

Islamic-Imperial Encounters: Colonial Enclosure and Muslim Cosmopolitans in
Island Southeast Asia, 1800-1940

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	iii
ABSTRACT.....	ix
CHAPTER	
1. INTRODUCTION	1
The worlds of Sumatra and Sulu.....	10
The advent of colonial enclosure in Aceh and Sulu.....	16
Disconnection and reconnection in Islamic networks.....	20
Islam and coercive cosmopolitanism.....	26
Organization of dissertation.....	33
2. CONTINGENT CONQUESTS: COLONIAL WARFARE, ISLAM, AND COLLABORATION ACROSS SUMATRA AND SULU	37
Civil war, commerce, and European designs in Sumatra circa 1815.....	42
Backdrop to the Padri War: Dutch weakness and Islamic strife.....	56
The beginning of the Padri War and the search for viable Muslim collaborators.....	65
Overreach, correction, and the durability of cooperation in the Padri War.....	77
Aceh and the advent of the imperial age.....	85
Imperial war-making and the fall of the Muslim collaborator.....	97
Conclusion.....	114
3. ENCLOSING MOBILITIES: THE INCORPORATION OF SULU INTO THE COLONIAL SPHERE	119
The rise of the Sulu Sultanate and the trading ecosystem of the Mindanao region.....	125
The first round of enclosure: blockades, invasions, and resettlements, 1836-1881.....	133
Britain, Singapore and the survival of Sulu, 1849-1870.....	138
The intensification of exclusion and enclosure, 1871-1887.....	142
The 1890s and the end of blockade: towards a new regime of enclosure.....	149
The arrival of the United States.....	153
Resistance, resilience, and the emerging disconnect.....	180
Conclusion.....	197
4. COSMOPOLITAN ENCLOSURES: TRADE, BLOCKADES AND ISLAMIC REFORM IN COLONIAL-ERA ACEH, 1873-1939	200
The rise of Aceh as a cosmopolitan and Islamic power.....	204
Enclosure or co-optation: the Aceh dilemma.....	212
The evitable blockade, 1873-1880.....	222
<i>Scheepvaartregeling</i> and Pulau Weh.....	227
Enclosure and containment after the blockade.....	232
The afterlife of war: economic drift and the atrophy of Aceh's external connections.....	241
Enclosure and the displacement of Islamic cosmopolitanism.....	246

Conclusion.....	266
5. MUHAMMAD TAHIR JALAL AL-DIN, WEST SUMATRA, AND ENTANGLED ISLAMIC COSMOPOLITANISMS	269
The offspring of Tuanku nan Tua in the aftermath of the Padri War.....	274
West Sumatran society in flux: coffee cultivation system and economic transformation.....	282
Economic transformation, religious renewal, and the foundations of cosmopolitanism.....	290
Muhammad Tahir Jalal al-Din and the Cairo-Singapore nexus.....	303
The long, winding road from Singapore to West Sumatra.....	315
Abdullah Ahmad, urbanization, and <i>Al-Munir</i>	318
Conclusion.....	331
6. RECONFIGURING ISLAMIC COSMOPOLITANISM: ZAMBOANGA IN THE COLONIAL SULU WORLD	332
The arrival of the American regime and Zamboanga as cosmopolitan colonial showcase.....	341
Zamboanga as international trading node.....	345
Moro exchange, colonial fairs, and constitution of Zamboanga as a Muslim commercial hub.....	350
Reconfiguring Islamic networks: John P. Finley, the “Sheik-ul-Islam,” and “Modern Mohammedanism”.....	354
Haji Abdullah Nuño and the local movement for Islamic reform in Zamboanga.....	369
Urban nodes, their hinterlands, and the stunting of religious reform in Zamboanga.....	375
7. CONCLUSION	388
Imperial Islamic encounters and the paradoxes of war.....	388
Paired comparisons and re-conceptualizing the periphery.....	390
Disconnection and reconnection, enclosure and coercive cosmopolitanism.....	393
Complicating disconnections and reconnections.....	397
Epilogue.....	399
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	407

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Island Southeast Asia, 1800-1940

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Under the supervision of Professor Alfred W. McCoy
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This dissertation addresses the question of how violence and colonial war-making disconnected and reconnected Islamic peoples across the boundaries of region, colony, and nation. In the extant literature conquest and rebellion has generally been interpreted as discrete events limited in time and space. However, war also entailed ramifications that reached far beyond the battlefield, providing inadvertent opportunities for Muslims to re-forge commercial ties, create new types of religious organizations, and reclaim their place in the global community of Muslims (*umma*), developments which directly contributed to the anti-colonial movement of the 1920s and 1930s.

To elucidate this dialectical process of destruction and creation, this dissertation employs a distinctive methodology of paired comparison. By taking two paired case studies, West Sumatra versus Aceh in colonial Indonesia, and Sulu versus Zamboanga in the Philippines, it becomes possible to see the most protracted colonial wars of Southeast Asia—the Dutch Aceh War and the Moro Wars—in the context of immediate neighbors that did not suffer war, but flourished as an inadvertent consequence. Paired comparisons thus display the synergies and simultaneities between exclusion and inclusion, disconnection and re-connection, war and peace.

Specifically, I utilize the analytical concepts of “enclosure” and “coercive cosmopolitanism.” Enclosure denotes the range of imperial policies that colonial powers deployed to detach Muslims from networks that stretched across the Indian Ocean world. Coercive cosmopolitanism refers to the processes of entanglement by which local Muslims

became intertwined with the circuits of the colonial state and could, paradoxically, reconnect with their co-religionists across the globe.

This comparative analysis of Sumatra and Sulu, enclosure and coercive cosmopolitanism, illustrates that there was no inherent, immovable violent edge of the Islamic world. Instead there is a kaleidoscopic flux of ever-shifting cores and peripheries that generated innumerable pockets of inclusion and exclusion, a patchwork of overlapping modernities. In sum, this finding of fluid cores and peripheries provides a framework flexible enough to be applied to other areas of the Islamic world, yet focused enough on discrete variables like enclosure and coercive cosmopolitanism to illuminate the significance of Southeast Asia's most controversial colonial wars.

Chapter 1 Introduction

In March 1873 four battalions of colonial troops embarked upon the final leg of a journey half-way around the world, from temperate Europe to tropical Southeast Asia.¹ After traveling on iron-hulled steamships from the North Sea all the way across the Indian Ocean to equatorial Java, these soldiers set course for their final destination: the northern coast of Sumatra.² There, some one thousand European troops landed with one overriding objective: the capitulation of another seaborne power, the Muslim kingdom of Aceh. Fierce resistance, however, soon pushed these troops back into the sea, forcing the Dutch government to undertake a protracted, forty-year war of conquest that, in the end, would require far more than that small original detachment.³ Over the course of this long, painful pacification, Dutch troops would continue to land on Sumatra's shores to mount periodic offensives, levelling ports and settlements with artillery fire. Other indigenous peoples from across the Indies, moreover, were increasingly drawn into this maelstrom of colonial conflict, as Ambonese and Javanese found themselves conscripted into the imperial forces.⁴ In the end, this sustained assault left an indelible imprint not only upon Aceh, where it cost the lives of some 75,000 residents, but upon the entire Dutch colonial enterprise in the East Indies.⁵

¹ Antje Missbach, "The Aceh War (1873-1913) and the Influence of Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje," in *Aceh: History, Politics, and Culture*, ed. Arndt Graf, Susanne Schroter, and Edwin Wieringa (Singapore: Institute for Southeast Asian Studies, 2010), 45.

² Paul van't Veer, *De Atjeh-oorlog* (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij de Arbeidspers, 1969), 50.

³ There is debate about the duration of the Dutch-Aceh war, and specifically, the end date, but the most accepted periodization is from 1873 to 1913, see J.I. Bakker, "The Aceh War and the Creation of the Netherlands East Indies State," in *Great Powers and Little Wars: The Limits of Power*, ed. A. Hamish Ion and E.J. Errington (Westport: Praeger, 1993), 56-58.

⁴ For instance, in the initial sortie into Aceh, there were 220 people of Javanese and Ambonese origin in the invading colonial army, see Veer, *De Atjeh-oorlog*, 50.

⁵ Henk Schulte Nordholt, "A Genealogy of Violence," in *Roots of Violence in Indonesia: Contemporary Violence in Historical Perspective*, eds. Freek Colombijn & J. Thomas Lindblad (Leiden: KITLV, 2002), 36.

During these same years, another seaborne “invasion” swept the East Indies. Instead of a military assault from Europe, this one originated in the Arabian Peninsula and reached the disparate port cities of the East Indies archipelago, threatening the nascent colonial order. Writing in 1888, a leading Dutch scholar of Islam, Carel Poenson, sounded the alarm about this growing circulation of Muslim religious texts. During their voyages to Mecca, Poenson observed, ever-expanding numbers of *hajjis* from the Indies exchanged Islamic sources such as the *hadith*, so that “a certain number that is initially 17,000 is made into 17,000,000.”⁶ Thus augmented, such texts would spread around the Indian Ocean reaching Sumatra and its thriving entrepot of Padang—erstwhile tributary of the Acehese kingdom. These texts would then be scattered “to the four winds,” from the colonial capital Batavia (now Jakarta) to Semarang, where, Poenson feared, they would surely unleash a flood of “holy struggle (i.e. prang-sabil)” and an “expanding popular movement” in favor of “religious war.”⁷ While these fears were inflated by his religious bias, Poenson’s assessment does, nonetheless, draw attention to the movement of Islamic ideas and texts across the Indian Ocean, with profound consequences for Dutch rule over the Indies.

Midst these cross-currents of colonial soldiers and Muslim *hajjis*, of iron-hulled steamships and Islamic texts, an ever growing number of individual travelers came ashore in unexpected places, the flotsam of this imperial age. While war continued on the Acehese coast in the 1880s, for example, a sultan from the kingdom of Sulu in the southern Philippines disembarked in the British port of Singapore, just across the Straits of Melaka from Aceh. As a

⁶ Carel Poenson, “Een Mohammedaansche Tractaatje,” *Mededeelingen van wege het Nederlandsche Zendelinggenootschap* 32 (1888): 2. The scholar of Indonesian Islam, Michael Laffan, has exposed the inaccuracy of Carel Poenson’s claim that the reproduced text was a *hadith*, identifying instead as a tenth century catechism from central Asian scholar Abu l-Layth al-Samarqandi, see Michael Laffan, *The Makings of Indonesian Islam: Orientalism and the Narration of a Sufi Past* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 33.

⁷ Poenson, “Een Mohammedaansche Traactaatje,” 2.

victim of the same imperial pressures that had beset Aceh, the Sultan of Sulu had been battered by a surge of Spanish colonial troops, which by 1878 had compelled him into formal submission.⁸ After he acquiesced and swore his allegiance to the Spanish Crown, the Sultan set sail for Singapore in 1881 en route to Jeddah and Mecca for the *hajj*. Sultan Kiram spent considerable time in Singapore's harbor precincts, reportedly participating in gambling, opium smoking, and other pursuits characteristic of such quarters. Spanish spies and informants who trolled these districts for information reported disturbing rumors that Kiram was attempting to purchase weapons on the black marketplace.⁹ With such arms, the Sultan might yet drive the Spanish from their foothold on his island.

These three instances of contentious circulations from the southern Philippines to Mecca and Holland reveal a wider Indian Ocean world in flux. Since the emergence of Portugal as a maritime empire in the 1400s, European traders had navigated alongside Arab seafarers, Japanese pirates, Chinese merchants, and countless other Asian traders. In the process, European Christians and Asian Muslims created a series of overlapping seaborne networks of trade, commerce, and religious exchange that reached around the Indian Ocean. While European networks often intersected with Islamic ones and sometimes captured a sliver of valuable cargo, they never displaced inter-Asian trade. In the words of Kenneth McPherson, an historian of the Indian Ocean, the Portuguese and their successors "had become simply another trade diaspora around the Indian Ocean reliant on good working relations with indigenous merchants."¹⁰ By the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, however, the British and Dutch East Indies Company

⁸ James Warren, *The Sulu Zone, 1768-1898: The Dynamics of External Trade, Slavery, and Ethnicity in the Transformation of a Southeast Asian Maritime State* (Manila: New Day Publishers, 1985), 124.

⁹ Cesar Adib Majul, *Muslims in the Philippines* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1973; reprint, Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1999), 357 (page citations are to the reprint edition).

¹⁰ Kenneth McPherson, "Port Cities as Nodal Points of Change: The Indian Ocean, 1890s-1920s," in *Modernity and Culture from the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean, 1890-1920*, ed. Leila Fawaz, C.A. Bayly, and Robert Ilbert (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 79.

intensified their efforts to control valuable commodities within this oceanic world, a project which went well beyond commodity exchange to outright political control. These attempts at imposing authority ultimately entailed ever greater recourse to naval incursions and military intervention.

The advent of high imperialism in the late nineteenth century would, in turn, unleash currents of change across the Indian Ocean, sweeping along all manner of trader and soldier, religious scholar and secular administrator, ruling sultan and ordinary peasant, Asian Muslim and Christian European. Advances in technology—whether steamship, telegraph or repeating rifle—only served to roil these waters even more.¹¹ Amidst these disruptions, nothing emerged unscathed or unchanged. European and Muslim networks, in particular, increasingly collided in a process that engendered European encounters and entanglements, along with Muslim creativity and collaboration. In essence, the violence of colonial interactions underwrote a generative process of combination and re-combination that would ultimately lead to a far-reaching reconfiguration of Islamic networks in the eastern Indian Ocean world. Great Islamic kingdoms that had anchored disparate networks of trade and religious exchange for centuries would rapidly fall and rise and fall yet again, while hinterlands that had barely registered in past oceanic circulations would emerge as new nodal points. Sultans who had been the focal points of religious devotion for centuries would suddenly be cast aside, while new Islamic institutions and reformist theologies would proliferate. Where once Muslim mobilities had focused on Mecca and a handful of sultanates, the pious now coursed between colonial cities from Zamboanga in the Philippines to Singapore and Cairo. Out of these encounters between colonizing European

¹¹ One of the few works to deeply engage with issues such as the arms trade and violence in the Indian Ocean rim is Emrys Chew, *Arming the Periphery: The Arms Trade in the Indian Ocean during the Age of Global Empire* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012).

and colonized Muslims, the Islamic networks of the Indian Ocean world would emerge re-constituted, reconfigured, and re-made.

This dissertation will examine precisely these contentious oceanic encounters and entanglements, focusing on the ways in which colonial maritime expansion, from the onset of the Dutch-Padri War in 1817 until the independence struggles of the 1940s, reconfigured the Islamic networks of the eastern Indian Ocean world. In specific, it will attend to the central role of colonial violence and military intervention in this process.¹² Amid the “global turn” in history, David Bell notes, “military conquest...is the most direct form of ‘global connection’ imaginable.”¹³ However much the reality of coercion and conflict might be recognized as the omnipresent backdrop to oceanic circulations, this reality almost invariably recedes from view in the scholarly literature, lost amidst an almost giddy sense of unbounded motion, mobility, and exchange. Perhaps no group became a more frequent target of this sort of colonial violence, whether of the physical or discursive variety, than did the Muslim communities of the Indian Ocean world. This dissertation will therefore pay special attention to the campaigns of imperial conquest in the Muslim lands of island Southeast Asia and their afterlife.

How can we understand these seminal, violence-wracked Islamic-imperial encounters that unfolded along a 10,000 mile arc from the deserts of Morocco and Sudan to the Afghan highlands and the southern Philippines islands, in the century between 1830 and 1930? This dissertation proposes an approach at once broad, yet focused, capable of yielding generalizable

¹² In many senses, the process by which colonial European seafarers integrated societies of the Indian Ocean world into global networks of trade, urbanization, and exchange may be likened to the process by which Turko-Mongol nomads advanced a similar process of integration in the Indian world of the 11th through 13th centuries. See André Wink, *The Making of the Indo-Islamic World*, vol. 2, *The Slave Kings and the Islamic Conquest 11th-13th Centuries* (New York: Oxford India Paperbacks, 1999), 8.

¹³ David Bell, “This is What Happens When Historians Overuse the Idea of the Network,” *The New Republic*, October 25, 2013, <http://www.newrepublic.com/article/114709/world-connecting-reviewed-historians-overuse-network-metaphor>, accessed October 31, 2013.

insight while remaining mindful of local nuance and particularity: a paired comparison of two island worlds in Southeast Asia, Sumatra in present-day Indonesia and Sulu in the Philippines. From the examination of four specific case studies on these islands, we will learn that colonial violence did not merely suppress resistance, but also generated opportunities for Muslim to re-connect with their co-religionists and forge alternative expressions of Islamic modernity.

To elucidate this paradoxical dynamic borne of violence, this dialectic between exclusion and inclusion, disconnection and reconnection, two specific analytical concepts will be employed. The first of these, enclosure, will be used to explain the ways by which colonial empires contained and isolated once powerful Islamic kingdoms through a set of tactics ranging from aggressive intervention to gradual disengagement. The second of these, coercive cosmopolitanism, will describe how the process of Muslim entanglements within the colonial system, for all of its repressive elements, also facilitated travel, interconnection, and religious reform among Islamic communities. In sum, by tracing such paradoxical processes across two island realms, this dissertation will recast the role of violence as central to the shaping of alternative Muslim modernities.

The study of violence and Muslims, it should be noted, is an undertaking fraught with heavy social, cultural, and political baggage. In a recent roundtable on theorizing violence in the contemporary Middle East, Laleh Khalili observed that many scholars refrain from grappling with the subject for fear of inflaming prejudicial stereotypes and biased discourses, thereby giving legitimacy to the contemporary wars on terrorism being waged across large swaths of the Muslim world.¹⁴ These risks are only magnified in places like Aceh and Sulu, two locations beset by ongoing insurgency, pacification, and counter-terror campaigns. All too often, so-called

¹⁴ Laleh Khalili, "Thinking about Violence," *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 45 (2013): 791.

“terrorism experts” fall back on depiction of such sites of Muslim resistance and insurgency as violent “edges,” as fringe zones of religious fanaticism diametrically opposed to modernity.¹⁵ Aceh and Sulu comprise two, lesser known examples of this putative fanatical fringe, or what Julia Clancy-Smith refers to as an “enduring historical myth...of an age-old Christian-Muslim frontier stretching from the Mediterranean and Red Sea Gulf region across the Indian Ocean, a frontier allegedly shaped by implacable hatreds and impervious to all or most, exchanges, with the exception of warfare and violence.”¹⁶ In all of these places, *jihad* and resistance against invading colonial armies appear to merge almost seamlessly with post-colonial insurgency and lawlessness, a story of primordial violence and religious extremism that produced the lands of poverty, disorder, and terrorism portrayed today by popular media. So depicted, the religious rebellions of the colonial era cannot offer a space for reflection on the complex dynamics of these imperial-Islamic encounters. Instead, they provide superficial confirmation and validation of many of the most deeply ingrained stereotypes about “remote,” “tribal” or “jungle” sites of violence in particular, and Islam in general.

Yet, the persistence of such clichés only heightens the urgency of confronting this subject head on, of elaborating more sophisticated historical models and reclaiming the concept of the “edge” of the Islamic world. Khalili indeed affirms the “centrality of forms of coercion to the reproduction of institutions of...empire,” and the most egregious displays of such violence often unfolded in those areas colonial regimes defined as the “edge.”¹⁷ One possible avenue for recovering the concept of “edge” would be to construe it not as an isolated periphery, but rather,

¹⁵ John Sidel is especially critical of the “terrorism studies” experts who have little grounding in the local history of the places under study. See John Sidel, “Jihad and the Specter of Transnational Islam in Contemporary Southeast Asia: A Comparative Historical Perspective,” in Eric Tagliacozzo, ed., *Southeast Asia and the Middle East: Islam, Movement, and the Longue Durée*, (Singapore: NUS Press, 2009): 275-279.

¹⁶ Julia Ann Clancy-Smith, “Collaboration and Empire in the Middle East and North Africa: Introduction and Response,” *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 24, no. 1 (2004): 126.

¹⁷ Khalili, 791.

as a central site for the generation of the colonial state and of multiple expressions of Muslim identity in the core centers of the Islamic worlds. In such an interpretation, the experiences of extreme violence and counter-insurgency efforts that constituted “edge” spaces also played a seminal role in the fashioning of state apparatuses, along with oppositional forms of Muslim “modernity” that flowed back to regions defined as the “center.” Such an interpretation would conform to recent historical trends that seek to reconstitute core and periphery models by elucidating the dynamic interplay between those areas and, in effect, “re-centering the periphery.”¹⁸

This dissertation, however, seeks to go even further in this revision of core-periphery models; specifically, it seeks to employ the idea of “networks” to dissolve the edge altogether, to illustrate how violence shaped connections and re-connections among Muslims without end or geographical limitation. The entire premise of core and periphery, to some extent, accepts the retrospective boundaries and dyads imposed by colonial and post-colonial states, which place Aceh or Sulu in liminal spaces even if they did exercise substantial influence on centers in Jakarta and Manila, The Hague and Washington. However, Muslims from regions defined as the “periphery” would continue to forge multidirectional ties with co-religionists that cut across region and nation well after the moment of colonial invasion, travelling from Luzon to Singapore and Malaya, from South Asia to the Middle East, and even farther beyond to Paris and London.

¹⁸ For example, in his seminal work on colonial policing in the Philippines, Alfred W. McCoy scrambles core/periphery models by conceiving relationships between the United States and its colony as a process of “mutual transformation,” see Alfred W. McCoy, *Policing America's Empire: The United States, the Philippines, and the Rise of the Surveillance State* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2009), 11; one article that specifically plays with the concept of core/periphery is Charles Argo, “The Ottoman Balkan City: The Periphery as Center in Punitive Spectacle,” in *Secondary Cities and Urban Networking in the Indian Ocean Realm, C. 1400-1800*, ed. Kenneth R. Hall (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2008): 259-286; More broadly, this article seeks to engage in a larger discussion of the ways of re-imagining World Systems Theory in a humanistic way attentive to agency, difference, and multiple subjectivities, see, David Palumbo-Liu, Bruce Robbins, and Nirvana Tanoukhi, eds., *Immanuel Wallerstein and the Problems of the World* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013).

The question thus becomes: how did the experience of colonial warfare in areas like Aceh and Sulu reconfigure extant Islamic networks without end or edge?

To better understand this process of reconfiguration, this dissertation will situate colonial conquest in the context of shifting Islamic networks, a process of flux that would, paradoxically, not only promote resistance and rebellion, but also alternative Muslim modernities.¹⁹ By widening the historical lens beyond the immediate sites of war to nearby cities, towns, and agricultural plots just beyond the battlefield, it becomes possible to see that colonial violence did not only wreak destruction. These wars simultaneously played a creative role, catalyzing new forms of trade, agricultural production, and economic development that would draw in many local Muslims. Indeed, even as wars of conquest weakened and debilitated once powerful Islamic sultanates in Aceh and Sulu—the traditional nodes of the Indian Ocean Islamic world—they simultaneously opened up new spaces in Padang, Zamboanga, and the surrounding countryside to pursue a resurgent form of Islamic reformism. Growing trade, income, and access to international travel allowed Muslims in these communities—by their own initiative, and often against the express wishes of colonial rulers—to take far-flung journeys, to open new types of religious schools, and to start novel mutual-aid societies.

Thus, colonial violence did not simply crush Muslims or engender protracted insurgency. It also provided opportunities, usually unintended by colonial administrators, to re-work religious expression and enact new cosmopolitan projects of commitment to the larger global *umma*, or community of Muslim believers. By pursuing a paired comparison of Aceh and West

¹⁹ For the extensive literature on Muslim modernities, see works such as Aynn Sajoo, ed., *Muslim Modernities: Expressions of the Civil Imagination* (London: I.B. Tauris in association with The Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2008); Muhammad Masud, Armando Salvatore, and Martin van Bruinessen, eds., *Islam and Modernity: Key Issues and Debates* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009); and, Fazlur Rahman, *Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition*, Publications of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies, no. 15 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982).

Sumatra in the Netherlands East Indies, along with Sulu and Zamboanga in the Philippines, this dissertation will thus chart the ways by which colonial violence generated dialectics of creation and destruction, inclusion and exclusion, modernity and resistance. In sum, it will trace the gestation of a regime of coercive cosmopolitanism that would exert a powerful hold on the Muslim communities of Sumatra and Sulu throughout the colonial period, and indeed, well into the post-independence years ahead.

The worlds of Sumatra and Sulu

To make sense of the immensity of imperial-Islamic encounters across the Indian Ocean rim, this dissertation will focus on two specific island worlds in the eastern expanses of that maritime realm, in the region denoted by area studies scholars as Southeast Asia. These two places are Sumatra, the sixth largest island in the world, an oblong landmass at the western extremity of the present-day Indonesian archipelago; and Sulu, a necklace of islets between Mindanao and Borneo, in what is today the southernmost reaches of the Philippine nation. Separated by almost three-thousand miles of ocean just north of the equator, Sumatra and Sulu comprised very distinct historical, social, and cultural units. Endowed with mutually unintelligible languages and unique local identities, situated in two different nations, these two island regions, at first glance, might seem to share little in common apart from their tropical geography.

Yet, in many respects, there is much more that connects Sumatra and Sulu than separates them. As early as the fourteenth century, legend has it that a seafarer from the west central regions of Sumatra Island named Rajah Bagindo, in the area today known as West Sumatra or Minangkabau, set sail for distant ports and eventually landed in the center of the Sulu chain, on

Jolo Island, where he established the first organized polity in the region.²⁰ From that moment, Sulu and Sumatra have been deeply implicated in a common Southeast Asian web of commerce, diasporic interconnection, and cultural exchange. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, for instance, traders from both islands fanned out across the littoral world of the Malay-Indonesian archipelago, travelling from Sulawesi to Java, from Borneo to the Malay Peninsula, in search of markets to peddle their wares. Various ethnic diasporas, such as the Hadhrami Arabs from Yemen on the Arabian Peninsula and the Bugis peoples from southern Sulawesi, routinely called on both islands, in the process establishing local communities and forging another vital link between the two regions.²¹ The peregrinations of individual religious scholars, in turn, added another layer of connection, as students from Sulu appeared in Sumatra during the eighteenth century, while Sumatran educators, conversely, helped to organize new schools on Sulu in the twentieth. Moreover, as the age of high imperialism dawned in the 1800s, both of these two islands became ever more tightly integrated into the commercial orbit revolving around the British “free-port” of Singapore, exporting the preponderance of their raw materials to the Straits Settlements in exchange for European capital and commodities.²²

However, among all the linkages and historical resonances, perhaps nothing did more to join the fate of these two islands together than the intertwined experiences of Islamic expansion

²⁰ Majul, *Muslims in the Philippines*, 60-61.

²¹ Engseng Ho, “Names Beyond Nations: The Making of Local Cosmopolitans,” *Etudes Rurales* 163-164 (July-December 2002): 28; The Bugis were deeply intertwined in the trading realm of Sulu, see Heather Sutherland, “The Sulu Zone Revisited,” review of *Iranun and Balangingi: Globalization, Maritime Raiding and the Birth of Ethnicity*, by James Francis Warren, *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 35, no. 1 (February 2004): 145; the Bugis were similarly involved in trading with Aceh, and in fact many of the sultans of that kingdom were of Bugis origins, see Anthony Reid, *An Indonesian Frontier: Acehnese and Other Histories of Sumatra*, (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2005), 8; Lee Kam Hing, *The Sultanate of Aceh: Relations with the British, 1760-1824* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995): 1.

²² See for example James Warren, *The Sulu Zone 1768-1898: The Dynamics of External Trade, Slavery, and Ethnicity in the Transformation of a Southeast Asian Maritime State* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1985); Lee, “Aceh at the Time of the 1824 Treaty,” 90.

and colonial conquest. From the moment Arab seafarers sailed across the waters of the Indian Ocean, landing first in northern Sumatra in the thirteenth century, and later navigating their way to Sulu in the fifteenth, they carried with them an abiding devotion to their religious faith, a devotion which would leave a deep impression on these two islands. In turn, as these seafarers proceeded to marry into prominent indigenous clans and convert local notables to Islam, new socio-political formations began to crystallize. Kingdoms grounded in the spiritual charisma and religious legitimacy of their rulers, the Muslim Sultan, emerged.

Among those kingdoms, Aceh and Jolo in specific, located on the northern tip of Sumatra and the center of the Sulu Archipelago respectively, developed into two of the most formidable and interconnected powers of the entire Southeast Asian maritime world. While contemporary travelers might attribute the ascent of these two kingdoms to brute military prowess, at a more fundamental level, Aceh and Jolo derived their strength from their positions as vital hubs of exchange in the broader Islamic world of the Indian Ocean. The movement of Muslim traders and merchants, religious scholars and ordinary pilgrims, slaves and commodities, ultimately articulated these two kingdoms with networks that spanned from the coasts of Sulu and Sumatra, through the Indian subcontinent, and all the way to Arabia. In the process, these networks infused Aceh and Jolo with the wealth, traditions of religious scholarship, and spiritual eminence, thereby transforming these two kingdoms into important anchors of the Southeast Asian Islamic world.²³

The vitality of Aceh and Jolo as Islamic kingdoms, meanwhile, persisted well past the generally accepted heyday of indigenous sultanates, surviving and thriving well into the 1800s. For instance, although it had fallen into decline in the wake of its sixteenth century “golden age,”

²³ A.C. Milner identifies both Sulu and Aceh as paradigmatic “Medieval Muslim” kingdoms, see A.C. Milner, “Islam and the Muslim State,” in *Islam in South-East Asia*, ed. M.B. Hooker (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1988), 34.

Aceh nonetheless proved resilient and, by the late 1700s, would adapt to the growing penetration of European capitalism by repositioning itself as a key supplier of pepper, a prized commodity in global markets.²⁴ Jolo, meanwhile, had never been as prosperous and powerful as it was in the first half of the nineteenth century, forging a symbiotic relationship with the British merchants of the Singapore Straits Settlements by furnishing pearls, *tripang*, and various other raw materials in exchange for cloths, firearms, and opium.²⁵ Moreover, even as Aceh and Jolo adjusted to the deepening presence of European capital, British privateers, and Chinese traders in their region, smaller-scale Muslim seafarers and religious scholars passed through on their voyages across the larger Indian Ocean world.²⁶ In sum, rather than lapsing into terminal decay, the sultanates of Sumatra and Sulu leveraged shifting patterns in global trade to burnish their position as kingdoms at once historically-rooted yet modern, politically potent while still indigenous, Islamic but also cosmopolitan.

It was precisely this dynamism, vitality, and raw power, however, which placed Aceh and Sulu in the path of the incoming colonial surge. By the second half of the nineteenth century, the longstanding catalyst of European activity across maritime Southeast Asia, commerce and unadulterated avarice, soon began to morph into more classically colonial aspirations. No longer satisfied with extracting an ever greater share of profits, the forces of ascendant nationalism at home and inter-imperial competition abroad increasingly impelled Europeans to seek total political control across Asia and Africa.²⁷ Specifically, this colonial sea-change drove these

²⁴ Lee, "Aceh at the time of the 1824 Treaty," 73-74.

²⁵ For a succinct summary, see Warren, *The Sulu Zone*, 38-44.

²⁶ There was, for example, a substantial flow of *hajjis* from Aceh and a smaller flow from Sulu throughout this period, see Eric Tagliacozzo, *The Longest Journey: Southeast Asians and the Pilgrimage to Mecca* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013): 92; Antje Missbach, *Separatist Conflict in Indonesia: the Long-Distance Politics of the Acehnese Diaspora* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 31; Warren, *The Sulu Zone*, 117-119.

²⁷ Maarten Kuitenbrouwer, *The Netherlands and the Rise of Modern Imperialism*, trans. Hugh Beyer (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991), 124-213; Cite Scramble for Colonies Literature and attendant move toward High Imperialism

empires to impose their sovereignty over indigenous populations, to establish new bureaucratic forms of administration, and to draw bright, unambiguous boundaries around their possessions. Against such hegemonic ambitions, autonomous kingdoms like Aceh and Jolo posed an especially nettlesome threat. Rather than accede to colonial rule, collaborate or even wage a token resistance that could be quickly brushed aside, Aceh and Jolo commanded the resources, economic wherewithal, and legitimating Islamic ideology to mount a credible challenge. For example, already sensing the impending colonial wave by the 1850s and 60s, the Sultan of Aceh started to tap his cosmopolitan international networks, making overtures to the Ottoman Empire in Istanbul on the basis of their shared historical and religious ties, as well as to potential imperial competitors to the Dutch such as the United States.²⁸ Sulu, meanwhile, intensified their slave raiding activity in non-Muslim regions of the Philippine islands such as the Visayas, wreaking considerable havoc on Spanish efforts to consolidate control in their colony. These two Muslim kingdoms thereby jeopardized the fledgling colonial order in the eastern stretches of the Indian Ocean world.

By the 1870s, the continued independence of Aceh and Jolo finally precipitated a full scale invasion by their would-be colonial overlords, the Dutch and Spanish. In an age of imperial hubris, it is perhaps unsurprising that both colonial powers failed to anticipate the depth, extent, and longevity of resistance that greeted them. While these two empires at first dispatched relatively small contingents of troops, expecting swift surrender, it soon became apparent that capitulation would not be forthcoming. Dutch and Spanish officers discovered that hoisting their colonial flags over the abandoned grounds of a sultan's palace (*kraton*), for all of its jingoistic

²⁸ For an analysis of the Dutch place in the Scramble for the Colonies Kuitenbrouwer, see *The Netherlands and the Rise of Modern Imperialism*, 107-108.

resonance back home in the metropole, yielded little in the way of political acquiescence.²⁹

Similarly, decisive victories in the field failed to translate into effective military control.

Acehnese and Jolo fighters could easily evade oncoming colonial troops, stealing into the seas or vanishing into the jungles, materializing only to engage in stealthy raids. The sultans of both kingdoms, in fact, fled at one time or another into the mountain fastness of their territories. Much of the inspiration, meanwhile, for rearguard raids and resistance emanated from *hikayat perang sabil*, or tales of holy war, that circulated by mouth as well as by the written word among the Muslim faithful of Aceh and Jolo alike.³⁰ Lurching from one ill-conceived strategy to another, colonial armies struggled to enter local Muslim societies or exert any sort of authority within its confines. For all their military superiority, Dutch and Spanish troops found themselves sinking into some of the deepest quagmires of the imperial age.

The advent of colonial enclosure in Aceh and Sulu

Unable to conquer the kingdoms of Sumatra and Sulu from within, these two colonial powers slowly pivoted towards an approach that would, ever so gradually, attempt to wear them down from without, an approach I call “enclosure.” As the initial colonial assaults of the 1870s foundered, crashing and disintegrating like a ship wrecked on rocky shoals, they would soon give

²⁹ Kuitenbrouwer, *The Netherlands and the Rise of Modern Imperialism*, 104-5; Majul, *Muslims in the Philippines*, 354-355.

³⁰ In the case of Sulu, see Thomas Kiefer, “Parrang Sabil: Ritual Suicide Among the Tausug of Jolo,” in *Understanding Islam and Muslims in the Philippines*, edited by Peter Gowing (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1988); and, Gerard Rixhon, “Levels of Discourse in the Tausug *Parang Sabil* Epic,” in *Old Ties and New Solidarities: Studies on Philippine Communities*, ed. Charles J-H Macdonald and Guillermo M. Pesigan (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2000); in the case of Aceh see, Teuku Ibrahim Alfian, “Aceh and the Holy War (Prang Sabil).” In *Verandah of Violence: The Background to the Aceh Problem*, ed. Anthony Reid (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2005).

way to a slow, multi-decade campaign of pacification that stretched well into the twentieth century, and in the case of Jolo, even ensnared the United States as a successor empire in the Philippines. In contrast to the lightning strikes of those first years, this new strategy sought to slowly, almost imperceptibly, wash over Aceh and Jolo, to erode their coastal defenses, and to sap them of their strength and vitality. Since much of the energy of these two kingdoms, ultimately, flowed from their connections to the outside world, from their position as important centers in far-flung networks of trade and religious exchange, the logical response for invading armies was to contain and enclose them, to disrupt those ties with the outside world in anyway possible.

“Enclosure” as an analytical category emerging from the study of landownership and peasants in European history usually refers to the delineation of private property, the destruction of the commons, and the transition to modern capitalism.³¹ More recently, this venerable concept has experienced something of a revival in the Southeast Asian historiography. Scholars such as James C. Scott and Amrita Malhi have been especially active in repurposing the idea of enclosure from something that could explain changes in landholding among a primarily sedentary class of peasants to a more general framework for understanding the subjugation and sedentarization of formerly mobile and stateless shifting cultivators.³² Malhi, in particular, conceives of enclosure as a means by which “the colonial state sought to create discrete categories of land: government forest, under the state's active management and free from cultivation activity; and agricultural land, divided into bounded plots which were privately

³¹ See for example, James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 4-9.

³² Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*, 2-3; Amrita Malhi, “Making Spaces, Making Subjects: Land Enclosure and Islam in Colonial Malaya,” *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 38, no. 4 (2011): 728-729.

owned and worked by smallholders.”³³ This process of divvying up and categorizing land not only helped to constitute a “Malay peasant subject,” but also incited a backlash expressed through the idiom of Islam “in the name of the *umat*, the global Muslim community which they posited as sovereign in the world.”³⁴

This dissertation seeks to extend the insightful scholarship of Malhi and Scott by applying this idea of enclosure not only to the stateless shifting cultivators of the highlands, but also to colonial campaigns against powerful Muslim kingdoms already deeply interconnected into global regimes of trade and exchange. In the case of Aceh and Jolo, while colonial powers did sometimes attempt to replicate a similar regime of private property, a much blunter instrument of enclosure prevailed. It was, in essence, a form of enclosure not on land, but on the high seas. The Dutch, the Spanish, and eventually, the Americans too, sought to implement some variation on a naval blockade, to erect a cordon that could encircle and envelop the kingdoms of Sumatra and Sulu thereby impeding their mobility and international connections.

In contrast to traditionally understood forms of enclosure, these blockades did not so much seek to draw people into capitalist modes of production and exchange as to rupture already well-developed ties of global trade. If colonial powers could not control or direct indigenous flows of commerce, according to this logic, they must be obliterated. Of course, Dutch, Spanish, and American planners understood that they could never realize perfect enclosure; they could not, and did not, hope to completely seal the sprawling maritime geography of islets and coves, channels and coastlines. However, they did aspire, over time, to wear these outside connections down and to diminish their significance. By arresting the flow of goods, weapons, and mobile

³³ Malhi, 728.

³⁴ Ibid., 732.

Muslims, the colonial powers could disarticulate these two recalcitrant sultanates from global networks of trade and, thus, grind them down into submission.

This multi-decade campaign of maritime enclosure in Aceh and Jolo, however, never did yield a definitive triumph, a decisive moment that marked the transition from wartime to colonial hegemony. Even when Sultan Kiram of Jolo signed a treaty with the Spanish state in 1878 and began receiving a stipend from the colonial government, or when Sultan Muhammad Daud Shah of Aceh was captured not far from his capital in exile at Keumala in 1903, resistance persisted. Attacks and raids continued to beset imperial troops and other institutions of the colonial state despite repeatedly premature declarations of victory. Dutch, Spanish, and American authorities all lamented the elusiveness of effective control, an elusiveness that engendered pervasive anxiety. Indeed, once organized resistance did begin to peter out after 1910, colonial official nonetheless grew increasingly paranoid about the specter of individual Muslim assailants. Known as *Atjeh-Moorden* in northern Sumatra and *juramentado* in Jolo, these lone attackers, at least in the colonial imagination, lurked behind every corner, waiting to swear an oath to God and lunge at as many foreign targets as possible with a sharp blade all in the certainty that death and heaven would be their final recompense. The haunting afterlife of conquest and war thus continued to exert a powerful hold over Aceh and Jolo to the very end of the colonial period and well beyond into the post-independence era.

If enclosure and the repeated waves of soldiers washing upon the island shores of these two kingdoms never did compel complete submission, it nonetheless accomplished a tertiary objective: the gradual, slow motion erosion of Aceh and Jolo's nodal prominence in the Islamic networks of the Indian Ocean. The international trade of these two kingdoms, whose currents also carried sundry religious scholars, texts, and *hajjis*, could not withstand the punishing

campaign of enclosure in perpetuity. While traders from Aceh and Jolo, now branded as “smugglers” by the colonial powers, could easily enough slip through the net of blockades and continue to exchange at least a limited portion of their goods, roiling uncertainty and risk would inevitably inflict a heavy toll. Although Acehnese continued to secret out a large proportion of their pepper harvest after the outbreak of hostilities in 1873, maintaining prewar output levels through much of the 1870s and 1880s, by the 1890s, the tide had turned: pepper exports began to plummet, as purchasers from foreign ports pivoted to less volatile sources or other commodities altogether. In Jolo, meanwhile, Spanish blockades similarly impeded the harvesting of slaves and the export of pearls over time undermining the entire basis of the local economy. As the commerce of these two interconnected regions suffered, the locus of Islamic activity, in turn, also began to undergo a perceptible shift away from the traders of port cities toward resistance leaders who found refuge in the forested mountains and remote islets. While resistance continued in the name of Islam, *ulama* from abroad now called into port far less often and locals struggled to join their co-religionists in the flow of the devout to Mecca and even new destinations in the Middle East. Aceh might still proudly claim the mantle of “Gate to Mecca” (*Serambi Mekka*),³⁵ and Sulu might remain deeply attached to its religious identity, but their connections with the larger Islamic world receded, like an outgoing tide.

Disconnection and reconnection in Islamic networks

The long, slow-motion descent of Aceh and Jolo as central trading hubs, a decline accelerated by colonial war-making and enclosure, invites the question: did these Islamic networks of the eastern Indian Ocean world simply wither and shrivel away? The whole concept

³⁵ Kenneth George, *Picturing Islam: Art and Ethics in a Muslim Lifeworld* (Boston: Wiley-Blackwell, 2000), 16.

of “network,” to a large extent, implies contingent connections and flows that extend well beyond the confines of specific nodal points like Aceh and Jolo, flows and connections that in the words of Indian Ocean historian Sugata Bose, “intermediates between the level of nation and globe” and individual locality.³⁶ If the military power of the colonial surge battered these networks, it should have scattered them in countless directions, not just simply beat them into the ground. To borrow the apposite phrasing of Kerry Ward, an expert on the history of the Dutch East India Company, did colonial warfare help to drive “shifting patterns of connection, dissolution, and reconnection” of shared imperial and Islamic activity?³⁷ If conquest and pacification precipitated the “dissolution,” or at least interruption, of ties linking Aceh and Jolo to the wider Islamic world, where would the corollary of “reconnection” materialize? Did warfare, inadvertently, provide opportunities to Muslims nearby to forge links with places like Singapore and Cairo, even if these links came through awkward entanglements and collaboration with the ascendant colonial regime?

In the case of Sumatra and Sulu, “intermediating” between the local, national, and global to understand the reconfiguration of Islamic networks does not require some complicated methodological maneuver or theoretical epiphany; it entails, instead, a widening of the net, a pulling back ever so slightly from historical nodes such as Aceh and Jolo to consider their erstwhile hinterlands further afield. For instance, the historical homelands of the Minangkabau people in the west central regions of Sumatra, today simply referred to as West Sumatra, had long been integrated into the wider universe of the Acehese kingdom. As early as the 1500s, Gujarati Indian traders resident in Aceh had pushed the kingdom’s sultan to extend his ambit

³⁶ Sugata Bose, *A Hundred Horizons: The Indian Ocean in the Age of Global Empire* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 3.

³⁷ Kerry Ward, *Networks of Empire: Forced Migration in the Dutch East India Company* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 10.

some five hundred kilometers south towards the Minangkabau lands, where a significant gold trade then flourished.³⁸ Aceh would succeed in imposing its suzerainty upon their southern neighbors, establishing the sultan's very own brother on the coast, in the vicinity of what is today the city of Padang, as governor (*panglima*). While these arrangements of suzerainty would eventually lapse, connections between these two regions through the seas, along the coastlines, and over upland mountains endured, with Sufi scholars, *hajjis*, and traders continually circulating between them.

Likewise, Jolo exerted a similar influence over the lands of the Zamboanga Peninsula. For many centuries, the sultanate had dispatched many of its most prominent aristocrats, known as *datu*, to this protruding finger of land, which lay only some one hundred kilometers away at the far northern end of the Sulu Archipelago. There, the *datu* collected raw materials, harvested slaves, and converted local animist populations to Islam. The Zamboanga Peninsula, just like the Minangkabau lands of West Sumatra, constituted important and integrated hinterlands of the nearby sultanates. Yet, in the voluminous works written by local and national historians on the colonial wars in the Aceh and Jolo, these neighboring regions fade away, forgotten almost entirely.

Enlarging the field of study to incorporate West Sumatra and the Zamboanga Peninsula—to see the surrounding worlds of Aceh and Jolo in their totality—reveals a very different view of colonial warfare in the region. From the very outset of their protracted military encounters, Dutch, Spanish, and American officials sought to fill the void in the surrounding peripheries and to establish a stronghold at striking distance to the theaters of war. Whereas Aceh and Jolo presented seemingly impregnable strongholds of indigenous Muslim power, by the 1870s,

³⁸ Christine Dobbin, *Islamic Revivalism in a Changing Peasant Economy: Central Sumatra, 1784-1847*, Scandinavian Institute of Asian Studies Monograph Series, no. 47 (London: Curzon Press, 1983), 64.

Padang and Zamboanga cities had evolved into relatively stable outposts under the control of the germane colonial authorities. As a consequence, these erstwhile hinterlands developed into important staging grounds for ongoing colonial pacification. Dutch officers routinely routed and dispatched their colonial armies through and from Padang, as soldiers prepared, rested, and recuperated within the city's confines. Indeed, an array of hospitals, storehouses, and army barracks arose to service the needs of the rising military population.³⁹ Likewise, the architects of Spanish military offensives devised and orchestrated their strategies from the Presidio fortress of Zamboanga, while funneling many of their onward sorties to Sulu through the precincts of this Spanish administrative base.

In the years following the immediate onset of war, moreover, colonial ambitions for Padang and Zamboanga began to exceed mere tactical maneuvering; planners also hoped to transform these encampments into vibrant port cities, commercial hubs that would supplant their nearby indigenous competitors, thereby offering a safe point of control between local and global economies, and ultimately, transplant colonial society into these two island regions. Military campaigns in nearby regions, if anything, did not deter growth, but furnished a catalyst for it. The population of Padang doubled between 1874 and 1905, from 25,000 to 47,000 inhabitants; Zamboanga experienced similar surges, especially after the Americans replaced the Spanish in 1903. An assortment of international banks and trading firms established branches nearby Padang harbor, among them such high profile concerns as the Java Bank; the Chartered Bank of India, Australia, and China; the Hong Kong & Shanghai Banking Corporation; and the New Oriental Bank Corporation.⁴⁰ At the same time, the US colonial government arranged for private

³⁹ Freek Colombijn, *Patches of Padang: The History of an Indonesian Town in the Twentieth Century and the Use of Urban Space* (Leiden: Research School CNWS, 1994), 47.

