

# Disorientation of the meaning of Hajj in local Indonesian Muslim communities

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## Abstract

This study investigates how social, cultural, technological, and modern influences can lead to a redefinition of the Hajj, specifically resulting in a loss of its traditional meaning. This research aims to examine the complexities of various influences on the

attitudes and practices of Hajj pilgrims within the local Muslim community, which may lead to disorientation during the performance of Hajj. The research method employs an interpretive qualitative approach. Data is collected through participatory observation techniques to gather information about the implementation of the Hajj in the holy cities of Mecca and Medina, as well as local ritual practices related to the Hajj within Muslim communities in Madura and Lombok. The study identifies both internal and external factors contributing to the disorientation of the Hajj's meaning. Internal factors include limited knowledge among Hajj pilgrims and the local Muslim belief system, which is reinforced by traditions that elevate the Hajj as a religious example, bestowing it with high social status. External factors, such as modernity and advancements in digital technology, further exacerbate this disorientation, shifting the Hajj experience from a transcendent one to a worldly one, from idealistic to pragmatic, and from sacred rituals to a celebratory Hajj festival.

Studi ini menelisik tentang bagaimana pengaruh sosial, budaya, teknologi, dan modernitas menyebabkan perubahan definisi haji, khususnya hilangnya makna tradisional haji. Tujuan penelitian untuk mengupas kompleksitas ragam pengaruh tersebut terhadap sikap dan praktik para jamaah haji pada komunitas muslim lokal sehingga menyebabkan disorientasi dalam beribadah haji. Metode penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif interpretif. Pengumpulan data dilakukan dengan teknik observasi partisipatif untuk memperoleh data tentang pelaksanaan haji di tanah suci Mekah dan Madinah, serta praktik ritual terkait dengan ibadah haji pada komunitas lokal di Madura dan Lombok. Dari penelitian ini ditemukan faktor internal dan eksternal yang menyebabkan disorientasi makna haji. Faktor internal disorientasi makna haji adalah pengetahuan jamaah haji yang terbatas dan sistem gagasan Muslim lokal yang didukung oleh tradisi ritual haji yang menempatkan haji sebagai teladan dari beragama dan memiliki kedudukan sosial yang tinggi, Adapun faktor eksternal adalah modernitas dan kemajuan teknologi digital yang mengukuhkan disorientasi makna haji; dari transendental ke duniawi, dari idealitas ke pragmatis, dan dari ritual sakral ke perayaan festivalisasi haji.

**Keywords:** *Hajj pilgrimage; Disorientation; Indonesian local Muslims; anthropology of hajj*

## Introduction

The Hajj pilgrimage is the lifelong dream of every Muslim. Every year, millions of Muslims flock to the holy land, heading to the two holy cities of Islam, Mecca and Medina.<sup>1</sup> In Indonesia, the growing enthusiasm of the Muslim community to perform the Hajj has resulted in a longer waiting list for regular Hajj pilgrimages each year. The waiting period for Hajj ranges from 11 to 47 years.<sup>2</sup> The allure of the hajj has contributed to the development of a local cultural system within the Muslim community in Indonesia, where the hajj figure is revered with high social status, symbolizing the pinnacle of a Muslim's spiritual journey.<sup>3</sup> Over time, the significance of the hajj has evolved to encompass not only its transcendental and sacred meaning but also to acquire worldly prestige, symbolic imagery, and a celebratory festival-like character.<sup>4</sup> Exploring this shift in the meaning of the Hajj can offer valuable anthropological insights into the reasons behind this transformation, its impact on Hajj-related values, pilgrims' attitudes, and the rituals associated with the Hajj.

There has been limited research on the issue of hajj disorientation in existing studies. Most studies have focused on various topics with diverse perspectives, including literary studies, theological perspectives, and the history and development of the Hajj.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, numerous studies on Hajj have been conducted on various themes. For instance, women and

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<sup>1</sup>Carol Delaney, "The Hajj: Sacred and Secular", *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 17, no. 3 (1990), 513-530; Nazar Ul Islam Wani, "Pilgrimage in Islam: Traditional and Modern Practices", *American Journal of Islam and Society*, Vol. 35, no. 4 (2018), 62-64. \\uc0\\u8221{ }\\i{ American Ethnologist} 17, no. 3 (August 1990

<sup>2</sup>Admin, "Antrian Haji Panjang, Plt. Dirjen PHU Perkuat Regulasi," <https://haji.kemenag.go.id/v5/detail/antrian-haji-panjang-plt-dirjen-phu-perkuat-regulasi> (2021).

<sup>3</sup>Bela Fitri, "Gelar Haji Sebagai Stratifikasi Sosial Pada Masyarakat", *Jurnal Ilmiah Sosiologi Agama (JISA)*, Vol. 6, no. 1 (2023), 1-18.

<sup>4</sup>Huub de Jonge, "Pilgrimages and Local Islam on Java", *Studia Islamika*, Vol. 5, no. 2 (1970).

