



# Be-Longing: Fatanis in Makkah and Jawi

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Be-longing: Fatanis in Makkah and Jawi

A dissertation presented

by

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to

The Department of Anthropology

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

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in the subject of

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## BE-LONGING: FATANIS IN MAKKAH AND JAWI

### Abstract

This dissertation is a study about *belonging* among the Fatanis who are caught between two places, namely Makkah and Jawi. Using historical and ethnographic data collected during two years of transnational fieldwork in Saudi Arabia, Thailand, and Malaysia, this dissertation shows that belonging is constituted as much by ideas of community, namely *home* and the *homeland*, as it is by lived experience as well as practical and cultural factors. Its central argument is that belonging is unstable, often incomplete, and always contingent owing to the dynamic quality of social life. Belonging is a condition that is volatile. It is not something that can be retained perpetually. A person might experience comfort from belonging someplace at a particular moment, while yearning to be somewhere else simultaneously. Thus, longing often accompanies belonging.

In the late-eighteenth century, some Fatani men and women left Patani, on the northern Malay Peninsula, and sailed northwest until they arrived at Makkah. These migrants left in search of safety and inspiration as Siamese armies pillaged their homeland in attempts to depopulate Siam's recalcitrant tributary kingdom from 1785-1839. Almost two and half centuries later, in contemporary times, the Fatanis are once again on the move. This time, unfavorable conditions in Makkah are the causes of reverse migration to the homeland, which the Fatanis refer to as *Jawi*.

For the Fatanis, who are caught between Makkah and Jawi, belonging is elusive. Makkah, the place and society that many of them consider *home*, is

familiar, but also where their right of residency as foreigners is fragile. On the other hand, Jawi, the homeland, is foreign to the Fatanis despite their status as nationals. From one page to another, this text tells the Fatanis' stories of pain and yearning, but also of their ingenuity and perseverance.

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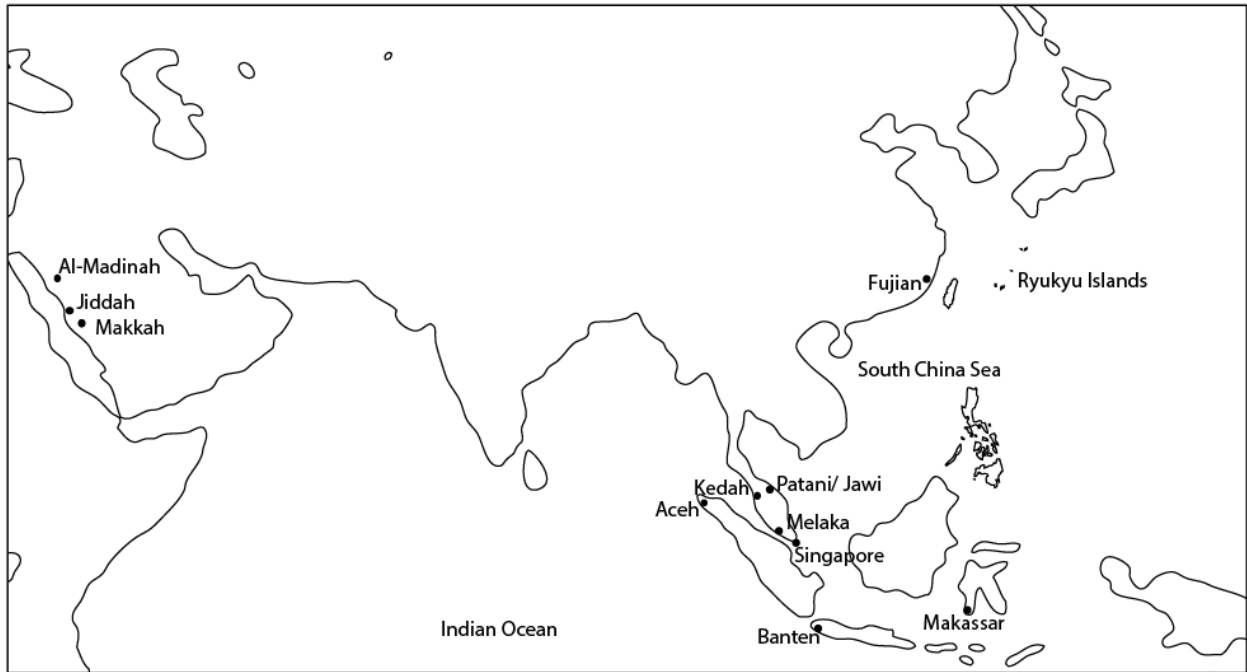
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# MAP OF KEY PLACES



## INTRODUCTION

This dissertation is the product of a very long engagement with Jawi. It began twenty four years ago when I came across my maternal grandfather's handwritten memoir in my parents' bedroom. In the text's opening chapter, my late-grandfather identified the Malay Kingdom of Patani, historically located on the east coast of the northern Malay Peninsula, as the place of our origins. According to oral accounts, which he gathered from elder relatives, our ancestors left their homeland for Kelantan during Patani's wars with Siam. From 1785-1839, Siam invaded and ravaged Patani as it consolidated political control over northern Malay Peninsula. Many Patanians became displaced when Siamese soldiers pillaged their lands in the effort to depopulate Siam's recalcitrant tributary kingdom. In the frantic escape, the Patanians dispersed in various directions. Some of them migrated to Makkah in search for safety and inspiration. These sojourners and migrants are the pioneers of the Fatani<sup>1</sup> community, which still exists in Makkah today.

My family's migration history is intertwined with the migration of the Fatanis between Jawi and Makkah. My grandfather was born in Kelantan, the Malaysian state that borders southern Thailand on the Gulf of Siam. His father relocated the family to Mersing in Johor, Malaysia's southernmost state, which borders Singapore when he was still a child. In Mersing, they lived in a coastal community among other migrants from Patani and Kelantan. When my great-grandparents died, their young children were left under foster care. My grandfather was raised by his school headmaster.

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1 Throughout this dissertation, the term "Fatani" is used to refer only to the Patanian immigrants to Makkah and their descendants. Fatanis who were born in Makkah are called the (pl.) muwalladeen (singular-male: muwallad, singular-female: muwalladah). Their ancestral homeland is referred to as "Jawi" to conform to the label that contemporary Fatanis use in communication.

Eventually, he moved to Singapore as a young man, and that was where he started and raised his family. That is how my family came to be rooted in Singapore.

Some of my grandfather's relatives who lived in Singapore decided that it was not the place where their migration trajectory should end. My grandfather recalled moments of interaction with some of his relatives who lived in Singapore prior to their migration to Islam's heartland. When my parents performed the hajj for the first time in 1984, with all of my mother's siblings, they were hosted by relatives who were living in Makkah. According to my father, their hosts were citizens of Saudi Arabia and had become much assimilated into society. It was a challenge for my parents to communicate with their hosts, especially the younger ones, who spoke mostly in Arabic. Alas, contact with our relatives in Makkah broke down after my grandfather's passing in 1989. I have attempted to search for them through friends I made during fieldwork in Makkah, but have been unsuccessful so far. The search has been made difficult because the community they used to reside in has been torn down in the process of urban redevelopment of Makkah.

This dissertation is a study about *belonging*, especially in its relation to *place*. It examines the Fatanis' history of migration and their experiences from the late eighteenth century to the present. My interest in the subject was reawakened by persons I met in Jawi when I began conducting fieldwork there in 2002. Many people in Jawi are aware about the existence of the Fatanis in Makkah, but are unable to share any other information about them when asked. Additionally, nothing has been published about the community except for the intellectual biographies of some of the Fatani 'ulama of the past. The benefits of reviewing the literature about social life in Makkah are also limited. To my knowledge, the most recent substantive study was conducted in the late nineteenth century by Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje (2007 [1931]). Contemporary Makkah is a radically different place

compared to the society that Hurgronje observed in 1884-5. With this in view, I knew that I had to keep an open mind and use my observations during my first field visit to Makkah in the summer of 2009 as guides for identifying the topic of research.

Ridhwan, my first host and friend in Makkah, asked me to tell him about the topic of my research just moments after he picked me up at the King Abdulaziz International Airport in Jiddah in 2009. My response puzzled him. I said, "I don't know." I explained to him that I wanted to avoid being presumptuous and learn more about his community before deciding upon a topic. After just a few days of listening to the muwalladeen's conversations, I observed that the Fatani muwalladeen often discussed their lack of opportunities from being Saudi-born foreign nationals in Makkah. Ridhwan verified that this issue is, in fact, always on the muwalladeen's mind and a predominant subject of their discussions whenever they gather.

I listened attentively as one muwallad after another shared their life-stories with me. They spoke of being unable to gain admission into universities in the kingdom despite acquiring excellent grades in high school. Many of them described the challenges of securing employment because of the intricacies of the *iqamah* (Ar. residential permit)<sup>2</sup> system. Some of them shared their feeling of sadness from being unable to pursue their dream careers, while others spoke about the difficulties of finding a marriage partner because of the bleakness of their life situations. In short, the muwalladeen identified the issue of nationality as the main source of their problems.

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<sup>2</sup> Throughout this dissertation, I indicate the source language and translations of terms and phrases using the following abbreviations: Arabic (Ar.); Patani Malay (PM.); Standard Malay (SM.); Thai (Th.).

If the muwalladeen's foreign nationality is the cause of their problems in life, then why is their resolve to continue living in Makkah so strong? Why do they not move to Jawi? These are the main questions that guide my research. It follows that *belonging* is a productive approach into the lives of the Fatanis. Rather than focusing on what nationality provides or does not provide to the Fatanis in Makkah and Jawi, belonging opens up some space for us to give shape to a community about which little is known. In the chapters that follow, we discuss various sources of belonging, including affective ones such as ideas of *home* and the *homeland*, lived experience, social relationships, practical concerns such as livelihood and property ownership, as well as different constituents of culture, including language, religion, and gender norms.

This dissertation shows that the Fatanis are caught in-between Makkah and Jawi. The Islamic heartland is a place and community that many Fatanis have come to call *home*, while the latter is the ancestral homeland that is distant from their hearts. For many of them, Makkah, its society, and environment are familiar. Jawi, the homeland, is largely unknown and does not mean much to them. The Fatani muwalladeen often sheepishly admit that they feel more like Arabs than Jawi persons.

The central assertion of this dissertation is that *belonging* is structurally unstable, often incomplete, and contingent owing to the dynamic quality of social life. Being an immigrant or a foreigner in society is not the only way that a person may feel a sense of not belonging. There are as many factors that affect belonging as there are sources of identification. These may include gender, ethnicity, class, language, religion, ideological orientations, and so on and so forth.

The hyphenated “be-longing” in the title of this dissertation is not an attempt at explicating the etymology of the word. It is a playful rendering of the word, but one that depicts the dissertation’s central argument. “Be” gives a sense of rootedness in a particular place and moment, while “longing” means to yearn, for a being somewhere else in time or space. “Be-longing” then mirrors the argument that a person may experience the comfort from feeling that one is a member of a social group or society, while also longing to be somewhere else simultaneously.

In the rest of the dissertation, we follow and trace the relationship between migration and belonging as the Fatanis move between Jawi and Makkah. The Fatanis appear to be perennially caught in-between these two societies from the early years of their migration to Makkah in the late eighteenth century.

Chapter 1 discusses the problematical contemporary life situations of the Fatanis in Makkah. They are grounded in the holy city from being born and bred there. This proves to be a double-edged sword. On the one hand, familiarity is a source of comfort for them. On the other, it makes them less willing to migrate despite the seriousness of the life challenges they encounter. The Fatanis have developed some strategies that allow them to circumvent some of these challenges, including the renewal of their iqamah and property ownership. Nevertheless, the respite that these strategies provide is limited and does not bring their problems to an end; they are stopgap measures. To put it another way, the success of these strategies simply prolongs and reproduces the in-between life situations of the Fatanis in Makkah.

In Chapter 2, we step back in time and space and begin by locating our discussion in Jawi prior to the emergence of a steady trend of Fatani migration to Makkah. The chapter discusses the historical trends and events that shaped the early



phase of Fatani migration to Makkah from the late eighteenth through the nineteenth-century. These pioneering Fatani migrants to Makkah remained connected to the homeland. We look at the careers of some Fatani 'ulama (Ar. scholars), who studied and engaged in the conversations that were going on in Makkah, but also continued to participate or contribute to the shaping of social life in the homeland. Many of the scholars and their students returned to Jawi to found schools, while others sought to inspire the political reawakening of their society.

We follow the Fatanis on their sea travel across the Indian Ocean in the beginning of chapter 3. The majority of the chapter's discussion, however, is located in Makkah. The factors that contributed to the intensification of Fatani migration to Makkah and this phenomenon's transformative influence on what Makkah as a place means to the Fatanis are discussed in this chapter. Improved travel conditions as well as Saudi Arabia's rising economic fortunes attracted more Fatanis to Makkah in the twentieth century, especially after the conclusion of the Second World War. As the community of Fatanis in Makkah grew, the lives of these immigrants became increasingly anchored to the society in the holy city.

Any text that discusses Makkah is incomplete without mentioning the hajj, which is the subject of chapter 4. Owing partly to the constraints that Saudization of the economy imposes on their life chances, the muwalladeen depend heavily on seasonal employment during the hajj for their annual livelihood. For this reason, this event is especially important to the current study. The hajj season, however, is also the time of the year during which the Fatanis come into contact with pilgrims from their homeland. Their encounters highlight not just cultural affinity between the two categories of persons, but also cultural distance between them. Thus, in chapter 4, our discussion is still located in Makkah, although we begin to glimpse at the Fatani's homeland in Jawi.

The chapters of this dissertation have been arranged in a way to mirror the circular direction of Fatani migration between Jawi and Makkah since the late eighteenth century through the present. It does not suggest that their migration was unidirectional at given era. In fact, some of the Fatanis migrate back and forth between the two places, although this has become extremely rare as Saudi Arabia tightens its control over immigration. We come full circle in chapter 5 as we look at the struggles of the muwalladeen as return migrants in Jawi. The relationship between the direction of migration and belonging is reversed for these return migrants vis-à-vis the Fatani pioneers whom we read about in chapter 2. It typically takes several years before a returning muwallad feels a sense of belonging in Jawi. Even so, they do not stop longing for Makkah.

## CHAPTER 1

### FATANIS IN-BETWEEN HOME AND THE HOMELAND

"The *shabaab* (Ar. youths), they see a ship sailing, and they want to get on it. However, they wait for it to come to them. They want the ship to come to their doorstep," said Masrur. Ridhwan just looked at him as if expecting him to carry on explaining the meaning of his statement as the three of us continued taking clumps of rice and chicken from the heap of *al-ruuz al-bukhari* in front of us during the lunch we shared in Ridhwan's room in July 2009. Masrur continued, "If you want something, you have to do something to get it. You can't wait for the ship to come. You have to swim towards it. Am I right, Ridhwan?" Ridhwan looked at Masrur and said, "Ya Masrur. You are correct. But, what if we drown? What if we do not know how to swim? You have your own goals, but what are you doing about them?"

Ridhwan and Masrur were talking in tropes about the life situation of the Fatani youth in Makkah. On the onset, both appear to be in the same boat; they are the Makkah-born sons of immigrants from the Muslim society in southern Thailand, which they refer to as *Jawi*<sup>3</sup>. I first met Ridhwan and Masrur in 2009. Both men, who were in their early thirties, appeared to be tranquilized by their recent job losses. They were in no rush to take the next step to resume their work life. As our lunch conversation unfolded that afternoon, it occurred to me that they were motivating one another to do the inevitable; they had to find new jobs. Despite the similarities in their life situations, the circumstances and consequences of their job loss could not be more different.

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3 The Muslim society in southern Thailand is largely located in the provinces of Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat. This area was the seat of the Malay kingdom of Patani until it suffered defeat to the armed forces of Siam (Thailand) in the late eighteenth century. In Makkah, the term "Fatani," derived from the Malay kingdom's name, is used to refer to immigrants from this region of Thailand, and their descendants. Makkah-born descendants of the Fatanis often used the terms *muwallad* (s.) and *muwalladeen* (pl.) for self-reference in speech. I shall abide by the same usages of these terms throughout this text.

Masrur is a citizen of Saudi Arabia, while Ridhwan is a Thai national. Masrur had resigned from his job when he could no longer endure his troubled relationship with his office superior. He could, however, freely apply for another position if he wished to do so. Ridhwan, on the other hand, lost his job as a network specialist at one of Makkah's premier hotels after an envious Saudi colleague tipped off the General Directorate of Passports in the Ministry of Interior about the violation of labor regulations by the hotel's expatriate employees. Ridhwan escaped capture during a raid after climbing out of his office's window and driving away. He has never returned to the hotel ever since. When I met him in 2009, he was still traumatized by the incident and was not ready to take another chance at seeking employment. The price that a foreign national in Ridhwan's situation has to pay should he be caught by the authorities is deportation to the transgressor's home country.

This chapter is about *in-betweenness*. The Fatanis are caught in a dilemma between remaining in Makkah and migrating to Jawi. The goal of the chapter is to highlight some of the major challenges that confront the Fatanis in Makkah today. The problematical lives of the Fatanis that are shaped by these challenges often occupy their minds, and the conversations that they share with their fellows. Although the Fatanis are treated as foreigners by the Saudi state and many of its citizens alike, Makkah is a society that is familiar to them. They consider it to be their home and are reluctant to leave it. The strategies that the Fatanis employ to maintain their existence in Makkah are also discussed.

In the world today, capital, goods, news, and persons travel across vast distances with relative ease. This is not to say that blockages are absent. Nevertheless, with the right combination of resources, including travel documents, money, and personal will among others, an individual can stay or move to another

city or country as he wishes. Even so, we are all empowered, as well as constrained, by the consequences of the decisions and actions of our progenitors. We are born to a nationality, which is not based on our own choices. A citizen of one country may not be welcomed by another. Alternatively, the country of one's nationality might prohibit its citizens from entering another. Ridhwan and Masrur are no different in this regard.

The life chances that Ridhwan and Masrur have in Saudi Arabia are distinguished by decisions that their parents made decades before their birth. Masrur's father, who was one of the first automotive technicians to work in Saudi Arabia, took up Saudi citizenship for his entire family when it was offered to him. He was employed as a civil servant and was able to amass enough wealth for his family to live comfortably in Makkah. Masrur, who was born to his father's second wife, was not given his full share of inheritance by his half-siblings upon the passing of his father. Thus, he claims that he had to struggle to support his mother from an early age. Like other Saudi citizens, however, his right to assume any job that he is qualified for is protected by the law.

Foreigners in Saudi Arabia maintain residency in the kingdom through the possession of a permit known as the *iqamah*. When a male child of an *iqamah*-holder turns eighteen, he has to apply for a separate *iqamah* from his parents. This procedure would require that either he finds employment, in which case his employer becomes his sponsor, or that he is enrolled in a school. Although the procedure appears straightforward enough, this is usually the start of the *muwallad*'s troubles with maintenance of legal residence in the kingdom. The intricacies of the foreigner's status in Saudi Arabia and the dilemmas that they face will unfold in the rest of the chapter.

## A SOUNDLESS CRY

*I asked my father, "Who am I?" He said, "You are one who is lost in the fictions of your age. You are one who lives life as you wish. Not as I wished it for you. You are a land without a nation, and a nation without a land."*

*Oh Father, you said to me that my birthplace, or the place where I was raised, is my nation. Then, that place is the land of the Haram. For my childhood, my dreams, my youth and my adulthood are there.*

*How can I bear two hearts in my chest and two tongues on my lips? Between two hearts is a lost love. Neither a little nor a lot remains. And between two tongues, is a lost language. I am not eloquent nor am I inarticulate.*

*I am wandering between two trees. There is not Safa or Marwah. Between the two mounts I stagger, neither am I satiated nor is my thirst quenched. For the land is not satisfied with me being on it, nor beneath it. Oh Possessor of Death, please give me some relief. Perhaps a land other than this would cover my body.*

*Oh Friend of Allah (Abraham), you called to us, and we responded. You requested for us safety, sustenance, and fruits. I wished you had asked for us honor and dignity with inspiration. Verily the progeny of Adam were bestowed with dignity. So, does Adam have a brother we don't know about? Whose sons we happen to be? Or, is there one God for the East? Another one for the West? And none for me? Oh God, the Lord of Gods, you see me, but I don't see you. I am asking you for a planet that is not this land to be my land, so that I can see you and bathe in you mercy night and day.*

*Lord, ordain this for me, Grant me wings, Make me a bird, So that I may go wherever I please, All nations will be my land, and every land my nation. For there is no country without culture. No nation without dignity. And between culture and dignity, is a soundless cry.*

When 'Abd al-Ghaffar returned to the teachers' lounge after concluding a lesson with his students one day, he came upon a group of Arab colleagues who were debating the merits of their respective tribes. Suddenly, they turned towards him and one of them said, "And you, you are not even Saudi." 'Abd al-Ghaffar responded, "How could I be a teacher here if I am not Saudi?" Yet another one of his colleagues rejoined, "You don't have any origins here."

'Abd al-Ghaffar stomped off and headed for his office and started to put ink to paper. He was furious. He was bruised. His mind was raging. 'Abd al-Ghaffar pointed out that he originally wrote many religiously-inappropriate verses, but he decided to strike those out so that they would not be seen by another soul. Even so, his question about the possible existence of a brother for Adam is scandalous to many of his friends, but he insists that those verses be kept. "I performed my prayer of repentance after writing this *khaatirah* [referring to his poetry]. I was angry and lost. Even so, I am an artist. Such things are allowed in art," said 'Abd al-Ghaffar.

*A Soundless Cry* reveals the dilemma facing the Fatanis in Makkah arising from their state of in-betweenness. From the start, 'Abd al-Ghaffar discloses a feeling of being lost. The Fatani in Makkah is out of place. Perhaps, he is misplaced. Most Fatanis in Makkah today are descendants of immigrants who came to the holy land in search of a better life. They were born and raised in Makkah. To their minds, Makkah is home. They know not of life in another place. Ironically, 'Abd al-Ghaffar's parents never took up Saudi citizenship when soldiers who were patrolling the city offered it to them in their younger days. They feared that they would not be able to return to live in Jawi. By the time they started having children, it was too late; too late to apply for a citizenship in the kingdom; too late to start anew in the homeland. Makkah had become the place where they knew they would see through their final days.

'Abd al-Ghaffar became a Saudi citizen almost by a stroke of luck. When he turned eighteen, the kingdom decreed that a person who was born in the kingdom could apply to become a citizen after reaching eighteen years of age. His father acted swiftly. 'Abd al-Ghaffar said that the process was tedious. He had given up hope when suddenly he was informed by the authorities that his application was successful. His life changed radically from then on. He began to put in more effort

into his education and subsequently gained employment as a teacher in a public school. Others were not as lucky. Very few Fatani applicants for Saudi citizenship have been successful since 'Abd al-Ghaffar received his.

'Abd al-Ghaffar admits that he was once a lost youth like his youngest sibling, Ridhwan. "I understand Ridhwan's situation. That is why I care about him a lot. I would do anything I can to help him get his life on track," said the elder of the two. To compound Ridhwan's feelings about his predicament as a foreigner in a society he considers as his home, his two elder sisters became Saudis when they bore children upon their marriage to their respective Saudi Arab husbands. His mind is constantly reminded of his unfavorable status in the kingdom as he watches his siblings and their children live their lives.

The Fatani muwalladeen today yearn for Saudi Arabian nationality. Their desires are understandable when we consider the promise of stability that comes with it. Ironically, an immigrant's outsider social status does not dissolve completely after acquiring Saudi nationality for the layers of social exclusion are many. The Saudi-Fatanis learn this through lived experiences such as the one that inspired 'Abd al-Ghaffar to write his khaatirah. Hence, many Fatani muwalladeen, including non-Saudi nationals, downplay their ethnic identities and cultural practices with the hope of gaining acceptance into society. This means that they adopt the cultural practices and attitudes of the Arabs, even though Makkah's population has been ethnically diverse for centuries. Even as they do this in social interaction, they contemplate about escaping from their situation. They recognize that they are in between two socio-cultural worlds<sup>4</sup>. When they reflect on the

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<sup>4</sup> The cultural hybridity of the muwalladeen will be discussed more extensively in chapter 5, which revolves around their experiences of return migration to Jawi.



unfavorable conditions of their lives in Makkah, they often look across the ocean to Jawi. However, the society in the homeland is largely unknown to them. Additionally, its political troubles simply deepen their misgivings towards it. Hence, 'Abd al-Ghaffar says that the Fatani vacillates between his current home, Makkah, and the homeland, Jawi. He is not satisfied with either of the two. As we sat and discussed his khaatirah at the courtyard of his home in Makkah one evening, he said, "I cannot love Makkah or Jawi with all of my heart. Neither of these two places can give me everything that I want. I am not completely at ease here [Makkah], nor will I be at ease over there [Jawi]. Thus, between two hearts is a lost love."

## **COMING OF AGE OF THE FATANI MUWALLAD**

The first Fatani muwallad I met when I started this research was Muhsin. Now a citizen of Singapore, Muhsin, who is in his late thirties, lives in the island-state together with his Singapore-born wife and their three children. During our initial meeting at a coffeehouse in the Arab Street district of Singapore, he promised to contribute to my research by introducing me to his relatives in Makkah. His fulfillment of this promise proved invaluable to my research. He refrained from commenting too much about the Fatanis in Makkah at that time. His reason for doing so was that he preferred that I make my own observations, although he had the following to say:

Our lives in Makkah are full of contempt and insults. The lives of the youths over there are empty. There is nothing in the lives and nothing in the future to look forward to. My life used to be like that too. Then, I decided to leave Makkah to study at the International Islamic University in Malaysia. I did not know what I was going to do after that, but I had to look for opportunities elsewhere.

Muhsin also shared an unusual story during our brief meeting. He told me that Ridhwan, who is his paternal cousin, slapped his face really hard just before he entered the passenger terminal at the King Abdulaziz International Airport in Jiddah.

He then instructed me to ask Ridhwan to explain the reasons for his action to me when I meet the latter in Makkah. Ridhwan mentioned the incident before I even asked:

I was sad when Muhsin left for Malaysia. We grew up together. We were very close. Just as he already told you, I went up to him and slapped him. He was so shocked. He asked me, 'What is wrong with you?' I told him that he must remember to reciprocate my slap when he returns to Makkah after completing his studies at the university. That would be the lesson for not going to Malaysia with him. Look at him now. In the beginning it was not easy for him. Now, he is all right.

For many Fatani muwalladeen, their first profound experience of the unenviable status of a foreigner in Makkah is in education. This issue dominated my conversations with them throughout my fieldwork in Makkah, Jawi, Bangkok, and Kuala Lumpur. 'Abbas, an undergraduate at the International Islamic University Malaysia, realizes his advantageous situation vis-à-vis his non-Saudi muwallad compatriots. He said:

My parents always reminded me of my origins. This is one of the reasons why I am studying in Malaysia. They want me to learn what it means to be Malay. As a child I was always told that I was similar to the others. The only difference between us is that I am Saudi. So, I was careful never to make them feel like they are worth less than me.

During their childhood, the Fatani muwalladeen are no different from other children. They dream of becoming pilots, doctors, teachers, soldiers, police officers, and fashion models among others. Their minds know not of limitations. Tragically, their dreams are often shattered by the time they are in middle school when they learn through friends that universities in Saudi Arabia would not admit them except in undergraduate concentrations that are relevant to Islam, including the various Islamic sciences as well as the Arabic language. Those who do not aspire to become religious teachers look to other countries for opportunities in higher education. Even so, many families simply are unable to afford to pay for international education.

I am often told that many of the top performing students in Makkah's schools are the children of immigrants. Ridhwan claims that he was always among the top two students of his cohort until he entered middle school. He strove to follow in the footsteps of his brother, 'Abd al-Ghaffar, and enroll in a university in Saudi Arabia. His life's downward spiral began when he discovered the university's policy towards foreigners. He said:

My heart hurts whenever my Saudi classmates talked about their desires to study in the university. They wanted to study engineering, computing, architecture, this and that. I just kept quiet and listened. Whenever I could no longer restrain the hurt, I would go to the restroom and lock myself in a cubicle. I cried my heart out and returned to the classroom only after I had regained control of myself.

Ya 'Arafat, it was not easy. I was among the brighter students. Even this did not provide me the chances that my classmates had. Then, I became depressed. During lunch, I would take my food with me to the restroom and eat in the cubicle. I could no longer put on a brave front among my classmates.

Some of the non-Saudi muwalladeen have been better at managing the situation than Ridhwan. Ishaq, a physician in his forties, and his younger brother, Sabri, are two examples of Fatani muwalladeen who managed to achieve their goals in education despite the odds against them. Ishaq realized his ambition of becoming a physician by sojourning to Pakistan to enroll in a medical school. He is currently employed by a private hospital in Jiddah. Sabri, on the other hand, earned his bachelor's degree in telecommunications engineering from a university, also, in Pakistan. These two brothers assert that there are ways to get around financial barriers preventing the muwalladeen from acquiring university education. Sabri is currently active in sourcing for scholarship opportunities for the muwalladeen. In 2010, I met one such scholarship recipient who graduated with a first class honours bachelor's degree in architecture from the International Islamic University Malaysia. Even so, not everyone can qualify for scholarships. Furthermore, information about such funding opportunities is not well disseminated among the muwalladeen. In

short, the combination of a muwallad's discovery of the lack of opportunities for admission to Saudi universities, his family's inadequate financial standing, and lack of knowledge about funding opportunities, is often potent enough to break his will to pursue higher education.

The pursuit of higher education in Thailand is not an option that most of the Fatanis consider. They are not equipped with the necessary knowledge to do this. Instruction in Thailand's universities is conducted in the Thai language. Most of the muwalladeen are not even slightly acquainted with this language. If they have to learn a new language in order to enroll in a degree program, their preference would be to learn English. There are international undergraduate programs in Thailand for which the language of instruction is English. However, these programs are costly and relatively unknown to the Fatanis. It is for these reasons that Malaysia has emerged as a preferred educational destination among the Fatani community in Makkah.

The lack of opportunities to progress in education spins another angle to the in-betweenness of the Fatanis. They are less likely to secure a stable job, let alone a job of their preference. Consequently, many of them are unable to get married and start a family. This trend is regarded to be a disturbing one in a community whose members tend to settle down by the time they are in their mid-twenties. Without the responsibilities of married persons and no regular employment, the lifestyle of a young adult remains similar to when he was a teenager. Tensions, however, build up when they realize that time passes by without any progress made towards the next stage of one's life-cycle.

The issue of marriage is a factor that distinguishes the muwalladeen who are Saudis and those who are not. Until recently, it was a channel through which a non-Saudi muwalladah could acquire the kingdom's nationality as a Saudi may nominate

his wife who has borne him a child for it. As I have mentioned earlier, Ridhwan's elder sisters acquired Saudi nationality in this manner.

The non-Saudi muwalladeen often lament about their disadvantaged position among young men seeking a bride in Makkah. Many of them have stories of broken hearts to share. My friend Seyf, who is in his late thirties, said:

There was this girl in my *haarah* [Ar. quarter] that I was interested in. We grew up together. When we are at this age, single men and women are not allowed to mingle. As children we all played together. When we were teens, she and I still kept in touch secretly. Then, she was given away in marriage when another man in the *haarah* approached her parents. I was heart-broken, but after some time I accepted the fact that it was better for her. Look at me. What do I have? I can barely support myself. She and her husband have children of their own. She is now a Saudi citizen and does not need to worry about things like renewing her iqamah. They have a car. They live in a nice house. Her husband takes good care of her.

Some of the muwalladeen explained their observation of marriage trends among the Fatani when I began conducting fieldwork in 2009. They listed down the Fatani family's preferences of male suitors for their single daughter in descending order. Assuming that the person who approaches the muwalladah's parents is a Fatani and single, the order of preference is: Saudi national with full-time salaried job, Saudi national without a full-time job salaried job, non-Saudi national with full-time salaried job, non-Saudi national without a full-time salaried job. Thus, many of the Fatani muwalladeen are the least preferred candidates for marriage in the community.

I met twenty-something year-old 'Azzam in 2009. At that time, he was looking for a muwalladah to marry. He had a full-time appointment as a graphic designer at a hotel in Makkah. He also hails from a relatively respectable family; his late-grandfather was known to be a pious man, while his father was one of the few Fatani men of his generation who had graduated from the prestigious Al-Azhar University in

Cairo. His family social standing among the Fatanis was expected to enhance the likelihood of his marriage proposal to be accepted by a muwalladah's parents. This, however, was not the case. His marriage proposals were rejected three times by different families. They were all hoping to marry their daughters off to Saudis. By 2011, 'Azzam had moved on to another full-time job doing data-entry for one of Makkah's town councils. He decided to accept the new job, which he acquired through personal connections, because of its stability and the prestige that comes with working for a government department. Even so, this did not alter his luck in seeking a bride. He remains single, and many of our mutual friends claim that he became depressed after pursuing the matter for more than two years.

## **GONE ARE THE BLESSED DAYS**

Many of the Fatanis recall a time when living in Makkah did not seem as troublesome as it is today. Kamal, a return migrant to Jawi in his mid-forties, illustrates an opinion, which is commonly held by the Fatanis when he said:

I find it difficult to imagine the situation in Makkah described by the muwalladeen who return for visits each year. I returned to Jawi from Makkah about twenty years ago. At that time my mother had just passed away and my father had lost all his money doing business. We would not have left otherwise. In those days, it was easy to find work. Money was everywhere. Those were the days. It was *al-ayyaam al-mubaarakah* [Ar. the blessed days].

The al-ayyaam al-mubaarakah mentioned by so many Fatanis gradually came to its end when Saudi Arabia introduced an economic program widely known as Saudization. This policy outlines the goal of the kingdom to reduce its reliance on expatriate manpower, while also upgrading the skills of its own nationals so that they may take up meaningful work in the economy. In other words: Keep the outsiders out and the insiders in. This program is beneficial when seen from the perspective of the Saudi national. Who better to depend on to protect one's

economic interest other than one's own country? On the other hand, Saudization is damaging for the muwalladeen and other foreigners in the kingdom.

Saudization, the iqamah system, education, and marriage are all mutually constitutive aspects of the muwallad's life in Makkah. When a muwallad applies for a separate iqamah from his parents as legally-required upon reaching eighteen years of age, he may appoint a school as his sponsor. If the muwallad is no longer a student, then an employer would have to be his sponsor. Typically, a father enlists the assistance of a trusted Saudi friend to act as his son's sponsor. The necessary documents are then submitted to the General Directorate of Passports. The most common positions listed for the application of a muwallad's iqamah are: personal driver, gardener, home security guard. The sponsor performs this service for a fee usually amounting to several thousand Saudi riyals. My interlocutors claim that the fee is often increased with each renewal of the iqamah, which expires every two years.

The attainment of the iqamah does not solve the residency issues faced by the muwallad. It simply prolongs his ability to remain living in the kingdom, although many have done this until the ends of their lives. Others have not been as fortunate and were repatriated to the country of nationality when found guilty of alleged criminal acts or transgressing Saudi Arabia's labor laws. However, others have migrated to Jawi "voluntarily" when they found the financial toll from the biennial renewal of every family member's iqamah to be too costly. Furthermore, the muwallad is then stuck in the job situation that was described at the beginning of this chapter. Saudization, which prioritizes educational and career opportunities for citizens of the kingdom, proves to be a major obstacle to the muwalladeen's progress in education, work, and thus life in general, including marriage.

## The Blue Diamond Affair

If we calculate backwards based on Kamal's departure from Makkah, we may observe that the situation of the Fatanis in Makkah began to deteriorate in the 1990s. It is important to point out that an event that occurred at around the same time produced a situation whereby the Fatanis were hit by a double whammy. This event is internationally known as the Blue Diamond Affair.

Economic relations between Thailand and Saudi Arabia experienced a period of blossoming throughout the 1980s. Saudi Arabia had made massive gains in wealth from its sudden rise as a major producer in the global oil industry and was moving quickly on the path toward urbanization. Thailand provided much of the manpower needed to sculpt Saudi Arabia's skylines. The relationship between the two kingdoms nosedived rapidly following a sensational crime that infuriated the Saudis.

In 1989, a Thai gardener and janitor named Kriangkrai Dechamong stole a stash of precious stones from a bedroom in one of the palaces of his employer, Prince Faisal b. Fahd 'Abdulaziz, while the latter was on vacation with his family (McCarthy 1994). He placed the booty, including a rare blue diamond, into a vacuum cleaner bag and shipped it back to Thailand. Then, he took flight from Saudi Arabia. The total value of the heist was estimated to be approximately 12 million pound sterling.

Back in Thailand, Kriangkrai encountered much difficulty while trying to sell the jewels. However, his activities caught the attention of an opportunistic jeweler, Santi Sithanakan, who purchased the bulk of the gems at a massive discount. Meanwhile, the Saudi royals informed their Thai counterparts about the theft. The Thai police launched an investigation immediately. The Saudis, on the other hand,



assigned three of their own diplomats and a Saudi businessman, Mohammed al-Ruwaili, to investigate the case.

Kriangkrai was arrested by the police in January 1990. However, events took a turn for the worse when the three Saudi diplomats were assassinated in Bangkok on February 1, 1990. Mohammed al-Ruwaili also disappeared during that month and has not been found since. He is presumed to have been murdered. These events caused the Saudi royals to lose faith in the integrity of the Thai state. They believe that the Thai police was involved in the murders of the diplomats as well as the disappearance of al-Ruwaili.

Saudi Arabia reacted to the outrageous events by downgrading its diplomatic relations with Thailand. A *chargé d'affaires* named Mohammed Said Khoja was dispatched in the place of an ambassador. Khoja believed that the four Saudis were murdered because they had made important discoveries about the case being investigated (McClincy 2012). In 2011, I met a Thai member of the staff working at Saudi Arabia's diplomatic mission in 1990. This person told me that they received three anonymous handwritten letters implicating a powerful figure in Thai society of involvement in the unresolved cases.

In March 1990, the Thai police's investigation team announced that they had recovered the missing jewels. The investigation team's leader, Lieutenant-General Chalor Kerdthes, traveled to Riyadh and handed over the jewels in a public ceremony. This turned out to be another major scandal when it was discovered that not only were many of the jewels still missing, including the blue diamond, but many of the jewels, which were handed over were indeed replicas. Saudi Arabia, then, protested Thailand's lack of integrity in investigating the theft and murders. It canceled the work permits of Thai workers in the kingdom and refused to accept new

applications for iqamahs by Thai nationals. There were 200,000 Thais employed in Saudi Arabia in 1989. Currently, there are only 20,000 of them; most of whom are presumably Fatanis living in Makkah.

The murders and theft remain unsolved today. In 1994, Santi's wife and fourteen-year-old son were found dead in a wrecked car on a highway in Bangkok. Initial investigations concluded that the pair died in a traffic accident, but post-mortem reports later showed that the victims died of heavy blows to the back of the head. Several Thai police officers, including Chalor, have been tried and convicted. Thailand has expressed its desire to normalize relations with Saudi Arabia in recent years. However, Saudi Arabia refuses to budge from its position because it believes that justice has not yet been served and that the convicted police officers are mere pawns in the larger scheme of things.

According to the Fatanis in Makkah, the soured relationship between Saudi Arabia and Thailand has largely been restricted to the administrative circles. None of the Fatanis with whom I discussed the issue ever felt a threat to their personal safety following the negative coverage that Thailand was receiving in the news. Nevertheless, the Saudi proscription against accepting new iqamah applications by Thai nationals affects the situation of the Fatanis, who are current iqamah-holders. The repercussion of losing one's iqamah is more consequential for them. An iqamah-holder who loses his status is allowed to submit a new application after serving a five-year ban from entry into the kingdom. As Thai nationals, however, the Fatanis are unable to do this. With stakes being higher, the Fatanis become more dependent on their sponsors and, thus, more vulnerable.

## VICARIOUS PROPERTY OWNERSHIP

The Fatani constantly has to work his way around the system in Makkah, including the laws governing the ownership of property. Prior to the amendment of property law in 2011, foreigners were not allowed to own real estate in Saudi Arabia. The change in rules, however, applies only to foreign investors according to Abdullah Al-Ahmari, head of the real estate appraisal committee at Jiddah Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Nafee 2012). The new policy also does not apply to properties in Makkah and al-Madinah, known together as the Al-Haramayn.

The Fatanis and other foreigners, who reside in Makkah, have long owned property in the holy city. Property ownership is highly coveted among the Fatanis because it provides a sense of stability, even though this has turned out to be just an illusion at times owing to its legal status. The Fatanis acquire property in Makkah in similar fashion to the way they navigate their way around the iqamah system. They register their homes under the name of Saudi proxies for a fee. The parties involved in the arrangement may also agree on the distribution of the proceeds if the property is sold in the future. This arrangement works well in principle. The Saudi makes some financial gains from penning his signature onto some documents. The Fatani gets to own a property and finds some respite from his nervousness over the instability of his situation in Makkah. His ownership of the property is based on a moral agreement that he enters with the Saudi proxy, while the latter owns the property only on paper.

This arrangement has been phenomenal in transforming the economic status of many Fatanis. When King Abdulaziz, the founder of the current Saudi state, had consolidated his power over the kingdom, he embarked on the upgrading and expansion of the al-Masjid al-Haraam. Owing to its place as the center of the Muslim universe, this mosque has attracted immigrants to Makkah for hundreds of years.

Quite expectedly, these immigrants built their homes as close to the mosque as they could. When Saudi Arabia undertook the urban redevelopment of the city, many Fatanis amassed a fortune from the sale of their lands, which were acquired by the authorities to make way for infrastructure development; some became millionaires.

The situation, however, did not always work out well for the Fatani. There is nothing legally binding in his agreement with the Saudi proxy. When the situation threatens to go awry, he can only hope for the other party to act ethically. This serves as a reminder for the Fatani about how volatile their lives in Makkah are. They are exposed to the threat of losing everything for living in the space between legality-illegality. I met a muwallad whose family was left scrambling for a home when their Saudi proxy decided to reimburse them only for total cost of the initial land purchase and the building of their home. My friend Seyf and his family, too, were helpless when developers came with the intention of buying their property. The Saudi under whose name Seyf's father registered the ownership of the property had passed away when this took place. The latter's two sons could not agree on whether to recognize Seyf's father as the real owner of the property. One of them acknowledged the rights of Seyf's father to keep the proceeds of the proposed sale. The other sought to capitalize on the situation by claiming that Seyf's father was just a tenant of their deceased father. Thus, he should not have a share of the proceeds. The disagreement remained unresolved at the end of 2011.

## **HOMELAND ≠ HOME**

Why do many Fatanis choose to remain living in Makkah despite the volatility of their living arrangements? If many of the current problems they encounter are the consequences of being foreigners as they claim, then why do they not migrate to the country of their citizenship, Thailand?

“When I try to imagine Jawi, I only see darkness. Our parents tell us that Jawi is our land of origin, but we don’t know much about it,” said Ridhwan. Previously, it was rare for the muwalladeen to visit Jawi. The situation has changed in recent years when Thailand introduced the use of smart identity cards in 2005. These identity cards are required for the muwalladeen to obtain new passports when their current one expires. Foreigners living in Saudi Arabia are, in turn, not able to renew their iqamahs without a valid passport. Consequently, there has been a sudden increase in the number of muwalladeen who visit the homeland annually since 2005. Prior to this, most Fatanis in Makkah had not made such visits for several decades. There was no reason that compelled them to do it. Additionally, the cost of making such visits would have been deemed unnecessary by the Fatanis. Only the wealthier families in the community could afford the luxury of taking vacations to Jawi.

Jawi’s history of political violence compounds the muwalladeen’s ambivalence towards the homeland. Jawi was ruled by Malay rulers prior to its invasion by the Thais in the late eighteenth century. The victorious Thai king and his generals, then, maneuvered to bring the Muslims of Jawi into the yoke of its emerging modern nation-state. The Muslims revolted and suffered massively as a consequence. Their attempts at building alliances with the British against the Thais were also unsuccessful. The maintenance of cordial relations with the Thais was more crucial for the protection of British economic and political interests in their colonies in Burma and Malaya. In 1909, the British signed a treaty with Siam (as the Thai kingdom was known at that time) that saw the confirmation of the political boundary between British Malaya and Siam. The Muslims of Jawi came firmly under the political control of Siam from then on.