⁴⁰ Jeffrey Hadler, *Muslims and Matriarchs*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008), 127.

shipping lines to service the Zamboanga to Singapore route, a clear attempt to supersede the old circuits of exchange flowing from Sulu. On occasion, of course, colonial ambitions sometimes lagged behind reality, and in terms of the greater Southeast Asian and Indian Ocean spheres, these two cities never did grow beyond “secondary cities.”⁴¹ By the 1930s, in fact, the circuits of global capitalism had produced new nodes such as Medan in North Sumatra and Davao on the southern coast of Mindanao that had, to some degree, eclipsed Padang and Zamboanga. These two important centers would remain vital hubs, hubs to some degree borne out of the destructive carnage of colonial warfare.

The emergence of Padang and Zamboanga as colonial centers in the Sumatran and Sulu worlds, in turn, occasioned another phenomenon unforeseen by the colonial authorities: the reconstitution and reconfiguration of Islamic networks. When colonial blockades pounded the coasts of the powerful sultanates, they did more than attenuate commercial ties, trade, and raids. They also interrupted the long history of transnational Muslim connections that linked these two kingdoms to places such as the Coramandel Coast on the Bay of Bengal, Gujarat in northwest India, the Hadhramaut in Yemen, and the Ottoman capital of Constantinople (Istanbul). Arab seafarers helped to establish the Sulu Sultanate in the 15th century and to operate its overseas outposts on Borneo in the 19th century, while the royal court of Aceh received Sufi ideas from mobile Indian *alim* and weapons from the Muslim rulers of the Ottoman Empire. The outbreak of protracted campaigns of colonial pacification, of course, did not sever these longstanding ties entirely. Resonances and affinities continued to endure. Every perceived iniquity committed by Dutch forces in Aceh, for instance, aroused the indignation not just of locals, but of Muslims across the global *umma*, and in the new age of telegraphs and newspapers, the war emerged as a

⁴¹ Kenneth R Hall, “Introduction,” in *Second Cities and Urban Networking in the Indian Ocean Realm, c. 1400-1800*, ed. Kenneth R. Hall (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2008), 3.

cause célèbre in the burgeoning pan-Islamic presses of the Middle East.⁴² Contraband weapons, financial support, and even foreign fighters trickled into Aceh through the naval net, lending their support. Nonetheless, protracted war and blockade still severely restricted the lifeblood of religious and cultural interchange, the regular flows of traders, *hajjis*, and religious scholars that could instantiate connections and endow them with real word meaning. By comparison, the transnational resonances of these colonial campaigns in pan-Islamic newspapers proved rather ephemeral.

At the same time that the tides of war lashed these Southeast Asian shorelines, scattering Muslim travelers and texts, these flows also began to reassemble and reconstitute around the new connections in Padang and Zamboanga. Michael Feener, a prominent specialist of Southeast Asian Islam, has astutely noted that “print, the telegraph and steam powered rail and maritime transportation fuelled processes of communal re-definition and accompanying religious reformulations across a diverse range of Muslim societies.”⁴³ It was no coincidence that these very technological sinews of modernity should emerge with special force in Padang and Zamboanga. Indeed, just as colonial authorities mobilized steamships and telegraphs, railroads and print, capital and soldiers in their nascent hubs on the periphery of war zones, these very same tools also provided new opportunities to Muslims. Just as during the Aceh War colonial steamships companies began to carry *hajjis* in ever greater numbers, devout *alim* sojourned to new, ever more far-flung locales such as Cairo and even imperial capitals such as London, and Islamic newspapers began to flourish, attracting substantial readerships. Of course, in chronicling

⁴² Michael Laffan, “Another Andalusia: Images of Colonial Southeast Asia in Arabic Newspapers,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 66, 3 (August 2007), 691, 698-9.

⁴³ R. Michael Feener, “New Networks and New Knowledge: Migrations, Communications, and the Refiguration of the Muslim Community in the Nineteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries,” in *The New Cambridge History of Islam*, vol. 6, *Muslims and Modernity: Culture and Society since 1800*, ed. Robert W. Hefner (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 41-42.

these phenomena, it is important to avoid succumbing to a crude technological determinism, or losing sight of the contingent local “determinations” and intermediations that shaped engagements with such tools.⁴⁴

It is still possible to grasp how these new technologies passing through colonial nodes first to wage war, could then later compress time and space for local Muslims as well, opening up new horizons. Through these technologies Muslims from Padang, Zamboanga, and their own hinterlands, began to experience a greater degree of simultaneity with their co-religionists around the globe, a whole new depth of belonging in the global *umma*.

The burgeoning connections and re-connections among Muslim communities passing through Padang and Zamboanga, in turn, catalyzed a dramatic re-workings of faith, theology, and institutional organization. Take, for example, the case of religious reformism. It should be noted that the idea of *tajdid* and *islah*, of revival and reform, has a long history within Islamic tradition going back to the Qur’anic injunction for constant struggle to rid the world of false innovation, novelty, and heresy. However, the plenitude of new technologies and connections amplified these traditions. Sojourners from Padang to Cairo and Mecca, this dissertation will argue, carried back with them revised reformist theologies that emphasized reasoning with recourse to precedent (*ijtihad*), a rejection of the uncritical acceptance of calcified juridical precedents (*ijma*), and a commitment to individual engagement with the Qur’an and *hadith*.⁴⁵

New journalistic networks stretching from Cairo to Singapore to Padang transmitted those ideas

⁴⁴ Feener, “New Networks and Knowledge,” 42.

⁴⁵ Definitions of Islamic concepts such as *ijtihad*, *ijma*, *tajdid*, and *islah* are taken from Samira Haj, *Reconfiguring Islamic Tradition: Reform, Rationality, and Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), 71-72; Taufik Abdullah discusses the role of West Sumatra’s *kaum muda* reformers as part of the opening of the “gate of *ijtihad*,” Taufik Abdullah, *Indonesia towards Democracy* (Singapore: ISEAS, 2009), 56; for a look at the influence of the Cairo milieu on West Sumatra, see “Indonesian and Malay Students in Cairo in the 1920s,” *Indonesia* 9 (April 1970).

into every corner of the hinterlands of places like West Sumatra, and helped to produce a mass constituency for such ideas.

The circulation of these ideas, newspapers, and sojourners also sparked new institutional synergies, helping to give rise to a movement for “modern” Islamic schools with blackboards and textbooks, as well as new sorts of associations that could realize the objectives of Muslim social welfare and advocacy, such as Muhammadiyah in Padang and Sarikatul Islam in Zamboanga. These organizations would become the antecedents of new Islamic political parties that carried these regions past the colonial era into the post-independence age. In sum, even as colonial warfare battered old kingdoms and ensnared erstwhile hinterlands into the process of conquest, the very tools of that coercion also helped to reconfigure Islamic networks and give rise to new religion horizons, especially in Padang and Zamboanga.

Islam and coercive cosmopolitanism

By attempting to bring into relief the large-scale reconfiguration of Islamic networks across the wide oceanic sweep of Sumatra and Sulu, as well as the catalytic role of colonial war-making in these same processes, this dissertation will draw attention to the term “coercive cosmopolitanism.”⁴⁶ The juxtaposition of Aceh with West Sumatra, of Sulu with Zamboanga, demonstrates that the apparent paradoxes of Islamic-imperial encounters in the colonial age were not paradoxes at all. The same coercive forces that powered conquest in some Islamic kingdoms also enabled Muslims to travel, trade, extend their connections with their co-religionists, and to

⁴⁶ In his seminal 2000 article on cosmopolitanism, Sheldon Pollock coined the phrase “coercive cosmopolitanism” to reference to the expansion of the Roman Empire and the coercive imposition of Latin as a cosmopolitan lingua franca across a wide space. However, Pollock did not go into an extended elaboration of the concept and few scholars have revisited “coercive cosmopolitanism” since. See Sheldon I. Pollock, “Cosmopolitan and Vernacular in History,” *Public Culture* 12, no. 3 (2000): 596.

think in terms of a broader Islamic world. In an influential 2000 article, one of the leading theorists of cosmopolitanism, Sheldon Pollock, alluded to this seeming paradox. In his seminal formulation of “cosmopolitanism” as “unbounded spatiotemporal circulation,” a form of communication or contact “that travels far, indeed, without obstruction from any boundaries at all, and, more important, that thinks of itself as unbounded, unobstructed, and unlocated,” Pollock also recognized that such limitless horizons did not emanate from goodwill or open-mindedness alone.⁴⁷ Violence and force also played a significant constitutive role. For example, the widespread dissemination of Latin as a common medium for communication across the Euro-Mediterranean world resulted from the brute fact of conquest and the “obliteration” of all other competing vernacular languages. This forcible dimension inspired Pollock to ever so briefly sketch a concept of “coercive cosmopolitanism” as a process in which “participation in larger...worlds is compelled by the state”—a process equally applicable to nineteenth century colonialism as it was to the Roman imperium of antiquity.⁴⁸

In spite of the provocative paradox suggested by Pollock, few have revisited “coercive cosmopolitanism” as a possible conceptual tool for elucidating the place of war-making in the movement of Muslim peoples, texts, and ideas across borders and space. This absence is especially acute in the extant literature on Islam in the Indian Ocean and Southeast Asia. For example, in her otherwise groundbreaking study of translation, language diffusion, and religious conversion, Ronit Ricci explicitly brackets violence off from the development of what she terms the “Arabic Cosmopolis of South and Southeast Asia.”⁴⁹ Indeed, she notes that “no organized political power, colonial enterprise, military conquest, or large migration was involved” in “the

⁴⁷ Ibid., 599-600.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 600-601.

⁴⁹ See Ronit Ricci, *Islam Translated: Literature, Conversion, and the Arabic Cosmopolis of South and Southeast Asia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011).

diffusion” of Arabic to the larger Southeast Asia region.⁵⁰ While clearly referring to the earlier precolonial age, this broad assertion nonetheless precludes any attempt at understanding how Euro-American colonial armies may have unintentionally amplified the resonances and salience of the Arabic cosmopolis in later periods.⁵¹

Omissions of coercion from the study of cosmopolitanism in the Muslim World perhaps stems from a more general dissonance between histories of violence and histories of Islamic connectedness. Take, for example, Magnus Marsden’s article on refugee flows in the borderlands between Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Tajikistan in Central Asia. On the surface Marsden appears to counteract dominant historiographic tendencies by situating “transnational mobility” and cosmopolitanism against the backdrop of “violence, Afghanistan’s fragmentation, and the breakup of the Soviet Union.”⁵² However, he also draws a stark contrast between his own “violent” case study in the mountainous interior and other expressions of cosmopolitanism among the the “coastal Muslims” of “the expansive Indian Ocean region.” In this dichotomy, “global movements of Islamic reform” or the “circulation of long-distance trade, pilgrims, and holy men of religious authority” implicitly fall beyond the purview of coercion, an outgrowth of voluntaristic “transregional ways of being Muslim in such littoral spaces.”⁵³ Marsden thus confirms the widespread assumption that violence has little relevance to those forms of trans-

⁵⁰ Ibid., 15.

⁵¹ Carool Kersten has similarly produced a rich intellectual history of three different Muslim activist thinkers whose training represented a cosmopolitan synthesis of Islamic learning and transnational academic thinking in religious studies and philosophy. However, violence largely fades into the background in his study. One scholar who does engage with the interrelationships between Islamic and non-Islamic communities by showing their “boundedness within a larger complex of religious exchange and social comity” is Bruce Lawrence. See Carool Kersten, *Cosmopolitans and Heretics: New Muslim Intellectuals and the Study of Islam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011); Bruce Lawrence, “Afterword: Competing Genealogies of Muslim Cosmopolitanism,” in *Rethinking Islamic Studies: From Orientalism to Cosmopolitanism*, ed. Carl W. Ernst and Richard C. Martin (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2008), 304.

⁵² Magnus Marsden, “Muslim Cosmopolitans? Transnational Life in Northern Pakistan,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 67, no. 1 (2008): 217.

⁵³ Ibid., 216.

local Islamic belonging most prevalent in Southeast Asia, despite the fact that military conquest and colonial naval power were very much a part of that same world of maritime Muslim movement.

This dissertation seeks to retrieve Pollock's forgotten concept of "coercive cosmopolitanism" and apply it to the study of various expressions of Muslim border-crossing in the cases of Sumatra and Sulu. In particular, it will elaborate on the idea of coercive cosmopolitanism by focusing specifically on war-making and conquest as an instrument for compelling the Muslims of Southeast Asia to "participate in larger...worlds."⁵⁴ Oftentimes, this violent compulsion was geared toward the subjection of Muslims to Euro-American hegemony and tutelage. A prominent early twentieth century American educational reformer, John Dewey, encapsulated the view that war could in fact compress the distance between various peoples and impart a cosmopolitan education of sorts:

Every expansive era in the history of mankind has coincided with the operation of factors which have tended to eliminate distance between peoples and classes previously hemmed off from one another. Even the alleged benefits of war, so far as more than alleged, spring from the fact that conflict of peoples at least enforces intercourse between them and thus accidentally enables them to learn from one another, and thereby to expand their horizons.⁵⁵

While we must be careful to renounce the idea of war as some sort of benevolent enterprise, an opportunity to bring superior Western learning and civilization to benighted Muslims, Dewey did nonetheless touch upon a crucial reality here: war could indeed have an inadvertently productive capacity. With colonial conquest came new technologies, expanded economic opportunities, and a revived space for communication that enabled Muslims not to not only borrow or adapt those

⁵⁴ Pollock, "Cosmopolitan and Vernacular in History," 596.

⁵⁵ John Dewey, *The Political Writings*, ed. Debra Morris and Ian Shapiro (1916; repr., Indianapolis: Hackett, 1993), 110, quoted in Marianna Papastephanou, "Thinking Differently about Cosmopolitanism: Theory, Eccentricity and the Globalized World (Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2012), 128-129.

elements of the colonial world they found most useful, but also, to re-connect with their co-religionists from around the Islamic world.

Warfare, paradoxically, could thus create a new space for Islamic cosmopolitanism.⁵⁶ While oceanic sojourners and travelers and reformers of Muslim faith might have been entwined and entangled with violent colonialism, they also expressed their own agency in a multitude of ways. Even if reformers in Padang or Zamboanga perhaps deployed the same technologies that hastened conquest in Aceh or Sulu, and even if they may have pursued situational forms of engagement or collaboration with colonial rulers, they still shared little with their foreign overlords in terms of their worldviews or goals. In fact, the Muslim cosmopolitans of these port cities leveraged their growing ties with co-religionists from around the globe to pursue theological and political projects in conflict with their colonial rulers. Out of these coercive colonial projects also came opportunities for renewed and reimagined Muslim connections; ultimately, these would play a vital role in the rise of nationalism and the undoing of the imperial age. It is this element of “coercive cosmopolitanism,” of violence intermingled with possibility, of suppression and counterinsurgency mixed with intellectual ferment and religious inspiration that will comprise the focus of the empirical chapters of this dissertation.

This concept of “coercive cosmopolitanism,” of course, might invite a certain degree of skepticism. In her thoughtful study titled *Thinking Differently about Cosmopolitanism*, Marianna Papastephanou warns her readers against two intertwined temptations of particular pertinence here. First, she inveighs against the “celebration of unbounded movement and unconditional

⁵⁶ One of the few scholars who does give some sense of the interplay between resistance, political contestation, and Muslim cosmopolitanism is Bruce Lawrence. In his discussion of minorities in Indonesia and the Philippines, he describes how the Moro National Liberation Front rebellion and the difficult negotiations between local Muslims and the central Philippine government in Manila intersect with “the symbolic capital of religion, NGO activity and individual creativity to provide a ray of hope, however dim, for the future of Moros as cosmopolitan citizens.” See Bruce B. Lawrence, “The Cosmopolitan Canopy of East Maritime SE Asia: Minority Citizenship in the Phil-Indo Archipelago,” *Comparative Islamic Studies* 7, no. 1/2 (June 2011): 88.

border crossing” as little more than apologetics for colonialism, an attempt to cloak empire in the sanitizing gloss of universality and to rationalize the “much deeper-laid motivations for expansion.”⁵⁷ Indeed, by arguing that the most brutal aspect of the colonial experience—warfare—in some way provided opportunities for mobility and connectedness to Southeast Asian Muslims, the framework of “coercive cosmopolitanism” might appear to fall directly into this trap of exculpation. Second, Papastephanou also argues that this idea of border crossing supplies crass legitimation to globalizing capitalism and “leads to a mistaken identification of globalized managerialism and footloose entrepreneurs as ‘emerging cosmopolitan classes.’”⁵⁸ By employing technology, trade, and commerce as a key metric for the possibilities of Muslim re-connection amidst the dislocations of war, the framework of coercive cosmopolitanism likewise risks internalizing a colonial bourgeois ethos. If not careful, it becomes too easy to superimpose European models of capitalism onto Indian Ocean Muslim networks.

While Papastephanou anticipates legitimate pitfalls, “coercive cosmopolitanism” still offers a framework of analysis that can extend and expand our knowledge of Muslim society in an age of violent flux. Indeed, if taken to their logical extreme, Papastephanou’s criticism would occlude historical developments of vital significance. However much scholars must avoid reinforcing the tropes of implacable Islamic fanaticism, by lurching too far in the opposite direction and overlooking the realities of total warfare, they would in effect be whitewashing some of the most brutal episodes of the colonial era. Historians would be remiss if they did not explore all of the complexities of conquest and consider how military violence might, quite apart from the intentions of any colonial soldiers or administrators, thrust Muslims into heightened contact with one another. In terms of economics, it would likewise seem possible to examine the

⁵⁷ Papastephanou, “Thinking Differently about Cosmopolitanism,” 21.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 53.

ways in which shifting patterns of trade, agricultural development, and bureaucratic employment could expand opportunities to Muslims to make the *hajj*, study, and travel—all while remaining mindful of the yawning inequities spawned by colonial capitalism. The accelerating circulation of money and the emergence of a substantial *petit-bourgeoisie* class, in fact, played a crucial role in the formation of new religious schools and associations whose influence reverberated across the region. To disregard such phenomena for fear of valorizing colonial rule would, ironically, deny an important element of agency within the history of Southeast Asian Muslims.

Only by examining the coercive and commercial underpinnings of Muslim mobility can scholars truly grasp what Papastephenaou regards as the true locus of any meaningful concept of cosmopolitanism: “the intellectual, emotional, and ethico-political...significance of spatiotemporal border crossing.”⁵⁹ “The celebration of unbounded movement and unconditional border crossing,” Papastephanoou declaims, “is curiously combined with a very telling silence on unconditional obligation” or a sense of moral commitment on the part of those mobile cosmopolitans.⁶⁰ However, it was the advent of brutal colonial warfare that engendered precisely such a sense of fierce moral urgency, not only connecting Muslims to one another but also reinforcing the sense of mutual obligation between co-religionists. Likewise one cannot disentangle commercial expansion and the subsequent increase in travelling Muslims from the expanded moral horizons they might embrace while studying at al-Azhar University in Cairo or the Sumatra Thawalib school of West Sumatra, a moral horizon not at all congruent with that of the colonial elites. Thus, a revived sense of belonging and commitment to the global community of Muslims, to the larger *umma*, was inextricably intertwined with the coercive expansion of the non-Muslim colonial world.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 134.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 136.

In sum, the conjunction of “coercive” with “cosmopolitan” can help locate Muslim movement, border-crossing, and ethics in the context of conquest. War and commercial penetration, paradoxically, played a central role in creating an oppositional, yet symbiotic, Islamic movement that could not be reduced to simple resistance or fanaticism. Instead, this movement encompassed a cosmopolitan ethos of universalistic Muslim belonging. By constantly asking how the realities of violence and coercion, domination and commercial expansion, informed the individual stories of hajjis, religious scholars, and other sojourners, the framework of “coercive cosmopolitanism” will help to present a more nuanced portrait of the adaptability and resiliency of Muslim Southeast Asians during the colonial age.

Organization of dissertation

Much of the foregoing introduction has, by necessity, been schematic in nature. To present the larger issues of violence and colonial warfare, reconfigured Islamic networks, and coercive cosmopolitanism across a geographic sweep that spans the three thousand miles of ocean separating Sumatra from Sulu and across the larger Indian Ocean basin, it has been imperative to provide a broad sketch. However, this broad sketch has perhaps concealed the reality of contingency and agency embedded in such historical processes, thereby perhaps occluding the feeling of local specificity.

By contrast, the paired comparisons of Aceh and West Sumatra in the Netherlands East Indies, versus Sulu and Zamboanga in the Philippines affords an opportunity to burrow down into these historical particulars, to illuminate the stories of individual Muslim reformers and colonial administrators, and to parse out the similarities and differences that manifested themselves across the connected rims of archipelagic Southeast Asia. Not only can it bring into

fine-grained focus singular regions and persons, but it can also shed light on the broader Islamic world of the Indian Ocean stretching from Singapore to Gujarat, from the Malay Peninsula to Mecca, from Luzon to Cairo. With individual chapters devoted to different facets of these individual Southeast Asian localities, this study offers insight into the local history of Sumatra and Sulu, juxtaposing nearby places usually seen in isolation, as well as to larger historical debates ranging from Inter-Asian connections to Islamic networks, colonial conquest to religious reform, coercive cosmopolitanism to postcolonial transitions.

To realize this study of violence as a force for destruction and creation, exclusion and inclusion, as a driver, in short, for the reconfiguration of Islamic networks, this dissertation will be divided into five empirical chapters. The first of these, chapter two, will dive into the history of contingent conquests by comparing three military encounters across Southeast Asia: the Padri War from 1817-1838 in West Sumatra and the Dutch-Aceh war from 1873-1913. While West Sumatra may have been, by the time of the Aceh war, a secured node of colonial control, it too featured a long, protracted clash between European colonizers and the Muslim colonized. This chapter will therefore focus on the ways in which the modalities of war-making and underlying socio-religious developments contributed to patterns of collaboration and contestation, thus laying the groundwork for divergent histories of exclusion and inclusion.

Chapters three and four, in turn, will focus on the exclusionary dimension of Islamic-imperial encounters, or more specifically, the phenomenon of enclosure, through close studies of violence in Sulu and Aceh. With regular warfare rendered ineffectual by the enduring vitality of these Islamic kingdoms and the failure of collaboration, this chapter will elucidate how colonial powers instead turned to long, incomplete campaigns that I refer to as enclosure: projects that

sought to sever inter-Asian connections, to disarticulate ties of trade and religious exchange with the outside world, and to entrap local Muslims on newly isolated islands.

The final empirical section, chapters five and six, will in turn consider the inclusionary element of colonial violence by using “coercive cosmopolitanism” as a lens for analyzing the resilience and re-emergence of Islamic networks in the relatively calm precincts of West Sumatra and Zamboanga. In particular, these chapters will examine how entangled encounters in emergent colonial hubs helped to give rise to a new category of cosmopolitan experience among local Muslim populations, along with an ascendant movement of Islamic reform. In particular, it will place the case studies of specific Muslim leaders, such as Haji Muhammad Tahir Jalal al-Din from West Sumatra and Haji Abdullah Nuño of Zamboanga, in the context of broader social, economic, and religious ferment.

In sum, this dissertation will help to re-conceptualize our view of violent imperial-Islamic encounters by casting them as products not of a fixed, fanatical Muslim periphery, but rather, as the driving force behind reconfigured Islamic networks without end or edge. Rebellion and resistance did not inherently emerge from the edge of empire. Instead, colonial warfare shifted the extant web of relationships between Southeast Asian Muslims, displacing and dislocating once powerful Islamic polities while simultaneously producing new cities, economies, and cultural models integrated into global webs of interconnection. Through the methodology of paired comparisons, of juxtaposing West Sumatra with Aceh and Zamboanga versus Sulu, it becomes possible to understand how insurgency coexisted with thriving ports and agricultural valleys, often in close proximity. This process of conquest, therefore, did not extirpate inter-Asian networks or turn local Muslims into compliant colonial subjects. Instead, the very technologies and communications that sustained warfare and the production of colonial spaces

alike also could be appropriated by devout residents to reconnect with one another, to forge new ties across the Indian Ocean, and to nourish a revitalized spirit of religious reform, a spirit of reform that would, soon enough, help to propel anti-colonial nationalist movements forward. Thus, this dissertation will provide a better understanding of coercive cosmopolitanism and the paradoxical fashioning of Muslim modernities across boundaries amidst the upheaval of war.

Chapter 2

Contingent Conquests: Colonial Warfare, Islam, and Collaboration across Sumatra and Sulu

In 1826 Hubert Joseph de Stuers, an officer in the Dutch military, cast his gaze upon the coast of Sumatra with great foreboding. A veteran of arduous colonial campaigns in the Moluccas and Borneo during the early 1820s, de Steurs had been appointed as resident of the recently established jurisdiction of Padang and its dependencies in 1826 on the shores of West Sumatra. In his position as the civilian and military commander of this erstwhile Dutch East Indies Company (VOC) trading outpost, the Dutch government had tasked De Stuers with the mission of consolidating colonial authority in the fledgling port city and overseeing one of the most infamous wars in the entire colonial history of the Netherlands—the Padri War of 1817 through 1838. In particular, de Stuers needed to supervise the Dutch military in its perilous march inland from the coast up the steep slopes of the Bukit Barisan Mountains into the upland plateaus that comprised the home of their dreaded antagonist, the much feared group of devout Muslim insurgents known as the Padris. However, while De Steurs never lost sight of the turmoil inland, his attention nonetheless often wandered north, along the coastline that continued a few hundred more kilometers before reaching none other than Aceh, the most powerful indigenous kingdom in Sumatra. Lamenting that the “troubled state of the population on the coast” in the immediate vicinity of Padang “makes it so that little trade now exists,” he noted, with a twinge of wistfulness that farther north, “people counted oftentimes 15 to 20 ships, mostly American” retrieving cargoes of pepper of almost 150,000 piculs in the “northerly ports of Aceh.”¹ Even

¹ Hubert de Stuers to the Governor General of the Netherlands Indies, 8 May 1826, *Het Archief van het Ministerie van Kolonien, 1814-1849* (hereafter referred to as MK 1814-1849), code toegang: 2.10.01, entry 547, National Archives of the Netherlands (hereafter referred to as NNA), the Hague, the Netherlands. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.

more ominously, de Steurs observed, the web of Acehnese traders and merchants appeared to extend south through inland mountains and overpasses, supplying the Padris with wealth and weapons for their insurgency against the Dutch.² Aceh thus loomed over the horizon: a competitor, a potential conspirator with other foreign powers, a wellspring of recalcitrance and resistance to the colonial aspirations of the Netherlands in the region.

While Aceh never did recede from the view of Dutch planners during the Padri War, de Stuers and his successors nonetheless avoided succumbing to the temptation of launching an ill-advised raid against the kingdom and opening up a second Sumatran front. The Padri War, along with the outbreak of another conflict in Java in 1825, had already placed a heavy strain on Dutch colonial resources, rendering the prospect of military engagement with Aceh unpalatable.³ Perhaps even more critical to the restraint of the Dutch, however, was British involvement. In the aftermath of the Napoleonic Wars, Britain sought to maintain a balance of power in Europe and to secure the Netherlands as an ally against French bellicosity. To solidify this relationship, officials in London, in an 1824 treaty, consented to withdraw their small presence from Sumatra at Bengkulu and recognize the island as belonging to the Dutch sphere of influence.⁴ However, administrators from the Straits Settlement colony on the Malay Peninsula insisted upon one important caveat. With their longstanding investment in the pepper trade of Aceh, they demanded that the Netherlands respect the sovereignty of the northern Sumatran kingdom and permit unrestricted free trade in its harbors. The Dutch, already overburdened and overextended,

² Hubert De Stuers to Dutch Minister of the Colonies, 23 October 1826, MK 1814-1849, code toegang: 2.10.01, entry 523, NNA, The Hague, the Netherlands.

³ Gerke Teitler, *Op het Koloniale Oorlogspad: De Strijd Tegen Moslim-Fundamentalisten ter Westust van Sumatra (1817-1838), Vergeleken met de Russische Verovering Van Tsjetsjenie en Dagestan (1817-1859)* (Amsterdam: De Bataafsche Leeuw, 2010), 24.

⁴ Anthony Reid, *An Indonesian Frontier: Acehnese and Other Histories of Sumatra* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2005), 11.

reluctantly complied.⁵ Thus, over the course of the next forty-five years, however much they might bridle at British imperiousness or vociferate against the perceived depredations of Acehnese “pirates” and adventurers, the Dutch nevertheless refrained from interfering in the kingdom’s affairs.⁶ Only in 1871, when authorities in Batavia finally pressured their British into abrogating their recognition of Acehnese independence, did the Netherlands begin to prepare in earnest for an invasion.⁷

The half century gap between the outbreak of war in West Sumatra and Aceh highlights an oft-overlooked element in the violent colonial encounters that would ultimately play such a decisive role in the reconfiguration of Indian Ocean Islamic networks: the element of contingency and chance. When viewing Southeast Asia from the broad sweep of history and geography, it might be tempting to view the clash between empire and sultanate, between European and Southeast Asian, and between Christian and Muslim, as somehow inexorable. Colonial navies from The Netherlands and Spain, Great Britain and the United States swarmed across the seas to challenge the great Islamic kingdoms of the Indian Ocean rim, setting up an epic confrontation that cleared the island ground for conquest. However, these navies did not wash upon Muslim shores like predictable ocean tides. Instead, individual decisions and strategic calculations, such as those that delayed the onset of invasion in Aceh until forty years after the Padri War, made for an uneven, uncertain, often quite messy process of colonial conquest. On both sides of the colonial divide, a multitude of choices and judgments, of personalities and

⁵ Lee Kam Hing, “Aceh at the time of the 1824 Treaty,” in *Verandah of Violence: The Background to the Aceh Problem*, ed. Anthony Reid (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2006), 89-90; Reid, *An Indonesian Frontier*, 11-13; Teitler, *Op het Koloniale Oorlogspad*, 21.

⁶ Teitler, *Op het Koloniale Oorlogspad*, 2; Lee, “Aceh at the Time of the 1824 Treaty,” 91.

⁷ Maarten Kuitenbrouwer, *The Netherlands and the Rise of Modern Imperialism*, trans. Hugh Beyer (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1991), 89-93.

political struggles, of technological shifts, cultural considerations, and logistical determinations, all served to cumulatively pattern the conduct of individual wars and their ultimate outcomes.

Amidst this swirl of overlapping influences, peoples, and pressures, perhaps the most important, if not also the most fraught and contentious contingency of them all, was the decision on whether to pursue collaboration. A working relationship forged amidst the brutality and death of warfare across enemy lines might well constitute one of the most tenuous and unstable arrangements imaginable. Much of the extant literature on colonialism and war frames the issue of collaboration in normative terms, as a question of agency and exculpating foreign regimes.⁸ However, leaving aside such moral and ethical concerns, the question of whether some sort of viable form of cooperation could not only be established, but could also withstand the violent forces that would inevitably buffet any such arrangement, is key to understanding the conduct of colonial warfare.⁹ What circumstances might permit a Muslim leader to enter into a relationship with colonial invaders often branded as infidels, as *kafir*? Which factors might allow a colonial officer to recognize the local population as something more than an undifferentiated mass of fanatics with their own political agendas, concerns, and interests? And what aspects of the society at large—whether that of the colonial administration or local Muslim community—would confer on these relationships a degree of legitimacy? The answers to these questions would ultimately determine whether a war could be won, a colonial peace secured, and perhaps

⁸ There is an extensive debate, for example, in studies of South Asian history on whether the concept of collaboration deprives the colonized of agency and reduces relations across the colonial divide to a crude sort of stimulus and response. However, none of these works of scholarship really take the conduct of war and war-making seriously as a factor in the development of the colonial order. For example, see Ranajit Guha, “On Some Aspects of the Historiography of Colonial India,” in *Subaltern Studies: Writings on South Asian History and Society*, vol. 1, ed. Ranajit Guha (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1982), 1.

⁹ For an example of a historian trying to examine the military history dimension of colonial collaboration, see Martijn Kitzen, “Between Treaty and Treason: Dutch Collaboration During the Aceh War, a Case Study on the Collaboration with Indigenous Power-Holders in Colonial Warfare,” *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 23, no. 1 (2012): 93-94.

most importantly for this study, whether Muslim peoples would be enclosed and excluded from reconfiguring cosmopolitan networks of the Islamic Indian Ocean.

To answer these questions, this chapter will examine and compare the two wars of conquest that convulsed the Sumatran worlds in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: the Padri War in West Sumatra from 1817-1838 and the Dutch-Aceh Wars from 1873 through 1913. Although all these military encounters thrust colonizing militaries into violent engagement with strong Muslim defenders in some of the most infamous wars of the entire colonial era, leaving lasting scars on empires and local communities alike, they also manifested important differences and dissimilarities. Indeed, across a host of variables ranging from logistical capacities to technological wherewithal, from the configuration of local Muslim societies to the politics of the metropolitan moment, from the decision-making skill of field commanders to the economic resources available to contending foes, these three wars were waged on markedly different terrain. In particular, this chapter will argue that in West Sumatra a complex interplay of factors, including the relative symmetry between the war-making capacities of the two sides, roiling divisions with Minangkabau Islamic society, and a certain, unrecognized pragmatism in the colonial military, all converged to produce viable, long-lasting relationships of collaboration. By contrast, in Aceh and Sulu, asymmetric war-making technologies, a swell of imperial enthusiasm and competitiveness in the metropole, and local Muslim societies defined by a cultural—if not necessarily political—sense of unity and integrality, all conspired to undermine nascent bonds of cooperation and collaboration. It is to these three wars we will now turn.

Civil war, commerce, and European designs in Sumatra circa 1815

The nineteenth century would be a period of unprecedented tumult and turmoil in the history of Sumatra, and its beginning decades were no exception. By 1815 civil wars raged in two of the most populous areas of the island, pitting Muslim reformer against village head, local chief against monarchical sultan, brother against brother. The first of these two conflicts erupted in West Sumatra in 1805 and roiled Minangkabau society for over three decades. Specifically, a group of devout Muslim reformers launched various raids against neighboring villages for their purported moral lassitude, best exemplified by rampant opium smoking, cock-fighting, and other violations of Islamic law. These attacks tore highland Minangkabau communities asunder, turning village against village and causing widespread property destruction, displacement, and loss of life.¹⁰ Meanwhile, further to the north in Aceh, a number of territorial, lineage-based chiefs known as *ulèëbalang* plotted to overthrow the ruling Sultan, Ala'al-din Jauhar al-Alam, forcing him to flee from the capital city of Banda Aceh in 1814 and sparking a five-year struggle for control of the kingdom.¹¹

The underlying forces that propelled this upheaval, however, were not decay or decline, but rather economic efflorescence and the advent of a globalizing economy. By the late 1700s, the international commercial boom sweeping across much of the globe finally reached the shores of Sumatra, thereby catalyzing the production of goods sought after in European markets, including the old staple of pepper and the new stimulant of coffee. With unprecedented demand for commodities in Europe, and international traders arriving in ports from Banda Aceh on the far north coast to Padang in the middle section of the island, local Sumatran entrepreneurs started

¹⁰ Dobbin, *Islamic Revivalism*, 133-134.

¹¹ Lee Kam Hing, "Aceh at the Time of the 1824 Treaty," *Verandah of Violence: The Background to the Aceh Problem*, ed. Anthony Reid (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2006), 85-89.

to feverishly enlarge the territories under cultivation. Whereas most agricultural production in Aceh had hitherto been limited to the heartlands of the kingdom in the interior Aceh Besar river valley and the Pidië coastal plain to the north, ambitious *ulèëbalang* chiefs began spreading out to the hinterlands on the west coast to plant a new breed of pepper originally from the Malabar Coast in South Asia. Through this process of expanding the boundaries of cultivation, pepper production exploded from 2.13 million pounds in 1797 to 18.6 million pounds in 1822, thereby making the Acehnese sultanate the source of approximately half of the global pepper supply.¹² Likewise, entrepreneurial Minangkabau men began to push the frontiers of the fertile upland valleys that comprised the core of West Sumatra, ascending from the rice-growing areas on the valley floors to the higher and hillier terrain more congenial for the production of coffee. As a result, the export trade in coffee skyrocketed from almost nothing to 16,000 *pikul* in 1821, 33,000 *pikul* in 1825, and 49,000 *pikul* in 1826, transforming the region into one of the largest coffee producers in the world.¹³

This florescence in the commodity trade of Sumatra, however, did more than generate wealth and prosperity; it also spawned an intense contest for political control in the sultanates and rajah kingdoms of the island. With these new sources of profit, the urgent question quickly arose of who would extract income from the production of such commodities, whether during its initial planting, its transport through local territories, or at its point of sale to Chinese and European merchants. In Aceh, the long embattled sultan, Ala'al-din Jauhar al-Alam, sought to reassert his authority by imposing duties on pepper shipments and requiring all trade to be conducted under his watchful eye in the port city of Banda Aceh. Yet, the west coast *ulèëbalang* chiefs, who already carried on their own direct trade with British and Chinese merchants in

¹² Lee, "Aceh at the Time of the 1824 Treaty," 74.

¹³ Dobbin, *Islamic Revivalism*, 97.

Malay Peninsula cities such as Penang, proved unwilling to cede profits to the sultan. Instead, they moved to depose Jauhar in 1814 and forced him to retreat from the Banda Aceh court to the north coast port of Lhokseumawe.¹⁴ Likewise, the advent of a thriving coffee trade in the hill villages of Minangkabau incited concern over the perceived prevalence of banditry and lawlessness, not to mention resentment against the rice producing areas that had traditionally been wealthier and seemed disinterested in protecting caffeinated cargos.¹⁵

While the penetration of capitalist markets provoked pitched battles for control over commodities in both Aceh and West Sumatra, two intertwined factors, indigenous politics and Islam, distinguished the contests in these two places, and made the conflict much more intractable and pervasive in the Minangkabau heartlands. On the surface, both regions exhibited considerable similarities in the political and religious sphere. For example, however much they had fallen into disrepair, Aceh and West Sumatra still shared the same outward form of an Indic, “mandala” type of political organization, with symbolic authority revolving around and radiating outward from sacral centers in Banda Aceh and Pagaruyung respectively.¹⁶ These two traditional Southeast Asian polities, in turn, were both overlaid with much more vibrant Islamic traditions. Since at least the seventeenth century, learned *ulama* scholars had travelled from both Sumatran regions westward to Arabia, bringing back with them the teachings of various Sufi orders, such as the Shattariyya and the Naqshbandiyya, while establishing networks of religious boarding schools, known as *dayah* in Aceh and *surau* in West Sumatra, which emerged as the

¹⁴ Lee, “Aceh at the Time of the 1824 Treaty,” 77, 83, 85-86.

¹⁵ Dobbin, *Islamic Revivalism*, 131-133.

¹⁶ The Acehnese and Pagarruyung sultanates clearly owed much to the mandala system of government in which sacally legitimated kings operated as the center of territorially fluid and imprecise entities, expecting tribute from a shifting set of tributary entities. For a full definition and discussion of the concept of mandalas, see O.W. Wolters, *History, Culture, and Region in Southeast Asian Perspectives*, Studies on Southeast Asia 26, rev. ed. (1982; repr., Ithaca: Cornell Southeast Asian Publications, 1999), 25-33; Audrey Kahin, *Rebellion to Integration: West Sumatra and the Indonesian Polity, 1926-1998* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1998), 22-23; Dobbin, *Islamic Revivalism*, 61-62.

focal point of Muslim communal life in rural villages across both regions.¹⁷ However, these similarities masked crucial distinctions—particularly in terms of the continued salience of traditional polities, as well as the political role played by ascendant Muslims—that contained conflict in Aceh while exacerbating them in West Sumatra.

In spite of the well-documented decline of the Acehnese sultanate following its “Golden Age” in the early seventeenth century the outward forms of the royal polity endured and remained largely intact well into the 1800s.¹⁸ Throughout the eighteenth century, even as ceaseless machinations and usurpations wracked the Acehnese court in Banda Aceh, the contestants never fundamentally disagreed over the object of all this palace intrigue: the position of sultan itself. Different factions of *ulèëbalang* competed strenuously to make their preferred candidates sultan, but they never questioned the legitimacy of the institution of the sultanate. In fact, whatever problems transpired in practice, the Acehnese nonetheless continued to subscribe to a fairly straightforward, pyramidal notion of political authority. The sultan sat at the apex, while immediately beneath him, sat three powerful territorial chiefs known as *Panglima Sagi* who between them exercised control over three federations of smaller territorial units known as *mukim*.¹⁹ These *mukim*, in turn, fell under the jurisdiction of lesser *ulèëbalang*, who ruled at the local level. This form of administration prevailed throughout the relatively compact heartlands of the Acehnese kingdom, stretching south into the interior through the Aceh Besar River valley and along the northern coastal plain of Pidie. The sultan struggled to exercise effective authority over his domains, especially as they extended farther from the center along the eastern and

¹⁷ Azyumardi Azra, “The Surau and the Early Reform Movements in Minangkabau,” *Mizan* 3, no. 2 (1990): 63-68; Saifuddin Duhuri, “Dayah Dalam Tiga Phase Perkembangan: Menelaah Pendidikan Berbasis Perubahan Sosial yang Telah Punah,” *Sarwah* 9, no. 4 (Januari-Juni 2011): 154-157.

¹⁸ Peter G. Riddell, “Aceh in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries: *Serambi Mekka* and Identity,” in *Verandah of Violence: The Background to the Aceh Problem*, ed. Anthony Reid (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2006), 41-42.

¹⁹ Lee, “Aceh at the Time of the 1824 Treaty,” 81.

western coast, and the *ulèëbalang* endlessly jostled for power with each other and the sultan, often resorting to violence to achieve their ends.²⁰ Yet, these very same *ulèëbalang* still held fast to an official document known as a *sarakata*, a seal from the sultan which conferred upon a territorial chieftain the right to rule and symbolized the sacral legitimacy of the court in Banda Aceh.²¹ In short, none of the *ulèëbalang* sought to upend the prevailing political paradigm of the sultanate.

Moreover, another important element of Acehnese culture served to reinforce the symbolic unity of the kingdom: Islam. Upon his travels to Sumatra in the late 1700s, the British naval officer and amateur linguist, William Marsden, remarked upon the uniquely Islamic quality of Aceh and the marked Arabic influence in the area, noting that “in religion they are Mahometans, and having many priests, and much intercourse with foreigners of the same faith, its forms and ceremonies are observed with some strictness.”²² Although the precise date Islam arrived in Sumatra is unclear, we do know that the thirteenth century brought a rapid escalation in Muslim trade from the Middle East across India and the Indian Ocean to Sumatra—a process which would transform the northern Sumatran kingdom of Samudra-Pasai into the first significant Islamic community of the entire Malay-Indonesian archipelago.²³ By 1500, the assorted Muslim harbor principalities coalesced into a single, unified sultanate that was roughly

²⁰ Lee, “Aceh at the Time of the 1824 Treaty,” 82.

²¹ Eric Eugene Morris, “Islam and Politics in Aceh: A Study of Center-Periphery Relations in Indonesia,” (PhD diss., Cornell University, 1983), 23-24.

²² William Marsden, *History of Sumatra: Containing an Account of the Government, Laws, Customs, and Manners of the Native Inhabitants, with a Description of the Natural Productions, and a Relation of the Ancient Political State of the Island*, 2nd ed. (London: Printed for the Author, 1784), 313.

²³ By 1282, Muslim advisors were reported to have counselled the Hindu Malay ruler of Samudra-Pasai, a precursor kingdom to Aceh located in the northern coastal stretches near Lhokseumawe, and by 1292, Marco Polo reported the presence of a significant Muslim community in the area. See Leonard Y. Andaya, *Leaves of the Same Tree: Trade and Ethnicity in the Straits of Melaka* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2008), 112-113; Ira M. Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies*, 2nd ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 383-384.

contiguous with the space of present-day Aceh.²⁴ Over the next two centuries, the Acehnese kingdom would develop into one of the preeminent Muslim powers in all of littoral Southeast Asia.

Over the course of this nearly two-hundred year ascent, Islam would become deeply embedded into the very fabric of Acehnese polity, emerging as the principle wellspring of laws, legitimacy, and local organization. During the much-heralded golden age of Aceh from 1606 through 1637, Sultan Iskandar Muda would move to burnish the religious credentials of his realm by establishing a system of law explicitly grounded in the Shafi‘ite system of *fiqh*, or Islamic jurisprudence. Muda thus moved to relocate the civil court to the Bayt al-Rahman mosque and to elevate the leading religious court judge into the “Chief Judge of the Sultan,” or *Qadi al-Malik al-‘adil*, more or less fusing the law of the land with the precepts of Islam.²⁵ Consonant with these developments, the sultanate also enthusiastically patronized the development of Islamic scholarship at court, supporting the work of the archipelago’s most renowned religious legal thinkers, among them Shams al-Din al-Sumatra’i, Hamza Fansuri, and Nur al-Din al-Raniri.²⁶ Beyond the court of the sultans, religious law also permeated the organization of the villages and rural communities. The *mukim*, which served as the basic territorial unit of jurisdiction in the kingdom, were, in fact, arranged around centrally-located mosques meant to satisfy the Shafi‘i law requiring the presence of 40 men at the communal Friday prayers.²⁷ In each *mukim*, meanwhile, an *imeum* served under the leadership of an *ulèëbalang*, simultaneously presiding over the central mosque and embodying the unity of the

²⁴ Reid, *An Indonesian Frontier*, 5.

²⁵ Riddell, “Aceh in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries,” 42.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Morris, “Islam and Politics in Aceh, 29.

several villages that together constituted the *mukim* entity.²⁸ From the court of the sultans all the way down to local villages, Islam was thereby encoded into the structural DNA of the Acehese kingdom.

By the early nineteenth century, however, new forces threatened to unwind the almost genetic connection linking sultans and territorial-defined *mukim* rulers with Islam, as new religious institutions outside the chain of the Acehese polity started to emerge. In particular, Islamic boarding schools known as *dayah* that began to proliferate as early as the 1600s.²⁹ Although the origins and nature of their historical development remain murky, it is nonetheless clear that, in many respects, they straddled the existing socio-political order rather uneasily. For the most part, the *dayah* stood aloof from traditional Acehese political hierarchies. The Islamic scholars (*ulama*) who operated these schools did not generally occupy responsible positions of authority such as that of *ulèëbalang* or even of *imeum*.³⁰ Moreover, while villages esteemed these *dayah* and sent them their most promising students to receive an advanced Islamic education, once there, young men entered an intensive and cloistered cultural milieu quite distinct from the communities they left behind.³¹ The rising prominence of these institutions seemed consistent with the observation made by the prominent historian of Indonesian Islam, Michael Laffan, that by the nineteenth century and even earlier, the locus of Muslim activity in the archipelago had begun to shift away from the royal courts of sultans toward more local, village-level institutions.³²

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ For example, the founding of one of the most prominent *dayah* in Acehese history, the *Dayah Tanah Abee*, is dated back to 1627. See Mehmet Ozay, "A Preliminary Note on the Dayah Tanah Abee," in *Ottoman Connections to the Malay World: Islam, Law, and Society*, ed. Saim Kayidibi (Kuala Lumpur: The Other Press, 2011), 66-67; Morris, "Islam and Politics in Aceh," 43-44; Duhuri, "Dayah Dalam Tiga Phase Perkembangan," 151.