<sup>5</sup>Jonge, "Pilgrimages and Local Islam on Java"...

hajj,<sup>6</sup> the economic aspects of the hajj,<sup>7</sup> how the Indonesian government manages hajj,<sup>8</sup> and local traditions of the hajj.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, a study mentioned that the Hajj pilgrimage reflected the equality among Muslims before God, and there was ritual admiration for women as in the symbols of Hagar and Eve.<sup>10</sup>

In anthropological studies, the Hajj has been examined as a component of religious rituals. It is considered a pilgrimage ritual that holds great importance in increasing the religiosity of those participating. The Hajj is viewed as a distinctive pilgrimage ritual when compared to others. It involves a journey to visit and trace places that are deemed sacred and hold significant meaning due to their connection to the lives of prophets, religious figures, ancestors, or the history of Islam's development. Researchers also examine how pilgrims assimilate the Hajj experience and

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<sup>6</sup>Kholoud Al-Ajarma, "Power in Moroccan Women's Narratives of the Hajj," in *Muslim Women's Pilgrimage to Mecca and Beyond*, London: Routledge, 2020, 56-74; Viola Thimm, "Gendered Pilgrimage: Hajj and Umrah from Women's Perspectives", *Journal of Contemporary Religion*, Vol. 36, no. 2 (2021), 223-241.

<sup>7</sup>Aam Rusydiana et al., "Hajj Investment Fund: A Bibliographic Study of the Hajj Economy", *International Journal of Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage*, Vol. 9, no. 1 (2021), 12-12; Rifki Ismal and Nurul Izzati Septiana, "Islamic Hedging for Pilgrimage Funds: Case of Indonesia", *Qualitative Research in Financial Markets*, Vol. 11, no. 3 (2019), 328-341; Jahanzeeb Qurashi, "Commodification of Islamic Religious Tourism: From Spiritual to Touristic Experience", *International Journal of Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage*, Vol. 5, no. 1 (2017), 9; Chubado Babbi Tijjani and Hakeem Onapajo, "Hajj Diplomacy and Economic Relations between Nigeria and Saudi Arabia, 2012-2022", *Journal of Global Social Sciences*, Vol. 4, no. 16 (2023), 82-99; Amin Nouri Kouchi, Mansour Zarra Nezhad, and Pouyan Kiani, "A Study of the Relationship between the Growth in the Number of Hajj Pilgrims and Economic Growth in Saudi Arabia", *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, no. 36 (2018), 103-107; Mouna Boujelbène Abbes and Mouna Abdelhédi-Zouch, "Does Hajj Pilgrimage Affect the Islamic Investor Sentiment?," *Research in International Business and Finance*, no. 35 (2015), 138-152.

<sup>8</sup>Moch Nur Ichwan, "Governing Hajj: Politics of Islamic Pilgrimage Services in Indonesia Prior to Reformasi Era", *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies*, Vol. 46, no. 1 (2008), 125-151.

<sup>9</sup>M Zulfa, "Multidimensional Phenomena of Hajj: Study of Javanese Pilgrims," *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies*, Vol. 5, no. 1 (2015), 135-162.

<sup>10</sup>Asma T. Uddin, "The Hajj and Pluralism", *The Review of Faith & International Affairs*, Vol. 6, no. 4 (2008), 43-47.

apply it to their daily lives after completing the pilgrimage.<sup>11</sup>

In contrast to previous anthropological studies of the Hajj, this study focuses on the disorientation experienced by Hajj pilgrims in three areas: values, attitudes, and Hajj practices. The study aims to address two main questions: first, why does disorientation occur within the local Muslim community? Second, how do local belief systems, modernity, the advancement of information technology, and societal expectations regarding the ideal Hajj experience contribute to the disorientation of the pilgrims?

This research is premised on the belief that feeling disoriented during the hajj pilgrimage is unavoidable, despite the strong religious basis of the ritual. Disorientation can be attributed to both internal and external factors. Internal influences stem from the local cultural beliefs surrounding the social significance of the hajj, which are reinforced through various local customs and rituals. External factors include the impact of modernity and advancements in information technology. According to Bauman, contemporary society's fluid modernity can lead to the erosion of traditional spirituality, presenting individuals with challenges in balancing material and spiritual needs.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, technological advancements have led to an abundance of imagery, with pilgrims and their families documenting their hajj experiences in the holy land using mobile phones and sharing them on social media platforms. Consequently, the proliferation of digital

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<sup>11</sup>Eric Tagliacozzo and Shawkat M. Toorawa, "Introduction," in *The Hajj Pilgrimage in Islam*, Cambridge University Press, 2016, 1-10; Kholoud Al-Ajarma and Marjo Buitelaar, "Social Media Representations of the Pilgrimage to Mecca", *Journal of Muslims in Europe*, Vol. 10, no. 2 (2021), 146-167; Abdullah. S. Karban et al., "The Historical Development of Hospitality in Makkah," *International Journal of Engineering & Technology*, Vol. 7, no. 3 (2018), 225-225; M. Amin Abdullah, "Ibadah Haji: Ziarah Ke Tanah Suci Makkah Dalam Perspektif Insider Dan Outsider", *Jurnal Sosiologi Agama*, Vol. 16, no. 1 (2022), 1-16.

