue between different religious and cultural groups can foster mutual understanding and respect. Interfaith and intercultural dialogues are essential in bridging gaps and building a more cohesive society. Finally, policy-makers should support legal recognition by strengthening frameworks that provide equal recognition and protection for indigenous religions. This legal backing ensures that followers of indigenous beliefs can openly and freely express their faith without fear of discrimination or marginalisation. Through these comprehensive measures, the preservation and respect for indigenous religions like Arat Sabulungan can be effectively promoted, contributing to a more inclusive and culturally rich society.

CONCLUSION

Currently, the Mentawai people still adhere to the principles of Arat Sabulungan in their daily lives, even though they are Christians, Catholics, or Muslims. The complexity and nuances of religious conversion, including the socio-cultural dynamics that influence the negotiation process of Arat Sabulungan and world religions, as well as the role of state policy in the past and currently, have shaped the religious landscape and identity of the Mentawai people. Sikerei has also succeeded in adapting and maintaining their beliefs amidst external pressure and state intervention.

The socio-cultural life of the Mentawai people, especially in Matotonan village, has shown that recognition of Arat Sabulungan in Mentawai does not only occur at the level of intercultural relations but also in the anthropological realm. Followers of Arat Sabulungan (Sikerei), followers of world religions, and government employees have constructed themselves as subjects through intersubjective recognition. Applying Axel Honneth's theory of intersubjective recognition to studying Indigenous religions in political and religious contexts is new as a methodological innovation or conceptual contribution to similar studies.

Studies regarding state recognition of indigenous religions in Indonesia have been widely researched. This study also shows the same thing, which focuses more on the Mentawai indigenous religion. Further research could address cultural sensitivity and inclusion strategies in government policies towards indigenous religions. Areas for further research, such as longitudinal studies to track changes in religious practices in Mentawai, comparative studies with other Indigenous groups globally, exploring the impact of state policies on younger generations within the Mentawai community, or comparing the integration of Arat Sabulungan with other Indigenous belief systems in similar socio-political contexts, would be essential to complete this study.

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