³⁰ Morris, "Islam and Politics in Aceh," 42-43

³¹ James Siegel, *Rope of God* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 57-58; Morris, "Islam and Politics in Aceh," 43-45.

³² Laffan, *The Makings of Indonesian Islam*, 46.

Yet, in spite of the ascendance of the *dayah*, little evidence exists to indicate that they posed a challenge to the prevailing social order. While the *dayah ulama* occupied a relatively ambiguous and autonomous position in Acehese society, as early as the 1700s, members of the al-Baghdadi family, the spiritual eminences of one of the most influential Islamic school complexes in Aceh Besar, the *Dayah Tanah Abee*, also served simultaneously as judges in the Acehese court system sanctioned by the sultan.³³ While not all of the al-Baghdadi's scholarly counterparts embraced such a direct political-cum-legal role, nonetheless, the role of this clan is suggestive of the compatibility and overlap between the *dayah* and the larger sultanate system. Furthermore, even as the villages sent their children to boarding schools to study the deepest mysteries of their faith, they continued to abide by the leadership of their *imeum* and their *ulèëbalang*, while the *imeum* and *ulèëbalang*, in turn, continued to pay theoretical obeisance to the idea, if not the person, of the sultan. To date, there is no recorded instance of open conflict pitting *dayah* leaders against *imeum*, *ulèëbalang*, or the sultan in the early nineteenth century; strife remained the province of political in-fighting at court.³⁴ More plausibly, the deeply Islamic nature of Aceh's institutions and organization, which supplied the basis of everything from the *ulèëbalang*'s territorial jurisdiction to the royal legal system, proved itself supple enough to absorb the fledgling *dayah* networks into its web of social relations.

For all the maneuverings and machinations that defined the Acehese "war of cousins" (*perang saudara*) in the 1810s, widespread violence never convulsed the population centers or the countryside, and Islamic legitimacy would continue to endow the Acehese kingdom with a surprising degree of resilience.³⁵ The sultanate even experienced something akin to revival later

³³ Ozay, "A Preliminary Note on the Dayah Tanah Abee," 68.

³⁴ Lee, "Aceh at the Time of the 1824 Treaty," 79-82.

³⁵ Mohammad Said, *Aceh Sepanjang Abad*, vol. 2 (Medan: Waspada, 1981), 459-469.

in the mid-nineteenth century.³⁶ After the bouts of political intrigue that marred Sultan Jauhar's reign, his successors, Muhammad Syah (r. 1823-1838) and Ali Ala'ad-din Mansur Syah (r. 1838-70), managed to stabilize court politics, quieting opposition and presiding over lengthy, untroubled reigns.³⁷ These sultans learned from the mistakes of the past, granting more independence to *ulèëbalang* while still garnishing a healthy revenue from the ever expanding production and trade of pepper.³⁸ Undergirded by Islamic legitimacy and strengthened by a more prudent approach to *ulèëbalang*, the sultanate showed every sign of persisting for the foreseeable future.

The civil war that roiled West Sumatra in the 1810s, by contrast, had irreparably shattered the political and religious order of that region. The similarities that, on the surface, appeared to link the highlands of Minangkabau with the Acehnese kingdom, upon close inspection, dissolve almost completely. Like Aceh, West Sumatra possessed a royal court which purported to rule over a wide area, but had to contend with a bevy of rival claims and challenges. As with Aceh, unprecedented wealth generated by cash crops provided an incentive for competition and conflict among the Minangkabau. Furthermore, much like the Acehnese, Minangkabau deeply identified with the Islamic faith and began to develop a system of Islamic boarding schools, in this case known as *surau*. The founder of the famous school of Ulakan, Shaykh Burhanuddin, had even maintained direct connections with many Acehnese, studying under the tutelage of the famous Acehnese *ulama*, 'Abd al-Ra'uf al-Sinkili, and teaching a member of the aforementioned al-Baghdadi clan who rose to such fame at the *dayah* in Tanah

³⁶ Lee, "Aceh at the Time of the 1824 Treaty," 90-91.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid., 90.

Abee.³⁹ However, as shall be seen, the similarities ended there. The Minangkabau royal court commanded little respect or authority, coffee revenues rarely trickled into the coffers of traditional leaders, and the emergence of Islamic scholars did not acknowledge the legitimacy of traditional *adat* rulers.⁴⁰ “Civil war,” in this instance, went far beyond elite maneuvering for a generally agreed upon prize. Instead, it featured the wholesale destruction of entire villages, neighbors fighting neighbors, and ultimately a pitched battle over the proper moral framework for Minangkabau society. At one point in the 1810s, *ulama* even went so far as to ensure that, in the words of a British visitor to the region, “three times has the city [Pagarruyung] been committed to the flames” and “little was left for our curiosity but the wreck of what once been great and populous” thereby reflecting the deep-seated nature of this clash.⁴¹ West Sumatra, in contrast to Aceh, endured a civil war deserving of the name.

At least part of the explanation for the depth of the conflict in the West Sumatra rests in the limited authority and geographic extent of the historical Minangkabau royal kingdom at Paggaruyung. The historical heartlands of the Minangkabau speaking territories constitute something of an anomaly to typical patterns of population dispersal for a pre-modern Southeast Asian kingdom. Rather than a series of contiguous communities arrayed around a single river system or port harbor, the settlements of West Sumatra were divided into four fertile, yet separated and semi-autonomous upland valleys cradled high in the Bukit Barisan mountains of Sumatra. Rugged mountain peaks and a scarcity of easily-traversable passes between these four regions impeded not only easy movement, but also the degree of political coherence and

³⁹ Azra, “The Surau and the Early Reform Movements,” 67-68; Ozay, “A Preliminary Note on the Dayah Tanah Abee,” 70.

⁴⁰ Dobbin, *Islamic Revivalism*, 133-134.

⁴¹ Sophia Raffles, *Memoirs of the Life and Public Services of Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles, Particularly in the Government of Java, 1811-1816, Bencoolen and Its Dependencies*, vol. 1 (London: James Duncan, 1835), 421.

centralization that obtained in places such as Java. Thus, when an ambitious local regent named Adityawarman broke off from his tributary masters in the Majapahit Kingdom of Java and established his own, independent West Sumatran realm in 1347, he struggled to extend his ambit beyond the single, gold-producing upland valley of Tanah Datar.⁴² Other constitutive regions of the Minangkabau heartlands—especially the valley of Agam, Singkarak-Solok, and Limapuluh Kota—never evinced any sign of submission to Adityawarman’s kingdom based in the Tanah Datar city of Pagaruyung. Even after gold-fueled florescence propelled the growth of Pagaruyung yet again in the seventeenth century, endowing the court city with a population of 8,000 at one point, the political authority of the court remained concentrated in a handful of Tanah Datar market towns and among the caravans of gold traded that descended the steep mountains down to the coastal stretches near Padang. Moreover, when global gold prices plummeted in the second half of the 1700s, the Minangkabau royal family tottered on the brink of collapse and a yawning power vacuum opened up yet again.⁴³

If the geographic reality of four separated non-contiguous valleys posed a large, almost insuperable, barrier to any semblance of political cohesion in West Sumatra, the Pagaruyung royal family also struggled to draw upon another potential reservoir of legitimacy: Islam. Unlike the maritime kingdom of Aceh, which looked outward to the Muslim trading networks of the Indian Ocean and from very outset identified itself as an explicitly Islamic realm, the origins of the Minangkabau royal family rested in the Hindu-Buddhist tradition of Java. King Adityavarman showed no signs of having converted to Islam during his rule, which was the apogee of the Minangkabau monarchy.⁴⁴ In the succeeding centuries, Islam also infiltrated West

⁴² F.W. Stapel, “Een Verhandeling over het Onststaan van het Menangkabausche Rijk en zijn Adat,” *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land-, en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch Indië* 92 (1935): 463-464; Dobbin, *Islamic Revivalism*, 62.

⁴³ Dobbin, *Islamic Revivalism*, 68.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 66.

Sumatra more slowly than it did Aceh, as the Minangkabau social world revolved around the fecund valleys of the highland rather than the ocean, from which it was separated by a sharp, precipitous drop in the Bukit Barisan mountain range.⁴⁵ This highland orientation deprived the Minangkabau of a maritime portal to the larger Islamic world, and the first significant trading centers on the West Sumatran coast were formed by foreign Dutch and British traders rather than Muslim sultans. Moreover, by the time royal family of Pagarruyung did convert to Islam, likely at some point during the sixteenth century, much of the socio-political edifice of Minangkabau culture had already been set.⁴⁶ West Sumatra was bereft of any of the Shafi‘ite Islamic trappings that imbued the Acehese sultanate. Instead, the royal family continued clinging to many pre-Islamic beliefs and practices, while a distinctive matriarchal system of *adat* social organization centered upon the multi-family, multigenerational lineage dwelling known as the *rumah gedang*, predominated in Minangkabau villages.⁴⁷ Thus, in spite of gradual conversion and the slow evolution of shamans and Brahman *panditas* into Muslim *malim*, the outward form of Minangkabau society remained, for the most part, pre-Islamic in nature.

The non-Islamic character of Minangkabau social organization, in combination with the decentralized political system of the region, would ultimately give rise to religious contention and strife by the beginning of the nineteenth century. As with Aceh, a wave of religious reformism began to wash ashore upon the West Sumatran coast in the late eighteenth century and seep into the highlands, generating increased contact with Islamic centers such as Mecca, a strengthened commitment to *shari‘a* law, and a profusion of autonomous religious schools and

⁴⁵ Ibid, 2-4.

⁴⁶ Haan, F. de, “Naar Midden Sumatra in 1684,” *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal-, Land-, en Volkenkunde*, 39 (1897): 345-347.

⁴⁷ Dobbin, *Islamic Revivalism*, 13-14.

Sufi *tariqa* known as *surau*.⁴⁸ However, in contrast to its neighbor to the north, West Sumatra lacked an Islamic political superstructure that could contain and channel these trends. With no sultan or *imeum* or *mukim*, the *imam* and *tuanku* leaders of the *surau* emerged as the de-facto spokespeople of Islam in their communities, and increasingly they looked upon their neighboring kinsmen and villages with great dismay. All around them they espied moral iniquities of varying degrees, from gambling and cock-fighting to opium smoking and alcohol drinking to even usury.⁴⁹ Moreover, the already weak supra-village political ties in the Minangkabau highlands showed every indication of fraying beyond repair in the late 1700s, as banditry and lawlessness prevailed on most travel routes, jeopardizing the nascent coffee trade that sustained many of the Islamic *surau* and *tariqa*.⁵⁰ Without any formal framework of Islamic leadership like that found in Aceh, many of the Islamic scholars of West Sumatra, known as *tuanku*, felt it incumbent upon themselves to try to remedy this situation by advancing the precepts of the Qur'an and the *hadith* in the larger Minangkabau society, by force if necessary.⁵¹

The dissimilarities in the political and religious situations of Aceh and West Sumatra not only go a long way in explaining the distinctive character of these two civil wars, but also their divergent consequences. In Aceh, the narrow contest for political control between the sultan and various *ulèëbalang* petered out of its own accord by the 1820s. In the following years, European authorities recognized that fissures persisted within the Acehnese elite, and merchants from both empires complained about the endemic piracy afflicting shipping lanes around the long Acehnese coastline.⁵² However, the pepper trade with British Penang continued to surge in the 1820s, and

⁴⁸ Ibid., 120-125, 128-130.

⁴⁹ Azra, "The Surau and the Early Reform Movements," 175.

⁵⁰ Dobbin, *Islamic Revivalism*, 125-126.

⁵¹ H.A. Stein Parvé, "De Secte der Padaries in de Padangsche Bovenlanden," 1 *Indisch Magazijn* (1844): 22-23.

⁵² Lee, "Aceh at the Time of the 1824 Treaty," 77.

the sultanate remained intact.⁵³ Absent any interruption to their lucrative pepper profits or other marked instability, British administrators in the Straits Settlement found no compelling reason to intervene in the affairs of the independent sultanate. In fact, they negotiated a series of treaties in 1819 and 1824 that, for the time being, protected the Acehnese from the encroachments of the Dutch and guaranteed them a modicum of independence so long as British trade could continue.⁵⁴

The hostilities in West Sumatra which started as early as 1807, by contrast, wore on for well over a decade and left a trail of destruction that reached into almost every corner of the region, thus eliciting strong concern among the small community of European traders and administrators on the coast. The British, who had established a presence in the area as traders during the 1780s and taken control of all former VOC trading enclaves during the height of the Napoleonic Wars, learned about the violence from an influx of highland refugees.⁵⁵ Rumors of violent fanaticism, along with a concurrent decline in trade, proved especially alarming. Moreover, entreaties for aid from some of the most beleaguered Minangkabau combatants, especially the royal family of Pagarruyung, began reaching colonial quarters by the 1810s.⁵⁶ With all of these disturbing incidences, the responsible British authority at the port of Padang, Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles, decided to make a brief expedition into the highlands in 1818 and soon sought permission from his superiors to intervene in the struggle.⁵⁷ However, in spite of this trip, officials in London relinquished the coastal areas of West Sumatra to the Dutch after the resolution of the Napoleonic War. The new Dutch officials soon shared many of the same

⁵³ Ibid., 90-92.

⁵⁴ Lee Kam Hing, *The Sultanate of Aceh: Relations with the British 1760-1824* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 307-308.

⁵⁵ H.J.J.L. Ridder de Stuers, *De Vestiging en Uitbreiding der Nederlanders ter Westkust van Sumatra*, vol. 1 (Amsterdam: P.N. van Kampen, 1849), 15-16, 28-37.

⁵⁶ Dobbin, *Islamic Revivalism*, 141.

⁵⁷ De Stuers, *De Vestiging en Uitbreiding*, 38-39.

anxieties that plagued their British predecessors, particularly those concerning the disruption of coffee production and threats to their own security on the coast. Upon his arrival in May 1819, the new Dutch resident of Padang, James Du Puy, soon began making a forceful case to his superiors about the necessity of coming to the aid of the Pagarruyung royal court. By June 1821, the battle was joined.⁵⁸

These fundamental disparities between the civil wars of West Sumatra and Aceh in the 1810s would ultimately shape the contours of colonial conquest for the rest of the nineteenth century. The profound upheavals shaking Minangkabau society proved too great a temptation to resist, and the Dutch intervened at an early moment in the 1830s when their military capacities, as shall be seen, still remained quite limited. By contrast, the Acehnese kingdom overcame the jockeying of its elite classes and even experienced something of a revival, thus managing to retain its political-cum-territorial integrity for another forty years. With the benefit of hindsight, however, this reprieve from direct colonial intervention can perhaps be seen less as a triumph than as a pyrrhic victory, a development which delayed conquest to a much later, more perilous era of war-making. This divergence in timing would determine much about the ultimate conduct and consequences of colonial war-making in Sumatra.

Backdrop to the Padri War: Dutch weakness and Islamic strife

Glosses of the Padri War often evoke, albeit implicitly, the classic paradox of an unstoppable force meeting an immovable object. The Dutch colonial military in West Sumatra incarnates the unstoppable force of imperialism sweeping through the Indonesian archipelago on its inexorable march toward conquest, while the Padris, the devout defenders of the Islamic faith,

⁵⁸ Dobbin, *Islamic Revivalism*, 141-145.

represent the immovable object which could never be fully displaced. The irresistible power of the European empire inevitably carried the Dutch to victory in their war, but the implacable resolve of Muslims would propel resistance, and eventually, a successful movement for independence and nationhood.⁵⁹ However, in reality, the Dutch encountered many difficulties that constrained their military efforts and rendered the outcome of their campaign far from certain. Likewise, fractures not only between devout Padris and their matrilineal *adat* antagonists, but also among Islamic scholars and *ulama* themselves, rent the Muslim Minangkabau community. These underappreciated facts would drive much of the war-making in West Sumatra.

When the Dutch returned to the erstwhile Dutch East Indies Company trading post of Padang in 1819, they appeared to enjoy an overwhelming military advantage over their Muslim Minangkabau counterparts. From the perspective of sheer firepower, for example, Dutch supremacy might appear unassailable, as the colonial military held a monopoly on artillery, howitzers, and other weaponry capable of inflicting heavy damage on fortifications or large numbers of people.⁶⁰ By contrast, the Padris relied on spears and a type of rudimentary, self-made firearms known as *lilla* with very limited ranges.⁶¹ In addition to this disparity in weaponry, the Dutch colonial authorities also could deploy infantry units forged in the crucible of continental battle during the Napoleonic Wars and trained in the most state-of-the-art military techniques.⁶² Minangkabau villages, meanwhile, depended on ordinary inhabitants to assist in defense and lacked much in the way of coordinated units dedicated to specifically military

⁵⁹ Colin Brown, *A Short History of Indonesia: The Unlikely Nation?* (Crows Nest, N.S.W.: Allen & Unwin, 2003), 79-83; Gordon P. Means, *Political Islam in Southeast Asia* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2009), 40; Robert Pringle, *Understanding Islam in Indonesia: Politics and Diversity*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2010), 42-43.

⁶⁰ Teitler, *Op het Koloniale Oorlogspad*, 10, 43-46.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 25.

purposes.⁶³ Given these imbalances, the ultimate outcome of any encounter might seem preordained.

Significant weaknesses belied the outward appearance of Dutch military dominance. The most predictable difficulty arose from Dutch inexperience with guerrilla tactics. As commanders arrayed their troops into inflexible forward-marching columns, individual soldiers found themselves susceptible to ambushes and other attacks by Minangkabau fighters, who could then, in turn, vanish into the almost impenetrable forest jungles of the region. The defenders also benefitted from their familiarity with the terrain, and colonial troops struggled to adjust to the exigencies of an alien, tropical climate.⁶⁴

The difficulties of the Dutch extended beyond these well-worn concerns about guerrilla warfare associated with fighting “asymmetric” or “small” wars outside Europe.⁶⁵ Upon further inspection, for example, the purported preponderance of colonial military strength itself begins to unravel. While Europe stood on the cusp of a revolution in firearm and military technology at the beginning of the nineteenth century, with new improvements in gunpowder and bullets made in the 1810s and 20s, military rank-and-file still needed to make due with unwieldy, difficult to re-load rifles until at least mid-century.⁶⁶ These rifles possessed an effective shooting range of only 80 feet, and did not offer that marked of an advantage over the *lilla* in use by Minangkabau.⁶⁷

⁶³ Ibid., 6.

⁶⁴ Teitler, *Op het Koloniale Oorlogspad*, 6-10, 37.

⁶⁵ There is an extensive literature on the challenges of “small wars,” especially as they pertain to fighting “asymmetric” guerrilla warfare. Some of this pertains to the colonial experience. See for example, J.I. Hans Bakker, “The Aceh War and the Creation of the Netherlands East Indies State,” 53-82.

⁶⁶ V.G. Kiernan describes the old historical consensus that centuries of fighting in the cauldron of European battle had set the stage for a century of outward European military conquest directed toward Asia and Africa. See V.G. Kiernan, *Colonial Empires and Armies, 1815-1960* (Stroud, U.K.: Sutton Publishing, 1998), 11-14.

⁶⁷ Daniel Headrick explains that in spite of innovations in firearm technology made during the 1810s, particularly with regard to bullets and re-loading capacity, the “muzzle-loading smoothbore musket” remained the dominant gun for European armies until the 1850s. He also explains the limitations of these guns. See Daniel R. Headrick, *The Tools of Empire: Technology and European Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 83-89.

Thus, the Dutch still needed to fight their opponents in short-range conditions. Aside from individual firearms, the most common type of munitions in the colonial arsenal, the basic cannon, could not penetrate Minangkabau embankments and walls shrouded with meters of thorny bamboo.⁶⁸ Moreover, although the Dutch army could draw upon a smaller supply of heavy ordnance capable of breaching indigenous defenses, such as the howitzer artillery piece, these heavier pieces also suffered from serious shortcomings. The howitzer weapons, in particular, proved especially awkward to transport and maneuver around the mountainous landscape of West Sumatra, making them difficult to deploy on the battlefield.⁶⁹ On several occasions Minangkabau fighters even managed to seize some of these artillery pieces during ambushes, thus leveling the playing field to some extent.⁷⁰

In addition to this surprising parity in firepower capacity, logistical problems also afflicted the Dutch army and rendered it difficult to wage war in the remote reaches of Sumatra. When Resident James DuPuy made the decision to venture into the seething internal conflicts of the Minangkabau highlands in 1821, he had only a paltry five hundred Dutch soldiers at his disposal, and in the succeeding years, the troop strength would only rise to the level of several thousand, a remarkably modest presence for an area encompassing some 18,000 square kilometers.⁷¹ While the Java War (1825-1830) siphoned many of the available troops to the central Javanese region around Yogyakarta, other problems also inhibited a dramatic scaling up of military force in West Sumatra.⁷² In particular, a scarcity of transport ships bedeviled Dutch efforts off the far-flung Sumatran coast. Although technology did exist to move large quantities

⁶⁸ Teitler, *Op het Koloniale Oorlogspad*, 17.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 11.

⁷⁰ Ibid., *Op het Koloniale Oorlogspad*, 18-19.

⁷¹ Ibid., *Op het Koloniale Oorlogspad*, 44.

⁷² Several historians of West Sumatra cite the Java War as a reason for slow mobilization of Dutch troops in the Padri War. See, for example, Dobbin, *Islamic Revivalism*, 146; and Elizabeth Graves, *The Minangkabau Response to Dutch Colonial Rule in the Nineteenth Century*, (Jakarta: Equinox Publishing, 2010), 64-5.

of troops, munitions, and supplies across the vast distance of oceans between Europe and Java and Sumatra, the economics of ship production in this relatively early period rendered them quite expensive. As a result, the Dutch navy only owned a small number of large transport vessels, and military planners often had to compete on the costly open market to lease ships from the private European concerns. In addition, many of the ships in the Dutch fleet were more geared toward offensive operations on the open seas, as was needed in the Napoleonic Wars, than for carrying large numbers of army soldiers halfway across the world. As a result, the military planners struggled to muster anything near the number of ships required for a large expedition in West Sumatra, and directed many of those that were available exist to servicing the primary base of colonial operations in Java.⁷³ This massive scarcity in ships, in combination with other logistical problems such as traversing the rugged terrain of the Minangkabau area or providing basic supplies such as clothes and food, severely constrained Dutch war-making activities.⁷⁴

Just as military equivalence contradicted the image of an unstoppable colonial force, divisions within Muslim Minangkabau society also serves to problematize any notion of a united religiously motivated resistance. While the rift between customary Minangkabau matriarchal leaders and upstart Muslim reformers constituted the most infamous split in West Sumatra, Islamic society itself was riven by a bevy of doctrinal disputes, personal enmities, and inter-village rivalries. These fissures, as shall be seen, would play a key role in the conduct of the Padri War.

On the surface, perhaps, such ruptures might seem almost counterintuitive. In particular, the network of Islamic schools known as *surau* exemplified the underlying convergences in

⁷³ For an interesting analysis of Dutch struggles with sea transport for troops, see Teitler, *Op het Koloniale Oorlogspad*, 37-38.

⁷⁴ For information on logistical struggles with clothing and food, see Teitler, *Op het Koloniale Oorlogspad*, 39-40.

religious outlook that animated Minangkabau Muslim life. These educational institutions, which plucked students from their local villages at a young age and immersed them in a heady atmosphere of religious scholarship, all shared certain theological and pedagogical underpinnings. In terms of theology, for example, all Minangkabau *surau* hewed to something of a consensus middle way in the great Islamic debate between mysticism (*tawwasuf*) and the law (*shari'a*), blending traditional Sufi activities devoted to receiving visions of the sacred, such as music, dancing, and the incantation of God's name, with a thorough grounding in the precepts of Islamic jurisprudence. In terms of pedagogy, these *surau* schools all drew from a similar curriculum, teaching Arabic as a tool for Qur'anic recitation and using a single textbook known as the *Minhaj at-talibin* (A guidebook of Believing Students) to explicate the rudiments of Islamic law.⁷⁵ Moreover, the unconditional and unwavering devotion of the students (*murid*) to his master teacher, the *shaykh*, represented a universal operating principle in Muslim Minangkabau education. With these convergences in basic structure, teachers and students alike frequently circulated between different schools over the course of the career, weaving the *surau* into a tightly knit, interconnected network of Islamic learning.⁷⁶

The intimacy of the Minangkabau Muslim milieu and the shared core of theological assumptions could also serve to magnify the ferocity of disputes when they did emerge. For example, in spite of a common Sufi orientation, *surau* did indulge in polemic clashes that might appear esoteric to the outside observer, but nonetheless degenerated into hostility and, at times, outright violence. For example, a cleavage arose between *surau* aligned with the Shattariyya and Naqshbandiyya branches of Sufism. While there was considerable social and theological permeability between these two streams of Sufism, and both exhibited overlapping patterns of

⁷⁵ Dobbin, *Islamic Revivalism*, 123.

⁷⁶ Ibid., *Islamic Revivalism*, 121-5.

religious thought and practice, the Shattariyya nevertheless expounded some unique metaphysical doctrines.⁷⁷ Most notably, devotees of the Shattariyya postulated a unique seven-stage doctrine of Being, known in Indonesian as *martabat tujuh*, in which all existence emanated from the first phase, God, and proceeded through a series of six more emanations into the physical world.⁷⁸ Although this theory might seem like an abstruse philosophical preoccupation, it still elicited fierce criticism from Naqshbandiyya adherents who castigated it as a pantheistic deviation from the most sacred principle of Islam, the transcendent unity of God.⁷⁹

In West Sumatra such polemics overlapped with other personal, geographic, and economic considerations. For example, the most famous Shattariyya *surau* was located at a prosperous trading junction in the southern corner of the Agam valley, while the main Naqshbandiyya outposts stood in a more rugged, hardscrabble part of the Limapuluh Kota valley.⁸⁰ Furthermore, the leading *shaykhs* at the Naqshbandiyya in Taram and Talawi had nursed personal grievances against their Shattariyya rivals and in fact suffered from something of a prestige deficit, failing to attract nearly the number of followers as Shattariyya institutions. Thus, a whole range of factors served to exacerbate what might otherwise seem like a rather pedantic metaphysical debate, generating fierce polemical tracts and, eventually, open violence between members of these two camps.⁸¹

⁷⁷ Reflecting the permeability of the boundaries between Naqshbandiyya and Shattariyya, there are some debates over the allegiance of one of the most famous *ulama* in Minangkabau history, Tuanku Nan Tua. Azyumardi Azra, in particular, argues that although Tuo is usually labeled as a Shattariyya, he in fact came under the influence of Naqshbandiyya teachings later in his life. This is due to the fact that the Naqshbandiyya generally are associated with a slightly more legalistic, *shari'a* oriented inclination. However, the inability of historians to clearly situate him in one camp is indicative of how muddled the social and intellectual boundaries between these two camps were. See Azra, "The Surau and the Early Reform Movements," 71.

⁷⁸ Howard Federspiel, *A Dictionary of Indonesian Islam* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Center for International Studies, 1995), 155; Dobbin, *Islamic Revivalism*, 124.

⁷⁹ Martin van Bruinessen, "Origins and Development of the Sufi Orders (Tarekat) in Southeast Asia," *Studia Islamika* 1, 1 (1994): 7-8; Dobbin, *Islamic Revivalism*, 124.

⁸⁰ Ph.S. van Ronkel, "Een Maleisch Getuigenis over den Weg des Islams in Sumatra," *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land-, en Volenkunde van Nederlandsch Indie* 75 (1919): 365-369.

⁸¹ Dobbin, *Islamic Revivalism*, 123-4.

Meanwhile, another theological dispute would prove even more salient to the conduct of war in West Sumatra over the coming decades—a debate over the proper means for encouraging Islamic devotion among the Minangkabau population. As mentioned in earlier sections of this chapter, the confluence of new trends in global Islamic thought, on the one hand, and social turmoil in West Sumatra itself, on the other, helped give rise at the turn of the nineteenth century to a sea-change in the orientation of local religious life, turning Minangkabau Muslims away from the perfection of the individual and toward the ethical obligations of the entire *umma*, or Islamic community. In other words, all Minangkabau villages should explicitly abide by the dictates of the *shari‘a*, or go “back to the *shari‘a*.”⁸²

Reformist Muslims disagreed over the method for achieving such aims. One school of thought, revolving around the person of Tuanku Nan Tua, the most renowned *ulama* in all of the Minangkabau heartlands and the leader of the Kota Tua *surau* in southern Agam province, promoted education and peaceful persuasion as the most salutary strategy for securing adherence to the strictures of Islamic law. However, several of his pupils sought a more aggressive approach. In particular, two former students of Tuanku Nan Tua, Haji Miskin and Tuanku nan Rinceh, came to see banditry, moral turpitude, and opposition to Islamic law as irredeemable facets of life under the Minangkabau matriarchate. For them, the only path to an Islamic society lay in the extirpation of antagonistic *adat* elites and the forcible imposition of *shari‘a* on the villages of the highland. Death, according to Hadji Miskin and Tuanku nan Rinceh, was the only fitting punishment for transgressors of Islamic law.⁸³

⁸² Azra, “The Surau and the Early Reform Movements,” 70-71.

⁸³ Much of what we know about these disputes is culled from an account written by Tuanku nan Tua’s disciple and likely son, Jalal al-Din Ahmad of Samiang. This account has been compiled in several different editions. In this dissertation, I use the one by E. Ulrich Kratz and Adriyetti Amir. See E. Ulrich Kratz and Adriyetti Amir, eds., *Surat Keterangan Syeikh Jalaluddin Karangan Fakih Saghir* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewean Bahasa dan Pustaka, 2002); H.A. Steijn Parvé, “De Secte der Padaries in de Padangsche Bovenlanden,” *Indisch Magazijn* 1 (1844): 22-23.

Over the course of the 1810s, this disagreement over the proper means for achieving an Islamic society would irreparably sunder the network of Minangkabau Muslim *surau*. At first, it appeared that Haji Miskin would dutifully follow the tutelary script of *shaykh-murid* relations, supplicating his erstwhile teacher, Tuanku nan Tua, for approval of a campaign of organized violence. However, when Tua demurred, Miskin departed and sought out the sanction of other religious leaders. Tuanku nan Rinceh, another former student of Tuanku nan Tua and the leading spiritual figure in the hill village of Bukit Kamang, proved especially receptive. After providing Miskin with safe harbor and listening to his case, Tuanku nan Rinceh embraced the cause of armed *jihad* with alacrity, launching several raids against towns on the valley floors.⁸⁴ Moreover, the message of violent intervention resonated amongst the population of the upstart hill areas, many of whom expressed social resentment against the *adat* communities of the valley and had seen their shipments of coffee and cassia stolen along the valley floor. Against this larger social backdrop, Rinceh and Miskin soon managed to piece together an alliance of eight other *ulama*, known as the *harimau yang delapan*, or eight lions, and before long they accosted the most prominent holdout, Tuanku nan Tua. During a marathon session of negotiation and theological disputation, Tuanku nan Tua still refused to submit. Afterwards, Rinceh and Miskin excoriated their former master as a morally reprobate *kafir*, and launched a series of attacks not only on *adat* villages, but also against Tuanku di Tua's *surau*, destroying many of the school buildings and even killing two of his sons in battle. This fratricidal violence between student and teacher, *shaykh* and *murid*, would continue to convulse the region until the Dutch arrived in 1821.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ Parvé, "De Secte der Padaries," 24-26.

⁸⁵ Dobbin, *Islamic Revivalism*, 134-5.

The reality of internal strife within the Minangkabau Muslim community thus undermines prevailing historiographic narratives of the Padri War. Rather than a manifestation of some underlying spirit of Islamic resistance and unity, the conflict in West Sumatra actually witnessed, as Christine Dobbin has observed, fierce dissension within the Muslim ranks, leading to recriminations and reprisal not only against the scions of *adat* lineage communities, but also between the *ulama* themselves. This reality, when paired against the earlier discussion of Dutch military weakness, would thus seem to puncture the epic dimensions often imputed to the Padri War, making it less of a world-historical clash between Islam and Empire than an accidental encounter between squabbling religious leaders and hapless Dutch administrators. However, as shall be seen, the twin realities of Islamic disunity and colonial feebleness are not simply a rebuke to historians, they also played a key role in patterning one of the most curious and unremarked upon aspects of the Padri War: Dutch-Muslim cooperation.

The beginning of the Padri War and the search for viable Muslim collaborators

With the myths of Dutch invulnerability and religious uniformity dispatched, the range of possibilities for negotiation and alliances across the colonial divide begins to come into sharper focus. From the very moment the British relinquished control of Padang harbor in 1819 until the conclusion of the Padri War in 1837, Dutch strategists grasped the fundamental weakness of their position in West Sumatra. A paucity of troops and resources, ignorance of local conditions, and competing priorities elsewhere in the Netherlands East Indies rendered total mastery of the Minangkabau almost unthinkable. One of the most famous governors general in the history of the colony, Johannes van den Bosch, went so far as to call into question the feasibility of

“subjecting the [Minangkabau] people” to colonial rule and even of “using war” altogether.⁸⁶

This statement, of course, should not be misconstrued as a sign that the Dutch foreswore coercive measures. Many of Van den Bosch’s subordinates advocated stern military measures, while colonial functionaries showed little compunction about interfering in Minangkabau internal affairs to advance their own commercial aims.⁸⁷ However, this statement by Van den Bosch does speak to an awareness of Dutch vulnerability in West Sumatra and the futility of trying to impose colonial aims through coercion alone. This awareness only heightened the imperative of finding possible collaborators, even among the most devout Muslim segments of the population. In turn, many Minangkabau Muslims began to express disenchantment with the violent fervor of the most radical among them called the “Padris.”⁸⁸ As the targets of Padri wrath expanded beyond the ritually impure cock-fighting arenas and opium dens to include the mosques and *surau* of their rival religious scholars,⁸⁹ the Dutch no longer embodied the evil *kafir* for some Muslims. Instead, they were potential allies against the excesses of their co-religionists.

The search for viable collaborators, in many respects, comprised the sole constant in the otherwise disorganized and haphazard efforts of the Dutch in West Sumatra. The first few years of the Dutch return to West Sumatra perfectly crystallizes this impulse for identifying a viable local collaborator. Upon the transfer of Padang port from British to Dutch control in 1819, colonial administrators wasted little time in making overtures to scions of the old Pagarruyung royal family in the Tanah Datar valley. Within a year, Dutch authorities had consented to furnish a stipend to the Tuankus of the Surusao area of Tanah Datar, all of whom were claimants of a

⁸⁶ Johannes van den Bosch to C.P.J. Elout, 13 October 1831, entry 852, MK 1814-1849, code toegang: 2.10.01, NNA.

⁸⁷ Dobbin, *Islamic Revivalism*, 149-151.

⁸⁸ For an examination of the complex genealogy of the word “Padri,” see J. Kathirithamby-Wells, “The Origin of the Term Padri: Some Historical Evidence,” *Indonesian Circle* 41 (November 1986): 3-9.

⁸⁹ Dobbin, *Islamic Revivalism*, 135.

connection with the royal house. These efforts to woo members of the royal elite culminated two years later on 10 February 1821 when the Dutch signed a treaty with Sultan Alam Bagagar Syah of Pagarruyung, the Tuankus of Suruaso, and several prominent lineage leaders from individual villages known as *penghulu*. In return for payment and protection from the Padris, these local grantees agreed to cede nominal sovereignty over most of Tanah Datar.⁹⁰

By forging these ties with members of the Minangkabau royal family, Dutch officials were, in many respects, following the template laid out a century earlier by the Dutch East Indies Trading Company (VOC). As with the merchants of the past, the paramount goals of the new Governor General, G.A.G. Ph. Van der Cappelen, and his primary representative in Padang, Resident J. Du Puy, revolved around commerce. Above all else, Van der Cappelen and Du Puy sought to steer some of the flourishing coffee trade in the region through Dutch ports and to secure contacts with local intermediaries who could provide a reliable supply of the product. In the past, the VOC had established reliable trading relations with members of the *adat* elite to secure gold, and Van der Cappelen assumed he could replicate this model for coffee.⁹¹ It appeared that the Governor General never intended to move past this safeguarding of commerce toward a more extensive intervention in Minangkabau society, as he only allocated several hundred troops and continually spurned requests for greater manpower. Cooperation in service of commerce constituted the overriding objective.⁹²

The Dutch quickly discovered, however, that an alliance with the Minangkabau royal family would not guarantee peace and security, but instead entangle them in civil war. During the course of negotiations leading up to the 1821 Treaty of Cession, representatives of the *adat*

⁹⁰ Dobbin, *Islamic Revivalism*, 142-3.

⁹¹ Ibid., 150.

⁹² Teitler, *Op het Koloniale Oorlogspad*, 42.

faction and royal family repeatedly warned the Dutch of the menace posed by religious fanatics in the highlands and beseeched them to offer protection. A precipitous decline in the flow of coffee during this time only reinforced the impression that the Padris gravely jeopardized Dutch interests in the region. Thus, at the behest of his interlocutors, Resident Du Puy established a small garrison in Simawang, a village wedged between several Padri strongholds. Tensions from there quickly worsened, and after a few Padri raids launched by one of Tuanku Nan Rinceh's allies, Tuanku Lintau, the Dutch decided to mount an attack on the nearby village of Silit Air in April of 1821, a mere two months after the Treaty of Cession. The operation at first seemed successful, but in fact the Padris immediately re-occupied the village after the battle was complete and managed to snatch several pieces of light artillery left behind. This encounter marked the beginning of Dutch intervention in the Minangkabau civil war.⁹³

Thus ensnared in conflict, the Dutch resolved to lend further support to their royal family allies and to intensify aggressive measures against the Padris. By December of 1821, authorities in Batavia dispatched a contingent of reinforcements under the command of a brash young army officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Antoine Theodore Raaff, to the region. In contrast to some of his superiors higher up the colonial chain of command, Lt. Col. Raaff, a graduate of the French military academy of St. Cyr and a veteran of the Napoleonic Wars in Europe, was eager to demonstrate his proficiency as a military commander.⁹⁴ Thus, in February 1821, Raaff deliberately spurned an offer proffered by the Padris through an Arab intermediary to accede to the Dutch so long as they enforced Islamic law. Instead, they gathered some 400 infantrymen and artillery for a campaign to dislodge the Padris from the heartlands of royal family in Tanah

⁹³ Dobbin, *Islamic Revivalism*, 143.

⁹⁴ *Nieuw Nederlandsch Biografisch Woordenboek*, eds., P.C. Molhuysen and P.J. Blok, vol. 2 (Leiden: A. W. Sijthoff's uitgevers-maatschappij, 1912), 1148.

Datar. This offensive reaped some initial triumphs. By March, Raaff achieved a decisive victory over the forces of one of Tuanku nan Rinceh's most prominent allies, Tuanku Lintau, forcing him to retreat into the surrounding mountains and securing the seats of royal power in Pagarruyung and Suruaso from the Padris. Moreover, Raaff continued to ratchet up pressure on the Padri, pursuing them into the hilly hinterlands of northern Tanah Datar, conquering a number of villages in the region, and constructing both roads and rails wherever he ventured. These accomplishments garnered the approbation of officials in Batavia and The Hague, who promoted Lt. Col. Raaff to the position of resident and vested him with total military and civilian authority over West Sumatra.⁹⁵

The successes of Raaff would prove ephemeral, and the limitations of an alliance with the *adat* faction of Minangkabau society would quickly grow evident. The occupation of the valley floor of Tanah Datar did not translate into total Dutch control over West Sumatra or Padri submission, and attacks against colonial forces only escalated. Raaff soon realized that by conquering regional centers such as Pagarruyung and Suruaso, the Padris had simply been displaced into rugged mountains and other valleys further afield such as Agam, from which they could easily regroup.⁹⁶ To vanquish these enemies, the Dutch would need to follow their quarry beyond the confines of Tanah Datar. Raaff thus circled around Mt. Merapi into the neighboring valley of Agam with the intention of trapping Padri fighters who were concealed in the peak's elevated heights, but soon found himself overextended and exposed to attacks in an entirely new place.⁹⁷ Much to his consternation, moreover, the writ of the so-called "King of the Minangkabau," did not seem to extend into this devoutly Muslim terrain of Agam, the home of

⁹⁵ Teitler, *Op het Koloniale Oorlogspad*, 44-48.

⁹⁶ Dobbin, *Islamic Revivalism*, 143-144.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 144-145.

unyielding figures such as Tuanku nan Rinceh. Thus, the Dutch made little headway in the pious villages of the area and the forces of Tuanku nan Rinceh easily repelled an attack on his stronghold of Kapau in August 1822. In April 1823, Raaff lunged out once again at the mountainous refuge of Tuanku Lintau in the vicinity of Mt. Marapalm, but suffered a humiliating defeat. Lt. Col. Raaf died in Padang in April of 1824.⁹⁸ Without viable collaborators outside Tanah Datar, the question then arose: could the alliance of the Minangkabau royal family offer an adequate basis for security in West Sumatra?

In the years after 1824, the Dutch began to despair of the possibility of imposing a solution with only the support of the Minangkabau royal family and began to look toward the milieu of devout Muslims for some potential solution. In spite of their deep-seated mistrust of the Padris in specific, and Islam in general, colonial administrators nonetheless determined the necessity of coming to some sort of short-term resolution with the Muslim combatants themselves. After the untimely passing of Raaff, the new Dutch Resident and Military Commandant, Colonel H.J.J.L. de Stuers, argued that it had been foolhardy to undertake a campaign of colonial conquest beyond Tanah Datar, especially given the meager state of Dutch resources in the region, and decided that the only path to security lay in direct negotiations with the Padris themselves.⁹⁹ As a result, “in the spirit and intent of the assignment given to me, I began at once to open up correspondence with the Padris of Bonjol of Alahan Panjang,” as well as other intractable foes like Tuanku nan Rinceh and Tuanku Lintau.¹⁰⁰ In effect, De Steurs

⁹⁸ Ibid., 144.

⁹⁹ De Stuers, *De Vestiging en Uitbreiding de Nederlanders*, vol. 1, 60-64.

¹⁰⁰ H.J.J.L. De Stuers to Governor General of the Netherlands Indies, Godert van der Capellen, 25 November 1825, entry 513, MK 1814-1849, code toegang 2.10.01, NNA, The Hague, the Netherlands.

hoped to transform some of the colonial regime's most intractable opponents into collaborators with whom they could work, or at least maintain peaceable relations.¹⁰¹

In November 1825, representatives of Tuanku nan Rinceh and Tuanku nan Rinceh, as well as Tuanku nan Saleh of Talawi and Tuanku Guguk of Limapuluh Kota, arrived in Padang along with a retinue of eight other *tuanku* and fifty four *murid*. Dressed in the white garb characteristic of the Islamic purification movement, this group stayed in the Dutch outpost for twenty days. The Dutch, for their part, showed little compunction about negotiating with Muslims, and the Padris evinced a willingness to reach something resembling a truce. Although the Dutch refused to impose Islamic faith on the Minangkabau inhabitants in the area under their sway, as initially demanded, they did agree to assist in the gradual elimination of those moral calumnies most abhorred by the devout: opium smoking and cock fighting. By 15 November 1825 this concession proved sufficient to secure a treaty, wherein the Padris agreed to recognize Dutch authority in the places where it already existed, for example Tanah Datar, in exchange for a policy of colonial non-intervention in those areas under Padri sway. This treaty ushered in a five year reprieve from open fighting.¹⁰²

Ultimately, Tuanku Rinceh and Lintau would turn against the Dutch at the first indication of potential weakness in 1830; however, out of the otherwise unvarnished rout that was the 1822 expedition into Agam, the Dutch did, at the very least, forge a more enduring relationship, a working alliance with the esteemed Muslim scholar, Tuanku nan Tua. During his rapid sorties across southern Agam, a region known as the *Empat Angkek* or "Four Exalted Ones," for its four famous Shattariyya Islamic teachers, Lt. Col. Raaff stumbled upon Tuanku nan Tua for the first

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Dobbin, *Islamic Revivalism*, 145-146.

time.¹⁰³ By the time the Dutch arrived, as previously discussed, this learned scholar had already been mired in years of strife with his theological adversaries. However, largely ignorant of the complexities and nuances of the Minangkabau religious milieu, the invading armies at first displayed little capacity for distinguishing the followers of Tuanku nan Tua from any of the other more hostile factions.¹⁰⁴ The existence of this orthodox group thus initially had remained invisible.

Despite this lack of foreknowledge about Tuanku nan Tua, his followers would quickly make their presence felt to the Dutch. Incalculable violence had already been visited upon Tua by adversaries such as Tuanku nan Rinceh, including the sacking of his *surau* school and the death of two of his sons. Given such brutality, it should not be surprising that Tuanku nan Tua would put aside any religious doubts about these non-Muslims. By September of 1822, emissaries of Tuanku nan Tua had established contact with Lt. Col. Raaff, swearing loyalty to the Dutch cause and communicating a desire to assist their military campaign. Although the colonial officers initially expressed some skepticism of these offers, events eventually confirmed the veracity of some of Tua's intelligence about the movements of Imam Bonjol. Thus, while too late for the 1822 campaign, the Dutch grew to consider Tua a reliable ally.¹⁰⁵

The writings of one of Tuanku nan Tua's former students, most loyal acolyte, and likely son, Shaykh Jalal al-Din Ahmad Samiang, attested to this enthusiasm for cooperation with the Dutch.¹⁰⁶ In a Jawi language manuscript written in Arabic script, Shaykh Jalal al-Din, who had

¹⁰³ Ibid., 144.

¹⁰⁴ Kathirithamby-Wells, "The Origin of the Term Padri," 6.

¹⁰⁵ E.B. Kielstra, "Sumatra's Westkust van 1819-25," *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 36 (1887): 64.

¹⁰⁶ There is a fair degree of ambiguity on the precise nature of the relationship between Tuanku Nan Tua and Shaykh Jalal al-Din Ahmad Samiang (alternately referred to as Fakih Saghir). However, at least one scholar based in Malaysia, Hafiz Zakariya, asserts that Jalal al-Din is Tuanku nan Tua's son. See Hafiz Zakariya and Mohd Afandi Salleh, "From Makkah to Bukit Kamang?: The Moderate versus Radical Reforms in West Sumatra (ca. 1784-1819)," *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 1, no. 14 (October 2011): 198.

developed a well-regarded scholarly reputation and seen his own school burned to the ground by followers of Tuanku nan Rinceh, traces the genealogy of the conflicts rending the Muslim community of West Sumatra.¹⁰⁷ For much of the text, Jalal al-Din concentrates on expounding the theological basis of this rift between Tuanku nan Tua and Tuanku nan Rinceh, while at the same time advancing a polemical argument on behalf of Tua's position of spreading the *shari'a* Islamic law through peaceful means rather than violence. At the end of the manuscript, however, Jalal al-Din devotes several pages to the arrival of the *Orang Kompeni*, which literally means "Company Men," a term denoting the Dutch left over from the days of the Dutch East Indies Company. Instead of execrating these invaders as *kafir* interlopers attempting to impose a blasphemous way of life on the region, Jalal al-Din instead lauded the Dutch as saviors from the misguided errors of Tuanku nan Rinceh.¹⁰⁸ In sum, Jalal al-Din believed that the Dutch could help rescue Minangkabau Muslims from the excesses of the Padris.