<sup>12</sup>Peter Beilharz and Zygmunt Bauman, "Liquid Modernity", *Contemporary Sociology*, Vol. 30, no. 4 (2001), 420-420.

content can result in the dissemination of false information.<sup>13</sup>

The celebration of the Hajj through various local rituals, social media image-building, and the pursuit of perfection in worldly life leads to a disorientation of the Hajj in three dimensions: values, attitudes, and practices. The complexity of social, cultural, and modernity factors, as well as advances in information technology, influences how the perpetrators interpret the Hajj in their lives, leading to a disorientation of its meaning. This study offers new insights into how the meaning of the Hajj is not always fully understood by its participants and how it has become increasingly distanced from the ideal Islamic doctrine. This study enriches our understanding of how the meaning of religion has shifted due to complex influences and their implications for religious communities.

The research employed an interpretive, qualitative research procedure. Field data was collected and analyzed descriptively and interpretively.<sup>14</sup> Data were collected using the following techniques: observation, including both direct and indirect methods, interviews, and analysis of digital media documents. Additionally, naturalistic and participant observation procedures were employed during the data collection process<sup>15</sup>. Researchers conducted natural observations during the 2022 Hajj events in the holy land, where the researcher participated in the Hajj. Additionally, researchers conducted participant observation by observing the ritual activities during the 2023 Hajj departures and returns in Madura and Lombok. Researchers also collected digital documents, including online

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<sup>13</sup>Hazim Abed and Ahmed Ahmed, "The Impact of Digital Communication on Social Networks: A Review", *International Journal of Computer Science and Mobile Computing*, Vol. 51 (2016): 183-190.

<sup>14</sup>Norman K. Denzin (ed) and Yvonna S. Lincoln, *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*, SAGE, 2005.

<sup>15</sup>Zainal Abidin Achmad and Rachmah Ida, "Etnografi Virtual Sebagai Teknik Pengumpulan Data Dan Metode Penelitian", *The Journal of Society & Media*, Vol. 2, no. 2 (2018), 130-130.

social media posts (such as those on YouTube and WhatsApp), related to various Hajj rituals during the departure, implementation, and return from the Hajj. The data collected from the field research were analyzed using symbolic-interpretive methods. Symbolic analysis involves contextualizing emic data with the researcher's interpretation of the events experienced by the informant.<sup>16</sup>

### **Hajj in local Indonesian Muslim communities**

The Hajj pilgrimage is one of the five pillars of Islam, alongside the shahada, prayer, zakat, and fasting.<sup>17</sup> These pillars serve as guidelines for worship and help build social relationships among fellow Muslims and with other creatures<sup>18</sup>. Islam encompasses both a formal religion and substantive, practical values.<sup>19</sup> According to Kisworo (2017), the Hajj pilgrimage holds significant spiritual value, benefiting individuals personally while also embodying universal social values.<sup>20</sup> Due to its strong social significance, the Hajj pilgrimage continues to evolve and undergo shifts in various dimensions in response to the changing dynamics of society.<sup>21</sup>

The Hajj pilgrimage is a widely studied form of worship in various social dimensions. One area of extensive research conducted by previous

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<sup>16</sup>Clifford Geertz, *Kebudayaan Dan Agama*, Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 1992.

<sup>17</sup>Ardiansyah Ardiansyah, Irma Savitri Sadikin, and Siska Rizkiani, "Debat Rukun Islam' Wayang Golek Bobodoran Performance", *PROJECT (Professional Journal of English Education)*, Vol. 2, no. 2 (2019), 140–140; Azalia A Arinal, Virginia Tulenan, and Agustinus Jacobus, "Pengembangan Aplikasi Tata Cara Wudhu Menggunakan Metode Markerless Augmented Reality", *Jurnal Teknik Informatika* 14, no. 2 (2019), 165–172.

<sup>18</sup>Yedi Purwanto, "Memaknai Pesan Spiritual Ajaran Agama Dalam Membangun Karakter Kesalehan Sosial", *Jurnal Sositelknologi*, Vol. 13, no. 1 (2014), 41–46.

<sup>19</sup>M.Samson Fajar, "Transormasi Nilai Rukun Islam Dalam Peningkatan Sumber Daya Insani (SDI) Berperadaban", *Ath Thariq Jurnal Dakwah dan Komunikasi*, Vol. 1, no. 1 (2017), 15.

<sup>20</sup>Budi Kisworo, "Ibadah Haji Ditinjau Dari Berbagai Aspek", *Al-Istinbath: Jurnal Hukum Islam* 2, no. 1 June (2017), 75–98.

<sup>21</sup>Fransisca Aprillia and Agus Machfud Fauzi, "Perubahan Makna Haji Pada Masyarakat Di Kelurahan Lontar, Kota Surabaya", *Nuansa*, Vol. 14, no. 1 (2021).

scholars is the shift in the meaning of the Hajj pilgrimage.<sup>22</sup> The study by Nasruddin (2020) found that in the Bugis Barru community, the symbolic meaning of the Hajj pilgrimage has undergone a shift. It has become a commodity sign used to gain legitimacy, symbolic benefits, and a higher social status.<sup>23</sup>

In Indonesia, the Hajj pilgrimage holds spiritual and material significance for Muslims. Spiritually, numerous stories of pilgrims experiencing magical dimensions are often shared through word of mouth and can instill fear in prospective pilgrims. Economically, the cost of the Hajj pilgrimage has increased over the years, with pilgrims needing to provide funds ranging from IDR 30,000,000 to IDR 35,000,000 in 2006, and rising to around IDR 45,000,000 in 2022. Additionally, physical ability is crucial for Hajj pilgrims, as they must endure the hot weather of Saudi Arabia for over a month, with temperatures reaching around 37°C to 45°C in 2022.