Several Malay nationalist movements emerged in Jawi during the mid-twentieth century. The activities of these movements have flowed and ebbed in the

decades that followed. In 2004, violence once again engulfed Jawi after more than a decade of relative peace. Members of the older generation of Fatanis in Makkah were actively involved in some of these movements in the 1970s. However, their participation appears to have reduced drastically, especially following the ban on political gatherings by Saudi Arabia in the 1980s. At present, many of the muwalladeen prefer to stay clear of any involvement with the nationalist movements. Many of them are in the dark about the goals of these movements and cannot relate to their use of violence. Their lives in Makkah are too disconnected from the events in Jawi. My friend Hakeem, who visits Jawi several months annually, said:

You have to understand that the shabaab here do not know anything about the *jue*<sup>5</sup>. Many of the Malays in Jawi themselves cannot relate to the violence. Shooting here, bombing over there. If they would rather not get involved, then why would the muwalladeen? Our lives are even further removed from the politics in Jawi than the people there. I visit Jawi every year. I just want to have a good time. When I come back to Makkah, I would rather focus on my livelihood. The other muwalladeen feel the same way.

Let us now return to the remainder of 'Abd al-Ghaffar's khaatirah. He reflects on his father's words stating that his nation is the place of his birth or the place where he was raised. Makkah, he says, is that place. Many of the muwalladeen in Makkah feel the same way about the holy city, although they are not nationals of Saudi Arabia, unlike 'Abd al-Ghaffar. Interestingly, *citizenship* or *nationality* is left out of 'Abd al-Ghaffar's identification of the nation that he belongs to. This rhetorical move resonates with a question that has been asked by Muslims, especially

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5 The Patani Malay term "jue" comes from the Standard Malay "juang", which means "to struggle." Among the Patani Malays, jue refers to the struggle of the people against the dominance of the Thai state. There are several organizations, including the Patani United Liberation Organization (PULO) and the Barisan Revolusi Nasional / National Revolution Front (BRN). From time to time, the goals of these movements have changed from seeking independence from Thailand to increased administrative autonomy.

those who live in Makkah: Does Makkah belong to Saudi Arabia or the *ummah*<sup>6</sup>? The implications of asking and answering this question are multifarious and will not be answered directly in this text. Nonetheless, it is important to mention the question here to enhance our contextual knowledge of the discussion that follows.

When we met Muhsin earlier, he asserted that the Fatanis in Makkah are subjected to contempt and insults. This may be experienced through speech encounters with Saudis. I experienced this while walking with some friends along a busy street. An impatient driver who was trying to drive through the crowd shouted at us, “Ya Jaawah<sup>7</sup>! Go back to your own country!” Some of the muwalladeen would counter such impropriety with a comeback of their own, while others simply let it go. While educating me in the ways of a man in Makkah, Ridhwan said, “When you speak in Arabic you must speak like a Bedouin. Don’t say ‘Assalamu’alaikum’ like the people from Jawi. Say, ‘Salam ‘alaik’ [He said this in a deep and loud voice]. And, when the Arabs are rude to you, don’t just keep quiet. Talk back to them. Otherwise, they will not take you seriously!”

Muhsin’s statement about contempt, however, has a deeper and more general social relevance. He was referring to the unequal treatment of foreigners in Saudi Arabia. In Makkah, foreigners like the Fatanis are sometimes called the *bagiiyaa al-hujaj* (Ar. remainders of the pilgrims). This is a derogatory term, which casts these foreigners as unwanted elements of society. According to some older Fatanis, this term has been around for a long time, although it has been used more frequently

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<sup>6</sup> Ummah refers to the global Muslim community.

<sup>7</sup> In Makkah, “Jaawah” is used to refer to anyone from Southeast Asia. A Jaawah is often rightly or wrongly identified phenotypically by his brown skin, facial features, and physical size.

since the introduction of Saudization in the kingdom. They assert that this speech trend indexes the deteriorating attitude of the Saudis toward the foreigners.

'Abd al-Ghaffar delves into religion to meditate on the situation of the muwalladeen in Makkah. He reflects on the Prophet Ibrahim's supplication to God as mentioned in the Quran:

O my Lord! I have made some of my offspring to dwell in an uncultivable valley by Your Sacred House (the *Ka'abah* at Makkah) in order, O our Lord, that they may perform *As-Salat* (*Iqamat-as-Salat*). So fill some hearts among men with love towards them, and (O Allah) provide them with fruits so that they may give thanks. (14:37)

'Abd al-Ghaffar interprets "offspring" in Ibrahim's supplication to refer to the people of Makkah and not just the Arabs. His reference to this supplication in his khaatirah, then, reveals the muwalladeen's sentiment that they be treated as the people of Makkah.

Further, the Quran also mentions that God had conferred dignity upon mankind:

And indeed We have honored [dignified] the Children of Adam, and We have carried them on land and sea, and have provided them with *At-Tayyibat* (lawful good things), and have preferred them to many of those We have created with a marked preferment. (17:70)

The muwallad are caught between a home where he feels unwelcomed and a homeland from which he feels alienated. Consumed by sadness and anger, 'Abd al-Ghaffar wonders about the possibility that Adam had a brother; for the Quran tells us that God bestows dignity on all of Adam's descendants. Why then are foreigners like the Fatanis treated like lesser persons in Makkah? During our personal discussion of his khaatirah, 'Abd al-Ghaffar clarified that he did not mean to argue against the Islamic belief that all of mankind is descended from Adam. He wanted to highlight the feelings of betrayal that sadden the muwalladeen.



The muwallad desires for an escape when he feels that his situation is no longer bearable. 'Abd al-Ghaffar fantasizes about becoming a bird. He dreams of flying to any place of his choosing and not being told that his presence is unwelcomed. I recall an enthusiastic muwallad who asked me questions about life in the United States. He had even registered every member of his family for the United States' green card lottery in the hope of pursuing the American Dream. Reality strikes back. Most of the muwalladeen know that this is but a dream. They know that other places present other challenges with many others calling out for someone to hear their stories. Their voices become flat in the hullabaloo, just another soundless cry.

## **CHAPTER 2 THE TURBULENT HOMELAND**

The late eighteenth to mid nineteenth century was a turbulent period of time in the history of the Patanian people. Their homeland, the Kingdom of Patani, became involved in a long-standing conflict with Siam. The violence inflicted on their homeland was catastrophic for the Patanians. Their society became politically and economically impotent as a result. The ensuing uncertainty over the supply of basic needs of survival such as food aggravated matters for many Patanians. Many of them took flight when existential matters became grim.

This chapter is about the history of the emergence of Fatani community in Makkah. It argues that Fatani migration to Makkah began as a consequence of the social and spatial dislocating effects of war. Although the Patani refugees headed in different directions in search of safety in various societies, we discuss only those who settled in Makkah in line with the focus of the dissertation. This chapter argues that the Patanians who migrated to Makkah from the late eighteenth century onwards were inspired by the 'ulama of the Malay-Indonesian world who circulated extensively between their homeland and the Middle East from the seventeenth century. Some of the early Fatani immigrants and sojourners to Makkah rose to become famed 'ulama of the Malay-Indonesian world. Their pursuits as teachers, translators, and authors of religious texts then attracted a steady flow of students to Makkah, thereby pioneering the expansion of the Fatani community in the holy city. Some of them remained engaged in the political life of the homeland. Makkah became ubiquitous in the cultural life of the Jawi society as a result of the careers of these pioneers.

## AN IMPORTANT NODE ON THE INTRA-ASIAN COMMERCIAL NETWORK

Southeast Asia is strategically located in the middle of maritime Asia. On the one hand, we may say that it divides the region into two. This statement is especially true if we consider the body of water that skirts communities all along the southern extremes of the continent. The Malay Peninsula, which is the world's longest peninsula, may be viewed as a land barrier on the shipping route between the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea. On the other hand, the region connects, rather than separates, communities located all over the two seas. The persisting prominence of Singapore in the international shipping routes reminds us that the importance of Southeast Asian ports must not be underestimated. The trade history of Asia provides ample evidence too. As Anthony Reid has commented:

The Peninsula, and the hinterland of the two vital Straits of Melaka and Sunda, has for millennia been a place of exchanges, transshipments and portages. It is an area "made for merchandise", with poor agricultural soils but many strategic locations for the necessary points of exchange between the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea. (2010:37)

Patani was one of the polities on the Malay Peninsula that once played a vital role in connecting merchants. This aspect of Patani's history has been acknowledged, but only in a cursory manner. The paucity of textual sources and records may be responsible for this situation. To my knowledge, Francis Bradley's (2008) article entitled *Piracy, Smuggling, and Trade in the Rise of Patani, 1490-1600*, is the only published literature that takes the rise of Patani's commercial role as the main focus. In the other literature, Patani's trade activities have been treated as material for the reconstruction of the commercial trends and structures of particular eras in the history of Southeast Asia (Gunn 2011; Reid 1988).

Patani's rise to commercial prominence took place after the Portuguese invasion of Melaka in 1511. However, it had already attracted traders to its port

prior to that. Traders who, for whatever reasons, wanted to avoid engaging in the commercial activities in Melaka employed the Kedah-Patani portage route (Reid 1995). Goods coming from the South China Sea were offloaded in Patani and transported using the network of rivers that led to Kedah on the western coast of northern Malay Peninsula. The same can be said about goods traveling in the opposite direction. Nevertheless, the sacking of Melaka provided several other coastal polities with the opportunity to fill the role of facilitating the massive exchange of goods that brought various groups of merchants, including the Chinese, Portuguese, Dutch, and English to Southeast Asia. Patani, along with Pahang on the Peninsula, successfully capitalized on the opportunity until it experienced the peak of its commercial success from 1580-1640 (Bradley 2008).

Reid (2010) observes that the entrepôts of Southeast Asia were effective at facilitating commercial exchanges because they successfully maintained an accommodative environment for the merchants, who came from the various societies and regions of the world. Patani was one such entrepôt. In the early period of Patani's growth in intra-Asian commerce (1490-1543), its main trading partner was Ryukyu, whose merchants came to Patani to purchase pepper and sapan wood in exchange for Chinese porcelain and silk.

Patani's Chinese community was vital in expanding and maintaining this exchange (Bradley 2008). When China's Ming rulers banned maritime trade in 1433, many southern Chinese merchants from Fujian relocated their operations near to Ryukyu's capital of Okinawa. Patani's domestically grown pepper found its way to the lucrative Chinese markets through the networks of Chinese merchants based in Patani and Ryukyu. Additionally, goods that flowed in the opposite direction contributed to Patani's popularity among merchants on the lookout for goods from

East Asia. By 1516, the Portuguese had established warehouses in Patani (Bradley 2008). The Dutch and English followed suit in 1602 and 1612 respectively.

In the sixteenth century, the control over East Asian trade shifted into the hands of the merchant-smugglers of Fujian. Owing to the necessity of maritime trade to the coastal populations of southern China, merchants from Fujian decided to violate the ban on maritime trade and resorted to smuggling as their main economic activity (Bradley 2008; Gunn 2011). This form of exchange grew massively despite the unflagging effort of Ming officials to halt it.

Patani retained its active role in the commercial exchange within the South China Sea region despite the change in the main actors in the trade networks. By this time, Patani's domestic pepper production had increased to the point that it became one of the main exporters of pepper to China. Patani also emerged as a preferred site of exchange for the Patani-Fujian-Portuguese commercial networks. Trade could be conducted in a safer environment compared to the islands and coasts of Fujian where the threat of Ming officials was always present.

Portuguese traders, who were expelled from Canton in 1522, also found it profitable to establish partnerships with the Fujian-Chinese diaspora in Patani, through whom they gained access to the smuggling networks (Bradley 2008). This partnership proved to be mutually beneficial. The diasporic Chinese merchants provided the social capital and knowledge in the conduct of trade with the Fujian smugglers. The Portuguese, in turn, had the firearms, which provided their ships with military capabilities at sea. Portuguese firearms were also sought after items among the Fujian smugglers who must have clashed with one another and with Ming forces from time to time.

The Ming government finally consolidated its control over China's southern coast in the mid-sixteenth century. In 1567, it lifted the ban on maritime trade. By this time, the Portuguese had established themselves at Macau and were no longer dependent on their connections in Patani. Nevertheless, Patani's merchants' commercial strength had already grown enough for them to maintain their activities in the South China Sea trade network without their European partners (Bradley 2008).

Patani's economy flourished well into the late seventeenth century, although signs of decay began appearing from 1650 onwards (Bradley 2009). It was wise to keep its open trade policy, which continued to attract foreign merchants who had the financial strength to support mercantile projects (Bradley 2008). In 1578, Lin Dao-Qian, a prominent merchant-smuggler from Guangdong, relocated his base of operations to Patani. China's lifting of the ban on maritime trade had caused him to lose much of the influence he had among the Chinese merchant-smuggler circles. He quickly consolidated his position in Patani by marrying Raja Hijau. She would become the first of Patani's female rajas who reigned from the late sixteenth century. The presence of Lin Dao-Qian and his comrades in Patani appears to have benefitted the kingdom. Patani's trade continued to flourish. By 1592, Japan was added to Patani's already strong commercial relations with China. Patani's role in this regional trade was so prominent that it earned a reputation as the gateway to markets and goods of China and Japan (Bradley 2008; Davies 1961).

## **FIVE WARS TO ANNIHILATION: PATANI FALLS INTO SIAMESE HANDS, 1785-1839**

Stanley Tambiah (1976; 1977) has described the pre-modern kingdoms of Southeast Asia as “pulsating galactic polities.”

In the center was the king’s capital and the region of its direct control, which was surrounded by a circle of provinces ruled by princes or governors appointed by the king, and these again were surrounded by more or less independent “tributary” polities. (Tambiah 1977:112)

The influence that a tributary overlord exercised over its vassals gradually thinned out as the distance between the two polities increased. Additionally, the power of the overlord also waxed and waned from time to time like the flame of a candle (Davisakd 2008). Whenever a powerful king reigned at the center, tributary kingdoms would be obeisant.

From the sixteenth to the eighteenth century, Patani was a tributary of the Siamese kingdom of Ayutthaya. Whenever a powerful king reigned in Ayutthaya, Patani’s rulers would send tributes to its overlord as was expected of them. When the ruler in Ayutthaya was weak, which was often the situation whenever a new king ascended the throne, Patani experienced almost complete independence and lapses in the performance of obeisance went unpunished. The relationship between an overlord and a tributary was not always exclusive. Various kingdoms sent tributary gifts to multiple kingdoms simultaneously. Tributary gift giving is better interpreted as the calculated gesture of a weaker kingdom bent on diverting the potential threat that a more powerful neighbor may impose on its sovereignty. Furthermore, a kingdom may be a tributary and an overlord at the same time. Patani was, in fact, the overlord of its neighbors including Kelantan, Saiburi, and Trengganu.

Patani experienced political and economic decline from the mid-seventeenth century. By the 1620s, Patani’s port began to lose its appeal among the European

merchants, namely the Dutch and the British who closed their factories during that period. The situation was exacerbated when European merchants felt it prudent to avoid Patani because of the unstable political environment in the kingdom, which was facing local rebellions. The ensuing increase in competition for decreasing commercial wealth among the Patanians only made things worse. While Patani's political and economic strength was declining, Ayutthaya was growing from strength to strength. By the eighteenth century, Ayutthaya had a clear upper hand vis-à-vis its vassals including Patani. Agricultural innovation around the Chao Phraya Delta coupled with access to the trade in superior firearms from Europe gave Patani's overlord the advantage (Bradley 2010).

In April 1767, the Burmese forces led by the Konbaung Dynasty suddenly and dramatically sacked Ayutthaya. The two years during which the two rivals were warring, Ayutthaya's Malay tributaries, including Patani, maneuvered to free themselves out of Ayutthaya's grasp by aligning with the Burmese. The wisdom of this political move diminished rather quickly. By 1770, a triumphant ruler by the name of Taksin had once again unified the Siamese peoples and freed them from Burmese rule (Wyatt 1984). However, Taksin was deposed by one of his generals in 1782, who then founded the Chakri Dynasty that continues to rule Thailand today. The consolidation of Siamese political power that began with Taksin continued and eventually turned out to be calamitous for Patani.

Conflicts continue to break out between the Burmese and the Siamese, whose capital by then had shifted to Bangkok. In 1784, Burmese forces launched an attack on Ligor, a Siamese polity just north of Patani. When the reinforcement from Bangkok successfully drove the Burmese out, their advance on the recalcitrant tributary, Patani, became imminent. Thus began the first of the five wars between Siam and Patani, collectively referred to as *Musuh Taning* (PM. Patani Wars) in



Patanian social memory. Siamese armed forces, which had superiority of numbers and types of weapons used, then swept the Patanians aside (Bradley 2013). In 1786, Patani experienced its first military defeat to Siam.

The second *Musuh Taning* (1789-92) began when Tungku Lamidin, the ruler installed by the Siamese army chief before his return to Bangkok, revolted. The ruler of Annam, to whom Patani's raja sent a letter offering political alliance, informed Siam of the impending rebellion. Despite suffering some early setbacks, the Siamese forces again crushed Patani by 1792. The triumphant general appointed another ruler for Patani before departing to Bangkok.

Patani revolted again, but suffered defeat to the combined armies of Songkla, Ligor, and Bangkok, in 1808. The two rebellions were a valuable lesson for the Siamese general. He severed Patani into seven territories namely Patani, Yaring, Sai, Nongchik, Raman, Legeh/Rangae, and Yala, with the aim of weakening the stubborn Malays. These territories were known as *khaek chet hua mueang* (Th. Seven "Malay" Territories). The appointed governor, *phraya*, of each of these territories came under the purview of the *phraya* of Songkla. This did not improve the situation. When Bangkok attempted to consolidate its control over another fractious Malay kingdom, Kedah, the Malays of Patani allied with the latter with the hope that a unified front could finally drive the Siamese out. The alliance fought two wars against the Siamese in 1831-2 and 1838-9 and suffered massively from the losses.

The structure of political control between the ruler of Siam and other neighboring polities was reconfigured over the course of the five wars of *Musuh Taning*. Tributary kingdoms such as Patani, which exercised a high degree of independence before 1785, increasingly came under control of Bangkok. The appointment of the *phrayas* by the Siamese general and the slicing of Patani into

seven territories are clear indications of Bangkok's imperialist designs. The political landscape in the area continued to be transformed throughout the nineteenth century so the centralization of political power in Bangkok was completed by the early decades of the following century.

### **Violence and Migration in Pre-Modern Southeast Asia**

In recent years, *migration* has emerged as a popular topic of research in various academic disciplines. This is largely a reaction to the speedy rate and massive numbers of migrant labor crossing borders in search of work. In Southeast Asia, however, migration has long been a key feature of its inhabitants' lives. Various researchers, including Robert Elson (Scott 2009:143) who says, "Mobility rather than permanency seems to have been a keynote of peasant life in this [colonial] era as well as previous ones," have acknowledged this situation. This is due in part to the region's demography. Pre-colonial Southeast Asia was an under-populated region. This was true of both the mainland and island parts of the region. Human resources were so scarce that control over persons mattered more than control of land.

Violence was a major factor that shaped the mobility of persons in pre-colonial Southeast Asia. In relatively peaceful times, consistent mistreatment of the subjects of a polity by its ruler could trigger an emigration trend to the latter's own detriment. It was often the case that a person drew much material and social benefit from being bound to a powerful ruler of a polity via a subservient relationship. In areas of the region where several weak kingdoms competed for manpower, the pressures on the ruling elites to treat their subjects well were higher. This is because the excessive mistreatment of subjects, including unreasonable taxation and corvée labor practices, might urge them to migrate to a

rival kingdom. This migratory trend that resulted from non-physical violence was not uncommon in pre-colonial Southeast Asia (Scott 2009).

More dramatic was the impact of forced migration that resulted from wars and slave raiding. Recalling the earlier point about the region's demographic situation, triumph in war presented valuable opportunities for the victor to bolster his polity's human resource base. Moreover, Bryce Beemer (2009) has argued that this aspect of warfare saw the forced movement of skilled labor including artisans, dancers, soldiers, and iron workers, who were vital to intra-regional cultural transmission in Southeast Asia. When the Konbaung's forces overran Ayutthaya in 1767, they did not pass up the chance to capture such persons as booty. Others who escaped capture fled in search of safety elsewhere. It took approximately 150 years before the Siamese core population returned to its pre-1767 size (Scott 2009). Did this demographic setback influence the resurgent Siamese's military campaigns against Patani? The answer to this question may very well be the affirmative.

Many Patanian lives were lost in massacres that the victorious Siamese armies carried out. Captured survivors were enslaved and taken back to Bangkok as war bounty. Still, others were extremely lucky to escape death and slavery. However, many of them would find returning to their homes unfeasible because the Siamese pillaged Patanian land in an attempt at depopulation. They burned and destroyed the Patanians' sources of food including agricultural fields and fruit orchards. The outcome was nothing short of catastrophic. Bradley (2010) estimates that Patani's population was reduced by approximately 66-89 percent in the final two wars. If we consider the likelihood that Patanian society at the dawn of the war in 1831 was already a shadow of what it once was, then we have to surmise that the combined Siamese army truly devastated Patani in the course of the five wars.

J. H. Moor, the editor of a Singapore newspaper, offered a graphical account of the violence in 1832,

We are informed by [a] person who accompanied the expedition, that the hordes of Siamese soldiers, or more appropriately armed coolies, which were landed at [Songkhla] from the Junks, having proceeded overland to *Patani*, committed every outrage there. Most of the inhabitants fled at their approach; but many of them previously set fire to their houses. Such as were taken, were made prisoners, and to prevent the fugitives from re-occupying the country, (which is described as having been most beautiful and in good cultivation) every fruit tree was cut down, and the country devastated ... Of the captives, the women suffered most from their brutality, as neither infant youth, nor age were spared. But to close this ... revolting scene, the captives were thrust by hundreds into the filthy holds of the junks, which were totally incapable of containing so many, and in most instances, the wretched beings were obliged to trample or lay on each other, by which numbers of them perished!<sup>8</sup> (Bradley 2013:153-4)

In the same letter published in the *Singapore Chronicle*, Moor provided us with a firsthand description of the plight of the newly captured slaves,

Out of compliment, of course, to their *Ally*, the British Indian Government, the poor, wretched, diseased creatures, (and few indeed, were free of disease) were quartered in what the Siamese style, 'the British Factory.' I occupy one side, and the Malays, to the amount of 400 or 500, were confined to the other, until a conveyance could be got to take them up the country, or perhaps until they were given as presents to some of the great men here. They were counted in and out just like so much sheep, and when an order was given in presents to some of the Siamese Chiefs to send off 40 or 50, it did not matter whether they were sick or well; off they must go, the healthy carrying the sick, and in some instances you would see them counting out old men and women, in such a condition, that it was scarcely possible they could have lived, had they been left alone, a single hour. Most of the [Patani] Malays had immense large ulcers about their feet or legs, and the stench from them alone was enough to breed a plague. Besides that, they were all swarming with lice, and covered with the itch and to wind up all, had sore eyes. At night, could you but have seen them – without beds, or mats, or musquito curtains – the sick, the young and the old, all huddled together; and even dead bodies lying amongst them. The children, from sunset to sunrise were continually crying – the poor little wretches must have been nearly eaten up by the musquitoes. Another thing I was obliged to observe, was that no regard was paid to the parental feelings of either the father or mother. I often

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8 Originally published in Moor's letter to Singapore Chronicle dated November 22, 1832.

saw the children taken away from their parents, altho' the father generally seemed quite *callous*, the poor mother used to set up such a howling, tearing her hair, and begging and praying to be allowed to accompany her only child. (Bradley 2013:155)

The Siamese invaders' attempt to depopulate Patani was a common characteristic of wars that occurred in Southeast Asia during the same period. As tactics, the enslavement and the transfer of war captives to Bangkok as well as the destruction of Patani's agriculture were part of a strategy aimed at the centralization of power in Bangkok by the new ruling elite of Siam. The consequence of this strategy for the surviving Malays was drastic.

The treacherous socio-political environment that enveloped Patanian lives following their kingdom's fall to Siam prompted many to seek safety beyond Bangkok's political and military clutches. Many Patanian fled their homes towards the neighboring Malay kingdoms of Kedah and Kelantan. However, these kingdoms had to turn away the war survivors for fear of the military punishment that the Siamese threatened to carry out if they accepted the Patanian refugees. Many of the refugees unwillingly returned to their homeland, although others escaped repatriation and remained behind to make a new life. Still, others migrated further away.

One of the destinations of choice for such migrants was the Middle East, especially the Haramayn (The Two Sanctuaries), both of which are provinces of Saudi Arabia today. This migration trend would turn out to be most consequential in the subsequent history of the Patanian people. Some of the early Fatani migrants to Makkah were students at *pondok*<sup>9</sup> schools prior to their departure from the

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<sup>9</sup> Pondok refers to the traditional Islamic schools in Jawi. This system of schooling is also found in other parts of the Malay Peninsula. In Indonesia, they are known as pondok pesantren. A more detailed explanation about this system of schooling is provided later in this chapter.

homeland. It is likely that they were already aware of the history of the Malay-Indonesian scholars' travels to the Middle East, to which we now turn.

## **TRAVEL AND ISLAMIZATION OF THE MALAY-INDONESIAN WORLD**

A historian of the Indian Ocean has described it as “a great highway for cargoes of people, goods, and ideas” (McPherson 1993:1). Among the persons who have long sailed extensively in the Indian Ocean were the Arabs, who together with the Indians were responsible for the initial incursion of Islam in the Malay-Indonesian world of Southeast Asia. The Golden Age of the Arabs, which began during the earliest caliphates following the Prophet's death, witnessed them asserting their supremacy in Indian Ocean trade (Kearney 2004; McPherson 1993). This coincided with Islam's spread throughout the whole of the Arabian Peninsula. However, the religion did not extend immediately to Southeast Asia and conversion en masse in the various kingdoms in the region did not occur until the later part of the fourteenth century. By 1500, Islam had penetrated much of the Malay-Indonesian world between its Western extreme and Java. Beyond Java towards the Malay-Indonesian world's Eastern ends, the incursion of Islam had also begun to take shape (Pearson 2003).

As the Arabs navigated their way around the Malay-Indonesian world, they competently cultivated their positions in commerce, religion, and politics. They rose to prestige in various societies across the region, especially from the seventeenth century onwards. In commerce, the Arabs benefited from the access to goods and markets through the relationships that they had cultivated with partners all over the Indian Ocean over several centuries. One particular category of Arab persons who capitalized on and substantially gained from the ever-burgeoning trade networks around the Indian Ocean was the descendants of the Prophet, recognized by their honorary title *sayyid*. The majority of the sayyids in the Malay-Indonesian world

originated from Hadramawt, which is today part of the Republic of Yemen. These sayyids took advantage of the prestige from being of the honorable pedigree. They climbed to the top of the social structure to become leaders of commercial circles, religious scholars and jurists. Some even became rulers of various societies of the Malay-Indonesian world as they married into the families of rajas and sultans who were keen to cement their political positions through kinship ties with the sayyids (Ho 2006). Thus, trade, religion, and politics were tied together in a mutually benefiting tripartite relationship. With the inroads that the Arabs made in their commercial engagements with the Malay-Indonesian world, they consistently continued to extend Islam into newer reaches throughout the region. As the number of communities that embraced the religion increased, so did the importance of being the Prophet's descendants. The sayyids were able to capitalize on their ever-heightening socio-politico leverage to cement their commercial interests.

### **Reversing the Imagery of Passive Southeast Asian Muslims**

In the study of Southeast Asia, scholars often conceive of the pre-colonial societies in the region as derivatives of larger, and therefore "greater," civilizations namely India to their West and China to their East. According to Kenneth McPherson (1993:57), "Nothing could be further from the truth." Taken together with the literature produced during and after the colonial era, the body of knowledge presented testifies that political attitudes and trends often affect knowledge production.

Scholars who dreamt of *Greater India* speculated at length about unidirectional cultural diffusion from the Indian subcontinent to Southeast Asia and thus betrayed the imperialist orientation of their scholarship (Bayly 2004). Additionally, European ethnology and its racism molded a perception of Southeast Asians as peoples who lagged in the evolutionary ladder, who needed to be guided in

order to be civilized. With this in mind, the Europeans felt justified in colonizing various societies throughout the region. Both corpuses of work paint Southeast Asian societies as passive recipients in the process of cultural transmission.

Meditating on the possibility of producing scholarship that is firmly rooted in the perspectives of local scholars in Southeast Asian Studies and away from the Eurocentric legacies of the field, Goh Beng-Lan asks:

Given the global diffusion of Euro-American ideas in today's world, how are alternative social scientific discourses possible? At the same time, what are the conditions and processes that enable alternative epistemologies and imaginings without falling into the traps of essentialism and chauvinism? If indeed the project of knowledge production has become polycentric, would the agendas and ideas from regional scholarships be accepted into dominant paradigms, even if they were to overthrow their fundamental disciplinary and epistemological (theoretical-political) premises? (2011:3)

The literature on the Islamization of the Malay-Indonesian world suffers from a similar tendency as the one that Goh (2011) outlined above. Until recently, scholars have emphasized the roles of external agents, those groups of persons whose origins lie outside the Malay-Indonesian world. Thus, the questions asked by Goh (2011) are also relevant to the scholarship on the Islamization of the Malay-Indonesian world. Perhaps these questions have eluded us because there is a tendency among academics to view the coming of the Indians and Arabs as being less politically disruptive as European colonialism.

The works of some local historians of Islam in the Malay-Indonesian world have shifted the center of gravity somewhat closer towards a more balanced view of Islamization in the region. That Islam is a religion originating outside of the Malay-Indonesian world is an indisputable historical fact. The important role of the Arabs and Indians in the Islamization of the region is also an assertion that is backed by much credible evidence, but what of the activities and contributions of local agents



themselves? A search for answers to this question would address a relatively neglected issue in social scientific discourse on Islam in the Malay-Indonesian world.

### **Malay-Indonesian Pioneers in the Haramayn**

In the history of Islam in the Malay-Indonesian world, it was important for an aspiring religious scholar to travel in order to earn social recognition as a pedagogue (Laffan 2003). The extended travel itineraries of some of the region's most accomplished scholars from the seventeenth century onwards clearly demonstrate this. While the spread of Islam had covered many parts of the Malay-Indonesian world by that time, learned scholars who could serve as teachers to those who craved a deeper and more extensive understanding of the religion remained relatively rare.

Port polities such as Aceh and Banten, which were able to attract scholars from the Indian subcontinent and the Middle East, emerged as important centers of learning in the seventeenth century. It was from these regional centers that individuals who thirsted for more knowledge set sail to other reaches of the Islamic world including the Haramayn. These two holy cities were arguably the most important destinations for higher religious learning for Malay-Indonesian Muslims from the seventeenth century onwards. These religiously motivated sojourners capitalized greatly on the opportunities to interact with renowned Islamic scholars of their times. The works that they produced later indicate that they achieved much intellectual growth from their interactions with teachers and fellow students in the places that they visited. Furthermore, such interactions also intensified the extent of the connections between the Malay-Indonesian world and the wider Islamic intellectual network. These connections and networks proved beneficial to succeeding generations of scholars who followed in the footsteps of these Malay-Indonesian world pioneering 'ulama.

One of the earliest scholars from the Malay Peninsula to study in Makkah was Syaikh 'Abd al-Malik 'Abd Allah (1650-1736), originally from Trengganu on the east coast of the peninsula. Before heading to Arabia in pursuit of knowledge, he travelled to Aceh where he became a student of a scholar by the name of 'Abd al-Ra'uf Sinkili (Mohammad Redzuan 1998). 'Abd al-Malik's sojourn in Aceh shows that knowledge of the current whereabouts of the Malay-Indonesian world's ulama circulated among the region's scholarly circles so that a student knew where to go to in order to continue his education. 'Abd al-Ra'uf's fame as an early Malay-Indonesian *mujaddid* (renewer) must have attracted his student to Aceh (Azra 2004). 'Abd al-Rauf al-Sinkili himself had travelled widely in the Middle East to study and engage with other scholars whom he encountered. According to Azyumardi Azra (2004), this religious pedagogue was critical in placing the Malay-Indonesian world on the map of global Islamic reformism in the seventeenth century.

#### *'ABD AL-RA'UF AL-SINKILI*

'Abd al-Ra'uf b. 'Ali al-Jawi al-Fansuri al-Sinkili (1615-93) hailed from Singkel on the southwest coastal region of Aceh. He left his native land in 1642 and returned only nineteen years later. During this time, he sought knowledge in Doha, Yemen, Jiddah, Makkah, and al-Madinah among other places. While in Yemen, he studied jurisprudence and Hadeeth from various scholars including Ibrahim b. 'Abd Allah Ibn Ja'man who was a well-known scholar of both Islamic sciences. After obtaining the blessings of the latter, he left Yemen for Jiddah and then the Haramayn where he continued his studies under some of the most prominent Islamic scholars of his time.

He then studied under mufti 'Abd al-Qadir al-Barkhali in Jiddah. While in Makkah, he became a student of various scholars among whom 'Ali b. 'Abd al-Qadir al-Tabari, a leading jurist, was the most important. As has always been the case, Makkah at that time attracted scholars who came from various communities around

the world to perform the hajj. 'Abd al-Rauf al-Sinkili benefitted from his interaction with them throughout his time in the holy city. He finally felt satisfied with the knowledge he had acquired during his travels after he studied under Syaikh Ahmad al-Qushashi (d. 1661), the leading *qutb* (Ar. axis) of his time whom many considered a saint, and his disciple and successor, Ibrahim al-Kurani (d. 1690) in al-Madinah. 'Abd al-Ra'uf al-Sinkili was appointed a *khalifah* for the Shattariyyah and Qadiriyyah *tasawwuf tariqah* by al-Qushashi, who was of the opinion that his student was qualified to further the spread of Islam in his homeland.

In 1661, 'Abd al-Ra'uf al-Sinkili finally returned to Aceh after completing his study with Ibrahim al-Kurani. It was to his final teacher in al-Madinah that he owed the most intellectual debt. His authored works reflect this. While back in Aceh, he remained in communication with al-Kurani, from whom he continued to seek advice on various religious issues. He continued to teach as he had done while in the Haramayn. He also continued to author works that contributed to the circulation of Islamic knowledge in the Malay-Indonesian world.

#### *YUSUF AL-MAQASSARI*

Another key figure in the Malay-Indonesian Islamic world of the seventeenth century was Muhammad Yusuf b. 'Abd Allah abu al-Mahasin al-Taj al-Khalwati al-Maqassari. He was born in 1627 in Gowa, Makassar in South Sulawesi and died in 1699 at Faure in Cape Town, South Africa. According to Azra (2004), Yusuf al-Maqassari received his early education in Islam in his native region of South Sulawesi from a combination of local and Arab teachers including Daeng ri Tasammang, Sayyid Ba 'Alwi b. 'Abd Allah al-'Allamah al-Tahir, and Jalal al-Din al-Aydid.

In September 1644, Yusuf al -Maqassari began his quest for knowledge that would take place over a long duration and vast geographical distance. His first stop

was Banten, which had established itself as an important Islamic center of learning on Java. From Banten, he headed for Aceh in the hope of studying under the tutelage of a famous scholar Nur al-Din al-Raniri, who, with the support of the Sultan of Aceh, was infamous for his persecution of the followers of the *wahdat al-wujud (wujudiyyah)* led by Hamzah al-Fansuri and Shams al-Din. However, al-Raniri had left for Ranir, India. So, Yusuf al-Maqassari had to wait until his arrival in India to commence his study under al-Raniri.

He then voyaged west across the Indian Ocean to Yemen where he studied in Zabid like 'Abd al-Ra'uf al-Sinkili had done. It was in Zabid that Yusuf al-Maqassari was initiated into the Naqshbandiyyah tariqah by Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Baqi al Mizjaji al-Naqshbandi. After leaving Yemen, he sojourned to the Haramayn when the years of his studies overlapped with that of al-Sinkili. Like the latter, he also learned from Syaikh Ahmad al-Qushashi and Ibrahim al-Kurani. Among his other teachers were scholars from other parts of the Middle East as well as South Asia. Again, this reflects the cosmopolitan character of the intellectual environment of the Haramayn at that time. Still thirsty for knowledge, al-Maqassari journeyed to Damascus to become a pupil of the renowned sufi and Hadeeth scholar named Ayyub b. Ahmad b. Ayyub al-Dimashqi al-Khalwati (1586-1661). The pupil impressed the teacher, who then conferred on him the title of al-Taj al-Khalwati (The Crown of al-Khalwati).

Yusuf al-Maqassari finally returned to the Malay-Indonesian world. He resided in Banten, but may have first travelled briefly to Istanbul (Azra 2004). Like al-Sinkili, Yusuf al-Maqassari also began teaching in the Haramayn and continued to do on his return to the Malay-Indonesian world. However, he was increasingly pulled into the political conflict that plagued the court of Banten, which also involved the

Dutch. In the ensuing wars, al-Maqassari opposed the Dutch, who captured him in December 1683. They exiled him to Sri Lanka in September 1684.

The Dutch's intention to cut off Yusuf al-Maqassari from the Malay-Indonesian world through his banishment to Sri Lanka proved ineffective. Al-Maqassari was able to maintain contact with his native region through pilgrims who transited through Sri Lanka, which was a major stop on the hajj-shipping route for Southeast Asians. Furthermore, the pilgrims became conduits for the circulation of al-Maqassari's works. They would deliver texts produced in the Malay-Indonesian world to al-Maqassari and, in turn, carry the latter's own authored works on their passage back home. This worried the Dutch who then decided to transfer him to their colony in Cape Town, southern Africa, in 1694, so that they could silence him further. He finally died there on 22 May 1699, although not without first emerging again as a key contributor to the propagation of Islam in Cape Town (Azra 2004).

From the careers of Yusuf al-Maqassari and 'Abd al-Ra'uf al-Sinkili we see that aspiring Islamic scholars of the Malay-Indonesian world in the seventeenth century recognized the limits of religious knowledge and training that one can get from learning within the region despite the fact that Islam had already achieved much in the conversion of the Malay-Indonesian peoples. As students travelled from one society to another in the region to study under esteemed scholars, they also acquired the connections needed to undertake further education in the wider world of the Indian Ocean as well as other parts of the Middle East. The pioneers of Malay-Indonesian educational travel such as Yusuf al-Maqassari and 'Abd al-Ra'uf al-Sinkili were vital in laying the trend for future generations of the region's 'ulama to follow.

## **PATANI'S MAKKAH-TRAINED 'ULAMA IN THE ORIGINATION OF THE FATANI COMMUNITY**

We can be certain that, when Siam systematically annihilated Patani from 1785-1839, its rulers did not anticipate that they would be contributing to the creation of a social phenomenon that would consistently disrupt their own political scene to the present day. The political violence that troubles Jawi today is in part a continuation of the conflicts that caused the wars of 1785-1839. Although periods of relative peace have emerged from time to time, the Malays of Pattani, Narathiwat, and Yala, which collectively corresponds to the geographical area that constituted the former Kingdom of Patani, still hark back to Siam's destruction of their kingdom whenever the violence resurfaces.

The Patanian people experienced a collapse of the moral order with their kingdom's downfall to Siam (Bradley 2010). According to Bradley, Patani's political elites failed to recover from the blows that Siam dealt them. Against the backdrop of this crisis of moral authority, Islam rose to become the dominant social glue for the Patanian people.

Many Patanians left their homeland in search of safety following Patani's devastating defeat to Siamese forces from 1785-1839. They fled in various directions to resettle in different societies of the Malay-Indonesian world, especially those located on the Malay Peninsula. Some of them followed in the footsteps of the preceding Malay-Indonesian 'ulama by undertaking the voyage to the Middle East, especially the Haramayn, for higher religious training. Such persons would occupy the apex of the Patanian moral order. Collectively, the efforts of these men in their careers as founders of schools, teachers, scholars, and authors, gained them fame and saw them rise as extremely prominent members of the Islamic community of the

Malay-Indonesian world from the late eighteenth century to well into the nineteenth century.

The Patanian scholars of the eighteenth century maintained connections with their native homeland like 'Abd al-Ra'uf al-Sinkili and Yusuf al-Maqassari had done in the seventeenth century. Some of them travelled back and forth between Patani and the Haramayn from time to time, while others returned to found schools or simply taught and imparted the knowledge that they acquired during their sojourn to the Middle East. Others who did not return wrote books, which their students brought back to the Malay-Indonesian world. Some of these works are still in circulation today.

### **Da'ud Fatani (1769-1847)**

Tens of thousands of Patanians fled south when the Siamese ravaged their homes during the war that ended in 1786. One young man who partook in the frantic flight was Syaikh Da'ud b. Syaikh 'Abd Allah b. Syaikh Idris al-Jawi al-Fatani (Bradley 2010). Leaving home at sixteen years of age and probably orphaned by the war, the young Da'ud Fatani blossomed into one of the most accomplished Islamic scholars of Malay-Indonesian origin. Based on extensive research on the life and works of this pedagogue, Bradley (2010:189) reckons that Da'ud Fatani has "the dual distinction of being both one of the most adept Arabic-Malay translators and one of the most prolific Malay writers to ever wet a pen." Da'ud Fatani authored sixty-three major works in total.

From his name, we may infer that Da'ud Fatani was born into a family of established religious scholars. It should not surprise us then that his own father guided the young Da'ud in the early years of his study of the religion (Ismail 2002a). It is unclear if Da'ud Fatani's compass pointed straight to Makkah upon his departure

from Patani. It has been suggested that he first went to Aceh as others had done before him (HWM Saghir 1990). In any case, Da'ud Fatani appeared in Makkah by the late 1780s, hence within a few years of the exodus in 1786. The holy city would be his home until his death in 1847 in Ta'if, where he had a home to retire to, as was common among Makkah's residents (Ar. *Makkawi*) who wished to escape the scorching heat in the summer.

Da'ud Fatani continued to be connected to his homeland despite making very few visits to Patani and spending most of his life in Makkah. We may infer this from Da'ud Fatani's explicit affirmations of his identity in several pieces of his writings. According to Ismail Che Daud (2009:35), Da'ud Fatani wrote the following expressions of identification in the voice of a third person: "Patani is the name of his nation," "Patani is name of the place of his birth," and "Patani is his nation of origin, Syafi'i, which is known and respected in the place where he lives in Makkah, is his madhab."

Da'ud Fatani also became a provider of services to hajj pilgrims from his native region. Even prior to the lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad, the Makkawis earned most of their annual livelihood from participating in commerce that takes place in their city during the months of the hajj. It was relatively usual for learned men of the religion to do that. Furthermore, the demand for the services of these learned men increased in tandem with the number of pilgrims arriving in the Haramayn. Many, if not most, of these pilgrims were not knowledgeable in the manners and rites of the hajj. Thus, it was important for immigrant scholars like Da'ud Fatani to serve as teachers and guides to their fellows who had come from distant lands with many of whom could not converse or understand tongues other than their own. In 1824, Da'ud Fatani acquired a house in al-Madinah to accommodate the pilgrims under his charge.



Perhaps Da'ud Fatani's connection to his native region was strongest through his activities as a scholar, whether as a teacher or as a writer. Da'ud Fatani began to accept students of his own after learning from some of the leading scholars of the Haramayn for two decades. He proved to be charismatic and influential as he attracted many students, most of whom hailed from distant communities all over the Malay-Indonesian world. Perhaps out of admiration for their disciple, Da'ud Fatani's own teachers joined his teaching circle and together with the latter's Malay-speaking students they formed an impressive intellectual circle that bridged students and scholars of Islam from various parts of the Islamic world.

Some of Da'ud Fatani's teachers who also taught his earliest students included Muhammad Salih b. Ibrahim al-Zubayri (1774-1825), who taught *usul al-din*, Syaikh Ahmad al-Marzuqi al-Maliki, and one Syaikh Muhammad Adam. There were also other Arabic-speaking scholars who joined them including Syaikh Muhammad b. Sulayman Hasb Allah al-Makki (1817-1917) who was a scholar of the Syafi'i legal doctrine, Sayyid Ahmad 'As'ad al-Dihan, Syaikh Muhammad Haqqi al-Nazili, Sayyid Syaikh Muhammad Amin b. Sayyid Ahmad b. Sayyid Ridwan al-Madani, and Sayyid 'Abd Allah b. 'Umar b. Yahya (Bradley 2010).

Other Malay-speaking scholars also taught in Da'ud Fatani's intellectual circle. They include Syaikh Muhammad Salih, who was a fellow student of al-Marzuqi, and the Da'ud Fatani's own brother named Syaikh Wan Idris (Bradley 2010).

Da'ud Fatani had many students. He would elevate some of the impressive, and willing, ones to teach at the Majid al-Haram alongside him. These include Syaikh Isma'il b. 'Abd Allah al-Minankabawi, Syaikh Ahmad Khatib b. 'Abd al-Ghafar Sambas, Syaikh 'Abd al-Malik b. 'Isa Trengganu, Syaikh Hassan bin Syaikh Ishaq al-

Jawi al-Fatani, Syaikh 'Ali b. Ishaq al-Fatani and Syaikh Hajji Wan Musa al-Fatani (Bradley 2010).