Of course, while it is possible to interpret Jalal al-Din's account as an exaggeration of the desire of Tuanku nan Tua for peace and as a sort of retrospective theological apologetic for his actions during the war, as does one prominent historian, such an interpretation in no way contradicts the evidence of an enduring alliance between the Dutch and Tuanku nan Tua's camp.¹⁰⁹ During the initial encounter of 1822, when the followers of Tua and the Dutch met each other for only first time and needed to overcome ingrained prejudices to forge a bond of cooperation, this alliance could not yet drive any decisive military victories. By mid-1822, the Dutch had, as already mentioned, pulled back from Agam. However, when colonial army planners decided to launch a more focused attack two years later against the forces of Tuanku

¹⁰⁷ Dobbin, *Islamic Revivalism*, 131.

¹⁰⁸ Kratz & Amir, *Surat Keterangan Syekh Jalaluddin*, 23-25, 43-50.

¹⁰⁹ Laffan, *The Makings of Indonesian Islam*, 42.

nan Rinceh in his mountainous redoubt of Kota Lawang, they received considerable support from the forces of Tuanku nan Tua just to the south, helping to propel them forward into otherwise hostile, Padri-controlled territories. In spite of the fact that Tuanku nan Tua had died earlier that year, the alacrity of his followers played a determinative role in expelling Tuanku nan Rinceh from Agam and forcing him into exile in Alahan Panjang.¹¹⁰

Perhaps even more significant than this military support, however, was the political cooperation of Tuanku nan Tua's Muslim followers in the aftermath of the 1825 Treaty with the Padris in 1825. As already discussed, even when they negotiated this temporary cease-fire, the Dutch already grasped the untrustworthiness of both the principal Padri signatories and the ineffectuality of the royal family of Pagarruyung. If the Dutch hoped to maintain a strategic advantage over the recalcitrant Padris in Alahan Panjang, they would need to consolidate their recent gains to the south in Agam, the territory under their influence nearest to Bonjol's encampment. The most obvious path for entrenching colonial rule lied with their most stalwart Muslim ally, the followers of Tuanku nan Tua. Thus, when Resident de Stuers sought to organize the administration of their new possessions in Agam, he did not turn to scions of the adat lineage system, the *penghulu*. Instead, he appointed the nephew of Tuanku nan Tua, Tuanku Samit, to the newly created position of Regent of Agam. This move officially incorporated the family of West Sumatra's leading Shattariyya Islamic scholar into the emerging apparatus of colonial rule.¹¹¹

Noteworthy in this burgeoning alliance with Tuanku nan Tua was also a grudging recognition that the religion of Islam itself did not constitute a source of intrinsic and implacable opposition to Dutch influence. Colonial discourses attendant with the process of war-making in

¹¹⁰ Dobbin, *Islamic Revivalism*, 144.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 152.

West Sumatra, of course, contained all the predictable tropes of religious fanaticism, savagery, and barbarism. However, while the proclivities of early nineteenth century Dutchmen perhaps militated against any ecumenical outlook, the growing collaboration with Tuanku nan Tua did at least inspire a more pragmatic understanding of working with devout Muslims. By 1826, several colonial officials hinted directly and indirectly at these benefits. In a report surveying conditions in West Sumatra, for example, Resident De Stuers explicitly cited the “great piety” of Tuanku nan Tua’s nephew, and the fact that he “followed the laws of the Padri,” as a primary qualification for his ascension to the position of Regent of Agam.¹¹² As such, De Stuers believed, this relative of Tuanku nan Tua could appeal to people of the Padri persuasion and help defuse animosity toward the Dutch. Meanwhile, an officer in the colonial military, one H.G. Nahuijs, recounted a visit to the *Tuanku* of Candung in which the learned *ulama* kept a letter from the Dutch Governor General reverently tucked inside his holy Qur’an.¹¹³ For Nahuijs, this episode symbolized the potential of the Qur’an not only to fuel opposition, but also to consecrate a working alliance with colonial forces.

By securing the active cooperation of one faction of devout Minangkabau Muslims represented by Tuanku nan Tua, and the temporary acquiescence of another faction, embodied by Tuanku nan Rinceh and Imam Bonjol, the Dutch could finally turn away from active combat to the task of reinforcing their precarious strategic position in West Sumatra. Since the outbreak of hostilities in 1821, military commanders had barely been able to satisfy the minimum requirements of war-making. Besides the already stated dearth of European soldiers, which remained acute even as late as 1826, the Dutch strained even to transport or house the soldiers

¹¹² H.J.J.L. Ridder de Stuers to Governor General of the Netherlands Indies, 16 May 1826, entry 523, MK 1814-1849, code toegang 2.10.01, NNA, The Hague, the Netherlands.

¹¹³ H.G. Nahuijs, *Brieven over Bencoolen, Padang, Het Rijk van Menangkabau, Rhiouw, Sincapoera en Poelo-Pinang* (Breda: F.B. Hollingerus Pijpers, 1826), 174.

they did have.¹¹⁴ However, the signing of the armistice with the Padris, inclusion of Tuanku nan Tua's family in administration, and subsequent abatement of resistance allowed the Dutch to begin addressing these shortcomings. In addition to a network of small garrisons, usually located adjacent to indigenous villages for purposes of surveillance, the army also constructed some formidable centralized encampments in the highlands. In Tanah Datar, for example, in 1825 the Dutch constructed Fort van der Cappelen on a hillside adjacent to the old capital of Pagarruyung and designated it as capital of the interior highlands. Of even greater strategic significance was the construction of Fort de Kock on a commanding hillside at the center of the tempestuous region of Agam in 1827. From here, Dutch troops could survey most of the neighboring countryside, including large swaths that had been previously under Padri control. In addition, the army also accelerated the process of road-construction, which had already been underway since the very beginning of the war efforts in 1821. As a result, the transportation network continued to expand through much of Agam.¹¹⁵

Through this two-pronged strategy of cooperation and fortification, Resident De Stuers achieved a prolonged cessation of hostilities to the core territories of Agam and Tanah Datar. In the four years following the peace treaty of 1825, the Dutch waged no battles of consequence and instead focused on defending the territories they already possessed.¹¹⁶ The acolytes of Tuanku nan Tua, if not exactly approving of the presence of a non-Muslim interlopers, nonetheless showed every sign of accepting colonial forces as a necessary counterweight to the most zealous of their co-religionists. Meanwhile, the most fearsome antagonists of the Dutch, Tuanku nan Rinceh and Tuanku Lintau, now displaced, could do little to mobilize followers into

¹¹⁴ Teitler, *Op het Koloniale Oorlogspad*, 44-45.

¹¹⁵ Dobbin, *Islamic Revivalism*, 152-154.

¹¹⁶ Teitler, *Op het Koloniale Oorlogspad*, 57.

battle and posed little direct threat to Dutch positions. By 1833, both of them were dead, Tuanku nan Rinceh by natural causes and Tuanku Lintau, reportedly, at the hands of one of his own, more “moderate” followers.¹¹⁷ Moreover, the very object that drew the Dutch into the Minangkabau heartlands in the first place, trade, began to flourish as coffee receipts in coastal ports increased dramatically and thriving markets took root in the shadow of Dutch fortifications at Fort de Kock and Fort de Cappelen.¹¹⁸ Calm by and large prevailed in the region.

Overreach, correction, and the durability of cooperation in the Padri War

In spite of this clam in Tanah Datar and Agam, the ineluctable logic of colonial expansion eventually lured the Dutch out of their defensive posture further into the surrounding hinterlands, and eventually some of the most grueling military experiences of the entire war. With the promotion of Resident De Stuers to the position of Chief of the General Staff of the entire Royal Netherlands Indies Army in 1829, a more impatient Resident, one H. MacGillavery, arrived on the scene. In contrast to De Stuers, MacGillavery asserted his belief that the Padris would never renounce their aim of expelling colonial *kafir* from the Highlands, and he fixated on potential threats from outside the sphere of Dutch influence to the north of Agam. Moreover, this new resident also expressed reservations about one of the pillars of colonial success in the region: cooperation with receptive Muslims. Rather than seeing payment of *hajjis* as a necessary price for peace, MacGillavery attributed such demands to malign motivations.¹¹⁹ Given these perceived threats from without and within, the Resident slowly advanced his troops north of the army’s furthestmost perimeter of forts to engage in several battles on the borderlands between

¹¹⁷ Dobbin, *Islamic Revivalism*, 149.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 153.

¹¹⁹ Teitler, *Op het Koloniale Oorlogspad*, 57-59.

Agam and Alahan Panjang.¹²⁰ While these moves initially proved successful, it also thrust the Dutch into their perhaps most infamous encounter, war with Imam Bonjol.

Of all the leaders of the Padri movement, none has been as extensively mythologized as Imam Bonjol—a mythology that, in many respects, outstrips his actual role in the conduct of the Padri War. In the collective historical memory of Indonesia, Imam Bonjol would eventually emerge not only as the embodiment of religious opposition in this specific military encounter, but as the very progenitor of anti-colonial resistance and nationalistic patriotism for all Indonesia, a national hero emblazoned on one of the most commonly used banknotes in Indonesian currency.¹²¹ This mythologizing of Imam Bonjol, much of which can be attributed to later twentieth century politics, is not entirely baseless. Drawing inspiration from the strict ideology of Islamic expansion advocated by people such as Tuanku nan Rinceh and Tuanku Lintau, Bonjol from the very outset played a key supporting role in their battles against the Dutch.¹²² However, as military defeats piled up and his confederates acquiesced to a truce, Bonjol withdrew from colonial controlled areas and instead concentrated on solidifying his own networks. In particular, he waged wars of plunder against the non-Christian animist Batak peoples further still to the north, seizing many of them as slaves, while at the same time cultivating trade through adjacent coastal areas.¹²³ While these networks helped maintain Bonjol's position as the most formidable opponent of Dutch efforts in the region, subsequent events would still reveal a much more complicated story than that told in nationalist mythmaking.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 59-60.

¹²¹ Jeffery Hadler, "A Historiography of Violence and the Secular State in Indonesia: Tuanku Imam Bondjol and the Uses of History," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 67, no. 3 (August 2008): 974-975.

¹²² For example, Bonjol sent followers to fight in Agam and lead a last-ditch charge at Kapau Mountain in 1825 against the recent gains of colonial troops. See Teitler, *Op het Koloniale Oorlogspad*, 49.

¹²³ Dobbin, *Islamic Revivalism*, 178.

Provoked by MacGillavery's sallies to the north both inland and along the coast, in 1831 Imam Bonjol would mobilize nearly 5,000 followers from Alahan Panjang to launch his first attack against the Dutch in nearly six years. Bonjol's surprise assault upon Air Bangis, a coastal garrison well to the north of Pariaman and adjacent to the highland Alahan Panjang valley, resulted in the death of two-thirds of the Dutch contingent.¹²⁴ However, these vertiginous triumphs would prove fleeting. Although MacGillavery had departed from West Sumatra by the end of 1830, his successor as Resident, C.P.J. Elout, had begun to muster a rejoinder to Bonjol's actions. With significant reinforcements now available after the close of the Java War in 1830, Elout mounted a massive counterattack in December 1831, barraging Bonjol's position from both sea and land and expelling his armies from the coast by January of 1832. By March of 1832, these offensives forced the Imam to once again turn back. With his counterparts dying or defeated, and Agam still within the grasp of the colonizers, Bonjol found himself isolated in the face of the oncoming Dutch onslaught.¹²⁵

Just as the colonial army raced towards Bonjol's Alahan Panjang stronghold, this Padri leader also confronted another crisis within his own Muslim community. At this moment, Padri religious fervor apparently slackened, and within months, Bonjol went into exile in the valley of Rao to the north.¹²⁶ Much of the particulars of this extraordinary turnaround remain unclear. A posthumous manuscript about Imam Bonjol's life written by his son, the *Naskah Tuanku Imam Bonjol*, attributes the sudden rejection of Padri teachings to the return of four *hajjis*, who reported that Salafi teachings had fallen out of favor in Mecca and that their own efforts to

¹²⁴ J.C. Boelhouwer, *Herinneringen van Mijn Verblijf op Sumatra's Westkust, Gedurende de Jaren 1831-1834* ('S Gravenhage: De Erven Doorman, 1841), 19-21.

¹²⁵ Lt. Col. Andreas Michiels to Lt. Col. Cornelis PJ Elout, 6 February 1832, entry 852, MK 1814-1849, code toegang: 2.10.01, NNA.

¹²⁶ De Stuers, *De Vestiging en Uitbreiding*, 226-7.

impose *shari'a* law had been wrongheaded. According to the manuscript, news of this error humbled Bonjol and led him to disavow any further intervention in the affairs of the *adat* authorities. As a result, Bonjol went into exile of his own volition, almost as an act of expiation for his wrongdoings. Another interpretation—one perhaps less flattering to Bonjol—suggests that his followers sensed the impending arrival of Dutch troops and thus expelled Bonjol in an attempt stave off utter destruction. Irrespective of which scenario more closely approximated historical events, however, the ultimate outcome is not in doubt: Bonjol departed, while three leading *penghulu* personally surrendered in September 1832 and invited colonial soldiers to enter the town. A few months later, Resident Elout sought to re-enact the template of collaboration followed earlier in Agam with Tuanku nan Tua, persuading Imam Bonjol's chief lieutenant, Tuanku Muda, to join the Dutch regime as Regent of Alahan Panjang. Peace and order, or *rust and orde* as the Dutch said, seemed at hand.¹²⁷

In the short term, however, the September 1832 conquest of Bonjol would prove illusory, ushering in the gravest challenge to date against the regime of collaboration established by the Dutch in 1825. It might have seemed that the incorporation of Imam Bonjol's chief lieutenant, Tuanku Muda, into the colonial ruling establishment would presage a period of stability akin to that in Tanah Datar and Agam following 1825. However, events proved just the opposite. Perhaps feeling emboldened by a string of military victories and the rapidly increasing number of troops at their disposal, the Dutch military adopted several provocative tactics. For example, they opted to permanently garrison troops within Bonjol village itself in express violation of the terms they negotiated at the outset. Meanwhile, at the same time as they emancipated the non-Muslim Batak slaves held by many Minangkabau in the region, thus upsetting the labor arrangements

¹²⁷ Hadler, "Historiography of Violence and the Secular State," 983-986.

vital to the regional economy, the Dutch also conscripted many locals for the construction of new roads. Compounding these affronts, the Dutch increasingly reduced the perquisites of their indigenous officials; intervened in the production of coffee; and perhaps most offensive of all, quartered their troops in village mosques.¹²⁸

In 1833 stress on collaborative bonds and the rampant dissatisfaction found throughout West Sumatra would give rise to a rebellion of unprecedented proportions. The most spectacular and infamous episode of this struggle, of course, transpired at Bonjol. In response to the abuses of Dutch soldiers after their initial conquest, an unprecedented cross-section of villagers from Imam Bonjol's hometown, including adherents of the orthodox Padri ideology as well as traditionally hostile *penghulu* from the *adat* elite, coalesced around his leadership for a surprise attack on the Dutch only four months after their initial conquest. This assault waylaid the colonial troops and resulted in the annihilation of some 139 men, the single biggest loss of the entire war.¹²⁹ Moreover, the Bonjol raid itself also attested to common grievances among the Minangkabau people and reverberated well beyond Alahan Panjang's borders. Five months after the Bonjol raid, in May of 1833, rebellions flared across the breadth of the Minangkabau highlands. Often times the fiercest battles raged in the regions with histories of Padri resistance such as the Bukit Kamang homeland of Tuanku nan Rinceh.¹³⁰

More distressing still were the challenges that arose in quarters hitherto deemed friendly to Dutch interests and seemed to strike at the core of the system of collaboration had been elaborating for many years. The most stalwart defenders of Dutch intervention, the royal family at Pagarruyung, began to waver for the first time. Perhaps offended by the incessant colonial

¹²⁸ Dobbin, *Islamic Revivalism*, 196-7.

¹²⁹ H.M. Lange, *Het Nederlandsch Oost-Indisch Leger ter Westkust van Sumatra (1819-1845)*, vol. 1 ('S Hertogenbosch: Gebroeders Muller, 1852), 331-332.

¹³⁰ Lange, *Het Nederlandsch Oost-Indisch Leger*, 316-17; De Stuers, *Vestiging*, 197-199.

belittlements and denigrations of his family's influence over the Minangkabau population, the Regent of Tanah Datar, one Sultan Alam Bagagar Syah, lent his support to a conspiracy against Dutch. Beyond Tanah Datar and the royal family, at least one ally in another bastion of cooperation, the pious region of Kota Tua in southern Agam, similarly betrayed his Dutch benefactors by giving intelligence on colonial plans and movements to Padri militants in the region. As a result, in May of 1833 the colonial army endured stunning setbacks in the vicinity of southern Agam.¹³¹

In the end, however, cooperative bonds with Muslim Minangkabau society proved resilient. In contrast to the defection of Sultan Alam Bagagar Syah, the Dutch managed to retain the loyalty of another lesser royal then serving as the Regent of Batipo. This collaborator helped Dutch authorities to track down Sultan Syah and also worked to tamp down any nascent currents of unrest, thus sparing Tanah Datar from the significant outbreaks of violence that afflicted other areas of the Highlands. Beyond the royal *adat* faction, the Dutch also remained deft at preserving their connections to the most devout elements of the Muslim milieu. In addition to the unstinting fidelity of the Regent of Agam, a member of the family of Tuanku Tua, the Dutch cultivated relationships with other new religious scholars such as Tuanku Halaban of Tanah Datar and Tuanku nan Cedok of the Limapuluh Kota valley. Colonial officials obtained their fealty not merely by devising new "Regencies" over which they could rule, but also by permitting them to administer their domains according to the strict interpretation of Islamic law most associated with Padris. Thus, even amidst the worst paroxysms of violence in eight years, Dutch authorities continued to demonstrate flexibility vis-à-vis Islam.¹³²

¹³¹ Dobbin, *Islamic Revivalism*, 199-203.

¹³² De Stuers, *Vestiging*, 200, 220.

Through their ongoing appeal to Muslim Minangkabau, colonial soldiers splintered the local community and consequently, in little more than a month, succeeded in suppressing the most serious threats to their rule. Even before the fighting began, the Dutch had already poured new resources and soldiers into the region, a contingency itself made possible by the eight years of collaboration and security before 1833. With their fighting capacity enhanced, the colonial army was well-prepared for the outbreak of hostilities in May 1833. Indeed, military officials dispatched soldiers from new forts like Fort van der Cappelen and Fort de Kock to the areas under the control of friendly allies such as the Regents of Batipuh and Agam. Here, the Dutch army possessed a relatively secure base from which to barrage more hostile ones. Thus, soldiers from Batipuh in Tanah Datar speedily defeated the forces of the royal family in the vicinity of a town named Buo, while in Agam troops massed in the precincts of Kota Tua could march to the obdurate areas of Bukit Kamang further to the north. Despite the fact that rebel forces swelled to as many 20,000 persons in northern Agam at one point, the Dutch army nonetheless vanquished their foes within one month and restored order to almost all of Agam and Tanah Datar. Some residual restiveness notwithstanding, this peace would hold in the months and years to come, with only a single minor case of revolt recorded in these core regions in 1835.¹³³

The swift reversal of rebel fortunes in the core regions of West Sumatra thus left the one last rebel holdout, Imam Bonjol, isolated and in an untenable position. Many of the myth-making hagiographies of this Padri rebel emphasize the difficulties the Dutch had in overcoming him.¹³⁴ One cannot deny that Bonjol endured for another four years in a remote, rugged, and difficult to reach corner of Alahan Panjang. However, severed from the heartlands of Minangkabau further to the south and partially encircled by colonial troops, Bonjol no longer posed a substantial threat

¹³³ Dobbin, *Islamic Revivalism*, 203-5.

¹³⁴ Hadler, "Historiography of Violence and the Secular State," 973.

to the Dutch regime.¹³⁵ Subjected to relentless shelling and dwindling food supplies, the Bonjol population had plummeted to only 80 persons by June 1837. In August 1837, troops finally seized the fort, but Imam Bonjol himself had managed to slip out to hide in the forests even further to the north for a few more months. The Dutch eventually tracked Bonjol down and sent him into exile in Java and Ambon, where he would die. The war against the Dutch in West Sumatra had finally reached its end.¹³⁶

Despite the expulsion of Tuanku Imam Bonjol from West Sumatra, which deprived him of his stated wish to die quietly near home, the final resolution he signed furnished yet one more example of the absorptive, collaborationist logic that guided the Dutch throughout their campaign of conquest. While insufficiently magnanimous to absolve the Tuanku himself, the Dutch not only agreed to forgive his son and fellow fighter, Naali Sutan Caniago, but also to appoint him as an administrator in the colonial regime.¹³⁷ With this settlement, Tuanku Imam Bonjol finally submitted. In the years that followed, Naali Sutan Caniago enjoyed the freedom to visit his father in Ambon and also became embedded within the Dutch system of administration, serving the colonial government well into the 1870s.¹³⁸ Much as conciliation with figures like Tuanku nan Tua before him had helped the Dutch defuse the worst violence of the Padri War, the incorporation of both Tua's nephew and Caniago into the local administration helped lay the foundation for a durable system of colonial government in the decades ahead.

The emphasis on collaboration and alliance presented here does much to rework our understandings of the Padri War. Rather than a long, constant, almost Manichean contest between the forces of Empire and Islam, the lens of collaboration recasts it as a mix of sporadic

¹³⁵ Dobbin, *Islamic Revivalism*, 206-8.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 205-208.

¹³⁷ Hadler, "Historiography of Violence and the Secular State," 992-3.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 985.

clashes and shifting alliances, as a long process of negotiation between diverse groups with their own distinct aims, agendas, and agency. The argument that Muslim Minangkabau cooperated with Dutch interlocutors, of course, does not mean that they completely submitted to the colonial project or betrayed their own co-religionists. Constant colonial concerns over the reliability of their partners are suggestive of the fact that the Minangkabau continued to operate quite independently of the Dutch. Likewise, the reality of cooperation should not be misinterpreted as a sign of some sort of noble, pluralistic high-mindedness on the part of the colonial invaders. The Dutch worked with Muslims because of their own weakness and because they had little other choice. The apparent strengthening of the colonial position by 1830, in fact, was precisely what inspired overconfidence among the colonial military establishment and lured them in 1833 into a new round of fierce war-making. However, the divisions within Minangkabau society and the precariousness of the Dutch would, paradoxically, produce a durable framework of cooperation. This pattern would play the pivotal role in mitigating violence and enabling the Dutch to establish their first viable colonial regime outside of Java. Yet, once the colonial position had been bolstered and a clear beachhead established, would war-making continue to follow this relatively manageable pattern? To answer this question, it is now necessary to turn our attention to the other momentous conflict of the long Sumatran nineteenth century: the Dutch-Aceh War.

Aceh and the advent of the imperial age

If the Padri War unfolded under the penumbra of metropolitan indifference and disinterest, remote from the thoughts of most Dutch citizens and policy-makers alike, the Aceh War, by contrast, immediately found itself exposed to the blinding light of the imperial manias of the late nineteenth century. At the outset of the Dutch campaigns in West Sumatra, the

Netherlands had endured a series of weighty ordeals, including a long-term occupation by Napoleonic France and threats to its own territorial integrity from Belgian separatists.¹³⁹ Against the backdrop of turmoil at home, events in distant Sumatra, which appeared as little more than the repetition of countless VOC campaigns to enlarge its commercial ambit, barely registered in the metropolitan consciousness. By contrast, Dutch newspapers covered every detail of the invasion of Aceh beginning in 1873 with rapt attention. At the cusp of the infamous “Scramble for Colonies” in Africa and with brinkmanship over control of Southeast Asia intensifying, especially in relation to the British, Sumatran matters would for the first resonate far beyond a handful of merchants and soldiers. Aceh came to epitomize the larger pursuit of national glory, a test of Dutch strength in the arena of imperial conquest that would redound to its status as a major European power. Indeed, when reports of the capture of the Acehnese Sultan’s palace in 1874 reached the Netherlands, a torrent of patriotic energy pulsed throughout the country, with spontaneous demonstrations erupting in all major cities and Dutch flags being hung in homes even in quiet rural areas.¹⁴⁰ Likewise, news of setbacks emitted throbs of despair through the metropole and criticism of Dutch military strategy. The very honor of the Netherlands, it seemed, rode on the crests of victory and the troughs of defeat in Aceh.

This emotional investment in the fate of Acehnese, of course, invites questions about how such prominence and visibility affected the process of war-making. With national prestige in question, could military commanders take the necessary decisions to pursue engagement and cooperation with local Muslims where necessary, as they had in West Sumatra? Or, did the collective commitment to the war in Aceh demand a more dramatic triumph worthy of national esteem? Could the emerging imperialist mindset perhaps even color the assessment of Dutch

¹³⁹ Dobbin, *Islamic Revivalism*, 61-63.

¹⁴⁰ Kuitenbrouwer, *The Netherlands and the Rise of Modern Imperialism*, 104.

officers themselves, engendering a misplaced belief in their own military superiority and hence leading to blunders and tactical mishaps on the battlefield? These questions are central to understanding the long, three decade trajectory of the Dutch-Aceh War.

Dutch colonial interest in Aceh, albeit an interest limited mainly to a small number of government officials and Indies traders, can be traced back well before the 1870s all the way to the time of the Padri Wars. Throughout their military engagements in West Sumatra, colonial officers repeatedly fretted over Acehnese piracy off the Sumatran coast and potential alliances between the Acehnese and Minangkabau *ulama* such as Tuanku Imam Bonjol. These concerns buttressed the belief among the colonial establishment that Aceh comprised a den of lawlessness inimical to their interests in the region.¹⁴¹ Moreover, whatever the actual threat level posed by Aceh, this region also soon became an insult against Dutch national pride as a result of British machinations. Much to the chagrin of the Dutch, the leading British plenipotentiary in region, Sir Thomas Raffles, negotiated a treaty in 1819 recognizing the sovereignty of the Acehnese Sultanate in exchange for preferential trading privileges at its ports. Five years later, the British government in London responded to the strident objections of the Dutch and partially reversed course, agreeing to accept Dutch claims over Sumatra in exchange for recognition of India and the Malay Peninsula as British possessions. Yet, this treaty still contained one key exception: Aceh would remain a neutral, sovereign territory free of direct Dutch intervention. This proviso would remain a source of tension for decades afterward, seemingly making a mockery of the Netherland's dominion over Sumatra Island.¹⁴²

In spite of this long, troubled history with Aceh, developments in the decades following the Padri War did not appear at all suggestive of the lasting import this region would assume in

¹⁴¹ Dobbin, *Islamic Revivalism*, 164-167.

¹⁴² Lee, "Aceh at the Time of the 1824 Treaty," 87-91.

the collective consciousness in the 1870s and later. Whatever concerns on-the-spot official in Sumatra voiced over piracy from Aceh, the colonial establishment in Batavia and The Hague evinced little appetite for further military adventures in the region. The massive costs incurred not only during the Padri War, but also the contemporaneous Java War, rendered any new interventions an unpalatable prospect. Along these lines, Governor General Jean Claude Baud instituted a new policy of “abstention” at the end of the Padri War, which essentially consisted of a retrenchment of Dutch involvement in Southeast Asia to Java and a renunciation, at least for the time being, of offensive campaigns of conquest in the so-called *Buitenbezittingen*, or Outer Islands.¹⁴³ Instead, administrators could concentrate on developing the revenues from the cultivation of sugar in Java, known as the “Cultivation System,” and paying back the debts contracted from previous wars. Revenues from this system soon skyrocketed, amounting to a third of the entire budget of the metropolitan Dutch state, and frugal administrators in The Hague manifested little proclivity to re-direct this windfall to massive wars of conquest. In this atmosphere, intervention against Aceh ranked exceedingly low on the colonial hierarchy of priorities.¹⁴⁴

However, even as prominent colonial officials hewed, in rhetoric at least, to the tenets of “abstention,” military expansion nonetheless continued unabated. Dutch officials understood that to impose order in Java, safeguard their lucrative source of sugar revenue, and defend the island from external menaces, they would need to maintain a substantial military presence. Thus, after a brief drawdown in the later 1830s, army planners oversaw a rebound of Dutch force levels in the 1840s back to the levels seen at the height of the Java War, including nearly 21,000 troops, 8,400

¹⁴³ Elsbeth Locher-Scholten, “Imperialism after the Great Wave: The Dutch Case in the Netherlands East Indies, 1860-1914,” in *Liberal Imperialism in Europe*, ed. Matthew P. Fitzpatrick (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012), 29.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 27.

of them European and 12,000 Indonesian.¹⁴⁵ Subsequent increases during the 1850s would translate into an additional 40 percent expansion in the size of the Indies Army.¹⁴⁶ While hardly sufficient to police a sprawling archipelago, these figures nonetheless represented a dramatic escalation of peacetime military capacity. Along with troop strength, colonial military planners also moved to remedy one of the principal shortcomings of the Padri War: inadequate naval capacity. Recognizing that a lack of ships had hindered their ability to transport troops from Java to other islands, the Dutch made a significant investment in their steamship fleet. These nimble, yet formidable, ships could dart between islands at record speed and navigate inland rivers all while carrying large contingents of soldier and providing ample firepower to overwhelm indigenous resisters. The presence of these ships after the 1840s helped to bolster Dutch communications lines between various islands and to bombard coastal defenses. With the ramping up of force capacity and steamship fleets, the Colonial Army appeared more deeply entrenched in Indonesian soil than ever before.¹⁴⁷

The enhanced military presence in Indonesia belied that stated policy of “abstention” and, over time, enmeshed the Netherlands East Indies government in an ever-expanding panoply of expeditions and engagements throughout the Archipelago. By the late 1840s, Baud’s successor as Governor General, W.F. Rochussen, could not resist the temptation to respond to a perceived affront from several Balinese princes, who refused to recognize Dutch supremacy, and dispatched an expedition to punish them in 1846. The logic of this initial intervention soon spiraled, necessitating two further campaigns in 1848 and 49 and peaking with a commitment of 7,500 troops in March of 1849. Elsewhere in Borneo in the 1850s, intrigues between Dutch

¹⁴⁵ J.A. de Moor, “Warmakers in the Archipelago: Dutch Expeditions in Nineteenth Century Indonesia,” *Imperialism and War: Essays on Colonial Wars*, eds. J.A. de Moor and H.L. Wesseling (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1989), 55.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 61

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 62-3.

merchants, Chinese mining interests, British interlopers from Sawarak, and local sultanates would draw the Indies Army into a sustained operation, which came to be known as the “Kongsi War” after the Chinese mine owners.¹⁴⁸ Other encounters proliferated from the kingdom of Bone in Southeast Sulawesi to Nias in Sumatra, and not a single year elapsed without at least one military intervention in the Outer Islands.¹⁴⁹ Although authorities in The Hague did attempt to adhere to their policy of “abstention,” constraining their subordinates where possible and mandating that officers restrict themselves to defensive measures such as the guarding of a fort, the offensive impulse continued to gather momentum throughout the East Indies.

With a reinvigorated military presence and a pent-up strain of aggressiveness bubbling to the surface in many quarters of the colonial establishment, it did not take too long for the Dutch to revisit one of their earliest sources of vexation in the archipelago: Aceh. By the 1860s, the estimation of the strategic, military, and economic value of this region among colonial policymakers had only grown. The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 ensured that the Acehnese kingdom now sat astride a sea lane of exponentially expanding value, as traders, naval vessels, and travelers between Asia and Europe would have added impetus to try to traverse the Straits of Malacca. Likewise, the burgeoning cultivation of tobacco and other cash crops not far from Aceh in the vicinity of the Sumatran east coast beckoned Dutch economic planners, promising a substantial windfall if colonial planters could penetrate further into Acehnese territory. In this context, it is not surprising that two Dutch Colonial Ministers, E. de Waal and P.P. van Bosse abandoned any lingering attachment to the “abstention” policy and pursued an aggressive tack toward Aceh. Indeed, these Ministers applied extensive pressure both to their superiors in Dutch Government and to colonial rulers in the British Straits Settlement, militating for a renunciation

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 55-62.

¹⁴⁹ Locher-Scholten, “Imperialism after the Great Wave,” 29.

of Britain's commitment to defend Acehnese sovereignty. The British themselves retained little interest in occupying any further territory at this point, and these efforts would soon reap dividends for the Dutch. In 1871, the Netherlands and Britain struck a deal, soon christened the Sumatra Treaty, which effectively conceded Aceh to the Dutch sphere of influence in return for the promise of the free trade in Sumatran ports and the cession of their small African holdings in the Gold Coast area.¹⁵⁰

While the Sumatra Treaty represented an important breakthrough in the seemingly endless series of maneuvers between Britain and the Netherlands for dominance in colonial Southeast Asia, it also marked a departure from the old way of conducting colonial politics in another important sense: it crystallized public interest among the Dutch in Aceh and a burgeoning sense of imperial entitlement in the metropole. For many decades colonial policy-making in Sumatra had been the preserve of a small coterie of officials. In the case of the Padri War, for example, the decision-making process belonged to the Ministry of Colonies in The Hague, the Dutch East Indies Army, and a handful of civil servants on the spot such as the Resident; oversight from metropolitan politicians was slight and public concern even slighter. By the 1860s, however, the advent of a democratic public sphere in the Netherlands, most notably in the form of a more empowered parliament and an expanding print media, gradually began to wrest colonial decision-making from these tight networks of soldiers and administrators.

This heightened public profile came to the fore in the negotiations over the Sumatra Treaty, which hinged to an unprecedented extent upon parliamentary approval. To secure the votes of conservative members, who opposed the cession of Dutch lands in the African Gold Coast that had been included to appease the British, as well as excessive concessions in the

¹⁵⁰ Anthony Reid, *The Contest for North Sumatra*, 60-73.

sphere of tariffs and fair trade in the Indies, the Liberal Party government needed to do more than simply extract more sweeteners from the British.¹⁵¹ They also had to appeal to public opinion.¹⁵² The blossoming newspapers and print media industry—largely absent or in their infancy at the time of the Padri War—furnished a medium for doing just that. In the case of the Sumatra Treaty, the Liberal Party called their own partisan press into action to mobilize support for the treaty, dismissing the concerns of some Conservatives as parochial and invoking the greater glory of the Netherlands. The *Arnhemsche Courant*, for the most part aligned with the Dutch Liberal Party, declared that “Sumatra must become what Java has already become for us—an area that has undeniably and entirely been made subject to our rule, and this must become obvious to the whole world.”¹⁵³ Popular politics and the mass media thus demonstrated a striking synergy, as elected leaders could rely on the press to communicate their broader message while newspapers could increase sales with jingoistic accounts of national exploits, a hallmark of the imperial age. With these larger dynamics of popular mobilization in place, comparatively trivial arguments about tariffs stood little chance and the Sumatra Treaty sailed through the Parliament by large margins.

The entanglement of colonial decision-making in the democratic public sphere of the Netherlands would have serious implications for the course of events in Aceh. For example, whereas colonial powers had hitherto negotiated their treaties and agreements clandestinely, preserving a degree of plausible deniability, the open airing of debates on the Sumatra Treaty laid bare the expansionary intentions of the Dutch state for all to see, including the Acehnese themselves. From since the time of the Padri War, the Sultan of Aceh had been acutely aware of

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 71.

¹⁵² Kuitenbrouwer, *The Netherlands and the Rise of Modern Imperialism*, 89.

¹⁵³ *Arnhemsche Courant*, 22 April 1872, quoted in Kuitenbrouwer, *The Netherlands and the Rise of Modern Imperialism*, 91.

the danger posed by the Dutch colonial forces, sending plaintive missives to American merchants about the conquests in West Sumatra and making entreaties to their fellow Muslim brethren in the Ottoman Empire for protection.¹⁵⁴ The open signing of Sumatra Treaty seemed to confirm the worst of these fears, telegraphing a new era of Dutch bellicosity. Deprived of British protection, the Acehese Sultan decided to redouble its efforts to cultivate new international allies, dispatching emissaries throughout 1872 to meet with Italian, American, and Turkish representatives in Singapore and Constantinople.¹⁵⁵

From there, events spiraled further out of control. In addition to diplomatic cover, the Acehese also requested concrete military aid and invited foreign navies to the dock at their ports. When the British Consul-General in Singapore discovered these machinations in January of 1873 and divulged them to the Dutch Governor General, J. Loudon, warning of “very important intrigues,” the Dutch saw more than Acehese deceitfulness.¹⁵⁶ They also saw intimations of a much larger plot on the part of Russia, Germany, and the United States to strip the Netherlands of their colonial possessions and to divvy up the world between them. In this atmosphere of paranoia and feverish imperial jostling, Loudon dispatched a military expedition to Aceh and issued an ultimatum to the sultan: acknowledge Dutch supremacy within 24 hours or face military invasion. On 26 March 1873, the Dutch declared war. In sum, the public airing of debates over the Sumatra Treaty had unleashed a chain of events culminating in the *casus belli* for the Dutch-Aceh War.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁴ Ismail Hakki Kadi, A.C.S. Peacock, and Annabel Teh Gallop, “Writing History: The Acehese Embassy to Istanbul, 1849-1852,” in *Mapping the Acehese Past*, eds. R. Michael Feener, Patrick Daly, and Anthony Reid, vol. 268, *Verhandelingen van het Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2011), 168.

¹⁵⁵ Reid, *The Contest for North Sumatra*, 119-122, 142-144.

¹⁵⁶ Quoted in Kuitenbrouwer, *The Netherlands and the Rise of Modern Imperialism*, 94.

¹⁵⁷ Kuitenbrouwer, *The Netherlands and the Rise of Modern Imperialism*, 95.

The full import of these public debates, however, goes well beyond the disclosure of information to the Acehnese Sultan and the chain of events that followed; rather, it lies in the changing nature of the relationship between the publics of the Dutch metropole and colonial war-making. Historians have engaged in an extensive argument over the intentions of the Dutch state vis-à-vis Aceh, disagreeing over whether the Sultan's international forays constituted a pretext for a premeditated colonial invasion or an unexpected event that pushed a reluctant metropolitan establishment into war. This dispute misses the larger forces at work beyond the motivations and intentions of individual Dutch officials. The plans of the Governor General and the Colonial Minister notwithstanding, the very public nature of the Sumatra Treaty had already embedded Aceh in the metropolitan consciousness, turning the disposition of this region into a measure of Dutch imperial vigor and a matter of the utmost national concern.¹⁵⁸ Throughout 1872 newspapers breathlessly reported every detail and rumor emanating from the region, and when news of the Sultan's travails leaked, it did not take long for calls to invade Aceh to emerge. The *Arnhemsche Courant* demanded the violent subjugation of the region by January 1873, a full two months before the initial invasion, and members of the Second Chamber of the Dutch parliament commissioned a much-ballyhooed report on Dutch-Acehnese relations from 1824 onwards with a particular emphasis on Aceh's efforts to secure foreign backing. On the other end of the spectrum, humanitarians more skeptical of the imperial project, such as the renowned writer and erstwhile civil servant, Multatuli, had issued dire warnings of war in Aceh in 1872. Aceh's embroilment in metropolitan debates over imperialism did not bode well for a peaceful outcome.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁸ Reid, *The Contest for North Sumatra*, 73.

¹⁵⁹ Kuitenbrouwer, *The Netherlands and the Rise of Modern Imperialism*, 97-98.

Glimpses of how these metropolitan dynamics of pride might upend and transform the conduct of colonial war soon materialized with the initial Acehese skirmish of March 1873. The fact of the expedition itself, composed of 3,000 troops under the leadership of General J.H.R. Kohler, was unremarkable.¹⁶⁰ As discussed earlier, Dutch policy makers routinely employed military force throughout the Indonesian archipelago in the mid nineteenth century. Moreover, even the setbacks experienced by Dutch troops and their repulsion from Acehese territory within less than a month, did not appear that atypical from the perspective of recent military history. In previous expeditions, the gap between the limited resources available to Dutch troops and the impossibly large goals of subjection, produced indeterminate results in which the Dutch would extract nominal concessions while gaining little real power over their foe, or at worst, outright defeat.¹⁶¹

By contrast, the retreat of Dutch forces in the face of stiff Acehese resistance excited an outcry among the metropolitan public. Amplified by the new technology of the telegraph, which transmitted wartime events in the Indies back to Dutch audiences almost simultaneously for the first time, newspapers soon blared with headlines of disaster and defeat. The killing of the expedition commander General Kohler shocked readers, and editorialists began questioning every strategy and maneuver almost in real time. The final decision to withdraw by the end of April 1873 struck an especially grave blow to national pride, reverberating not only in the Dutch media, but also in newspapers across Europe, thus jeopardizing the Netherlands' international reputation as an imperial power. Opinion-makers in the Netherlands fulminated against the unpreparedness of Dutch troops and the disgrace of such a hasty retreat. Politicians soon jumped

¹⁶⁰ C.M. Schulten, "Tactics of the Dutch Colonial Army in the Netherlands East Indies," *Revue Internationale d'Histoire Militaire* 70 (1988): 60.

¹⁶¹ De Moor, "Warmakers in the Archipelago," 56.

into this maelstrom, demanding explanations and calling for a second assault into Aceh to redeem this unacceptable humiliation. Against this backdrop of public recriminations, tactical retreat no longer seemed like a viable option for commanders in the field and officials in the Netherlands would be hard-pressed to resist the mounting pressure for revenge. Within weeks, the colonial establishment began drawing up plans for a second invasion.¹⁶²

This response to the first Aceh expedition exemplifies the dramatically altered calculus of colonial war-making in an imperial age. Subject to increasing oversight from parliamentary representatives, new technologies like the telegraph, and the whims of public opinion, the Royal Dutch Indies Army no longer operated in the shadows of metropolitan ignorance and indifference. Instead, the Dutch nation now called upon them to fulfill a task of central importance to the self-regard and international standing of the imperial state. Indeed, this imperial turn marked a larger transformation in assumptions about what the colonial army could and should achieve in the Indies.¹⁶³ With the public now invested in the outcome of events in Southeast Asia, the colonial state demanded more from the army than preserving the status quo or making territory safe for commerce; they also insisted that the army provide triumphs commensurate with the glory of the Netherlands Empire. The quick abandonment of operations in Aceh—perhaps a viable solution in the old colonial world—no long sufficed. This kingdom must be vanquished. The question then arises: how would the new imperial calculus shape the conduct of the war to come in northern Sumatra?

¹⁶² Kuitenbrouwer, *The Netherlands and the Rise of Modern Imperialism*, 98-101; Reid, *The Contest for North Sumatra*, 144, 162.

¹⁶³ Jeremy Black, *War in the Nineteenth Century: 1800-1914* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009), 4.

Imperial war-making and the fall of the Muslim collaborator

In the wake of the misbegotten initial attack, the Dutch set about assembling a second invasion force of unprecedented size and scope to subjugate Aceh for good. Whereas in the past parsimonious budgets and limited objectives had constrained colonial war-making, depriving the Royal Dutch Indies Army of the resources necessary for waging large operations, the colonial government now spared no expense in their preparations to overawe and overwhelm the enemy into submission. By December of 1873, a mere seven months after the first expedition, the Dutch army mobilized some 8,500 European soldiers and 4,300 indigenous auxiliaries from Europe and Java, while also summoning 1,500 supplemental reserves from their regional base in West Sumatra, the largest such force ever gathered in the Indonesian archipelago.¹⁶⁴ In addition to sheer numbers, the army also made sure to equip its troops with the most technologically advanced weaponry available. Every soldier received a Beaumont breechloading rifle at the cutting edge of firearm technology; simultaneously, the military had also reinforced all of its artillery with 12 cm bronze breech loading pieces. Dutch commanders even dispatched two of its very first machine gun pieces to the battlefield. Given this formidable array of firepower, Governor General Loudon and the military officer put in charge of the assault, General Jan van Swieten, both expressed confidence that they would quickly overpower any remnants of Acehnese resistance. Thus, General van Swieten moved ahead with launching his assault against the capital city of Kutaradja, today known as Banda Aceh, on Christmas Day 1873.¹⁶⁵

For about a month, however, the Acehnese proved more obstreperous than many Dutch anticipated, inciting nervous grumblings in the metropolitan press about the possibility of yet another debacle. Although we lack estimates of the exact size of the local defense, there is no

¹⁶⁴ Reid, *The Contest for North Sumatra*, 110.

¹⁶⁵ Schulten, "Tactics of the Dutch Colonial Army," 61-62.

doubting its massive scale, as Dutch officials in Batavia and Malaya estimated the number of Acehese defenders in Kutaradja at between 10,000 and 100,000 men. The preponderance of these defenders, moreover, traveled from districts well beyond the immediate confines of the Acehese capital, as *ulèëbalang* in the interior Aceh Besar river valley and on the west coast north of Meulaboh joined in the fighting. Therefore, the Dutch struggled mightily to clear the capital city and to dislodge local defenders from the royal enclosure, as the Acehese repelled several of their charges and exacted high casualties on their troops. Within four weeks, colonial forces still had not occupied the *kraton*.¹⁶⁶

This outpouring of resistance provides an object lesson in the symbolic potency of the sultanate, which was discussed earlier in this chapter. Even if the royal family lacked the administrative or bureaucratic apparatus associated with a modern state, or if *ulèëbalang* engaged in petty political chicanery, an assault on the sultan's palace could still rouse the collective ire of a people united by culture, language, and history; indeed, many of the peasant cultivators living in outlying coastal territories actually could trace their family genealogies back to the Aceh Besar heartlands. Thus, news of the initial Dutch expedition resounded throughout the Aceh region and proved capable of inciting a massive mobilization for defense.¹⁶⁷

In spite of this resistance, however, the Dutch finally attained their primary objective on 24 January 1874 seizing the *kraton* and declaring victory over the Acehese forces. This triumph furnished a transitory elixir to sagging spirits at home in the Netherlands, sparking outbursts of patriotism and flag-waving throughout the nation. Yet, this success derived more from the decision of cholera-wracked Acehese defenders to withdraw from the palace grounds and decamp to more strategically advantageous terrain outside the capital city rather than from any

¹⁶⁶ Reid, "The Contest for North Sumatra," 109-111.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 109.

martial brilliance on the part of the invading troops.¹⁶⁸ Locked in the mindset of European warfare, Dutch strategists assumed that the occupation of the capital and the royal palace would translate into Acehnese capitulation and the end of the war. Instead, much to their consternation, no formal act of surrender seemed forthcoming, and attacks against Dutch positions resumed almost immediately. By the time the Dutch secured a perimeter around Kutaraja in April 1874 some 1,000 out of 8,000 troops had perished either in battle or from disease.¹⁶⁹ The war had only just begun.

With Acehnese resistance unbowed and only a sliver of the region under their control, the Dutch colonial establishment confronted a perplexing set of questions about how best to proceed. In the past, decision makers had often been content to evacuate their troops from recalcitrant areas in the Outer Islands so long as they extracted a formal statement of surrender and some nominal concession of sovereignty.¹⁷⁰ Would this suffice in the Aceh case? If they wanted to extract a declaration of surrender, with whom should they negotiate? Yet, to the contrary, the depth of emotion aroused by the Aceh issue and the unparalleled attention lavished on it in the metropolitan press, along with fears that rival European powers might intervene in the region, also seemed to suggest that such a response might be inadequate. If the Dutch opted to establish a more permanent military presence in the region, should they pursue a comprehensive occupation of the entire region, or should they limit themselves to a few strategic strongholds? With whom in Acehnese society could they cooperate to help erect the scaffolding for a manageable administration? Complicating matters further, the Dutch possessed very limited intelligence on this alien territory, and the one figure they did recognize, Sultan Mahmud, had

¹⁶⁸ Reid, "The Contest for North Sumatra," 111.