A series of processes has altered the meaning of the Hajj, causing it to lose its original, transcendental sacred significance and become more focused on worldly prestige and image. The hajj departure and return rituals in Madura and Lombok have become expensive and time-consuming, indicating this shift. The hajj ritual has transformed into a ceremonial event with a festive atmosphere. This disorientation of the hajj is supported by advancements in information technology and the fluid nature of modern civilization.

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<sup>22</sup>Evan Stiawan and Miti Yarmunida, "Analisis Faktor Motivasi Jati Diri Muslim Melaksanakan Haji Dan Umrah" in *Jurnal BAABU AL-ILMI: Ekonomi dan Perbankan Syariah*, Vol. 4, no. 1 (2019), 144–144. akan tetapi untuk mengisi waktu tunggu tersebut yang cukup lama banyak masyarakat yang melakukan ibadah umrah. Penelitian ini bertujuan mengetahui faktor-faktor motivasi masyarakat melaksanakan ibadah haji dan umrah. Studi desain penelitian ini menggunakan metode analisis faktor melalui uji Barlett test of sphericity, Kaiser Mesyer Olkin (KMO)

<sup>23</sup>Nasruddin Nasruddin, "Haji Dalam Budaya Masyarakat Bugis Barru: Suatu Pergeseran Makna", *Kamaya: Jurnal Ilmu Agama*, Vol. 3, no. 2 (2020), 158–173.



## **The worldly orientation of the Hajj**

### *Social status*

The local Muslim community perceives performing hajj as a symbol of high social status. This perception influences their motivation to undertake hajj, as they desire to gain social recognition. Upon completing hajj, individuals strive to present themselves as accomplished and distinguished members of society. They adopt a distinct appearance daily, often wearing white caps and other symbols that indicate they have completed hajj. Furthermore, they feel compelled to demonstrate their generosity by making larger donations to social causes than others, thereby portraying themselves as philanthropists.<sup>24</sup>

The title of “haji” is obligatory for those who have performed the hajj. Among the Sasak people in Lombok, those who have performed the hajj are then called “*tuan*” for men, and for women, they are called “*ummi*,” “*inag tuan*,” or “*papuk tuan*.” These terms are used to distinguish those who have performed the hajj pilgrimage from those who have not performed the hajj. Refusing to address those who have completed the pilgrimage as “haji” is a sign of disrespect. The hajj involves significant effort, sincerity, religious devotion, and sacrifice of time, energy, and money. Therefore, it is only fair that those who complete this sacred journey be honored with this title.<sup>25</sup>

The data presented above shows that, in this context, the Hajj is an activity oriented towards worldly things, namely the title of Hajj and its otherworldly consequences, such as a high social status.

### *Material orientation*

The orientation towards materialism can be observed in the case of Hajj pilgrims who obtain work visas or are referred to as TKI (Indonesian

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<sup>24</sup>Interview with P1, conducted on November 30, 2023, and observation were conducted in Sisik Village, Lombok on 29-30 November, 2023

<sup>25</sup>Interview with P2, conducted on November 30, 2023

Migrant Workers) Hajj in Saudi Arabia. This information was provided by Haji J. In 1985, Haji J arrived in the Holy Land seeking economic opportunities, as his financial situation was difficult. After his economy improved, Haji J performed the Hajj while continuing to work in Saudi Arabia in 1985, 1986, and 1987.

Then, in 1988 Haji J returned to Indonesia, accompanying his wife on her Hajj journey. Later, from 1997 to 2001, Haji J worked as a teacher at a mosque. Subsequently, from 2002 to 2008, he returned to Saudi Arabia to work once again and performed the Hajj multiple times.<sup>26</sup> The pilgrims also believe that after the pilgrimage, they can improve their economic situation through their efforts. The pilgrims always pray for success, wealth, and prosperity.

### *Tourism and shopping*

Some pilgrims believe that going on hajj can also be considered a form of tourism. The extended stay in the Holy Land allows for visiting several historical sites and unique destinations. The pilgrim mentioned that the most enjoyable activity during this trip was in Medina. The most comfortable was when in Medina. It was because one can eat, pray, sleep, walk around, and shop.<sup>27</sup> Then go on a pilgrimage to the tomb of the Prophet, and visit historical places such as Jabal Uhud."<sup>28</sup> During the Hajj pilgrimage in the holy land, markets, shops, and areas where traders set up stalls can be seen and visited by Indonesian Hajj pilgrims, including in places where trading is prohibited.

The orientation of hajj shopping can also be understood from the experience of a hajj pilgrim. This pilgrim had traveled to the holy land to perform Umrah and bought gold to make a profit by selling it after

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<sup>26</sup>Interview with P6, conducted on Wednesday 22, 2023

<sup>27</sup>Observation were conducted in Medina, July 16, 2022

<sup>28</sup>Interview with P4, conducted on Monday 27, 2023

returning home. However, he was disappointed because the jewelry he purchased in Mecca was not valued as he had expected, and he ended up experiencing a loss. Ultimately, he sold his jewelry in the Holy Land during the Hajj. The money obtained from selling the gold was then used to purchase souvenirs upon his return from the pilgrimage. He spent time shopping in Mecca during the Hajj.<sup>29</sup> This expression emphasizes that the motive for the pilgrimage is not only for worship but also an opportunity to shop. Hajj orientation like this is evidence that Hajj disorientation has occurred.