Da'ud Fatani's corpus of writing also shows that he kept abreast of developments in Patani throughout his life as an immigrant in Makkah. Bradley (2010) observes that Daud b. 'Abd Allah al-Fatani sought to address the social upheaval that his nation experienced following its destruction by the Siamese. In addition to the influence that socio-religious politics in Makkah had on him, Daud b. 'Abd Allah al-Fatani consistently selected the themes of his writings in ways that addressed the social trends and upheavals that occurred in Patani at various times during his lifetime (Bradley 2010). His writings included translations of renowned Arabic works as well as his expositions on the Syafi'i legal doctrine, eschatology, and tasawwuf, a subject he began writing about only after the Wahabiyya were expelled from Makkah. He even advocated *jihad* against Siam in several of his works.

Da'ud Fatani's life activities ultimately gave birth to a Patanian network of students and scholars who shaped various aspects of Patanian lives for a very long time. Some of his writings are still being read and taught in the Malay-Indonesian world, especially in Malaysia and Thailand (Ismail 2002a). In his students, he left an illuminating and lasting legacy. They were vital in founding numerous religious schools, which would draw Malay-Indonesian students to Patani. Additionally, they also contributed greatly to the spreading of Islam's teachings as well as its application in the daily lives of the Patanians to the present day.

### **Wan Ahmad b. Muhammad Zain Al-Fatani (1856-1908)**

Patani remained prominent in the Malay-Indonesian Islamic community by producing many Islamic scholars throughout the nineteenth century. This historical fact is still recognized today as I have been told whenever I introduced my research

on the Fatanis to religious scholars and teachers from Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore. Other than Da'ud Fatani, the leading Patani scholar whose name still resonates in contemporary Malay-Indonesian Islamic religious circles is Syaikh Wan Ahmad b. Muhammad Zain b. Mustafa al-Fatani.

He was born in a village named Kampong Jambu, which is today in Yaring district of Pattani province, Thailand. He hailed from the family that ran the Bendang Daya pondok, which had been the leading Islamic educational institution in Patani over several generations. He migrated to Makkah when he was four years old and the holy city would be his home for the rest of his life. In Makkah, he seized the opportunity to study under the top Malay and Arabic-speaking scholars of the day, including Syaikh Nik Mat Kecik Fatani, Wan 'Ali Kutan, Syaikh Nik Dir Fatani, Syaikh 'Umar al-Shami al-Baqa'i (1829-1896), Sayyid Husain al-Habshi, Sayyid Abu Bakri Shatha (d. 1893), Sayyid Ahmad b. Zaini Dahlan, Syaikh Muhammad b. Sulaiman Hasb Allah al-Makki, Syaikh Muhammad Haqqi al-Nazili, Syaikh Ibrahim al-Rashisi (d. 1874), and Syaikh Ahmad al-Dandrawi (d. 1909) (Bradley 2010). From these teachers he gained knowledge in various disciplines of religious study, including fiqh, usul al-din, tafseer, and Hadeeth, as well as Arabic linguistics. Interestingly, he was recognized also for his talents in writing Arabic poetry.

Wan Ahmad Fatani's thirst for knowledge was apparent as he dabbled in other sciences including medicine. In fact, Wan Ahmad Fatani's first self-authored work, *Luqtah al-'Ijlan*, was a medical text (Ismail 2002b). His teacher in this field was al-Syaikh al-Tabib 'Abd al-Rahim al-Kabuli, a physician from the Indian sub-continent, who taught in al-Madinah. From there, Wan Ahmad Fatni sojourned to Jerusalem in search of more knowledge before heading to Cairo, which had emerged as an attractive center of learning in the eyes of Malay-Indonesian students of the latter half of the nineteenth century (Laffan 2003).

We have seen that the Patanian people, led by the 'ulama, turned to religion as a path to reinvigorate their society. Da'ud al-Fatani wrote many treatises in the belief that a proper observance of Islam by Patanians would help their nation rise from its ashes. The subsequent two generations of Fatani scholars answered his call and labored through the pages he authored for guidance. Wan Ahmad Fatani, however, belonged to the fourth generation of scholars from Patani, who lived in an era when a new strand of thought was spreading throughout the politically inclined amongst the 'ulama.

Much of the Islamic world was under European colonialism by the latter half of the nineteenth century. It should not be surprising that some 'ulama found the geopolitical situation disturbing. In Cairo, Wan Ahmad Fatani studied under Muhammad 'Abduh (1849-1905) via whom he was exposed to the reformist thoughts of Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1839-97). The latter two, leading figures of "Cairene Reformism" (Laffan 2003), were renowned for calling out to the Islamic world to embark on reforms that they saw as a way to catapult the ummah back to the vanguard position in geopolitics. Firstly, they championed the notion of pan-Islamism and criticized exclusive forms of social identification along national, tribal, and ethnic lines. They asserted that these socio-political practices divided the ummah and weakened them vis-à-vis the non-believers. Secondly, they also sought to reform education in the Islamic world. They argued that centuries of codification of Islamic knowledge and rituals had caused intellectual impotence in the Islamic world. They advocated a return to the Quran and *sunnah*<sup>10</sup>, which would bring back the "progressive" and "rational" character of the religion (Laffan 2003). In turn, Muslims would feel encouraged to embrace new forms of knowledge,

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10 Sunnah refers to the way of life prescribed to the Muslims based on the teachings and practices of Prophet Muhammad.

including Western sciences, while the religion continues to guide them away from blind imitation of the sources.

Wan Ahmad Fatani became the director of the Malay section of the Makkah branch of the Ottoman Printing Office (*al-Matba'a al-Amiriyya*) in 1884. This was not his first foray into publishing. During his four-year sojourn to Cairo, he worked as a proofreader at either Mustafa al-Babi al-Halabi's bookshop or the Cairo branch of the Ottoman Printing Office (Laffan 2003). Wan Ahmad Fatani's published works on Arabic grammar and poetry led C. Snouck Hurgronje to recognize him as a "savant of merit" (2007 [1931]:306). Yet, Hurgronje (2007 [1931]) asserts that patriotism led him to publish many of his Patanian predecessors' writings. Rather than Wan Ahmad Fatani's patriotism, Bradley (2010) argues Wan Ahmad's assignment as the head of the press indexes the prominence of the earlier cohorts of Patanian scholars among the Malay-Indonesian community in Makkah. Furthermore, his publication of some of Da'ud Fatani's important works indicates both the extent of the author's readership as well as Wan Ahmad Fatani's own business acumen. The popularity of these early publications brought ample revenue for the continuation of the Malay-language press's operations.

Da'ud Fatani's writings remained the single most popular collection of Malay works in publication until more than a century after his passing. The Makkah branch of the Ottoman Printing Office was not exclusive in publishing Da'ud's Fatani's works. Publishing houses in Istanbul, Mumbai, Cairo, Singapore, Penang, and finally Pattani, also profited from a similar enterprise (Bradley 2010). If Da'ud Fatani's fame as a teacher laid the foundation for the emergence of Makkah's Fatani community by attracting students from his native homeland to the holy city, Wan Ahmad Fatani and the burgeoning printing press contributed much to its expansion through print culture's extended reach. As the accessibility of the printed works of

Patani's Makkah-trained 'ulama increased, more would undertake the sojourn or migration to the holy city thereby expanding the community. In a reflection of the impacts of the Malay-Indonesian 'ulama's work in Makkah in the late nineteenth century, Mohammad Redzuan Othman wrote, "By then the Hijaz had emerged as an important center of Malay scholarship, with the presence there of a number of prominent 'ulama who not only taught at Masjid al-Haram but also produced many religious books" (1998:147).

## **MECCAN CONNECTIONS I: THE PONDOK INSTITUTION**

In Jawi today, many members of the Malay youth still look towards the Middle East annually to begin higher education, especially in the Islamic sciences<sup>11</sup>. From the moment these young men and women receive news of their acceptance for admission to the university, they become sources of pride for their respective communities. When they return after completing their studies, they become respected members of the Malay society in Jawi. They are expected to act as exemplars of erudition and, more importantly, Muslim conduct.

The destinations of these contemporary Malay students are more diverse than those who preceded them in the early years of Patanian educational sojourn. The Patanian youth now enroll in universities in Cairo, Damascus, Riyadh, Amman, Pakistan, and even those closer to home in Malaysia and Indonesia. Despite the difference in the locations of study, the contemporary cohort of knowledge seekers share a similar educational path with the 'ulama that Patani has produced in centuries past. Here, I'm referring to their ties to the "pondok" institution in Jawi.

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<sup>11</sup> It should be mentioned that this trend continues to be largely male-dominated trend even though girls tend to out-perform the male cohort.

The pondok institution has provided education to the Muslims of Jawi for a long time. It predates the introduction of modern secular education in the region by several centuries. One prominent Malay-Indonesian Islamic scholar of the eighteenth century, Sayyid 'Abd al-Samad b. 'Abd al-Rahman al-Jawi al-Falimbani (1704-1789), received early education at pondok schools in Kedah and Patani before pursuing more knowledge in the Middle East where he would build a respected career for himself (Azra 2004). 'Abd al-Samad al-Falimbani was the son of a Hadhrami sayyid who served as a *qadi* (judge) in the Malay kingdom of Kedah located on the west coast of northern Malay peninsula. The fact that 'Abd al-Samad al-Falimbani's father, who was learned in the Islamic sciences, would entrust to the pondok schools of Kedah and Patani signals that these pondok schools must have developed a decent reputation for themselves as providers of early religious education. Furthermore, the student population of the pondok schools of Patani does not comprise only locals, but also Muslims from other regions of Thailand as well as others who come from as far away as the Indonesian islands as well as Champa in present day Cambodia and southern Vietnam.

The influence of Makkah as a center of learning and the origin of the pondok institution that is widespread in the Malay-Indonesian world is irrefutable. Most of the major Patanian 'ulama from the late eighteenth to the end of the twentieth centuries were trained in the Islamic sciences at the Masjid al-Haram (Ahmad Fathy 2002). These scholars began their careers as young students at pondok schools in their homeland. Like the traditional learning system in Makkah, the pondok institution did not offer a fixed syllabus nor stipulate the duration of time needed for students to graduate. After several years, the more inspired of the students embarked on the esteemed journey to Makkah to perform the hajj and receive further instruction if they had sufficient funds to do so. Many a time their respective families and communities contributed funds to this admirable endeavor.

Although Syaikh Da'ud Fatani and Syaikh Wan Ahmad Fatani resided in Makkah for the rest of their lives, many other major Patanian scholars returned to their homeland of origin after feeling satisfied with the knowledge that they had accumulated from the years spent in Makkah.

Many of these returning scholars took up teaching positions in established pondok schools, while others established new ones. When they assumed the leadership of a pondok school's faculty, these scholars became known in Patani Malay as *Tok Guru*. Often times, pondok schools were founded when a community felt the desire for more convenient access to religious education. These communities would gift some land to their scholar of choice for the purpose of establishing a pondok school. This act is referred to as *waqf tanah* in Patani Malay. One such pondok school is Pondok Bermin, which I have visited many times in the last ten years.

Pondok Bermin was founded by Wan Ahmad b. Wan Idris (1875-1957). Wan Ahmad, who is more affectionately known as Tok Bermin in Jawi, studied at several pondok schools in Patani prior to his departure for Makkah, while he was a teenager. According to Ahmad Fathy, the young Tok Bermin had to persuade his elder brother, Wan Satang b. Wan Idris, to allow him to accompany the latter who intended to continue his education at Islam's holiest mosque. The latter was initially reluctant to take Tok Bermin with him. Aside from being financially challenged, he felt that the young student had not acquired ample knowledge in preparation for higher learning in Makkah. However, Wan Satang relented owing to his younger sibling's persistence.

Tok Bermin's education in Makkah began under a fellow countryman named Muhammad Dahan b. Da'ud, who was also known as Tok Yaman, a sobriquet he



earned for the time he spent as a student in Yemen (Ahmad Fathy 2009). The latter was a popular tutor to students who had just arrived in the holy city and were in need of preparation to participate in the learning circles of the more established 'ulama of the Masjid al-Haram. Once he was ready, Tok Bermin studied under the famous Syaikh Wan Ahmad b. Muhammad Zain Fatani and one Syaikh 'Ali Maliki among others (Ahmad Fathy 2009). When Wan Satang decided to leave Makkah for home, Tok Bermin was placed in the care of Wan Ahmad Fatani. There is no doubt the young student must have benefitted from this association.

His return to Patani after several decades of residence in Makkah was well received, especially by the communities located around the present day district of Yaring, Pattani province. A highly-respected pondok school teacher known as Tok Guru Cho-Ok was at that time recently deceased. Furthermore, many of the other prominent teachers of other pondok schools in that area were advanced in age and were no longer active in teaching. Thus, Tok Bermin's return was well-timed as it coincided with a generational change in leadership of the pondok institution in Patani. Within several months of his arrival, a piece of land was gifted by the Bermin village community to serve as the foundation for a new pondok school, which would take after the name of the community. Students of the renowned late tok guru of the pondok school at Cho-Ok enrolled in the new school as soon as it was established and they were joined not long after by others. Pondok Bermin's reputation and student population continued growing from strength to strength and Wan Ahmad himself came to be known more widely as Tok Bermin. This pondok school has produced many scholars and imams, who serve as religious leaders in various villages. Several new pondok schools were established during the 1930s as a new generation of religious teachers took over the mantle of the religious sphere in Jawi. Tok Bermin and his pondok school were at the forefront of this new era.

Apart from bringing home knowledge in the various Islamic sciences, the Makkah-trained Patanian scholars also introduced the method of knowledge transmission that they were exposed to at the Masjid al-Haram. The Tok Guru's home and the prayer hall, known as *balasoh* or *balai*, both of which are usually located close to one another, form the core of the spatial configuration of the pondok school. Upon hearing the call to prayers, students of the school take a quick shower in preparation for participation of congregational prayers at the *balasoh*, which takes place approximately ten minutes later.

Lessons begin not long after the completion of each of the five daily congregational prayers. Attendance at lessons is not compulsory as some students of these pondok schools, which includes adults and married couples, may engage in economic work in order to support themselves. Consistent attendance, however, is generally considered to be an indicator of the student's commitment towards the pursuit of knowledge.

Pondok school students carry the books that will be taught with them to every lesson. This is different from lessons conducted by teachers who teach at mosques all over Jawi where attendees are not expected to own books and are invited simply to attend and listen as the instructor delivers the sermon. At the pondok school's *balasoh*, the Tok Guru sits in front and faces his students who sit scattered around the room at locations that allow them to sit comfortably, but also listen effectively to the teacher. The Tok Guru first reads several lines off the text before explicating their meanings to his students. The latter may also stop the instructor at any point to seek clarification on the subject matter. In order to answer his students' queries, an instructor must read more widely and make connections between several textual sources not unlike a university professor teaching a graduate class. The writings of the Makkah-trained Patanian scholars of yesteryears such as Syaikh Da'ud Fatani and

Syaikh Wan Ahmad Fatani remain the most popular texts used, thus reflecting the pondok institution's historical debt and connection to the Fatani community in Makkah.

I have noted earlier that Da'ud Fatani and Wan Ahmad Fatani remained concerned with politics in their homeland despite their migration to Makkah. Islam was the source from which they sought solutions to the socio-political impotence that their native society was experiencing in their power struggle with Siam. They postulated philosophically that the reason for Patani's decline was society's deviation from what they considered to be the true path for Muslims and Islamic societies. Da'ud Fatani's religious meditations suggested that Patanian society would regain its might if its members return to Islam's basics and focus on conducting their lives as proper Muslims should. Wan Ahmad Fatani, on the other hand, was influenced by the modernist ideas of Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and Muhammad 'Abduh, with whom he had direct contact, and promoted the idea that modernization and keeping abreast with contemporary developments were ideals that are associated with Islam.

Political awareness and activism are not qualities that were restricted to these two figures in the Fatani scholarly network. We now turn to the career of Tuan Guru Haji Sulong for an example of the political contributions of Patani's Makkah-trained 'ulama.

## **MECCAN CONNECTIONS II: POLITICS**

Haji Sulong was born Muhammad Sulong b. 'Abd al-Qadir in 1895 in the village of Anok Rhu, which is located today in the town district of Pattani province. The young Sulong was taught the recitation of the holy Quran by his own father. By the time he was eight years old, he was able to recite the sacred scriptures relatively

well. He was then enrolled in a pondok school before being sent off to Makkah following the death of his mother in 1907 (Ahmad Fathy 2009).

During the time that Haji Sulong spent in Makkah, geopolitical trends made for very uncertain times for the Islamic world. The Ottoman Empire, which had been the most visible leader of the Islamic world for several centuries, was approaching the nadir of its decline. The military defeats that it suffered in World War I quickened the coming of its final days. The Sultanate was abolished in 1922 following which the Sultan served only as caliph. This arrangement, too, did not last long. The caliphate quickly became victim of the secularist ideology of the succeeding Republic of Turkey led by Mustafa Kemal when it was abolished in 1924.

Makkah experienced a profound event in the Arab Revolt of 1916, which saw the expulsion of the Ottomans from the Hijaz. This event, which was instigated by the British, displayed their mighty political influence in the politics of the Islamic Middle East (Paris 2003). It is hard to imagine that Haji Sulong was oblivious to politics while living amidst such turbulent times. Furthermore, Makkah's relevance to the Malay-Indonesian Islamic community was not restricted to religion. From the anti-Dutch struggles of Yusuf al-Maqassari to the political-inclination of the writings of Da'ud Fatani and Wan Ahmad Fatani, Makkah was also a place where anti-colonial political discourse was circulating (Laffan 2003). Owing to its central position in Islamic pilgrimage and knowledge circles, Makkah connected the various Muslim communities around the world. As persons circulated in the network of places around the Islamic world, so did texts, ideas, and conversations.

Thailand, or Siam at that time, had also undergone major political changes during Haji Sulong's absence. The political elites of Siam had spent much effort in modernizing the nation since the middle of the nineteenth century. This process,

which has been described by Thongchai Winichakul (2000) as the “quest for *siwilai*<sup>12</sup>”, comprised largely the adoption of European-styled political administration and modern infrastructure. This endeavor also extended into culture and lifestyle including dressing and etiquette for the elites of Siam who knew that their nation’s ability to maintain its independence depended partly, and only partly, on their ability to navigate in a geopolitical environment in which the European colonizing powers’ values reigned supreme.

We have seen from Siam’s subjugation of Patani from 1785-1839 that political centralization was already underway in the late seventeenth century owing to increased Siamese superiority in demography and weapons technology. The rapid extension of European colonization throughout Southeast Asia in the nineteenth century added impetus to Siamese political centralization efforts. The delineation of politico-geographical boundaries between Siam and the colonized nations adjacent to it was a constant source of frustration in bilateral relations between Siam and the French and between Siam and the British (Thongchai 1994). 1909 saw the consequential signing of the Anglo-Siamese Treaty, which established the political boundaries between Siam and the northern Malay states then under British rule. This treaty placed the Jawi society firmly under the yoke of Siamese political control.

Haji Sulong subsequently returned to Jawi in 1924 (Ahmad Fathy 2009). It has been suggested that the purpose of his return was to mend a saddened heart following the death of his infant son in Makkah (Ahmad Fathy 2009; Ockey 2011). On arrival, he observed that the lifestyles of Jawi’s Muslims remained steeped in pre-Islamic beliefs and practices. The traditional pondok institution had until then failed to steer society on a modernization path as envisioned by the reformists such

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12 The term *siwilai* itself is derived from the English word *civilized*.

as the Cairene Muhammad 'Abduh. Consequently, he undertook the responsibility of mitigating the situation. He travelled around Pattani province (Th. *monthon*) to preach Islam as he understood it from his education at the Masjid al-Haram. This invited trouble almost instantly.

Haji Sulong's teaching activities attracted opposition from the leading Islamic teachers of various pondok schools. They interpreted his efforts to purify the Islamic practices of his society as a threat to their establishment. Haji Sulong's ability to attract large audiences to his lectures at the mosque added fuel to the fire. As a reaction to his burgeoning influence, they requested the Siamese government to investigate Haji Sulong on the suspicion that he was inciting a revolt. The government avoided involvement in this regional conflict.

Siam experienced a revolution in 1932 that saw its political system change from absolute to constitutional monarchy. This event was led by modernist Bangkok elites who saw the absolute monarchy as a hindrance to Siam's progress towards modernization. The new government also saw educational progress as vital to the nation's future and so, encouraged the founding of new schools. Haji Sulong saw this as an opportunity. He made a request to the government for funds to complete the construction of his new school. The government obliged and the Prime Minister then, Phraya Phahon, even accepted the invitation to grace the school's opening in 1933.

Haji Sulong became increasingly integrated into Siam's new democracy in subsequent years (Ockey 2011). In the eyes of Bangkok's political elites, his rapidly growing student numbers and influence over the Muslims in Jawi were indicators that he was becoming one of the Muslim society's prominent leaders. However, the government suspected the school of being a center of political activities and ordered it to be closed in 1935. Haji Sulong returned to teaching Islam by travelling

from one community to another all over Jawi. However, he continued to play an active role in politics. He even established an enduring political alliance with Khunjaroenworawet, a Thai-Buddhist who competed in parliamentary elections against Phraphiphitphakdi, the son of the last Sultan of Yaring and a Muslim. According to James Ockey (2011), Haji Sulong supported Khunjaroenworawet's because they shared a commitment to the rhetoric of democracy and equality. Additionally, the arrangement also proves that the Muslim leader was sufficiently integrated into the Thai political system.

As part of efforts to integrate Muslim citizens in Jawi, the Thai<sup>13</sup> government passed the Patronage of Islam Act in 1945. With this, the provincial Islamic councils were formed. The imams in Pattani voted Haji Sulong as the inaugural President of the province's council. This confirmed the massive influence that he has amassed since returning from Makkah. However, his relationship with the authorities in Bangkok turned sour when he opposed the government's proposal that the appointment of Islamic judges in the provinces be their prerogative. Furthermore, Haji Sulong disagreed with the government's plan to place the Islamic courts under the jurisdiction of the constitutional courts. Haji Sulong stood fast despite the central government's willingness to establish a compromise. For this, the government began to view him as an intransigent troublemaker (Ockey 2011).

The relationship between the Malays and the Thai political elites has always been an uneasy one. It became increasingly precarious when the modernizing state attempted to integrate the Malays more firmly into its evolving administrative structures. This situation initially provided opportunities for Haji Sulong to rise to political prominence. However, it would also contribute to the tragic way that his

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13 The kingdom's name was changed to "Thailand" in 1941.

life ended. When a separatist movement emerged after the Second World War, the central government became increasingly wary of Haji Sulong's activities. The latter was aware of this, but continued to work tirelessly to collect information regarding the political aspirations of his community.

In March 1947, the central government dispatched a committee of four government officials and the *jularachamontri*<sup>14</sup>, also known as the Syaikh al-Islam, to Jawi to investigate various complaints of the Malays including those lodged against bureaucrats as well as the cultural assimilationist policies that were introduced by then Prime Minister Plaek Phibunsongkhram from 1939-42. Various leaders of the Malay society saw this visit as an opportunity to bring the central government to the negotiation table. Haji Sulong was nominated to lead the congregation of some one hundred Malay leaders who attended the meeting with the government-appointed committee (Ockey 2011). During the meeting, Haji Sulong made seven requests to the committee on behalf of the Malay community. This seven point petition has since become infamous because it is widely believed by Malays today that it was the trigger of his deadly tug-of-war engagements with the state. James Ockey (2011:113) lists the seven demands:

1. That the four southern provinces be governed as a unit, with a Muslim governor.
2. That for the first seven years of the school curriculum, Malay be allowed as the language of instruction.
3. That all taxes collected in the four southern provinces be expended there.
4. That 85 percent of the government officials be local Malays.
5. That Malay and Thai be used together as the languages of government.
6. That the provincial Islamic committees have authority over the practice of Islam.
7. That the Islamic judicial system be separated from the provincial court system.

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<sup>14</sup> This term refers to the officially appointed leader of Thailand's Muslim community.



The government was slow in responding to the demands made by the Malay leaders. Meanwhile, Haji Sulong organized a movement in order to put pressure on the government so that it would act more quickly. He was also in contact with the Kelantan-based separatist movement led by Tengku Mahmud Mahayiddin, the son of the last Sultan of Pattani, Tengku Abdulkadir Kamaruddin, who was exiled by Siam in 1902. Haji Sulong was suspected of leading the Pattani-branch of Tengku Abdulkadir's separatist movement by the Thai government as a result of his connections to the latter.

In time, the government responded to the seven demands made in March 1947. Various ministries were tasked with deliberating the demands and only the separation of the Islamic and provincial court systems were rejected instantly. Unfortunately, a coup d'état took place in November 1947. The demands would have to be renegotiated. When Haji Sulong found out that the new government was planning to negotiate with Tengku Mahayiddin, he drafted a new petition that the latter could use in his discussions with the government. This petition, which proposed political autonomy be given to Malay society of Jawi, fell into the hands of the authorities before the commencement of the planned negotiations. Haji Sulong was arrested along with some of his supporters. He and three others were then convicted on charges of involvement in a separatist movement and were incarcerated in the notorious Bangkhwang prison in Bangkok until his release in March 1952 (Ockey 2011).

Haji Sulong remained under the watchful eyes of the state after his release from prison. He had to report to the authorities regularly and was even told to stop teaching Islam at the end of 1953. This robbed him of his economic lifeline and main inspiration for his return migration from Makkah. To aggravate matters, the activities of the separatists were on the rise and his political ally

Khunjaroenworawet was convicted for his involvement in a movement called the Peace Rebellion (Th. Kabot Santiphap) of 1952. Haji Sulong and several others were instructed to report to the police station in Songkla. He complied with the instruction. On August 13, 1954, he reported to the station as ordered with his eldest son in tow. The latter was to be his interpreter and to be his contact person if needed. They were last seen praying at a mosque in Hadyai (Ockey 2011). Those aware of the disappearances of Haji Sulong and his son, Muslims and non-Muslims alike, believe that they were victims of extra-judicial assassination. Haji Sulong's unsolved disappearance is still constantly invoked in Malay discussions of their community's troubled relationship with the Thai state indicating that his life and, perhaps more importantly, death are a key moment in the history of the Patanian Muslim society.

## **FATANIS IN SEARCH OF INSPIRATION**

Eickelman and Piscatori wrote that "pilgrimage and migration are forms of political and social action" (1990:1). They perspicaciously pointed out that it is too easy for us to believe that Muslims travel because Islamic doctrine informs them of the educational benefits of doing so. Here, I am referring to the widely believed Hadeeth, despite the disputation of its veracity by some scholars – *Seek knowledge even as far as China*. In other words, Eickelman and Piscatori (1990) suggest that it is tempting to believe that Muslims travelers have always done so for the esteemed pursuit of knowledge. The essays in their edited book, *Muslim Travellers* (1990), challenge this opinion by showing that the meaning and motivations for travel for Muslim travelers may vary greatly.

From the late eighteenth century, we observe an increased and steady trend of Patanian migration to Makkah. Siam's destruction of their homeland contributed to the emergence of this trend. These pioneers count among those Patanians who

left the homeland in search of safety. Even so, their decision to migrate or sojourn to the heartland of Islam over other societies indicates that they were driven by religious motivations. Aside from the desire to fulfill the religious obligation of performing the hajj, these pioneers of the Fatani community in Makkah were also attracted to the holy city for its role as a center for religious education. In this chapter, we have seen that the Makkah-trained Fatani 'ulama stayed connected to the homeland and contributed greatly to politics and education in Jawi. They turned to religious learning for inspiration to rebuild the homeland.

## CHAPTER 3 BELONGING IN MAKKAH

I labored to keep abreast with them. Their speech sounded more like drum beats to me. The tempo was rapid, but there was a beautiful rhythm to it. Although the fifteen or more friends were seated close to one another, there was really more than one conversation going on simultaneously. My host Ridhwan had already introduced me to his friends and now details of my identity were circulating in the group — He's a doctoral researcher; He studies in America; He's from Singapore; He's like us, Fatani but born in Singapore. Each time he could not answer a question about me, Ridhwan turned to me for clarification. For the most part, the group was intrigued by the purpose of my visit. Why would anyone want to study us? You mean people can get a doctoral degree doing that? *'Ilm al-insan* (Ar. Anthropology) was not something known to them. I anticipated that it would require time to make my interlocutors understand what I was doing. Even so, I was encouraged that some members of the group were visibly receptive to my intentions.

That meeting with Ridhwan's friends was not the first time I visited Syi'ib 'Ali. From the day of my arrival, I sat at the same spot outside Muhammad Ramadhan's *bigalah* (Ar. grocery store) every day after performing maghrib prayers in the congregation at the al-Masjid al-Haraam. That day was different though. The group assembling at the bigalah was larger than usual. Some of the young men like Ridhwan who have moved out of the Syi'ib had come up the hill to catch up with their childhood mates after performing Friday prayers at the al-Masjid al-Haraam. When I asked Ridhwan if this was the practice every week, his answered drearily, "In the past, there were more people."

From my vantage position, I scanned Makkah's landscape. The holy city is situated in a valley, and the al-Masjid al-Haraam is rightfully its central core. The

city itself is built around the mosque, which is Islam's holiest shrine. Makkah's built landscape is not an architectural wonder. Admittedly, the Abraj al-Bait, also known as the Mecca Royal Hotel Clock Tower, is impressive. It holds several world records — the tallest clock tower in the world, the world's largest clock face and the building with the world's biggest floor area. Apart from this, the eye is overwhelmed by the sight of the rubble of flattened buildings that once stood proudly as homes to the denizens of Makkah's various quarters. The numerous mighty cranes that clutter the skyline seem to remind the observer that Makkah is undergoing massive reconstruction. Since the al-Masjid al-Haraam must remain at the core of life in Makkah, the buildings around its compounds have to be demolished before Makkah can be refashioned as a *modern* city. The magisterial Abraj al-Bait then invites us to imagine the holy city's future.

My visual examination of the city was interrupted by Waseem, who diverted my attention to the trail of people walking to and away from the al-Masjid al-Haraam. He claims that, save a handful number of days during the year, there is never a moment when you will not find a single person approaching or leaving the mosque. He laughed as he recounted the time when he tried to point this out to a non-Arabic speaking pilgrim a few years earlier. "People more," he said to the befuddlement of the man. I diverted my attention away from the mosque towards the people who were hiking up the hill in our direction.

I was amazed at the sight of South Asian men walking up the uneven and broken path with goods as large as refrigerators tied upon their backs, while thinking about myself panting as I slogged up the same route just minutes earlier. The weather did not help either. The average temperature in June is 110°F and can rise up as high as 121°F. Summer living in Makkah is like being in an oven.

Surrounded by the desert, the dusty and dry air of Makkah is no more benevolent to one's lungs than the temperature.

Seyf pointed rather proudly to a frail figure amidst the sturdy bodies of the South Asian porters of Syi'ib 'Ali and said, "That's my father." Abu Seyf (literally, Father of Seyf in Arabic) was dressed in a white thawb, the white ankle-length garment that is commonly donned by Arabs, and a white pointy-top Meccan kufi skullcap. His steps throughout the hike appeared slow, but steady. Seyf was ready with a pack of cold orange juice drink when his father arrived at the bigalah. I walked to them obligingly when I heard Seyf calling, "Come, ya 'Arafat."

I stood in anticipation as Seyf related whatever he had learnt about me and my research project from the boisterous conversations outside the bigalah. I stared at Abu Seyf's face as he listened intently to his son. If I did not know any better, I would have guessed that Abu Seyf was a Muslim from China if we crossed path in the streets. His crinkled facial skin bespoke of not only physical exhaustion from old age. According to Seyf, his father seemed to have fallen into an emotional abyss following the passing of his beloved wife and companion of fifty-odd years. When he finally spoke, the voice was soft, but his words were kind. Managing a pleasant smile, he asked, "Would you like to walk home with me?" I was relieved, even elated. Given the role of the Fatanis in the political struggle of the Malays in Jawi, I expected the older members of the community to be hesitant in receiving me.

Abu Seyf gave me an introduction to Syi'ib 'Ali as we strolled along the time-worn footpath towards his home. At one point, Abu Seyf paused to appreciate the view of the al-Masjid al-Haraam. He took a deep breath and slowly let out a long sigh and then said, "The people used to come in search of knowledge."

This chapter is about place and belonging. Low and Lawrence-Zuniga (2003) assert that *place* has long been a neglected concept in anthropology. In the pursuit of understanding culture and cultures, the importance of place was often reduced to being the context within which ethnography is carried out. Margaret Rodman echoes this when she wrote:

Places in anthropological writing have been equated with ethnographic locales. As such, they could be taken for granted. They were just space, "the dead, and fixed, the undialectical, the immobile" in Foucault's lament. They became the settings, albeit often exotic ones, where things happened. (2003:204)

Today, *place* has become an important focus of ethnography. Rather than taking place as given, anthropologists now consider the mutually constitutive relationship between people or communities and the space that they occupy. Place is, thus, invented, or as Augé writes, "It has been discovered by those who claim it as their own" (1995:43).

In what follows, we shall observe what Makkah has meant for the lives of Patanians, including immigrants, who undertook the important journey between Islam's heartland and their native homeland in Jawi during the past two centuries. Pioneers of Fatani migration to Makkah saw the holy city primarily as a place of sojourn. We have seen that many of these immigrants were aspiring scholars to whom Makkah represented a place for the accumulation of religious merit and learning. Our survey of the careers of some of the prominent scholars in the previous chapter reveals that these men sought religious inspiration for the reawakening of their society following Siam's attempts at annihilating the Patanian social fabric. Although some of them remained in Makkah for the rest of their lives, Patani was never far from their hearts and minds. Later cohorts of Fatani immigrants to Makkah differed from the pioneers in this regard.

The Fatani community grew massively in the twentieth century. When this happened, Makkah's prominence as a place for social identification vis-à-vis the native homeland increased among the resettled community. Today, the Fatani muwalladeen imagine themselves to be different from their brethren in Jawi. They are not just Patanians, but also Fatanis; they share experiences of living and belonging in Makkah. There are good reasons for this too and more will be discussed in chapter 5 of this dissertation.

We begin the rest of the chapter by discussing the reasons that contributed to the Fatani community's expansion including advancements in long-distance transportation. Makkah's rapid socio-economic transformations following Saudi Arabia's ascension to the pinnacle of the global oil industry concurrently influenced the migration of the Fatanis. They no longer migrated to Makkah for religious motivations alone, but also economic ones. Over time, we observe the emergence of pockets of Fatani communities around the holy city. It was in these communities where the Fatanis' collective sense of belonging vis-à-vis other ethno-national communities in Makkah as well as their fellows in the homeland matured.

### **WAVES AND TURBULENCES: TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS OF TRAVEL**

The introduction of air travel dealt a decisive blow to the centuries-old pilgrim shipping networks that brought generations of Southeast Asian pilgrims to Makkah. The maritime networks of pilgrim transportation, which had experienced its heyday from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, met its abrupt end as Southeast Asian pilgrims increasingly opted for the convenience of the quicker journeys offered by the airline industry.



Sunil Amrith (2011) has argued that Asia has been experiencing a mobility revolution since 1850. During this period, inter-Asian human migration has occurred at unprecedented scales anywhere and at any time in human history (Amrith 2011). He asserts that advancements in transportation technology have been significant in facilitating this trend. In sea travel, steamships and later ships with diesel engines empowered the hands of the captains and his crew making the long and arduous journey safer for their passengers. Furthermore, the increase in European ships arriving in Southeast Asia that resulted from the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 increased the possibility for Southeast Asians to undertake the journey to the holy land. On land, the railroad has extended the transportation networks so that the ports of call from which travelers could embark on their journeys have increased over time.

The ever increasing convenience of travel has been vital for Fatanis who migrated to Makkah, especially following the availability of air travel. While the earlier cohorts of migrants and sojourners from Patani predominantly comprised aspiring scholars who sought to contribute toward the betterment of their homeland society, migrants in the later cohorts were a motley group whose motivations for migration were at times less noble. In this section, we will listen to the voices of travelers from the Malay-Indonesian world from several eras, from that of the sailing ships to the fast-moving airplanes.

## **Sea Travel**

On January 29, 1854, a ship named Sabil al-Islam departed from the waters of Singapore on a northwestern course towards the Indian subcontinent. Among its passengers was 'Abd Allah b. 'Abd al-Qadir, better known as Munsyi 'Abdullah, a figure of first-rate importance for the development of modern Malay letters. As an author, he chose to deliver his observations and commentaries of the social trends

around him and the ones he encountered through his travels in simple prose. Hence, his works represent a radical departure from traditional Malay literature, which was fantastical and pregnant with legends.

'Abdullah was fluent in several languages. This made him popular as a tutor to various Europeans who wanted to learn the Malay language, including prominent figures such as Stamford Raffles, the founder of the modern settlement in Singapore in 1819. He was also a talented scribe who began earning money from copying the Quran from a young age. His reputation in this line of work attracted Europeans enthusiasts of Malay manuscripts to commission him for the job of copying such surviving texts. Students of the history of Patani are eternally indebted to Munsyi 'Abdullah, who scribed copies of the Hikayat Patani, which remains the most important source of data on the pre-modern history of the Patani Kingdom.

The journey that 'Abdullah undertook to Makkah in 1854 would be his last voyage. He died soon after his arrival in the holy city. As one would expect of a sincere man of letters, 'Abdullah has gifted us with an account of his traverse of the Indian Ocean with the hajj as his goal. Although he is not of Patanian origin, we now turn to his final authored work, which I believe is valuable if we are to gain some understanding of the travel experiences of the Malay-Indonesian migrants and pilgrims to Makkah in an era when the sailing ship was the still only mode of transportation across the Indian Ocean.

*'Abdullah's Voyage to Jiddah  
(Kisah Pelayaran Abdullah Ke Negeri Juddah)*

Munsyi 'Abdullah's journey from Singapore to Makkah took approximately 92 days. Many pilgrims of the nineteenth century planned for an early arrival unlike contemporary hajj pilgrims. The date of 'Abdullah's departure from Singapore corresponds to 29 Rabi' al-Akhir of Islamic calendar. He had up to six months to

travel and prepare for his performance of the hajj. His arrival at the holy city, which is estimated to fall from May 9-18, 1854, corresponds to 11-20 Sya'aban, which is approximately two months before the time of the hajj. From my research interlocutors, I found that planning for an early arrival before the hajj continued to be widely practiced by many pilgrims from everywhere in the Muslim world well into the twentieth century.

From Singapore, the *Sabil al-Islam* first sailed up the Straits of Malacca passing by Malacca and Penang along the way. The waters off Penang were the eastern extreme of the Malaccan Straits gateway to the wide-open waters that connected Southeast Asia with Indian subcontinent of Asia. From here, the *Sabil al-Islam* altered its course to face true west in the direction of Aceh, which 'Abdullah sighted on the tenth day of his voyage. The captain, Syaikh 'Abd al-Kareem, continued the ship's westward course towards the island of Ceylon. The first experience of being in the open sea awed even a relatively seasoned Malay traveler like Munsyi 'Abdullah, who remarked, "After that we sailed into the great ocean without seeing a single thing apart from the water and the sky which embraced the vast sea" (Raimy 2000:186). The ship arrived off the coast of Galle on February 20, the twenty-third day of the voyage, and after two days from their first spotting of Ceylon. The ship continued sailing and when it came aligned with Adam's Peak, a peculiar ritual was performed by the crew. This interested 'Abdullah, who described his observation:

At that precise moment all the sailors broke out in a jubilant roar while beating trays and drums. They immediately dressed up one of the Abyssinians on board to look like an old man complete with a walking-stick in his hand and a long beard. He was then followed by a motley crew who danced before the *Nakhoda*, with whom I was sitting, and they bowed and paid their respects to us. Each of us gave them some money according to our due. I queried the coxswain, whose name was *Serang* Muhammad about this and he replied, 'It is the usual custom for ships sailing past here, to merrily seek alms to buy food for the

recitation of the *Fatihah* for our father Adam, upon whom may there be peace.' (Raimy 2000:186-7)

The Sabil al-Islam's northwest bearing brought it into the Laccadive Sea where it was hit by a storm while passing the treacherous Cape Comorin. Everyone onboard clung tightly to various parts of the ship, which tossed around by the massive winds and waves for several days. The ship arrived at Allepey on February 26 after sailing for twenty-nine days. 'Abdullah then spent six days at Allepey before boarding another ship named 'Atiah Rahman for the remainder of his voyage to Jiddah, the port of disembarkation for pilgrims intending for Makkah. This ship was piloted by one Muhammad Tamim and was owned by Muhammad Ghatan, a native of Hudaydah.

The overcrowded 'Atiah Rahman departed Allepey on March 3 and sailed northwards along the coast until it arrived in Calicut six days later. Again, 'Abdullah seized the opportunity to disembark and tour the town. He leaves us a description of the town:

I saw a large number of houses and endless rows of shops selling cloth and various kinds of foodstuff: fruits, young coconuts, rice, and suchlike. There were also a large number of streets and these streets were not like the ones in Allepey. These were made of earth without any sand on them and were paved with stone. (Raimy 2000:190)

'Abdullah mentioned his observation of women's dressing twice, at Allepey and Calicut, which illustrated his surprise, "The Hindu women here walk around quite naked, both young and old alike as well, meaning they didn't wear any upper garments as their breasts [wholly] jiggled about" (Raimy 2000:190). The 'Atiah Rahman remained in Calicut for one week, perhaps to give ample time for its crew and passengers to prepare for the journey's upcoming leg. From Calicut, the ship headed west across the Arabian Sea toward the island of Socotra. This lasted two

weeks. No break was intended, and the ship aimed for the Gulf of Aden. As 'Abdullah and his fellow travelers were passing Socotra, they encountered a pirate ship<sup>15</sup>.

Suddenly a ship appeared behind us. As it moved closer, the *Malim* [*mu'allim*<sup>16</sup>] of our ship spoke to all the pilgrims and asked them to gather together and sit in the rear. All at once the ship which appeared close to us began to lag slowly behind. A call was then made for thirty-two sacks of rice to be brought from the hold and placed at the back, together with two cannon and water pipes. By the next day the ship had disappeared and was left behind. (Raimy 2000:192)

'Atiah Rahman sailed safely past Aden and Bab Iskandar after that encounter with pirates, but could not enter Mukha. The captain felt that the lack of visibility at night would be detrimental to the ship's safety. They were hit by a storm that night and lost some of the distance covered earlier in the day as they drifted away from Mukha. The wind abated the following day, and they managed to sail into Mukha. By this time, approximately twenty people aboard the ship had contracted small pox and two or three of them had already died. 'Abdullah again disembarked at Mukha. In his own words, the purpose of his disembarkation was "to observe the local customs in Mocha" (Raimy 2000:194). The duration of the break at Mukha was two weeks as both the captain and pilot of the 'Atiah Rahman were natives of the city. The goods that were onboard the ship were offloaded at the port, and new ones were loaded for delivery elsewhere. They set out from Mukha on April 20 and arrived at Hudaydah the next day. After spending another six days at Hudaydah the ship departed for Jiddah. First, the ship was steered to Lamlam, the location where pilgrims heading for Makkah from the direction of Yemen have to don the pilgrim garb and pronounce their *niyah* (Ar. Intention) to undertake the hajj. Munsyi 'Abdullah arrived in Jiddah onboard the 'Atiah Rahman on April 29, 1854.

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15 This detail provides a historical angle to contemporary piracy in the same area that has been receiving global media and political attention.

16 "Mu'allim" is the Arabic word for "navigator."

As we retrace 'Abdullah's itinerary and its duration, we gain some sense about the time and energy that a Malay-Indonesian traveler must invest into the journey from Southeast Asia to Makkah in the age of the sailing ship. This mid-nineteenth century traveler, however, also penned much of his observations, opinions, and emotions throughout his travel. The fear and insecurity he felt from the perils of the voyage were persistent in his writing. Mother Nature's treachery greeted him, even before he bid farewell to the waters of the Malay Peninsula as if educating him on what was to be anticipated for the rest of his journey across the Indian Ocean. The Sabil al-Islam was hit by a storm while making way between Penang and Aceh:

The waves and swells were immense, so much so that our large ship became merely like a coconut husk that was being thrashed about by the waves, floating and sinking as it was tossed about in the middle of the sea. All the chests and goods on the left of the ship came crashing to the right, while those on the right came crashing to the left, and this carried on until the break of day. (Raimy 2000:186)

Shortly after the crew performed the ritual when their ship crossed Adam's Peak as I've mentioned earlier, reality again crept up on them as another storm threatened their safety:

A while after that, a rough wind blew as we tried to cross Cape Comorin. 'Oh God! Oh God! Oh God!' I can't even begin to describe how horrendous it was and how tremendous the waves were, only God would know how it felt, it was as if I had wanted to crawl back into my mother's womb in fright! Waves from the left thrashed to the right and those from the right thrashed to the left. All the goods, chests, sleeping-mats and pillows were flung about. Water spewed into the hold and drenched everything completely. Everyone was lost in their own thoughts, thinking nothing else but that death was close at hand. (Raimy 2000:187)

Meteorological extremities were not the only form of danger faced by those who traversed the mighty ocean. Each time the ships approached a port for a stopover to offload goods or restock supplies of food and water, the risk of running aground was always present. Furthermore, a steersman maneuvering a sailing ship

was not afforded the kind of control of the vessel that someone steering an engine-powered one has.