¹⁶⁹ Schulten, "Tactics of the Dutch Colonial Army," 62.

¹⁷⁰ Moor, "Warmakers in the Archipelago," 56.

succumbed to cholera during the second military onslaught, leaving behind a power vacuum and no obvious successor.¹⁷¹ The future of Aceh very much hung in the balance.

Over the course of the ensuing years, the Dutch muddled through these questions with a deleterious mixture of reticence and bombast. In one sense, the residues of old colonial policy could be seen at work in Aceh, especially with regard to stinginess. Officials in The Hague displayed little desire to expend unlimited resources on their invasion of Aceh. As a result, in spite of some objections, the Dutch moved to contain costs by rejecting any large-scale offensive beyond the vicinity of Kutaradja, instead choosing to fortify their position in the capital city and erect a defensible perimeter in the area. Moreover, in addition to this cost-driven decision, General van Swieten, an exemplar of the more cautious way of thinking in the military, averred his intention to treat the Acehnese humanely and refrained, for the most part, from engaging in punitive acts of retaliation.¹⁷²

Yet, in spite of the restraining influence of frugality, it was little match for the emergent zeitgeist of imperial fervor and bellicosity. Strong public sentiment in the Netherlands and discourses of Acehnese treachery, for example, constrained the range of acceptable options and ultimately overpowered those colonial officials who might have preferred a discreet departure.¹⁷³ Anything that resembled retreat, according to newspaper editorialists and boosters of expansion, was unbefitting of the imperial glory of the Dutch nation. The actions of Governor General Loudon, a proponent of an aggressive approach from the outset, dovetailed well with such dominant discourses. Unwilling to countenance any departure, Loudon fought with and prevailed over officials from the Ministry of the Colonies who favored a managed withdrawal. In fact, as

¹⁷¹ Schulten, "Tactics of the Dutch Colonial Army," 62.

¹⁷² Petra Groen, "Colonial Warfare and Military Ethics in the Netherlands East Indies," *Journal of Genocide Research* 14, no. 3-4 (2012): 284-285.

¹⁷³ Kuitenbrouwer, *The Netherlands and the Rise of Modern Imperialism*, 104-106.

the Dutch worked to fortify their position in Kutaraja, Loudon proclaimed the Dutch intention “to remain in Aceh forever.”¹⁷⁴

One of the decisions most indicative of this imperial tendency toward overreach, and some might even say, hubris, involved the Sultanate of Aceh. However frustrated the Dutch may have been with the Sultan’s backchannel international negotiations or the unexpectedly stiff resistance put up by his defenders in the vicinity of the *kraton*, he stills offered the best hope for a negotiated conclusion of hostilities. The death of Sultan Mahmud on 26 January from cholera perhaps even amplified this opportunity. Given the political disarray left behind by Mahmud’s death and the precarious position of his successor, a young child named Daud—not to mention the fierce ongoing battles—it is not surprising that sultanate officials would seek to reach a settlement with invading armies.¹⁷⁵ In May 1874 a leading official and *ulèëbalang* within the Sultan’s retinue, Panglima Polem, relayed their desire for peace to prominent Acehnese intermediaries in the British colony of Malaya, who in turn worked with the Sultan of Johor in Malaya to draft a peace treaty. Among other things, the text of this draft signaled the unambiguous acquiescence of the Sultan, stating that “H. H. the Sultan of Atjeh binds himself so long as sun and moon exist to place himself under the protection of the Netherlands Indies Government, and shall absolutely not withdraw from this.”¹⁷⁶ Although Acehnese officials in Malaya failed to obtain proper signature and approval, this draft treaty still presented a clear sign.¹⁷⁷ The Sultan and his retinue were willing to defer to Dutch authority.

¹⁷⁴ Schulten, “Tactics of the Dutch Colonial Army,” 62.

¹⁷⁵ Reid, *The Contest for North Sumatra*, 179.

¹⁷⁶ Shaikh Ahmad to Paya 2 Rabil-akir 1291H (20 May 1874), English translation to Governor General to Kol., 7 June 1874, Kol Kab, E24, 6052, quoted in Reid, *The Contest for North Sumatra*, 169;

¹⁷⁷ Reid, *The Contest for North Sumatra*, 170-1.

If colonial officials had assented to this proposal from the sultanate, they would have gained a potent lever for control over Acehnese society. Many Dutch officials observed, correctly, that the Sultan himself did not exercise political authority in a fashion commensurate with European expectations, and that many of the principalities beyond Kutaraja enjoyed a fair degree of autonomy in practice. This assessment also disregarded the symbolic resonance of the institution. Unlike in West Sumatra, where the raja of Pagarryung exerted little influence beyond his small principality and amounted to little more than a vestige of a bygone Indic system, the Sultan of Kutaraja remained the fulcrum of the Acehnese political system. Whatever petty squabbles or maneuvers consumed his actual relations with political rivals, the Sultan nonetheless comprised the indispensable embodiment of Acehnese unity. Thus, an assault on the *kraton* could galvanize *ulèëbalang* and ordinary Acehnese in the tens of thousands to travel to Kutaraja to join in the resistance. Likewise, after Mahmud died of cholera, prominent *ulèëbalang* fought strenuously to emerge as the leading advisor and Regent of the new child Sultan, Daud. Thus, even if the Dutch perhaps needed to weigh the possibility that this ruler might not heed all their wishes or even betray them, the rewards of some type of alliance with the Sultanate seemed obvious: a conduit for influence over Acehnese society.¹⁷⁸

The belligerent temper at home in the metropole and in the corridors of colonial power in Batavia, however, impeded any such level-headed assessment of the value of the sultanate. During the lead up to the first and second Dutch expeditions, for example, metropolitan reportage mercilessly impugned the character of the Acehnese sultan, portraying him a duplicitous “Oriental” potentate, a figure who would feign willingness to accede to Dutch demands while simultaneously working to betray them by negotiating with rival European

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 80-81, 109.

powers. Such opprobrium impaired the ability of officials to reach any type of agreement with the Sultan short of an all-encompassing surrender.¹⁷⁹

Furthermore, these sentiments also infected the colonial-decision making apparatus itself, most notably in the form of Governor-General Loudon. Interpreting the negotiations held between the Sultan and other foreign powers as an indication of serial perfidy, Loudon argued that he could not be trusted and that, in any event, his support was not needed. Moreover, perhaps slightly intoxicated by the rhetoric of imperial virility as well as the unprecedented array of military hardware assembled in the region, Loudon construed the colonial position in Aceh as one of unassailable strength contrary to all available evidence from the previous military campaign. With such overwhelming force, Loudon believed, the Dutch did not need to indulge the prevarications of the Sultan any longer.¹⁸⁰

In January of 1874, before they even secured the perimeter of the *kraton*, the Dutch thus moved to unilaterally abolish the sultanate, in effect shattering the symbolic underpinnings of the Acehnese polity and eliminating their most likely collaborator. Without so much as any negotiation or discussion, General Van Swieten, working at the behest of Loudon, pronounced all laws appertaining to the Sultanate inoperative, and communicated to the *ulèëbalang* that any election of a new sultan to replace the deceased Mahmud would be null and void. At first, the Acehnese elite did not seem to process this sweeping annulment of all extant political arrangements. Well after the initial communique of Van Swieten, leading *ulèëbalang* continued to offer settlements to the Dutch predicated on the continuity of the sultanate. However, Governor General Loudon rebuffed all of these. As the realization began to take hold that the invading Dutch forces would no longer recognize the sultan, the constituency for peace among

¹⁷⁹ Kuitenbrouwer, *The Netherlands and the Rise of Modern Imperialism*, 94-98

¹⁸⁰ Reid, *The Contest for North Sumatra*, 162-163.

the *ulèëbalang* began to crumble, attacks on the colonial fortifications at Kutaraja resumed, and the portents of a wider conflict seemed unmistakable.¹⁸¹

Yet, the end of the sultanate did not extinguish all hope for peace in Aceh; the outstretched hand of a singular figure in Acehnese history, Habib Abdur-Rahman Az-Zahir, kept the possibility of a negotiated settle alive for a few more years. At first glance, Abdur-Rahman might appear like an improbable savior for Aceh. An Arab born in the Hadhrami region of Yemen in 1833, Abdur-Rahman spent decades sojourning far and wide from India to Ottoman Turkey to Europe, never even alighting in Sumatra until 1863 at age 30. Yet, in spite of his peripatetic life, his Hadhrami background provided him with something of an entrée into the world of the court where Arab background was highly valued. Within a matter of years, this Hadhrami itinerant not only gained the confidence of the royal elites surrounding the sultan, but also attracted a broad following among the Acehnese masses, thus propelling him to a position of great respect and power. In the ensuing years, Abdur Rahman would stand at the forefront of almost every effort to stave off war and secure a reasonable accommodation with foreign European powers. Why, however, would he ultimately fail to achieve peace?¹⁸²

Aside from his personal charisma and charm, the influence of Abdur Rahman can be attributed not only to his stature as a devout Muslim, but also as a paragon of the broader, global phenomenon that scholars have recently begun referring to as “Islamic cosmopolitanism.”¹⁸³ Abdur-Rahman’s status as a religious “cosmopolitan,” as a man capable of transcending the particularities of ethnicity or place and gliding across the boundaries of the Islamic world,

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 168-172.

¹⁸² The definitive work on Abdur Rahman is still Anthony Reid’s article summation. See Anthony Reid, “Habib Abdur-Rahman Az-Zahir (1833-1896),” *Indonesia* 13 (April 1972): 37-40, 44-49.

¹⁸³ Reid refers to this cosmopolitanism as a sort of “Islamic internationalism,” Reid, “Habib Abdur Rahman Az-Zahir,” 37.

derived from two sources. First, Abdur Rahman's pedigree and training imbued him with the imprimatur of religious authority. Born to a family whose genealogy stretched back to the Prophet Muhammad, Abdur-Rahman had studied at the most renowned religious schools of Cairo and Mecca and acquired a considerable proficiency in Islamic theology.¹⁸⁴ After spending extensive time in the Malabar Coast of India and Malaya, he finally ended up in Aceh in 1863. In addition to ingratiating himself with the Sultan, who appointed him chief of the Grand Mosque, Abdur-Rahman also aroused a widespread popular following for his campaigns against gambling, opium smoking, and other errant practices, placing him squarely in a reformist religious tradition. The Hadhrami scholar converted this spiritual eminence into a formidable fundraising prowess, collecting sums from prosperous Acehnese pepper growers for the construction of new mosques and his own handsome remuneration. In sum, the sanctified geographic arc of Abdur Rahman's life bestowed upon him great prestige and wealth in Aceh.¹⁸⁵

However, Abdur-Rahman's status as a sojourning Arab and a religious scholar comprised only a part of his "cosmopolitanism," and certainly could not explain his central role in international peace negotiations; it was his dexterity at navigating commercial, political, and technological networks beyond the Islamic world that would endow him with such a place of prominence. Over time, Abdur Rahman matured into the consummate "citizen of the world." Born into Hadhrami Arab maritime commercial world, Abdur-Rahman interacted with non-Muslims from an early age, and in the years following his religious training, he continued to enlarge his awareness of the larger world by working for his father's shipping company and

¹⁸⁴ Reid, "Habib Abdur Rahman Az-Zahir," 44.

¹⁸⁵ An unsigned memorandum on the career of Abdur Rahman goes surveys much of his early career in Aceh in the early 1870s. Unsigned memo on Abdur Rahman, 1873 August 25, E24, Entry 6052, Het archief van het Ministerie van Koloniën, 1850-1900 (Hereafter cited as MK 1850-1900), NNA, The Hague, The Netherlands.

developing a familiarity with the modern technologies such as the telegraph.¹⁸⁶ Later, Abdur-Rahman's insatiable wanderlust impelled him to leave his father's service and travel more broadly, first across the nations of France, Germany, and Italy, and then onward to the British colonial nodes at Bombay and Singapore.¹⁸⁷ Furthermore, Abdur-Rahman proved a shrewd student of politics as he cultivated a wide range of contacts among European merchants and diplomats alike that would only enhance his stature among indigenous rulers.¹⁸⁸ Thus, equally at home with colonial power-brokers, Southeast Asian sultans, and ordinary Acehnese *ulama*, Abdur-Rahman personified the consummate Muslim cosmopolitan.

Given his position at the intersection of the European, Islamic, and Southeast Asian worlds, in 1872 the Acehnese Sultan dispatched Abdur-Rahman to the Ottoman court in Constantinople in a last-minute diplomatic effort to appeal to their common Islamic identity and procure some sort of intervention on their behalf against the Netherlands. During his time in Turkey, Abdur-Rahman also went beyond the standard bounds of diplomacy, appealing to newspaper editors in eloquent Arabic and promulgating the idea of Aceh as a part of a larger, global Islamic caliphate with the Ottoman Sultan at its helm.¹⁸⁹ However, when the Turks demurred from offering material assistance and the Dutch occupation of Aceh became entrenched, Abdur-Rahman recalibrated, committing himself to a negotiated settlement with the Dutch.¹⁹⁰ The Hadhrami notable rushed to Singapore in March 1874 and began making inquiries with several British intermediaries. An eminently pragmatic man, Abdur-Rahman in all likelihood understood that if the Dutch restored the sultanate and respected the religious rights of

¹⁸⁶ Reid, "Habib Abdur Rahman Az-Zahir," 40.

¹⁸⁷ Alexander, "Korte Levensschets van den Arabier Habib Abdoe'r Rahman Alzahir, Naar Zijne Eigene Opgaven Saamgesteld," *Indische Gids* 2, no. 2 (1880): 1010.

¹⁸⁸ Reid, "Habib Abdur Rahman Az-Zahir," 40.

¹⁸⁹ Reid, *The Contest for North Sumatra*, 119-129.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 128-129.

the Acehnese, he could salvage the perquisites that had accrued to him before the occupation, and perhaps even insinuate himself as the Regent to a young sultan Daud. Abdur-Rahman thus had little incentive to wage a hopeless battle against the Dutch. Moreover, the scholar's religious charisma still held great currency among the Acehnese, and local leaders on the ground in the territory, including Panglima Polem, expressed a willingness to accept arrangements procured by him.¹⁹¹ Thus, Abdur-Rahman emerges as something resembling a more cosmopolitan iteration of Tuanku nan Tua from West Sumatra: a charismatic, devout Muslim nonetheless capable of propitiating invading forces.

While Abdur-Rahman expressed a willingness to reprise the role played by the Tuanku nan Tua fifty years earlier, the Dutch colonial establishment had by now rejected the possibility of making peace with Muslims. Whereas in West Sumatra the Dutch had curbed some of their worst religious prejudices and displayed at least some interest in distinguishing between different groups of Muslims, now they indulged in much more categorical judgments. Thus, rather than recognizing Abdur-Rahman's religious pragmatism and cosmopolitanism, the Dutch colonial milieu dismissed him as a "fanatical" Muslim, citing his advocacy of the "Caliphate" in Constantinople as proof of his irredeemable extremism.¹⁹² Moreover, the same forces that thrust Dutch colonial forces into precipitate action against Aceh once again deterred them from negotiations. Fearing the perception of weakness at home in the metropole, Dutch officials in The Hague enjoined their officials in Penang and Singapore to refuse to meet with Abdur-Rahman, as British involvement in relaying Abdur-Rahman's message left behind the irretrievable taint of colonial intrigue.¹⁹³ Indeed, Governor-General Loudon categorically

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 168-172.

¹⁹² Ibid., 178.

¹⁹³ Reid, *The Contest for North Sumatra*, 174-5.

repudiated Abdur-Rahman's offers as well as his pleas to return to Aceh itself, noting that "at Kutaradja we are strong, very strong, and we can energetically spurn everything which is not unconditional surrender."¹⁹⁴ Thus, suffused with illusions of imperial infallibility and religious intolerance, the Dutch no longer even countenanced the possibility of negotiation.

Over time, this marked colonial obduracy would systematically repel the moderating influence of Islamic cosmopolitanism. Long after the initial rejection of his entreaties, Abdur-Rahman persisted in beseeching colonial officials for some sort of negotiation, shuttling between various British consuls in Malaya over the course of 1874 and 1875, even offering at one point travel to Aceh on a Dutch steamer to convene a peace conference in Dutch-controlled Kutaraja. However, Batavia and The Hague remained as intransigent as ever. With the dearth of results increasingly jeopardizing the Hadhrami's standing among the Acehnese, and the chances of restoring his profitable relationships with local Acehnese pepper growers fading, this last rebuff finally drove Abdur-Rahman to despair of any reasoning with the Dutch. Thus, in March 1876, he secreted himself back into Aceh aboard a merchant ship. The Acehnese, desperate for a unifying leader after the turmoil of the initial invasions, embraced the return of Abdur-Rahman's; thousands paid allegiance to him in what turned out to be his valedictory journey across Aceh Besar. Even then, however, Abdur-Rahman still sought to avert the eventuality of war. The Hadhrami cosmopolitan managed to postpone rebel action for two years, but in the end, these prevarications would prove untenable. Inaction generated growing restiveness among a cross-section of prominent *ulèëbalang*, and Abdur-Rahman finally moved to launch an attack on several Dutch positions, in turn eliciting fierce colonial reprisals.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹⁴ John Loudon to Jan van Swieten, n.d, quoted in Reid, *The Contest for North Sumatra*, 173,

¹⁹⁵ Reid, *The Contest for North Sumatra*, 184.

Even in the aftermath of this engagement, Rahman still sought to organize a unified submission to Dutch authorities, but he could no longer prevail upon all the *ulèëbalang* to agree to such a course. As a result, Abdur-Rahman negotiated with the Dutch for his own safe-passage out of Aceh. In return for his departure, colonial authorities consented to conduct him to Mecca and provide him with a lifetime pension of \$1000 so long as he stayed there. By exiling Abdur-Rahman to the Arabian Peninsula, the Dutch did more than remove their own most reliable intermediary with Aceh's elite; they also severed the sturdiest links between the moderating, transnational milieu of Islamic cosmopolitanism and Acehnese Muslim society.¹⁹⁶

The banishment of Abdur-Rahman, and with him, the tempering currents of religious cosmopolitanism, marked the advent of a new, more brutal phase of the war. From the very outset of the Aceh invasion, a curious mix of hubris and tightfistedness had set Dutch war planners on a path of mounting exasperation. Possessed of an unshakeable belief in their own military superiority, colonial officials continued to foresee quick victory long after none was forthcoming and rejected the need to negotiate with Acehnese interlocutors.¹⁹⁷ However, at the same time, frugal administrators relentlessly sought ways to contain the spiraling costs of war-making.¹⁹⁸ Together, these two factors encouraged officials to prematurely proclaim "victory," as did the new Governor-General, J.W. van Lansberge in 1877 after a series of successful offensives.¹⁹⁹ Not surprisingly, when these putative triumphs unraveled, anger would erupt. The Acehnese counter-offensive of 1878 incensed leading Dutch military officers and humiliated Lansberge, who had declared victory less than a year before. The new governor of Aceh, General

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 184-185.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 173.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 183-4.

¹⁹⁹ Emmanuel Kreike, "Genocide in the Kampongs? Dutch Nineteenth Century Colonial Warfare in Aceh, Sumatra." *Journal of Genocide Research* 14, 3-4 (2012):302.

Karel van der Heijden, imputed this latest outbreak to an excess of forbearance on the part of the Dutch rather than a lack of allies among the Acehnese, disdain for anything resembling a negotiated settlement, or general penuriousness.²⁰⁰ Therefore, the solution for Van der Heijden lay not in greater outreach or negotiation, but in a new, more unforgiving approach: *voorbeeldloos tuchting*, or “unparalleled punishment.”²⁰¹

After the surrender of Abdur-Rahman, Governor van der Heijden thus unleashed his campaign of “unparalleled punishment” upon the Acehnese people, wreaking devastation in a land already battered by five years of war. Between March and June of 1879, Van der Heijden drove deep inland along the Aceh Besar river valley, pushing through the region known as the XXII *mukim* and having as its ultimate objective the interior riverine city of Indrapuri.²⁰² Later that year through 1880, Van der Heijden pursued a similar campaign along the northern coastal regions of the XXVI *mukim*.²⁰³ The general predicated his actions on a single, overarching principle: to eradicate Acehnese resistance, it would be necessary to punish the general Acehnese population.²⁰⁴ Rather than trying to distinguish between combatants and non-combatants, all the Acehnese people constituted legitimate targets as enemies hostile to the Dutch,. Besides, Van der Heijden argued, if the Acehnese did not adhere to the principles of “civilized warfare,” like other European nations did, why should they?²⁰⁵

Thus, Dutch troops deliberately trained their destructive fury on civilian populations, setting ablaze entire villages, devastating rice fields, cutting down mango and other fruit trees,

²⁰⁰ Groen, “Colonial Warfare and Military Ethics,” 284.

²⁰¹ Ibid., 284.

²⁰² Azarja Harmanny, “Een 'voorbeeldloze tuchting': Het militaire optreden van Karel van der Heijden in Atjeh, 1879,” *Mars et Historia: Orgaan van de Nederlandse Vereeniging ter Beoefening van de Militaire Historie* 43, no. 3 (2009): 16.

²⁰³ Harmanny, “Een 'Voorbeeldloze Tuchting,’” 16.

²⁰⁴ Groen, “Colonial Warfare and Military Ethics,” 284.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 285.

and destroying granaries—thereby, in essence, eliminating the very rudiments of sustenance in the region.²⁰⁶ During this year long period, the ravages of the colonial campaign reached into almost every corner of the region. For example, out of approximately 150 *kampong* districts in the XXII *mukim* alone, Dutch troops obliterated 50, spreading widespread havoc and dislocation throughout the area.²⁰⁷ In total, it is estimated that 400 to 500 *kampong* were leveled during this time.²⁰⁸ In a somewhat macabre twist on the pecuniary logic that underwrote so much of the colonial efforts in Aceh, General Van der Heijden did proffer local villages one final opportunity to stave off ruinous assaults by paying a ransom of 500 rijksdaalders. However, this demand surpassed the capacities of most villages, and only two recorded cases exist of Acehnese *kampong* purchasing their protection.²⁰⁹ Thus, in the period from 1874 to 1880, with the latter years comprising the most devastating ones, war, disease, and starvation exacted a heavy toll: some 30,000 Acehnese, or 6 percent of the entire Acehnese population, perished.²¹⁰

The turn to “total war” in the Dutch-Aceh conflict precipitated a dramatic shift in the nature of local resistance with dire consequences for the future of the colonial occupation in this region. Before 1878, the character of the opposition to Dutch incursions remained fluid, inchoate even. In spite of the abolition of the sultanate, many of the most prominent *ulèëbalang*, including Panglima Polem, repeatedly forwarded their requests for negotiation and settlement to the Dutch through Abdur-Rahman.²¹¹ Raids on colonial positions were sporadic, and most of the Dutch deaths resulted from cholera, not armed assaults.²¹² Meanwhile, the Acehnese social group most notorious for their insurrectionary tendencies, the devout *ulama* of the *kampong* and *mukim*

²⁰⁶ Harmanny, “Een 'Voorbeeldloze Tuchtiging,’” 18-19.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 19-20.

²⁰⁸ Groen, “Colonial Warfare and Military Ethics,” 285.

²⁰⁹ Harmanny, “Een 'Voorbeeldloze Tuchtiging,’” 20.

²¹⁰ Groen, “Colonial Warfare and Military Ethics,” 285.

²¹¹ Reid, *Contest for North Sumatra*, 169.

²¹² In one month in 1875, 432 soldiers alone died of cholera. See Reid, *The Contest for North Sumatra*, 181-2.

villages, did not appear to register—in the eyes of the Dutch at least—as significant actors in what resistance did exist.²¹³ The *ulèëbalang* still stood at the apex of local society, and even as late as 1878, upwards of 7 out of the 12 leading figures voted to surrender along with Abdur-Rahman.²¹⁴ Persistent opposition was thus not an inevitable preordained reality quite yet.

The upheaval and dislocation spawned by Van der Heijden's campaign of "unparalleled punishment" appeared to radicalize the local population and irreversibly shift the locus of resistance to the devout and localized class of Islamic *ulama*. For the first time, vast portions of the densely settled Aceh Besar river valley population found themselves uprooted and forced to shelter in the rugged mountainous separating the area from the Pidie plain to the north. Here, the refugees struggled to find food and disease soon festered.²¹⁵ Moreover, in a direct insult to the sensibilities of the devout Muslim inhabitants of the area, Dutch troops generally occupied the most central and strategically valuable site in each locality, the village mosque.²¹⁶

Against this backdrop of unprecedented privation and religious grievance, a new doctrine of resistance would soon begin to materialize: *perang sabil* or holy war. The most well-known proponent and propagator of this phenomenon was Teungku Sheikh Saman of Tiro, Pidie, often known simply as Teungku di Tiro. The scion of a clan renowned throughout Aceh for its religious scholarship and a distinguished teacher in his own right, Teungku di Tiro responded to the harsh military campaigns of 1878 and 1879 by embracing the cause of resistance, exhorting Acehnese Muslims to see defiance as a theological obligation. Indeed, as part of this new doctrine, the *ulama* began to play a leading role in disseminating and reciting the oral tale known

²¹³ There is little evidence in either the extant historiography or in any of the colonial documentation indicating an awareness of Teungku di Tiro or other *ulama* before 1881; moreover, most Dutch materials only cites Teungku di Tiro beginning to engage in battle in 1878—the same year that Van der Heijden's military campaigns began.

²¹⁴ Reid, *Contest for North Sumatra*, 184-5.

²¹⁵ Groen, "Colonial Warfare and Military Ethics," 285.

²¹⁶ Kreike, "Genocide in the Kampongs," 30.

as the “tale of holy war,” or *hikayat perang sabil* in Indonesian.²¹⁷ As the Dutch continued to intensify their war efforts in 1880 and to pursue a deliberate policy of food rationing, i.e. starvation, the condition of the average Acehnese deteriorated and Teungku di Tiro’s new campaign only gained added resonance among a broad cross-section of local society.²¹⁸ Although di Tiro did briefly slip out of Aceh at the beginning of his campaign in 1880 to make the *hajj* pilgrimage to Mecca, he returned in 1881 and would never again leave.²¹⁹ Instead, from his base in Pidie, di Tiro would spend the next ten years wandering across the villages and hinterlands of Aceh Besar as an outlaw, raising money for the cause of holy war, mobilizing armed resistance, and otherwise bedeviling the colonial regime.²²⁰ By the time Dutch forces killed Teungku di Tiro in 1891, the damage to colonial power had, in many senses, already been done: the idea of resistance as a religious war, or a *jihad*, had permeated Acehnese consciousness.

With the devastation wrought by the military campaigns by General van der Heijden, and the subsequent rise of a sustained movement of Islamic resistance, the opportunity to cultivate a reliable regime of collaborators had passed. In the 1880s, the Dutch belatedly started making overtures to *ulèëbalang* to serve in the colonial government and many, looking after their own self-preservation and the maintenance of their position, agreed.²²¹ However, the “unparalleled punishment” of Van der Heijden had radicalized a large segment of the rural Acehnese population, thus undermining the very ability of the *ulèëbalang* to speak on behalf of the ordinary local Muslim. Indeed, the mantle of leadership had by then passed from the pragmatism

²¹⁷ Reid, *The Contest for North Sumatra*, 204.

²¹⁸ Kreike, “Genocide in the Kampongs,” 304-308.

²¹⁹ Reid, *The Contest for North Sumatra*, 204.

²²⁰ Ibid., 251-2.

²²¹ Kreike, “Genocide in the Kampongs,” 305.

of the *ulèëbalang* to the uncompromising vehemence of the *ulama*. Whereas before a cosmopolitan Muslim figure such as Abdur-Rahman could have defused tensions, now the Dutch must contend with much more localized religious radicals, roaming the countryside and instigating resistance in places they imagined to be conquered. As shall be seen, this fatal error in judgment by the Dutch would condemn Aceh to three more decades of warfare, and in the process, complicate the region's place in the colonial order until the very eve of Independence.

Conclusion

The history of warfare in the nineteenth century Sumatran world presents a paradox. At the start of the period, a miniscule contingent of ill-equipped Dutch soldiers ventured into a remote and rugged Minangkabau corner of the island, a place which had been mired in a fractious civil war; yet, within fifteen years, troops not only subdued Muslim rebels, but also succeeded in establishing the foundation for a stable and prosperous albeit coercive colonial order that would serve as the lynchpin of the Dutch imperium on the island for well over a century. In the latter quarter of the century, by contrast, a colonial troop force of unprecedented size, scope, and technological sophistication marched into the comparatively peaceful indigenous kingdom of Aceh at the northern tip of the island. However, instead of achieving a decisive triumph, Dutch forces would soon stumble into a cascading series of errors and miscues, inflaming an Islamic insurgency that would persist for four more decades and imprinting upon the region an indelible reputation as a haven of religious resistance. In sum, weakness and inexperience appeared to breed colonial success in West Sumatra, while strength sowed catastrophe in Aceh.

This chapter has sought to elucidate this evident paradox of nineteenth century colonial warfare on the island of Sumatra through an examination of the fraught dynamics of collaboration and cooperation that inflected both struggles. To erect an infrastructure for colonial rule, invading armies needed to bridge the profound chasm of violence, coercion, and cultural misunderstanding intrinsic to war in order to forge relationships with indigenous peoples with whom they could work. Local allies performed vital tasks without which colonial armies would struggle to subdue resistance, including intelligence-gathering, popular mobilization, and actual fighting. In the devout Islamic societies of Aceh and West Sumatra, the imperative of collaboration also required Muslim allies. Yet, however real the potential benefits of cooperation—not only for invaders, but also for local people seeking to avert violence or, perhaps, to obtain their own self-aggrandizing political and economic advantage—it was not easy to achieve. To work across enemy lines inevitably invited accusations of treachery, moral turpitude, and pusillanimous weakness. At an even more fundamental level, it also required historical actors to challenge the most tenacious attachments of human nature and scramble the dichotomous categories of us-versus-them, Muslim versus Christian, Acehnese or Minangkabau versus the Dutch *Kompeuni*, colonized versus colonizer.

Throughout the nineteenth century, Acehnese and Minangkabau Muslims exhibited a substantial degree of agency in fashioning ties with invading Dutch troops. In the West Sumatran case, for example, a longstanding civil war among pious Minangkabau spurred one prominent Sufi *tarekat* leader, Tuanku nan Tua, to reach out to colonial forces as a potential ally and mobilize his followers in *surau* schools and nearby villages behind them. Meanwhile, in Aceh, a charismatic and cosmopolitan Hadhrami Arab with a broad following among the devout indigenous population, Habib Abdur-Rahman az-Zahir, labored strenuously to create a working

relationship with Dutch authorities. In their actions, both men rejected the essentialisms of religious difference, eschewing the use of epithets like *kafir* frequently used to denigrate non-Muslims in the context of holy war and instead seeking to negotiate some type of accommodation with invading colonial forces.

However, the Dutch themselves proved to be exceedingly fickle and unreliable partners. At the outset of the nineteenth century, narrow objectives and a grudging awareness of their own military weakness induced colonial officials to engage with Muslim Minangkabau overtures. Influenced by the old commercial verities of the Netherlands East Indies Trading Company, Dutch military officers at this point still displayed a deeply pragmatic approach to war-making, preferring the quickest, cheapest, and most effective means to quell resistance in West Sumatra. Cooperative Muslims like Tuanku nan Tua provided just such a vehicle, and Dutch officials did not hesitate to elevate Tua's clan members into the nascent colonial administration—even singling out their Muslim piety as an asset for winning over the local population. Yet, as the age of imperialism dawned in the last quarter of the century, the Dutch view of Muslim allies soured. Ascendant ideologies of imperial expansion overlapped with increasing military technological prowess in mutually reinforcing ways, leading the Dutch to believe that their own power was unstoppable. Such illusions, in turn, encouraged colonial officials to cast aside the entreaties of figures like Abdur-Rahman. Not wanting to sully their glorious imperial mission by compromising with nefarious schemers, or worse, Islamic fanatics, the Dutch establishment believed that military force should be sufficient to overawe the local population into submission. As a result, colonial forces pursued an ever-escalating series of punitive offensives culminating in General Van der Heijden's 1879-80 campaign of "unparalleled punishment." These devastating operations would undermine Muslim support for a negotiated truce, shift the center

of gravity in Acehese Islamic society toward uncompromising resistance against Dutch rule, and ultimately, undermined the position of those *ulèëbalang* whom they would seek to collobrate and cooperate in the 1890s and afterward.²²²

Such divergent histories of conquest and collaboration across the maritime worlds of Southeast Asia, in turn, did not fade away after the opening salvos of battle or the eventual resolution of conflict. While the afterlife of warfare would continue to cast a long shadow upon the coastal realms of West Sumatra, Aceh, and Sulu alike, haunting relationships across the colonial divide with the specter of mutual suspicion and mistrust, the original contours of collaboration would nonetheless have rather disparate consequences. For instance, however much colonial officials in West Sumatra might fear the recrudescence of the “Padri” tendency or local Muslims might imprecate their Christian occupiers, a mistrust that would periodically erupt into rebellion and repression, the close cooperation with Tuanku nan Tua nonetheless created an enduring link between the two sides. This link would sustain an array of economic, educational, and political engagements, engagements that, over the course of the next century, would provide Minangkabau Muslims the opportunity to make and re-make connections with their co-religionists across the Indian Ocean world, to enact their own version of Islamic cosmopolitanism.

By contrast, in Aceh and Sulu, the failure to forge cooperative ties engendered a starkly different logic. As the colonial powers forsook or sabotaged potential collaborators, leaving them with little access to local society, they instead sought to ensnare and entrap their foes, to cut them off from the external connections that had for so long sustained Aceh and Sulu as formidable

²²² By the 1890s, the Dutch had finally embraced collaboration and colonial officials like Governor Deijkerhoff supported using the militias of *ulèëbalang* instead of Dutch troops, see Kitzen, “Between Treaty and Treason,” 97-98, 106.

Islamic kingdoms. In other words, Dutch and Spanish and Americans alike took refuge in the strategy of enclosure. While the military forces of these powers never could break these resilient connections entirely, they did weaken them, and slowly, over time, begin to turn strong, cosmopolitan sultanates inward upon themselves.

The following chapters will thus trace the myriad of ways in which the afterlife of war both enclosed and included, connected and disconnected, created and degraded, a dialectical process that would drive the reconfiguration of the Islamic networks of the Indian Ocean world.

Chapter 3

Enclosing Mobilities: The Incorporation of Sulu into the Colonial Sphere, 1851-1930

As colonial governments cast about for an escape route from the quagmires of conquest in Sulu and Aceh, the failure to forge collaborative ties with local peoples presented them with a series of vexing challenges. In contrast to West Sumatra, where Dutch forces established a viable working relationship with Tuanku nan Tua, colonial militaries in Aceh and Sulu struggled to find leverage into local Islamic worlds, a point of access through which they might defuse violent resistance, orchestrate a political resolution, or achieve some modicum of demobilization. The escalation of violence, however, did not offer much of a solution either. Karel van der Heijden's campaign of "unparalleled punishment" in Aceh revealed that total warfare strategies not only visited untold suffering on the local population, but also provoked intensified resistance, the enduring hatred of those whom they wished one day to rule, and even the reproofs of critics in the metropole. If invading armies could not engineer a definitive victory from within local societies, the question thus became how invading armies could stop a never-ending cycle of reprisals and recriminations to impose a durable regime of colonial government from without.

Sulu posed an especially acute conundrum. While the Dutch spurned Acehnese entreaties from the very outset, unilaterally disbanding the local sultanate and instead finding recourse in extreme violence, the Spanish at least advanced a pretense of seeking to work through the Muslim ruler of Sulu, an artifice that the United States would maintain when they arrived on the scene in 1899. However, in spite of a long succession of treaties and pacts, mutual antagonism nonetheless proved pervasive. Continued resistance and slave raiding by Sulu inhabitants infuriated colonial administrators, while the wanton brutality of many Spanish soldiers only aggravated the resentments of local inhabitants. Misunderstandings over treaty terms and the

definition of sovereignty, in turn, exacerbated the mistrust on both sides even further. The gloss of compromise and cooperation thus could not mask an underlying, endemic state of war in the region.

Of all the disputes and disagreements that beset these contentious encounters, perhaps the greatest source of anxiety and panic, the imponderable that inspired the most dread among colonial invaders, was the connectedness of the Sulu kingdom. Starting in the mid-eighteenth century, the Sultanate began to emerge as a potent force in the greater Southeast Asian world on the basis of the mobility of its people, the fleetness of its *prahu* ships, and an undeniable deftness at capitalizing on patterns of global trade. Indeed, the Tausug kingdom quickly insinuated itself as a vital node in the British Empire-China trade.¹ By supplying valuable marine products such as pearls, *tripang*, and bird's nest to British traders, who could, in turn, sell them in the Middle Kingdom for a handsome profit, the Tausug could in exchange procure firearms and other munitions, thereby allowing the Sultanate to consolidate their position as the dominant political actor in the region.² Moreover, to an extent less well-understood, global trade also coincided with the inflow of unknown number of Hadramaut Arabs to the region, an internationally connected group who intermarried with the local population, served important roles in the trade and government of the Sulu kingdom, and maintained a vital link with the global *umma*.³

The sultanate in Jolo did not sit, as some might imagine, isolated on a small island, a fringe of piracy and recalcitrance at the farthest edges of the Philippine lands and the known world. Instead, it occupied the center of a web of overlapping connections and networks,

¹ James Warren, *The Sulu Zone, 1768-1898: The Dynamics of External Trade, Slavery, and Ethnicity in the Transformation of a Southeast Asian Maritime State* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1981; reprint, Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1985), 38-42 (page citations are to the reprint edition).

² *Ibid.*, 36-37.

³ Engseng Ho, "Names beyond Nations: The Making of Local Cosmopolitans," *Etudes Rurales* 163/164 (2002): 228; Omar Faroul Bajunid, "The Arabs in Southeast Asia: A Preliminary Overview," *Hiroshima Journal of International Studies* 2 (1996): 21-38.

connections that ramified in myriad directions from the vibrant colonial entrepot of Singapore to the empire of China, from the cloth producing regions of the Coromandel coast in India to the desert realms of Hadhramaut on the Arabian Peninsula, from the industrial factories of middle England to the Holy Islamic city of Mecca. Thus, even as one Sultan might profess to cooperate with the Spanish King, he could still leverage his own kingdom's external networks to secure capital, firearms, and spiritual support from around the world. It was from these connections without edge or end that Sulu derived its strength, its resiliency, and ultimately, its capacity to withstand the advances of the Spanish.

In many respects, colonial invaders could only grasp the significance of Sulu's external connections obliquely. Shrouded in self-aggrandizing discourses of European and Catholic superiority, the Spanish probably struggled to fathom this island realm as anything other than a derelict den of pirates and fanatics, as a remote, hopelessly backward region at the fringe of their southern Philippine possessions. The idea that Sulu might constitute a growing or thriving kingdom, that it might even enjoy a symbiotic relationship with global patterns of trade, technology, and religious exchange, existed well beyond the conceptual ken of most colonial soldiers and administrators. At a more intuitive level, the Spanish understood that Sulu did not exist in isolation. Colonial administrators worried ceaselessly about the partnerships the Sulu Sultan might form with British sailors or Chinese traders, the guns he might procure from unscrupulous merchant houses in Singapore or the succor he might draw from Arab *ulama*, the slaves that his retainers might harvest from Philippine markets or the commodities they might supply to global markets. Of course, the Spanish usually portrayed such actions in terms of treachery and deceit, a betrayal of the trust they had accorded the Sultan in numerous treaties and pacts. Still, such worries only underscored a hazy recognition that the principal threat to colonial

aspirations, the wellspring of ongoing resistance that undermined any attempt at forging a workable collaborative bond, lied precisely in these enduring connections with the outside world.

This chapter will examine the response of colonial invaders to Sulu's potent connections with the outside world, focusing specifically on an ongoing project that I refer to as "enclosure." Absent the ability to forge a viable collaborative pact with the Sulu Sultan and thus win the war from within local society, Spain and its colonial successor in the region, the United States, instead turned to decades-long campaign to wear the kingdom down from without, to degrade its ties to the outside world and ultimately disconnect them altogether. If they could not win a decisive military victory over Sulu, they would instead need to contain and isolate it. But how, exactly, could they extricate such a dynamic and interconnected region as the Southern Philippines from these larger trans-regional networks, while simultaneously circumscribing local peoples in bounded colonial spaces? How might these two colonial powers successfully sever the trade that carried weapons to rebels, interrupt the interactions with foreign Arabs that promoted Islamic resistance, or corral the raiders who brought such distress to Philippine waters?

To answer these questions, this chapter will examine colonial projects of enclosure in the Southern Philippines as an ongoing process that played out across a variety of military, economic, and legal axes. The first section will concentrate on the coercive armed measures undertaken by the Spanish regime between 1851 and 1898, with special reference to naval blockades and colonial raids against trading ports as blunt attempts to rupture the outward looking ties of the Sulu Sultanate. The second section will consider the Coast Guard and Customs program of the United States "Moroland Province" as a subtle extension of earlier blockade efforts, at once continuing military efforts to sever outward ties but also attempting to steer them toward channels that could benefit the colonial regime. Finally, the third section will

investigate various American schemes of juridical enclosure to constrain local *datu* notables within discrete territories, orient them away from local trading partners toward colonial sanctioned forms of economic production, and hence, unravel the complex ecosystem of regional commerce and exchange that had impelled Sulu's global trade in the first place. By looking at these three facets of enclosure across time and regime, it will become possible to see that even as colonialism failed to erase local forms of connection or mobility—and in fact stimulated an escalation in “smuggling,” “piracy,” and other forms of motion—it did render them illicit and illegitimate. In the process, enclosure played a critical role in criminalizing local mobilities, consigning the regional economy to a subordinate place in global networks of trade, and ultimately, condemning the peoples of the Southern Philippines to a long-term process of marginalization and dispossession. This process of enclosure and dispossession would have devastating ramifications that can continue to be seen until the present day.

The rise of the Sulu Sultanate and the trading ecosystem of the Mindanao region

The Sulu Sultanate traces its history back almost six centuries to approximately 1450 and a man named Abu Bakar. A Hadhrami Arab migrant who likely engaged in long-distance trade, Abu Bakar journeyed far and wide from the Arabian Peninsula and Baghdad, onward to Sumatra and Borneo, before finally arriving at his final destination, a small port harbor on Jolo Island.⁴ There, as with many of his Hadhramaut brethren who filtered out across the Southeast Asia to various small port enclaves such as Brunei, Kutai, and Cotabato, Abu Bakr capitalized on his ethnic background, and most especially, the sacral genealogies connecting the Hadhramaut with

⁴ Cesar Adib Majul, *Muslims in the Philippines*, (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1973; reprint, Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1999), 11-12.

the Prophet Muhammad, to curry favor with recently converted Muslim peoples.⁵ Before long, he married the daughter of a local *raja* notable and declared himself ruler. As Abu Bakr and his successors invested themselves with the ritual trappings of an Islamic leader, interposing themselves as the principal intermediary between God and man, they gradually began to garner the symbolic obeisance of a class of aristocrats composed mainly of kindred family members: the *datu*. These *datu*, in turn, extending from the harbor port across Jolo and outward to the surrounding islands, attracted shifting alliances of followers among the various agriculturalists and coast dwellers of the region. Over the course of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, as commoners and *datu* alike were bound together with a single, transcendent leader by the legitimating glue of Islam, the sultanate system came into focus.⁶

The crystallization of the Sultanate, however, did not signal the dawn of a fixed political order or the establishment of a strong state apparatus analogous to those of the twentieth century; quite the contrary, it merely furnished a religious gloss of stability for the kaleidoscopic, ever-shifting relations of the people of the Sulu Archipelago. While perhaps exalted as the symbolic manifestation of the community of faithful Muslim on earth and as the “defender of the faith,” the Sultan did not wield effective sovereignty over his subjects or retain an administrative structure capable of imposing order outside the walls of his modest palace.⁷ Instead, his nominal subordinates, the *datu*, ceaselessly vied with one another for followers and booty. The authority of these *datu* stemmed not from the granting of a fixed, reliable sinecure by the sultan, but rather, from their ability to piece together alliances of commoners through personalized bonds of

⁵ Engseng Ho, “Names beyond Nations,” 222-224.

⁶ Thomas M. Kiefer, “The Tausug Polity and the Sultanate of Sulu: A Segmentary State in the Southern Philippines,” *Sulu Studies* 1, no. 1 (1972): 33-35.

⁷ Warren, *The Sulu Zone*, xxvii.

friendship and demonstrations of prowess.⁸ Highly dispersed patterns of settlement and the absence of clear territorial boundaries within Sulu only exacerbated this churning maelstrom of contestation, as mobile *datu* journeyed near and far to win followers and procure spoils.⁹ As the residents of Sulu combined and re-combined into these ever-shifting permutations of alliance, raiding expeditions proliferated and feuding became endemic. Moreover, *datu* did not even eschew competing with the Sultan himself. Claiming many of the prerogatives that might be presumed to be the exclusive preserve of a head of state, such as the right, among others, to conduct external warfare, exact tribute, and exert dominion over subject peoples, the *datu* maintained considerable autonomy from the Sultan. However much they might genuflect in matters of religion, it is thus hardly surprising that, on occasion, the *datu* openly challenged the Sultan in the political sphere.¹⁰ Strength permitting, they sometimes even foisted their own agendas upon him.

While the labile political and social arrangements of Sulu might, from the perspective of a Weberian political scientist, appear problematic, they would nonetheless prove central in propelling the kingdom forward as a formidable political and economic force in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. From the time of the inception of the Sultanate until the 1700s, Sulu had never been much more than a small port polity at the far eastern margins of the larger Indian Ocean world. Like the other humble kingdoms in the surrounding seas, Sulu had not projected power or made much of an impression beyond its immediate hinterlands.¹¹ Nor could it match the wealth and influence of other Islamic states in the far western end of the Malay-Indonesian world such as Aceh, the well-known, and much feared, kingdom known as the “Gate to Mecca”.

⁸ Kiefer, “The Tausug Polity and the Sultanate of Sulu,” 28.

⁹ Ibid., 26-27.

¹⁰ Warren, *The Sulu Zone*, xxvii.

¹¹ Ibid., xxiv.