### *Political orientation*

Hajj has become symbolic of the influential Tuan Guru, although not all pilgrims, or perhaps only a few, possess the same level of religious knowledge as Tuan Guru.<sup>30</sup> This perspective is what leads to every Hajj participant obtaining an esteemed position in society, as a leader with political influence, as indicated by several informants. After being granted the title of Hajj, they gained the trust of the community and were appointed as a leader. They also become a speaker at youth activities.<sup>31</sup> After completing the Hajj, the hajj pilgrims felt a greater sense of appreciation and were able to contribute to the community by offering religious advice and guidance.<sup>32</sup>

Table 1 illustrates the shift in the perceived value of the Hajj pilgrimage towards worldly gains.

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<sup>29</sup>Interview with P5, conducted on Tuesday 27, 2023

<sup>30</sup>Erni Budiwanti, *Islam Sasak: Wetu Telu versus Waktu Lima*, Yogyakarta: LKiS Pelangi Aksara, 2000.

<sup>31</sup>Interview with P1, conducted on November 30, 2023

<sup>32</sup>Interview with P6, conducted on November 30, 2023

Table 1. Disorientation of More Worldly Hajj Values

| Orientation          | Description   | Source of the Data   |
|----------------------|---|--|
| Social Status        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- The title of Hajj elevates social status.</li><li>- It is embarrassing to donate a small amount; paying Zakat should be more significant.</li><li>- Attending a <i>Hajat</i> (social and personal ceremony) should appear more favorable.</li></ul> | Interview with P1 and P2<br>observation in Sisik Village, Lombok |
| Economic orientation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Hajj is the second goal when journeying to the holy land for work</li><li>- Bringing back more resources.</li><li>- Belief in returning from hajj as a path to increase wealth and good fortune.</li></ul>  | Interview with P6  |
| Tourism and shopping | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Besides performing hajj, they traveled</li><li>- Indonesian pilgrims are known for their love of shopping.</li><li>- Escorting and picking up Hajj as a tour</li></ul>  | Interview with P5 and P4<br>Observation in Medina                |
| Politics             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Become a charismatic figure</li><li>- Become a leader in society</li></ul>  | Interview with P1 and P3   |

The contents of Table 1 illustrate that apart from worship, the Hajj activity has a worldly orientation, namely social status, earning a living, traveling, and shopping, as well as a political orientation.

## **The pragmatic attitude of Hajj pilgrims**

### *Illegal Hajj departure*

The strong desire to perform the Hajj can lead people to undertake illegal journeys, such as with an Umrah visa, a pilgrimage visa, or a tourist visa. The ease of performing the Hajj with an illegal visa depends on the strength of the network established in Saudi Arabia. For example, an informant shared their experience of performing the Hajj with an *Umrah* visa (pilgrimage) (refer to Figure 5). They could do it with the help of a network of workers from Madura in Saudi Arabia, for 120 million rupiah for a ninety-day stay.

According to the pilgrims, many potential pilgrims take unauthorized routes, but the challenging conditions in the holy land make it difficult to fulfill the pillars and obligations of the pilgrimage properly. The Hajj pilgrimage is sometimes not performed according to traditional customs because it is often conducted with an illegal status. For example, when entering the *Mabid* in Muzdalifah, the group must wait for all the official ones to finish, and the entry days have changed.

Travelers may be reluctant to incur additional expenses or miss out on potential profits, leading them to overlook situations where someone should be penalized or required to fast due to violations of Hajj rules. Some pilgrims have mentioned that individuals using illegal visas can still claim the title of Hajj, but the legitimacy of their pilgrimage is questionable. The lack of proper Hajj ritual training, as offered in regular Hajj experiences, impacts the quality of their journey. This can create doubts about the sincerity of their pilgrimage once they return home.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>33</sup>Interview with P2, conducted on November 30, 2023

### *Ambiguity: adherence to local traditions and Islamic teachings*

The *slametan* ritual is not a part of the teachings of the Hajj; however, it is considered unusual within the local Muslim community to ignore this cultural practice before departing for or returning from the hajj. There is a hesitation between hosting the local traditional ritual (*ngalak cara*) and not doing it. Those who did not conduct the *slametan* ritual before departure are considered to have an anti-social attitude (*tak norok kaprah*; inappropriate), as stated by the pilgrims.

*Ngalak cara* refers to the act of accepting an invitation, receiving a gift, slaughtering a cow, or hosting an event at home when a pilgrim departs for the holy land. There is a widely held assumption by parents and almost all prospective hajj performers that before the ritual of *selamatan*, the prospective hajj must not go out or depart.<sup>34</sup> Before departure, it is customary to have a *selamatan* ceremony. The date, time, and the appropriate time to depart are determined by the beliefs that have developed in local society. Although there is no specific tradition of *selamatan* in religion, it is important to follow the advice of our elders, particularly when leaving for a holy place. In our society, the tradition of *selamatan* is closely intertwined with local beliefs and is considered essential.”<sup>35</sup>

### *The importance of material ability*

Many prospective hajj pilgrims believe that the ability to afford the trip determines the order of departure. Hajj is seen as something that can be bought - if you can afford it, you can go on Hajj right away. There are three official hajj departure options, which differ in terms of cost and facilities provided.