For a traveler from the Malay-Indonesian world the waters of the Red Sea were most well-known for the threats that reefs posed to a ship's safety. 'Abdullah describes the situation as his ship approached Jiddah:

On the next day we saw Jiddah before us. The ship, however, did not dare sail any closer. It was only then that both of the ship's land-based *Malim* from Hudaydah appeared. One of them scaled the back mast and one of them sat on the prow, while our *Malim* sat in the middle of the vessel.

Now the land-based *Malim* had been appointed to bring the ship safely into Jiddah and he was paid forty *Ringgit* to do so. It was after this that we saw the path that lay before us: it was filled with coral reefs, so much so that the sea appeared green due to these corals, and there were only a few small channels through which we could navigate. It was through these channels that the ship made its way, with the *Malim* on the mast shouting to guide the *Malim* on the prow. The *Malim* on the prow would then reply, to which the ship's *Malim* responded and he would in turn holler over to the helmsman in the bows. The *Nakhoda* himself stood in trepidation. Everyone else was forbidden to speak. Each of us was silently praying that we would be released from the danger of these reefs. Every now and again the coral would stick out and appear fortress-like around us. The sails were lowered, leaving only four on the mast. The water around us then felt as if it was being hurled / into the ship /. With His blessings, it took roughly three hours for our ship to pass through safely without any mishaps, by the end of which the *Nakhoda* and everyone else on the ship broke out with gales of laughter in relief. (Raimy 2000:197)

One can reasonably conjecture that for a first-time traveler, the brushes with death during an extensive sea borne journey must evoke a feeling of helplessness. In such moments of impuissance, even hardened travelers begged for divine intervention. If one was not already religious, though this is unlikely for a pilgrim in the days of yore, the actions and words of fellow travelers encouraged them in that direction. 'Abdullah narrates the actions of the people on board the *Sabil al-Islam* during a storm:

It felt as if the waves were crashing over the tips of the ship's mast. We even had to sit down and grasp onto something firm while performing our prayers. In the ship's hold, the noises made by people vomiting and urinating were indescribable as the sailors kept on hosing down the place. Water [also] kept leaking in from everywhere as well, while the only audible sound came from the ship's ropes which were humming as they strained. The torrential winds gushed as if they were being slammed down violently upon us by someone with increasing force. The weather and atmosphere grew clear and bright, and sometimes we would see rays of the sun, but the winds were just wretched, and even more so the waves. The sea looked as starkly white as white can be. Everyone held fast to the ropes. The sails tore and the ropes broke many times. We could scarcely cry then even if we had the tears to do so, while our lips became parched and dry. Various voices shouted and besought the names of God and the Prophet, because as the *Nakhoda* had said himself, Cape Comorin is infamously feared by many, 'It would be best for all of you to pray to God, for every year many ships disappear here without leaving either a trace or any survivors! Ah! Ah! Ah!' (Raimy 2000:187)

As if being thrashed about by winds and waves was insufficient, the emotional trials of the voyage were aggravated by the poor living conditions aboard the ships. These ships were often crammed full because their operators sought to maximize the profits to be earned from the annual hajj season. Again, 'Abdullah gives us a glimpse of these conditions:

God only knew the circumstances aboard the ship and how the crowded mass of people made it so miserable for us who tried to eat, sit or sleep on board. God Willing, all these trials and tribulations will gain us meritorious blessings, for we endured this in the Path of the Righteous. (Raimy 2000:189)

The fact that many pilgrims fall victim to various types of contagion every year is not surprising given such poor conditions of travel aboard the ships of that era. From the 1850s onwards, many pilgrims first had to check-in at Qamaran Island, which was used as a quarantine station (Amrith 2011). As mentioned earlier, several of 'Abdullah's fellow passengers died of smallpox. 'Abdullah himself died on his arrival in Makkah. It is believed that he was a victim of cholera (Raimy 2000). Those who undertook the sacred journey would have been aware of the adversity that awaited them. Their participation in the hajj required not only financial and



physical ability, but also a strong commitment to achieving whatever goals that were personally intended. For the Fatani scholars whom we met in chapter 2, the pursuit of religious knowledge and solutions for the betterment of their native society were some of these motivations. 'Abdullah's final *syair* is telling in this regard:

As I entered into this exalted city,  
I became oblivious to all the pleasures and joys of this world,  
It was as if I had acquired Heaven and all that it holds,  
I uttered a thousand prayers of thanks to the Most Exalted God,  
Thus I have forgotten all the hardships and torments along my journey,  
For I have yearned and dreamed after the *Baitullah* for many months.  
(Raimy 2000:200)

#### *From Bangkok to Jiddah*

Abu Seyf continued telling me stories while we sat on the floor of his living room. Most Fatani homes in Syi'ib 'Ali have very small living rooms. Abu Seyf and I were joined by Ridhwan, who is a little less than six feet tall and slightly bulky, and Seyf. Both Seyf and his father are petite, being approximately three inches over five feet and slim. The living room could accommodate maybe another person or two, but that would be rather tight. The small size of the living rooms in Syi'ib 'Ali reveals the humble origins of the Fatani home owners, many of whom are first-generation immigrants to Makkah. Most of the earlier cohorts of immigrants have moved out of the community in search of more spacious and comfortable homes for their families as they moved up the socio-economic ladder, especially when their fortunes turned for the better when one or more members of the family became a Saudi national.

Ridhwan and Seyf appeared to be listening to Abu Seyf's stories as if for the first time. "I have lived here for many years already, but there were many others before me," said Abu Seyf, who migrated to Makkah at a relatively advanced age when he was in his thirties. Like most other Patanian travelers to Makkah in the 1960s, Abu Seyf arrived at Jiddah on board a diesel-powered ship. His sea journey between Bangkok and Jiddah in 1964 on a ship named Hoi Ying at sea took

approximately fifteen days. Unlike Munsyi Abdullah, most Malay-Indonesian travelers to Makkah did not keep a journal of their journey. Abu Seyf, too, was not concerned with recording the sail path of Hoi Ying. Nevertheless, we were able to use Harun Aminurrashid's (1960) published memoir of his hajj to stimulate Abu Seyf's memory as he recalled his own journey to the holy land.

Abu Seyf's journey to Makkah began when he left his village shortly after completing his prayers at dawn almost fifty years ago. He would not return to his birthplace for more than four decades, though this fate was unknown to him at the time of his departure from his homeland. The first leg of his journey was a boat ride up a river to the town district of Narathiwat. This took him all of daytime so that he arrived about the time of the *maghrib* prayers at dusk. From there he boarded a taxi and headed towards the train station at the Khok Pho district of Pattani province, where he commenced a train journey to Bangkok. The journey to Thailand's capital would take another three full days. Abu Seyf returned to Thailand for his first visit in 2011 since migrating to Makkah in 1964. Abu Seyf traveled to Bangkok by train as part of his return trip to Makkah like he did nearly five decades earlier. During our meeting, one evening at his home in Syi'ib 'Ali in August 2011, Abu Seyf reminisced about his train ride in 1964, "The train journey of the past is not what it is like now. The train would move and make many stops because it ran out of wood. The crew members would then get down and chop the trees along the way to be used as firewood for the engine." As usual, Abu Seyf's charming personality came across clearly as he managed a little laughter in between sentences. Abu Seyf was not the first person to mention the *deforestation* activities of the railway crew. This appears to have been a rather common feature of train travel in Thailand until steam engines were finally retired in 1982 (Ramaer 1984).

Abu Seyf waited in Bangkok for Hoi Ying's arrival as per the instructions of the *tok syaikh*<sup>17</sup> of his choice. This took five days. There was a native of Narathiwat named Syaikh Haji Che Ka, who was at that time a reputable tok syaikh. Nevertheless, Abu Seyf opted to join the pilgrimage group of Tok Guru Syukur, who was his teacher at the pondok school where he was then studying and living. Tok Guru Syukur had prepared a separate accommodation for his group of hajj clients. The religious teacher/hajj organizer, however, invited his student to stay at his family home in the city. The latter obliged. According to Abu Seyf, the tok syaikh made proper arrangements for the pilgrims' food and lodging so that everyone felt that they were well served during the wait in Bangkok.

As far as Abu Seyf can remember, the Hoi Ying did not make any stop and sailed directly for the pilgrim port in Jiddah. He said, "We arrived at Jiddah after fifteen days. We passed by a place that had many lights. I knew then that we were passing Singapore. The other people aboard the ship confirmed this."

None of the pilgrim ships that plied the routes between Southeast Asia and Jiddah stopped in Thailand prior to the Second World War. So, Thai citizens who intended the hajj began their journey by traveling to either Singapore or Penang. Some continued to do this even after Bangkok began to be offered as the starting point for the sea travel to Jiddah. The choice of the port of embarkation depended on the instructions of the respective tok syaikhs. Judging from other ships that carried pilgrims from Malaya and Singapore during that era (Harun 1960), the pilgrim passengers from Thailand onboard the Hoi Ying must have numbered approximately 1,000 persons.

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17 Tok syaikh refers to an organizer of a pilgrimage group in the Patani Malay dialect.

Abu Seyf was a steerage passenger on the Hoi Ying. This means that for accommodation, he had a cubicle on the ship's deck where part of the cargo load is normally stored. Owing to seasonality of the hajj industry, the pilgrim ships were typically used in the transportation of cargo rather than human passengers during other times of the year. For example, the Anshun, the vessel on which Harun traveled to Jiddah in 1961, was fitted with fifty first-class cabin accommodations and another 116 for steerage passengers (Plowman 1992). An additional 1,000 steerage passengers could be accommodated on short sectors.

Shipping companies aiming to maximize profits during the hajj season usually opted to carry the maximum passenger load possible. The consequence of this practice was that the conditions of the accommodation on the ships were far from ideal for passengers in the overcrowded steerage accommodation on the deck. Harun was sickened by what he encountered during his initial attempt to visit the steerage passengers of the Anshun:

This morning I tried to visit the ship's deck, but immediately felt scared to descend [to the deck] as soon as I encountered the sickening stench. It was then that I realized the performance of the hajj as a deck class passenger is a big sacrifice because for two weeks one has to endure a way of life that is unsatisfactory. (1960:12)

He also provides details of the steerage class accommodation:

Becoming a passenger in the sections that are located in the ship's belly is a heavy undertaking. The advice regarding the importance of having patience that is often made to pilgrims is appropriate. I believe that this is the only correct expression to be said to the second and deck class passengers because whatever life's convenience they have while being on land is completely absent. For example, they have to sleep on a bench each measuring approximately two feet in breadth and the length equal to a person's height, and immediately next to the sleeping benches of others ... the single thing that can assist in enduring the hardship is "patience." A friend of mine says that the beds in the deck class are just like funeral caskets. (Harun 1960:19)

Unlike Munsyi 'Abdullah, none of my seafaring Fatani interlocutors mentioned a fear of their ships sinking during their journey. Even Harun Aminurrashid's account of his own sea travel, which is commendably detailed, is void of such fear. It appears then that advancements made in ship design and navigational knowledge and technology by the mid-twentieth century, such as the use of radars and radio transmitters, significantly reduced people's anxiety for long-distance maritime travel. For example, Harun (1960) describes the use of the echo sounder for the navigation of the Anshun. Recall Munsyi 'Abdullah's description of the nerve-racking atmosphere onboard when his ship was being maneuvered away from reefs and shallow water as it approached Jiddah. By the mid-twentieth century, the invention and refinement of echo sounding as a technique to measure the depth of the sea allowed for improvements in the accuracy of maritime navigational charts. So, ships sailing up the Red Sea no longer needed navigators to climb up their masts in order to spot potential danger of running aground.

The risks and discomfort of sea travel, however, could not be completely eliminated by improved ship designs as well the use of navigational aid. Even today, sinking and running aground are still the fate that some ships meet. Then, there is also the threat of being hijacked by pirates. Even so, the type of hardship that is often mentioned by Fatanis who experienced sea travel to Jiddah was the debilitating seasickness.

Abu Seyf recalls that most of the passengers suffered from seasickness as soon as the Hoi Ying entered the open sea. With its starting point of sailing being Bangkok, he must have been thinking of the Gulf of Siam in the South China Sea. This is not surprising when we consider the time of the year that his journey took place. Abu Seyf and his fellow passengers set sail for Jiddah in January 1964, which coincided with the middle of the Islamic month of Sya'aban. The months from

December to February are the peak of the monsoon in the South China Sea. With much personal experience of sailing in this part of the Indian Ocean from my childhood to my years of service in the Coast Guard, I feel comfortable in affirming the likelihood of Abu Seyf's recollection. In his own words, "As soon as we entered the open sea, everyone retired to their respective beds. The cooks did not have to cook anymore. No one had the appetite to eat. The winds were not strong, but the waves were huge."

It has been pointed out earlier that Harun (1960) found the smell of the steerage of the Anshun repulsive. Many who have experienced even an occasional ride on a passenger ferry would recognize that the enclosed parts of a ship often have a musty odor. Abu Seyf remembers seeing many fellow passengers of the deck class on the Hoi Ying vomiting throughout the journey. Overcrowding only made matters worse. One can only imagine the fetidness of the air on deck. The pilgrims had to experience two weeks of this!

## **CHANGING MOTIVES**

"My father killed someone. So, he moved to Makkah," said Asad when I met him in Kuala Lumpur. Asad was born and raised in Makkah. He left the holy city for Malaysia to pursue an undergraduate degree. After completing his education there, he took up a job in Kuala Lumpur and has been living there ever since. The point to be made here, however, is that Asad's disclosure about his father was a concordance with my venture to him that later cohorts of Fatani immigrants to Makkah, especially after the Second World War, were no longer predominantly made up of scholar-type persons.

Although connections between various communities of the world of Islam have long been in existence, the period from the latter part of the nineteenth century

saw a massive intensification of these connections. By the mid-twentieth century, the world of shipping had become extensively interconnected. This can be illustrated by identifying the origins and operators of ships that were plying the pilgrimage routes. The Anshun was built by Taikoo Dockyard in Hong Kong and operated by China Navigation Company Limited (Plowman 1992). It was later sold to the Pan-Islamic Steamship Company of Pakistan in 1971. It was renamed "Safina-E-Abid" and continued being used for transporting pilgrims, although not from the Malay-Indonesian ports but those in Pakistan. Another ship remembered by my Fatani interlocutors was the "Gavina." This ship was originally named "Maetsuycker" and was built by the Netherlands Dock Company in Amsterdam in 1937. Thus, ships that were built in one part of the world were plying routes in distant waters, thereby signifying and facilitating increased human mobility.

The increasing global interconnectedness led to a consequent upturn in human migration. The lack of data makes it difficult to identify with absolute certainty the periodical increase in the number of Malay-Indonesian, including Fatani, immigrants to Makkah. However, Amrith (2011) asserts that the rhythmic increases and decreases of migration and pilgrimage to Makkah more or less corresponded with each other. Thus, we rely on pilgrimage data for a sense of the historical changes of Fatani migration to Makkah. From the middle-late nineteenth century, the number of Malay-Indonesian pilgrims to Makkah increased from approximately 2,000 to 7,000 annually (Amrith 2011). The peak of pilgrim arrivals before the Second World War took place in 1927 with the number of persons from the Dutch East Indies and Malaya being 39,157 and 29,604 respectively (Amrith 2011; Bose 2006). The years of the Great Depression saw the number of pilgrims undertaking the hajj annually reduced. Following that the annual hajj would again increase in size, but it was not until after the 1950s and 1960s, after World War II, that it recovered to the levels of the 1920s.

During my sole meeting with Asad in January 2011, at his office in Kuala Lumpur, he spoke about some of the disreputable types of Fatani immigrants to Makkah following the Second World War. Initially, I assumed that his father had killed someone for political reasons. We may recall the role of the Fatanis in homeland politics that was discussed in the preceding chapter. I have also been told that Makkah had become a safe haven for those who were involved in Patanian separatist movements. He neither denied nor confirmed this. However, Asad swiftly redressed my misguided assumption. He claims that his father was not alone in migrating to Makkah after falling on the wrong side of the law. There were others who were, simply put, bad Muslims. The list includes substance abusers, gamblers, alcoholics, womanizers, among others. He told me candidly that these characters were sent off to Makkah by their family so that they might repent. Even so, not everyone did. Some of them continued in their wayward lifestyles.

Did the relationship between the Fatanis and their friends and family in the homeland change over time? It certainly did. During my first research visit to Makkah in the summer of 2009, many of the young Fatani men talked about the issue of monetary remittance with me. It appeared then that they felt that their kinsmen in the homeland had let them down at some point. This sentiment was especially noticeable in those who had never undertaken a return visit to Jawi. None of my interlocutors in Makkah offered answers to my question regarding the reasons that contributed to the change in the practice of monetary remittance between their community and its counterpart in Jawi. I sensed that those who could provide the answers were uncomfortable discussing the issue. Thus, I restrained myself from pressing further even though I felt quite certain about what the reasons were. It would not have been wise to alienate my interlocutors, especially at such an early stage of my research.



## “Repenters” and Workers

“Why did the people here stop sending money over to relatives and friends in Makkah?” I asked Pok Leh<sup>18</sup> (PM. Uncle Salleh) when I met him at his home in Pattani in June 2010. I had known Pok Leh for eight years at that time and knew that he had knowledge and wisdom that matched his advanced age. Ever adept at observing people, Pok Leh responded saying, “You tell me.” He knew that I had my own hunches about the answer. I, on the other hand, wanted to hear his opinion, so I simply kept quiet.

According to Pok Leh, the hajj and migration to Makkah used to be held in very high regard in the Malay society of Jawi. Over time, the social prestige accorded to returning hajjis decline when the performance of the hajj became less rare. “Furthermore, it is often said that the character flaws of the hajjis today have caused many people to lose respect for them. In the past, the people who performed the hajj were role models for society,” said Pok Leh. As for the Fatani immigrants to Makkah, Pok Leh told me that they no longer constituted a respected group. He elaborated:

In the past, people moved to Makkah to seek knowledge. However, those who went there in more recent times are different. They went in order to work. It is not too difficult to prove this. In the past, those who migrated to Makkah were studying at the pondok schools before they left. Those who left in later times were not. The villagers knew that their intentions were to earn money. So, the people think: Why should we continue sending money to Makkah?

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<sup>18</sup> “Pok” is a shortened form of the Malay word “bapak”, which means father. However, in the Patani Malay dialect, this term is also attached to the names of men who are older than the speaker as a practice of age deference in speech.

In August 2010, I met seventy-something year-old Babo Loh<sup>19</sup>, who talked at length about the time he spent in Makkah when we met at his balasoh. The building was constructed with donations collected by his students who felt that they needed a larger venue for study after the village's imam prohibited Babo Loh from conducting classes at the village mosque. The imam claims the latter was not fit to teach. Babo Loh's students, on the other hand, allege that the imam was worried that the former's increasing influence as a teacher would threaten his authority over religious affairs in the village.

Babo Loh showed me a book gifted to him by one of his teachers, Ali Chaiya, who was one of the two most prominent teachers to the Fatani community in recent decades. The other was Hussein Surat. As he flipped through the book to give me a brief introduction of its contents, I asked him to explain the motives for his migration to Makkah some four decades earlier. With his soft, but clear voice and in his usual calm manner, he said:

I was a sickly child and when I grew up, I was physically small and weak. I knew that I could not work at sea as everyone else did. Everyone knew that too. So, I figured that studying was the wisest thing to do. I studied at the pondok school for a long time. Then, I desired to perform the hajj. My family pulled our financial resources together to pay for my passage. I remember the villagers helping out with donations too. When the day of my departure came, the whole village came to bid me farewell.

I did not go to Makkah alone. There were eleven others in the group. Every one of us said that if we got to Makkah, we were going to stay behind and study the religion as many of the 'ulama had done before us. Then, two persons from the group said that they could not do it. They were homesick. So, they decided that they would leave for home once the hajj season was over. Then, the remaining ten of us agreed that we would have to spur one another and remind ourselves of the reason why we went to Makkah. Even so, the temptations were too great. One by one, the others began to focus on work. In the beginning,

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19 "Babo", which is derived from the Arabic "baba", is an honorific term often used in referring to religious teachers in Jawi.

they did just a bit of work. Little by little, work occupied more of their time. Within months, I was the only one left who was studying. I never worked throughout the twelve years I lived in Makkah.

Babo Loh's account clearly corroborated Pok Leh's above-mentioned views of Fatani migrants to Makkah. In fact, I talked to very many others who echoed this viewpoint. One return-migrant known as Koli Mae<sup>20</sup> (PM. Uncle Sulaiman) spoke candidly about the issue:

I was very hard working. Many of the other men used to spend time and money on doing wasteful things like smoking the shisha and playing carom for hours at the cafes. I didn't do any of those. *Alhamdulillah* [Ar. Praise to God.] Oh, I made a lot of money. I could sew thirty *kodi*<sup>21</sup> of kufis [Ar. skullcaps] in a week. I sold it at the market every Thursday and Friday. Oh, they came from far and near ... Lebanon, Sudan, Egypt, everywhere.

There was also another category of persons whose migration contributed to the reduction of the prestige that the Fatanis enjoyed in the eyes of the society in Jawi. These are persons who were sent to Makkah by family members who hoped that they would repent and alter their wayward lifestyles as Asad had mentioned during my meeting with him in Kuala Lumpur earlier. Pok Leh also had something to say about this trend:

Aside from those who went to Makkah for work, there were also others were sent there by their families to repent. Of course, they usually came from slightly well-to-do families. There were those who liked to drink alcohol, those who womanized, those who gamble, [and] those who were addicted to drugs. Some of them repented, but some did not. When they came back here for visits, the villagers knew that they were still the same. Just a few years ago one of them returned to the village drunk one night. I don't want to say much about this, but look at their children. They are not very religious even after being raised there.

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20 The term *koli* comes from the Arabic *khaali*, which means "my maternal uncle." It is common for returning migrants from Makkah to adopt this word as a suffix to their names to indicate that they had once lived in Makkah. This practice may have accorded the signified person some prestige in the past. This is less likely the case today.

21 A unit of measurement used in the Patani Malay dialect. One *kodi* is equivalent to twenty pieces.

And, they cannot even be advised. When you offer some advice, they look at you and say, "You don't know anything."

One person who repented was Sofia's father. I first met them in Bangkok, where Sofia currently lives and works. She was born and raised in Makkah, but returned to Jawi when her father decided to relocate the whole family there after she had completed high school education. She was initially angry and disappointed with her father's decision, but has since appreciated the preparations he made before the family's return migration. During our first meeting, she took me to visit her father who was receiving treatment after suffering a stroke. No doubt saddened by her father's health condition, Sofia said:

My father did certain things when he was younger. He was very loyal to his friends, and that got him into trouble with some people. Nevertheless, he's my hero. [Momentary pause] I was so surprised to see that he had built a house in preparation for our return.

Sofia was clearly reluctant to elaborate on her father's activities prior to his migration to Makkah. Although I made no conscious effort to look for more information about her father's past, I learned about it through mutual friends that her family and I shared. I was told that her father had once been a relatively feared person in the district where he lived. He was somewhat of a gangster. When I visited a tok guru of a pondok school which is located nearby Sofia's family home in Pattani, he said, "There were many not-so-good persons who went to live in Makkah. Some of them did not change. In this village, there was your friend's father, Bae Soh<sup>22</sup>. Fortunately, he changed. He truly changed."

According to Sofia, his father met and married her mother not long after he arrived in Makkah. From that moment onwards, he was focused on working hard to

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<sup>22</sup> "Bae" comes for the Malay word "abang", which means elder brother. In Patani Malay speech, "bae" is placed in front of a person's name when referring to a boy or man who is older than the speaker.

support and raise his family. I met her father again when I visited him at home in Pattani several months later. We shared a conversation about Makkah. He asked me lots of questions about my visit to the holy city in 2009. He spoke about how much he missed living there. For me, the most poignant moment came when he sobbed uncontrollably upon hearing the sound of the *adhaan* (Ar. prayer call) from the mosque nearby. I was moved as he patted his chest and struggled to mouth the following words, "I cry every time I hear the adhaan. I think of my life. I think of all the years that I lived in Makkah. I miss going to the Masjid al-Haraam. Now, I cannot even take care of myself."

## MODERNIZATION

"This land had nothing in the past. Oh, life was difficult. Then, there was oil," said Abu Seyf one evening when I asked him to describe the way of life that he encountered upon arriving in Makkah. Although he described life in the past as difficult, he was evidently fond of it. He laughed every time he spoke of the troubles one had to go through just to obtain the simple yet necessary things in life such as potable water. "In the past we had to go to the *zamzam* well ourselves or pay a Yemeni man to bring the water in a *girbah* [Ar. water skin] up the hill to our homes. Now, water comes out with just a twist of the tap," said Abu Seyf.

Many of the Fatani 'ulama who left their homeland for Makkah to receive training in the various Islamic sciences returned after several years or decades of sojourn. For generations, these Fatani educational sojourners benefited their homeland society as well as other communities in the Malay world. They founded and taught at many Islamic schools throughout the regions, especially in the Malay Peninsula. Two of the most prominent of these Fatani 'ulama, however, did not migrate back to Jawi. Nevertheless, they contributed greatly to the intellectual environment in the Malay-Indonesian world through their prolific careers as authors

and translators of important Arabic religious texts as well as teachers to many students from the Malay-Indonesian world.

The increase in Fatani immigrants to Makkah, especially after the Second World War, coincided with the decline and eventual demise of the authorial contributions of Makkah's Fatani community. It would be difficult, however, to deny that religious-related motivations were still important in these immigrants' decision to relocate to the holy city even if embarking on a career as a religious scholar was not on their minds. One Fatani migrant who relocated back to Pattani province after living in Makkah for more than a decade had the following to say when I asked for the motivations for his initial migration to Makkah:

I just felt like moving there. So, I thought to myself, "If God has already moved my heart towards moving to the holy city, why am I still in doubt?" After that, I packed my things, pooled some money and left for Makkah.

It has been shown that inter-connected global trends such as improvements in long-distance transportation and growth in international migration factored in the increase as well as a diversification of the motives of Fatani migration to Makkah. Our discussion, however, would suffer greatly should we not consider the socio-economic changes that Makkah underwent and their impacts on Fatani immigration trends. For past few decades, young Malays from Jawi have been pursuing religious knowledge at other centers of Islamic learning, especially the universities located in Pakistan, Cairo, Khartoum, Amman, Damascus, al-Madinah, and Riyadh. Those who migrated to Makkah were drawn by the promise of a better life even if they were initially motivated to follow in the footsteps of their knowledge-seeking predecessors. Life in Makkah was changing rapidly, and many of the new immigrants were happy to jump on the bandwagon. The economic opportunities in the holy city

took care of their worldly needs while the city's religious life gave added impetus for them to accumulate merit for the hereafter.

### **Ottomans, Syarifs, Al-Sa'ud**

The city that greets pilgrims and immigrant to Makkah today is radically different from the one that welcomed the Fatani pioneers in the eighteenth century. When Syaikh Da'ud al-Fatani arrived in Makkah in the late eighteenth century, he would have found himself in a small town that came to life for several months each year during the hajj season. According to John Lewis Burckhardt, who visited Makkah in 1814:

The town itself covers a space of about fifteen hundred paces in length, from the quarter called El Shebeyka to the extremity of the Mala; but the whole extent of ground comprehended under the denomination of Mekka, from the suburb called Djerouel (where is the entrance from Djidda) to the suburb called Moabede (on the Tayf road), amounts to three thousand five hundred paces. (1829:103)

Nothing spectacular could be said about its infrastructure and its facilitation of the daily needs of the Makkawis in the early eighteenth century. Although Burckhardt was fond of the holy city, describing it as a "handsome town" (1829:103), he was not particularly impressed with its public space:

The only public place in the body of the town is the ample square of the great mosque; no trees or gardens cheer the eye; and the scene is enlivened only during the Hadj by the great number of well-stored shops which are found in every quarter. Except for four or five large houses belonging to the Sherif, two medreses or colleges (now converted into corn magazines), and the mosque, with some buildings and schools attached to it, Mekka cannot boast of any public edifices, and in this respect is, perhaps, more deficient than any other eastern city of the same size. Neither khans, for the accommodation of travelers, or for the deposit of merchandize, nor palaces of grandees, nor mosques, which adorn every quarter of other towns in the East, are here to be seen; and we may perhaps attribute this want of splendid buildings to the veneration which its inhabitants entertain for their temple; this prevents them from constructing any edifice which might possibly pretend to rival it. (Burckhardt 1829:104)

From Burckhardt, we also learn that the difficulty of obtaining water mentioned by Abu Seyf was, in fact, a longstanding problem that Makkawis face in daily life:

With respect to water, the most important of all supplies, and that which always forms the first object of inquiry among Asiatics, Mekka is not much better provided than Djidda; there are but few cisterns for collecting rain, and the well-water is so brackish that it is used only for culinary purposes, except during the time of the pilgrimage, when the lowest class of hadjys drink it. The famous well of Zemzem, in the great mosque, is indeed sufficiently copious to supply the whole town; but, however holy, its water is heavy to the taste and impedes digestion; the poorer classes besides have not permission to fill their water-skins with it at pleasure. The best water in Mekka is brought by a conduit from the vicinity of Arafat, six or seven hours distant. The present government, instead of constructing similar works, neglects even the repairs and requisite cleansing of this aqueduct. It is wholly built of stone; and all those parts of it which appear above ground, are covered with a thick layer of stone and cement. I heard that it had not been cleaned during the last fifty years; the consequence of this negligence is, that the most of the water is lost in its passage to the city through apertures, or slowly forces its way through the obstructing sediment, though it flows in a full stream into the head of the aqueduct at Arafat. The supply which it affords in ordinary times is barely sufficient for the use of the inhabitants, and during the pilgrimage sweet water becomes an absolute scarcity; a small skin of water (two of which skins a person may carry) being then often sold for one shilling – a very high price among Arabs. (Burckhardt 1829:193-5)

One thing that has remained characteristic of Makkah's society from eras long gone to the present is the diversity of its members. The city has proven its ability to attract persons from varied walks of life and places to come and settle down. As the most prominent of cities in the history of Islam, Makkah has long received immigrants from various Muslim populations around the world (Burckhardt 1829; Hurgronje 2007 [1931]). By the early nineteenth-century, Burckhardt (1829) observed that almost all of Makkah's residents are foreigners of different sorts. Some were themselves immigrants who had migrated there at some point in their lives, while others were descendants of immigrants and many of whom were the offspring of intermarriage between immigrants and members of the host society.



In every hadj some of the pilgrims remain behind: the Mohammedan, whenever resident for any time in a town, takes a wife, and is thus often induced to settle permanently on the spot. Hence most of the Mekkawys are descendants of foreigners from distant parts of the globe, who have adopted Arabian manners, and, by intermarrying, have produced a race which can no longer be distinguished from the indigenous Arabians. (Burckhardt 1829:180-1)

Another European observer several decades later in 1884-5 remarked that most foreigners were more likely to restrict their social activities within their own ethnic communities during the initial years of their immigration to Makkah (Hurgronje 2007 [1931]). He maintained that this was also true for those who arrived from the Malay-Indonesian world whom he said had to undergo training in the Arabic language before they could interact more extensively with speakers of other tongues or even study under Islamic teachers and scholars who taught in Arabic. The situation changes as they become more settled in their adopted home.

As Mekka is partly a town of foreigners, the whole many-tongued mass of humanity which we have now superficially passed in review feels itself there quite at home, but always as foreigners. Many foreigners, however, no longer belong to a foreign colony. Their inclination, business relations, or other causes have brought them into such close connexion with the Mekkan community properly so-called that they have gradually taken their place in it. Between these and the "colonists" there is an endless series of gradations, but no sharp dividing line. Marriages are the chief bonds of union; he who has married a woman reared in Mekka, becomes himself more or less a Mekkan, and in the second or third generation the origin of the new family is as good as forgotten. So this central body of citizens is ever assimilating to itself new elements which are not drawn together one with another by any affinity. When we take into account moreover the consequences of polygamy and concubinage we can suppose that each quarter of the town contains in itself almost every imaginable type of the human race, and that often in one family every possible hue of human skin is represented. (Hurgronje 2007 [1931] 8-9)

### *The Arab Revolt (1916-8)*

Change is a constant in the histories of human societies. The rate at which change occurs is not. Rate of change changes, as it were. An intensification of the rate of change may be called an *event* owing to its momentous impact on people's lives. The Arab Revolt which saw the shift of political control in the Hijaz from the

Ottomans to the Arabs is one such event in the process of massive transformation that social life in the city experienced in the twentieth century.

The Arab Revolt was led by Hussein Ibn 'Ali, who was then the Grand Syarif of Makkah. In the beginning, he was intransigent in his alignment with Makkah's Ottoman political overlords against the Allied Powers in World War I. He finally changed his mind in 1916 at the instigation of France and Britain, especially because his relationship with the Ottomans was deteriorating. He had also learnt that the latter was plotting to replace him with 'Ali Haidar, a rival claimant to the reigns over Makkah (Paris 2003; Peters 1994). The Ottoman Empire, which had come under the control of the Young Turks, was moving towards a centralized state system. Hussein had invested much in consolidating his power since his ascending to the title of Grand Syarif in Makkah and had no intention of submitting to the political maneuverings of the Young Turks. On June 10, 1916, Hussein launched his successful revolt to drive his overlords out of the Hijaz, including Makkah.

In an autobiographical novel titled *My Days in Mecca*, Ahmad Suba'i (2009) depicts the Arab Revolt as a period of reinvigoration. He wrote admiringly about Hussein Ibn 'Ali, who became King of the Hijaz following his successful uprising, as a leader who was personally committed to steering his polity in the path of modernistic progress.

One of the targets of King Hussein's reforms was education. New schools were established to educate Makkah's youth in a broader range of subjects, including mathematics, science, history, and literature among others. The King, himself, made the effort to assess the implementation of these reforms. Suba'i, who taught at one of these schools, told of surprise visits by the king. One of those incidents took

place one morning after the king acted on reports that municipality workers were not reporting to work at the mandated time.

After inspecting the municipality, he climbed onto the rooftop and saw that it was next door to the school. Spotting a ladder, he made it over to the school's rooftop. Then he walked down the stairs from the upper floor, hoping to investigate how things were going on there. He had not taken into consideration that the school's official starting time was even later than the municipality's. So by the time he had left, the school was echoing with rumors, which made civil servants in both buildings tremble with fear. Suddenly, they were all eager to get to work as early as possible. (Suba'i 2009:94)

Makkah's march to modernization, however, was not straightforward. In spite of his commitment to educational reform, King Hussein did not see the need for higher education. So, no university was founded during his reign. Such was the situation in many other aspects of life (Suba'i 2009).

## **Boom!**

In October 1924, political rule over Makkah changed hands once again with 'Abd al-'Aziz Ibn Sa'ud's occupation of the city. Al-Madinah and Jiddah capitulated in December 1925, and Ibn Sa'ud assumed the title of King of the Hijaz in January 1926. The task of building political supremacy in Arabia was not yet completed, and Ibn Sa'ud quickly moved to consolidate his power base. On September 22, 1932, King 'Abd al-Aziz Ibn Sa'ud declared the dominions under his rule as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and political rule in the kingdom has remained in the reigns of the al-Sa'ud family to the present.

'Abd al-'Aziz had his work cut out for him despite the massive gains he made in politics. The infant Saudi nation was still one extensive desert with no existing income-generating industry except for the timeless Islamic pilgrimage industry. To aggravate matters, the global economic depression resulted in a decline in pilgrim

arrivals. The situation, however, suddenly changed with the discovery of oil reserves in 1938 that would feed the world's insatiable needs for this natural resource.

From a financial perspective, the venture of extracting oil is hardly realizable for a young nation. Even the exploration of the existence of oil deposits required huge investment that was well beyond the financial capabilities of Saudi Arabia in the 1930s (Simmons 2005). Foreign economic actors needed to be co-opted. On May 29, 1933, the first oil concession was awarded to Standard Oil of California (SOCAL). SOCAL invited three other corporations, namely Texaco, Standard Oil Company of New Jersey (later renamed Exxon) and Socony-Vacuum (later renamed Mobil Oil Company) to a joint venture when the possibility of discovering giant oil fields became apparent. The new company was named the Arabian America Oil Company (Aramco). Thus began Saudi Arabia's path to riches as a major actor in the global economy as an oil producer of extreme importance.

By the 1970s, Saudi Arabia had emerged as the world's largest oil producing country (Simmons 2005). From 1965-70, Aramco successfully increased the quantity of oil produced from less than 2 million barrels to over 3 million barrels a day. It was even more impressive when that figure increased to 8 million barrels a day just four years later. This earned Saudi Arabia both political currency in geopolitics as well as an economic windfall. In late October 1973, King Faisal, then ruler of Saudi Arabia, implemented an oil embargo in agreement with other producers in the Middle East as a reaction to the United States' alignment with Israel against Palestine. Saudi Arabia's own announcement of a 10 percent reduction in its oil production contributed to a global panic that caused the price of oil to soar several fold (Simmons 2005). Consequently, the oil crisis of the 1970s was, in fact, an oil boom for Saudi Arabia.

The economic gains from exporting oil became a springboard for the kingdom's development. The urban renewal of Makkah has been an important component of Saudi Arabia's developmental march. This is not surprising given the fact that the holy city is the best candidate for projecting Saudi Arabia's achievements to the rest of the world through its position as one of the world's most prominent religious centers. With this in mind, the urban reconstruction of Makkah has been carried out with two broad goals: the extension of services and facilities to the holy city's inhabitants, and an uplifting of the quality and convenience of facilities and services to the millions of pilgrims that arrive annually (Ministry of Information 1993).

Development efforts began with the expansion and decoration of the al-Masjid al-Haraam in line with the goals outlined above. In fact, this process started even before the 1970s oil boom with the King 'Abd al-'Aziz Project in November 1955. The mosque's expansion effort has been continuous ever since. This is followed with a city-wide uplifting of public facilities, including the construction of streets, tunnels, and flyovers, and infrastructure for the provision of utilities that make the daily life of the Makkawis comfortable and convenient. According to my Fatani friends, Makkah was like a "rural" district several decades ago, and now it is a city.

## **THE HAARAH**

The Arabic word *haarah* (pl. *haaraat*), which means quarter, part, or section of a town, was often on people's lips during our conversations. Throughout Hurgronje's (2007 [1931]) book on late nineteenth century social life in Makkah, the *haarah* appears to be central in the organization of life in the city. Many activities, including work-related as well as leisure ones, were organized among members of the same *haarah*. One example of such an undertaking is the annual visit that the Makkawis made to the Prophet's tomb in al-Madinah:

For these Rèjèb caravans the Mekkans divide themselves into several groups according to their town quarters; each group has a leader called Sheikh of the Rakk. Preparations are begun long before. Those who possess no dromedaries hire them, or content themselves with a swift ass. Both riders and beasts go through days of practice for the fatiguing ride, for each rakk strives to get past the others on the journey to and from Medina, and laggards come in for general abuse from their hardy travelling companions. (Hurgronje 2007 [1931]:69)

Fights may also break out between persons who hail from different quarters from time to time. Both communities would then be dragged into the quarrel:

It is strange how in their mutual relations the different quarters of the town have followed the usages of Central Arabia. Here as there feuds lasting years arise from trifling sources; a quarrel between children of two quarters, or the fact that some scape-grace has driven the dogs of one quarter into another, will start endless enmity. No man of one of the two quarters can then venture from his own quarter into the other without the danger of stones being thrown at him from houses or even, in the night time, of him being attacked with knives. (Hurgronje 2007 [1931]:9-12)

The massive increase in the size of the Fatani community after World War II proved conducive to the emergence of pockets of predominantly-Fatani communities around the holy city. As their numbers grew, the Fatanis constructed several haaraat of their own. When individual families purchased land and built their homes close to one another, they carved out portions of the space of the city and converted them into physical communities to claim as their own. Social practices in daily life as well as those associated with the celebration of festive events gave rise to a strong sense of belonging among members of these communities, which became central to the social identification practices of the various members of the Fatani community since the middle of the twentieth-century.

## **Syi'ib 'Ali: A Jawi Village at the Center of the Islamic World**

Syi'ib 'Ali was big. Far bigger than what it is today. You know the *Maulid al-Nabi* [Ar. the place of the Prophet's birth]? That used to be part of the Syi'ib. The Mount of Abu Gubays was one end of the Syi'ib and Ghazza was the other. Then, from the Haraam the Syi'ib extended all the way up the hill where the present end of the Syi'ib 'Ali is. Syi'ib 'Ali is the mother of all Jawi communities in Makkah.

— Ridhwan's elder brother, 'Abd al-Ghaffar

In the past, when a Patanian arrived in Makkah, his first goal was to perform the hajj. Most likely, he was a member of a pilgrimage group under the guidance of a syaikh. From this time until the end of the hajj season, his lodging was provided by the syaikh. During several months of waiting for the days of the hajj to come, the Patanian would have to arrange for a place to live in if he intended to remain in Makkah when the season was over. A friend, relative, or a member of the same community of origin in the homeland was usually useful in this matter.

Syi'ib 'Ali was the biggest Fatani haarah in all of Makkah in the post-Second World War period until its destruction to make way for urban development. Many of the Fatani families who live in other communities today are able to trace their connections to Syi'ib 'Ali indicating that it was the preferred choice to reside in for the Fatani immigrants. New immigrants who were unsuccessful in finding a home there in the beginning would rent a home at several other communities in the holy city. Many of them bought land and built their homes in Syi'ib 'Ali when they had accumulated sufficient savings. This was the geographical residence practice of the Fatanis that created several Fatani haaraat around Makkah.

One evening, Umm 'Abd al-Ghaffar (literally, mother of 'Abd al-Ghaffar in Arabic) recounted her experience of migrating to Makkah at the four-storied family home in the al-Khansa district. Umm 'Abd al-Ghaffar came to Makkah in order to

escape from a life situation that she resented in Jawi. As a child, Umm 'Abd al-Ghaffar was not allowed to play with other children by her mother who needed an extra hand tapping rubber trees in the plantation and with chores at home. She recalls the times when she had to slog while her brothers who were younger played all day long. This, however, was not the main reason for her desire to migrate. This was her story:

I asked to be allowed to come to Makkah. I was restless with life in Jawi. Restless because ... Hmm...there is no benefit in telling this story. ['Abd al-Ghaffar insisted that she continue.] So, when I was living in Jawi, I was married off at the age of eleven, but my marriages did not last. I was married thrice. I did not want to remain married to any of the three men. After each divorce, I was forced to marry again. My third husband told my father not to worry about things at home. While my father was away he would take care of everything in the household. Of course, my father liked him immediately upon hearing that. However, I still did not want to remain married to him. So, I thought about what I should do. I asked that my uncle, my mother's brother, tell my father that I wanted to follow him to Makkah. Oh! He said, "How can you go with him? You are somebody's wife." I was adamant. In the end, he spoke to my father. Oh! My father was angry. He told me that if I wanted to go then I would have to ask my husband for a divorce. He did not want to get involved. The person who arranged for my third marriage was my father's brother. So, I went to see him. I didn't know how to talk to him about it. Several hours passed before I talked to him about it.

Umm 'Abd al-Ghaffar managed to get divorced from her third husband despite the reluctance of everyone else involved. When the period of the hajj had passed that year, a young man in Makkah approached her father to ask for her hand in marriage. Once married, she could continue living there and has never returned to Jawi until the present day.

Umm 'Abd al-Ghaffar and her husband moved from one home to another in the first few years of their marriage. Unable to afford the rental of a whole house, they shared their living space with other couples. In the meantime, they learned to sew from other Fatani immigrants and worked hard at sewing the thawb like others. The Fatanis were well-known in this trade. Like other Fatani immigrants, they were



finally able to purchase a piece of land on the hill at Syi'ib 'Ali and build a home after saving a portion of their income for several years.

When Abu Seyf left his hometown in Narathiwat province, he never intended to migrate to Makkah. Although still studying in a pondok school, he was married and already a father to an infant son. I met many Fatanis who claimed that their initial purpose for traveling to there was solely to perform the hajj. It was after spending a few months in the holy city that they began to have a change of heart. Abu Seyf's story, however, is a little peculiar. He came to Makkah with a cousin who secretly intended to migrate there. The latter quickly hid Abu Seyf's passport upon their arrival in Jiddah. When his cousin refused Abu Seyf's request for the return of his passport, he agreed to stay for another year.