However, while the fluidity of Sulu life perhaps impeded the development of a commanding state apparatus, it also endowed the people with a unique receptivity to maritime movement and trade. From an early date, Tausug—literally “people of the current”—displayed considerable dexterity in small-craft ship-building, navigation, and local trade. Coastal Tausug traders, indeed, became major suppliers of pearls, tripang, and shark’s fin for global markets, a position which soon attracted traders not only from Southeast Asia, like the Bugis of the Sulawesi, but also from as far afield as China. In sum, the flexibility of Tausug social relations predisposed them to a commercial outlook and entwined *datu*, many of their followers, and even the Sultan himself into a vibrant, albeit small-scale, web of local exchange from an early date.¹²

This adaptability, mobility, and historical experience of regional exchange would, as we shall see, place Sulu in a very fortuitous position vis-à-vis the revolution in global trade that started to unfold by the second half of the eighteenth century. The crux of this revolution lay in the trade between Britain and China. By the middle of the 1700s, Great Britain had emerged as a commercial, colonial, and even industrial behemoth, an incomparably rich empire bestriding the global stage. Just as wealth and markets at home expanded exponentially, the British population developed an inexhaustible appetite for a stimulant that, in spite of the fact it could only be found halfway around the world in China, would become interwoven with their national character. That stimulant was tea. As the growing ranks of middle class merchants and working class factory workers came to rely on this brew, British traders based in the East Indian colonies of the Indian subcontinent descended on China and surrounding Asian entrepôts in search of this highly profitable item. However, they also encountered one substantial hurdle to reaping this expected bonanza: for the most part, they possessed few goods of value to the Chinese. Traders and

¹² Ibid., 11, 15-16.

consumers from the Middle Kingdom evinced little interest in the coarse textiles and assorted manufactures churned out by factories in Britain and India, nor did the Confucian dynasty look kindly upon the importation of an agricultural commodity grown in great quantities on the subcontinent: opium. The question thus became the following: what could the East Indian Trading Company factors find to trade with the Chinese that would satiate demand at home and enhance the corporate bottom line? It was only a matter of time before this search would lead British traders to the shores of Sulu.¹³

By the middle of the eighteenth century, of course, the Sultanate of Sulu had already launched a busy export trade with China, and it probably was only a matter of time before ambitious British traders in India learned of this. Drawing from their dense web of regional commerce, the Tausug collected a range of maritime products highly valued in China, including shark's fin, pearls, mothers of pearl, bird's nest, *tripang*, and wax. In return for these prized products, Tausug received lacquered ware, porcelain, earthenware, and other products for use in local households. It would not take long before British East Indies traders, who already journeyed as far as the Malay Peninsula and engaged in regular exchange with another people whose networks overlapped with those of Sulu, the Buginese, to grasp the potential of that region to solve their chronic shortage of goods for the Chinese tea trade. After doing careful research of the East India Trading Company reports and records, one especially astute British civil servant based in Madras, Alexander Dalrymple, envisioned the Sulu region as an ideal location for a trade entrepot which could service the British-India-China trade. Between 1759 and 1764, Dalrymple embarked upon a series of voyages to the Sulu Region to bring this vision to fruition.

¹³ Ibid., 3, 17.

The arrival of British traders to the region would constitute an important inflection point in the history of Sulu and its rise as a regional hegemon.¹⁴

While many of the conditions for Tausug prosperity predated the arrival of the British, as illustrated by their thriving commercial networks, these Europeans did offer something that could dramatically alter the regional calculus: advanced firearms and munitions. The process of forging contacts with producers across the region had not been devoid of conflict, and as the Tausug ramped up their collection of goods for the China trade, they had begun to clash with other fledgling kingdoms in their vicinity. Indeed, as competition with local rivals grew and advanced European weapons started to trickle into the hands of some of their adversaries, the pressure on Sulu intensified. With their long history of fluid alliances, raiding, and incessant jostling for primacy, Tausug also perhaps had with a particularly keen appreciation of the indispensability of arms to their commercial and political aspirations. Thus, in the sixteen years following their arrival at North Borneo in 1759, the sultan and the *datu* of Sulu repeatedly sought to entice British traders into the firearms trade.¹⁵

The British, for their part, recognized that firearms could help facilitate the procurement of lucrative maritime products for exchange with China. Alexander Dalrymple, in particular, understood that if the Company established “a mart for arms and ammunition, the demand would be very great and nothing would bring stranger thither sooner” with all manner of bird’s nest, *tripang*, and pearls for exchange.¹⁶ Moreover, since East Indian Company officials eschewed explicit territorial ambitions beyond their base in the Indian subcontinent, Dalrymple and his superiors did not fear the potential peril such munitions might pose to public order or safety in

¹⁴ Ibid., 18-19.

¹⁵ Ibid., 19-22.

¹⁶ “Memoir of the Soologannan Dominions and Commerce,” 26 February 1761, Egremont Papers, Public Records Office, London; quoted in Warren, *The Sulu Zone*, 23.

the region. Thus, these British traders granted a 1761 request from the reigning Sultan of Sulu, Sultan Bantilan Muizz ud-Din, for \$10,000 worth of arms and ammunition, including blunderbusses and swivel guns for use in their *prahu* boats.¹⁷ From this initial deal, firearms would quickly develop into a mainstay of local trade, furnishing European traders with profit margins in excess of one hundred percent while propelling Sulu's ascent as the most powerful kingdom in the region.¹⁸

The consolidation of the weapons trade in the hands of the Sulu Sultanate, in turn, catalyzed a cascading set of benefits that would not only support Sulu's meteoric rise, but also deepen its entanglement in global networks of exchange. For instance, as demand for maritime produce inexorably increased and Sulu's martial dominance became more pronounced, many Tausug *datu* began travelling even farther afield with their bands of followers and retainers to places such as the east coast of Borneo, a particularly rich source of pearls, *tripang* fish, bird's nest, and wax. When this escalating demand, in turn, began to strain the capacities of *datu* to engage in the labor intensive collection of such maritime products, they began to seek out new supplies of manpower. In particular, Tausug rulers entered into a mutually beneficial arrangement with a group of sea nomads infamous for their skill at slave-raiding: the Iranun. In return for a steady supply of weapons and a secure base from which to organize their activities, the Iranun began undertaking an ever-escalating number of slave raids on behalf of the Tausug, raids which yielded tens of thousands of bonded workers. This enslaved workforce would become the backbone of the entire Tausug system of maritime produce collection.¹⁹

¹⁷ Warren, *The Sulu Zone*, 23.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 22-24.

¹⁹ James Warren, *Iranun and Balangingi: Globalization, Maritime Raiding and the Birth of Ethnicity* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 2002), 49-52.

With this enlarged supply of labor, a cycle of expansion thus took hold that would persist unabated until the middle of the nineteenth century. Greater supplies of maritime products attracted more British and European merchants to Jolo, which in turn stimulated *datu* to make the journey to North Borneo with additional frequency. The growth in this trade also furnished Tausug *datu* with more firearms, with which they could prod their Iranun retainers to embark on raids of ever escalating distance and audacity. With more workers, this cycle could then start once again, placing the Sulu Sultanate and its *datu* in a commanding economic position.

Another vital element in the multiethnic web supporting Sulu's economic florescence was the Arab community. Across Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean, communities of Hadhrami Arab origin played a key role in articulating local communities to broader networks of trade. The Sulu Sultanate proved no exception to this general pattern. For example, the preponderance of *datu* who first recognized the potential of North Borneo as a source of maritime produce and established a variable presence in the area, in fact, were of Arab ancestry. One of the most prominent of these chiefs working on behalf of the Sulu Sultanate was Sherif Usman. After following the Hadhrami template followed across the Indian Ocean world of marrying into the family of the local sultanate by dint of his religious bonafides and commercial acumen, Usman had been tasked with the task of supervising the Sulu's expansion into the north Borneo region. Besides for overseeing the collection of pearls, bird's nest, and rice, the Sherif also served as a principle interlocutor with the Iranun slave raiders.²⁰ In the words of one Briton sent to reconnoiter the north Borneon coast, this "half-Arab...supplies the Balgnini [sic] with

²⁰ Warren, *The Sulu Zone*, 78-81.

food, powder, arms, salt, &c. under the agreement that they pay him on return from their cruise, at the rate of five slaves for every 100 rupees' worth of goods.”²¹

The impact of Arab trading networks upon Sulu, moreover, extended well beyond the economic or political sphere, but also spilled into the religious one, as the various “sherifs” provided a conduit from the Mindanao world to the Islamic heartlands of West Asia. By the end of the century, for example, a Spanish official in Sulu reported that Arabs enjoyed substantial influence in the region, and this history extended back much further. As early as the mid eighteenth century, a “Sharif from Mecca” name Sayyid ‘Alawi Balpaki, who likely came from a prominent Hadhrami family that had major branches on the Malay Peninsula, arrived in Sulu.²² Once there, he undertook a campaign of religious reform, attempting to expunge impure deviations among the local Muslim and to win converts among non-Muslims.²³ About fifty years later, in 1810, *ulama* from the distant lands of the Red Sea called to the court of the Sulu Sultanate.²⁴ From 1861 to 1862, an Afghan served as the chief *qadi*, or judge, at the Sulu court, and from 1886 to 1894, the Sultan chose an Arab as his replacement.²⁵ The selection of Arabs and Central Asians for top religious position also conformed to the fact that during the entirety of the nineteenth century, a significant portion of *ulama* across the archipelago traced their ancestry to foreign lands.²⁶ Religious artifacts found in the region attest to such wide-ranging influence, as several Qur’ans of Daghistani provenance, an area in the predominantly Muslim Caucasus region

²¹ Henry Keppel, *The Expedition to Borneo of H.M.S. Dido for the Suppression of Piracy, With Extracts from the Journal of James Brooke, Esq., of Sarawak*, vol. 2 (London: Chapman & Hall, 1853), 146-147.

²² William Clarence-Smith, “Middle Eastern Migrants in the Philippines: Entrepreneurs and Cultural Brokers,” *Asian Journal of the Social Sciences* 32, no. 3 (2004): 427.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*

of Russia, were found scattered across the Sulu Zone.²⁷ The sustained connections linking the Sultanate with places across the Middle East, undoubtedly, helped to entrench Sulu's Islamic character and bind the kingdom together as a coherent religious-cum-political entity.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, Sulu had thus come to occupy a singular and potentially subversive position in the wider maritime world of Southeast Asia. A rising indigenous power in an age of imperial expansion, a cosmopolitan Muslim kingdom adept at international trade with non-Muslim partners, a dispersed, even chaotic polity that nonetheless enjoyed a cohesive identity and could project force far from its shores, Sulu presented a formidable challenge to colonial aspirations. Embedded in a series of overlapping webs that stretched from the tribal domains of upland Borneo to the trading houses of Singapore and London, from the isolated coves and inlets of roving sea-nomads to the industrial firearm factories in central England, from the harbors of China to the shores of Arabia and the mountains of Afghanistan, the Sultanate could summon resources from networks without edge or end. This situation not only incensed the Spanish Empire to the northeast, but also sowed anxiety even among their British interlocutors across the Malay world. Could an emboldened indigenous power undermine English traders? Did the raiding system that provided Sulu with captive labor jeopardize the integrity of Dutch and British protectorates? Would the colonial empires even have the capacity to sunder Sulu's multifarious connections and subject the kingdom to their control? The second half of the nineteenth century would soon bring these questions to a head.

²⁷ Annabel Teh Gallop, "From Caucasia to Southeast Asia: Daghistan Qur'ans and the Islamic Manuscript Tradition in Brunei and the Southern Philippines," *Manuscripta Orientalia* 14, no. 1 (2008): 32-34.

The first round of enclosure: blockades, invasions, and resettlements, 1836-1881

Long before the dynamics of global trade thrust the Sultanate onto the international stage in the latter half of the eighteenth century, the presence of an independent and armed Muslim kingdom in the Sulu Archipelago had endlessly rankled one specific European empire with designs on the region. From the moment that Spain declared its sovereignty over Luzon and the Visayas in 1571, it also began to dispatch warships to Sulu. Over the next three centuries, the Sulu Seas witnessed a seemingly endless cycle of assault and repulsion, truce and betrayal, Catholic proselytization and *jihadist* resistance. In the seventeenth century, the Spanish leveled Tausug cities, Sulu-led raids ransacked the Visayas, and missionaries established a fort in what is today Zamboanga.²⁸ Colonial troops even forced the Sultan into exile for brief periods. Yet, Spain failed to achieve the one thing that could have lasting impact: the interruption of Sulu's ties to the outside world. With their superior knowledge of local maritime geography and their nimble *prahu* vessels, Tausug traders easily evaded, outran, and circumvented Spanish ships designed more for battle on the open seas than for navigating shallow shoals and treacherous coastlines. As a result, exchange continued to flow into Sulu, permitting the Tausug to shrug off assaults and mount fierce retaliations.²⁹ Colonial influence on the ground thus always remained tenuous, and missionaries did not venture far from fortified encampments. Without a tighter grip on the seas, the Spanish could not attain true enclosure of the islands.

Although exorbitant costs finally prodded the Spanish to sign a longer-lasting peace treaty with Sulu in 1646 and to evacuate the Zamboanga fort in 1663, leading to an almost century long cessation of open hostilities, they never did relinquish their aspirations to exercise

²⁸ Majul, *Muslims in the Philippines*, 121, 126, 141-143, 147.

²⁹ Warren, *The Sulu Zone*, 117-118.

influence in the Sulu region.³⁰ By 1718, the lure of expansion once again drew Jesuits to resurrect Zamboanga fort, and tensions began to flare into intermittent warfare in the first half of the eighteenth century.³¹ While the British occupation of Manila in 1762 interrupted Spanish ambitions, the growing power of Sulu in the decades after the destruction of Balambangan in 1775, along with the advent of intensified raiding in those years, would once again draw the attention of the colonial officials south by the nineteenth century.³² The stage was set for a clash between a renascent Sulu Sultanate and a Spanish empire eager to assert its power.

When the Spanish began to re-engage Sulu in conflict during the 1820s, the initial patterns of conflict appeared to mimic those of past centuries. An Iranun raid and the capture of a top official from the Order of the Recollects in the Visayas incited a harsh Spanish reprisal in 1824.³³ Three years later, the Spanish navy mounted a direct invasion of Jolo, landing 500 soldiers on the island. However, Sulu's economic and political resurgence over the preceding half century had only hardened its defensive capacities, and forces loyal to the Sultan easily repelled this force within weeks.³⁴ Local exchange, by now articulated with international networks of trade extending outward to China and India and Britain, ensured a steady influx not only of the food and material necessary, but also of English-manufactured rifles and cannons as advanced as any in the possession of the Spanish Empire.³⁵ In sum, Spain still confronted much same difficulties as it had before: for all of its might, the royal navy could not easily cordon off agile *prahus* in such a forbidding and treacherous maritime landscape.

³⁰ Majul, *Muslims in the Philippines*, 172, 181-182.

³¹ Ibid, 228.

³² Nicholas Tarling, *Sulu and Sabah: A Study of British Policy Towards the Philippines and North Borneo from the Late Eighteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 10-22

³³ Majul, *Muslims in the Philippines*, 318.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Warren, *The Sulu Zone, 1768-1898*, 41-44.

With naval efforts for the time being proving woefully inadequate to the task of interrupting Jolo's external trade, the Spanish turned to diplomacy as the best avenue for staking a claim to the burgeoning international trade of the Sulu Sultanate and dampening the raiding activities of their Iranun/Balangangi retainers. In 1836 Spain and Sulu resolved two treaties that granted Spanish traders access to the Jolo port in return for similar rights to Sulu traders in Zamboanga and Manila. In addition, Sulu consented to support the Spanish against any of their enemies, for which, in return, the government in Manila offered to protect Sulu.³⁶

However, a series of misunderstandings and provocations would soon trigger new tensions in the Spanish-Sulu relationship. Officials in Manila, for example, construed the terms of the treaty regarding mutual protection as permission to construct military installations in the vicinity. Seeking to bolster their military position against potential European rivals, the Spanish built a fort on Basilan Islands in the northernmost reaches of the Sulu Archipelago, a move which the Sultanate viewed as a violation of their territorial integrity.³⁷ Conversely, Sulu did little to rein in the raiding activities of their Iranun and Balangingi retainers. Although Tausug *datu* equipped Samal Balangingi ships and provided them credit, they nonetheless viewed these raiders as a separate, autonomous people.³⁸ Since the Spanish, however, drew no distinction between these two groups, they interpreted raiding activities as a deliberate transgression of their alliance.³⁹ With the accumulation of such points of contentions, peace would not hold for long.

The Spanish military campaign of 1848 marked a decisive shift in the centuries long struggle against Sulu, a shift not only toward a more vigorous, technologically proficient prosecution of war, but also, toward the project of enclosure. In the past, Spain had usually

³⁶ Majul, *Muslims in the Philippines*, 319.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 321-324.

³⁸ Warren, *Iranun and Balangingi*, 49-51.

³⁹ Majul, *Muslims in the Philippines*, 327.

sought to inflict overwhelming damage on the capital city of Jolo, to capture the Sultan or at least drive him into exile, and to erect some sort of fort from which they could exercise their sway over the island. Yet, the fluid social arrangements and regional connections characteristic of Sulu always undermined these plans. By 1848, however, Spanish officials trained their sights not on the Sultan or the construction of a fort, but on a specific island. The Governor General of the Philippines himself travelled with six advanced steam-powered gunboats and 650 soldiers to oversee operations against the Balangingi Samal Island settlement at the outskirts of the Sulu Archipelago. At first glance, this might seem like a strange choice: why should Spanish officials invest so much import on such a sparsely settled, remote island?

The answer lies in the growing Spanish preoccupation with a phenomenon wracking their possessions throughout the Philippines: kidnapping raids. The Governor General and his subordinates recognized that Balangingi Samal and their island comprised one of the principal staging grounds for the “piracy” perpetrated against other Spanish possessions. In these raids, the Samal men would depart from Balangingi to traverse vast distances on the open seas, flitting from island to island, evading detection in their lithe *prahu*, and striking without warning from the Visayas to Luzon. In swift, disorienting attacks, they would abduct tens, sometimes hundreds, of coast dwellers—earning them the moniker, “fishers of men.”⁴⁰ After capturing a sufficient number of people, the Samal would then return to the Sulu seas and force their captives to labor in pearl and *tripang* collection. Other times, the raiders might sell their prey at slave markets in Jolo to prominent Tausug *datu*. In sum, the Balangingi were more than the cornerstone of the Sulu economic system or the dynamic thrust of their mobility; they also were a specter that haunted the coasts of the entire Philippine Islands.⁴¹

⁴⁰ The term “fishers of men” is borrowed from Warren, *The Sulu Zone*, 182.

⁴¹ For an exhaustive overview of slave raiding and trading, see chapters 7-9, Warren, *The Sulu Zone*, 149-211.

By 1848, the Spanish Governor General could no longer countenance these depredations, and launched an onslaught unprecedented not only in its severity, but also in its technological sophistication. From the outset, the invaders had made a determination to give “no quarter.” After demolishing the principal defensive fortifications of the island, known as *cotta*, the 650 soldiers set to work razing all six Samal settlements, destroying hundreds of ships, and felling 7,000-8,000 coconut trees, in the process killing some 440 Samals. In so doing, the Spanish sought to cripple Samal Balangangi society, thereby embracing a strategy reminiscent of “total warfare.”⁴² Moreover, for the first time, the usage of advanced steamships outfitted with 100 plus horsepower engines allowed the Spanish to maneuver around the island with a deftness and rapidity that matched local *prahu* ships.⁴³ The Spanish could thus virtually encircle an island, intercepting escaping *prahus* and impeding contact between Balangangi and the outside world. As a result, the Spanish managed to take 350 men, women, and children captive, all of whom would be exiled to the distant Cagayan Valley.⁴⁴ Through this mixture of steamship technology, brutality, and forcible relocation, the Spanish had for the first time leveled a blow not just against a titular political chief, like the sultan, but at the very sinews of Sulu mobility.

The attack upon Balangangi produced an immediate and perceptible reduction in Samal raiding activities. In the three years immediately following the 1848 encounter, slave raiding plummeted across the Philippine Islands to almost nil, and only revived rather slowly. Samal society had been plunged into disarray, and a second assault on some of the re-constituted social groups in 1858 exacerbated the situation. While the Samal did begin the process of slowly re-constituting their *prahu* ships, the Spanish likewise scaled up their production of fast-moving

⁴² Warren, *The Sulu Zone*, 192.

⁴³ Majul, *Muslims in the Philippines*, 324-325.

⁴⁴ Warren, *The Sulu Zone*, 192.

steamships and began deploying them at fixed intervals along favored trading routes.⁴⁵ Amidst these measures, Samal *prahu* struggled to roam across large distances and the range of their raiding activities contracted to only those islands closest to the Mindanao region.⁴⁶ Thus, despite the fact that slave attacks persisted throughout the 1850s and 1860s, they could not resist the tightening colonial net for long. While never entirely eradicating these raids, by the middle of the 1870s, the Spanish had succeeded at transforming this erstwhile staple of the Sulu Zone economy into little more than a vestigial nuisance.⁴⁷

The events of 1848 presaged an enduring shift toward a colonial strategy of enclosure and exclusion vis-à-vis Sulu; however, this shift did not in any way portend the imminent or rapid demise of the Sultanate. Over the previous seventy years, the Sultan and *datu* had accumulated substantial expertise in the domain of global trade, cultivated wide-ranging contacts with a variety of European merchants, and studiously examined the vicissitudes of international politics.⁴⁸ The advent of steam shipping perhaps signaled a real reverse for Sulu, inhibiting the slave raids which had hitherto supplied the principal source of their labor force. Nonetheless, the colonial powers could not simply eliminate the supple, elastic web of connections that Sulu had woven with local and international actors with just one application of pressure. In the decades ahead, Sulu would, in fact, prove remarkably resilient.

Britain, Singapore and the survival of Sulu, 1849-1870

Amidst the destruction of Balangingi, the Sultan of Sulu, Muhammad Fadl, had a unique opportunity to demonstrate his political and economic canniness. In 1848, at the same time that

⁴⁵ Ibid, 195.

⁴⁶ Ibid, 195-196

⁴⁷ Ibid, 196-7.

⁴⁸ Ibid, 27-37.

Spanish naval forces beset his domains and imperiled his commerce, an infamous English adventurer, the so-called “White Rajah” of Sarawah, James Brooke, decided to pay a visit to the Sultan at Jolo. Furnishing a letter of introduction from the Governor of the Straits Settlement, Brooke stated his interest in expanding the already substantial trade with Sulu and establishing direct political links. Sultan Fadl responded with alacrity to these overtures. A year later, in May 1849, Sulu and Britain orchestrated a sweeping treaty of Friendship and Commerce which, among other things, conferred mutual trading rights, permitted British subjects to purchase properties from the Sulu, ensured the protection of Britons in Sulu, and stated that Sulu would not cede land or become a vassal of any other state. The Sultan even promised to help tamp down piracy and grant British war vessels the right to stop at Jolo harbor. With this treaty, Sulu thus sought to burnish its longstanding ties with the British Empire into an official political relationship, while simultaneously counterbalancing Spanish machinations in the region.⁴⁹

In the short term, these efforts to pivot from Spain to Britain appeared to backfire. The agreement between Brooke and Sulu incited the ire of the Spanish Governor of Zamboanga, who perceived it as a violation of their own 1837 treaty of alliance.⁵⁰ After the Sultan rebuffed Spanish protests and affirmed the Brooke treaty, the Zamboanga dispatched yet another offensive against Jolo in February 1851 of fifteen ships and three thousand men. The resulting destruction soon prompted the Sultanate to sign a new treaty which established not only “the expression of friendly union with Spain” and the right of Spain to erect a trading and naval outpost at Jolo, but also rescinded the Brooke agreement signed a mere year earlier.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Ibid, 104-105; Tarling, *Sulu and Sabah*, 52-89.

⁵⁰ Majul, *Muslims in the Philippines*, 329.

⁵¹ Warren, *The Sulu Zone*, 105-106.

However, when viewed from a longer term perspective, it becomes evident that the 1848 overtures with Britain would, in fact, inaugurate an extended period of growing international trade that attested to the resiliency of the Sulu Sultanate and the depth of its integration into the world economic system. The Spanish presence on Jolo, much like in the past, proved ephemeral, as dysentery and inclement weather compelled the invaders to evacuate without even constructing a permanent garrison. The terms of the 1849 treaty, meanwhile, however onerous on paper, did little to deter the Sultanate from continuing to expand its connections and relationships with the outside world.⁵² Throughout the 1850s, the Sultanate pursued a bold and sophisticated campaign of outreach to private European merchants, as Sulu *prahu* aggressively plied trading routes to Singapore and Tausug boat captains, known as *nakodahs*, spread the word in various harbors that the Sultan was “anxious to see vessels in his port.”⁵³ At the same time, on-the-spot officials and merchants in British Singapore and Labuan evinced little interest in abandoning their prosperous Sulu trade. Thus, within years of the 1851 assault on Jolo, the flow of British arms and manufactures resumed, soon surpassing earlier levels.

The revivification of Sulu trade also revealed a remarkable capacity for flexibility and adaptation on the part of the Sultanate, a capacity that would serve it well in its efforts to evade the Spanish net of enclosure. Although the 1851 invasion of Jolo represented something of a reversion to the failed strategies of the past, a blunt strike on the Sultan that produced little impact on the kingdom’s outward looking ties, the 1848 siege of Balangingi had leveled a more effective blow on Sulu’s mobile networks. With Samal society thrown into disarray, the Tausug could no longer project its power over vast oceanic spaces and thus lost its access to a reliable

⁵² Ibid, 106.

⁵³ Ibid, 113.

source of labor. As a result, *datu* struggled to produce quantities of pearls, shark's fin, and *tripang* commensurate with British demand, a profound threat to their commercial position.⁵⁴

However, as Spanish enclosure schemes limited access to labor and the seas, Tausug *datu* demonstrated a remarkable ability to cope with such adverse circumstances. Given their ample experience navigating through international trading networks and managing the shifting exigencies of international trade, the Tausug were able to acquire information about newly desirable commodities. The advent of the telegraph, for example, required a plentiful supply of gutta percha for the insulation of wires. The tropical ecosystem of the Sulu Sea Zone produced this tree in abundance, and *datu* did not need to venture into the seas to obtain it. Likewise, the Tausug ratcheted up production of venerable inland staples of their trade, such as wax, bird's nest, and camphor. Moreover, Tausug seafarers re-deployed their maritime skills to begin making the long voyage to Singapore themselves in growing numbers. As a result of these various strategies of adaptation, trade from Sulu soared sevenfold over the 1860s alone.⁵⁵

The resiliency of Sulu's external networks, not surprisingly, prompted Spanish officials in the Philippines to intensify their efforts to exclude and enclose the region to their south. Most worrisome of all to these colonial officials was the steady flow of weapons, which made a mockery of Manila's pretense to sovereignty over the kingdom. In the 1860s the British commercial outpost of Labuan in Borneo reported annual importation of musket cases as high as 30 cases and of gunpowder up to 15,000 pounds, the vast preponderance of which was destined for Sulu.⁵⁶ The Spanish did pursue several measures to stem this influx, and by 1865 they even pressured the British regime into enacting the first ever arms control law that limited the

⁵⁴ Ibid, 72-74, 121-122, 195-196.

⁵⁵ Ibid, 109-111.

⁵⁶ Ibid, 109-116.

“manufacture, importation, transport and sale of arms and ammunition at Labuan.” However, while this measure appeared to betoken trans-imperial cooperation, agitation from merchants in the Straits Settlement militated against the adoption of any practical steps to enforce this new prohibition. Weapons thus continued to pour unchecked into Labuan and Sulu well after 1865.⁵⁷

In sum, Sulu proved resilient even in the face of concerted efforts to undermine the very fundamentals of its economy. The Spanish navy not only managed to curtail Samal raiding activities with its 1848 Balangingi assault, thereby depriving Sulu of labor, but also subjected local pearling collection teams to unremitting attack. Yet, Tausug *datu* managed to maintain trade with Britain by pivoting to the production of less labor intensive and land-based commodities, such as gutta percha. Moreover, the Tausug were adept at drawing from their contacts in global trade, enticing European merchants to their ports while at the same time promoting their wares in markets abroad. Thus, in spite of the formal restrictions of the Spanish, trade continued to flourish and Sulu went on obtaining large quantities of the firearms so indispensable to their power. The ascent of Sulu appeared invulnerable to outside attack.

The intensification of exclusion and enclosure, 1871-1887

With the rise of Sulu uncurbed and cooperation from the British wanting, Spain soon prepared to undertake its own unilateral measures of escalation and enclosure against the indigenous kingdom. Since 1848, the navy had already vastly expanded their capacity for monitoring maritime spaces. The arrival of a British surveying fleet in Jolo waters in 1870, which stirred fears of even greater intervention in the region from Singapore and London, supplied Spain with a convenient pretext for ramping up these earlier efforts. A year later, the

⁵⁷ Emrys Chew, *Arming the Periphery: The Arms Trade in the Indian Ocean during the Age of Global Empire* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012), 177.

Spanish initiated an outright blockade of Jolo. For the first time, Spain sought to apply its formal restrictions on trade to and from Sulu by stopping, intercepting, and seizing any ship caught in such a business, including British and other European vessels.⁵⁸

However, in spite of improvements in the technology and speed available to the Spanish Navy, it could never seal the long maritime frontier around Jolo Island entirely. Ships associated with the Labuan Trading Company, for instance, received signals from Tausug *datu* directing them around treacherous shoals, islets, and coastal protrusions even in the dark. As a result, clandestine nighttime trade expeditions beyond the vision of Spanish steamers proliferated. British and German traders, in turn, outfitted themselves in small, agile screw steamers, which could dart into shallow river mouths and creeks inaccessible to larger Spanish vessels. Thus, even when spotted, many trading boats still escaped. Moreover, a certain sense of imperial propriety apparently prevailed, as, in almost all cases, the Spanish refrained from firing upon European vessels. Consequently, European traders circumvented the blockade with ease; one ship, the *Tony*, made the voyage twenty one times in a single fourteen month interval.⁵⁹

If an unwritten code of propriety perhaps restrained Spanish belligerence against European traders, however, no such clemency would be afforded to the Tausug themselves. With the blockade failing and weapons still flowing, by 1872, officials in Manila implemented a policy at once narrower but also more brutal. At the behest of a prominent naval commander, Santiago Paterno, the Spanish Navy re-directed their steamship assets toward the goal of crippling the Tausug and their capacity to navigate local seas. Specifically, Paterno ordered his fleet to not only stop all Tausug *prahu* they encountered, but also to capture and exile all passengers onboard to Manila or Zamboanga as forced laborers. Besides this blanket interdiction

⁵⁸ Warren, *The Sulu Zone*, 116-117.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 116-118.

and imprisonment policy, Paterno also authorized gunboats to use whatever force necessary against Tausug ships if they betrayed any sign of trying to escape—a tactic never deployed against European traders. Over the course of the following three years, the Spanish would thus become a looming menace to all indigenous sea-faring journeys. In one case, for example, Spanish cruisers descended upon the boat of a prominent trader from Cagayan de Sulu, Haji Mansur, just as he was embarking upon a pilgrimage to Mecca. Although Haji Mansur escaped after the Spanish opened fire, the rest of his family faced “extermination by grape shot” and died. Similarly, another well-known Tausug, Datu Kassim, on a routine voyage barely escaped to shore with his wife after a sudden naval barrage sunk their ship.⁶⁰

This era of extreme capriciousness and brutality, finally, signaled the beginning of the eclipse of the Sulu Sultanate in the 1870s and 1880s. Although firearms continued to seep past the Spanish net, the draconian measures of the blockade ensured that imports from Sulu at Labuan in North Borneo, the principal transshipment point for Tausug goods, plummeted by 25 percent between 1872 and 1873. Meanwhile, the inbound flow of rice and other staples of daily life dwindled. Sensing weakness, Spain soon renewed its quest to conquer Jolo in 1875, prompting the Sultan and his coterie to decamp to the southern Jolo Island town of Maimbung.⁶¹ Moreover, midst this shifting landscape and the declining profitability of their port at Labuan, even the British, erstwhile defender of the Sultanate, started to discern the advantages of entering into an agreement with Madrid at the expense of Sulu.⁶² In the Protocol of 1877, the British thus acknowledged Spanish sovereignty over Sulu in exchange for the end of the naval blockade, open ports, and free and unlimited trading rights. A year later, the Sultan himself recognized

⁶⁰ Ibid., 117-119.

⁶¹ Ibid., 120-121.

⁶² Ibid., 104-105.

Madrid's authority. In spite of such blows, for a brief time, the Sulu system did evince some semblance of its old resilience. In exile at Maimbung during the 1880s, for example, the Sultanate managed to resume many of its old activities, exporting marine produce, welcoming foreign steamship lines, and perhaps most distressing to the Spanish, importing weapons. However, the Spanish navy maintained its blockade against indigenous *prahu*. By 1887, the exasperated military governor of Jolo launched a surprise assault on Maimbung in the middle of the rainy season, obliterating the Sultan's cotta, seizing a cache of weapons, and deporting a significant portion of the local population. Labuan's export trade in firearms, in turn, rapidly collapsed.⁶³ The unraveling of the Sulu system was nearly complete.

Moreover, this process of unraveling had already begun still earlier with the initial launching of the Spanish blockade. For the naval blockade that had afflicted Sulu since 1871 was about a transformation more subtle and sophisticated than the pulverization of local property and *prahu* might suggest. It represented something else besides the mere encirclement of a vexing island, or even the destruction of Tausug mobility. Rather, the Spanish blockade epitomized a much larger project: a project of exclusion. The blockade gave tangible expression to the view expounded by the Spanish that it was the commerce of indigenous Tausug, and indigenous Tausug alone, which constituted, *a priori*, a transgression, a violation of the proprieties of international law, a dangerous act of *smuggling*. Without ever trying to establish the particulars of any given case or to determine the culpability of individual sailors, the Spanish navy would automatically deem a Tausug ship guilty and subject it to summary justice. While occasionally stopped and impounded, especially at the height of the blockade before the Protocol of 1878, few European vessels suffered from the same presumption of malfeasance or the arbitrary execution

⁶³ Ibid., 104-105, 123-124, 129-130; Majul, *Muslims in the Philippines*, 363.

of violence that befell their counterparts from Sulu. Tausug merchants alone bore the assumed, inescapable taint of criminality.

The process of marginalization and criminalization, in turn, engendered a profound shift in the nature of Sulu's ties with the outside world. Before, Tausug rulers had dominated the external commerce of the kingdom, capitalizing on their own diasporic connections with Hadhrami Arabs to insert their goods into Islamic circuits of trade that reached out across the larger Indian Ocean world. The blockade, however, abruptly transformed the Tausug into an alien class of seafarers in their own waters. This shift compelled the Tausug to outsource their trade to another, hitherto subservient group: local Chinese traders.⁶⁴ Through their familial ties to the well-connected merchant houses and shipping companies of Singapore, these Chinese could freight goods on the one type of ship that garnered little harassment from Spanish patrols: European steamships. Thus, Chinese traders alone could move goods in and out of Sulu to international markets.⁶⁵ From such a privileged position, this community not only consolidated their dominance of local markets, but also interposed themselves as the primary purveyor of firearms to the Sultanate in Maimbung—the lifeblood of continued resistance against Spain.⁶⁶ In sum, the blockade rendered the Sultanate dependent on Chinese commercial networks.

The changing patterns of trade that propelled the ascent of Chinese traders in the Sulu realm, of course, did not qualify as “legal” to the colonial powers either. While connections and capital might have afforded Chinese merchants superior access to European ships, it did not alter the fact that those who secreted “illegal” weapons amidst “legal” cargo were still, just as much as their Tausug counterparts, committing a criminal act of “smuggling” in the eyes of both Spanish

⁶⁴ Ibid., 126-127.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 126-127, 129-130.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 130.

and British authorities. In his influential book, *Secret Trades, Porous Borders*, historian Eric Tagliacozzo identifies the symbiosis of permissible and impermissible trade as regular features of colonial economic life, observing that local traders often engaged “in a variety of legal and illegal activities simultaneously.”⁶⁷ In so doing, these smugglers engaged in a process Tagliacozzo denotes as “undertrading,” wherein goods pass “underneath, or at the legal and geographic interstices of, the majority of items being traded in this area.”⁶⁸ The case of Chinese gun smuggling into Sulu fits this “undertrading” pattern perfectly, as traders exploited legal shipping to conceal contraband weapons. Such activities, moreover, exposed traders to periodic reprisals, including the impoundment of goods, arrest, or in one notable instance, the expulsion of the entire Chinese community of Maimbung for suspected complicity in the firearms trade.⁶⁹

However, the conceptual framework of “undertrading,” by emphasizing the symbiosis between legal and illegal trade, also to some extent overlooks the ways in which anti-smuggling projects generated new hierarchies of inclusion and exclusion in Southeast Asian markets. At the apex of this hierarchy, European businesspeople who owned most of the international steamer ships often flouted smuggling laws and profited from illicit trades with relative impunity.⁷⁰ Lower down on the next rung, the Chinese endured greater risk of ruinous sanctions from the colonial authorities. However, this community could still straddle the boundaries between licit and illicit activity rather effectively, exploiting their indispensable role in colonial economies as cultural broker between Europeans and indigenous locals to avoid excessive interference from

⁶⁷ Eric Tagliacozzo, *Secret Trades, Porous Borders: Smuggling and States along a Southeast Asian Frontier, 1865-1915* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 9.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁶⁹ Warren, *The Sulu Zone, 1768-1898*, 123, 131.

⁷⁰ Chew, *Arming the Periphery*, 181-182.

the authorities.⁷¹ Moreover, by operating inside the colonial urban nodes, where, according to Tagliacozzo, “the state is somewhat blinded by the frenzy of activity,” Chinese merchants could conceal many of their activities in plain sight.⁷²

By contrast, the residents of indigenous polities like Sulu enjoyed none of the legal entitlements that accrued to residents of colonial cities. With their entire economy now deemed illegitimate—even if their products remained in demand—it proved difficult for Tausug to occupy the interstices between legality and illegality; they were, instead, seen as unvarnished criminals. As already mentioned, the unremitting assaults on *prahu* ships decimated the capacity of Tausug to carry goods across local seas, thereby depriving the Sultanate of control over its external business and shunting it to the lowest rung of emerging commercial hierarchies. The blockade, in sum, constituted a watershed moment of economic enclosure and dispossession.

This process of marginalization and subordination wrought by anti-smuggling campaigns would, in turn, entail grievous consequences for the future of Sulu—if not the precisely the consequences sought by the Spanish colonial regime. On the one hand, trade proscriptions did not compel Sulu to surrender, and if anything, the ensuing state of siege only heightened the value of firearms.⁷³ Thus, resistance would remain endemic not only after the Sultan formally relinquished control of Jolo to the colonial invaders, but also well into the American period. On the other hand, the very forces that made firearms such a desirable, albeit scarce, commodity also warped the local economy. With prices for Enfield rifles, swivel cannons, and other weapons skyrocketing, the trade in firearms captured an ever-growing share of local resources.

⁷¹ To understand influential position of Chinese communities in Straits Settlement, see for example Mark Ravinder Frost, “*Emporio in Imperio: Nanyang Networks and the Straits Chinese in Singapore, 1819-1914*,” *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 36, no. 1 (2005).

⁷² Tagliacozzo, *Secret Trades, Porous Borders*, 5.

⁷³ Chew, *Arming the Periphery*, 184-185.

Meanwhile, the ascendance of the Chinese siphoned surplus profit from local trade to businesses based in Singapore, while the criminalization of the entire economy likely made other prosaic commodities exorbitantly expensive. Thus, whereas before weapons safeguarded a cascading series of investments in more slaves, ships, and commodity production, by the 1880s, they contributed only to rear-guard resistance and a slow motion process of economic strangulation.

The 1890s and the end of blockade: towards a new regime of enclosure

Although the 1887 conquest of Maimbung, finally, occasioned a gradual relaxation of the Spanish naval blockade against Sulu, such a détente could not mask the fundamental economic transformations that had been wrought in the preceding decades. After a prolonged period of devastation and enclosure, it proved nearly impossible for Tausug seafarers to reclaim their own carrying trade, as Chinese migrants had entrenched their dominance in the exchange of goods and firearms. In the 1890s, meanwhile, the development of regular steam shipping lines to other areas of Mindanao, such as Cotabato, Davao, and Zamboanga, began to lure even those Chinese away from the Sulu Archipelago. With the most valuable trade now diverted, the exchange in Sulu waters was increasingly local and oriented toward basic subsistence. To the extent that surplus production did persist, moreover, it was conscripted into the resistance, purchasing guns from Chinese arm merchants rather than flowing into more potentially productive directions.⁷⁴

Moreover, beyond the pervasive repercussions of a nearly two decade naval blockade, Spain also began to experiment with new, more subtle methods of containing and corralling Sulu. One of the core elements of this approach involved the regulation of foreign ethnic groups who might function as intermediaries to global markets. The most well-known threat, of course,

⁷⁴ Warren, *The Sulu Zone, 1768-1898*, 130, 143.

arose from the Chinese and their participation in the firearms trade. Although too vital for the emerging colonial economy to expel entirely, the Spanish nonetheless experimented with new forms of social control, conducting surveys of the Chinese populations, mandating residency and registration requirements, and even enjoining anyone “wearing Chinese clothes” from involvement in the metals trade—a bald attempt to restrain the weapons trade.⁷⁵

While the Chinese constituted the most visible “middleman” diaspora subject to colonial regulations, they were hardly alone; the Spanish also placed heavy restrictions on the movement of foreign Arabs, sometimes expressly forbidding specific individuals to journey from one place to another. Some of these restrictions, of course, derived from the perceived role that Arabs, who comprised a disproportionate share of the Muslim *ulama* clergy in the region, might play in fomenting religious rebellion.⁷⁶ However, an economic dimension likely entered into this calculus too, as many of the most commercially successful *datu* were of Hadhrami Arab ancestry and had likely tapped into Indian Ocean networks of shared kinship, faith, and capital to develop their wealth.⁷⁷ Indeed, by the nineteenth century, the Hadhramaut constituted the most notable non-European commercial diaspora in Southeast Asia besides for the Chinese, with particular strengths in the fields of shipping, finance, and real estate.⁷⁸ Moreover, in stark contrast to the Chinese, Hadhrami shared religious affinities with the local population, and their claims to be descendants of the Prophet Muhammad provided an instantly intelligible claim to leadership.⁷⁹ Thus, as the Hadhrami played a growing role in nearby islands like Sulawesi and Borneo, it is not surprising that the Spanish might construe them as an especially menacing threat.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 131-132.

⁷⁶ Clarence-Smith, “Middle Eastern Migrants in the Philippines,” 427.

⁷⁷ Warren, *The Sulu Zone, 1768-1898*, 78-80.

⁷⁸ William Clarence-Smith, “Entrepreneurial Strategies of Hadhrami Arabs in Southeast Asia, c. 1750s-1950s,” in *The Hadhrami Diaspora in Southeast Asia: Identity Maintenance or Assimilation*, eds. Ahmed Ibrahim Abushouk and Hassan Ahmed Ibrahim (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 135.

⁷⁹ Ho, “Names beyond Nations,” 218-219.

Yet, in spite of their history in the region and their economic clout, the Hadhrami never solidified a strong foothold in the Sulu region during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Part of this is likely attributable to the deep penetration of the Straits Settlement Chinese networks in the 1870s and 1880s, which left little space for an inflow of Hadhrami Arabs to serve as middlemen brokers.⁸⁰ However, the Spanish also took direct steps to forestall such developments. In particular, it limited the movement of Arab migrants found in Sulu on the basis of their potential danger in the 1890s.⁸¹ The writings of the Sulu Sultan also suggest that the colonial state interfered with Hadhrami economic activities. In 1901, only two years after the Spanish evacuated from Mindanao, the Sultan sent this letter to his new American overlords:

I wish to inform you concerning the case of Tuan Sheikh Mustap of the Arab race...He is the teacher of us Tausugs from the time of my father, Sultan Muhammad Jamalul Ajam, the one that had the duty of caring for him since he came to Sulu from Mecca in 1877. He had become part of us Tausugs so that, if he desires to engage on whatever trade, he is one of us who should not pay fees.⁸²

This letter, of course, provides an apt reflection of the interweaving of commerce and religion, as the Sultan viewed pilgrimage by his Arab advisor not just as a spiritual obligation, but also as an economic opportunity. However, it also implies that the Spanish had not permitted Arab traders to trade freely. Whether the colonial state adopted any direct disincentives to Arab trade, they still constrained Hadhrami commerce. Thus, the Hadhrami population that flourished across much of the neighboring Netherlands East Indies only developed a tiny presence within Sulu.⁸³

Beyond the regulation of non-European middleman communities, colonial powers would also undertake more direct intrusions upon the commercial activities of Tausug themselves. The British, who codified their control of many ancestral Sulu domains on the island of Borneo as a

⁸⁰ Clarence-Smith, "Middle Eastern Migrants in the Philippines," 427.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Paduka Mahasari Maulana Sultan Hadji Muhammad Jamalul Kiram II to the Governor of Jolo, n.d., in *Surat Sug: Letters of the Sultanate of Sulu*, ed. Samuel K. Tan (Manila: National Historical Institute, 2005), 193.

⁸³ Clarence-Smith, "Middle Eastern Migrants in the Philippines," 427-428.

result of the landmark 1885 Sulu Protocol, moved first in this regard, erecting a customs office at a strategic chokepoint in the area, demanding the payment of a customs fee by Tausug traders, and recording the names of all passing ship captains. A year later, in 1888, the British Crown company responsible for North Borneo further enlarged these efforts by leasing the right to collect bird's nest at specific caves.⁸⁴ Furthermore, the British government even aligned with their Spanish counterparts on the munitions trade, consenting to an ambitious and multilateral regime of arms control in the 1897 Jolo Protocol treaty.⁸⁵ Amidst this flurry of activity, moreover, the Spanish also undertook new measures such as the levying of head tax upon all Sulu subjects, payable not in kind, but in Spanish currency.⁸⁶

Although most of these new measures would prove utterly ineffectual, they did nonetheless chart a colonial course for a new sort of economic intervention that went beyond those of the blockade era. Before, the surplus production of the Sulu Zone economy had existed outside the cash nexus of the European economic world, as the number of followers a *datu* could attract and the number of slaves he held represented the best markers of wealth. The institution of taxes and duties, however, would require Tausug merchants to convert such non-monetary assets into the sovereign currency of the British and Spanish governments, a process designed to draw them out of the barter and gift economies into familiar regimes of private property and capital accumulation.⁸⁷ In other words, it amounted to a new type of enclosure, an enclosure not only of entire Tausug islands, but also of Tausug individuals within discrete parcels of land and relations of labor. In the 1880s and 90s, the Spanish government did not have the resources to bring such a revolutionary vision to fruition, and they struggled to enforce their permit

⁸⁴ Majul, *Muslims in the Philippines*, 359; Warren, *The Sulu Zone*, 135-136, 140.

⁸⁵ Chew, *Arming the Periphery*, 163-164.

⁸⁶ Majul, *Muslims in the Philippines*, 364.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

requirements on mobile Chinese, to police the weapons trade, or to collect a head tax. However, the successor to Spain in Mindanao, the United States colonial government would commit themselves to such a transformation with renewed vigor.