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<sup>34</sup>Interview with P7, conducted on November 11, 2023

<sup>35</sup>Interview with P8, conducted on November 12, 2023, and observation were conducted in Sampang Madura, May 26-28, 2023.

The official rates for organizing *furoda* hajj or *mujamalah* hajj by the Saudi Arabian government do exist. However, in reality, the cost of *mujamalah* or *furoda* hajj can vary greatly depending on the travel agency arranging it.<sup>36</sup> This can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2. Differences Between Regular Hajj, Plus Hajj, and Mujamalah Hajj

| Type of Hajj                   | Reguler   | Plus  | Mujamalah/ Furoda  |
|--------------------------------|---|---|--|
| The Organizer                  | Directorate General of Hajj and Umrah (Dirjen PHU), Ministry of Religious Affairs | Legal Entity that has a ministerial permit to host special hajj (PIHK)  | Special Hajj Pilgrimage Organizers (PIHK) or official travel companies registered with the Ministry of Religious Affairs                         |
| Cost of Hajj                   | IDR 40-50 million   | USD 8,000, equal to IDR 119 million, based on the departure embarkation   | USD 15,500, equal to IDR 231 million.  |
| Waiting Period                 | 10-30 years   | 5-7 years   | Leaving straight away  |
| Transportation                 | Garuda Airlines, economy class, transit   | Saudi Airlines, direct flight to Jeddah   | Qatar Airways, direct flight to Jeddah   |
| Hotel                          | Hotels outside the Grand Mosque area, economy-class                               | An exclusive hotel around the Grand Mosque. Maktab in Mina and Arafah near Jamarat, air-conditioned, with more spacious and soft mattresses | Luxury Hotel near Masjidil Haram (Grand Mosque). Maktab in Mina and Arafah near Jamarat, air-conditioned, with more spacious and soft mattresses |
| Period of stay in Saudi Arabia | 40 days   | 25-27 days  | 16-24 days   |

Source: UU No. 8/2019, Nasional Tempo 20/1/2023.

<sup>36</sup>Interview with P2, conducted on November 30, 2023

The fluctuating rates for Furoda Hajj are highlighted in the advertisements of the Hajj Umrah Travel Bureau. In their promotional poster for Umrah and Hajj packages, three different Hajj programs are outlined based on their costs. The first program is the Silver package, priced at USD 19,000; the second is also a Silver package, priced at USD 23,000; and the third is the Platinum package, costing USD 26,000.<sup>37</sup> The following Table 3 illustrates the disoriented attitudes of the hajj pilgrimage.

Table 3. Disoriented Hajj Attitude

| Orientation   | Description  | Source of the Data  |
|---|--|---|
| Illegal Hajj  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- illegal Hajj</li><li>- Using a tourist/pilgrimage/umrah visa, Indonesian Worker (TKI) visa</li><li>- Knowledge of the Hajj pilgrimage becomes less important</li></ul>   | Interview with P2 and P9                                  |
| Ambiguity between practicing Islamic teachings and local traditions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Rituals, according to local traditions, must be hosted, even though they are not obligatory according to Islamic teaching</li><li>- Local rituals seem to take precedence over rituals at the holy shrine</li><li>- There will be social sanctions if you do not conduct local rituals</li></ul> | Interview with P7 and P8<br>Observation in Sampang Madura |
| The Rich Can Depart Immediately                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Commodification of Hajj, Furoda's Haji visa is traded</li><li>- The hajj onh plus and <i>mujamalah</i> policies benefit the rich.</li></ul>  | Table 2<br>Interview with P7                              |

<sup>37</sup><https://www.pusathajjumroh.id/haji-furoda/> Accessed 21 July 2024.



## **Hajj practices: celebration and festival**

### *Festivalization of Hajj*

The participation of numerous individuals, including family members and neighbors, the duration of several days, marching band performances, entertainment, and banquets, make the ritual of departing and returning for the Hajj resemble an annual celebration or festival.

During the welcoming ceremony, the families of the Hajj received coffee, cigarettes, and rice. The total cost for the celebration, which included the slaughtering of a cow, is approximately IDR 15,000,000 to IDR 25,000,000. Therefore, the ability to perform the Hajj is not only about the capacity to worship in the holy land but also about being financially capable in one's hometown, both before and after the pilgrimage.<sup>38</sup>

### *Imaging*

The ritual of salvation is important for the pilgrims and is a source of pride. According to the pilgrims, people value maintaining their honor and self-esteem based on the duration and scale of the salvation ritual. There is a sense of pride when many people attend the ritual, which lasts several days, and involves the sacrifice of a greater number of animals.