One year led to another. Then, my wife suddenly arrived after four years. She came alone. My son was left behind in Jawi. Then, we faced problems getting him here. He finally came when he was about eight years old. His grandfather brought him. Once my wife and son were already here there were no more thoughts of going back. My focus, then, was to think of how to work and earn a living for my family. Khalid had become the king by that time. He introduced the system of iqamah. Again, we faced problems because I did not have a passport. Somehow the tailor whom my wife and I sewed the thawb for managed to arrange for us to get the iqamah.

Abu Seyf and his young family moved from one rental home to another for several years. Like Umm 'Abd al-Ghaffar and family, they moved to the hills of Syi'ib 'Ali when they finished building a house with earnings from tailoring. Abu Seyf described the process of home-building:

When I built this house the steps and concrete footpath that you walk along now did not exist. We had to climb up and down to bring the wooden planks for the house. Actually, there were some very old houses up here, homes of people from a long time ago. We had to tear them down. Those homes were not made of bricks or cement. The walls were simply made up of stacked rocks.

I was about forty years old when we moved here. Before that we moved from one rental home to another. We would stay in a house for one

year, and then the landlord would ask us to leave. So, we had to move somewhere else. It was after we moved here that there was some stability in our lives.

I bought this piece of land with two other families. It cost us 38,000 riyals. Actually, I wanted to buy land at Ajyad. It would have cost only 500 riyals, but the land over there was on the hill side. I didn't have the money to pay someone to hack it flat for the house's foundation. I was not strong enough to do it myself. Oh! The Africans, they are so strong. *Gadoong, gadoong!* They hacked the hill with a big hammer. There were no machines then unlike the present day. [Abu Seyf laughs] Once the foundation was flat, you can build the house. Some did this on their own, while others employed builders to do it.

To transport the materials up, like wood and others, we used donkeys. There were a lot of donkeys in those days. They belonged to the Yemenis. The fee to transport things up was not expensive. The donkey could transport four bags of cement each trip. This cost only fifteen riyals.

Abu Seyf concedes that by the time of his migration to Makkah, most of the Fatani immigrants were not persons of the scholar-type whose careers contributed greatly to Patani's fame as a center of Islamic knowledge in the Malay-Indonesian world of the nineteenth-century. He told me that many of them were more concerned with doing work as tailors. Relating to me the daily life of the adult members of the Fatani community several decades ago, Abu Seyf said:

In the past, we worked from early morning until very late into the night. We would wake up in time to prepare to join the congregational prayers at sunrise at the mosque. Even though, many of our people were not motivated like the scholars from the early times, some of us still studied. Studying then was not like what it is now. There were many teachers at the Haraam. You could just choose whom to study with. This was the situation until the Saudis clamped down on the teachers following the attack on the mosque by Juhayman<sup>23</sup>. Those of us who were already studying at pondok schools in Jawi still felt the desire to join the lectures. They began after the completion of each congregational prayer in the mosque. When the lectures were over, most of us would head back home to begin sewing. There were also

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23 On November 20, 1979, a group of 200-300 insurgents took control of the al-Masjid al-Haraam. Their leader was Juhayman al-Otaibi. A descendant of the religiously zealous ikhwan (Ar. brotherhood), Juhayman led his followers in an armed uprising as a challenge to the al-Sa'ud, whom they felt had failed in upholding the doctrines of the Wahaabiyah.

those were less hardworking. They would head for the *gahwah*<sup>24</sup>, sit around with friends, and smoke the shisha. I would join them once in a while just to catch up, but I could not smoke the shisha. It gave me a bad headache. For the rest of the day, we did not see sunlight. We stopped our work only for meals and prayers. In the evening, we went down the hill to go to the mosque again. Classes would be conducted after prayers just like in the morning. We headed home again after that and continued working into the night.

The women had their own social activities when they needed respite from the monotony of sewing. They would visit friends to trade information and news about themselves and fellow residents of Syi'ib 'Ali. Such social exchanges made communities such as Syi'ib 'Ali attractive for domicile to the Fatanis. Ridhwan asserts that this was also the reason for the lack of fluency in Arabic among the older members of the community despite decades of residence in Makkah. Umm 'Abd al-Ghaffar reminisces about life in Syi'ib 'Ali:

In those days, it was better here compared to Jawi. People who did not know one another, people who came from different villages in Jawi, became just like siblings here. We shared our homes. You can live here, and you can live there. There were always a few couples in each home. When the weather was hot, there were no fans in the past, and when we felt bored, we all went up to the roof of the house to sit around and talk.

While we lived in a home at the Mawlid al-Nabi, 'Abd al-Ghaffar's father's friends asked us to join them in the purchase of a piece of land on the hill. He was not keen, but I was. He tried to dissuade me, but I persisted. So, we bought a piece of land measuring 20 meters in length and 10 meters in width. We divided it equally among four families. Each family had a piece of land measuring 5 meters by 10 meters. Oh! Life was difficult. I just wanted to let you know how difficult it was before we were able to live comfortably like this.

In the hot season, we all slept on the roof. We did not have carpets. We used branches of date palm leaves and spread them on the floor. Oh, it was so hot. We would place some water in a tray and pour the water bit by bit onto the blades of a fan. That helped cool us down a little.

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24 Gahwah may refer to brewed coffee, coffeehouse, or a type of drink prepared by brewing lightly roasted coffee beans with cardamom. It refers to a coffeehouse in the current sentence.

Syi'ib 'Ali was just like a village in Jawi. Everyone knew one another. We did not even have to lock our doors. Everyone looked out for one another. We would visit the others, and they would visit us at any time. [At this point, 'Abd al-Ghaffar suggested that if I had lived in Syi'ib 'Ali even for one day at that time, I would have fallen in love with the community.] Oh, we were so happy, but not anymore now.

It the past, there were respected elders in the community. The most respected of them were Pok Cu Loh and Tok Ayoh Noh. These were people of good character. We could depend on them for guidance, especially for our kids. When they were naughty, the elders would scold them or pinch their ears. We did not feel angry at them. We told them to pinch our children more often so that they would learn their lesson. We depended on other villagers to help raise our children. Of course, there were the ones whom we could trust. They treated my children as if they were their own. Their children were like our own too.

At our own home, we could not lock the doors at any time, be it the daytime or nighttime. It was like this. The people who visit did not want to leave. There were people who wanted to talk, those who wanted to drink tea, and there were also those who just needed to visit the restroom. [Both 'Abd al-Ghaffar and his mother broke into a laughter.] For example, when a husband quarrels with his wife, he comes and confides in me. Sometimes, their wives came instead. I am not wise, but they just needed to talk it out.

Sometimes people came because they wanted to eat something. When they wanted to eat *lakso*, I cooked it for them. I would cook anything they wanted if I had the ingredients. They would ask, "What are you cooking?" I would then answer, "Hmm. I don't know what I'll cook." Then, they said, "Hmm. If you cook *nasi krabu* I want to come over." So, I would cook what they wanted, and they would come. We were all like siblings. Oh, I really loved the life in Syi'ib 'Ali; everything about it.

The stories related by Umm 'Abd al-Ghaffar and Abu Seyf illustrate that physical and social constructions of place occur simultaneously. When the Fatanis built their homes close to one another, they inscribed the spaces that they carved out from the holy city with meanings. They created physical communities of Fatanis, but also produced communities whose social practices set them apart from other non-Fatani communities around Makkah. These communities then became places of social belonging for the Fatanis. The locations of these communities within the holy city were also consequential for these communities developed social practices that also differentiated them from communities in their native homeland. Umm 'Abd al-

Ghaffar's example of the sibling-like relationships that were established with neighbors who came from other communities in Jawi is demonstrative of this. Over time, the Fatanis in Makkah came to identify with cultural norms and ethos that are different from their brethren in Jawi. The cultural distance between the Fatanis and the homeland society is also compounded by social changes in both the home and host societies. More of this issue will be discussed in chapter 5.

In the past few decades, urban development has profoundly impacted Makkah's society. One of its major consequences of the construction projects for the city is the relocation of families and communities that were situated closely around the al-Masjid al-Haram. The possibility of living close to Islam's holiest shrine has always been one of the primary attractions for immigrants who resettled in Makkah from their respective homelands. Therefore, most of the homes that were located immediately adjacent to the al-Masjid al-Haram were occupied by immigrant families and communities. Over time, these communities had to make way for the expansion of the mosque as well as the construction of the transportation infrastructure such as roads, a public transportation terminus, and hotels for pilgrim accommodation.

'Abd al-Ghaffar asserts that the *haarah* continued to be an important social unit in the structuring of life as well as the most prominent source of social identification well into the 1990s in Syi'ib 'Ali. According to various persons I met, the *kenduri* (SM. feast) demonstrates this clearly. 'Abd al-Ghaffar recalls the atmosphere of the feast:

One of the most enjoyable aspects of living in the Syi'ib was the *kenduri*. There was a *kenduri* for everything. There were big ones such

as weddings and the *Mawlid al-Nabi* celebration<sup>25</sup>. Then, there were all sorts of smaller ones like *doa slamat* and to read the yaseen. What else? We had a lot of kenduris. It will be at this person's home one day and then another the next day. On some weeks, there would be a kenduri every day. Weddings were the best. As children, we enjoyed the wedding very much. The adults would tie the cows near the kitchen, which they set up for the wedding. The children would play with them and fed them. Everyone had a job to do in organizing the wedding.

The wedding is still an important event in the social life of the Fatanis. I attended several of them during fieldwork. The contemporary wedding is a much bigger affair than those in the past. It has become common for weddings to be hosted at one of the big halls located within the city. These halls, some of which are larger and more tasteful than others, cater to a whole spectrum of customers. Nonetheless, all are quite impressive. Aside from being far more expensive than before, weddings no longer involve the community as much as they used to. Most of the work done in putting together the function is left to the wedding planner.

At the wedding, the groom is accompanied by several members of his family who stand in a straight line and greet guests at the entrance to the venue. The guests, many of whom include current neighbors as well as former fellow members of the haarah, reciprocate the receiving party's greetings with their best wishes and supplicate to God for blessings to be bestowed on the couple's union. This gracious exchange between the hosts and their guest is completed when the latter reaches the end of the line. The guest then looks around for familiar faces and proceeds towards someone or a group that he wishes to join. Once seated, he is offered a cup of tea or *gahwah*<sup>26</sup>. Everyone sits around chatting with one another until food is ready to be served, which may be several hours later. Dinner is usually served on an

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25 The *Mawlid al-Nabi* refers to annual celebration of the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad.

26 Here, "gahwah" refers to the brew of lightly roasted coffee beans with cardamom.

extra-large plate and shared by everyone at the dinner table. After dinner, guests may remain behind for more drinks and conversation, but could also leave if they have other matters to attend to. Most of them usually stay for a while.

The contemporary wedding is symptomatic of changes in the social structure of the Fatani community. Although bonds continue to exist between friends and families that used to live in the same *haarah*, interdependence, cooperation, and intimacy within the group is a faint shadow of what it was in the past. Comparing the situation between the present and the past, 'Abd al-Ghaffar said:

There are no problems in our relationships, but we are just not as close as we were in the past. Now, we have to make an appointment ahead of time so that the people will know when and where to go to for weddings. In the past, word of the wedding will spread so quickly from one person to another. Of course, there was still some planning that had to be done ahead of the event. However, everyone will just show up and assist with the work of putting together the wedding celebrations. Nevertheless, that's just the way it is now. Everyone is busy working, and we do not live in the same *haarah* anymore. When one is far from sight, one is also far from the heart.

When I began my research in Makkah in 2009, I noticed quite immediately that soccer was an activity that many young Fatani men took rather seriously. After a break of several years from playing competitive soccer while in college, I was reintroduced into the field by my new friends who insisted that I had to do that in order to learn about their lives. I became ill after that game, probably from not being used to inhaling the huge amount of dust that floated in the air while playing soccer in the desert. A small price to pay in exchange for the friendships needed to carry out field research.

I finally witnessed the magnitude of soccer as a social glue among the Fatani men one evening during Ramadhan of 2011 (1432H). I had the opportunity to participate in a communal *iftar*, the meal taken at sunset upon the completion of a fasting day, involving men in the sixties to those as young as teens who had been a

member of the *Nujum al-Mustaqbaal* (Ar. Stars of the Future) soccer team that represents the Syi'ib 'Ali.

Ridhwan and I left his home to meet the team's current manager shortly after 'asr prayers that day. The three of us then made stops at several restaurants to purchase some foodstuff for the iftar. Throughout this time, Ridhwan made a number of phone calls to see if the others were already on their way to the venue, and if they were assisting in the organizing of the activities in any way. During a telephone conversation between Ridhwan and Waseem, I heard the former saying rather sternly, "Have you bought the drinks? What?! Where are you? You are still at home? Ya Waseem! What are you doing? What? Are you just going to show up and eat? This is not how we do things. You know that!" Ridhwan was very angry. Actually, he was disappointed. He said to me:

These days it is so difficult to organize things. It was not like this in the past. Now, you have to tell people what to do. Then, that is all that they will do. In the past, the people would volunteer. Everyone knew what needed to be done.

Some men were already waiting when the three of us arrived at the venue. Everyone took the rugs that every car owner usually keeps in their trunk and laid them out to form one large sitting area. The food and drinks were arranged, and everyone took their seat. There were a lot of loud conversations and laughter as usual. When the call to maghrib prayers was heard over the radio, everyone ate some food and proceeded to pray together in several congregations. After praying, everyone resumed eating and talking.

I was invited to sit with a group of the elder members within the group. They asked questions about my research and what I had observed so far. I remarked that the gathering that day was particularly relevant to my research, which is about *belonging*. The group I was sitting with agreed and told me about the significance of



the Nujum al-Mustaqbaal soccer club in their lives, especially in their youth. 'Abd al-Ghaffar related the history of the club to me while the others nodded and offered their recollections from time to time:

Before there were soccer clubs, the people of Patani in Makkah were brought together by *jue*. That was the time of our parents. By our time, soccer clubs became the main reason for gathering. Misfalah and the other communities had their own teams. When we all got together, we organized a tournament. There was the Rayyan Club, Jazeerah Club, Ittihad Club, Syi'ib 'Amir Club. All these clubs, including Nujum al-Mustaqbaal gathered at Mina or 'Aziziyyah to compete. 'Aziziyyah was still part of the desert at that time. We competed for a cup. But, these competitions involved only the Fatanis, not the Malaysians nor the Indonesians. There were so many of us at that time. There were about twenty clubs in total. Each club came to the competition in a group of a hundred, two hundred persons. The people who liked to organize these competitions were from the Rayyan Club of Malagiyyah [district]. Soccer was what brought us together, the Fatanis in Makkah.

The soccer matches and competitions were events during which the sense of belonging to their respective quarters manifested most strongly among players of each competing team and their supporters. However, 'Abd al-Ghaffar and his friends agree these events also brought Fatanis from Makkah's various quarters together as non-Fatanis were disallowed from participating in these events. 'Abd al-Ghaffar admitted that there were fights that broke out between players and supporters of the different soccer clubs, but these were always resolved. As 'Abd al-Ghaffar pointed out above, the soccer tournaments not only brought the Fatanis together, but also kept non-Fatanis out. Thus, these events clearly illustrate the boundaries of social identification among the Fatanis.

## **WHITHER THE FATANIS?**

Most scholars of Thai studies, especially those whose research focuses on the political troubles of Jawi, react quite excitedly upon learning about my research. It is not always the topic of research that interests them, but the community being studied. According to rumors that circulate in Thailand, the anti-state political

movements in the provinces of Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat, are supported by the Patanians in the Middle East, Sweden, and Germany.

Makkah has long played host to the political struggles of Muslims from all over the world. We have noted in the preceding chapter that intellectual environment of the holy city inspired the likes of Syaikh Da'ud Fatani, Syaikh Wan Ahmad Fatani, and Tuan Guru Haji Sulong to contribute efforts towards the reformation and reawakening of their native society. This experience was not limited to the Fatanis. Michael Laffan (2003) has argued, that among the Indonesians, the experience of sojourning to Makkah planted a consciousness of brotherhood with other communities of the Malay-Indonesian world. Shared identity as Muslims was crucial to the emergence of this political consciousness. He showed that this would eventually develop into anti-Dutch nationalist consciousness in Cairo when the Indonesians increasingly took to the Egyptian city for education.

From the beginning of my research, I decided not to pursue the issue regarding the role of Makkah's Fatanis in Jawi's political troubles. This does not imply that I do not consider their role in the politics of the homeland important. There are two reasons that motivate my decision. Firstly, the trend in research on the Malays of Jawi in the past ten years displays a tendency to focus only on the violence. I felt that these people must be understood more holistically. The second reason behind my decision is more strategic and pragmatic. I knew that the sudden appearance of a field researcher is enough to raise suspicions in the community, especially within the context of the violence in Jawi as well as the ubiquity of terrorism attributed to Muslims in global political affairs. This is not to say that I would decline if anyone in Makkah wanted to talk about it. Indeed, several persons talked to me about the issue, but 'Abd al-Ghaffar was again most informative. He waited until we met at his home before talking about it:

Before soccer competitions brought the whole community together, there were parties. Now, you can see that there are no parties. For example, there was PULO. Half of the people of Syi'ib 'Ali belonged to PULO. Then, there were members from Syamiah. PULO had a gathering every week. The younger generation like Ridhwan never saw this. I did. I was taught to speak in front of a crowd when I was just seven years old. They gave me a piece of paper and trained me to speak in public. They taught me how to rally the people's spirits. PULO gathered the people of Patani. There was also Barisan, BRN. The supporters of the different groups did not go to the same gathering. The PULO gatherings numbered 1,000 or 2,000 sometimes. We gathered at various places; Arafah, this *waady* [Ar. valley], that waady. Now, the laws of the Saudis ban such gatherings. They would like to prevent the possibility of rebellions against them arising from such gatherings. The gatherings of BRN were also big; 2,000 or 3,000 persons. At the gatherings, there was a lot of food. They collected donations for the movements. I remember that these gatherings stopped suddenly around the time of my uncle's death. He was a key person in PULO's activities in Makkah. Furthermore, the Saudi government ban was introduced a year or two after that. Then, the soccer clubs appeared.

There are Fatanis in Makkah who continue to support the Patanian nationalist movements, although this appears to be largely restricted to the elder members within the community. A young man I met during the day of the 'Eid al-Fitr celebration in 2011 innocently told me that his father had remitted donations he collected for one of these movements just the day before. When I pointed out that most people would not mention such things to me, he unwittingly replied, "You are right. My mother told me the same thing."

Most of the young men whom I met in Makkah do not want any involvement in such activities. They feel far too removed from the cause. Many elderly members within the community told me that the muwalladeen are lost and that they are only interested in sitting around with their groups of friends and enjoying themselves. On the other hand, many of the muwalladeen assert that they face too many problems with livelihood that need immediate attention, which keeps them from thinking about contributing to the nationalist struggle. Furthermore, most of the muwalladeen were socially disconnected from Jawi as early as their childhood. Most of them neither visited nor considered it necessary to travel to Jawi prior to the

introduction of the use of smart card national identity cards in Thailand in 2005. Ever since then many of the muwalladeen have returned to Jawi at least once, while some continue to do this annually or once every few years.

Today, the Fatani muwalladeen remain socially rooted in Makkah even after visiting Thailand in recent times, although the orientation of belonging is changing. The physical destruction of the various haaraat around Makkah left a vacuum in the social life of the Fatanis. Some of them, especially the elderly members of the community, lament the disappearance of the haarah. Yet, even these people admit that social solidarity among the Fatani muwalladeen today is stronger than ever. For example, Internet-based social media is collapsing the social distance and barriers that kept members of the various haaraat apart in the past. It is still too early to proclaim that a community-wide sense of belonging will triumph over a haarah-based one, but this appears to be the direction where things are heading.

## CHAPTER 4 FOR GOD AND MONEY

The hajj season turns Makkah into a giant topsy-turvydom. For several weeks annually, the physical landscape and the systems that organize life in the holy city are overrun by millions of Muslims who are drawn to it with the desire to fulfill a religious obligation. As they communicate with one another in different tongues and move in this unfamiliar place with their varied spatial and cultural sensibilities, the pilgrims truly overwhelm the city's infrastructure and the people who host them.

I was one of the millions of pilgrims who came to Makkah in October 2011. One evening I joined the many people zipping in and out of the pedestrian traffic between the al-Khansaa district and the al-Masjid al-Haraam. Our feet shuffled speedily to meet our common goal of reaching Islam's holiest shrine before sunset. Millions of my fellow Muslim seekers of God's grace have traveled across vast distances to Makkah with the goal of attaining a feeling of closeness to God. For some of them this is achieved by simply being in this blessed city. Others try harder by performing as many rituals of worship as humanly possible in the belief that God will bless them in this life and the eternal hereafter.

My vehicle of choice for the four-kilometer journey to the mosque was my legs. In times like this man's legs proved more efficient than engine-powered wheels whose drivers do not have the privilege to weave in and out of traffic as I did. As a form of cardiovascular workout, my daily walks palliate the guilt that I felt from gobbling down all the deliciously fatty rice meals that my hosts fed me. When Nawab Sikandar Begum, a princess of Bhopal, visited Makkah in 1863, she commented on the *excesses* of her Makkawi host's hospitality (Sikandar and Lambert-Hurley 2008). My Fatani hosts, who have been raised in the holy city, were no different. Every meal was an extravaganza. Additionally, my daily walks also contributed to my research in

Makkah. Without them, I would have been oblivious to the various social intercourses that took place in the streets. Many of the Makkawis keep off taking to the streets during this time to avoid the crowd. On the contrary, the hajj season is an exciting time for the ethnographer. Makkah's usual slow rhythm of life gives way to a much faster tempo. Social life in Makkah was rapidly climaxing.

Every day, I observed groups of pilgrims standing outside the hotels that line the streets leading to the al-Masjid al-Haraam waiting for their ride to the mosque. Elderly Turkish men put on white robes while the women's dresses were in different shades of earth colors. Indonesian women wore knee-length white head scarves while the men proudly donned their traditional batik shirts. The purple scarfs that were tied around their necks made the Indonesian group identifiable from afar. The contact details of their *syaikh* were printed on these scarves in case of emergencies or if anyone of them lost their way. This is very important, for many pilgrims are first-time travelers. The high intensity of social activity in Makkah and the city's crisscrossing pedestrian and vehicular traffic are simply overwhelming for everyone present.

The eager, and nervous, pilgrims rushed forward to board their bus as soon as it stopped at the side of the street. This process aggravates the traffic congestion regardless, for the pace of the elderly may not be quick enough despite their utmost effort. Meanwhile, a monstrous brown sport utility vehicle pulled up beside these buses and pilgrims in *ihram* (the white pilgrims' robe) haggled for a reasonable fare to the Al Tan'eem Mosque in order to start the performance of an '*umrah*'<sup>27</sup>. When a deal was struck, the group of eight men and women moved to pack themselves into

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<sup>27</sup> This is sometimes referred to as the "minor pilgrimage". It involves lesser rituals compared to the hajj. Unlike the latter, there is not a specified time during which it may be performed and it is optional, though highly encouraged.

the vehicle. Everywhere in the street, impatient drivers slugged at their vehicles' horns to urge the other vehicles to move faster. Multiply this scene by several tens or even hundreds and the result is a sensory overload.

Vehicular traffic reduced sharply in the districts surrounding the al-Masjid al-Haram. In contrast, the density of pedestrians multiplied greatly. Private motor vehicles other than motorcycles are prevented from entering these areas in order to avoid a traffic pandemonium. Security officers were seen standing at various strategic locations in this busy area. They had to be alert at every moment to ensure that vehicles and pedestrians flowed smoothly. Try as they might, however, there was always something that threatened the systems that had been put in place. There were drivers attempting to enter a street that has been blocked, pedestrians walking in the middle of a street, or even children setting up a makeshift stall hoping to make some money from selling drinks. The sight of overworked and exasperated officers, then, signals the overbearing challenges for those responsible for organizing the hajj. Despite years of experience in planning and continuous refining of its management of the hajj, this great annual congregation is still a systemic deluge. *Chaotic* is still the appropriate adjective that captures the situation in the streets of Makkah during the hajj season.

Some of Makkah's reflexive residents think that the security officers managing the traffic simply lack competence. On the contrary, I am inclined to think that the massive influx of visitors into the city would be too much for any authority to handle. "It is true that Saudi Arabia can do a better job at organizing the hajj, but we also have to consider how tough it really is. It is like hosting the FIFA World Cup every year," said my friend 'Abd al-Ghaffar. His words are telling. The host nations of the FIFA World Cup take years to prepare for an event that they will host only once. Even so, the number of visitors to the World Cup pales in comparison to

pilgrims who come to Makkah annually. Furthermore, the matches played during the World Cup are usually spread across various cities. In 2010, just over 300,000 tourists visited South Africa when it hosted the event. By contrast, an estimated 3.4 million pilgrims performed the hajj in 2012.

Makkah's various diasporic communities play a crucial role in Saudi Arabia's management of the hajj. An overwhelming majority of pilgrims who come to the city do not speak the Arabic language. In fact, many of them do not speak any language other than their own mother tongue. Makkah's bilingual speakers bridge communication among the various participants and organizers of the hajj in the absence of a lingua franca. Thus, it is common for a non-Arab Makkawi to work in the service of pilgrims from his homeland or those from the same ethno-linguistic community. For example, most of the Fatanis are employed by businesses and the hajj missions that serve pilgrims from Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Southern Thailand. Malay is the lingua franca for pilgrims coming from these societies. The spoken dialects of the respective people from these societies are different, although they are usually mutually intelligible.

One evening, Ridhwan returned home a little later than expected. He told me about what held him back:

I just saw an elderly Indonesian couple. They were separated from their group and did not know where to go. The two of them were just standing around and looked confused. So, I went up to them and asked if they needed help. I saw the telephone number of the travel agent on their scarfs and I contacted them. I told them the location of this couple and waited until someone from the company came to bring them back to the hotel. Things like this happen all the time during the hajj. These pilgrims, they are so scared because they cannot speak Arabic. Some of them do not even dare approach anyone for help. You would be surprised to know that there have been instances when a pilgrim walks around Makkah for hours or days because they were lost. Once I saw an elderly Indian man like that. He was sitting on the side of the road. I



contacted the *muassasah*<sup>28</sup> and bought him a piece of cake and some fruit juice while waiting for help to arrive.

Makkah becomes a confusing place during the hajj even to the Makkawis. The direction of traffic along certain streets is reorganized to ensure better traffic flow. Some streets are blocked to prevent congestions, while some areas around the city are out of bounds to vehicles. Nevertheless, the muwalladeen's familiarity with the city means that they are among the best persons to serve the pilgrims. Many of the security officers who are stationed in Makkah during the hajj season are brought in from other parts of Saudi Arabia. Hence, many of them lack the knowledge needed to do a good job at assisting the pilgrims. Some of them may not even possess the right attitude. The soldiers think that their primary duty is to ensure security and command traffic. By comparison, the muwalladeen are not only more knowledgeable, but are also service-oriented.

This chapter examines the activities of the Fatanis during the hajj. We will observe that they play a vital role for the provision of various services to pilgrims who come from Malay-speaking societies. We may recall that the Fatani community has been active in this line of work for more than a century. For the muwalladeen, this is something that they have been doing from the time they were young. As a primary source of income, the hajj season is something that the Fatanis constantly look forward to. Owing to their extensive experience in the various types of work available in the hajj industry, the Fatanis comprise a community that is ever ready to serve the pilgrims. Although the Fatanis earn most of their annual income from the hajj, their activities in the industry must not be treated solely as economic. The

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28 Muassasah (pl. muassasaat) means "organization" in Arabic. When applied to the hajj industry, it refers to the organizations that oversee and coordinate the operations of the various companies that offer services to pilgrims. The various muassasaat are organized along regional lines. For example, there is a muassasah for Southeast Asia and one for South Asia.

Fatanis take their work seriously. They admit that economic considerations are consequential in deciding the jobs that they take up. However, they argue that it is important that they carry out their duties well. To them, the pilgrims are not just tourists; they are the *dhuyuuf al-Rahman* (Ar. guests of God). Thus, many of them offer assistance, which is not required of them, and for which they do not expect to be paid. In such instances, monetary reward is seen as a bonus. This will be clearly seen in our discussion of their roles as pilgrim proxies in the *hajj al-badl* (hajj on behalf of others), where the Fatanis perform the hajj on behalf of deceased persons or someone who is physically unfit to perform the hajj, but still desires to fulfill this religious obligation.

The importance of the economic benefits that the Fatanis gain from the hajj should not be underestimated. Hajj seasonal work typically provides sufficient funds for the unmarried Fatani to subsist throughout the year. For those who are married, the income earned from the hajj may even be the bulk of their annual incomes, while the money gained from work performed at other times act as supplementary earnings. To the Fatanis, then, the hajj is a cyclical source of income that is reliable. This is an important situation that informs the Fatani's decision to remain living in Makkah, thereby reproducing their in-betweenness.

The Fatani's experiences of servicing pilgrims from Jawi consistently highlight their cultural in-betweenness. On the one hand, Makkah's Fatanis facilitates the Jawi pilgrims' experience of the hajj through some shared cultural knowledge, including language and social norms. On the other hand, the Fatanis are also culturally different from the Jawi pilgrims. The Fatanis and the society in Jawi have moved along different social trajectories. Consequently, the habitus of the Fatani and the person from Jawi are noticeably different. This situation will be more extensively discussed in the next chapter. In the current one, we will see that the

Fatani's encounters with Jawi pilgrims bring about an awareness of their cultural differences. This produces a feeling of alienation from the homeland among the Fatanis and additional reluctance to remove themselves from the current lives that they live in Makkah.

Let us now look at the significance of the hajj to the Muslims. This is important if we are to understand the activities of the Fatanis and other Makkawis during the hajj and the event's meanings to their lives.

## **GUARDED HAPPINESS**

Most pilgrims experience an inundation of emotions on the road to Makkah as a lifetime of waiting for God is coming to an end as they edge closer to the holy city. They have made many sacrifices to undertake the hajj. Some have saved throughout their adult life, while others who have sold off their agricultural lands to pay for the journey. I admire their efforts, but often wonder about the impacts of their financial sacrifices. Whenever I talked with the people in Jawi about this issue, their responses were unequivocal: "Do not worry. Allah is generous." Then, there are also physical sacrifices. In chapter 3, we have seen the trials faced by pilgrims who traveled to Makkah on board ships. While air transportation has mitigated the demands of travel, many still suffer from exhaustion and fall ill during the hajj. Like so many other pilgrims, I developed a chesty cough that would not go away for several weeks. Even so, I consider myself among the lucky ones for everywhere I saw others, especially the elderly, who suffered much more.

Most people who make the decision to perform the hajj are aware of the challenges and risks that await them. This enhances the sweetness of laying one's eyes on the Ka'bah for the first time, which moves even the most restrained men to tears. Most pilgrims visit the al-Masjid al-Haraam immediately upon their arrival in

Makkah. A supplication is made as they enter the Al Haram - "With the Name of Allah and peace and blessings be upon Allah's Messenger, I seek refuge with Allah the All-Mighty, by His Noble Face and His most ancient rule and authority, against the accursed Satan. O Allah! Open the gates of Your Mercy for me" (bin Baz 2003:69-70). Indeed, many pilgrims feel that Allah has truly opened his gates of mercy on them. The words of Mbah Setiawan, a sixty-year-old Indonesian man, who received the visa to perform the Hajj after being on the wait-list for four and a half years, illuminates the experience: "Mr. Arafat, can you believe it? I still can't. We have been called by Him, and here we are, among millions of our kinsmen from all over the world. We are of different skins, but we are all here as one."

Stories of the perils of travel, especially for the elderly who make up quite a substantial portion of pilgrims every year, as well as those of peace and joy from being in the Holy City, circulating in all pilgrim-sending societies play an important role in conditioning the pilgrim's emotions and experience of the hajj (Pearson 1994). The joys of embarking upon the journey to Makkah are often shared by one's relatives, friends, and fellow villagers. For several weeks, each year, the Hatyai International Airport in Thailand is swamped by Muslims from Jawi who arrive in minivans and pickup trucks to see the hajj pilgrims off. While living in Singapore, I would travel to Jawi if a close friend was undertaking the hajj. These events generally create a festive atmosphere at the airport. Nevertheless, my conversation with Mbah Setiawan reminded me of a more somber reality. He broke down rather intensely when telling me that he had just found out that one of the buses ferrying his neighbors to the airport had been involved in a terrible accident. There were many fatalities. Similar incidents have happened in Jawi. My close friend in Pattani, Muhammad, described one of those incidents:

I remember an accident that occurred when I was still a child. That year, the villagers came out to send the pilgrims off as usual. The hajj

ship was anchored off the mouth of the Patani Bay. The weather was not so good that day. There were strong winds, and the sea was choppy. After the ship had departed, the tug boat turned back to head to shore. Suddenly, the barge carrying the people who accompanied the pilgrims to the ship capsized. Many of them died.

Many people in Jawi whom I met often interpret accidents such as the one described by Muhammad as a reminder that the hajj is not all about festivities. As easy and well-managed as it is today, sickness and death are still the fates that await some pilgrims. The high density of people in Makkah during the hajj and the fact that the elderly constitutes a substantial segment of pilgrims each year make the task of containing contagions a challenge. Returning hajjis often recollect prayers carried out for the deceased in Makkah. These prayers are conducted after the completion of each of the five daily prayers. A congregational prayer at the mosque that is not followed by a prayer for the deceased is truly a rarity during the hajj. Ultimately, the hajj requires a certain level of religious commitment and faith from those who have decided to perform it.

## **PILGRIMAGE AND TOURISM**

The hajj means a variety of things to different people. Michael Pearson writes, "The hajj was all sorts of things: a social event, a mechanism for solidifying and purifying Islam, perhaps an economic event" (1994:40). It had various political implications, it was an arduous and exciting journey, [and] it was a great transmitter of disease." Elaborating this point in his study of pilgrims from the Indian subcontinent, he said:

The hajj meant different things to different people. For the majority of simple Sunni Muslims it was an over whelming religious experience, the event of a lifetime. For a Sufi it could mean something much more intense, or at least more esoteric. Sufis made many pilgrimages, and not just to Mecca, but for them the set ritual was less important than the heightened mystical state which could be achieved by association with, and meditation at, places associated with the greatest guide of all, the Prophet. (Pearson 1994:41)

The hajj is, first and foremost, a religious activity. Thus far, I have introduced the hajj's religious significance to the Muslims in general. Most people may not view the hajj as a form of tourism. This is true even in the academe. *Tourism* and *pilgrimage* remained two distinctive themes for contemplation until as recent as the 1990s (Collins-Kreiner 2010). In fact, participants of either or the two activities are often conceptualized as being mutually exclusive types of travelers. According to Graham Holderness (2009), tourists are often thought to be engaging in secular leisure activities while pilgrims are seekers of spiritual benefits. Pointing to Enlightenment-influenced epistemology as the origin of this dualism, Holderness writes:

The interpretative models used in tourism studies are based on secular, rational, atheistic, materialist categories. It is assumed that people do not believe; alternatively, that belief has little to do with material existence. And yet of course people do believe, and what they believe does have profound implications for material culture. (2009:342)

For Holderness, this duality may be overcome by recovering *place* in the study of pilgrimage. Following Edward Casey, who argues "to be at all – to exist in any way – is to be somewhere, and to be somewhere is to be in some kind of place" (1997:10), Holderness (2009) suggests that the city, which pilgrims visit should not be treated as a generic spatial unit, separate from the sacred sites it houses. Consequently, the experiences of the pilgrims and the tourists are not completely different. The pilgrim experiences what the social sciences have termed the *sacred* and *secular* simultaneously during the pilgrimage. Holderness asserts:

The Holy City co-exists with another city, Rome, which displays excesses of both sacredness and secularity. Rome is a great bustling international capital, yet full of holy places; built and used for trading, and money-making, and shopping, and consumer display, and rushing about on secular businesses; yet also oozing sacredness from every worn and weather-beaten brick and stone. (2009:345)

Holderness describes Rome as a “multiverse, a collection of many worlds or parallel universes simultaneously existing in space and time” (2009:345). Observing tourists who are ferried around the same places across the city as examples, he asserts that their experiences vary according to the dictates of the particular dimensions of the city that the pilgrim pays attention to. Holderness’s treatise on the shared characteristics between pilgrimage and tourism is instructive for observing the Islamic hajj to Makkah. Millions of Muslims go to Makkah for pilgrimage every year. Their experiences of pilgrimage are both subjective as well as influenced by their own socio-cultural backgrounds.

For an event that takes place over a short period of time each year, the hajj constitutes a major economic sector. Long (1979) suggests that the significance of the hajj for Saudi Arabia diminished greatly and abruptly at the end of the Second World War. This is largely attributed to the sudden ascension of Saudi-Arabian oil export. Nevertheless, the pilgrimage still generates about SR30 billion of income for the Saudi economy annually (Muhammad 2010). Joan Henderson (2011) has argued that Saudi Arabia’s massive investments for the construction of physical infrastructure to facilitate the expansion of the pilgrimage industry show that the kingdom is once again attentive to the industry’s economic potential. Unfortunately, the lack of first-hand observation and heavy reliance on economic statistics limit her view of the relationship between pilgrimage as a religious activity and tourism. Joining the bandwagon of critics of Saudi Arabia’s version of Islam, Henderson writes:

The culture inhibits forms of leisure tourism familiar in Westernized societies, and there is reluctance to admit overseas visitors from beyond the Muslim world due to anxieties about un-Islamic influences. Strict rules such as those about female dress and the ban on alcohol consumption and certain public entertainments have further discouraged arrivals and investment. (2011:545)

Henderson is right about the negative impact of strict religious practices and cultural distrust toward non-Muslims on the growth of tourism in Saudi Arabia. However, her study of the hajj as tourism is inattentive to the dual role of the pilgrim as a religious visitor and tourist. This can be overcome by observing the consumption practices of the pilgrims.

Anyone taking a walk in the streets and the malls of Makkah during the hajj season inevitably recognizes the high intensity of commercial activities taking place. Makkah is a bazaar made up of innumerable shops and stalls set abuzz by pilgrims who seek not only to bring back a slice of Makkah home with them, but also fragments of other cultures that they may never encounter directly in a lifetime. Take a short walk along a street and one might come across a Chinese sporting a Moroccan skullcap or a European donning a Kuwaiti *thawb*. This is probably the reason why most of Makkah's retail spaces are eclectic. Various items of clothing sold alongside toys, religious books, perfume oils, jewelry, among others are often found within the confines of a cramped stall measuring 3.5 - 4 meters on each side.

One evening, I walked around the Ajyad district near the al-Masjid al-Haram to observe street activities within that area. I approached one of the shops located along the sidewalk to look over some books that were being sold. There I observed an African lady bargaining with a salesperson at one of these shops. First, she enquired about a Quran recitation machine that was designed in the appearance of a notebook computer. When the salesperson refused to lower the price of the object to her satisfaction, she picked up a Quran recitation pen and asked for its price and then a cellphone and finally, a bottle of perfume. Perhaps she was in search for a novel product to bring home. When the prices offered failed to meet her expectations, she settled for the age-old choice, perfumes. The African lady was participating in an activity that has become inevitable for a vast majority of



pilgrims. Shopping for gifts to distribute among friends and relatives after the hajj is almost as important as the obligatory rituals of the hajj itself. Once I asked a university administrative worker in Pattani to describe her experience of the hajj. She said, "It was tiring, but I truly enjoyed myself during the hajj; especially, shopping at the various shops and malls." She then smiled sheepishly when her colleague bestowed upon her a questioning look.

Visits to places of attractions are another activity that has become increasingly popular among hajj pilgrims. Until recently, most such visits involved guided tours to the various historic sites such as the Mount of Nur, where the Prophet received his first revelation from God through the angel, Jibrayl, and the Mount of Thaur where the Prophet and his companion, Abu Buakr, hid in a cave while being pursued by persecutors from Makkah during the migration of the Prophet and his followers to al-Madinah. Popular sites of visits in al-Madinah include the Prophet's tomb, Masjid Qubaa, Masjid Qiblatayn, the Mount of Uhud battle site, and Baqi' cemetery, where many of the Prophet's family members and companions are buried. Visits to these places are intended to educate pilgrims on important events in the history of the founding of Islam. The arranged itineraries have expanded over recent years to include visits to the King Fahd Complex for the Printing of the Holy Quran in al-Madinah, the King's Fountain, the Corniche leisure district, and the Floating Mosque in Jiddah. The pilgrim's visitation does not end in the environs of Makkah and al-Madinah. Travel agents in the pilgrim-sending countries may also arrange for tours to other countries before the pilgrims return to their own countries. Istanbul, Cairo, Amman, Jerusalem, and various cities in Morocco and Spain are some places that are increasingly visited by pilgrims.

## THE PULSE OF SOCIAL LIFE IN MAKKAH

Makkah has benefitted from pilgrimage-related commerce from ages even prior to the lifetime of Prophet Muhammad. It was divinely-revealed verses that brought the trade close to their home (Crone 1987). The early Muslims' ambivalence towards the association between religion and trade was palliated by the Quranic verse:

The Hajj (pilgrimage) is (in) the well-known (lunar) months (i.e. the 10<sup>th</sup> month, the 11<sup>th</sup> months and the first ten days of the 12<sup>th</sup> month of the Islamic calendar, i.e. two months and ten days). So whosoever intends to perform the *Hajj* therein (by assuming *Ihram*), then he should not have sexual relations (with his wife), nor commit sin, nor dispute unjustly during the *Hajj*. And whatever good you do, (be sure) Allah knows it. And take a provision (with you) for the journey, but the best provision is *At-Taqwa* (piety, righteousness). So fear Me, O men of understanding!

There is no sin on you if you seek Bounty of your Lord (during pilgrimage by trading). Then when you leave *'Arafat*, remember Allah (by glorifying His Praisas, i.e. prayers and invocations) at *Al-Mash'ar-il-Haram*. And remember Him (by invoking Allah for all good) as He has guided you, and verily, you were, before, of those who were astray. (2:197-8)

Pearson (1994) provides an account of the hajj caravans that transported goods overland from Cairo and Damascus as well as ships from all over the Indian Ocean. So lucrative was this network of trade that the Portuguese persistently attempted to control it through either commercial exchange or exercising their naval muscle (Faroqhi 1996; Pearson 1994). Makkah, however, was actually not a node on the main routes of exchange between Europe and the East that passed through the Red Sea. Goods that found their way to Makkah were often spillovers from Jiddah, the largest seaport closest to Makkah. Furthermore, the city's dwellers benefitted from the distribution of food and other items donated by various Muslim rulers who sought to enhance their political standing, both within their dominion as well as the wider Islamic world.

More important than the hajj's economic potential for Saudi Arabia, the hajj industry has always been the most critical activity to Makkah's economy. We can infer from the consumption practices of the pilgrims that the Hajj offers lucrative opportunities to the Makkah's resourceful entrepreneurs. It is not just cultural products that are in high demand. As tourists, many pilgrims equip themselves with ample currency to purchase technological products, including the latest models of television, DVD players, notebook computers, and cameras. It is not just the pilgrims who shop extensively during the hajj season. Even the Makkawis find it wiser to replace their household products during these months as Makkah's business-savvy retailers offer discounts on these products in order to increase profits through higher volumes of sales. This retail strategy has been learnt from years of experience.

The lure of profit is so great that some service providers may try to cheat pilgrims into paying for services which will not be rendered or overcharge for those that will be. From overcrowded hajj ships, to the injustices of Ottoman tax collectors and the Sharif's officers, as well as crafty porters and deceitful sheikhs, travel writers have long provided accounts of preying on pilgrims during the hajj (Burton 2002; Hurgronje 2007 [1931]; Keane 1887; Sikandar and Lambert-Hurley 2007; Sweeney 2005).

I had a slight taste of the cunningness of these service operators when I arranged for my road transfer from the King Abdul Aziz Airport in Jiddah to Makkah. After checking the fares for a taxi ride to Makkah from several drivers, I agreed to pay SR200, even though it normally requires half that amount to travel the same route. The man whom I assumed to be a taxi driver turned out to be a middleman. He directed me towards a taxi where he told the driver that SR50 would be owed him by the latter for his services in securing the deal. After giving the man directions to

the destination I intended for in Makkah, I boarded his taxi and the driver made way for the exit out of the airport. Shortly after our departure the driver told me that I would have to pay SR500. He furnished whatever reasons that came into his mind in order to justify his extortion. I insisted that I be sent back to the airport right then. He attempted a negotiation, but I refused his offers flatly and was returned to the airport's taxi stand.