The arrival of the United States

The dawn of the twentieth century brought with it a new colonial regime for the Philippines and Sulu. After more than three hundred years of Spanish rule, a swift succession of revolution, war, and imperial intrigue lead to the unceremonious ejection of the Iberians from their most prized Asian possession. In Spain's place arrived the victor of the Spanish-American War, the United States government. Although an insurrection by Filipino revolutionaries would quickly consume Luzon and the Visayas, miring the US Army in a bloody three year war of conquest, top officers did not lose sight of their far southern perimeter. In May of 1899, the Army Commander in Manila dispatched a small contingent of seven hundred troops to Jolo Island.⁸⁸ Hoping to secure their control with a minimum of tension, conflict, or most importantly, manpower, General John C. Bates entered into negotiations with the Sultan of Sulu in July. By August, the two sides struck an agreement that hewed closely to previous ones designed by the Spanish, as the Sultanate relinquishing sovereignty and the right to base troops in his domain in return for cooperation, respect for "the rights and dignities of His Highness the Sultan and his dattoes," and a generous subsidy.⁸⁹ The United States had thus completed its acquisition of Sulu—as well as its attendant history of political ambiguity, economic unruliness, and military conflict.

⁸⁸ Peter Gordon Gowing, *Mandate in Moroland: The American Government of Muslim Filipinos 1899-1920* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1983), 26.

⁸⁹ Gowing, *Mandate in Moroland*, 31-37.

Over the course of the next two decades, Sulu and the rest of Mindanao gained a reputation in the American colonial imagination as a den of resistance, religious fanaticism, and piracy, of treachery and deceit. The army fought a seemingly unending series of battles against rebels, from Panglima Hassan on the southern shore of Sulu,⁹⁰ to Datu Ali in the Cotabato region,⁹¹ to the restive peoples on the shore of Lake Lanao in north central Mindanao Island.⁹² Theft and robbery appeared endemic, and any semblance of law and order was tenuous. The surfeit of weapons which had washed ashore during the long nineteenth century fuelled what Americans believed to be intractable crime and disturbance. US officials deemed the sultan and *datu* wholly unreliable, liable to swear loyalty one minute and to lend their support to rebels the next.⁹³ This disorder and distrust, in turn, was punctuated by several episodes of spectacular violence visited upon local Muslims by US forces, most specifically the Bud Dajo and Bud Bagsak massacres on Jolo Island, which only served to entrench the view of Sulu as a hopelessly benighted place.⁹⁴ And over it all hovered the specter of the *juramentado*, that fearsome Muslim attacker who swore an oath of loyalty to God, swathed himself in white robes, and ambushed a poor, unsuspecting American with a jagged dagger before receiving his reward in paradise—a veritable forerunner of the suicide bomber of the late twentieth century.⁹⁵ Thus, for the Americans, Mindanao and Sulu became a place defined by turmoil, religious strife, and ongoing

⁹⁰ Samuel Tan, *Sulu under American Military Rule, 1899-1913* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1968), 55-59.

⁹¹ Thomas M. McKenna, *Muslim Rulers and Rebels: Everyday Politics and Armed Separatism in the Southern Philippines* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 94.

⁹² Henry Florida Funtecha, *American Military Occupation of Lake Lanao Region, 1901-1913* (Marawi City: University Research Center, 1979).

⁹³ Gowing, *Mandate in Moroland*, 117.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 160-165, 238-242.

⁹⁵ Stephen Frederic Dale, "Religious Suicide in Islamic Asia: Anticolonial Terrorism in India, Indonesia, and the Philippines," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 32, no. 1 (March 1988): 50-51.

warfare, a source of the vexing “Moro Problem,” a quandary in need of constant fixing.⁹⁶ This “problem” discourse has exerted a powerful sway on scholarly discourses of Sulu even to the present day.

However, within four years of their arrival in Sulu, it would soon become evident that Spain had not merely bequeathed to the United States a bounded set of territorial possessions or a legacy of protracted resistance; they had also transmitted to their successors a free-floating anxiety, a sometimes nebulous, but nonetheless very potent fear about the role of mobility and external connections in undermining colonial hegemony. As insurgencies flared, American military officers increasingly obsessed over what they perceived as the untrammelled capacity for movement among their foes, the ability of rebels to slip past the colonial net on small boats, to flit between innumerable islets, marshes, and channels undetected by the colonial state. Moreover, this mobility was not limited to local waters or even nearby stretches of British North Borneo just across the colonial boundary. US officers intuited that local connections at least had the possibility of merging and overlapping with networks that reached well past the immediate vicinity of Sulu to regional hubs such as Singapore, beyond to Hadhramaut and Mecca on the Arabian Peninsula, and even further afield to the Ottoman Empire of Turkey. Even the seemingly remotest of islands were interlaced with cosmopolitan hubs and distant capitals a world away. The small islets of Sulu thus did not exist at the far edge of the world, but rather as tendrils of networks that extended across the globe without end.

Two events in 1903 crystallized this American anxiety of connections without edge and the concomitant impulse to contain these mobile networks in any way possible, to in essence,

⁹⁶ See, for example, Najeeb Saleeby, *The Moro Problem: An Academic Discussion of the History and Solution of the Problem of the Government of the Moros of the Philippine Islands*, (Manila: Press of E.C. McCullough & Co., 1913).

resume the Spanish project of enclosure. First, US military officers began receiving hazy reports of a “new prophet” named Tungalan “who declared that he had been selected by Allah to preach to the people and teach them to mend their evil ways.” Colonel W.M. Wallace, the commander of the US Army Division of Mindanao, reported that “many Moros from other places went to see and hear” Tungalan, sailing in their stealthy *vinta* vessels to a small, remote islet named Pata to receive his ministrations. Besides for deriding “the Sultan and chiefs, whose injustice toward the people, he said, was the cause that the country was approaching ruin,”⁹⁷ the sermonizer also took direct aim at the United States. Asserting that “he could sink American vessels by merely pointing his finger at them,” Tungalan claimed that he could singlehandedly “make the Americans leave the country” and restore local rule. Moreover, the self-professed prophet invoked the distant figure of the Ottoman Caliph as the true protector of local Muslims, insisting that “he owed allegiance only to the Sultan of Turkey.” Through this blend of global resonances, religious charisma, and anti-American stridency, Tungalan continued to attract an ever-growing following, with the US governor of Sulu, Major Hugh Scott, reporting that “more than five thousand people went to Pata to see him” in one instance alone.⁹⁸

At the same time that Tungalan invoked the Sultan of Turkey and appeared on the cusp of launching a mass mobilization against US rule, American forces located another challenge to its authority in the external connections of Sulu. This time, the threat came not from a local Tausug, but instead, from a foreign Arab named Salib Masdali who had travelled to Southeast Asia and likely spent some time in Singapore, a notable hub of the Hadhrami diaspora in the region,

⁹⁷ Hugh Scott to the Secretary of the Moro Province, June 30, 1904, Jolo, P.I., Official File: Philippines, June 1904, Box 55, Hugh L. Scott Papers (hereafter cited as Scott Papers), Library of Congress Manuscript, Washington, D.C. Division (hereafter cited as LCMD).

⁹⁸ Appendix V, “Condition of Moro Affairs in Sulu Group (A, Annual Report of Col. William M. Wallace, Fifteenth Cavalry, Commanding; B., Quarterly Report for Third Quarter, Fiscal Year, Furnishing Details of Events and Circumstances,” *Annual Report of the War Department for The Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1903*, Volume III: Reports of Division and Department Commander (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1903), 357.

before continuing onward to Jolo Island. Like his counterpart on Pata, Masdali appealed to divine forces and purveyed charms that he guaranteed would make their wearers “invulnerable...and live forty years longer.” Similarly, Masdali also rejected American rule and lent his support to a rebel named Laksamana, even ensuring that his charms be “planted in the four corners” of Usap earthen fortress in a remote corner of Jolo Island. But perhaps the most menacing aspect of this spiritual figure, according to Governor Scott, derived from his alien origins as an “Arab from Mecca.” Indeed, Scott asserted that “these Arabs...are a great source of trouble in all Mohammedan countries on account of the reverence they receive from the Natives, who regard them as persons who act by divine authority.” As with Tungalan and his professed “loyalty to the Sultan of Turkey,” the larger Islamic world loomed threateningly over the horizon, a potential source of foreign conspiracies and religious affinities that could undermine US control in the region.

These two persons, embodiments of the perceived danger and peril posed by Sulu’s external connections to colonial rule, soon spurred the United States to undertake a twofold strategy of enclosure. In the case of the local threat, Tungalan, American officials pursued a literal policy of encirclement and eradication.⁹⁹ Specifically, Governor Scott dispatched three advanced steamships to surround Pata in January of 1904, all of which were “disposed about the island [as to make] all escape therefrom by boat” impossible.¹⁰⁰ With this naval cordon established, Governor Scott proceeded to go ashore with four companies of infantry to lay siege to the fort, or *cotta*, in which Tungalan was concealed. At first, American negotiators secured the peaceful surrender of the self-proclaimed prophet, and after a brief period of imprisonment

⁹⁹ Scott to the Secretary of the Moro Province, June 30, 1904, Scott Papers., 7-9

¹⁰⁰ Hugh L. Scott to the Secretary of the Moro Province, “Annual Report for the District of Sulu,” July 6, 1905, Official File: Philippines July-August 1905, Box 56, Scott Papers, LCMD, 2-3.

allowed him to return to his home islet of Pata on the conditions that he cease his preaching and abstain from any type of political activities.¹⁰¹ However, finding these restrictions too onerous, Tungalan slipped away from Pata and joined other rebellious Tausug in the vicinity of Talipau, on the southern coast of Jolo. In 1905, American troops once again surrounded Tungalan and his followers on a volcanic mountain, but this time acted with more ruthlessness, killing Tungalan in battle and burning the stores of rice collected by his followers.¹⁰²

US officers followed a similar strategy of encirclement in their pursuit of Salip Masdali, but added another key tactic in the case of this foreign Arab: exile. As with Tungalan, colonial commanders systematically surrounded and enclosed Masdali's contingent in Ipil, a mountainous and swampy area on the southern side of Jolo Island. Much like before, Americans exercised a modicum of restraint in that they sought the assistance of local interlocutors to negotiate the surrender of the combatant, this time sending the Sultan himself, a prominent datu named Maharajah Indanan and a coterie of "hadjis" to intercede on their behalf. This time, however, perhaps mindful of the escape of Tungalan a year earlier and also of the Arab ethnicity of Masdali, Governor Scott declined to imprison him or impose some type of ineffectual "probationary" confinement. Instead, noting that he "had been less than two years in the island," and that "during the Spanish period," Arabs like himself "were not permitted to land on account of the troubles they had instigated here," Scott ensured that Haji Masdali "was therefore deported to Singapore under an Act of Congress."¹⁰³ Fearing the destabilizing potential of mobile Muslims circulating from Mecca through the Indian Ocean to Sulu, US colonial regime moved, in this

¹⁰¹ Scott to the Secretary of the Moro Province, "Annual Report for the District of Sulu," 7-9.

¹⁰² Ibid., 6-7.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 3.

instance at least, to sever the connection between Sulu and the great hub of the insular Southeast Asian world, Singapore.

The cases of Tungalan and Masdali, in many respects, crystallizes the central, enduring tension that propelled so much of the history of Mindanao and Sulu between the eighteenth century: the tension between its outward-looking interconnectedness with the global economy and transnational Islam, on the one hand, and the ferocity of the imperial campaign to enclose the region, to exclude it from the riches and power that accrue from participation in international trade, on the other. Masdali, an Arab itinerant *alim* equally at home in the vibrant commercial hub of Singapore as in a *cotta* on southern Jolo, and Tungalan, a local peasant attuned to the politics of the distant Ottoman Empire, thus embodied merely the latest permutation in a long history of associations between the Southern Philippines and the larger Islamic world. Moreover, these hazards associated with the movement of arms, peoples, and religious ideologies only grew more acute by the early twentieth century. As the technologies of the telegraph and steamship compressed time and space like never before, increasing numbers in nearby Indonesia and Malaya ventured beyond local maritime waters into the larger Islamic world, making the *hajj*, attending schools in places such as Egypt, and bringing news of their journeys back home. Haji Masdali and Tungalan likely appeared to Americans officials as the vanguard of this larger “Pan-Islamic” movement, as menacing figures capable of merging pan-Islamic ideologies with local forms of Muslim resistance like the *juramentado*—a threat to be contained at all costs.¹⁰⁴

While the containment of Islamic connections played an important role in US efforts to control Sulu, they did not overshadow all other concerns; in fact, economic calculations emerged as the central element in the colonial project of enclosure. The case of Salip Masdali, in fact,

¹⁰⁴ For overview of Pan-Islam in history in Indonesia and elsewhere, see Anthony Reid, “Nineteenth Century Pan-Islam in Indonesia and Malaysia,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 26, no. 2 (1967): 267-283.

gestures to this related, but very distinct element, of transnational flows into Sulu. Singapore, the place to which American officials deported Masdali, did not just function as a hub of the Hadhrami diaspora or international Islamic networks. It also was the locus of global trading flows in the Southeast Asian world, a point of articulation between the economies of Europe or China and the local realms of the archipelagic Malay-Indonesian world. These webs of trade and commerce not only propelled Islamic mobility, but also disseminated capital, manufactures, and firearms to many indigenous kingdoms—including Sulu. It was, of course, precisely these subversive economic ties that had long constituted the unremitting object of Spanish attack. And it would not be long before such economic issues captured the attention of their American successors.

Although the Americans shared with their Spanish predecessors an abiding interest in the project of economic enclosure, of controlling and subordinating flows of commodities, capital, and merchants, they nonetheless brought to bear a more subtle, sophisticated approach. For example, the Americans never did resurrect that most infamous instrument of enclosure that defined the Spanish era: naval enclosure. Nor did they ever attempt to expel an entire group of people from their ancestral home, like the Samal from Balangingi Island, or to eviscerate an entire category of trading ship, like the Tausug *prahu*. Yet, beginning in 1903, the United States administration in the Sulu region, known as the Moro Province government, did undertake a series of measures that were, for all their seeming tameness, nevertheless more ambitious in their scope than anything pursued by the Spanish. Rather than attempting to destroy local economy through blunt force, the Americans in fact sought to re-make and re-fashion its very fundamentals, to re-order the relationships of property, currency, and law in such a way as to not only ensnare and entrap that Sulu as a collectivity, but also its individual inhabitants. In

comparison to the lurid descriptions of Islam and fanaticism, or the military campaigns of well-known American generals, these economic actions have attracted little scholarly attention.¹⁰⁵ However, officials in the fledgling Moro Province understood these policies as an indispensable component of conquest, a strategy for absorbing the multifarious agricultural and commercial activities of the Tausug—so long the wellspring of local autonomy and resistance—into the colonial sphere. Over time, the gap between such lofty colonial ambitions and reality would become evident, as much of the Tausug economy continued to operate beyond the ambit of American authorities. However, to acknowledge the limitations of colonial policy does not mean that it had little impact; in fact, it was these efforts that would explain much of the violence that did erupt, and ultimately, place the region on a dangerous path to poverty and marginalization within the emerging Philippine polity.

In 1903 US aspirations in Sulu began to come into focus with the enactment of two interlocking, intimately intertwined acts of legislation: the *cedula* tax law and the anti-slavery law. The *cedula* statute, the fifth act passed by the Legislative Council of the newly formed US Moro Province, provided for the levy of “an annual tax of one peso, Philippine currency, to be called the *cedula* or registration tax, from every male person of eighteen years and not more than fifty-five years of age.”¹⁰⁶ Act Eight of the Legislative Council, meanwhile, pronounced that “every person who buys, holds, sells or otherwise disposes of any person as a slave, or who directly or indirectly causes any person to be held in involuntary solitude...is guilty of slave

¹⁰⁵ For a criticism of the tendency to obsess over Islamic violence and *juramentado* in Mindanao, see Eduardo Ugarte, “Muslims and Madness in the Southern Philippines,” *Pilipinas* 19 (Fall 1992); for the tendency to focus on military battles, see Gowing, *Mandate in Moroland*, 21-42, 77-106, 148-166, 170-181, 230-241; also, Wayne Wray Thompson, “Governors of the Moro Province: Wood, Bliss, and Pershing in the Southern Philippines, 1903-1913,” (PhD. diss., University of California-San Diego, 1975); and, George William Jornacion, “The Time of the Eagles: United States Army and the Pacification of the Philippine Moros,” (PhD diss., University of Maine, 1973).

¹⁰⁶ “Act No. 5: An Act to Provide for the Imposition and Collection of a *Cedula* Tax,” Folder: Acts of Moro Legislature, 1903-1906, Box 216, Leonard Wood Papers (hereafter referred to as Wood Papers), Library of Congress Manuscript Division (hereafter referred to as LCMD).

holding” and would be subject to imprisonment for up to twenty years.¹⁰⁷ These two signal measures, among the very first items of business taken up by the new Moro Province, might appear to comprise two very divergent categories of statecraft. The *cedula*, as a tax, and a relatively modest one at that, fulfilled one of the most pedestrian requirements of any government: the collection of funds for its own survival. The anti-slavery law, by contrast, seemed to enunciate a high moral principle, affirming the profoundest tenets of post-Civil War American society and signaling a salutary spread of liberty to a formerly enslaved people. Yet, in spite of the ostensible ontological gulf between these two pieces of legislation, they would both play an integral role in the project of economic enclosure.

The *cedula* tax, in particular, entailed a more provocative challenge to Sulu’s prevailing social and economic arrangements of Sulu than a trivial one peso payment might suggest. Over a decade earlier, Spain had imposed a similar head tax of one *real fuerte* upon the denizens of the archipelago and elicited little protest. However, in that instance, the Spanish tacitly permitted the Sultan to pay the full amount of this tax on behalf of all his citizens. US officials, by contrast, would not countenance any such sleight of hand and insisted that all individual Tausug and Samal pay this fee individually, in spite of the fact that the preponderance of commoners did not partake in a money economy or earn cash. Traditionally, ordinary commoners on the islands of the Sulu chain engaged in subsistence agriculture, sometimes furnishing rice, basic handicrafts, or labor to *datu* headmen, in exchange for inclusion within a defensive-cum-raiding alliance. Thus, the deceptively innocuous and mundane *cedula*, in a single stroke, could attenuate commoner-*datu* bonds, transfer productive surpluses from local headmen to the colonial state,

¹⁰⁷ “Act No. 8: An Act Defining the Crimes of Slave Holding and Slave Hunting, And Prescribing the Punishment Thereupon,” September 24, 1903, Folder: Acts of Moro Legislature, 1903-1906, Box 216, Wood Papers, LCMD.

and compel common Tausug into a cash economy—a veritable social, economic, and political revolution.¹⁰⁸

Moreover, the operation of the *cedula* also involved an even more insidious form of personal enclosure. When an individual Tausug went to the office of their municipality or their sub-district treasurer to pay their tax, they would not simply receive a receipt, but would also need to “register.” Indeed, the *cedula*, also officially denoted as the “registration” tax, stipulated that all payees divulge all manner of personal information, including “the name of the person paying, his age, residence, place of nativity, his status, whether married or single, and his business occupation.”¹⁰⁹ The act of legislation also expressly stated the underlying logic of the legislation: to make each individual subject to the legal and administrative authority of the American state, or, to borrow a phrase from James Scott, to render Moros “legible.”¹¹⁰ Section three thus decreed the following:

The *cedula* or certificate of registration herein provided for may be used for the purpose of identification, admitted into evidence and must be presented by any one liable to pay such tax whenever (1) he appears in any court of the Moro Province, either as a witness in his own behalf in any civil proceeding, (2) he transacts any business with any public office or officer, (3) he pays any tax or receives money from any public funds, (3) he pays any tax or receives money from any public funds, (4) he acknowledges any document before a notary public, (5) he assumes any public office, whether by appointment or by election, and (6) he receives any license, certificate, or permit from any public authority.¹¹¹

The *cedula* registration, therefore, if successful, would yoke individuals to American laws, courts, and institution. In essence, it would transform Tausugs from anonymous members of indecipherable social formations, into a wholly transparent and intelligible subject of the colonial state. And for those who could not afford to pay for this privilege of subjectivization, the law

¹⁰⁸ Gowing, *Mandate in Moroland*, 143, 160; Michael C. Hawkins, “Imperial Historicism and American Military Rule in the Philippines’ Muslim South,” (PhD diss., Northern Illinois University, 2009), 123.

¹⁰⁹ Act No. 5: An Act to Provide for the Imposition and Collection of a *Cedula* Tax,” Folder: Acts of Moro Legislature, 1903-1906, Box 216, Wood Papers, LCMD.

¹¹⁰ James C. Scott, *Seeing like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 2-5.

¹¹¹ Act No. 5: An Act to Provide for the Imposition and Collection of a *Cedula* Tax,” Folder: Acts of Moro Legislature, 1903-1906, Box 216, Wood Papers, LCMD.

furnished a tidy solution: “imprisonment...shall be deemed a satisfaction of the tax and penalty and entitle the person convicted, at the expiration of his imprisonment...to the cedula.”¹¹² The cedula was thus backed with the full coercive power of the US Army.

Two weeks after the enactment of *cedula*, the Legislative Council then rushed headlong into another broadside against the existing arrangements of Sulu society with the abolition of slavery. Although the Spanish had dramatically curtailed large scale slave-raiding with their naval blockade, the relaxation of such policies, along with the vacuum in authority left by the Spanish-American wars, allowed for a small revival of the slave trade in the 1890s.¹¹³ American officials immediately elevated this issue, along with the cedula, to the top of their agenda. For all of its apparent dissimilarities from the issue of taxation, the act “defining the crimes of slave holding and slave hunting” served several complementary purposes.¹¹⁴ First, while one should not deny or overlook the incontrovertible humanitarian value of the anti-slavery law for those who stood to be released, from a strictly political vantage, the anti-slavery law further imperiled the autonomous resources of the *datu* class and made them ever more vulnerable to the machinations of the colonial state.¹¹⁵ Speaking for the entire *datu* class, the Sultan declaimed that “slaves are part of our property,” and that the protection of escaped slaves “is not just to me and my people.”¹¹⁶ If the *cedula* tax indirectly re-routed resources away from the *datu* toward US coffers, the anti-slavery directly expropriated one of their principal stores of wealth. Moreover, trade and exchange in slaves had also underwritten the fluid, shifting patterns of alliance and

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Michael Salman, *The Embarrassment of Slavery: Controversies over Bondage and Nationalism in the American Colonial Philippines* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 71-73.

¹¹⁴ “Act No. 8: An Act Defining the Crimes of Slave Holding and Slave Hunting, And Prescribing the Punishment Thereupon,” September 24, 1903, Folder: Acts of Moro Legislature, 1903-1906, Box 216, Wood Papers, LCMD.

¹¹⁵ Salman, *The Embarrassment of Slavery*, 81.

¹¹⁶ Sultan of Sulu to General Chaffee, 13 June 1902, translated copy, file 2869-7, Record Group 350, National Archives of the United States, Washington, D.C.; quoted in Salman, *Embarrassment of Slavery*, 81.

cooperation that defined Tausug politics, providing a reward that could galvanize followers and bind followers to a leader. Without access to enslaved persons, *datu* suddenly had much less leverage for exercising control over the local population.

Along with the deleterious impact upon the independent wealth and power of *datu*, abolition also undermined another key element of the old Sulu polity: its mobility. To say that slavery facilitated motion, of course, might seem like a cruel paradox, but placing normative judgments aside, the bondage and confinement of some individuals did supply a key impetus for the movement of others. Tausug seafaring in search of slaves, as already discussed, traversed much of the maritime space of littoral Southeast Asia, from the coasts of Luzon to Sumatra. While the earlier Spanish blockade severely confined the scope of these slave raids, they nonetheless persisted, and they provided alternative forms of movements to the increasingly hegemonic European shipping and naval routes. Slavery, in a sense, encouraged the continuation of mobilities that existed beyond the pale of colonial law or control. It is thus not surprising that the anti-slavery statute, while making slave ownership illegal and punishable by imprisonment, did not enumerate any specific provision for the systematic abolition of slavery. Instead, the only explicit remedy included in the act pertained to *transportation*:

Any vessel employed in the transportation of any person from or into the Moro Province...for the purpose of disposing such person as a slave or of causing such person to enter into involuntary servitude in the Moro Province or elsewhere, and any property, shelter, subsistence, arms, animas or equipments employed in the trafficking, shall be subject to confiscation.¹¹⁷

In this legislation, “any vessel employed in the transportation of any person...into involuntary servitude,” receives more attention than does the disposition of actual slaves with whom

American authorities might come into contact.¹¹⁸ The control of transgressive movements takes

¹¹⁷ “Act No. 8: An Act Defining the Crimes of Slave Holding and Slave Hunting, And Prescribing the Punishment Thereupon,” September 24, 1903, Folder: Acts of Moro Legislature, 1903-1906, Box 216, Wood Papers, LCMD.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

precedence over persons, thereby belying colonial professions of humanitarian concern. The project of enclosing Tausug *datu* and their economic activities thus undergirded even the most seemingly benevolent of colonial actions.

While the *cedula* and the anti-slavery comprised the opening salvos of the US campaign to re-fashion the autonomous Tausug trader into a compliant economic subject, these two measures alone could not achieve such a transformation. Without opportunities to earn cash, for example, the United States government could hardly expect the common Tausug to pay the *cedula*, and without a well-constructed juridical and regulatory apparatus, the colonial regime would probably struggle to extract taxes from even those capable of paying. Likewise, the mere pronouncement of restrictions upon the slave trade did not mean that the commodity flows which drove the trade in the first place—flows of maritime produce, opium, and firearms—would suddenly desist. Thus, over the course of the next decade, the US Moroland regime would continue to elaborate a wide variety of seemingly disparate measures designed alter the local economy, ranging from the construction of new marketplaces to customs levies, from new borders and legal systems to the impoundment of weapons, from land taxes to boat regulations. Some of these measures embodied the perpetuation of previous Spanish efforts to, in essence, seal off the people of Sulu from the outside world and contain them on their islands. Other programs, meanwhile, incarnated a new, more aggressive type of intervention into the granular details of everyday Tausug life, as US officials sought to re-map the relationships of landholding, commercial exchange, and political organization onto a legible colonial grid. However, for all their disparateness, these programs nonetheless shared an overarching mission: to constrain Tausug mobilities and channel Tausug economic activities to the benefit of the colonial state.

The most obvious continuity between the Spanish and American projects of economic enclosure came on the high seas. Although US officials never implemented anything as harsh or sweeping as the blockade that had enveloped Sulu in the 1870s and 80s, they nonetheless judged the porosity of maritime borders and the inflow of even the most prosaic of commodities, including rice, as dangerous to the interests of the colonial government. If the Philippine-American War briefly left the distant maritime spaces of Sulu in a military and legal vacuum, by 1904, US authorities took a much more active interest in hardening their southern perimeter. Specifically, Act Number 47 of the Legislative Council not only made the “use, registration and licensing of boats of Moro or Pagan construction” subject to the “provisions of the general customs administrative law of the Philippines Islands,” but also vested local authorities with unique coercive powers to enforce such laws. Indeed, under the act, district governors were “authorized to seize boats of Moro or pagan construction of less than ten tons burden found engaged in the coasting trade in violation of law, without warrant.”¹¹⁹ Six months before the Legislative Council even codified this new regime, moreover, the Customs Service had dispatched a special cutter cruiser, the *Tablas*, to patrol the waters of the Sulu Archipelago. Specifically, the government entrusted the *Tablas* with the responsibilities of informing the people that “free trade would be no longer permitted,” helping to “break up the smuggling trade from Borneo,” and ensuring that all local Muslims “license their boats” with the relevant authorities.¹²⁰ Control of maritime space thus vaulted to the top of the list of US colonial concerns.

¹¹⁹ “Act 47: An Act Subjecting the Use, Licensing and Registration of Boats of Moro or Pagan Construction to the Provisions of the General Customs Administrative Law,” May 4, 1904, Folder: Acts of Moro Legislature, 1903-1906, Box 216, Wood Papers, LCMD.

¹²⁰ James Miller, “Report of the Coast-Guard Cutter *Tablas*,” July 18, 1904, in *Report of the Philippine Commission*, volume xiii, part 3, *Annual Reports of the War Department for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1904*, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1905), 163, 183.

Once US authorities dispatched coast guard cutters to the shores of Sulu, they adopted a coercive, sometimes downright brutal, posture toward local maritime networks. Many of the violent actions taken by coast guard ships such as the SS *Tablas* can be attributed to the fact that they performed a myriad of auxiliary wartime duties. Indeed, on one tour alone, the SS *Tablas* assisted with the seizure of *vintas* “trying to escape with people wanted by the military authorities,” helped the Constabulary to “capture a cotta on Lapak Island,” and transported several troop companies to battle sites.¹²¹ However, the military dimension of their work often blurred with the more routine business of enforcing customs rules. On many occasions, customs agents pursued caches of smuggled, dutiable goods with overwhelming force; for instance once they went ashore at Maimbung in search of tobacco with twenty soldiers in tow, while another time ten soldiers scoured the Tausug village of Sitanki in search of scofflaw storekeepers.¹²²

These missions, in turn, frequently degenerated into arbitrary dragnets and violence. Although the Americans never came close to targeting all Muslim ships for destruction, as had their Spanish predecessors, US coast guard officials did from time to time impose summary examinations on all ships, as when the SS *Tablas* “cruised in Sibutu Passage and stopped for examination all Moro boats seen,” or when they did the same off the north coast of Tawi-Tawi.¹²³ Indeed, their “intention of licensing all Moro boats” provided a convenient pretext for such summary search and seizures.¹²⁴ While ensuring that all the ships in the waters near Cagayan de Jolo “were measured and licensed,” for instance, the *Tablas* then had four ships “seized off the coast of the island on their way in from Sandakan, all with contraband cargoes.”

¹²¹ Ibid., 182, 184.

¹²² Ibid., 185.

¹²³ Ibid., 183.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

Without any due process, “these were towed to Jolo, where they were disposed of.”¹²⁵ On more than occasion, moreover, such summary measures spiraled into violence, as the *Tablas* attacked fleeing Moro vessels several times, prompting even the US Governor of Sulu, Major Hugh Scott, to decry “the needless firing on Moros.”¹²⁶ . In sum, colonial intimidation and coercion reigned on the open seas.

The capricious and sometimes violent nature of coast guard patrols in the vicinity of Jolo would prove disruptive to Tausug maritime networks. Some of this disruption stemmed from assaults on the most threatening of illicit trades, slaves and guns; in fact, the officer in charge of the *Tablas*, James Miller, singled out these flows for particular mention, observing that “it is certain that Moros are sold as slaves and shipped in vintas,” while also noting that many of indigenous ships ran “arms” from Borneo to the Tataan Pass at the far southern end of the Jolo Archipelago.¹²⁷ However, adverse consequences also befell more mundane networks of indigenous trade and exchange. For example, the correspondence of Collector of Customs at Jolo, R.M. Corwine, is illustrative of how the task of searching for weapons intruded directly upon the mundane exchanges and mobilities of Sulu Muslims. Specifically, one letter sent to Corwine by a Cavalry Lieutenant reported that in one inspection of a ship that had “left Jolo for Dumagete and other ports to trade bark...knives, four barongs, 2 krises, and 2 spears were taken away from them by the Custom Official.” This confiscation proceeded despite the fact that the ships had been “licensed and numbered by the Collector of the Customs at Jolo, P.I., and the number of arms written in their pass book as being for their personal protection.” While the crew did ultimately sell “their bark and boat” before embarking “in another boat for Jolo,” the

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Hugh Scott to the Secretary of the Moro Province, June 30, 1904, Box 55, Official Files: Philippines, June 1904, Hugh Scott Papers (hereafter Scott Papers), LCMD.

¹²⁷ Miller, “Report of the Coast-Guard Cutter *Tablas*,” 183-184.

confiscation of weapons elicited predictable protests from the Moros, thus revealing the potential for disruption of trade in even the most basic of commodities.¹²⁸

Moreover, even when not directly connected with attempts to seize weapons or slaves, the new regime of maritime regulations still imposed considerable hardships and burdens on Sulu traders. For centuries, the people of the archipelago had travelled to and from North Borneo, traditionally an area under the suzerainty of the Sultanate, not just for maritime products valuable on international markets, but also for foodstuffs and other materials essential to everyday life. The US officer appointed as governor of the Sulu District, Major Hugh Scott, recognized this fact, noting that the people of the region “had been accustomed to bring their necessities of life especially rice from Sandakan, B.N. Norneo, usually in vintas.” However, besides for this trade in vintas “is now forbidden,” Scott also observed that any Moro wanting to engage such a trade now needed to adhere to a set of onerous and diversionary requirements:

They must bring it [commodities] in sapits [a larger type of ship], costing from 150 to 300 pesos for which they must pay the registering fees of from 40 to 80 pesos, and must go to Bongao, 155 miles, to clear for Sandakan, 110 miles from Bongao to pay for their duties, thus going and returning compelling them to go 530 miles instead of 166 miles, 364 miles of the way, as the direct distance to Sandakan is 83 miles, in a sea with exceedingly strong currents in which they are frequently drifted away and lost.

The consequence of such a system, according to Scott, was that “by the time they have paid for their goods, in Borneo, and the high duties in Bongao, they have nothing left to show for the labor of months.” In sum, the combination of harsh maritime policing and onerous regulation continued to make indigenous trade across the seas a difficult proposition.¹²⁹

However, while the United States embraced a restrictive maritime regime replete with regulation and coercion, ultimately, stinginess and the desire to stimulate “legitimate trade” with Jolo would not allow for the establishment of anything resembling the Spanish blockade of the

¹²⁸ Lieutenant Geo. T. Bowman to Mr. R.M. Corwine, Collector of Customs, Jolo, P.I., August 9, 1903, Folder: Official Files: Philippines, 1903, Box 55, Scott Papers, LCMD.

¹²⁹ Scott to the Secretary of the Moro Province, June 30, 1904, Box 55, Scott Papers, LCMD.

1870s and 1880s. In the years following the launch of the *Tablas* in 1903, the cash-strapped Philippine Bureau of the Coast Guard never could muster any more than two vessels and a few small gunboats at a time for the Sulu Seas areas, in spite of insistent pleas for, in the words of one future Moro Province governor, a “more rigid cutter service.”¹³⁰ Moreover, in the spirit of self-reliance, the US colonial government in Manila declined to furnish the Moroland Province with any dependable revenue stream, instead making their entire budget contingent on internal taxes like the *cedula*, as well as customs receipts collected from within its borders.¹³¹ Thus, the local authorities could not go too far in discouraging trade lest it entirely squelch its source of income. If the United States wished to control and channel the commerce of Sulu, Moroland Province officials came to recognize that cordoning off the seas would not be enough; they would also have to move their project of enclosure ashore.

The first major land-based initiative to re-orient the people of Sulu away from “smuggling” toward “legitimate” trade appeared in 1904 with the establishment of Moro Exchange. The basic principles of the Moro Exchange, on their face, appeared straightforward enough. Major John P. Finley, the governor of Zamboanga Province and the initial progenitor of the Moro Exchange, conceived them as a safe venue for “Non-Christians” to trade their goods and as a stimulus for the production of valuable commodities by the local population.¹³² To attract commerce, these exchanges would supply colonially-guaranteed “fair” and “average” prices, a commodious space for sleep to those traders who had journeyed far from home, and even halal food suitable for the Muslim population.¹³³ Moreover, ubiquitous bulletin boards

¹³⁰ Tasker Bliss to Governor General of the Philippine Islands, February 2, 1907, Folder 60: February 19-30, 1907, Tasker Bliss Papers (hereafter Bliss Papers), LCMD.

¹³¹ Gowing, *Mandate in Moroland*, 124.

¹³² John P. Finley, “Remarks upon the Tribal Ward System of Government for Moros and other non-Christians,” File: Mindanao and Sulu, P.O.--“reports, etc., 1908-1912”, volume 7, Dean Worcester Philippine History Collection, University of Michigan Special Collections.

¹³³ Hawkins, “Imperial Historicism and American Military Rule,” 122.

posted the price of goods at foreign markets like Singapore and Hong Kong, reflecting a certain aspirational globalism; indeed, US authorities invested a great deal of energy in attracting overseas shipping lines and making the Moro Exchanges into viable sites of international commerce.¹³⁴ After Governor Finley opened the first Exchange in Zamboanga City in 1904, they quickly proliferated across the Mindanao and Sulu region, with 25 operational by 1908, including an especially profitable branch opened in the Jolo town center.¹³⁵ In sum, American administrators believed that the Moro Exchanges constituted a harbinger of economic uplift and development to come.

However, the discourse of economic uplift, in many respects, concealed an even more radical vision at the core of the Moro Exchange Program, a vision for restraining the mobility of the Tausug and enmeshing them within a complex of property, legal, and financial relationships that would, inevitably, bind them to the nascent colonial order. This comprehensive rationale found its fullest expression in the writings of none other than Governor Finley, the initial founder and proponent of the Exchanges. The major posited that most of the problems confronted by the US colonial rulers, in one way or another, stemmed from “the migratory plan of life” that prevailed in the region. For too long, Governor Finley lamented, “a nomadic life has unfitted” the Moro “to submit to restraint” not just on the seas, but also in the mountain fastness of the various islands of the archipelago.¹³⁶ Indeed, since the enactment of the cedula in 1903, Finley believed that locals had only fled deeper into the interior, attempting to “remain beyond the reach of ordinary travel by government officials,” and “to trade with ambulante Chinos...in isolated places.”¹³⁷ To reverse this situation, force would be insufficient; some sort of incentive to attract

¹³⁴ Gowing, *Mandate in Moroland*, 127.

¹³⁵ Hawkins, “Imperial Historicism and American Military Rule,” 127.

¹³⁶ Finley, “Remarks upon the Tribal Ward System of Government,” 8

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 11.

the locals to a more sedentary and “productive” life was needed; therein entered the Moro Exchange.

Above all else, Finley argued that by providing a substantial material reward far in excess of what the *datu* had previously supplied, and by “showing them [the Moros] that a living gained through legitimate trade is more profitable,” the Moro Exchanges would prove irresistible.¹³⁸ The compelling logic of the markets appeared, to Finley anyways, incontrovertible. “The laborer,” intoned Finley, “however ignorant and poor is entitled to the product of his labor.”¹³⁹ By guaranteeing “all classes of Non-Christians the privilege of selling the products of their labor at the prevailing market price,” the Exchanges would work “for the good of all” and “primarily for the good of the native producer.”¹⁴⁰ Moreover, Finley contended these marketplaces would finally lure local Tausug into a cash economy, as it “affords the non-Christian a money-return for his labor and products, not a substitute which has no convertible value.”¹⁴¹ With this money, Muslims would “secure the standard money by which they could their obligations (taxes) to the government.”¹⁴² The Moro Exchange would thus play the indispensable role in luring the Moro from the rugged mountains and jagged shorelines into the open for colonial rule.

Having drawn Muslim Filipinos from the impenetrable wilds of land and sea to a place “where government can observe and confer with them,” Governor Finley argued that these Moro Exchanges would, in turn, unleash a cascade of salutary transformations across Mindanao and Sulu. Most immediately, Finley believed that the promise of profit could help to alleviate the endemic conflict that had beset the region since the Spanish era, and in fact, “prepare the way for

¹³⁸ John P. Finley, “The Organization and Management of the Moro Exchange System of the District of Zamboanga,” pg. 2, File: Mindanao and Sulu, P.O.--“reports, etc., 1908-1912”, volume 7, Dean Worcester Philippine History Collection, University of Michigan Special Collections.

¹³⁹ Finley, “The Organization and Management of the Moro Exchange System,” 1.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹⁴¹ Finley, “Remarks upon the Tribal Ward System,” 10.

¹⁴² Finley, “The Organization and Management of the Moro Exchange System,” 1.

the complete disarming of the Non-Christians.”¹⁴³ In turn, by promoting “legitimate trade” and by opening “the way for them to place the products of their labor in the channels of the world’s trade,” the Moro Exchanges would, once and for all, finally deter “piracy,” “barter,” commerce with “ambulante Chinos” and other, presumably illegitimate forms of economic activity.¹⁴⁴ Moreover, Finley believed that the Moro Exchange would also spur a fundamental re-orientation in the relationship of locals to property, settlement, and even the natural world around them. In no uncertain terms, the Governor proclaimed that the markets “will lead with directness and certainty to the holding of lands in severalty by the non-Christian and the establishment of permanent homes.”¹⁴⁵ Along with a comfortable “homestead,” this Exchange would also re-constitute the most elemental, even biopolitical, aspects of Moro life, re-shaping their relationship with the land, plants, and even animals. Rather than devoting themselves to skimming the sea, Moros would now turn toward “increased development of raw products” on land and farms.¹⁴⁶

In sum, through the irresistible enticement of profit, Finley thus imagined that the Moro Exchanges, in one bold stroke, would disarm the Tausug, discourage them from barter and piracy, completely revolutionize their extant systems of landholding, and draw them into the paternalistic embrace of the colonial regime. Rather than a mobile population with their own weapons and subversive connections to the outside world, the Tausug would thus be transformed into simple yeoman farmers who worked tidy plots of land and sent off their produce to global markets through the intermediary of American-backed steamship services. The people of Sulu would not simply be enclosed by blockades on their island, but also be contained on land by

¹⁴³ Ibid., 2.

¹⁴⁴ Finley, “Remarks upon the Tribal Ward System of Government for Moros,” 11.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 10.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

enclosures of private property. Nothing, Finley averred, “could be more important for their regeneration along lines that would make for their ultimate civilization on a secure foundation.”¹⁴⁷

Of course, by casting the “Moro Exchanges” as a virtual panacea for all that ailed the American administration of Moroland, it seems possible that Governor Finley perhaps overestimated their catalytic power. In explaining why these marketplaces would peaceably achieve “disarmament” or make people embrace “land holding in severalty,” the Governor could not really muster anything more than a few nostrums about the benefit of “honest living and honest labor.”¹⁴⁸ Moreover, the few actual mechanisms he attempted to outline for drawing Moros to the Exchanges, such as allowing the Moros to pay *cedula* taxes at the market, do not seem to stand up well to scrutiny. For example, Finley argued that because they could deduct *cedula* payment from the profit earned at the market, rather than making a separate payment, “all sense of a burden and antipathy to direct taxation” would be removed; local Muslims would consequently flock to the Exchanges.¹⁴⁹ However, if a local was already inclined to shirk the obligations of paying a *cedula*, as Finley himself acknowledged was often the case, why would they be so eager to relinquish a portion of profits to the government? Likewise, while perhaps logical in the abstract, why would local Muslims who came to trade goods at the market suddenly embrace the notion of tending a discrete plot of land, even if the Government did enact a homesteading law and provide a few incentives for the purpose? It seems the grandiose aspirations of the scheme were perhaps destined to greatly exceed what could realistically be expected on the ground.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Finley, “The Organization and Management of the Moro Exchange System,” 3.

¹⁴⁹ Finley, “Remarks upon the Tribal Ward System of Government for Moros,” 10.

However, Governor Finley did touch upon one aspect of the emerging legal and political terrain that might have some hope of bringing his Moro Exchange plans to fruition: the new Tribal Ward System. This new initiative, which authorized a modicum of self-administration and self-government to local Muslims, might appear at first glance to bear little connection with the Moro Exchanges. According to this statute, each of the five district governors of the Moroland Province, all American soldiers, were required to “delimit those portions of the district inhabited by Moros...into tribal wards, having reference when possible to natural objects and boundaries, in such manner that a single race or homogeneous division thereof shall occupy.”¹⁵⁰ In turn, the District Governor also needed to appoint an indigenous headmen for each ward, and, “when practicable, give preference to the member of the race or tribe at present recognized among his people as their chief.”¹⁵¹ These wards would then be subdivided into even smaller districts with an indigenous deputy headman each.¹⁵² Such provisions, in many respects, ran contrary to the fluidity of Tausug social relations, with their ever-shifting alliances and patterns of allegiance, but for the Americans, that was precisely point. By inscribing reliable local agents and investing them with the authority to act as police, enforce all colonial laws, and report crimes to their American superiors, US administrators hoped to bring fixity and order to what they perceived as social chaos.

Although none of the initial provisions of the Tribal Ward Law pertained directly to commerce or the Moro Exchanges per se, colonial rulers nonetheless recognized in them a potentially powerful agency for promoting their economic agenda of enclosure. In particular, Governor Finley hoped to synchronize the interests of the *datu*, newly appointed throughout the

¹⁵⁰ “Act Number 142: An Act Providing for the Organization and Procedure of Tribal Ward Courts,” October 6, 1905, Folder: Acts of Moro Legislative Council, 1903-1906, Box 216, Wood Papers, LC.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Ibid.

Province as headmen and deputy headmen, with the successful operation of the Moro Exchanges. Making note of the fact that the colonial regime had “prohibited slavery...and thus destroyed the source of revenue of many native chiefs,” Finley recognized the necessity of some alternative income stream even beyond the meager stipends supplied by the colonial government to those chiefs participating in the Tribal Ward System. He therefore counseled that “it was advisable to offer them an opportunity to make an honest and lawful living through the Moro Exchange system.”¹⁵³ Meanwhile, by installing headmen and deputy headmen as superintendents of many of the stations of the Moro Exchange scattered across the wards of the Moro Province, *datu* would enjoy an advantageous position to profit from trade. Moreover, Finley also suggested that while the US regime could not countenance outright debt peonage, it could allow for a form of arbitrage to determine what debt a peasant might owe to a *datu*, and then to compel the debtors to “pay the just obligations in trading through the Moro Exchange.”¹⁵⁴ All of these measures, Finley hoped, would reconcile the *datu* to the new economic order and persuade them to serve as loyal lieutenants.

Furthermore, once co-opted into the Exchange, Finley observed that the leading headmen and deputy headmen of the Tribal Wards would have many potent instruments for helping it to succeed and prosper. For example, instead of conducting commerce in remote areas or with the unregulated and supposedly unscrupulous Chinese, headmen could leverage their authority to direct “all non-Christian trade through these markets.”¹⁵⁵ Even more importantly, the government had invested the tribal ward officials with a critical supervisory role over almost all

¹⁵³ Finley, “The Organization and Management of the Moro Exchange System,” 1.

¹⁵⁴ Finley, “Remarks upon the Tribal Ward System of Government for Moros,” 16.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 7.

aspects of economic production in the region. Indeed, Tribal Ward had enumerated responsibilities and powers sweeping in their scope, including:

To visit every family in his Rancheria once in two weeks and ascertain their conditions as to health, any contagious diseases, the occurrence of death, the cultivation and harvesting of crops, land fenced and properly cared for, sufficient food and clothing for members of family, conditions of domestic animals as to disease, serve court papers and make arrests.¹⁵⁶

In this way, the officials of the Tribal Ward system would not only be involved with the granular, day-to-day economic activities of commoner Tausugs, but would also have ample opportunity to influence the type of crop cultivated or their selection of domestic animal. They could supervise the construction of fences and the maintenance of private property, thereby contributing to the vision of a colonially controlled geography of capitalism replete with enclosed spaces for agriculture. These headmen could even intervene in the most intimate of concerns, such as health and the control of the body. All of these powers of supervision, in turn, would be reinforced by coercive legal and police powers. Tribal Ward System could thus, in essence, do much more than steer economic activity towards the Moro Exchanges, although this did constitute a key objective of officials like Finley. It could also, if successful, reify and give concrete expression to the vision of colonially controlled capitalism that had, for so long, proven elusive first to the Spanish and now to the Americans.