Before leaving for Hajj, Haji M planned to slaughter a cow and invite both distant and close family members to gather for a pilgrimage opening ceremony and seek blessings from a teacher. A public recital was also held in the prayer room. In the days leading up to the pilgrimage, which would last about 15 days, various forms of remembrance would take place, such as reciting Yasin and Ratib every night, and sometimes early in the morning. After the 15-day pilgrimage opening ceremony, there would be a three-day rest period before departing for the actual Hajj.<sup>39</sup> Upon arrival, guests

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<sup>38</sup>Interview with P7, conducted on November 13, 2023

<sup>39</sup>Interview with P1, conducted on November 30, 2023

would receive turbans, caps, prayer beads, prayer mats, zam-zam water, and dates. The reception of guests could last up to 7 days, or sometimes even 40 days, providing new pilgrims with a sense of joy and pride.<sup>40</sup>

*Selfies, video-calls, blogging, creating content while performing Hajj*

In 2021 and 2022, news circulated widely on social media platforms, including YouTube, about a Saudi cleric, Sulaiman Ar Ruhaili, who made sarcastic remarks about Indonesian Hajj pilgrims taking selfies (see Figure 8). The cleric's comments highlighted his concerns about the use of technology by pilgrims, which he believed was disrupting the traditional practices of the Hajj pilgrimage<sup>41</sup>

Another activity that represents that the Hajj is a festival celebration is the selfie activity or other content-creating activities of the pilgrims. This activity is not part of the Hajj pilgrimage, because it is a form of activity that has shifted from the core of the Hajj pilgrimage; thawaf dhikr, sa'i, is throwing jurah, and wukuf.<sup>42</sup> This indicates a shift in the focus of Hajj activities to purposes beyond its traditional worship elements.

A Hajj degree is more important

According to informants 9 and 6, some pilgrims may not possess extensive religious knowledge, yet they are entrusted to lead religious rituals. The local Muslim community values the idealized Hajj experience, giving more importance to the title of Hajj than to one's religious depth. Being a prayer leader is a challenging responsibility. In some societies, people expect those who have performed Hajj to take on this role, even if they are not fully prepared for it. Some individuals feel nervous when asked to lead prayers.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup>Interview with P4, conducted on November 13, 2023

<sup>41</sup>[https://www.youtube.com/shorts/HU0eaZcD\\_4I](https://www.youtube.com/shorts/HU0eaZcD_4I), AccesDsed 22 July 2024.

<sup>42</sup>Observation were conducted in Mecca, July 20-22, 2022

<sup>43</sup>Interview with P9, conducted on November 30, 2023

Not everyone can read Al Barzanji, nor does everyone wish to lead its recitation. However, after performing Hajj, Tuan Haji took on the responsibility of leading the reading of Al Barzanji every Friday night.<sup>44</sup> This reflects the idea that a person who has completed Hajj has a social responsibility. The informant also noted that holding the title of Hajj is regarded as more significant than having mastery of religious knowledge. Data exposure regarding disorientation in Hajj practices can be found in Table 4.

Table 4. Disorientation of Hajj Practices

| Orientation  | Description  | Source of Data  |
|--|--|---|
| Celebration of Hajj<br>Departure and Return                            | The local tradition of Hajj departure and return has evolved into an annual celebration or festival, lasting several days and featuring hundreds of guests, with luxurious banquets and entertainment. | - Interview with P9   |
| Imaging  | The Hajj pilgrims will take pride in carrying out the departure and return rituals of the Hajj, as these rituals confirm the identity and high prestige of the Hajj.                                   | Interview with P1 and P4  |
| Selfies, Video-calls, Blogging, Creating Content while Performing Hajj | Indonesian Hajj pilgrims are known for taking selfies and creating content while performing religious worship.   | <a href="https://www.youtube.com/shorts/HU0eaZcD_4I">https://www.youtube.com/shorts/HU0eaZcD_4I</a><br>observation in Mecca |

<sup>44</sup>Interview with P6, conducted on November 30, 2023

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|   |   |                          |
|---|---|--------------------------|
| A Hajj Degree is More Important than the Depth of Religious Knowledge | People believe they are religious leaders, even without deep religious knowledge. | Interview with P5 and P3 |
|---|---|--------------------------|

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Table 4 shows the various types of orientation of Hajj practices and narratives that emerge in society. This narrative is based on facts that occurred during the Hajj Pilgrimage.

Several factors characterize the disorientation of the meaning of the Hajj within local Muslim communities. This complexity is evident through three key findings in this study. First, the shift in the Hajj’s valuation reflects the pilgrims’ inadequate religious knowledge, leading them to rely more on local perceptions of the Hajj rather than religious doctrine. Second, changes in attitudes towards the purpose of the Hajj suggest instability in the religious sentiments of the pilgrims, likely due to their limited life experiences. Society’s expectations for a perfect Hajj experience can lead to a conflict between focusing on spirituality and meeting worldly demands. Additionally, changes in how the pilgrimage is practiced reflect a more modern and technologically influenced approach to religion. These findings suggest that the understanding of Hajj within local Muslim communities is complex and shaped by specific contexts.