My experience does not compare to that of 250 pilgrims whose hearts were crushed upon being denied entry into Makkah during the 2010 season. Security officers detected that they had been given fraudulent hajj permits by their travel agent (Wahab 2010). Some of these pilgrims paid up to SR5,000 each to go on the hajj. A Riyadh-based Pakistani academic paid close to SR25,000 for his family, including his wife and three children. Unfortunately, this is but one of many similar cases that happen every year.

In short, Makkah is nothing if not for its importance to Islam and the hajj. Pilgrimage to Makkah is God-sanctioned tourism for the 1 billion Muslims who inhabit the world today and all those who preceded them. Notwithstanding the occurrence of major political and economic crises such as the Great Depression and the World Wars, Makkah's pilgrimage tourism industry is safe from the volatility of travel fads that other destinations experience.

So far, the general sense in which the hajj is important to Makkah has been discussed. While doing this, it was crucial to discuss what the hajj means to the pilgrims who come to the holy city each year. The consumption practices of the pilgrims illustrate the dual nature of the hajj as a religious and economic event. The relationship between the Makkawi host and the pilgrim in this regard is a mutually constitutive one. The desires and expectation of each of the two produce the actions

of the other. In the next section, we dig into ethnography for a more intimate treatment of the Fatanis' involvement in the hajj industry.

## **THE FATANIS AND THE HAJJ**

The opportunity to perform seasonal work during the hajj is especially crucial to Makkah's many foreign residents such as the Fatanis. In Chapter 1, we have discussed the challenges that the Fatanis face in securing regular employment. Aside from the usual limitations experienced by iqamah-holders in Saudi Arabia, the Fatanis have the additional disadvantage of poor bilateral relations between Thailand and Saudi Arabia. As a brief recapitulation, recall that the stakes associated with losing one's iqamah is higher for the Fatanis than for other foreigners in the kingdom.

The hajj industry requires more manpower than is readily available in Makkah. Thus, job opportunities are abundant for the Fatanis. Furthermore, many offices in the holy city are closed throughout the actual days of the hajj and the holidays in conjunction with the 'Eid al-Adha, which is also known as the 'Eid al-Akbar (Ar. the bigger celebration). This frees up time for Fatanis, who have full-time employment throughout the year, to supplement their incomes with seasonal work. The employment of foreigners such as the Fatanis during the hajj benefits everyone involved in the management of the hajj. Seasonal workers earn additional income, while businesses and Saudi Arabia, as the host of the hajj, avoids a logistical meltdown resulting from insufficient labor. Enforcement of the kingdom's labor laws are generally relaxed during the hajj period for this reason.

Many Fatanis take up seasonal work during the hajj from an early age. This was first highlighted to me by my relatives in Singapore who have experienced the hajj. Many of them vividly recall buying food and souvenirs from young Fatani

children who peddle in the streets of Makkah, especially those near the compound of the al-Masjid al-Haraam. 'Abd al-Ghaffar recounted his experience nostalgically when we met in Ramadhan 2011:

The hajj season is coming soon. For us, the muwalladeen, our first experience of work is always something that we do during the hajj season. I remember very clearly the hajj seasons when I was young and still in elementary school. My parents would wake me up very early in the morning before the call for fajr prayers is made. My mother would have finished cooking and packed the food with paper wrappers like the ones you see in Jawi. She prepared all sorts of Jawi food and desserts. My father arranged the food on a tray, and I would walk down from our home in Syi'ib 'Ali towards the Haraam. My friends and I would wait outside the mosque. We would all be sitting down on the street with our eyes closed until it was time to pray. Oh, it is so funny to think back about those times. We were all still so young. After the congregational prayers had concluded, we would all prepare to receive our customers. Many of them were from Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Jawi, and Brunei, but some of the pilgrims from other parts of the world would also try the food. When I finished selling all the food, I quickly returned home and my parents would give me a small amount of the money to save or spend as I like.

Many of the muwalladeen related similar stories of the work they did as young children. Other than food, they also sold souvenirs such as pictures of the Al Masjid Al Haram, key chains, toys, and drinks. According to 'Abd al-Ghaffar, it was important for them to supplement their household income with such work. Additionally, he said that many of the Fatani parents felt that it was important to instill the value of hard work while their children were still young because, as foreigners, the muwalladeen would have to rely on their own effort without much help from anyone else or any state institution in Saudi Arabia. According to the muwalladeen, the rest is up to God. They often say: *Allah Kareem* (Ar. God is generous.)

## Sneak Preview

Ramadhan is a special month for the ummah. We are told in the Surah al-Baqarah of the Quran (2:185) that it is the month of the Quran's revelation and that

Muslims are required to undertake the fast between sunrise and sunset daily throughout this month. Ramadhan is believed to be the month of blessings. In Makkah, one hears people exchange greetings such as *Ramadhan mubarak* (Ar. Blessed Ramadhan) frequently throughout the month. Muslims are encouraged to perform as many acts of worship as possible throughout this blessed month.

In 1999, Saudi Arabia introduced a quota system that allocates 1000 hajj visas for every million Muslims in a country's population. This move is aimed at discouraging Muslims from performing the hajj repeatedly in order to make way for more first-timers. While it is unpopular, this policy has also effectively expanded the size of the pilgrimage industry. The number of pilgrims who arrive in Makkah for the 'umrah has been increasing over the years. Robert Bianchi (2004) suggests that this can be attributed in part to Saudi Arabia's decision to liberalize the system of granting of visas since 2001. Those with the means and desire to return to the heartland of Islam are encouraged to do so through the performance of the 'umrah. Close to 5 million 'umrah visas were issued by Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Hajj between January and August 2011, a 45% increase from 2010 leading to an 62% upsurge of flights ferrying pilgrims over the same period (Humaidan 2011; Ministry of Hajj 2011). These policy changes are, thus, meant to "kill two birds with one stone—deflecting anger over new hajj restrictions while building a tourism industry that earns foreign exchange without admitting non-Muslims" (Bianchi 2004:11).

The gains made in the pilgrimage industry contribute to the increased significance of Ramadhan for Makkah. According to some hadeeth traditions, the Prophet has said that the spiritual reward of performing 'umrah in the month of Ramadhan is equivalent to the performance of the hajj. Some Fatanis in Makkah believe that the number of pilgrims who perform the 'umrah in Ramadhan is quickly catching up with those arriving for the hajj annually. This speculation is highly

plausible, especially in light of the Ministry of Hajj's estimation that more than two million Muslims prayed at the al-Masjid al-Haram on the eve of the twenty-seventh day of Ramadhan 2011, the anniversary of the night on which the Prophet is believed to have received the first revelation from God.

The sudden and massive increase in the number of pilgrims in Makkah during Ramadhan gives the various organizers of the hajj a sneak preview of the upcoming hajj season. Hotel staffs prepare themselves to receive more guests than usual. Law enforcement officers and the military get their first experiences of the new systems that are being put in place. By the end of Ramadhan each year, the various ministries involved are able to assess the effectiveness of these systems, including vehicle and pedestrian traffic management, security procedures, and disaster response management among others.

For the Fatanis, Ramadhan is also a time of preparation for the work that they will do in the upcoming hajj season. Most of them try to secure employment as well as business contracts during this month. The abundance of job opportunities does not imply that everyone may exercise freedom of choice. A variety of factors, including one's physical capabilities and limitations, knowledge, aptitude, and perhaps financial capital, are considered by the Fatani when deciding on the type of work to pursue. Personal connections are also instrumental because information about job openings and business opportunities often circulate by word of mouth. Several factors are then weighed before one selects a job over others. For many Fatanis, maximization of economic gain is most important. The industrious among them may even take up more than one job if they are creative in crafting a workable schedule. One young Saudi-Fatani whom I met in 2011 successfully juggled four jobs during that season.



When the Fatani child grows up, he tries his hand at other jobs that are available during the hajj. Seyf, who began hajj seasonal work by selling photographs, is now working as a nursing assistant at a temporary medical center that is run by Tabung Haji, Malaysia's hajj mission. He has been doing this job for seven hajj seasons since 2006. Seyf knows that he is unable to work jobs that require strength or physical ruggedness owing to his small physical size. He also feels that he lacks the knowledge or administrative perceptiveness to perform well in an office. His line of work as a nursing assistant involves giving care to patients, who include elderly men requiring him to clean up their feces after easing their bowels. This responsibility does not give Seyf any particular pleasure, but he claims to try his utmost to fulfill the trust placed in him by performing his job as best as he can. Seyf spoke to me of his desire for a better work opportunity, but is contented with his current one. He is paid SR7,000 for two months of work. He considers this seasonal job most economically rewarding given his physical and knowledge limitations.

Ridhwan is the opposite of Seyf in many ways. He is reputed among friends to be physically strong and smart. He is also confident in his abilities to learn and adapt to new responsibilities with relative ease. This combination of having the right aptitude and attitude has suited him for a variety of hajj seasonal jobs since he started selling hot tea twenty-two years ago at the age of ten. He has worked in various capacities at the company offices of hajj operators, known as *maktab* (pl. *makatib*), as well as an assistant cook for four years. In the season of 2011, he worked as a platform agent in the new train system, which transports pilgrims between Arafat, Muzdalifah, and Mina. In order to land this job, Ridhwan had to go through an interview during which the interviewers assessed his ability to communicate in English. His level of mastery of the language is rather impressive for someone who is self-taught. He does this through chatting with English-speakers on

the Internet, listening to songs, and watching films. This latest job pays the highest daily remuneration rate for one week's work. The short duration of work at the train station allows him to take up other types of work at other times during the hajj season.

Hakeem is physically the average of Seyf and Ridhwan. As a child he dreamt of becoming an airline pilot. Like other Fatanis who only know Saudi Arabia as their home, his ambition is perhaps more accurately labeled a daydream. Hakeem suffered the same devastating realization of the lack of educational opportunities at an early age. In July 2010, Hakeem told me that he used to gaze at the sky and wonder about traveling to distant places. "My father said to me, 'Hakeem, if you study hard you will become a pilot one day, if Allah wills it.'" His father passed away not long after that. Since then his family members have been preoccupied with meeting basic expenses. Hakeem was a lost youth for a few years until a Fatani tok syaikh named Yaasir took him under his wing. According to Hakeem, Yaasir was a father figure in his life. He helped Hakeem improve his ability to converse in Patani Malay and even treated Hakeem to vacations to Jawi several times. These were the first trips Hakeem ever made to the homeland. Even so, the relationship between the pair turned sour after several years. Hakeem remains grateful to his former mentor.

Hakeem took up administrative appointments at the offices of various tok syaikhs as well as Malaysia's Tabung Haji for several consecutive seasons. He did not have enough capital to start his own pilgrim-service business immediately. Furthermore, he felt that he needed to familiarize himself with the work procedures of the various organizations involved with the organization of the hajj. This proved to be a smart move because he accumulated ample contacts to build a business network of his own. He visits Jawi after each hajj season to cultivate his connections with tok syaikhs there. He has been successful at securing several

enduring business relationships from these visits. Hakeem now runs a company together with three partners providing logistical services, reservation of accommodation in Makkah, kitchen services, and operating tour visits in Makkah and Jiddah. The hajj season of 2011 proved to be lucrative for Hakeem as he earned the rights to operate tour visits for 12,000 pilgrims from Malaysia through the Tabung Haji in addition to other logistical and catering services that he provides to pilgrim groups from Jawi.

The experience of living in Makkah during Ramadhan is very interesting. The activities usually associated with daytime and nighttime are reversed. Many of the Makkawis spend most of the day sleeping while work and other social activities are conducted at night after the completion of the congregational *taraaweeh* prayers. The Fatanis get busier as the end of Ramadhan approaches. Most of them aim for employment arrangements and business negotiations to be sealed before the month is over.

Seyf was the least busy of the three friends during this time. His reappointment as a nursing assistant at the Tabung Haji was more or less confirmed. The Tabung Haji typically reemploys any former employee who is found to be reliable. This employment practice and its reputation for being the most well-managed hajj mission make the Tabung Haji a prestigious agency to associate oneself with. Thus, it is a popular employer among the Fatanis. This situation benefits the Tabung Haji too. Returning employees such as Seyf ease the operations of the Tabung Haji. Firstly, the Fatanis' ability to speak in a Malay dialect reduces the language barrier that the Malaysian pilgrims may encounter when communicating with a non-Malay speaking employee of the Tabung Haji. However, we may not assume that such language barriers do not exist between the Fatanis and the pilgrims. More will be discussed about this issue below. Secondly, the returning

employees' familiarity with the work of the Tabung Haji cuts the amount of resources needed to train a beginner at the mission's seasonal work while also increasing the organization's operational efficiency.

Ridhwan was occupied with a training program put together by the Chinese company that was contracted to manage the operations of the railway line. Training was conducted every night after the day's fasting was over. Whenever he was awake during the day, Ridhwan used his time to soldier through the training materials that were provided by his employer. Each night, Ridhwan and his fellow trainees had to sit for a test pertaining to material that was taught the night before.

Hakeem's preparation for the hajj season actually began several months before Ramadhan 2012. He had already identified and conducted initial negotiations with brokers who represented Makkah's property and hotel owners intending to lease accommodation to hajj pilgrim groups. Hakeem's main work during this time was to match tok syaikhs from Jawi with the brokers in Makkah and al-Madinah. In 2011, these tok syaikhs came to Makkah during Ramadhan to inspect the accommodation options that Hakeem had offered them. Once the Jawi tok syaikhs had made their decisions, it was Hakeem's job to negotiate and to secure the deal with the relevant brokers. When the various parties reached a consensus, the proposed agreements had to be submitted for review by the Thai Hajj Mission, which the Fatanis call *Bi'thah*<sup>29</sup>. With much of the day spent sleeping, most of the night spent for taraweeh prayers, and whatever little left taken up by work, the month of Ramadhan comes and goes rather quickly in Makkah.

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29 The full Arabic name of this organization is Bi'tha al-Hajj al'Thailandiyyah.

The arrival of the month of Syawwal provides a brief respite for hajj-related businesses. With most of the major contracts pertaining to pilgrim services such as accommodation, transportation, and catering secured by the end of Ramadhan, the first week of Syawwal is a time for festivity starting with 'Eid al-Fitr, the celebration that marks the completion of the Muslims' annual obligatory fasting. Schools and government offices are closed for a week. During this break, Makkah's residents make visits to friends and relatives as well as gather at parties. The holy city itself becomes relatively empty as 'umrah pilgrims are required to leave it by the middle of the month causing the rental rates of hotels in Makkah to drop by seventy percent compared to the rates during Ramadhan (Arab News 2011). After the weeklong celebration is over, final preparations are made for the upcoming hajj season. Security forces begin to pour in from other regions of the kingdom to familiarize themselves with their respective duties. Dry runs of emergency situations are conducted. For business operators, the remaining weeks of Syawwal is the time to secure the rest of the manpower needed.

## **SAUDIZATION'S ACHILLES HEEL?**

Legal issues pertaining to unofficial employment during the hajj season do not differ from other times of the year despite the sudden and massive increase in need for manpower during each season. A foreigner who is arrested for violation of Saudi Arabia's labor laws by officers of the General Directorate of Passports, commonly referred to as the *Jawaazaat* (Ar. Passports), is still likely to be expatriated. Many Fatanis claim that such incidents have increased staggeringly in recent years, even though the enforcement of Saudi Arabia's labor laws during the hajj season was extremely lax previously. Ridhwan, again, experienced a close call with the Jawaazaat several hajj seasons earlier when he worked as an assistant cook. He admitted that he and the others working at the kitchen in Mina, where pilgrims

spent two nights during the hajj, had already learnt about the Jawaazaat rounding up labor law violators at that time. Nevertheless, they agreed that it was important to continue kitchen operations because the thousands of pilgrims under their care would not be fed otherwise. So, Ridhwan and his colleagues agreed that they would stick together and not flee should the Jawaazaat come to their kitchen. He recounted the altercation to me:

The others ran. They were only three of us left; the cook, myself, and one of the Indian workers. We were finished. They took our iqamahs and force us to sign on a piece of paper. Basically, the paper states that I admit to working illegally. The officer held my hand and forced me to pen my signature. Before that I already saw an Indian worker being beaten by officers during the raid. I would rather sign the paper than be beaten. Then, the head of our maktab came and talked to the Jawaazaat. He said, 'We are from the Ministry of Hajj. You are from the Ministry of Interior. Don't you know what our work is?' The officer responded, 'Who are you? What are you doing here?' The head of the maktab then told the officer that he was the head of maktab that was in-charge of the operations there. They were speaking in loud voices. So, someone who was working as an undercover security officer then approached them and told them to calm down. He advised them against showing to the crowd of pilgrims who were watching nearby that the Saudi organizers were not working in cooperation with one another. Then, he asked both parties to settle the argument inside one of the tents and away from the view of the pilgrims. I eavesdropped on the discussion to find out what was going on. After the undercover officer heard the arguments from both parties, he said something like this, 'We are all working to serve the pilgrims. To them, we are all one unit. So, it is not good to show that we cannot agree on things. Now, we, Saudis, do not have enough cooks who can prepare the kind of food that the pilgrims eat. We need to look for help. Who is going to work in the kitchen? Your son? My son?' After that, the Jawaazaat relented. We were safe from arrest. I don't know what was going to happen to the others who had been arrested. There were so many of them in the bus. They were shouting, 'Help us too! Help us too!' We felt sorry for them, but what could we do?

Ridhwan was summoned by the Jawaazaat after the hajj season was over. Although his iqamah identity card was already returned by the Jawaazaat officer who attempted to arrest him, he figured that the latter was still in possession of the document of admission, which he was forced to sign. He went to consult his employer at the office with his two colleagues who were also summoned. His employer then requested the assistance of a relative who was in the police force.

Ridhwan and his friends were asked to provide two passport-sized photographs of themselves and a photocopy of their iqamah identity cards. Their employer promised to settle the issue. Ridhwan did not report to the Jawaazaaat nor did he receive any further news from his employer. When he renewed his iqamah two months later without any problems, he assumed that everything was fine.

Many Fatanis think that it will take many years before Saudization truly impacts their rice bowl in the hajj industry. In 2006, many Indonesian pilgrims were left starving when a Saudi catering company failed to deliver food to them. The Indonesian Hajj Mission had previously relied on the catering services by the Organization of Mutawwifs for Southeast Asian Pilgrims<sup>30</sup>, which is run by a committee of Southeast Asian muwalladeen whose families have been involved providing services to pilgrims for several generations. In the hajj season of 2006, the Indonesian Hajj Mission awarded the contract to supply food to some 200,000 Indonesian pilgrims to a company, called ANA-Arafah, owned by a member of Saudi royalty. Ridhwan recalled the panic:

I was working as a cook's assistant that year. The Indonesian pilgrims came to us to ask for food. They told us that they had not eaten anything from the day before. We felt so sorry for them. So, we cooked extra food for every meal that we prepared. Then, we distributed it to as many of them as we could. You see, the pilgrims are usually served by people who have been in this business for so long. We all learn about it from a young age. If someone thinks that he can just start a catering business and start serving a large number of pilgrims, he is wrong. One has to know when to cook, how much ingredients to keep in stock, where and how the food will be delivered, who is going to do the delivery, and so on and so forth. It's complicated because the all these things have to be done quickly, especially when you consider that the places where pilgrims gather are so crowded.

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30 A mutawwif is, traditionally, a person who guides pilgrims through pilgrimage rites. The arrangement has evolved over several centuries so that the mutawwif now operates a business organization that is responsible for providing accommodation, food and water, as well as transport services to pilgrims.

According to some Fatanis, the state institutions involved in the planning of the hajj have become more aware of the risks of sidelining the business networks of Makkah's immigrant communities, especially after the catering mess of 2006. 'Abd al-Ghaffar had an interesting story to tell:

There is a story that circulates among the Fatanis. In the time of King Faisal, a group of Saudi Arabs approached the king asking for favors in securing business opportunities in the hajj industry. However, King Faisal is known to be a wise ruler. He asked them, 'Can you speak the language of the foreign pilgrims? Do you eat their traditional food?' When they answered "no" he said to them, 'That is the reason why you can't do the work that is being done by the foreigners.'

I cannot ascertain the veracity of the story told by 'Abd al-Ghaffar. Nevertheless, it illustrates the Fatanis' conviction that the non-Arab muwalladeen like them will continue to be important in the service of hajj pilgrims for some time to come. As a group positioned in-between Makkah and the homeland society, the Fatanis are strategically situated to bridge the institutions and groups involved in the hajj industry, especially in the provision of services to pilgrims from Jawi. Furthermore, the community's familiarity with the various processes of hajj businesses enhances their advantage over Saudi businesses, which are only now aiming to penetrate the industry.

## **THE HAJJ OF THE MAKKAWIS**

The introduction of hajj pilgrim quotas by Saudi Arabia is aimed at providing opportunities for as many of the world's Muslims to undertake the hajj at least once in their lifetime as ordained by God in the Quran. While some Muslims who have enough means would like to perform the hajj multiple times may find the quota system restrictive, there are sound reasons for its introduction. The world's Muslim population has grown massively while the various venues of the hajj's ritual have remained and must always remain the same. Saudi Arabia has invested much capital into the expansion of some of the venues. The creation of a multi-floored complex



at Mina is an example of such efforts. This project has successfully eased the crowdedness during the ritual stoning of the devil at the Jamaraat through vertical spatial expansion of the ritual's venue. Despite its efforts, Saudi Arabia recognizes its limitations in coping with the stresses of overcrowding on Makkah's infrastructural capacity as well as the city's service industry. Abu Seyf spoke about the crowdedness of the contemporary hajj at his home one evening:

A lot of people think that it was more difficult to perform the hajj in the past than it is today. It is true that people had to go through the various hardships of long-distance travel onboard ships in the past. Now, you go on the airplane and zoom to Jiddah. Land travel here was also not as convenient in the past. The pilgrims had to ride the camel or the donkeys to go to the various places for the rituals of the hajj. Actually, there were trucks that one could ride on, but not everyone could afford it. Some people would even walk from one venue to another. That was physically exhausting. However, many people don't get it. It is still challenging to perform the hajj today. In the past, there were not as many people performing the hajj each year. It was not as dangerous. Have you ever heard the stories about stampedes at the Jamaraat? Before the current complex was built, going to the Jamaraat for the ritual stoning each year was always nerve-wracking even for seasoned pilgrims like us. Many of the pilgrims just shoved one another as they tried to make their way in the crowd. Small-sized people like me naturally lost out. We were pushed from all directions; left, right, front, and from the back. In addition to this, there were the women in our groups that we had to look out for.

Today, many of the Fatanis still try to perform the hajj annually. Although Muslims are decreed to perform the hajj at least once, there is no injunction against performing it multiple times. The repeated performances are considered voluntary acts of piety. According to several hadeeth, the reward to be received for a proper performance of the hajj is complete forgiveness of one's sins. For this reason, many Fatanis feel that it is a waste for residents of the holy city to forego the opportunity to perform the hajj annually.

I performed the hajj of 2011 with a group of Fatanis and learnt that the logistics, and perhaps experiences, of the Makkawis' hajj are different from that of pilgrims who come from other societies. Our group left Makkah for the Plain of

Arafat an hour ahead of schedule. 'Abd al-Ghaffar telephoned me at eight o'clock in the morning to ask that I be ready as soon as possible. According to 'Abd al-Ghaffar, the authorities have become stricter in their management of the hajj each year and so the organizers of the group that we were joining for the rituals of the hajj wanted to start the day earlier in anticipation of obstacles. In previous years, 'Abd al-Ghaffar drove his own car as close as he could to the Plain of Arafat and traveled the remaining distance on foot. However, in 2010, he had to hitch a ride with a pickup truck after security officers stopped him from driving to a location that was within reasonable walking distance to Arafat. The gathering at the Plain of Arafat is the most important ritual requirement of the hajj. According to the hadeeth, a pilgrim has to arrive at this location before sunset on 9<sup>th</sup> Dhu al-Hijjah for his hajj to be valid. In 2011, 'Abd al-Ghaffar's wife and eighteen-year-old son, as well as his elder sister, were planning to perform the hajj. This was his also son's first performance of the hajj. Thus, 'Abd al-Ghaffar decided that it would be prudent to join a pilgrimage group in 2011 in order to avoid any major inconveniences for his family.

We arrived at Arafat at around midday. Several bouts of stoppages notwithstanding, our bus's progress towards Arafat went rather smoothly. Everyone in the bus appeared to be relieved once our bus drove past the entrance of the Plain of Arafat. Most of the pilgrims were sitting in the tents that were leased out to the various pilgrim-serving makatib. The tents were located within boundaries of sections of the Plain of Arafat that had been allocated for pilgrims of the different regions of the world. There were still many pilgrims who were sitting on the streets outside the various tented sections. This is an indication that there are many more pilgrims who perform the hajj each year than is documented in official statistics. Undocumented pilgrims like those in our group were not able to enter the tented compounds. The entrances to these sections were guarded by men who request to

see the appropriate identification before letting anyone in. Security officers were also positioned at many locations around Arafat in order to direct traffic as well as assist the pilgrims. Groups of pilgrims who appeared to be lost could be seen surrounding these officers, who looked overwhelmed. Nevertheless, the smooth condition of vehicle traffic suggested that they were doing relatively well.

The activities of pilgrims, who assisted in the distribution of food and beverages, were outstanding amidst the crisscross of pedestrians and vehicles. Donations of food and drinks had poured in abundantly during the hajj as they did during Ramadhan in Makkah. Such acts of generosity were going on at massive levels in Arafat. Donated food and drinks were delivered by the loads of container trucks. Additionally, it was not just staples such as water and bread that were being distributed. Cooked food such as biryani rice and crates of fruit juices were also among the things that were handed out. Everywhere one could see that the pilgrims were not just happy to receive the donated food items, but were also eager to partake in their distribution. I did not understand the reason why 'Abd al-Ghaffar, who was sitting close to the entrance of our bus, kept accepting crates of buns and bottled drinking water from other pilgrims. It was when we performed the reverse role of handing out these crates to other pilgrims that I learned to appreciate what was going on. Everyone present was part of a chain of distribution. At one moment, we were recipients and at another, we were distributors.

Our bus circled the Plain of Arafat until the driver found a parking spot that was close to the start of one of the eight routes leading to Muzdalifah, the place where pilgrims are required to go to and stay until midnight at the soonest. We dispersed into smaller groups after agreeing to assemble shortly before sunset to beat the traffic leaving Arafat for Muzdalifah. Unlike other pilgrims whose hajj was arranged by registered hajj operators, our group did not have space in the tents that

were set up by the Ministry of Hajj. 'Abd al-Ghaffar's family and I found a space in between parked buses to sit on our mats while we supplicated and waited until it was time to leave Arafat for Muzdalifah.

'Abd al-Ghaffar reflected on his early experiences of the hajj as a child. He likened the Makkawis's performance of the hajj several decades earlier to a six-day camp. Every family had to ensure that they brought enough tents, food, and cooking equipment as they would have to prepare their own meals. Motorized vehicles were already used to transport the pilgrims then, but the number of vehicles available was much less than in the present day. When the ownership of personal vehicles swelled in Makkah, the Makkawis' performance of the hajj also changed. The availability of private transportation eases the Fatanis' hajj by making it convenient for them to return home to rest after completing its daily rituals, especially now that the authorities are restricting the use of personal vehicles for travel to Arafat and Muzdalifah on the 9<sup>th</sup> of Dhu al-Hijja in order to stem the traffic hold-up owing to the size and density of the crowd at these two venues.

As the country claiming sovereignty over the Haramayn, Saudi Arabia's legitimacy among the global Islamic ummah rests upon the smooth running of the hajj. It is for this reason that the Ministry of Hajj is mandated with the responsibility of constantly improving the management of the hajj. Part of the Ministry's efforts includes the construction of separate sections of tents to encamp pilgrims based on the regions of the world they have come from. The individual sections are then placed under the management of the mutawwif organization of the respective regions such as Organization of Mutawwifs for Southeast Asian Pilgrims.

Being unofficial pilgrims, the Fatanis do not come under the responsibility of any of these administrative or logistical organizations except in cases of

emergencies. We may imagine them as being at the perimeters of the system that has been put in place. I was often told that the Ministry of Hajj attempted to enforce a hajj visa requirement on Makkah's residents several years ago, but failed after facing strong opposition from the residents. By allowing them to continue performing the hajj without the visa unlike everyone else, the Ministry of Hajj can be seen to be accommodating. However, the Makkawis do not receive the services that the other pilgrims enjoy such as access to tents as well as other important facilities located within the encampments.

The situation at Mina on subsequent days was even more inconvenient for the Makkawis. Mina is the venue for the ritual stoning of the Devil. The conduct of this ritual was fraught with danger until Saudi Arabia took on a massive construction project to expand the venue. Two fatal incidents in 1998 and 2004 resulted in the deaths of 118 and 251 pilgrims respectively. Every one of the pilgrims I spoke to applaud this move, which cost the Saudis SR4 billion and took four years to complete. Aside from ritual stoning of the Devil, pilgrims are required to spend three evenings at Mina. Since the project's completion in 2010, security officers are tasked with chasing away any group found sitting along any vehicle or pedestrian pathway. Thus, pilgrims who do not have access to the tented sections of Mina, including the Fatanis, have to shift their sitting location several times throughout the evening when instructed to do so by the security personnel. In spite of the inconvenience that they have to endure for being at the perimeters of the system, many of them are content that the authorities have not prevented them from undertaking it annually. For them, performance of the annual hajj is not only considered a religious duty, but also a birthright.

## MONETARY AND SPIRITUAL REWARDS OF THE HAJJ

The benefits of performing the hajj are many. 'Abd al-Ghaffar said, "Our religion tells us that life in this world is transient, while life in the hereafter is eternal. In the Quran, Allah has promised anyone who is present at Arafat on 9<sup>th</sup> of Dhu al-Hijjah a place in heaven. This is the ultimate reward of the hajj." For anyone who performs the hajj or has had the opportunity to observe it, the religiosity of the event is irrefutable. The Fatanis hajj, however, also has a financial aspect to it.

Many Fatanis look for opportunities to go through the hajj as a proxy. I am referring to the practice of hajj al-badl. According to some hadeeths, someone who has completed the hajj at least once may repeat the hajj on behalf of someone else. For example, if a Muslim is disabled, or dies before fulfilling his hajj obligation, another Muslim may be appointed to perform it on his behalf. That person who is undergoing the rituals of the hajj again is typically financially compensated. This is a mutually beneficial agreement. "By accepting the trust of performing the hajj for a deceased or a disabled, we help them gain merit while also receiving the hajj merit ourselves," said 'Abd al-Ghaffar. The question of whether accepting payment for performing the hajj dilutes the spiritual value of one's hajj does not even cross the mind for it has been made clear in the Quran that one is allowed to seek bounty from the hajj. Furthermore, the earnestness with which these Fatani pilgrims perform the rituals of the hajj shows that they are not merely doing it for monetary rewards. According to them, there is no reason to cut corners when performing the hajj on behalf of others as that would only jeopardize the merits of one's own hajj.

The opportunity to earn money from the hajj al-badl is welcomed by the Fatanis. For some families, the income earned may even go a long way. Firstly, it enables the women, who are typically barred from accepting employment at other times of the year, to earn some income. There is also no religious injunction against

children performing this role. Thus, a Fatani family may even benefit financially from taking their younglings through the rites if there are opportunities to do so. There were a few families in our pilgrimage group that brought some young children along with them. I also saw many children and toddlers during the nights that I spent at Mina, although I am unsure if these children were, in fact, performing the hajj al-badl. Nonetheless, many Fatanis claim that financial reward alone is not enough to motivate them to perform the hajj annually. Abu Seyf said:

Many of them say that the amount of money given to someone to perform the hajj al-badl is increasingly insufficient. Each year the number of pilgrims increases, and the officers become stricter in managing the hajj. Look at the situation in Mina. You sit at one place for a while, and then you are asked to leave. So, you have to keep shifting throughout the night. When you consider the amount of SR2,000 or SR2,500 being paid in light of the physical weariness of the hajj, it's just not worth it to perform the hajj for money. The spiritual rewards of doing the hajj, and also on behalf of someone who could not do it, that's worth it.

The Day of Wuquf, which is the 9<sup>th</sup> of Dhu al-Hijja, fell on a Saturday during the hajj of 2011. The *khaatib*<sup>31</sup> who was delivering the sermon at the mosque where I joined the Friday congregational prayers the day before talked extensively about the need to treat the dhuyuuf al-Rahman with honor and warmth. Such messages echo throughout the valley of Makkah from the earliest arrival of pilgrims to the blessed city. Samia El-Moslimany (2002), a Jiddah-based free-lance photographer, discovers that many of the people who are responsible for serving hajj pilgrims find a deeper spiritual meaning in the work they do other than the monetary rewards that such work provides. She quotes Rami Abu-Ghazaleh, the CEO of a popular fast-food chain:

No one in our team looks at what we do during hajj as a job. It is a duty that we have been blessed with: to provide the millions of hajjis coming to Makkah with clean, great-tasting food at an incredible

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31 Khaatib is the person who delivers sermons.

value—fast. The honor to serve hajjis can never be translated into monetary gains. It is worship. It is a duty.

The attitudes of many Fatanis working in the hajj industry are similar to Rami Abu-Ghazaleh. The opportunity to serve hajj pilgrims is viewed as an honor. Nevertheless, the economic and spiritual motivations for performing their duties cannot be separated, especially when the obstacles they face in securing regular employment are considered. Ridhwan, Seyf, and Hakeem explained this point extensively to me so that I would understand it well.

Ridhwan disparaged Seyf's refusal to take up a different job during the hajj. He constantly advised me against believing that Seyf truly loves his job. Ridhwan, whose late father has been bedridden for two years at the time of my fieldwork, said, "Washing away our own fathers' feces is already so dreadful. Do you think that Seyf really enjoys his job cleaning up his patients? He thinks that he doesn't have a choice. That is why he sticks to this job." Seyf was patient when I asked him to comment on Ridhwan's words. He admitted that the job is burdensome but he also asserted that others just do not understand. He claimed to do his best at performing his job because of the trust that has been placed in him as a healthcare giver to a pilgrim-patient. When prompted to identify the most valuable aspect of the job, Seyf said, "The smile. Imagine how sad it is for someone to arrive for the hajj only to be bedridden. I think they are mostly moody because of this. However, they regularly offer a smile to me before leaving for home. I take it that they are saying 'thank you' and that relieves all my fatigue and makes my job a meaningful one."

Ridhwan may not be able to relate to Seyf's attitude towards his job, but he also respects the importance of serving the Dhuyuf Al Rahman well. Easily excited, Ridhwan complained passionately about an incident at the train station he was posted to in the hajj of 2011. He took his job as a platform agent seriously. His



responsibility involved ensuring that every passenger who boarded the train through the door where he is stationed did so safely. While in training, the platform agents were often reminded that avoiding the overcrowding of the trains was an important accident prevention measure. During the rush on the Day of Arafat, a British consultant of the train system started to shove the pilgrims into the trains in order to clear the congestion more quickly. This angered Ridhwan. He conceded that the British consultant might not be familiar with the heavy human traffic during the hajj. However, no action taken would be able to prevent congestion. Hence, he agrees with the trainers that passenger safety is of paramount importance. Despite being a low-level employee of the train system, Ridhwan pointed out the inappropriateness of the consultant's actions. Needless to say, Ridhwan was simply brushed aside and told to mind his own business. This incident reminded Ridhwan of his humble position in the company's organizational structure. He asserted that there was nothing more that he could do other than to feel dissatisfied with the consultant. Implying the wrongness of the consultant's action Ridhwan said, "He treated these pilgrims like they were sheep. These pilgrims are guests of God!"

Sometimes those working in service of pilgrims may even forgo an opportunity for financial gain for what they consider to be the greater good. Unlike many others who work in the hajj industry, Hakeem is relatively free of his work responsibilities during the actual days of the hajj. This allows him to perform the hajj year after year. While doing this, Hakeem also joins others who earn an income from pushing pilgrims on wheelchairs for the tawaf and sa'i rituals. A person may earn up to SR300 per pilgrim whom they assist based on current rates. Once, a wheelchair-bound elderly Malaysian pilgrim told Hakeem that he did not intend to perform the *tawaf al-Widaa* (Ar. Farewell Tawaf) after having paid and thanked Hakeem for his services. Hakeem felt surprised and advised the pilgrim against that. A pilgrim never knows if he will be blessed with a chance of returning to the holy city. Hakeem

continued to think of the elderly man's words throughout the rest of the day and figured that the latter might not have the financial means to pay for someone to assist him again. Hakeem went back to look for the old man the next day and told him that he was willing to assist the latter for free. "I just wanted him to have a complete experience of the hajj. Then, he will leave Makkah with a happy heart. I told him that if he is willing, he should simply supplicate for my well-being," says Hakeem.

### **(DIS)CONNECTION**

So far, we have explored the ability of the Fatanis to profit from their community's in-betweenness in the various types of work that they do during the hajj season. Their familiarity in providing services to hajj pilgrims from accumulated experience that spans generations is vital to Saudi Arabia's smooth management of the hajj. Being bilingual and, to a certain extent, bicultural places them at the appropriate position to mitigate the challenges of communication between the Saudi authorities and businesses and the tok syaikhs and their pilgrims from the Malay-Indonesian world, especially Jawi. Even so, we may not assume that they would be able to bridge the two societies seamlessly. Hakeem said that he had to hone his linguistic skills and familiarity with Jawi society before he could operate his intermediary business effectively. Recalling the years he worked as Yaasir's understudy, he said:

I could not speak the Jawi language well in the beginning. We listened to our parents speak in Jawi at home when we were growing up. So, we could also speak some of it. Sometimes we use some Jawi words when we speak to our friends. However, we spoke in Arabic most of the time. Most of the muwalladeen are like that. Even in my family, I am the only one, other than my mother, who is comfortable speaking in Jawi.

I observed various Fatani men going about their work throughout the hajj season of 2011. Although they were reliable in performing their tasks as well as

assisting pilgrims who approached them with problems, interaction between the Fatanis and the pilgrims from Jawi was limited and lacked the intimacy that I expected.

Social interaction between the Fatanis and the pilgrims is mostly confined to work-related matters. The situation among the Fatanis as well as between them and other Makkawis, however, is different. The hajj is a time for rekindling friendships between persons who do not normally meet at other times. At the office of the Bi'thah, the Fatanis spent every night talking and watching television together until they were called upon to assist pilgrims or carry out tasks related to the Bi'thah's operations. Every now and then, I heard one Fatani exclaimed to another about how they have not met up in such a long time. The two would then continue talking and exchange news about their lives and discuss other matters pertaining to life in Makkah. Such friendly exchanges were not limited to the Fatanis. There were also ethnic Thai employees, known as Siyaamis, at the Bi'thah. Ethnic differences did not appear to matter so much among the employees of the Bi'thah. Social interaction among the Fatanis and Siyaamis was visibly more intimate than between them and the members of the hajj mission that came from Thailand. As fellow Makkawis, the Fatanis and Siyaamis have much in common such as their lived experiences, social networks, and life situations among other things.

The situation is similar at other organizations. Seyf says:

Every year, I look forward to the hajj. Do you know why? It is because I get to meet friends whom I have not met since the last hajj season. The people who work at the Tabung Haji's hospitals always come back to work at the same places each year. I don't mean just the Fatanis, but also the Indonesians. It is fun to be able to see them again. It is like meeting a long-lost friend. We are all residents of this place, you know? So, we share something in common. Don't get me wrong. The Malaysian officers are nice too, but they come and go. The seasonal employees, however, are the same faces that you see every year.

I followed Abu Syakeer, a Fatani in his mid-forties, as he performed his work for the Bi'thah during one of the nights in Mina. We walked around the tented section that accommodated pilgrims from Thailand for Abu Syakeer to inspect and ensure that all the facilities were fine. He stopped at various locations to catch up with other Fatani employees of the Bi'thah. Our final stop that night was a kitchen run by a young Saudi-Fatani man. Abu Syakeer said that it was rare for a Saudi-Fatani to be willing to run a kitchen. He claims that most of the Saudi-Fatanis feel that such jobs are too energy-consuming and not appropriate for their social standing. Thus, most of the kitchens that serve Jawi pilgrims are run by Fatanis who are Thai nationals. During our visit, the cook and his crew had just finished serving dinner and was about to begin preparations for breakfast. I was told that each kitchen served a range of several hundreds to thousands of pilgrims. It is like cooking for three feasts each day for six days. Consequently, the kitchen crew does not get much rest until the hajj is over. After our visit to the kitchen, Abu Syakeer brought me to a tent that is the designated rest area for employees of the Bi'thah.

When I woke up from sleep to perform the fajr prayers the next morning, I saw a man and his two sons who were still sleeping. I would later speak to the man who introduced himself as Abu Zaki. He migrated to Makkah from Jawi when he was in his twenties and had already been working as an electrician for several years. He is now in the business of the installation, maintenance, and repair of home air-conditioners. He claims that the income he earns from his regular work is sufficient. Nevertheless, he prefers to continue working in the hajj industry because he enjoys serving the pilgrims. I noticed that Abu Zaki and his sons spoke in Patani Malay, which is somewhat unusual. Most of the Fatani children today are unable to converse in Patani Malay. When I asked Abu Zaki about this issue, he said:

I speak to all my children in Jawi. It is not that I cannot speak in Arabic. I am actually quite fluent, but we are people of Jawi. So, we

must speak Jawi. Our children must be able to speak in Jawi. This is the reason why I take my two young sons with me to work every hajj. I want them to be able to listen to the pilgrims speak in Jawi.

I asked Abu Zaki to comment on my observation that the Fatanis who work in the hajj industry usually do not interact with the Jawi pilgrims other than on work-related matters. He said:

You are right. Do you know why don't they mix around with the pilgrims? It is because they are shy. They are embarrassed because they are unable to speak the Jawi language fluently. Actually, they can and they should. They lack confidence in their abilities. If you speak a language often, you will be better at it. Furthermore, some of them feel like they are more Arabic than they are Jawi.

Some Jawi pilgrims acknowledge that there is a lack of interaction between them and the Fatani hosts. Ahmad, a fifty-something year-old man, was initially reserved when I approached him to start a conversation. He thought that it was rather unusual that a Fatani would talk to him. When he found out that I was a researcher, he opened up:

They speak in Arabic among themselves. We, on the other hand, cannot speak in Arabic. Actually, some of them try to talk to us, but there is nothing much to talk about. This should not be the case. We are all people of Patani, aren't we? Maybe they are not comfortable speaking to us in Jawi language. Seeing that they are not very interested in talking with us, we, then, just do not talk with them.

Many of the Fatanis admit that they are embarrassed by their self-perceived lack of fluency in Patani Malay. Even Hakeem, who had been traveling extensively in Jawi and the rest of Thailand for several years, still appeared a little awkward towards the Jawi pilgrims. The social disconnection between the Jawi pilgrims and the Fatani hosts was not always present just several decades earlier. Many of the Fatanis remember the hajj as being a time for reconnecting with Jawi society, especially with their relatives. Abu Seyf recollects:

In the past, the tok syaikhhs were not as well organized as they are now. So, the pilgrims will look for the Jawis who live in Makkah upon arrival.

They would come to the house and ask us about the proper way to perform the hajj. Some of them are relatives of our own or people who come from our villages of origin in Jawi. They would have already found out where we lived from friends and relatives in Jawi. When they arrived, they just ask around, 'Where is Syi'ib 'Ali? Where is the house of so and so?' Oh, we enjoyed their visits so much. Every year, we received so many of them. So, they came because they needed us.

The situation now is different. The tok syaikhs today are much better than before. They prepare enough food for the pilgrims. They take the pilgrims for visits around Makkah. They also teach their pilgrims about the rituals of the hajj. So, the pilgrims from Jawi do not need to look for us anymore.

'Abd al-Ghaffar, too, recalls that the arrival of pilgrims from Jawi used to create a festive atmosphere in the Syi'ib 'Ali community. The hajj season did not just bring people from Jawi to Makkah, but also things and news. He said:

I remember the crates that arrived with the pilgrims on the ships from Jawi. What did they look like? You know the boxed-shaped wooden crates? These crates would be placed outside our homes when they arrived. The children would run to these crates and climb all over them. We were so excited to know what was inside them. It was not as easy to buy things from Jawi in the past. So, the arrival of the hajj also meant that our mothers were going to get a new stock of foodstuffs to use in their cooking. *Budu*, fish sauce, fruits, and fish crackers; these were some of the things that the pilgrims brought.

Ah, do you know how we kept in touch with our relatives in Jawi? In the beginning, we sent letters. We sent them through the postal service as well as give them to the pilgrims who would then pass it along to our relatives. After that, we bought a voice recorder when they started selling it in the shops. It was not like the one you have here. It was the one that used the cassette tapes; the big one. We would all gather and place the tape recorder in the middle. We would talk about our family – Everyone is fine. So and so is ten years-old now. We are still living in Syi'ib 'Ali. This year the weather is hotter than usual. We would also ask about things in Jawi. I remember asking my grandfather about his health. How is the crop this year? What fruits were in season? Or, we would also request for them to send us this and that. Mainly, we just wanted to hear their voices.