This research reveals that disorientation regarding the significance of the Hajj pilgrimage in local communities stems from the combined influence of internal and external factors. The impact of internal factors stems from local Muslims viewing the Hajj pilgrimage as a means of enhancing their social status. This perspective is supported by the views of Mircea Eliade,<sup>45</sup> who suggested that desacralization occurs as cultural values change and

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<sup>45</sup>Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*, New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1959.

focus shifts from the sacred to worldly matters. Changes in social and economic structures can also lead to a decline in religious values, causing things that were once considered sacred to be viewed as more profane by modern society. Sacred items are commodified, with the argument being made that even the Hajj, a religious pilgrimage, can be bought and sold using free market principles.<sup>46</sup>

The influence of external factors, such as fluid modernity,<sup>47</sup> and the blending of digital culture within local Muslim communities, affects their understanding of the values of the Hajj, leading to the Hajj becoming more of a celebratory event. Fluid modernity leads to the decline of traditional spirituality, leaving individuals to face the challenge of balancing materialistic demands with their spiritual needs. The advancement of media technology has shifted society's spiritual focus to be more practical and pragmatic.<sup>48</sup>

The shifting values of the Hajj pilgrimage within local Muslim communities indicate a significant contextual change. This consistent shift has the potential to fundamentally alter the understanding of Hajj in three main areas: values, attitudes, and practices. The Hajj pilgrimage is no longer being observed and embraced under Islamic teachings. Turner also noted that the change in values can not only obscure spiritual meanings but also lead to the development of new ritual practices that differ from traditional beliefs.<sup>49</sup> Therefore, this shift in the understanding of the Hajj pilgrimage has the potential to spur new values and behaviors among Muslims, as observed in local communities. This context was also

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<sup>46</sup>Michael York, "New Age Commodification and Appropriation of Spirituality", *Journal of Contemporary Religion*, Vol. 16, no. 3 (2001), 361–372.

<sup>47</sup>Beilharz and Bauman, "Liquid Modernity..."

<sup>48</sup>Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, 1st MIT Press ed. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1994.

<sup>49</sup>Victor W. Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*, The Lewis Henry Morgan lectures 1966, New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1995.

emphasized by York, who suggested that ongoing practices can shape new beliefs within a community, potentially leading to future debate.<sup>50</sup>

The findings of this study differ from previous studies on the Hajj pilgrimage. Previous studies mainly focused on explaining the process and values of the pilgrimage in absolute terms.<sup>51</sup> However, this study's findings indicate that the practices and values of the Hajj pilgrimage in local Muslim communities in Madura and Lombok undergo value disorientation. As a result, the pilgrimage is practiced more dynamically and not always in line with religious doctrine.

The disorientation experienced during the Hajj stems from the conflict between the desire to follow religious teachings and the practical demands of everyday life. This finding is consistent with Al-Ajarma and Buitelaar's (2021) observation that contradictions and ambiguities mark the daily life of Hajj pilgrims. One such contradiction is the contrast between the expected behavior of a Hajj pilgrim, as dictated by religious morals and values, and the actual behavior and interactions with others, who may not always adhere to these ideal teachings.<sup>52</sup> According to Geertz (1976, 2001), a gap and tension always exist between the ideal and the practical aspects of life. Pilgrimage serves not only as a means to experience the ideal of "ascending to the path of God" and experiencing His power, but also to achieve worldly goals, attain success, and escape from everyday problems.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>50</sup>York, "New Age Commodification and Appropriation of Spirituality..."

<sup>51</sup>Syariati, *Haji*; Muslim Nasution, *Haji Dan Umrah (Keagungan Dan Nilai Amaliahnya)*, Jakarta: Gema Insani Press, 1999; Wiliam Roof, "Pilgrimage and the History of Religions Theoretical Approaches To The Hajj," in *Approach to Islam in Religious Studies*, Tucson: The university of Arizona Press, 1985; Tagliacozzo and Toorawa, "Introduction"; Al-Ajarma and Buitelaar, "Social Media Representations of the Pilgrimage to Mecca"; Abdullah, "Ibadah Haji: Ziarah Ke Tanah Suci Makkah Dalam Perspektif Insider Dan Outsider."

<sup>52</sup>Al-Ajarma and Buitelaar, "Social Media Representations of the Pilgrimage to Mecca..."

<sup>53</sup>Clifford Geertz, "Religion as a Cultural System," in *A Reader in the Anthropolgy of Religion*, ed. Michael Lambek, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2001; Clifford Geertz, *The Religion of Java*, New York: University of Chicago Press, 1976.

## Conclusion

The study has revealed intricate reasons why perceptions of the Hajj pilgrimage can lead to disorientation of meaning among local Muslim communities. The local system of beliefs and rituals serves as an internal factor contributing to this disorientation. In contrast, the fluid nature of modernity and advancements in information technology serve as external factors that further intensify this disorientation. This research enriches our theoretical understanding of how various factors influence religious diversity within Muslim communities. It also highlights those changes in modern civilization and advancements in information technology, along with local belief systems and limited religious knowledge, collectively contributing to the disorientation experienced during the Hajj pilgrimage.

Based on the research findings, it is evident that the disorientation of the hajj operates in three dimensions: values, attitudes, and worship practices. Firstly, in the values dimension, the local community's perception of the hajj is more focused on worldly aspects. Secondly, in their attitudes, Hajj pilgrims tend to become more pragmatic. Finally, in terms of practices, the Hajj ritual has evolved into a ceremonial event with a festive atmosphere.

From an anthropological perspective, this research enhances our theoretical understanding of the various factors influencing religious diversity within Muslim communities. It is important to note that changes in society, characterized by the fluidity of modernity<sup>54</sup> and advances in information technology, as well as the local belief system and limited religious knowledge, all work together to influence the disorientation experienced by pilgrims during the Hajj.

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<sup>54</sup>Beilharz and Bauman, "Liquid Modernity."

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