'Abd al-Ghaffar pointed out that many Fatanis were no longer in touch with their relatives in Jawi despite the ease of communications in the present day. He admitted that his family kept regular contact with only two of his cousins via Skype.

Both of his cousins used to live in Makkah, but migrated to Jawi after one of them was deported, while the other decided to pursue higher education in Malaysia.

The social distance between the Fatanis and Jawi society increases from one generation to another. Many older Fatanis who immigrated to Makkah from Jawi say that their experiences of living in the homeland before their migration enable them to relate to their visitors from Jawi. Even so, they are aware that the connection they share with the pilgrims is becoming increasingly tenuous. Abu Seyf, who visited Jawi in 2011, saw that the present day Jawi society is very different from the one that he left several decades ago. The initial excitement of coming home to his birthplace was lost after several weeks. "After a while, there was nothing left to talk about with my relatives. Our lives have become so different," says Abu Seyf.

Ridhwan obliges whenever his mother ask him to join her when the family receives guests from Jawi during the hajj season. In 2011, they were visited by a Jawi couple. Ridhwan said:

While the wife was talking to my mother, I looked at her husband, and he looked at me. I smiled at him, and he smiled at me. We both did not know what to talk about. So, we just listened as my mother and his wife talked. After a while, they, too, no longer had anything to discuss. Although, I did learn about how the husband and wife met after he asked me if I was already married. He saved her from drowning. She decided to marry him despite him being a poor person, while she comes from a rich family. He said to me, "Son, live your life well. What is yours will be yours. Allah is generous." That was nice of him. It made me think of my current love situation. Maybe there is hope after all.

The process of disconnecting from Jawi society is the result of a choice that the Fatanis made in the past several decades. I am referring to the Fatanis' decision to cement their lives in Makkah and forgo any real commitment to migrate back to Jawi. In chapter 3, we saw that the Fatanis increasingly gravitate towards belonging in Makkah as the size of their community grew rapidly in the latter-half of the

twentieth century. Return migration to Jawi also became less tempting when their families grew and they began investing their energy, time, and money, into acquiring real estate property in the holy city. By the time Saudization was introduced, many of the Fatanis, especially the muwalladeen, felt their lives had become too distant from Jawi society, while being too rooted in Makkah, to consider migration to the homeland as a favorable life option.

Many of the muwalladeen cite livelihood concerns as one of the main reasons for their disinclination towards Jawi. They assert that they do not know Jawi society well enough, or at all, to be able to find work that would allow them to sustain themselves financially in the homeland. This issue will be explored in the next chapter.

We have discussed the dual significance of the hajj for the Fatanis in the current chapter. Firstly, it is a religious event that offers spiritual reward that is unmatched by any other. Secondly, the annual occurrence of the hajj offers opportunities to perform seasonal work or run businesses that enable the Fatani to earn enough money to subsist for the rest of the year. The Fatani's lack of confidence in his ability to subsist financially in Jawi and the economic profit that seasonal work in the hajj industry provides discourage him from migrating out of Makkah to escape from the gloomy life choices that he faces being a foreigner. Consequently, his in-betweenness and the problems that it creates are constantly reproduced. Furthermore, the Fatani's encounters with Jawi pilgrims during the hajj cement his feelings of disconnection from the homeland society. Although he possesses some ability to converse in Patani Malay and is familiar with certain aspects of Jawi culture and habitus, the lack of intimacy in his interaction with the pilgrims reminds him of the lack of shared lived experiences between him and the people from his homeland. They do not have much in common other than the fact



that they originate from the same ancestral lands. Hence, being Fatani is not the same as being Jawi. If we imagine a spectrum with Makkah-Saudi Arabia as one extreme and Jawi-Thailand as the other, the Fatani gravitates close to Makkah-Saudi Arabia, while the Jawi would be close to Jawi-Thailand. In the next chapter, we explore some Fatanis' experiences of return migration to the homeland. We will see that as the return migrants adapt to life in Jawi, they move closer towards Jawi-Thailand on our spectrum. However, they ultimately never escape their fate of being in between the two societies.

## **CHAPTER 5 RETROSPECTION, INTROSPECTION, PROSPECTION**

Almost two and a half centuries ago, some men, and women, departed from their homeland and sailed northwest until they arrived in Makkah. As it turns out, these individuals became pioneers of the community of Fatanis in Makkah, which would continue to grow throughout the Asian mobility revolution from 1850 onwards, especially in the period following the Second World War. These Fatani pioneers may not have left their homeland with the intention of founding a settlement in the Islamic holy city. Instead, they left in part from being spatially displaced following the invasion of their society by the armies of Siam. Two centuries later, in contemporary times, the Fatanis are once again on the move. Like the pioneers of the late eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth century, the Fatani migrants today are also put into motion by unfavorable circumstances in the society they live in. The direction of their movement, however, is opposite to that of the pioneers. The current Fatani migrants are moving southeast from Makkah to the homeland in Jawi.

This chapter is about the Fatani muwalladeen's experience of return migration to the homeland. It discusses the challenges that the Fatai return migrants face as they adjust to life in Jawi. In so doing, we come full circle in tracing the direction of migration between Jawi and Makkah. We begin by narrating the shock that a deportee named Murad experienced immediately after arriving at the homeland. As a place, and a society, Jawi is both familiar and strange to the Fatani return migrants. Some of the return migrants adjust to Jawi society more quickly than others. The possession of knowledge or educational qualifications, land, or financial capital, and the right attitude are some factors that may affect the muwalladeen's experience of return migration and the time they take to feel adjusted and acquire a sense of belonging to Jawi. The homeland becomes home, but

Makkah is never too far from the mind. Consequently, the Fatanis' in-betweenness persists and their search for belonging is never completed, always in process.

Every morning he sat anxiously as he waits for the sun's first ray to brighten the landscape of his village in Jawi. As soon as this happened, he rushed towards the road and trudged up the slope until he reached its peak. The same question on his mind a day earlier plagued him on that day. He wondered whether the answer would be different. Will he finally be able to see Makkah, his home? His mind raced toward his wife and infant son. How were they coping with life during his absence? What about his father, his aging grandmother, his brother, and sister? Oh, how tough it was to be stripped of one's life and yet still be alive.

Murad was once again disappointed when he reached his destination. He scanned the horizon repeatedly to make sure that he did not miss anything. He gave up after a while. Maybe the weather was not clear enough that day. He would try again the following day as he had done for several weeks. His resoluteness was wavering. He knew that his efforts were futile, but he pacified himself by saying that the day would come when he could see Makkah once again.

"When I arrived here in Jawi, everything was shrouded in darkness," said Murad, whom I met for the first time in 2009. Murad was in his early forties at that time and worked as an Arabic-language teacher at one of the pondok-turned-madrasahs in Jawi<sup>32</sup>. His physical bearing looks every bit the part. He dresses in a

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32 Unlike traditional pondok schools, madrasah education in Jawi is similar to the modern schooling system. Madrasah students advance from one grade to another after attending classes for a full academic year and successfully meet a minimum grade average in exams. The madrasah is thus more organized compared to the pondok schools. Students who complete their education at the madrasah are considered to be on par with high school graduates in the Middle Eastern countries, thereby enabling them to gain admission to the study of religious sciences in Middle Eastern universities. This situation has contributed to a preference for madrasah vis-à-vis pondok schools among Jawi parents today.

traditional Malay long-sleeved shirt, usually white in color, over a pair of long and dark-colored trousers and wears a pair of synthetic-leather open-toe slippers. He never leaves home without a kuffi skullcap on his head. While his physical turnout conceals his past as a Fatani, his manner of speech does not. Like many other Fatanis whom I have met, Murad is easily excitable in conversation. When this happens, his manner of speech becomes raucous, and he breaks into a loud laughter every so often, unlike men in Jawi who tend to speak in a calm manner. Murad elaborated on his statement:

When I came back, I stayed at my grandmother's old house where she used to live before moving to Makkah. She has been living there for more than forty years, and the house has been empty since. All her children, my mom and her siblings, are living in Makkah. No one is here. Imagine, the house that I came back to? It did not have electricity, no television, nothing. I was literally living in darkness.

My whole life, I never thought that I would have to live in Jawi. I was born here, but my father took me to Makkah when I was still a baby. So, I don't know anything about Jawi, about the people here, how people lived, nothing. When I tried to imagine what kind of place Jawi is while I was living in Makkah, I could not see anything, just darkness. So, when I was deported from Makkah back to Jawi, it was a rude shock for me. My child was newly born at that time, and my wife was still there. I cried thinking about what was going to happen to them. I did not even know what was going to happen to me! I did not have a job. I did not have money. I had nothing here. I used to cry so much. One day, I was shouting from all the frustration. Then, one of my relatives came to hug me. He told me to calm down and be patient. He said that I had to have faith in Allah and that things will get better.

Murad returned to Jawi in the 1990s at a time when most of the Fatani muwalladeen had never experienced the homeland society first-hand. The circumstances of his return only aggravated the distress he experienced from being in the dark about the "homeland" that he "returned" to. Murad was arrested at a security checkpoint on the road from Makkah to al-Madinah. His cousin, 'Abd al-Ghaffar, whose was also present, had earlier agreed to transport a Jawi lady to al-Madinah for a fee. Murad was hesitant, but relented following his cousin's persuasions. Murad, whose iqamah registered him as a security guard, was charged

and found guilty of illegal employment and harboring someone who had overstayed her visa. He was deported not long after his arrest. His cousin, with whom we have become quite well acquainted, received a much lighter punishment and continues to live a decent life in Makkah.

Murad's story about his initial experience of return migration is instructive. In the previous chapter, we saw that the muwalladeen's interaction with Jawi pilgrims during the hajj, or the lack of it, makes them aware of their cultural dislocation from the homeland society. Murad's words confirm this. The differences between life in Makkah and Jawi are simply too many. Thus, the Fatani deportee is greeted by a "rude shock" upon his return to the homeland. The situation is not far better for the voluntary return migrant. Most of them feel that unfavorable circumstances in Makkah have pushed them out.

George Gmelch defines return migration as "the movement of emigrants back to their homelands to resettle" (1980:136). So, return migrant is the same person who migrated out of the homeland. The Fatani muwalladeen who migrate to Jawi do not fit Gmelch's profile of return migrants. In fact, many of them are first-time migrants who move to their parents' society of origin, which is officially registered to be their homeland owing to their Thai nationality. Their exposure to some aspects of Jawi life and culture through their parents and community in Makkah gives them a certain level of familiarity to the Jawi society that they migrate to. Nevertheless, Jawi society has changed over the years and is largely unknown to them until now.

## **THE HOMELAND IN IMAGINATION AND REALITY**

"What are the images that come to mind when you think of the homeland?" This is a question I often posed to a Fatani muwallad whom I had just met. I found this to be an interesting exercise to gain insights into the muwalladeen's

perceptions of Jawi and its society. Most of the muwalladeen who have now visited the homeland at least once admit that their imagination of Jawi prior to their first visit was way off track.

One of the images that immediately comes to the Fatani's mind when visualizing Jawi is that of old wooden houses. One muwalladah named Fauziah, an undergraduate at the International Islamic University Malaysia, said:

Before my first visit to Jawi, I often imagined it to be full of wooden houses that are surrounded by thick forests. I thought that it would be a great place to visit. As you know, there are few trees and not much greenery in Makkah. It's a city in the desert. So, I thought that life in Jawi would be wonderful.

Fauziah's imagination of Jawi prior to her visit there is interesting. She thought of a blissful life surrounded by greenery in explicit contrast with Makkah. She differs from most of the muwalladeen whose imaginations of Jawi were clouded by negativity. However, she is similar to the other muwalladeen in thinking that Jawi is a rural place without proper public facilities. I was repeatedly told by the muwalladeen that they did not think that Jawi would have street lighting. In their own words, they describe Jawi as being "dark" as Murad has also said earlier. Aside from this, many of them imagined that homes in Jawi do not have access to centralized electricity and water supply.

Some of the muwalladeen who have not visited the homeland continue to hold on to these images even after listening to stories that debunk such myths from friends who return to Makkah after visiting Jawi. Many of the Fatani homes in Makkah today have access to the Internet. A muwallad who finds it hard to believe the stories told by his peers can easily verify their stories by searching for the relevant images on the Internet. Thus, I found it confounding that they were stubborn in their perception of Jawi. According to Ridhwan, "I will have to see it for

myself to believe it.” Hakeem, on the other hand, argues that these muwalladeen are in denial. He said, “They just do not want to believe it. It gives them a reason not to consider the possibility of returning there at all. I think everyone should return to Jawi for a visit at the least.”

Many of the muwalladeen admit that their perceptions of Jawi are shaped by the stories, which their parents told about their lives before migrating to Makkah as well as those that circulate in their community. When the Fatanis’ lives became increasingly anchored to Makkah and disconnected from Jawi, their perception of the homeland appears to have remained static. This was the explanation that was proposed by some of the muwalladeen. Hakeem said:

They have not returned to Jawi for a long time. So, they do not know that the place has changed so much. Furthermore, the Fatanis of my parents’ generation did not think that Jawi would ever develop. They put these thoughts in our minds when we were growing up.

Ridhwan told me that he had considered migrating out of Makkah to study in Malaysia like his cousin Muhsin. Then, his mother said to him, “There is nothing in Jawi. Why would you want to go there?” One evening, I decided to show some pictures of Jawi on my computer to Ridhwan and ‘Abd al-Ghaffar’s mother. When I showed a picture of contemporary Pattani town, she asked, “This is Pattani now? Oh, it is so different from when I lived in Jawi.” Umm ‘Abd al-Ghaffar was visibly surprised. Her reaction was intensified when I showed pictures of the road close to her former village on the way to Yala province. She looked to be deep in thought, but kept asking if these pictures were really of places close to her village. After I finished showing her the pictures, she kept quiet. After some time, she let out a sigh and said, “I have not been in Jawi for so long. I don’t know how it is like now. Maybe someday we can visit it when you are there.”

"They think that we are still living like we used to when they left," said 'Arif, a public intellectual in Jawi. 'Arif has traveled to Makkah and other places to meet up with groups of Jawi men who are involved in the Malay nationalist movement. He says that many of these migrants are out of touch with life in Jawi. The way they imagine Jawi is like incarcerating the homeland in a temporal prison. The homeland remains unchanged. It does not progress. Most of the homes in Jawi in the last ten years are built with concrete contrary to the perception of the muwalladeen. Furthermore, they appear to associate wooden homes with the lack of financial means or some degree of poverty. Again, this indicates their lack of familiarity of things in Jawi society. The cost of building a new home using wood is much higher than concrete. Thus, the owner of a new wooden home in Jawi today is likely to earn a reputation as a person of means.

The muwalladeen's perception of Jawi as a rural place is not wrong, although they are incorrect to assume that Jawi is deprived of infrastructure. Many visitors to Jawi are surprised by the high quality of some of its infrastructure. Many of them are impressed by the high-quality of roads that connect most villages today. Important stretches of these roads are lined with street lamps. Most communities also have access to water, which runs through pipes that connect each household to the respective community's own groundwater processing plant. In some communities, tap water is safe for consumption when boiled first.

Many of the muwalladeen who visit the homeland discover that their perceptions of the physical makeup of Jawi have been shaped by the outdated recollections of their parents. They realize that much has changed, and for the better, in the past several decades since their parents' departure for Makkah. Even so, *place* is not defined only by physical structures, but also social life. Most of the Fatanis migrated to Makkah at a time when conflict between the Muslims of Jawi and



the Thai state was rife. In this regard, the muwalladeen return to a place, which is similar to the one described in stories that circulate in their community in Makkah.

## **Politics of Ethnicity**

Jawi has been mired in political violence since 2004, after a decade of peace between insurgents and the Thai state. In January that year, a group of militants attacked a military base and escaped with more than 100 rifles, which they took from the armory. The Thai state and the various militant groups have been engaged in a guerrilla-style insurgency since then. So far, more than 5,000 lives have been lost with more than 10,000 injured.

Reports of deaths and injuries of security personnel and civilians alike have dominated television, newspaper, and the Internet reports on Jawi in the last nine years. These reports cast a cloak of fear over many visitors as well as residents of Jawi. Many people in Jawi complain that the media portrays the situation to be worse than it really is. Mass media feeds on sensationalist stories. Most of the violence is concentrated at several locations throughout Jawi. Barring bad luck, a person who avoids visiting areas of heavy conflict would generally be safe. Even so, it is reasonable that visitors, including the muwalladeen, would feel nervous over the situation.

"I told you that they would not come," said 'Abd al-Jaleel after talking to some visiting muwalladeen on his cell phone. According to him, some of the muwalladeen who visit Jawi after the conclusion of the hajj season each year are nervous about traveling extensively in the area, especially if they are first-time visitors.

'Abd al-Jaleel is a Siyaami muwallad of Makkah, who migrated to Jawi after concluding his undergraduate studies in the Arabic language at the Islamic University

of Madinah. Now in his mid-thirties, he works as a lecturer in the Arabic language at the Prince of Songkla University (Pattani Campus). He tries his best to assist the muwalladeen in resolving their administrative needs, including registering for smart card identity cards and getting various motor vehicle licenses. His goal is to inculcate a positive image of homeland among his fellows.

The muwalladeen usually travel from Makkah to Jawi in a group and are received by their respective relatives upon arrival. Then, they are brought back to the villages of their families' origins and remain there before regrouping and touring other parts of Thailand with the other muwalladeen. 'Abd al-Jaleel thinks that it is good for them to spend time with their relatives, although he observes this practice to be a barrier for the muwalladeen to appreciate other things that Jawi has to offer. Thus, the visiting muwalladeen tend to enjoy the attractions of Thailand, but not of Jawi. Furthermore, he thinks that the muwalladeen are likely to adapt to life in the town districts more easily than in the villages should they migrate to Jawi. He said:

The muwalladeen think that they can continue living in Makkah forever. Maybe they can, but one never knows. Now, many of them have the chance to visit Jawi unlike before. They should take the opportunity to spend some time in town. They can come and stay with me. There are some muwalladeen like me who have lived here for some time. We would like to show them that life in Jawi is not as bad as they imagine. But no, they look for us only when they need assistance at the administrative offices, and then they go back to their villages or travel around the country.

The muwalladeen's perception of the risks of traveling around Jawi is also aggravated by their relatives. One undergraduate of the International Islamic University Malaysia, Jameel, who visited his grandfather in Pattani in 2011, said that the latter would not even let him leave the house without a relative in tow. When he came to Pattani town to meet me, his grandfather insisted on accompanying him on the public transport before handing him over to me. Jameel said, "My grandfather

treats my sister and me like we are kids. He insists that we do not go out on our own." His grandfather told me, "I am afraid that they might not know their way around. Furthermore, they cannot speak in Thai. So, if a police officer or a soldier asks them some questions, they will not understand and not know what to say."

The gravity of the Fatani muwalladeen's inability to converse in Thai is heightened by the distrust towards the Jawi Malay population among some officers of the state. In chapter 2, we have observed that *culture* has long been a centerpiece of the political struggle between the Jawi society and the Thai state. The global discourse about *Islamic terrorism* adds fuel to the officers' distrust. To the muwallad's mind, a Jawi citizen of Thailand, living in the Middle East, and who is also unable to converse in the national language, is likely to match the security personnel's profile of an insurgent. Their projection may not be off the mark. Some of the muwalladeen have stories to tell. Hakeem recounted an incident from his first visit to Jawi:

When we arrived at the immigration checkpoint at the airport in Bangkok, I stood behind Yaasir in the line. It was the first time I returned to Jawi and Yaasir paid for my trip. His whole family was also there. After the officer had finished checking his passport, he told me that he would wait for me outside because he needed to make sure that his wife and children were alright.

I approached the immigration officer and handed over my passport. He flipped through my passport and then said something to me in Thai. I did not understand any of what he said. I could not speak in Thai, so I responded in Jawi-language and then also in Arabic. After that, he said something again before gesturing for me to wait. Another officer came after that and took me to a room. There was a table and a few chairs in that room. One after another they came and talk to me, but I could not understand any of them. I tried telling them in Jawi-language and Arabic that I could not speak Thai. After a while, I just kept quiet. I was getting really worried.

I looked toward the clock and saw more than two hours had passed. I did not know where Yaasir was, or if he had left after waiting for so long. Then, another officer came in and spoke to me in Jawi Malay. At that point, all the tension in my body was eased, and I felt like I could just collapse. The officer said that the others wanted to see my birth

certificate. Then, he asked about why I could not speak in Thai. So, I told him that I was born in Makkah and had never been in Jawi. He understood and told me that everything would be okay. Then, he advised me to learn some Thai so that I can avoid getting into such a situation again.

Hakeem had other stories to tell, but concedes that the situation has improved over the years. "Now many of the officers know about the muwalladeen. Many of the muwalladeen return each year to register for the new identity cards and to travel around the country," said Hakeem. Others like my friend Hameed agrees that the situation is improving. He said:

Nowadays, the officers even joke about our inability to speak Thai. Once I was stopped by a police officer at a security checkpoint while driving my brother's car. He asked, 'Do you want to go to prison for driving like a mad man?' I said, "*Khrap*<sup>33</sup>." The officer was shocked. Then, my brother told him that I had recently returned from Makkah for the first time and did not know how to speak in Thai. The officer broke into laughter. He told my brother that I should be more careful in my driving and also when responding to officers in Thai.

Ethnicity is a significant motor of social life and politics in Jawi. It is a peculiar place compared to the rest of Thailand. In the three provinces that make up Jawi namely Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat, being Muslim is often equated to being Malay while Buddhism is associated with the Thais. Muslims comprise 76 percent of the population in Jawi while Buddhists constitute 23.3 percent. At the national level, Muslims represent only 12 percent of the population. The political violence that has engulfed Jawi for most of the last six decades is largely an ethnicity-based conflict, although religion is often used in the insurgents' political rhetoric. To the Jawi insurgents, the Thai state is an imperialist force, which imposes their cultural and religious values on the invaded Jawi population. Successive Thai governments, on the other hand, have tended to view the Jawi-Muslims as a bellicose community

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33 In Thai, *khrap* is a particle that is added at the end of expressions to indicate politeness, but may also be taken to mean "yes."

and largely ignored their grievances. Still, we cannot ignore that improvements have been made. Through eleven years of engagement in the Jawi community, I have encountered many persons who assert that they are comfortable with being citizens of Thailand. They maintain that there is still much to be done to establish mutual acceptance and understanding of cultural differences between the Thai-Buddhist majority and the Jawi-Muslim minority. Nevertheless, the Jawi community is sufficiently integrated in Thai society for its members to participate in the various fields of social life, including the economy, education, and politics among others.

According to some of the muwalladeen, relations between the Siyaamis and Fatanis in Makkah just several decades ago resembled the present day situation in Jawi. Immigrants who arrived in Makkah from Thailand were influenced by the ethnicity-based politics and prejudices of the homeland. The situation has changed greatly owing to the efforts of certain individuals who believe that the Siyaami and Fatani muwalladeen should not let politics in the homeland shape relationships among themselves in Makkah. Ridhwan said, "We try our best not to differentiate between the Siyaamis and Fatanis. When a Siyaami muwallad says something nasty to a Fatani, another Siyaami muwallad will advise him. The same goes for our group." After much has been achieved in bridging the two ethnic communities in Makkah, the muwalladeen's experience of ethnic differentiation in Jawi is disconcerting. Even so, the inter-ethnic distrust in Jawi and other provinces of southern Thailand influences the movements of the Siyaami and Fatani muwalladeen during their visits.

"Waseem and the others will never leave their relatives' villages in Songkla and come to Pattani. Even if they do, they will not spend much time here. They are scared. They don't trust the people here," said 'Abd al-Jaleel. After years living in Jawi, 'Abd al-Jaleel often considers himself a Fatani despite the negative reactions of some of his Siyaami friends in Makkah. "Some of my friends in Makkah wrote

messages to me when I registered my name as 'Abd al-Jaleel Fatani on Facebook. They said, 'How can you do that?' What is this? I don't care about what they say or think." He asserts that there is not much use in distinguishing the Siyaamis and the Fatanis in Makkah except to understand the history of the two communities. Their life situations in contemporary Makkah, he says, are similar. Ethnic differences do not distinguish their fates. As for himself, 'Abd al-Jaleel says that he made a decision to live in Pattani province about ten years ago and now feels adapted to social life around him. "I prefer the society and life here compared to my parents' community in Nakhorn Sri Thammarat or my wife's hometown in Phattalung," said 'Abd al-Jaleel. In fact, he prefers to identify himself as a Fatani. He smiled broadly when I suggested that he can be Fatani and Siyaami simultaneously. He said, "You got it. I don't have to throw away my own ethnic background and culture just because I identify myself as Fatani. I live in Pattani. So, I am Fatani."

## DIASPORIC PERSONHOOD

Let us return, for a moment, to 'Abd al-Ghaffar's khaatirah that we read in chapter 1. He wrote:

How can I bear two hearts in my chest and two tongues on my lips?  
Between two hearts is a lost love. Neither a little nor a lot remains.  
And between two tongues, is a lost language. I am not eloquent nor am  
I inarticulate.

His statements are as much about belonging as they are about culture. According to 'Abd al-Ghaffar, his statements are meant to point out that the culture of the Fatanis in Makkah is not solely that of Jawi Malays or Makkawi Arabs. At the same time, their culture is neither wholly Makkawi Arabic nor Jawi Malay. "Our culture takes some of that of the Arabs in Makkah and some of Jawi's," said 'Abd al-Ghaffar. "So, yours is a third culture," I said. 'Abd al-Ghaffar answered in the affirmative while nodding his head.

'Abd al-Ghaffar's comment on the cultural in-betweenness of the Fatanis suggests that the community's encounter with cultural difference in Makkah contribute towards the emergence of a hybrid culture. This, of course, brings to mind Homi Bhabha who wrote, "It is in the emergence of the interstices – the overlap and displacement of domains of difference – that the intersubjective and collective experiences of *nationness*, community interest, or cultural are negotiated" (2004:2). Bhabha also warns against the assumption of the existence of authentic and unchanging cultures in the past. To this end, he defines community as a "project – at once a vision and construction" (Bhabha 2004:4). Furthermore, each community comprises individuals and groups with competing visions of their intersubjective values and identity. Thus, cultures, communities, and persons, are social entities that are malleable and constantly emergent. In this hybridization process, the emerging social entity does not represent a complete breakaway from the past or what it was before. Similarly, the Fatani return migrant learns what it means to be a Jawi person as he adapts to social life in the homeland. Over time, the returnee becomes more proficient in interacting with others in the homeland. Nevertheless, the process of becoming a Jawi person is never completed. His cultural in-betweenness is again transformed, but never evaporates altogether.

### **Short-lived Excitement**

The return of the muwallad to the homeland is an event that generates some excitement among relatives and other members of the community in Jawi. "There was a muwallad who was in my village a week or two earlier. This is the first time he has come back to Jawi. I heard that his father is unwell. They returned so that he can get treatment at the hospitals here," said Mustafa excitedly in July 2010. He offered to introduce the muwallad. However, I was told, several days later, that he

had returned to Makkah. So, I asked Mustafa about the muwallad's activities in the village during his visit. He said:

Actually, it was very interesting in some ways. Some of the muwalladeen hardly mix around with the villagers when they come back. This boy, I think he wanted to talk with the people. He would come to the coffee shop near his relatives' home and sit at one of the tables. Some of the villagers tried to talk to him. He tried too, but he could not speak in Jawi language very well. Actually, when I think about that I sympathize with him somewhat. He would sit at the corner and sip at his cup of coffee or tea. Whenever someone comes in, they greet him and he would acknowledge. However, that is all there is to it. Language is a barrier.

For the muwalladeen whose return to Jawi spans only a short time, usually one to two weeks, their experience of the homeland is relatively pleasant. Many of their relatives are excited to meet them and find out about their lives in Makkah or simply to know what kind of people they are. The social atmosphere is no different from that when a visitor from a foreign country comes for a visit. The villagers ask questions about everyday life: How is the weather in Makkah? Where do you live? Do you live in the city or in villages like us? Do the Fatanis still eat Jawi food? Our friend Masrur, whom we met in chapter 1, claims that he thoroughly enjoyed meeting his relatives in Jawi. He said, "My wife and I went back to Jawi after we got married. The people there are so nice. Many of them invited us to their homes to share a meal with their families." When asked about his interaction with their relatives, he said, "We tried to talk to them, and they also tried, but it was not easy. So, sometimes we all just sat silently until someone attempted to start a conversation with us. Still, we had a good time."

Hakeem had a different story to tell:

Many people came to see me during my first visit to Jawi. That is always the case when a muwallad visits. News spreads very quickly. They would tell one another, "There is a young man who just returned from Makkah." So, they all came to see me. I felt a little shy, but it was alright. They asked me questions about my family, about my life in



Makkah, all sorts of things. After a week or two, they stopped coming. Well, they have to work. They are all busy with their own lives. After a while, I became so bored. I wanted to go out, but they would not let me. They were worried that I would get lost. Furthermore, I was also afraid. I did not know where to go. My mind went crazy. It was so stressful. When Yaasir finally called me, I told him that I wanted to go back to Makkah. I could not take it anymore. He told me to be patient and that he would call his friend as ask him to travel around Jawi with me. I did not have much money with me, so Yaasir paid for everything. We went to the beach, the waterfall, and many other places. Even when we just arrived at the Yala town, I already felt better.

Hakeem thinks that it is better that a muwallad be introduced to Jawi through tourism first. He asserts that most of them would be turned off by Jawi if they had to experience it the way he did initially. He said:

After what happened to me, I knew that there must be a better way for the muwalladeen to spend their time in Jawi. Try to imagine this. How would you feel? You are in a place that is unknown to you and there is nothing for you to do except sit around. After that year, every time I go back to Jawi with friends from Makkah, the group separates for a few days for everyone to visit their parents' villages. After a few days, a week at most, we regroup and travel around the country. We go to Bangkok and also the resorts. Pattaya is one of our favorites. I tell people that Thailand is like heaven on earth. The country is naturally blessed. It has beautiful beaches, waterfalls, and mountains. There is just so much to enjoy. The Thais are so nice too. They are very good at providing services to travelers. I tell them that I am a Thai citizen too, but I cannot speak much of the language because I was raised in Makkah. Now, some of them know about us. I have made many good Thai friends.

The muwalladeen often exchange knowing looks and smirks whenever the topic of tourism in Thailand is broached. Many of them admit that they enjoy touring the various places of attraction during their visits to Thailand. While some claim that they restrict themselves to activities which do not transgress Islamic values, others admit that they take to Thailand's nightspots, including go-go bars, clubs, brothels, and massage parlors among others. One muwallad showed me items that he collected for memories from his visits to Thailand. There were coasters, matchboxes, drink coupons, and pictures from the bars and clubs that he has visited. "Here, everything is prohibited. So, we just want to see and know what happens at these places in

Jawi," he says when I met him in Makkah. Ridhwan expressed a similar view. He said, "If I ever go back to Jawi, the first places I want to go to are the disco and the movie theatre. I want to experience what feels like to be on the dance floor. And, I love movies, but I have never watched them at a movie theatre."

The muwalladeen try to keep any discussions about their social activities in Thailand to themselves. They know that some of their activities are frowned upon by the society in Jawi. Nevertheless, many people in Jawi know about the muwalladeen's activities. The actions of the visiting muwalladeen have repercussions for the image of the Fatani return migrants in Jawi. Recall Pok Leh, who spoke about the undesirable personalities and behavior of the muwalladeen in chapter 3. 'Abd al-Jaleel says that he exercises some caution in joining the groups of visiting muwalladeen in public. He is committed to creating a positive image for the Fatani return migrants. Furthermore, he is socially expected to maintain a respectable image of himself as a university lecturer. He said:

I try to avoid meeting the visiting muwalladeen when they gather in large groups. As you know, they will be rowdy. This is still fine, although the other people may not like it. They may also do undesirable things. That is what I do not want to get involved in, but sometimes you cannot avoid this totally. Just a few weeks ago, I joined a group of muwalladeen who returned after the hajj season at one of the resorts in Songkla. We rented a chalet, and I was looking forward to enjoying myself with them. The muwalladeen who have settled down here in Jawi, we miss our friends in Makkah. So, when they come we want to join them and enjoy their company before they go back to Makkah. Then, one of them took out a bottle of wine from his bag. Some of them already planned it. I was so disappointed. I understand that they just want to try, but consuming alcohol is prohibited by our religion. They know it. That really spoiled the night for me.

Muhammad, a Jawi man in his late-forties, observes that the muwalladeen may have lost the respect given to the Fatanis in the past by the society in Jawi. This does not mean that the individual muwallad is unable to regain that respect. Muhammad says:

In the past, our society in Jawi respected our people in Makkah. When we thought about the Jawi people in Makkah, names such as Syaikh Da'ud and Syaikh Wan Ahmad came to mind. We read their books. Furthermore, many of us once studied in pondok schools. Most of our teachers were educated in Makkah. So, the presence of our people in Makkah was a source of pride for us in Jawi. When the people from Makkah returned to Jawi, we gave them our respect. Now, the situation has changed. Many of the muwalladeen have come back to visit Jawi in recent years. Initially, we thought that they were like our teachers in the past. They were people of fine character. Then, we saw the current young men from Makkah. When they come back, they go to the discos. They drink, and they look for girls. Stories about these things spread from mouth to mouth. Sometimes, they ask a villager to accompany them because they do not know their way around. We know their intent because they only ask villagers whom they know will be fine about going to these places. They choose to go out with the rotten characters from the village.

So, in the past, our people in Makkah were automatically given respect by the society here. Now, the muwallad has to earn it. The situation is reversed. To be fair, not all of them are bad. Take Ajarn 'Abd al-Jaleel as an example<sup>34</sup>. He has earned our respect.

'Abd al-Jaleel thinks that the boisterous demeanor of the muwalladeen may have contributed to their less desirable reputation in Jawi today. Recall that in chapter 1, Ridhwan advised me to project my voice loudly when I greet others. In Makkah, men are expected to perform masculinity through an outward display of robustness. The ability to stand one's ground in an argument, to stand up to insult or perceived injustice, and protect one's family members, are some qualities that are valued in men. To the muwalladeen, the Jawi male pilgrims whom they meet each year are too timid.

There was a commotion one night while I sat with a group of Fatani muwalladeen at the grocery store in Syi'ib 'Ali. One of the muwalladeen who got wind of the cause of the commotion approached Seyf, who was sitting beside me, and told him that his sister had accused a Yemeni man of following her as she was

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34 "Ajarn" (Th.) may mean "teacher" or "professor." It is usually applied as a prefix to the names of university educators.

walking up the stairs and touching her behind. The Yemeni then shouted at her and accused her of lying. Seyf approached the man as was socially expected of him, although he did not come across as confident. Seyf is petite and has a gentle voice. Furthermore, his posture was not upright enough. Sensing that Seyf was not going to be able to stand up to the Yemeni, Hamzah, a big and tall Siyaami, intervened. He threatened to report the Yemeni to the police if the latter did not stop his tirade towards Seyf's sister. The Yemeni unleashed another shout or two before backing down. Hamzah told him that all the muwalladeen would be observing him and will not hesitate to pursue the matter if he does not behave himself. Then, he instructed the Yemeni to leave the place. The latter walked away, but found a place to sit nearby. He needed to prove that he would not back down too easily. He left after some ten minutes. Commenting on the event, Ridhwan said, "You see what happened? Hamzah had to step in because Seyf could not handle it. If we do not fight back, the Arabs will treat us like any other Jawi men."

Men in Jawi are also expected to be able to stand their ground and defend themselves and their loved ones like the men in Makkah. However, outward robustness is not always the most appreciated quality expected of a Jawi man, especially if that is not matched by wisdom and maturity. On the other hand, a man who is calm but wise and resolute in his pursuit of rightness is highly respected. In Jawi's social context, the muwallad's robustness comes across as brash and unnecessary. Many people in Jawi associate the muwalladeen with their raucousness. 'Abd al-Jaleel said:

When people here walk about the streets, and they hear a group of young men speaking loudly to one another, they say, "Huh, those are the boys from Makkah." You cannot blame them for thinking like that. They are right. When the muwalladeen speak, they are noisy; Har! Har! Har!

Let me tell you a story about 'Adil. You know him. He asked me to accompany him to a shop because he wanted to buy a bag. He could not speak in Thai, and so he told me to ask the seller for the bag's price. As usual, she quoted a price higher than what she would accept. Before I could bargain with her, he pestered me to tell him the price she quoted. After I told him, he started complaining that it was too expensive in Arabic and in a loud voice. His reaction would have been tolerated in Makkah, but not here. No one does such things here. Oh, that poor salesgirl. She was shocked. He walked away thinking that she would call him back, but she did not. ['Abd al-Jaleel laughs.]

## Meeting Expectations

Many of the Fatani return migrants concede that the muwalladeen are largely responsible for the decline of their collective social prestige in Jawi. The issue is one of unmet expectations. As Muhammad mentioned earlier, many members of Jawi society expect the muwalladeen to be persons of exemplary character. He said:

When you observe the families that have returned from Makkah, most of the youth are not doing anything meaningful. It is all right if they are not able to serve as religious leaders of our society. Maybe the heyday of the Patani 'ulama ended long ago. However, it would be good enough if they are persons with decent *akhlaq* [Ar. disposition.]

Despite the bad reputation that the muwalladeen have developed in recent years, some of the return migrants claim that the process of reclaiming the respect, which they have lost, is not too difficult. They assert that many people in Jawi are forthcoming with assistance for the Fatani return migrants, who appear to be making the effort to build an honest and respectable life for themselves in the homeland.

One evening, Hameed took a rare break from running his cell phone sales and repair shop and spoke to me about his family's migration to Jawi from Makkah. He said:

After the visiting muwalladeen have gone back, we are the ones left to face the people. Actually, the people here are helpful. You just need to prove to them that you are honest.

Life was difficult when my family and I moved back to Jawi. It was already tough living in Makkah. We did not have the iqamah. Can you

imagine? I lived there until I was fifteen years old. All of my younger siblings were born there, except the youngest one. All these years and we did not even have the iqamah. My dad ran a business making fish crackers. It was a decent business. He could even afford to hire some employees, but he is the sort of person who is not adept at saving money. So, he would spend all the money he earned from the business. One night, while we were all sleeping, someone knocked at the door of our house. It was the Jawazaat.

Hameed told me that his family's repatriation to Jawi happened very quickly. They were all arrested on that fateful night and sent off to Jawi about a week after that. They never saw their home in Makkah again and were not even allowed to collect their belongings. He continued:

We had nothing when we returned. We did not have a home in Jawi or any money to rent one. Fortunately, one of our relatives took us in. Actually, I have two elder brothers here. My parents left them under the care of my grandparents before they migrated to Makkah. But, we could not rely on them. They resented my parents for leaving them behind. They did not feel any love for us too, their younger siblings.

After a few weeks, my siblings and I were sent off to study at pondok schools. My parents became worried when I had started to hang out with the youth in the village. I was riding around on the motorcycles with them. My daily activities were not productive. My father then took a job working as a rubber tapper at someone else's rubber plantation.

According to Hameed, he did not speak much Arabic while living in Makkah unlike the other muwalladeen. In a reflexive moment, he thinks that he always felt inferior to his peers because of his family's illegal status. He laughs whenever he thinks about the surprise of his visiting childhood friends when they realize how fluent he actually is speaking in Arabic today. He says that he always understood them, but just refused to converse in Arabic. Nevertheless, his insistence on speaking in Patani Malay, which was viewed negatively by his fellows in Makkah, turned out to be beneficial to his adjustment to life in Jawi. He could adapt quickly to life as a pondok student in Jawi. After studying at various pondok schools, he decided to move in again with his parents to help support the family. Not long after that, some villagers approached him with a proposition. He recounted the moment:

One evening several men from the village came to discuss something with me. The people in Jawi know that all the muwalladeen are quite fluent in Quranic recitation. Many of us were sent to the study with various teachers at the al-Masjid al-Haraam in the science of memorization of the Quran [Ar. tahfeezh.] The villagers who came to meet me said that they saw that I was trying to make good of my life, so they wanted me to assist them with the founding of the Qira'ati<sup>35</sup> program in our village.

I felt honored by their offer. It was also a proud moment for my parents. The villagers pooled some money to sponsor my Qira'ati instructor's training. After completing the course, I set up the program in our village. I truly enjoyed myself while doing that. It is good to have a purpose in life.

Hameed managed the Qira'ati program for a few years. He and his brothers worked in construction during the day and taught Quranic recitation at night. Hameed took on many jobs that came his way and learned various skills to make ends meet, but it was tough. Teaching Qira'ati was more of a volunteer work than it was a job. The financial reward that came with it was minuscule. Hameed persevered, but decided that he had to seek a more lucrative source of income if his family was to enjoy a more stable life. "There were times when we did not have any food to eat at home. We even had to skip meals. Some of the villagers helped out by sharing some of their food, but I felt that we could not continue living like that," said Hameed. So, he moved to Pattani town to work for one of his elder brothers, whom his parents left in Jawi when they migrated to Makkah.

Hameed says that working for his brother was a struggle. He was often paid less than other employees and was not even as well treated. He felt saddened many times, but had to be patient moving forward. He managed to accumulate enough skills in the repair of cellphones gradually until he was able to start his own business. He married a Siyaami muwalladah soon after that. He asserts that his

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35 "Qira'ati" is a method of teaching Quranic recitation that is popular in Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and southern Thailand. Its use of phonics is observed to be highly effective in introducing young children to Quranic recitation.

identity as a muwallad may have been a positive factor in the growth of his business. He said:

One day I told my brother that I wanted to open my own cell phone shop. Of course, he was not happy. I had just enough savings to rent this shop house, a display counter, and a few cell phones. When my brother visited my shop, he laughed at me. He said, 'How are you going to do business with so few cell phones?' I felt so sad because of what he said, but I knew that I had to be patient. Although he never taught me anything about repairing cell phones, it was also when I was working at his shop that I managed to pick up the skill. I observed how he did his work every day. Eventually, I asked him to let me try my hands at it. Once he saw that I could do it, he gave me the opportunity to continue repairing them. So, I am grateful for this.

Once I started my business, the residents of this area came. At times, they came just to talk and get to know me. They knew my shop as the telephone shop that belongs to a boy from Makkah. I suppose that I earned their trust. As I gained more customers, I increased the number of things in my shop, *alhamdulillah* [Ar. Praise to God.] Sometimes I receive too many orders for repair that I do not feel comfortable. So, I tell my customers to go to other shops, but they insist on coming to me. They tell me that they do not mind waiting for a little longer because they trust me. When a muwallad displays awful character, the people see them as being worse than the bad people here. However, if they see that you are good, then they really give you a lot of trust and respect.

A muwallad who migrates to Jawi with his family is likely to earn the respect of the people in Jawi more quickly than the unmarried muwallad. Abu Ihsan, a muwallad in his forties, migrated to Jawi with his family in 2009. When I asked him for the reason behind his migration, he said:

All my siblings are Saudi citizens except for me. Initially, my wife and I did not make much of it. My siblings are also very helpful. They always lend us a hand whenever we needed it. We started to change our views when our two children were enrolled in school. Our daughter was doing so well in school, but we know that she will never have equal opportunities compared to her cousins. It was very painful to think about that. So, we decided that we needed to migrate so that our children can pursue a better life. Our time is over. Now, we live for our children's future.

Many of Abu Ihsan's friends in Makkah were surprised when I shared my observations of his life in Jawi. According to them, Abu Ihsan was not the most



exemplary of characters in Makkah. One of them even claims that Abu Ihsan's application for citizenship was denied because the officers who were assigned to assess him some two decades ago in his youth found him to be of unsatisfactory character. Perhaps the additional years have straightened him out. More importantly, his neighbors in Pattani town appear to have taken rather well to him. Several families started sending their young children to his home to learn Quranic recitation within weeks of his move into the community. During one of my visits to his home, he commented on his relationship with his neighbors:

So far, the people here have been very nice to us. We do not worry too much about our children. At that age, they make friends so easily. Now, our two children already have friends of their own. We did not expect the adults to be so warm. We did worry about whether we would be able to adapt to the society here, but it has been quite a good experience so far. When our neighbors found out that we had just moved from Makkah, they came over to visit us. They brought gifts such as fruits and desserts. We buy drinking water from one of our neighbors' shop. After they found out that we were from Makkah, they have refused to accept payment until today.

### **In-Betweenness and Social Expectations**

"I think that we are quite lucky that you are doing this research," said 'Irfaan, a muwallad undergraduate at the International Islamic University Malaysia. "Why do you say that? You know that my research will not be able to solve the muwalladeen's problems in regard to citizenship, right?" I responded. Most persons, including the muwalladeen, focus too much on citizenship and livelihood-related issues. They fail to recognize that there are other sources of tensions in the muwallad's life. Thus, 'Irfaan was happy to talk about culture and personhood when we met in Kuala Lumpur. He says that many of the muwalladeen's friends and relatives may find it interesting that they "have two cultures," but most do not consider the tensions this occasionally creates in the muwallad's life.

Imagine the process of mixing flour and baking powder when preparing a cake. These two ingredients are different, but are similarly powdery and white. You put the mixture through a sieve to remove any powdery lumps. What you have at the end of this procedure is a heap of visually undifferentiated powder. The Fatani muwalladeen are culturally similar to the society in Jawi, but they are not the same. Their lived experiences of growing up in the Jawi community in Makkah contribute towards the emergence of their hybrid culture. Nonetheless, the Fatani return migrants are expected to assimilate into Jawi society upon their migration, very much like the baking powder that falls through the gaps of the sieve and subsequently blends with the flour.

'Abd al-Jaleel, Hameed, and I spent many hours discussing our observations on the lives of the muwalladeen in Jawi. Earlier in this chapter, Hakeem was quoted saying that his relatives stopped coming to visit him not long after his arrival to Jawi during his first visit. He cited work and other commitments of the people in Jawi for this. 'Abd al-Jaleel and Hameed have another view. According to them, the novelty of the returning muwallad runs out after a while. 'Abd al-Jaleel said:

People do not change their lifestyles just for us. Why should they? They have their own friends to hang out with. They have their own life routines. In their minds, they are probably thinking, "I eat *budu*<sup>36</sup>. You eat budu too." So, they think that we are no different from them. So, we are supposed to be able to adapt to the society here easily.

'Abd al-Jaleel and Hameed do not blame the people in Jawi for expecting the muwalladeen to adapt to the cultural practices and norms of Jawi society. Hameed said, "After all, we are no longer living in Makkah. We are now living in Jawi. So, we

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36 Budu is a type of sauce that is made from fermented anchovies. It is considered to be a popular traditional condiment in the cuisine of southern Thailand, including Jawi, and Kelantan. Some people may find its smell repugnant. For this reason, many people in Jawi think that the fondness of consuming budu is a distinctive aspect of Jawi personhood.

have to commit to the way of life in this society. Some of the muwalladeen still think about going back to Makkah. They are physically here, but their minds and hearts are in Makkah.” The muwalladeen in Jawi often experience internal conflicts pertaining to various aspects of everyday life including language, gender norms, and religion among others. Hameed and ‘Abd al-Jaleel assert that muwalladeen’s experience of adapting to Jawi society could be less stressful for the return migrants if more of the people around them are aware of this and try to understand them.

### *Language*

Languages change. When speakers of different human languages come into contact with one another, especially if this occurs over an extended period of time, they often are mutually influenced so that they effect certain changes in their own languages. The study of etymology provides countless evidence of the transfer of words from one language to another. The lexicon of the Malay language, and by extension the Patani Malay dialect spoken in Jawi, contains many words that are loaned from other languages. Arabic, alongside several Indic languages, including Sanskrit, is one of the sources of a large number of Malay words.

The long history of trade and religious contact between the Malay-Indonesian peoples and other societies around the Indian Ocean world, which was shown in chapter 2, played a major role in this linguistic trend. For example, the names of the days of the week in Malay are wholly loaned from Arabic:

**Table 1: Days of the week in English, Arabic, and Malay**

<u>English</u>	<u>Arabic</u>	<u>Malay</u>
Sunday	Yaum al-Ahad	Ahad
Monday	Yaum al-Ithnain	Isnin
Tuesday	Yaum al-Thulathaa	Selasa
Wednesday	Yaum al-Arba'aa	Rabu
Thursday	Yaum al-Khamees	Khamis
Friday	Yaum al-Jumu'ah	Jumaat
Saturday	Yaum al-Sabt	Sabtu

Some other examples of Malay words of Arabic origin that are also used in Jawi include *adat* (custom), *adil* (fairness/justice), *baki* (remainder), and *ilmu* (knowledge).

Linguistic anthropologists have observed that bilingualism often contribute to the practice of *codeswitching*. Kathryn Woolard defines codeswitching as “an individual’s use of two or more language varieties in the same speech event or exchange” (2004:73-4). Many of the Fatani muwalladeen in Makkah admit that they are more comfortable conversing in the Makkawi dialect of Arabic than in Patani Malay. After all, most of them have been schooled in Makkah’s public schools. Although many of their parents spoke to them in Patani Malay at home, the muwalladeen say that they tended to respond to their parents in Arabic. Some of them regrettably admit that this negatively affected the intimacy of the relationship between their parents and them.

The Fatani muwalladeen speak with one another in Arabic most of the time, although they occasionally pepper their sentences with Malay words. This occurs especially among close friends. Codeswitching appears to be a practice with which

two or more muwalladeen implicitly recognize their shared identity as Fatanis in Makkah. This form of identification is also practiced in their interaction with me, often codeswitching between Arabic and Patani Malay when talking with me.

Codeswitching is also predominant in the speech of the Malays in Jawi (Ahmad 1990). Jawi society has become increasingly assimilated into Thai society, especially through the youth's experience of Thai public education in since the middle of the last century. Thus, many people in Jawi now speak in both Patani Malay and Thai, although this does not suggest that they are equally fluent in both languages. More importantly, the two languages are often mixed in everyday speech. In fact, Christopher Joll (2012) suggests that the people of Jawi speak in some form of "Thai-ized Malay" and "Malay-ized Thai."

The practice of codeswitching does not imply that the bilingual person is always able to switch between two languages seamlessly. Firstly, many of the bilingual speakers among the Fatanis and in Jawi society are more comfortable in one language than the other. In Jawi, I often meet activists, including primary producers such as fishermen and plantation workers, who are more comfortable using Thai when delivering presentations or contributing their views at public events. The muwalladeen, on the other hand, are more fluent in Arabic than in Patani Malay.

Second, and perhaps more importantly, bilingual speakers may stop using certain words in one language as they continue to employ loan words which have the same meanings from the other language. Take the word *problem* as an example. The word that was most commonly used in Patani Malay previously is *masa'aloh* (SM. *masalah*, which is itself loaned from Arabic). Today, the Thai word *panha* is more commonly used in place of the Patani Malay *masa'aloh*. The Fatani muwalladeen, on the other hand, often use the other Arabic word for *problem*, *mushkilah*. Even if the

muwalladeen were to use *masa'aloh*, some of the youth in Jawi may not understand them.

According to Muhammad, the Patani Malay dialect has become so Thai-ized that it has become increasingly unintelligible to speakers of Kelantanese Malay, the closest dialect of Malay to it. This increasing differentiation from Kelantanese Malay reflects the Thai-ization of Patani Malay. Muhammad said:

The Kelantanese and people here could understand one another very well in the past. Now, we have a little bit of difficulty. For example, we can think about our community radio stations. Even the news readers cannot avoid using Thai words when they speak in Malay. In the past, we would say *sorat* [meeting], for [Th.] *prachum*. We used to say *blaku* [incident], but now we say [Th.] *het karn*. Surely the Kelantanese will not understand everything we say.

Patani Malay in Makkah, on the other hand, has been increasingly Arabicized. Like the Malays in Jawi, it is difficult for the muwalladeen to avoid using Arabic-imported words in everyday speech. Thus, there are moments when I had to provide translations during group conversations between the muwalladeen, Jawi Malays, and me. The point to be made is not that the Thai-ized Patani Malay of Jawi and the Arabicized Patani Malay of the muwalladeen have become mutually intelligible, although the gap between the two is widening indeed. For this reason, the muwalladeen who migrate to Jawi have to adapt themselves linguistically upon their return, although this undertaking is not a terribly difficult one.

The Arabic language is also a pillar of social identification for the return migrants in Jawi. The muwalladeen's shared ability to speak Makkah's dialect of Arabic with native fluency means that they constitute a distinct speech community in Jawi. Although Arabic has been taught as a subject at Jawi's pondok schools to many generations of students, most of them do not acquire verbal fluency in the language. Furthermore, pondok schools teach Modern Standard Arabic and not the

dialect of Makkah. During fieldwork, I often encouraged pondok school students to practice conversational Arabic with the muwalladeen. However, these exercises never progressed beyond several expressions of greetings. A Jawi graduate from a university in the Middle East usually fares better, but remains audibly separable from the muwalladeen.

“I speak with my son in Arabic even though he always responds to me in Jawi language,” said Hameed. Many of the married muwalladeen in Jawi hope that their children will grow up to be fluent speakers of Arabic. They would like to maintain their connections to Makkah as part of their family’s identity. Hameed continued:

For me, it is important for my children to be able to speak Thai. We live in Thailand, so they have to speak Thai. However, it is sufficient for me if they know just enough Thai for them to get by. It would be great if they are fluent, but it is fine with me, even if they are not. As for the Jawi language, they have to speak Jawi because we are Malays. Nevertheless, I think it is very important for them to speak Arabic. We are Muslims, and our religion was given to the Prophet through Arabic. The Quran was revealed in Arabic. Jawi society respects people who are fluent in Arabic. Furthermore, both my wife’s family and mine are part of the community of Fatanis in Makkah. So, I would like for my children to keep this connection. It would be a waste if my children do not speak the language.

### *Religious Orientations*

The Jawi Muslims are not a monolithic religious community. They are divided into two main groups, namely those who adhere to a more traditionalist strand of Islam in Jawi and others who subscribe to a reformist orientation of Islam. Ismail Lutfi Japakiya, Rector of Yala Islamic University, is the de facto spiritual leader of the reformist group. His followers are often referred to as *Puok Brao* (The Brao Group) after the village in which the Bamrung Islam Witthaya School, owned by Ismail Lutfi’s family, is located. The membership of the Puok Brao among the Muslims in Jawi has increased in the last two decades since Ismail Lutfi’s return after completing his doctoral studies in Syari’ah at the Islamic University of Imam

Muhammad bin Saud, Saudi Arabia. Even so, his followers are still a small minority compared to those who continue to hold on to Jawi's version of traditional Islam.

Ismail Lutfi's reformist teachings, which advocate the "return to a Salafist interpretation of pristine Islam" (Liow 2010:42), and his connections to the religious circles of Saudi Arabia make him vulnerable to the accusation that he is an advocate of the Wahabiyyah. According to some religious teachers in Jawi, the Puok Brao often challenges the permissibility of certain traditions practiced by Jawi Muslims, including the recitation of Surah Yaseen for the dead, the annual celebration of the Prophet's birthday, and visitations to the graveyard to supplicate for the dead. Some of my friends who teach at weekend religious schools in their villages, known as *tadikah*, claim that the Puok Brao members sometimes urge their children to ask their teachers to explain the validity of such practices to the class. They assert that such confrontational actions heighten the tensions between the members of the two groups at the village level.

The division between the traditionalists and reformists also exist among the Fatanis in Makkah. The labels used in Makkah are similar to the ones used in other parts of the Malay-Indonesian world. *Kaum Tua* (The Older Generation) refers to those who cling on to the traditions, while *Kaum Muda* (The Younger Generation) refers to the reformists. These labels also index the generational character of the division between the two groups. Most of the membership of the *Kaum Tua* comprises members of the older generation of the Fatani community who received Islamic education in the halaqas of the al-Masjid al-Haraam or pondok schools in Jawi prior to their migration to Makkah. The muwalladeen, on the other hand, are the largest constituency of the *Kaum Muda*. Their religious orientation is shaped through their experiences as students in Makkah's public schools. "When we go home, we ask our parents about why they do this or why they do that. They could not explain their



practices to us. Most of it is tradition. Our teachers in school provide clear evidence from the Quran and Hadeeth," said Ridhwan.

The differences in the religious orientations of the older generations of Fatanis and the younger muwalladeens sometimes result in heated arguments in public. Ridhwan said:

One time, I went to observe their Mawlid al-Nabi celebrations. Initially, I thought it was interesting. Suddenly, they stood up and started singing and there were some musical instruments. I don't know what. So, I asked, "What is all this?" Some of the older men got angry with me. One of them said, "The young people these days. They don't know anything. Their lives don't benefit anyone." Then, I became really angry. I asked him to provide evidence from the Quran or the Hadeeth to support the permissibility of their celebrations. I said that they were having a party! Oh, that got him even angrier.

Ridhwan's parents were displeased when they heard about the incident. They advised Ridhwan against repeating his actions, especially if the other party in the argument is a member of the older generation. Then, they called the older man with whom Ridhwan argued and facilitated their reconciliation. Ridhwan says, "After that I became good friends with that man. But, we now avoid discussing religious issues."

It has now become standard practice for the Kaum Tua and Kaum Muda to be mutually accommodative towards the other group's religious practices and beliefs. One muwallad in Makkah, who reverted to the membership of the Kaum Tua, seized every chance to discuss and criticize the Kaum Muda whenever I met him in Makkah. Several of our mutual friends were displeased by this. They told me to ignore him and eventually even told him off. Many of the muwalladeen think that it is better to avoid such discussions to reduce friction within the community. Once, 'Abd al-Ghaffar invited me to his brother-in-law's home for a kenduri. When we arrived at the doorstep of his brother-in-law's home, he told me to join the group in making supplications if I wanted to, while he sat outside with the other of his brothers-in-

law. 'Abd al-Ghaffar and the others who were sitting outside showed up at the event as a show of brotherliness towards their in-law and respect to their wives. However, they did not join in the group in the main religious activity of the kenduri because it conflicts with their own religious values.

Most of the muwalladeen who migrate to Jawi find the teachings of Ismail Lutfi to be similar to their own religious orientations. In fact, some of them now work as teachers and lecturers at both the Bamrung Islam Witthaya School and the Yala Islamic University. Nevertheless, many of them do not wish to get themselves involved in the rift between the Puok Brao and the traditionalists in Jawi. Thus, they adopt the same accommodative attitude they had in Makkah. This strategy appears to be effective. 'Abd al-Jaleel said:

Many of us, especially those who have received higher education in Islam, agree that we have to be respectful to the differences between the various religious orientations [Ar. madhab (s) madhahib (pl.)]. In our own daily performance of our religious obligations, we follow the practices of our madhhab. But, when we are at religious events, we adapt and follow the common practice. This applies even when we are invited to become the imam in congregational prayers.

The accommodative strategy of the muwalladeen return migrants earns them the respect of the people in Jawi. Some of them have been appointed to various levels of Islamic leadership positions throughout Jawi. Murad and several others are now imams the mosques in the respective communities that they live in. Some become teachers at madrasahs, while some others become university lecturers.

### *Gender*

"The Fatanis in Makkah follow a lot of the Arabic culture. They are very protective of the women in their family. For some of the muwalladeen, you cannot even ask for the news of their mothers unless you are a close friend or relative of the family," said Murad. I met very few Fatani women throughout my research in

Makkah. It was only towards the end of my stay that I was introduced to some of the women of 'Abd al-Ghaffar and Ridhwan's family. However, I managed to meet some of the muwalladaat in Jawi.

"A woman's life in Jawi is very different from Makkah. Here, the women can move around quite freely," said Umm Ihsan. During my visits to Abu Ihsan's home in Pattani, Umm Ihsan cooked delicious meals and dined with us. Umm Ihsan, her daughter, Syahirah, and Hameed's wife, Wardah, often sat in their own group, although they were not that far removed from the men. In Makkah, the women would dine in a separate room from the family's male guests. Umm Ihsan continued:

In Makkah, very few women work, especially if you are a foreigner. Here, it is common for women to work. Almost all the stalls at the wet market are run by women. You also find them working in the banks and offices. In some ways, I think that this is good. Although, I am not saying that the situation in Makkah is bad. It is just that the cultures are different.

Umm Ihsan and her husband migrated to Jawi with the hope that their children will have a decent chance of getting university education. Their sacrifices are beginning to pay off. Their daughter, who is the elder of their children, was admitted to the Prince of Songkla University in 2013. When I spoke to Abu Ihsan on the telephone, he was quick to say, "In Makkah, Wardah would not have such an opportunity." He sounded really proud and happy with his family's situation. The move has even benefited him and his wife. Umm Ihsan was a bright student and was certified to be a memorizer of the Quran (Ar. *hafeezah*). Both of them gained full-time employment as teachers at a madrasah in Pattani in 2012.

Another muwalladah who has been able to build a decent career is Sofia, whom we met in chapter 3. Sofia's family migrated to Jawi after she completed high school education in Makkah. Subsequently, Sofia enrolled at the International Islamic University Malaysia and graduated with a master's degree in Arabic

linguistics. She has taught Arabic at various institutions in Malaysia and Thailand, including the Yala Islamic University. She is currently employed at the Bumrungrad International Hospital in Bangkok. This hospital receives a substantive portion of its patients from Middle Eastern countries.

Sofia's fluency in the Arabic language and sensitivity toward the needs and preferences of the hospital's Arab patients allow her to excel at her job. I observed that she is quite popular with the patients and their families. Sofia occasionally receives gifts from former patients of the hospital. These gifts are delivered by the former patients' friends or relatives who are seeking treatment at the hospital. Word about Sofia's helpfulness spread from mouth to mouth among these patients. Consequently, Sofia has been able to develop a good reputation among them. One family member of a patient of the hospital in 2011 told me that his friend considers Sofia the *'umdah* (Ar. mayor) of the hospital. Sofia is contented with her current job, although she has ambitions of pursuing doctoral studies. She admits that she would not have access to similar opportunities in Makkah, but still she misses her lifestyle in the holy city from time to time.

The unequal status of women in Middle Eastern societies has been a popular subject in the media. In Makkah, women are normally not allowed to leave the house without a male member of the family in tow. Women in Saudi Arabia face a lot of cultural restrictions compared to those in many other societies. In 2011, The New York Times reported the arrest of a Saudi woman named Manal al-Sharif for organizing an online protest against the kingdom's ban against driving by women (MacFarquhar 2011). Even so, some of the muwalladaat I met in Jawi experienced tension when trying to adapt to the more liberal gender norms in the homeland. Nabeela, a muwallah in her late-twenties, shares Sofia's longing for the Makkan lifestyle. I met her through 'Abd al-Jaleel in Jawi a few months after she delivered

her first child. At that time, she had recently been divorced from her ex-husband, whom our mutual friends claim was a drug addict. This may have contributed to her negative perception of Jawi men. More strikingly, she is finding it difficult to adapt to gender norms in Jawi.

The circumstance of Nabeela's migration to Jawi is similar to Sofia. Her father also decided to return to Jawi with the family after Nabeela completed high school education in Makkah. However, her family does not own a home in Jawi. They are still living in a rented home today. Nabeela and her sister enrolled in a community college in order to learn Thai to prepare for work in Jawi. Nabeela's sister's luck in marriage is better than hers. Her sister is currently living in Pattani with her husband and children. Like Sofia, Nabeela moved to Bangkok to take up a job at a hospital while her young child is being cared for by her parents in Pattani. Nabeela described her experience of return migration when we met in 2010. She said:

I still find it difficult to adapt to life here. This is partly because my father is confused about how he expects us to behave. On the one hand, he wants us to continue living like we did in Makkah. He wants us to stay at home and go out only if there is a male member of the family to accompany us. But, my brother is now living in Bangkok, and my father does not like to go out of the house much. He gets annoyed when we ask him to help us buy stuff from the shops. It does not help if we tell him that we can do it ourselves. For example, when we tell him that we need A4-sized printing paper, he gets angry and says, 'I don't know what that is.' He becomes angrier and says that it is inappropriate for us to go out on our own. What does he expect us to do then?

Nabeela intended to return to Bangkok to work when we met in 2010. However, she was still unsure about leaving her young child in Pattani. Additionally, her plans were thwarted by her father who insisted that she should remain with the family in Pattani. She continued:

It is tough here. My parents are still doing the same work that they did in Makkah, but they are getting old. They are sewing the thawb and selling it to the shops, but their income is barely enough to support the family. Here the women have to work and assist the men in supporting the family. We have to do everything ourselves. When we want to study, we have to go to the school's admission office ourselves. When we want to apply for a job, we have to do it ourselves too. In Makkah, the men do everything. They go to the market. They buy all the stuff needed at home. The women just have to manage things around the house and make sure everything is fine.

## **TIME AND BELONGING**

"It takes about ten years to feel that you belong here," said 'Abd al-Jaleel. It should have become apparent as we progressed from the start of this dissertation to the present chapter that many of the muwalladeen are rather ambivalent about their connections to Jawi. This does not imply that feelings of belonging to the homeland are completely absent among them. Nonetheless, their lives are more clearly anchored to Makkah than to Jawi. The muwalladeen who migrate to Jawi usually require some time to develop an attachment to the society. Some of them are more prepared for the migration to Jawi than others. Factors such as having the necessary social and material resources as well as the right attitude affect the return migrants' experience of adjusting to Jawi society and how quickly they are able to do that.

Hakeem has been traveling to Jawi after the conclusion of every hajj season for more than a decade. He spends up to four months in Jawi during each trip. Besides cultivating his business relationships with tok syaikhs in Jawi and taking the opportunity to travel to resorts around Thailand, Hakeem visits Jawi in order to spend time with his elder sister and her family. Additionally, Hakeem has also purchased a rubber plantation to supplement his income as well as to prepare for the contingency that the day might come when he can no longer live in Makkah. Hakeem's decision to invest in Jawi is forward-thinking and places him in a better

position to transition to living in Jawi than most of his peers. Nevertheless, he would like to avoid migration to the homeland for as long as possible. He explained:

I really love traveling around Thailand. After doing that many times now, I am no longer nervous about traveling to other places in the country even though I can barely speak in Thai. I could live in Jawi if I had to. I am familiar enough with the society there, its culture, the place, and so on and so forth. I even have family there. My sister and her children have been living there for several years now. I even have my own friends in Jawi. But, I still prefer to live in Makkah. The society, food, culture, and environment in Makkah are still more familiar to me than Jawi. Also, I earn most of my income here. So, I would not move to Jawi unless I really have to.

Unlike Hakeem, Muzaffar, a muwallad in his mid-twenties, does not have the choice of living in Makkah. He was deported after being arrested on the charge of selling drugs. He claims innocence to the present day. According to him, there was a young police officer who had been observing him for several weeks before his arrest. The officer and his partner approached Muzaffar one evening and accused him of dealing drugs in the streets. He was alone at that time. When Muzaffar denied the accusation, the officer put his hand in and out of Muzaffar's pocket and produced a small packet of powdery substance. "He planned the whole incident," said Muzaffar.

Muzaffar was deported to Thailand just several months before I met him in October 2010. When I asked about his experience of life in Jawi, he said, "By God it is difficult. My whole family is still in Makkah. My mother and siblings, they are all there. My mother still cries each time we talk over the phone. That just breaks my heart."

Muzaffar's shock experience of return migration is aggravated by language difficulties. He spoke very little of Patani Malay and could not converse in Thai at all. He was living a nightmare. At that time, Muzaffar claimed that he did not have any feeling of attachment to Jawi and was seeking for ways to return to Makkah as soon as he could. "I will try to purchase an Indonesian passport and return to

Makkah," he said. According to 'Abd al-Jaleel and Hameed, other deportees have successfully returned to Makkah through the route that Muzaffar was planning, but that was prior to Saudi Arabia's introduction of the use of biometric recognition technology to keep track of foreigners entering and leaving the kingdom. 'Abd al-Jaleel said:

I told him that it would be better for him to accept the situation and put in his best effort at adapting to Jawi society. It was really tough for him in the beginning, but his attitude is changing. I hope that everything will work out for him here. Nevertheless, he still says that he wants to go back to Makkah. If that is really what he wants, then I pray that Allah will open the way for him. I will be sad because he has become like a brother to me, but I want him to be happy.

Most of the muwalladeen who are currently studying at universities in Malaysia plan to seek employment in Malaysia or return to Makkah after completing their studies. Almost none of the muwalladeen I met in Kuala Lumpur were considering an eventual move to Jawi. One such person is Hisham, a muwallad in his mid-thirties. He and 'Abd al-Jaleel were classmates at the Islamic University of Madinah. They even returned to Jawi together following their graduation from the university. While 'Abd al-Jaleel remained in Jawi, Hisham opted to migrate to Malaysia. He found a Malaysian wife and worked at her family's grocery store after their marriage. Their marriage did not last long. They got divorced after several years. He says that they loved each other, but he felt insulted and helpless around her family. He claims that her family members looked down on him because he did not own any property or wealth. He tried to make up for his lack of wealth by helping out with manual labor at the grocery store, but his efforts were not appreciated. He felt that he was losing his dignity, and his life was becoming purposeless. So, he decided to divorce his wife. "Maybe she will find someone whom her family thinks is more appropriate for their status," said Hisham. He is now concurrently pursuing a master's degree in Management and teaching the Arabic language at a language institute in Kuala Lumpur.



The muwalladeen admit that they do not develop an attachment to Jawi instantly upon arriving in the homeland. Their migration to the homeland is not a decision that they are usually happy to make. Many of them would rather remain in Makkah if the circumstances were better. Hakeem returns to Jawi annually for business, leisure, and to prepare himself for the possibility of being forced out of Makkah either through deportation or unbearable circumstances. Muzaffar was forced to return to Jawi through repatriation. 'Abd al-Jaleel and Hisham were required to leave Makkah upon graduation from the university. Others like Abu Ihsan and the families of Sofia and Nabeela migrated because they felt that prospects in Makkah were bleak for them. The reasons for these muwalladeen's arrival in Jawi are dissimilar, but none of them felt sufficiently connected to the homeland to undertake return migration until circumstances compelled them to leave Makkah.

Sixty-six-year-old Haji Rasheed is an example of a return migrant as defined by Gmelch (1980). He spent many years living away from his place of birth, Pattani. In 1991, he migrated back to Pattani. Furthermore, his experience of migration is rather extensive. He was born in Pattani to a Hadhrami immigrant father and a Malay mother. He was sent to study and live at an Islamic boarding school in Bangkok at the age of seven. In 1958, a year after Malaysia gained its independence from British colonial rule, his father sent him to live with a family friend in Kelantan with the hope that the young Haji Rasheed would be able to attain Malaysian citizenship. He did not receive Malaysian citizenship as hoped.

Haji Rasheed was put aboard a ship to a return to his father's homeland in Hadhramawt some five years later. According to Haji Rasheed, his father wanted him to learn the ways of being a Hadhrami Arab. Two years later, Haji Rasheed received a letter from his father who had migrated with his whole family to Jiddah. In that letter, the father asked for his eldest son to reunite with the family. The young man

wasted no time. He hopped onto the back of a truck with other passengers and headed northwest across the desert towards Jiddah. After several years, Haji Rasheed requested permission from his father and left for London. He arrived in London as a tourist, but managed to gain employment at a company specializing in the production of signs. "I pleaded with the owner of the shop to give me a chance and train me in the techniques of making signs. I convinced him by saying that if he was not happy with the work that I do, he would not have to pay me a single cent," said Haji Rasheed, who had been interested in art from his childhood days. He proved to be a capable worker and was hired on a full-time basis at the company for several years. During this time, he also took the opportunity to enroll in some courses in Graphic Design at the Saint Martins School of Art.

Haji Rasheed returned to Jiddah after several years of living in London. When he expressed a desire to start a family, his parents told him to return to Jawi to marry his first cousin. He followed their wishes and returned to Jiddah with his wife shortly after their wedding. They remained in Jiddah until Haji Rasheed, who had been living in Saudi Arabia as a Yemeni national, was required to leave Saudi Arabia when the relationship between Saudi Arabia and Yemen soured following 'Ali 'Abdullah Saleh's vocal support for Saddam Hussein in the First Gulf War. While living in Jiddah, Haji Rasheed learned the art of Arabic calligraphy and worked as a graphic designer. Upon his return to Jawi, he worked as a calligrapher for an Islamic book publisher owned by his relative.

Some of the Fatanis in Jawi are contemplative about return migration. They observe and think about the factors that affect the muwallad's experience. During one of my visits to his home in Pattani, Haji Rasheed promptly offered some of his insights indicating that he has been observing and thinking over the issue quite

extensively. Aside from his own personal experiences, he also observes his children's experiences of coping with migration from Makkah to Jawi. He said:

I believe that there are three things that could help the muwalladeen settle more easily in Jawi. Firstly, a muwallad could benefit from having knowledge or educational achievements. Even if work opportunities are limited, those with the necessary knowledge or certificates have a better chance of finding a job. For example, look at the muwalladeen working at the international hospitals.

Secondly, it would also be helpful if the muwallad's family owns some land in Jawi. If the muwallad cannot find a job, he can at least work on his family's land. Sometimes just doing this may suffice. Look at the high rubber prices right now. If you have a rubber plantation, you can earn a lot of money.

Thirdly, it is also good to have some money. With money, you can look for business opportunities. There is money to be made here. They do not have to take very high risks if they do not want to. Just start with a simple business first to sustain the cost of living from day to day.

So, when I look at the muwalladeen who have come back to Jawi, I see that those who are more comfortable have these three things, or at least one of them. Actually, it is the same for everyone here.

Haji Rasheed remained silent for a moment before saying that it is important for the return migrants to be patient. He asserts that people always require some time to get used to the society that they migrate to. He continued:

The society they migrate to is different. The culture is different. So many things are strange in the beginning. When I moved to London, I had to accept the lifestyle there. The society cannot change for us. If we cannot follow their ways, then we just have to accept they are different from us. In London, I saw that people mostly hang out at the bars after work. I felt that it would be meaningless if I lived like that. So, I returned to Jiddah. If a muwallad is not happy here, he could try to move elsewhere. Although, though he has to remember that this is his homeland. This is where his ancestors are from. More importantly, this is largely a Muslim society. So, it is not that bad. We have to make the effort to adapt. Then, we leave the rest to Allah. We have to have faith.

Haji Rasheed's observation regarding the importance of having the right resources namely knowledge/education, land, and financial capital, connects to the muwallad's preparedness to undertake migration to Jawi. Safwan, a muwallad in his

late-twenties, is fortunate to have all three resources. His father prepared for the family's return to Jawi years before their departure from Makkah. This has helped Safwan overcome many of the challenges of return migration relatively quickly compared to the other muwalladeen.

Safwan and his two brothers run a private Islamic school in Jawi. Construction of the school's buildings began while the family was still living in Makkah. During a visit to Jawi, Safwan's late father was disheartened by the closing of a pondok school near the village of his origin. So, he resolved to provide a new venue where the villagers, especially the children, could go to learn about Islam. Over the years, he regularly remitted a portion of his income in Makkah to several trusted persons in Jawi who oversaw the construction of the school. Blessed with foresight, he also purchased some rubber plantations nearby the school's location so that earnings from the sale of rubber might one day be used to sustain both the financial needs of the school and his family. When Safwan and his brothers graduated from high school in Makkah, they were sent off to study at the prestigious Al-Azhar University in Cairo in preparation for the family's subsequent return to Jawi.

The three brothers assumed leadership of their family-owned school after graduating from Al-Azhar University. Currently, the school is still unable to accept as many students as the brothers would like to. Safwan says that they are continuously working on the school's expansion. Several years ago, the school received some financial assistance from a charity foundation in Qatar. The funds that were received were used for the construction of a small student accommodation building. Safwan and his brothers see this as the first step towards transforming their school into a boarding school. Aside from donations, the brothers also apportion part of their earnings from their rubber plantation to invest in the school as planned by their late father. The remainder is used for the family. In 2012,

Safwan started a restaurant business to supplement his income. He found a shop lessee who was willing to sublet the restaurant to him in the evenings. This arrangement reduces his rental cost while also allowing him to continue teaching at the school during the day.

Safwan continues to feel connected to Makkah, but does not entertain any ideas of return migration to the holy city. He said:

I do not think that any of the muwalladeen in Jawi ever stops thinking about Makkah. Mostly, I miss my friends who are still living there. Now, there is the Internet. We can easily contact our friends using Skype. Furthermore, everyone has cell phones now. You ask if I still feel a sense of belonging to Makkah? Yes, I do. Nevertheless, I also belong here. In the beginning, I always thought about Makkah. As time goes by, I think lesser about it. It is done. I live here now. I have a job. I have friends. And, my family is also here.

Some of the muwalladeen in Jawi observe that livelihood and lifestyle are central to adapting to Jawi society. I noticed a change in Muzaffar within months of our first meeting. In the beginning, it was almost impossible to draw a smile from him. Even when sitting among the other muwalladeen, the expression on his face always hinted that his mind was absent from the conversation. He was constantly thinking of Makkah, his family, and friends. One day, I saw Muzaffar talking softly on his cell phone. I took the opportunity to tease him by saying that he must be chatting with a girl. He blushed. He admitted that his life situation was improving. At that time, Muzaffar had found a job as a waiter in a restaurant owned by one of our mutual friends. During one of my visits to the restaurant, I observed Muzaffar as he went about serving other customers. I complimented him when he came over to the table where 'Abd al-Jaleel and I were seated. He responded by saying:

I was nervous at the beginning. I could not speak Thai and was also not very comfortable with speaking in Jawi language, but it became easier bit by bit. Now I have even picked up some Thai words, enough for me to understand what the customers want.

According to Muzaffar, his job has helped him adapt to the society in Jawi by providing him with a regular daily routine. It also brings him into contact with more people, some of whom become his acquaintances and friends. He added, "I still think of my family in Makkah, but life here is good enough for now." 'Abd al-Jaleel says that Muzaffar is torn between reuniting with his family and pursuing his own interests in Jawi. On the one hand, he misses his family and would like to be able to see them often. On the other hand, he is starting to have a purpose in life. 'Abd al-Jaleel said:

We do not recognize that we already belong here until we stop for a moment and think about it. One day, we realize that we no longer think so much about Makkah as we all did in the beginning. One such moment is when our friends come to Jawi for a visit from Makkah. They expect us to join them on their trips to the beaches or other places. They think we can sit around, talk, and have fun the whole day like we used to do. Some of them say that we no longer value friendship like the muwalladeen do in Makkah. They do not understand that our lives have changed. We have jobs. We have to go to work every day. We cannot just leave as we like. We have responsibilities, and that makes our lives here meaningful. It gives us a sense of purpose. Alhamdulillah, we have learned that without purpose, life becomes less meaningful.

Many of the muwalladeen think that the assumption of responsibilities gives them purpose in life and in turn, acceptance of their lives in Jawi. Hameed and 'Abd al-Jaleel observe that the muwalladeen who are deported from Makkah to Jawi tend to adapt more quickly to life in Jawi. Reflecting on his experiences, Hameed said:

They have no other choice, but to accept that they are unlikely to be able to migrate back to Makkah. So, they know that they must make the effort to survive here. The point is that the earlier a muwallad accepts that he is fated to live here, the more quickly he will adapt and have a sense of belonging to Jawi.

Lateef is one muwallad who has settled down very quickly in Jawi. After working at a hotel in Jiddah for several years, Lateef moved back to Makkah to live with his family. He felt uneasy about being away from his family after his father died. As the eldest son, he knew that he was expected to return to Makkah to take

over the leadership within the family. His return to Makkah worked out well in the beginning. He found a job at another hotel. Then, some men came to look for him at his family home one evening. He was not home when they came, but arrived just as they were about to leave. When the men saw him, they immediately suspected that he was the person they were looking for. They arrested him and all his family members who were home at that time.

Lateef and his family, who were also deported, lived in a relative's house when they arrived in Jawi. After several weeks, Lateef asked one of his brothers who escaped the arrest and was still living in Makkah, to remit some of the money that he saved while working at the hotels in Jiddah and Makkah. He decided to follow the advice of a relative to look for a house. First, he bought a small piece of land. Then, he bought an old wooden house and hired some villagers to move it to his newly acquired land. "When I bought this house, it was in very bad shape. Even so, I felt that it was important to own a house. Our relatives might not be happy if we impose on them for too long. They are not wealthy either. Then, I found a job as a driver and repaired the house gradually," said Lateef.

I first met Lateef in 2010. To my mind, his accomplishments during the two years since his repatriation are nothing short of amazing. Firstly, he has established a good reputation for himself. Lateef has been appointed as the imam for the nightly taraaweeh prayers at the mosque in his village during each Ramadhan since his migration. Lateef has also repaired the old house to a decent condition. Additionally, he bought another piece of land and built a house following his marriage to a lady in his village. They now have a child. He also provides financial support for his siblings who are still schooling.

Lateef thinks that his flexible attitude and willingness to perform any job has allowed him to establish a decent life for himself and his family in such a short time. He said:

In the beginning, I asked people in my village for help to find a job. Alhamdulillah, a couple who has a stall at the traveling market asked if I could drive their pickup truck and help out with setting up and closing their stall. I knew that I could not be picky, so I accepted their offer immediately. Initially, I was shy to talk to the other people at the market. After a while, I decided that I needed to overcome that and make friends. I always eat at one of the stalls. Then, the couple who runs the stall gave me a discount after we became friends. So, I get to save some money.

One day I saw that their worker who usually washes the dishes was absent. The couple could not cope, so I decided to help out washing the dishes after I finished eating. The wife said to me, "Haji Lateef, you don't have to do that." Then, I said, "It is all right. I saw that you might need some help." The couple was very grateful and decided not to charge me for my meal that day. I helped them again the next time we met. Ever since then, they have been paying me for doing the dishes and they stopped charging me for my meals.

There is an elderly couple who sells fish at the market. One day, I noticed them dragging the buckets of fish from their truck to the stall. It was quite a distance. I felt sorry for them. So, I decided to help them since I had nothing else to do. I have been doing this since then, and they pay me too. So, I get another source of income.

Then, I noticed that a lot of people at the market have cell phones. As you know, most of the people in Jawi are using prepaid SIM cards. I decided to become an agent for the telecommunication companies. I earn commission for every selling credit refill. I do not earn much from this, but take whatever additional income I can. But, I do have a lot of regular customers. Some of them even wait until they see me to refill their credit. They just want to help me, you know?

Prepaid SIM cards have expiry dates. This is extended with every credit refill that you make. For selling credit refills, my own card's expiry is extended. I can transfer this validity period to other accounts. Now, people at the market even buy this from me.

Lateef and his family benefit from his ability to come to terms with the consequences of his deportation quickly. Once the decision to invest in a home for his family was made, Lateef never looked back. He is constantly on a look out for work opportunities to strengthen his family's financial position. At the current home



where he lives with his wife and child, Lateef runs a food business. The house has two main sections. It has a coffee shop as the front half and a residence in the back. In the day, Lateef's wife prepares and sells packed food to their neighbors. At night, Lateef runs a coffee shop serving his customers drinks such as tea and coffee along with various types of snacks. His coffee shop remains open late into the night. Hence, Lateef's days are filled with economic activity.

Marriage is another source of responsibilities that anchors the muwalladeen to Jawi. Almost all the muwalladeen who state that they belong in Jawi are married. In this regard, the muwalladeen's experience of return migration to Jawi mirrors that of their parents several decades ago in Makkah. In chapter 3, we learnt that many of the Fatani immigrants to Makkah did not plan for a permanent migration to the holy city. Their plans changed once they started a family. Return migration to Jawi became increasingly less feasible as their families expanded with every child born. Their days also became filled with work activities in order for them to earn sufficient income to support their families. Over time, they become comfortable with the rhythm of life in Makkah.

Hameed said, "When our everyday routines become similar to everyone else's, that is when we feel that we belong in Jawi." 'Abd al-Jaleel agrees with Hameed while adding that marriage is part of the muwallad's adaptation to the Jawi lifestyle:

When the muwallad returns to Jawi, he is already well into what is considered marriageable age. Sooner or later, he will feel the desire to marry. Once married, he is less likely to think of migrating anywhere else, especially if he becomes a parent. He will be busy with raising his children, putting them in school, and even just spending time with them every day. This is why you see that most of the muwalladeen who feel they belong here are married. Alhamdulillah, I am really thankful to Allah for leading my path back to Jawi. If I was still living in Makkah, I think that I would be single and not have a full-time job. My life when I am 33 years old will still be the same as when I was 20 years old. Years would go by and there would not be any progress made in life.

## PERSISTENT IN-BETWEENNESS

Most of the Fatani migrants to Jawi accept and adapt to their situation in the homeland over time as they learn to become a Jawi person. They adopt or learn to tolerate the Jawi cultural norms as well as appreciate the rhythm of life of Jawi society. Still, the muwalladeen can never be completely disconnected from the community in Makkah. Their assimilation into Jawi society is never complete and their in-betweenness persists. Some of them point out that they miss their friends and relatives who are living there. More importantly, the muwallad can never be removed from their lived experiences of growing up in the holy city. Even if they are currently living in Jawi, some of the muwalladeen still consider themselves to be a part of the Fatani community and would like to pass on this identification to their children. In Jawi, some muwalladeen arrange to meet up occasionally to reinforce relations amongst them even as they go about with their individual lives. Additionally, these gatherings give them a break from having to meet the expectations of fitting into Jawi society and allow them to relive the moments of their lives as Fatani youths in Makkah. 'Abd al-Jaleel said:

It is nice for the group to come together. It would be nice for us to meet often, but we all have our individual everyday responsibilities. We have our own work to do and our own families to look after. So, we have to make do with only meeting every once in a while.

We enjoy ourselves so much every time we meet. We usually cook a dish that we used to eat in Makkah such as *saleeg* or *kabsah*. We exchange news with one another. We also share news about our friends in Makkah. It is also good when we hear about a muwallad doing well in Jawi. It reminds us that there is hope for us here. And, someone in the group tells us about his problems we all try to think of solutions for him. At the very least, we try to offer comforting words. However, we usually joke around with one another like we used to do when we lived in Makkah. It feels good to be around other people who are similar to you, who understand the things you go through, even for just a brief moment.

## CONCLUSION

Our friend 'Abd al-Ghaffar often speaks fondly about his visit to Jawi several years ago. Unlike some of the other muwalladeen, he is convinced that Jawi is not a bad place to live in. He agrees with Hakeem that Thailand is blessed with gifts of nature, including beautiful beaches, mountains, waterfalls, and so on and so forth. More importantly, he said:

When I arrived in Jawi, Murad took me to a hotel and left me there to rest. I felt so hungry that night, but I did not know where to go. So, I decided to take a walk in the streets the next morning to look for some food. Then, I felt strange. I had never gone back to Jawi before that, but I found the place familiar. I closed my eyes. The sounds of people talking and the smells were all familiar to me. I thought to myself, "This is my language. This is my food."

'Abd al-Ghaffar, who is a Saudi national, says that he would still prefer to live in Makkah over Jawi, even if he were a Thai national like many of the muwalladeen. He enjoyed his visit to Jawi so much that he returned for another visit with his wife and children in 2012. He wanted his family to experience the homeland first hand. Despite his fondness for Jawi, he does not think that it can take Makkah's special place in his heart. To put it another way, Jawi is where the muwalladeen's roots lie, but their lives are rooted to Makkah.

*Be-longing* is about feeling comfort from being in a place, but also longing to be someplace else at the same time. The relationship between belonging and place, then, is not exclusive and never complete. It is contingent, but also structured. For the Fatanis in Makkah who contemplate migrating to another place, their options are not limited to Jawi. Even so, the homeland is always in consideration in this process. In fact, many of them have exercised this option in recent years by migrating to the place of their ancestors' origin.

In chapter 2, we discussed the historical circumstances that prompted some Fatani men and women to leave Jawi. They traveled in different directions in search of safety. They were also seeking places where they could belong. This search took them to multiple places. Some of my grandfather's relatives settled in Kelantan, the society that is most culturally similar to Jawi. My great-grandfather, however, continued to move and finally lived in Mersing until his death. My grandfather moved to Singapore, and the island nation has remained my family's home to the present day. Yet, some of his relatives continued to migrate until they arrived in Makkah.

The Fatani 'ulama who pioneered the community in Makkah remained connected to the homeland even as they adopted the Islamic heartland as their new home. When the size of the community grew significantly after World War II, the Fatanis assembled several communities of their own and invested themselves into creating social environments in which they could belong. This strategy worked relatively well until Saudi Arabia began to enforce its Saudization economic program. Some Fatanis feel compelled to move once again as circumstances in Makkah deteriorate, especially for foreigners.

The experience of return migration to Jawi is fraught with tensions and difficulties. The issue of being a locally-born foreign national no longer plagues their lives as it did in Makkah. Instead, being born and bred in a foreign society does. The cultural peculiarities of the Fatanis and the tensions that result from that are often unrecognized by others as the return migrants are expected to adapt to Jawi society. Additionally, the lack of resources to secure a stable livelihood immediately upon their arrival in Jawi also affects their experience of return migration. Over time, the Fatanis are usually able to work out solutions for the problems they face in Jawi. They are successful at fashioning a decent life for themselves and their families. In fact, they become contented, even happy, with

life. Even so, Makkah is never too far from their hearts and mind. Just as 'Abd al-Ghaffar in his khaatirah asks God to grant him wings so that he can fly to any place he wishes, the Fatani return migrant often flies back to Makkah in their minds.

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