Beyond its direct connection to the Moro Exchanges, moreover, or to the urge to fence in private property and make Sulu safe for a domesticated sort of colonial capitalism, the Tribal Ward System also promoted a specifically spatial sense of enclosure. For centuries, the constant churn of shifting alliances and allegiances so characteristic of Sulu politics had defied any sense of a stable geography, as different areas would sometimes cast their lot with one leader, then switch to another who could provide more spoils, and then join another group still. *Datu* roamed

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 5.

across the lands, alternately raiding and wooing the people they encountered. The tribal ward system, by contrast, sought to demarcate clear jurisdictions with fixed leaders. As John Finley noted, this system of administration called not only for the “division of non-Christian territory into Wards with boundary laws lines well marked,” but also for the appointment of one, single headman “in charge.”¹⁵⁷ This headman, in turn, would report to an American Deputy District Governor and be responsible for the execution of US law and the deployment of a police force on behalf of the colonial authorities. Besides for territorializing issues of leadership and authority, Moro Province statutes also made clear that organization of such wards should proceed “in such manner that a single race or homogenous division thereof, shall occupy, as nearly as possible, the territory actually occupied by it present.”¹⁵⁸ Thus, colonial officials hoped this putative system of “self-government” would cut across the kaleidoscopic interplay of various kin groups, political alliances, and ethnicities that had for so long characterized social life in Sulu, making local society more legible and, hence, controllable. Moreover, the Tribal Ward System pushed its logic of enclosure even further down into the recesses of local life, partitioning each ward into smaller “districts” under the supervision of “deputy headmen.”¹⁵⁹ This further subdivision helped to ensure that the tidy boxes and divisions of the Tribal Ward System would, to some degree, insinuate itself into the lived experience of the vast majority of Sulu residents. In sum, the Tribal Ward System thus embodied US colonial endeavors to bring order to the messiness and perceived unruliness of Sulu life through the elixir of geographic enclosure.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 4.

¹⁵⁸ “Act No. 39: An Act Temporarily to Provide for the Government of the Moros and Other non-Christian Tribes,” February 19, 1904, September 24, 1903, Folder: Acts of Moro Legislature, 1903-1906, Box 216, Wood Papers, LCMD

¹⁵⁹ Finley, “Remarks upon the Tribal Ward System of Government,” 4-5.

The Tribal Ward System and the Moro Exchanges on the land, together with the Customs Regulations and anti-smuggling measures on the seas, thus comprised the two essential components of the US strategy to enclose Sulu within a grid of colonial hegemony. If these two components worked in tandem, harmoniously, US officials believed, maybe they could finally succeed at conscripting the long autonomous local economy into the colonial sphere. The second Governor of the Moro Province, General Task Bliss, expressed this vision rather succinctly in a letter where he envisioned Coast Guard Cutters intercepting “roving bands of Joloano Moros” whom “commit some act of piracy,” to show them that “the only place where he can live is at home under his lawful headmen.”¹⁶⁰ Through a seamless net on land and sea, Tausug mobility would be restricted; the great indigenous economic power would finally be vanquished. But, could this actually succeed?

Resistance, resilience, and the emerging disconnect

The US project of enclosure in Sulu did not go unchallenged. Over the course of the first two decades of American colonial rule, the multidimensional campaign to contain and control the people of the region, to restrict their mobility and confine them to easily controlled wards or markets or customs houses, provoked a considerable backlash. Sometimes this backlash assumed the forms of open, spectacular rebellion. Outright battles and attacks, especially in the period before 1906 but also after, periodically punctured the relative state of calm on the islands of the Sulu Archipelago, while the infamous *juramentado* attacks by individual Muslims periodically claimed the lives of American soldiers or businessmen. Various forms of violence on the seas, which could entail raiding, theft, arson, and even killing, on occasion afflicted coastal areas—

¹⁶⁰ Tasker Bliss to Leonard Wood, January 29, 1908, Folder 88: 1908 January 1-February 6, Bliss Papers, LCMD.

albeit to an extent perhaps out of proportion with the reputation of Sulu as a den of piracy. But even more important than the direct acts of defiance on land and at sea were the mundane, everyday acts of non-compliance and non-participation in the nascent grid of colonial enclosure. Vintas would continue to sail between islands, people flitted across borders, and commodities circulated without passing through customs houses. Moro exchanges would be bypassed and commerce would be transacted far from the oversight of colonial officials on isolated shorelines and densely forested mountains alike. All the while, however, as the social and commercial life-world of Sulu continued to pass through porous boundaries, ever resilient, unable to be eliminated or corralled, a growing disconnect would emerge between the visible pathways of colonial commerce and the invisible, increasingly circumscribed networks of local Tausug. While never contained in the tidy grid of colonial control by the desultory efforts of enclosure, the commerce of Sulu would become progressively more marginalized, excluded, and shunted aside, disarticulated, if you will, from the global networks of exchange with which it had once been a proud participant. This disconnect between global-cum-colonial networks of exchange on the one hand, and the resilient, but excluded local networks of Sulu, on the other hand, would emerge as the dominant feature of local history.

Much of the open violence that did erupt in the first years of American rule emanated from the earliest acts of enclosure, the anti-slavery laws and the cedula tax. For instance, the infamous 1903-04 uprising spearheaded by Panglima Hassan, which wore on for nearly six months and occasioned some of the heaviest fighting ever seen on Jolo Island during the American period, stemmed in large measure from the slavery issue.¹⁶¹ Although born into a commoner family in the Looc area of eastern Jolo Island, Panglima Hassan had nonetheless risen

¹⁶¹ Salman, *The Embarrassment of Slavery*, 102.

to become one of the most formidable of local leaders in the late nineteenth century, piecing together a wide network of alliances—it was said that he could summon five hundred warriors almost instantly—and accumulating a significant number of slaves along the way.¹⁶² Hassan initially evinced a willingness to follow the Sultan in his acceptance of the new American regime, but after colonial officials refused to return his twelve runaway slaves and rumors began to spread of an impending abolition, he turned decisively against them.¹⁶³ After explicitly condemning US policy vis-à-vis slavery in October of 1903, Hassan and four hundred of his followers, armed with the Remington, Mauser, and German Express guns that had flooded into the region over the past half-century, launched an assault against US troops.¹⁶⁴ For over a month, the uprising consumed much of Jolo Island, resulting in the death of tens of American soldiers and hundreds of Muslim fighters. Even after US soldiers finally tracked Hassan down and killed him in March of 1904, his memory would continue to incite rebellion for years to come¹⁶⁵.

If some slave traders and *datu* like Hassan opted to confront American forces directly on land, others sought to leverage local forms of mobility to wage a more multifaceted type of resistance campaign. For example, a compatriot slave trader and ally of Hassan's, a man named Pala, responded to the death of the venerable Joloano leader by relocating to an island off the coast of British North Borneo in December of 1904 and biding his strength there. Besides for organizing a strong network of followers on both sides of the American/British colonial divide, Pala also managed to cultivate close contacts among the British merchant community and secure a reliable source of firearms from a British trader. Eventually, after spearheading destructive raids against various European communities as retaliation for the colonial refusal to return

¹⁶² Gowing, *Mandate in Moroland*, 157.

¹⁶³ Salman, *Embarrassment of Slavery*, 102-103.

¹⁶⁴ Tan, *Sulu under American Military Rule*, 55.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 55-59.

runaway slaves, Pala secreted himself back into Jolo. Once back home, he invoked holy war against the infidel American invaders and mobilized a diverse band of followers. For much of the spring of 1905, Pata would lead a stealthy campaign of resistance from sea, navigating along the shoals and difficult-to-see islets of the region, periodically emerging for small raids against US troops or larger scale assaults on the walls of Jolo. With much of the population aiding and abetting his endeavors, fear gripped the American colonial establishment. Only in May did US troops manage to drive Pala inland from the seas and kill him in battle, but not without both sides suffering heavy casualties and death tolls first. Pala's resistance campaign would persist, moreover, even after his demise until November of that year, when US forces publicly executed one of his most prominent followers, a man named Sariol.¹⁶⁶

At the same time that anti-slave measures so incensed many Tausug leaders, the *cedula* tax and other intrusive measures also spawned widespread dissatisfaction among commoners. The most infamous clash over this head tax unfolded a year later than the Pala uprising, in March 1906, at the steep volcanic mountain of Bud Dajo, about six kilometers away from Jolo town. The onset of the disturbance came only after the collection of the *cedula* began in earnest in 1905 after several delays and postponements. Although over 40,000 individuals paid the *cedula* tax, shattering all records, it also aroused considerable antipathy among local population, who saw it not only as an affront to their own personal autonomy, but even to Islam and the integrity of their larger community.¹⁶⁷ Various tribal ward leaders and headmen began reporting that "this tax was still most unpopular among the Moros, many of whom declared they would die before they would pay it."¹⁶⁸ By May of 1905, a group of Muslims numbering several hundred fled their

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 63-69.

¹⁶⁷ Gowing, *Mandate in Moroland*, 123.

¹⁶⁸ Hugh Scott, "Annual Report for the District of Sulu," July 6, 1905, Official File Philippines_July-August 1905, Box 56,

homes on the valley floor and ascended to the top of Bud Dajo Mountain to escape the rule of colonial authorities, to cultivate crops, and to create an independent encampment of sorts.¹⁶⁹

Scott initially expressed a wary acceptance of the community on Bud Dajo and permitted them, for the time being, to stay. However, his tolerance was very much provisional. By February of 1906, a new wave of thefts and depredations swept over the district adjacent to Dajo, appearing to lend further verification of the malign intentions of those on the mountain. The time for tolerance had come to an end.¹⁷⁰

As Bud Dajo posed a growing danger to the emerging infrastructure of enclosure, whether in its flouting of the cedula tax or its open defiance against the headmen of the Tribal Ward System, the United States Government soon decided it had no choice but to “clean” up the volcanic encampment.¹⁷¹ In March of 1903, the Governor of Moroland Province, General Leonard Wood, dispatched a disproportionate force of eight hundred soldiers to forcibly remove the nearly one thousand Tausug Muslims by then living there. With only crises, spears, barond, bolos, and a few rifles at their disposal, the Bud Dajo encampment stood little chance. An unceasing barrage of artillery fire produced the virtual annihilation of the nearly one thousand local Muslims encamped there, including many women and children as well as men. The widespread destruction elicited accusations that the American troops had perpetrated a massacre. In essence, fear and protest over the cedula had precipitated the greatest single loss of life that Moroland would ever witness.¹⁷²

Scott Papers, LCMD, Washington, DC.

¹⁶⁹ Joshua Gedacht, “Mohammedan Religion Made it Necessary to Fire: Massacres on the American Imperial Frontier from South Dakota to the Southern Philippines,” in *Colonial Crucible: Empire in the Making of the Modern American State*, eds. Alfred W. McCoy and Francisco Scarano (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2009), 404-405.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 405-406.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 406.

¹⁷² Tasker Bliss to Leonard Wood, January 29, 1908, Folder 88: 1908 January 1-February 6, Bliss Papers, LCMD.

In the years after the Bud Dajo massacre, much of the remaining resistance materialized not on land, where Americans enjoyed an overwhelming military advantage, but on the seas and isolated islands, shorelines, and shoals. The Governor General of Moroland Province, General Tasker Bliss (r. 1906-1909), especially fretted over the refuge such maritime spaces furnished to malcontents. Although Bliss expressed general pleasure with the state of law and order in his domains, and seemed nonplussed about the prospect of a general uprising, noting the presence of “Good Moros . . . and there are plenty who deserve that name,” he did fret a great deal about the seas. In particular, he wrote of concerns about the potential of mobile bands of Tausug and Samal Muslims from Jolo to sow discord in January of 1908:

I find that a number of roving bands of Joloanao Moros – who have cast off allegiance to their headmen and who are recognized as renegades and outlaws by their own people—have taken refuge on various of the little islands about Jolo and between there and here. They remain quiet for a while, living by fishing, and then they commit some act of piracy on their own people, the news of which drifts in long afterwards.¹⁷³

Bliss’ worries were quickly substantiated when one of the most fearsome “pirates” of the American colonial period, a Balangingi Samal named Jikiri, began wreaking havoc upon the fisheries, coastlines, and towns of Jolo. A former betelnut carrier for the Sultan, Jikiri fled from the disgrace of conquest in Jolo in 1907 and pivoted to a life of maritime piracy. At first, the Samal only had a small band of seven followers, but as news of his exploits circulated across the archipelago, he soon attracted many more. Among other pursuits, the Samal harassed fishermen, raided villages, and killed coastal residents—seemingly standard piratical activities.¹⁷⁴

For the most part, US officials interpreted the actions undertaken by Jikiri as little more than wanton destruction and murder on the high seas; however, they also conformed to a discernible pattern of economic resistance against the maritime hegemony of colonial rule. For

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Gowing, *Mandate in Moroland*, 179.

example, when Jikiri targeted Chinese storefronts in Maimbung, Jolo and elsewhere for destruction, he did not simply seek to sow gratuitous havoc or act merely out of ethnic animus, although that probably was a part of it.¹⁷⁵ The Samal also leveled a blow against the most visible manifestation of Sulu's commercial eclipse, of a people whom, through the conjunctures of colonialism and naval blockades, had displaced local merchants as the primary intermediary with global markets, and thereby siphoned much of the surplus profit to foreign commercial nodes such as the Straits Settlements of Singapore. Likewise, the especial animosity displayed by Jikiri toward pearl fishermen was not just happenstance. As the Sultan of Sulu reported to his American interlocutors, Jikiri raided the pearling vessels of American companies and Chinese merchants because of the fact that US administrators did not respect or acknowledge Tausug claims to the pearl beds of the region.¹⁷⁶ In fact, United States officials levied all sorts of arcane regulations and requirements on the collection of pearls, mandating, for example, that pearl fishermen pay for a license to collect pearls of a large size, and prohibiting collection of smaller pearls altogether.¹⁷⁷ For many Tausug, who could not afford such burdensome fees, these regulations constituted a grave affront and jeopardized the traditional mainstay of their trade. It is thus hardly surprising that Jikiri should harass the pearling industry with particular zeal.

The actions of Jikiri and other "roving bands" at sea, along with audacious uprisings by Hassan, Pala, and the people of Bud Dajo on land, thus conveys an image of open revolt and tumult against the colonial project of enclosure. These high profile incidents, however, belie the relatively peaceful conditions that often prevailed in Sulu. In particular, after 1906, the overwhelming force deployed by the US regime, for the most part, quelled the armed resistance

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 179-180.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 61.

that had existed on land. Likewise, in spite of the persistent threat of “pirates,” actual raids remained infrequent, and maritime commerce, for the most part, proceeded unmolested.

Governor General Bliss soon pronounced peace and order conditions satisfactory, while military planners expressed sufficient confidence in the state of the region to remove both troops from land and light draft gunboats from the seas.¹⁷⁸ One more major battle in 1913, at the Bud Bagsak volcano, would claim a huge toll in Tausug lives and also prove somewhat deadly for US soldiers.¹⁷⁹ Yet, the difficult work of conquest had more or less been completed by 1906, if not earlier. Outright resistance, in spite of the recalcitrant image of “fanatical Moros,” faded away.

The abeyance of direct military clashes, however, did not signal a capitulation to US economic measures or a submission to their fate as enclosed colonial subject. Whereas earlier *cedula* and anti-slavery laws spurred direct acts of defiance, in later years, local Tausug cast aside rebellion for more circumspect forms of non-compliance and non-participation. Aided by the desultory nature of US efforts to enforce rules and incentivize participation in colonial economic projects, Muslim Tausug in many ways performed the simplest act of resistance: they carried on with the economic activities as they had before, trading and moving across borders into Borneo, skirting past customs houses, and disregarding Moro Exchanges. The mobile patterns of Tausug life, both at land and on sea, continued unabated, while the vision of individual plots of land and private property remained elusive. Yet, even as the Tausug continued to exercise their own autonomous economic prerogatives and defy the dictates of the colonial regime, this continued resilience would also produce something of a paradox. For just as the US regime came to recognize the futility of overly zealous intervention in the commercial affairs of

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 178.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 238-242.

the Tausug and thus moved towards a more laissez-faire approach; the marginalization of the Sulu economy would not cease. It would only deepen.

The area in which the United States government first apprehended the most manifest shortcomings of its approach to enclosure was control of the maritime spaces of the Sulu Archipelago. Indeed, after open rebellion and military imperatives began to lose some of their potency, American officials began to focus on the seas as one of the most glaring deficiencies in the grid of US power. Nobody paid more attention to this problem than Governor General Tasker Bliss. From the outset of his three year tenure that started in 1906, Bliss immediately understood that in spite of all the pretensions to influencing Tausug economic activity, a vibrant local maritime economy remained almost entirely independent of the colonial sphere. In a remarkable letter to the Governor General of the Philippines, Bliss depicted the almost total disjuncture between colonial and indigenous networks of trade:

Down here there are two distinct classes of trade. One is that which is carried on by means of regular Steamship lines to meet the demands of Americans and foreigners generally, and for the better class of Filipinos, Chinos, etc... The other class of trade is that which is carried on by the innumerable native boats to meet the demands of Moros and Pagans who have never bought their goods at the centers of commerce, but rely solely on what is brought to them by these native boats.¹⁸⁰

Governor Bliss thus grasped the almost total incommensurability and lack of overlap between indigenous and economic colonial networks.

At the same time, Bliss conceded that in spite of previous efforts to rein in smuggling, solidify the maritime border with British North Borneo, and extract revenues from customs payments, colonial authorities exercised almost no influence over indigenous exchange. “Ever collector customs in the Moro Province,” lamented Bliss, “will tell you that he could not suppress smuggling within 500 yards of his custom houses.”¹⁸¹ Indeed, the Moro Province

¹⁸⁰ Tasker Bliss to Governor General of the Philippine Islands, February 2, 1907, Folder 60: 1907 January 19-February 10, Bliss Papers, LCMD.

¹⁸¹ Bliss to GGPI, February 2, 1907, Folder 60: 1907 January 19-February 10, Bliss Papers, LCMD.

governor believed that the sheer density and vibrancy of local boating networks rendered such efforts at control an exercise in futility, as “I can walk take a fifteen minutes walk along the beach, and pick out a hundred boats that in five minutes are ready to make the voyage to Celebes or to Borneo.”¹⁸² The “innumerable native boats,” in turn, could “land in countless places, far beyond the reach of the government.”¹⁸³ Moreover, the various attempts to concretize international boundaries by placing customs houses at Sitangki and Bongao, two unpopulated locales at the far southern extremity of the Sulu Archipelago border with Borneo, could only serve to repel indigenous traders:

Bongao and Sitanki are not centers of population, but wretched little fishing villages. If there were large and well-to-do populations at these places demanding imported goods, boats would doubtless enter there, pay their duties and dispose of their commodities. How can you expect one of these numberless boats to enter these places simply to have their goods taken out, opened and examined, pay the duties on them, and then put them back on their boats in order to take them to the other places where they want to sell, when they can just as well proceeded at once to these latter places and sell their goods without having paid duty on them.¹⁸⁴

Bliss thus understood that intensified customs controls would simply drive commerce further from the view of colonial administrators. The governor, in turn, concluded that “nothing but the absolute prohibition of all trade by native boats would accomplish” the end of this indigenous exchange, and “this, of course, is not to be thought of.”¹⁸⁵

The glaring obviousness of Tausug commercial autonomy, not to mention the permeability of local borders with British North Borneo, also shone through in a remarkable 1908 proposal made by the Insular Collector of Customs, Colonel Colton. In an effort to enforce a new law prohibiting the import of opium into the Philippines Islands, Colton devised a scheme that would, in effect, detach the southern portion of the Sulu Archipelago from the rest of the

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

colonial geo-body. According to Governor Bliss, Colonel Colton promoted the “establishment of a line from Balabac (South of Palawan) diagonally across to Jolo and around the South end of Jolo” that would in essence demarcate a reconstituted boundary. To the south of that line, in areas that Colton understood to be hopelessly indefensible, there “is to be declared a Free Zone so far as customs laws are concerned” wherein “no revenue cutters would be kept.” Instead, Bliss noted, Colton’s scheme would ensure that “importation into the territory contained therein from Borneo and elsewhere would be permitted without interference, in fact would be made perfectly legal”—a tacit recognition of the organic commercial links across that maritime frontier. By contrast, all incoming trade to the north of this new line would receive a radically different sort of treatment:

All dutiable articles that should be attempted to be brought across this line, whether into Jolo or Mindanao or Northwards to Palawan and the Visayas, would be regarded for customs purposes as coming from a foreign country, even though they came from Cagayan de Jolo, Siasi, Tawi-Tawi or another place within the so-called Free Zone in the Moro Province.

Moreover, Bliss described how Colonel Colton’s plan would provide for a very strict policing of that line by “fast cutters...which will constantly patrol from Balabac to Jolo and around the south coast of Jolo, overhauling every boat that they see.” Indeed, while this scheme guaranteed that “the inhabitants of the Free Zone would get without customs charges such articles as their *vintas* could bring in from Borneo,” those who continued farther north would see their cargo summarily “seized.” Furthermore, this redrawn border would constitute a more defensible boundary owing to its reduced length, as it would “very materially restrict the line of observation.” In turn, “if a boat runs away the proposition is to fire upon it and if necessary sink it.” In sum, Colonel Colton’s plan for the retrenchment and fortification of the border represented both an

acknowledgement of the frontier's porosity, as well as the extraordinary lengths that would be required if there was to be any hope for sealing it off.¹⁸⁶

In the end, Governor Bliss strenuously objected to such a harsh policy, and in fact, advocated for a much more modest sort of enclosure than had previously been imagined. Bliss noted that the hardening of maritime boundaries would constitute "a pretty hard proposition," arguing that "the proposed plan of rigid inspection of every boat... would be bad enough; to further make any article found in the boat liable to confiscation will most certainly breed trouble."¹⁸⁷ Instead, the Bliss counseled a cautious and circumspect strategy. On the one hand, he encouraged a much more limited investment to safeguard those ships, particularly of Chinese and Filipino provenance, by establishing a more "efficient cutter fleet that will cruise steadily for several months on the outskirts of these Islands toward Borneo and the Celebes."¹⁸⁸ On the other hand, however, the Governor also contended that "illicit smuggling," for all its attendant ills, "does not affect our revenue," and should thus be tacitly permitted. Indeed, bereft of cash and more likely to go "without...imported cloth, brasses, opium, tobacco and such like stuff" than to "buy it at our ports of entry," Bliss did not even imagine Muslim traders as part of a licit maritime economy.¹⁸⁹ They simply existed outside of it, and should, where possible, be left to their own devices. So long as Chinese merchants across Sulu could find it "easier and cheaper...to buy duty paid goods in Jolo and have them transported to them on the subsidized boat BORNEO than it is to smuggle them in direct from Borneo," the Muslim traders would be of little consequence to colonial designs.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁶ Tasker Bliss to Leonard Wood, January 8, 1908, Folder 88: 1908 January 1-February 6, Bliss Papers, LCMD.

¹⁸⁷ Bliss to Wood, January 8, 1908, Folder 88: 1908 January 1-February 6, Bliss Papers, LCMD.

¹⁸⁸ Bliss to GGPI, February 2, 1907, Folder 60: 1907 January 19-February 10, Bliss Papers, LCMD.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

In effect, Bliss had thus began, whether consciously or unconsciously, to chart a new course for enclosure, a course at once more limited and pragmatic in its scope, but also more insidious to the economic prospects of Tausug Muslims. The Moro Province governor understood that attempting to stem trade across the frontier, i.e. “smuggling,” which had gone on, in his estimation, since “times past immemorial,” would constitute a foolhardy endeavor. To “practically put a stop to the movement of Moro vintas...will result,” Bliss argued, “in a feeling on the part of the native population toward the Government which will make progress in this Province absolutely impossible.”¹⁹¹ However, at the same time that the Governor advocated for tolerance of Muslim trade, he also sought to promote subsidized shipping lines that would lure not Muslim, but Chinese merchants into a visible, and of course, dutiable, colonial network of commerce stretching from Zamboanga and Jolo in Mindanao, to Manila in the Philippine Islands, to Singapore in the Straits Settlement, and ultimately beyond to Europe beyond. Muslim Tausug would be, in effect, excluded from this emerging colonial nexus. In this world, Chinese and American merchants would capture the preponderance of surplus profit, while Muslims would only receive the scraps of leftover goods and commodities. Thus, while the strategy of Bliss would allow for the illusion of mobility and downplay the importance of artificial national boundaries per se, it would actually increasingly circumscribe the Tausug within a small and marginalized maritime world; in effect, it would complete the work started many decades earlier by the Spanish, disarticulating Sulu from the global economy once and for all.

A similar calculus of colonial retrenchment, modified enclosure, and economic marginalization would unfold not only on the seas, but also on land. The principal engine of economic regeneration and control ashore, the Moro Exchange, of course, was not equivalent to

¹⁹¹ Bliss to Wood, January 8, 1908, Folder 88: 1908 January 1-February 6, Bliss Papers, LCMD.

the customs houses and coast guard cutters of the maritime world. While Customs agents only sought to wring out fees from passing vessels and coast guard ships functioned as the coercive arm of the state at sea, Moro Exchanges functioned primarily as a marketplace, a potential stimulus to legal and legible commerce. Moreover, the Moro Exchanges did not uniformly repel actual Tausug, as did the Customs Houses. The Jolo city branch of the exchange, for example, initially attracted a substantial number of participants, and in its first year of operation, 1906, generated a substantial business of 362,892 pesos.¹⁹²

However, even as the Moro Exchange included a unique stimulative dimension and experienced a degree of success in its outreach to Muslim Tausugs, it still contained within it much of the coercive logic underlying colonial projects at sea. Those who participated in the Exchanges, for example, could only do so by demonstrating proof of payment of the cedula, while US officials also required the payment of a separate fee as a percentage of profits made in a given day.¹⁹³ Far more damaging than fees or expenses, however, was the efforts by US officials such as John Finley to make Moro Exchange the only legal venue for the conduct of trade, thus prohibiting any sort of trade outside its perimeter. In the view of one employee of the Moro Province government, these restrictions would have a very detrimental effect upon local Muslim commerce:

The Moro Exchanges, compelling as they did, all persons to trade there and nowhere else, made the small producer 50 miles, possibly from the nearest exchange hesitate before making such a long journey, and being forbidden to trade except at these exchanges, the natural increase that otherwise would have accrued, little stores of trading station that might have sprung up, were suppressed.¹⁹⁴

In effect, then, the colonial government had sought to forcibly channel indigenous commerce through its exchange system. Given the autonomy and independence of Tausug economic

¹⁹² Hawkins, "Imperial Historicism and American Military Rule," 128.

¹⁹³ Finley, "The Moro Exchange System," 5.

¹⁹⁴ Illegible to John J. Pershing, March 21, 1914, Folder 5: Governor of the Moro Province 1, 1910-1913, Box 370, John J. Pershing Papers (hereafter known as Pershing Papers), LCMD.

networks, of course, it is not surprising that many would “hesitate” to visit the markets and would go on to conduct their own exchanges beyond the oversight of the colonial regime. Indeed, after a promising start, sales at the Jolo market would decline in subsequent years.¹⁹⁵ Soon, in the words of the colonial employee, “these exchanges died a natural death.”¹⁹⁶

In turn, as the Moro Exchanges petered out, repelling Tausug away from the colonial sphere, US administrators started to slacken their promotion of attendant transformations in private property and agriculture. For example, John Finley regarded the Moro Exchanges as a catalyst not just for economic growth, but for a totalizing revolution in the organization of local life, as local Muslims would inexorably be drawn to cultivating cash crop commodities on individual plots of land. To some extent, residents of Sulu did cull a bit more of the resources that were easily gleaned from the land of the island, like hemp, copra, and timber, but they showed little proclivity for cultivating more intensive cash crop commodities like coffee or rubber.¹⁹⁷

Moreover, the Tausug betrayed even less inclination to embrace a system of private property and individual land holding. Despite longstanding intentions to conduct a land survey, for example, a key prerequisite for any viable system of private property, the Moro Province struggled to get one off the ground. As late as 1914, the governor of the newly constituted “Department of Mindanao and Sulu,” Frank Carpenter, could observe that “no surveys nor data of even approximate accuracy exist as to the total area of this class of land in the department.”¹⁹⁸ Carpenter ascribed this dearth, in large measure, to the absence of demand for any such

¹⁹⁵ Gowing, *Mandate in Moroland*, 228.

¹⁹⁶ Illegible to Pershing, March 21, 1914, Folder 5: Governor of the Moro Province 1, 1910-1913, Box 370, Pershing Papers, LCMD.

¹⁹⁷ Gowing, *Mandate in Maroland*, 190.

¹⁹⁸ Frank Carpenter, “Department of Mindanao and Sulu Report,” *War Department Annual Reports 1915*, vol.3 *Report of the Philippine Commission* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1916), 370.

undertaking by the local residents. “Under the conditions...of the lack of homeseekers on the public domain in these islands,” asserted Governor Carpenter, “such a survey as made in the central and western States of the Union would doubtless be lost in greatest part and would be for every reason an ill-advised expenditure of public funds.”¹⁹⁹ Moreover, the governor observed that hostility to any effort at performing such a survey was especially intense in Sulu:

In...Sulu, and to a lesser degree in other provinces, there were at the beginning manifestations of popular opposition on the part of Mohammedan natives to the inauguration or continuation of surveys. On a few occasions there was a display of force, at least in numbers, and an apparent determination to resist the advance of the surveyors at whatever cost.²⁰⁰

The persistent opposition to land surveying suggests that there was little appetite for the regime of private property envisioned by Finley and others. Although US colonial administrators never abandoned their surveying missions in Sulu, they did respond by only pursuing them in a very cautious and slow fashion. Surveyors would not cover the preponderance of Sulu until fifteen years later, in 1929.²⁰¹ In the meantime, the prevailing patterns of land ownership in Tausug society, instead of undergoing a sweeping transformation, would be left for the most part undisturbed.

Meanwhile, as the desultory policies of the colonial government at once pushed local Muslims away from colonial society, while simultaneously acknowledging their autonomy, the end result was a shift in the locus of economic activity away from Sulu. This shift manifested itself in several ways. First, as Tausug fled from the commercial spaces of colonially controlled Jolo, the Chinese consolidated their stranglehold on commerce in the area. According to a 1915 US constabulary report on Sulu, Major James Livingston reported that “commercial business at

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 371.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 372.

²⁰¹ James Fugate to The Director of Bureau of Non-Christian Tribes, March 25, 1930, File 14: Report of the Provincial Governor of Sulu, 1929, Box 29, Joseph Ralston Hayden Papers (hereafter cited as Hayden Papers), Bentley Historical Library, Ann Arbor, MI (hereafter cited as BHL), 14.

Jolo, both foreign and inter-island, is practically in the hands of a limited number of resident Chinese.”²⁰² Of 27 “principal” merchants listed in the report, 25 were Chinese, and the other two were not Tausug, but American and Filipino Catholic²⁰³. These Chinese merchants directed most of the foreign commerce going in and out of Jolo, or at least, all of that commerce visible to colonial authorities on the three ships trawling between Jolo and Manila and the two ships plying the route from Jolo to Singapore.²⁰⁴ This situation, Livingston believed, placed the Chinese in a commanding position:

Jolo is the distribution center for all supplies to the Sulu Archipelago, both coastwise and foreign, and all of the petty shipkeepers so widely stationed therein are merely...dependent on the few Chinese capitalists who reside in transact all their business from Jolo.²⁰⁵

Thus, whereas Tausug had once carried on their own commerce with the world, they now relied almost exclusively on Chinese. This dominance guaranteed that the Tausug would lose out on much of the surplus profit from commerce on their islands, and in fact, stoked considerable tension. In 1919, the Chinese Chamber of Commerce sought assistance from American authorities, due to the “frequent murder committed on the persons of the Chinese residents of Jolo, as well as the unprecedented attempts at all cost their stores.”²⁰⁶ These violent attacks represented an apt index of the economic eclipse and dispossession of Tausug within their own lands.

At the same time that a century-long displacement of the Tausug from the controlling perches of the local economy approached its conclusion, much of the colonial projects of

²⁰² Major Charles S. Livingston, “Constabulary Monograph of the Sulu Province,” November 15, 1915, File 35, Box 29, Hayden Papers, BHL, 168.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, 170-171.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 168.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 169.

²⁰⁶ Ho Kim Swee, President of Chinese Chamber of Commerce, to Governor General of the Philippine Islands, July 18, 1919, File Entry Number: 10582-24 (7), Record Group 165: Military Intelligence Division, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.

economic development unfolded well outside the boundaries of the Sulu Archipelago. For example, many more steamships called into the ports of Zamboanga and the emerging southern Mindanao port city of Davao than they did Sulu, the traditionally dominant harbor port of the region.²⁰⁷ Likewise, many of the schemes to promote settler agriculture, plantation agriculture, and commercial development concentrated on the same region of southern Mindanao around Davao. Abaca, otherwise known as hemp, emerged as the principal commodities for global exchange²⁰⁸. Thus, whereas for centuries Sulu had prevailed in the competition with the peoples of southern Mindanao, it was now the Davao region, and specifically the many Catholic Filipino, Japanese, and American settlers migrating to the region, that were driving the local economy.²⁰⁹ The marginalization of Sulu and its local maritime economy was deepening.

Conclusion

The history of enclosure in Sulu presents a study in contradictions and paradoxes. Colonial efforts to contain the mobilities of the Tausug people gyrated wildly between the poles of wanton brutality and extreme restraint, imperious dicta and strategic disengagements, spectacular failures and notable successes. Sometimes, the Spanish regime navy indiscriminately pummeled every single Tausug ship they encountered, while the Americans might slaughter a group of discontented Muslims who fled to the inland heights of an extinct volcano. Other times, the Spanish allowed the Sultan of Sulu to travel to Mecca and Singapore, where he purchased weapons, while the United States would almost beg local residents to participate in newfangled

²⁰⁷ For more on the rise of Davao, see in particular Patricio Abinales, *Making Mindanao: Cotabato and Davao in the Formation of the Philippine Nation-State* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University, 2000), 69-93.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 74-87

²⁰⁹ Patricio Abinales, *Orthodoxy and History in the Muslim-Mindanao Narrative* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2010), 78-83.

exchanges. Once in a while, colonial powers would demand a cessation to almost all maritime trade or impose a new regime of regulation and licensing, while on different occasions, they would withdraw almost all their coast guard vessels or barely muster the wherewithal to conduct land surveys, a basic prerequisite of colonial capitalism. Tausug vinta ships, in turn, might defy the restrictions of a colonial age, disregarding the artificially demarcated boundaries of foreign powers and plying the waters as they had for centuries, while simultaneously, the power and economic might of the Sulu region, previously so formidable, waned. Bowed yet unbeaten, controlled and left to its own devices, mobile but curiously circumscribed, Sulu fits uneasily into almost all of our received categories of the colonial past and Islamic-imperial encounters.

Yet, it is precisely these contradictions and paradoxes that hold the key to explaining the unique history of enclosure in Sulu. The power and wealth and autonomy of the Sulu Sultanate, so pronounced at the mid-nineteenth century, of course could not go unchallenged. Thus, the Spanish and the United States both deployed overwhelming force to dislodge Tausug from the their connections with the outside world, cutting them off from contact with places like Singapore or Mecca, and generally disrupting the cosmopolitan networks from which the people of Sulu had derived their wealth and political power. At the same time, however, the mobility and fluidity of Tausug society made Sulu a difficult place to control. Rather than intervene extensively on land or sea and thus provoke reprisals, colonial powers, and the United States in specific, instead allowed the Tausug to continue to sail to Borneo, to skirt regulation and property constraints, to carry all manner of commodities and yet not to pay duties.

However, this tolerance, sometimes tacit and sometimes explicit, also came with a heavy price. By simultaneously casting Tausug maritime networks as illicit while not intervening extensively in it, by branding local trade as smuggling and local merchants as pirates all the

while taking little in the way of coercive measures against them, it in effect marginalized those very networks. The colonial powers essentially reduced the value of the smuggled goods that would have come with strict enforcement, while still excluding them from the nodes of colonial commerce. In fact, by making participation in colonial networks expensive while also permitting de-facto indigenous commerce a workable option, encouraged Tausugs themselves to choose non-participation and non-compliance without active resistance. All of this ultimately served to put the Tausug in a unique position: a still mobile, but now disconnected and dispossessed people, able to roam across the local seas and even remote islands, yet disarticulated from the colonial-cum-global economy. Whereas once before the people of Sulu had been cosmopolitan and connected seafarers bringing wealth and power to their kingdom, now they still wandered, but as a relatively impoverished and disempowered echo of the past. Sulu might not provide a traditional example of enclosure, of people bounded by private land and impermeable borders. However, it did provide an example of the negative flip side to the indigenous mobilities so often vaunted, idealized and celebrated by scholars—especially in a colonial world.

Chapter 4

Cosmopolitan Enclosures: Trade, Blockads and Islamic Reform in Colonial-Era Aceh, 1873-1939

Although the history of Dutch intervention in Aceh shared much in common with their colonial counterparts three thousand miles away in the lands of Sulu, it also provides a subtle study in contrasts, an example of how slight differences in geography and local society could generate substantial divergences in the techniques and technologies of enclosure. On the surface, convergences and resonances between these two cases might appear overwhelming. At almost the precise same moment in the 1870s, the Dutch and Spanish both plunged into ill-conceived wars of conquest against powerful local sultanates without any clearly defined objectives, endgames, or strategies for cultivating local collaborators. These poorly planned ventures inflamed stiff resistance and ensured a decades-long slog of pacification. In their wars against Aceh and Sulu, moreover, both colonial powers encountered dynamic local kingdoms that not only enjoyed long, vibrant histories of connection with fellow Muslims across the Indian Ocean world, but were also in the process of being revitalized and remade by changing patterns of global trade. As a consequence, the pressing exigency for the Dutch in Aceh, just as with their Spanish and American counterparts in Sulu, was to find a means to contain and isolate their foes, to disconnect powerful Islamic sultanates whose ties and networks extended across the globe

without edge or end. The long war in Aceh, as in Sulu, thus became a struggle to enact a project of enclosure.

However similar the contours of contention might be in these two Islamic kingdoms, Aceh still posed some unique challenges that militated against an aggressive policy of enclosure. For example, both sultanates drew strength from their deep connections to the Islamic world, from flows of Hadhrami Arabs to their shores, as well as a legal system grounded in the doctrines of the Shafi'ite school of religious jurisprudence.¹ Nevertheless, as a kingdom sitting astride the maritime routes of the eastern Indian Ocean, Aceh had long experienced a greater density of contact and interaction with the wider Islamic world than did its peer in the Sulu Archipelago. Since the sixteenth century, according to the infamous Dutch colonial scholar Snouck Hurgronje, "we see there that the religious pandits who held mastery in the country were not Acehnese, but either Syrians or Egyptians who came to Aceh from Mekka, or else natives of India."² This influx of *ulama* from abroad intersected with a devout local population to catalyze rich tradition of Sufi religious scholarship and disputation, traditions that garnered Aceh the moniker of "Gate to Mecca," or *Serambi Mekka*. The density and intensity of Islamic flows, in turn, which persisted well past the kingdom's sixteenth century "Golden Age," eventually made the task of colonial disconnection and enclosure even more daunting than in Sulu.

¹ Thomas M. Kiefer and Clifford Sather, "Gravemakers and the Repression of Sexual Symbolism: The Case of Two Philippine-Borneo Muslim Societies," *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land-, en Volkenkunde* 126, no. 1 (1970): 76; Cesar Adib Majul, *Muslims in the Philippines* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1973; reprint, Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1999), 57 (page citations are to the reprint edition); Engseng Ho, "Names beyond Nations: The Making of Local Cosmopolitans," *Etudes Rurales* 163/164 (2002): 228; Peter G. Riddell, "Aceh in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries: *Serambi Mekka* and Identity," in *Verandah of Violence: The Background to the Aceh Problem*, ed. Anthony Reid (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2006), 42; Anthony Reid, "Habib Abdur-Rahman Az-Zahir (1833-1896)," *Indonesia* 13 (April 1972): 37; Azyumardi Azra, *The Origins of Islamic Reformism in Southeast Asia: Networks of Malay-Indonesian and Middle Eastern 'Ulamā' in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004), 55.

² Snouck Hurgronje, *The Acehnese*, trans. A.W.S. O'Sullivan, vol. 2 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1906), 12.

Another factor that complicated enclosure in Aceh came in the form of trade and the accidents of geography. While both sultanates constituted important nodes in larger commercial networks, Aceh had the distinction of lying just a few hundred miles across the narrow Straits of Malacca from larger, British-controlled entrepôts in Penang and Singapore. Over the course of the nineteenth century, Acehnese *ulèëbalang* chiefs forged a thriving exchange in pepper with Chinese merchants in the Straits Settlement, an exchange that generated substantial profits for residents of the British colony and carved out a vocal constituency for free trade. By contrast, however important a role British munitions played in the rise of the Sulu Sultanate, the Tausug kingdom remained much more peripheral to the economic and strategic calculations of the Straits Settlement. The deeper integration of Aceh into Straits trading networks and its proximity to the Southeast Asian hub of the British Empire thus imposed a range of constraints upon Dutch enclosure efforts that had been unknown to the Spanish in Sulu.

The deeper entwinement of Aceh in external circuits of economic and religious connection would, to some degree, temper colonial projects of enclosure in the region. By contrast to the Spanish in Sulu, the Dutch could not pursue unrestricted warfare on the seas, summarily sink any passing indigenous ship, or raise customs levels to punitive levels without incurring the wrath of British authorities across the Straits—whose cooperation they desperately needed if they wanted to stem the tide of illegal munitions and contraband into the colony. Likewise, colonial invaders never really entertained the possibility of arresting the flow of Acehnese *hajjis* to Mecca or permanently reversing external Islamic influences, as they appreciated the depth of the region's connections with co-religionists across the Indian Ocean world. Instead, even as the Dutch waged an often brutal military campaign of “unparalleled punishment” land, they adopted a more piecemeal, even tepid approach to containment. Rather

than subjecting local shipping to merciless, unrelenting bombardment as the Spanish did in Sulu, for instance, Dutch naval officials instead implemented a fitful, uneven blockade more oriented toward impoundment and seizure than wanton destruction. Likewise, colonial officials in Sumatra preferred exiling individual Muslims or Arabs to the imposition of wholesale restrictions against Islamic sojourners. Moreover, cognizant of the limitations upon their ability to influence Acehese society, Dutch officials shied away from any grandiose, far-reaching aspirations to re-direct and re-fashion the basic economic underpinnings of Aceh like those that characterized the efforts of the United States after they arrived in Sulu in 1899. Establishing small beachheads and niches of economic influence on the margins of Acehese society sufficed.

All of these comparatively circumscribed and modest efforts, of course, raise some important questions. If the Dutch adopted a cautious, almost even restrained approach to controlling Aceh's ties with the outside world, could they actually succeed in unravelling them? Without the blunt instruments of unrestricted naval warfare, coast guard policing, and economic engineering like those deployed in Sulu, could the Dutch exert significant influence from without Acehese society? Did colonial policy in Aceh, in fact, even merit the term "enclosure"?

This chapter will posit that Dutch tactics of containment, disengagement, and withdrawal was just as effective at isolating and weakening the Acehese as any of the baldly interventionist strategies pursued in Sulu. Through a fitful blockade, the colonial navy gradually raised the costs of trade with Aceh and sapped the vitality of its commercial connections. Similarly, by creating a colonial sphere of economic activity almost parallel to that of the local Acehese, the Dutch began to re-direct the inflow of capital towards themselves and to displace the kingdom's traditional role as a central trading hub. Moreover, the Dutch often proved deft at containing and exiling individual Muslims who might incite the formation of a religious or political

consciousness capable of transcending this more limited Acehnese sphere. In sum, although the colonial government did not induce any definitive ruptures between Aceh and the outside world, the erosion of external commerce and the careful management of religious ties would slowly attenuate the longstanding connections that had for so long made Aceh a cosmopolitan and powerful sultanate. In so doing, the Dutch would send this region on a slow drift toward isolation, an isolation that would have dramatic repercussions for the development of Islamic reform movements, political identity, and even the post-colonial future of Aceh.

The rise of Aceh as a cosmopolitan and Islamic power

From the very outset of its history in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Aceh staked out a uniquely cosmopolitan and Islamic profile in the Southeast Asian littoral. Rather than looking towards the relatively constricted and localized worlds of Java to the south, this kingdom instead turned to the vast horizons of the Indian Ocean world in the west, to the coastlines of the Bay of Bengal, South India and even beyond in the Middle East.³ A common religious background helped the sultans and *ulèëbalang* of Aceh to forge commercial relationships with a wide variety of peoples, including Arabs, Persians, Ottomans, and Indians among many others. Acehnese products such as gold, pepper, and jewels coursed across the Indian Ocean world, with spice exports to Jeddah on the Arabian Peninsula alone reaching 40,000-50,000 quintals a year; according to one European observer, trade in the Red Sea area augmented the Acehnese Sultan's income by about three or four million gold ducats each year alone.⁴ Meanwhile, this trade and commerce also occasioned an influx of learned Muslims into Aceh, as a number of distinguished

³ Anthony Reid, *Imperial Alchemy: Nationalism and Political Identity in Southeast Asia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 117.

⁴ Amirul Hadi, *Islam and State in Sumatra: A Study of Seventeenth-Century Aceh*, Islamic History and Civilization Studies and Texts, eds. Wadad Kadi and Rotraud Wielandt, vol. 48 (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 32-33.

ulama from Arab and Indian lands settled there, burnishing the kingdom's reputation as an epicenter of Islamic learning and jurisprudence.⁵ In the political realm, moreover, the Sultanate developed extensive diplomatic ties with the distant Ottoman Kingdom, who saw in Aceh a friendly Muslim ally against the ocean-wide depredations of the Portuguese Empire.⁶ Indeed, in their various assaults on the Portuguese settlement across the Straits in Malacca, Aceh not only received armaments and financial assistance from the *Sublime Porte*, but mobilized soldiers from as far afield as Malabar, Gujarat, and Turkey.⁷ Thankful for the assistance, Aceh affixed the Ottoman flag to all of their naval vessels.⁸ In sum, the distinctly cosmopolitan dimension of the trade, faith, and diplomacy of Aceh propelled its rise as a formidable Indian Ocean world power.

After its early seventeenth century "Golden Age" apogee under the leadership of Sultan Iskandar Muda, the power of Aceh began to ebb and its international profile receded. The trading connections that had linked Acehnese pepper growers with the *Hijaz* declined, while the alliance with the Ottoman Empire fell into abeyance. Whereas once before Acehnese suzerainty had extended across large portions of the Malay Peninsula and as far south as West Sumatra, by the eighteenth century, the revolving cast of Sultans could barely control their putative subordinates, the *ulèëbalang* class.⁹ Indeed, as noted in Chapter One, Acehnese politics degenerated into centuries of interminable bickering, jostling for position, and civil war. As its political and economic primacy slipped, even Aceh's reputation as a center of religious scholarship began to lose some of its luster. Michael Laffan observes that much of the intellectual energy that had animated the Islamic milieu of Aceh in the seventeenth century had shifted to upstart centers

⁵ Riddell, "Aceh in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," 42-46.

⁶ Reid, *Imperial Alchemy*, 117.

⁷ Hadi, *Islam and State in Sumatra*, 31.

⁸ Reid, *Imperial Alchemy*, 118.

⁹ Lee, "Aceh at the Time of the 1824 Treaty," 73, 79-83.

such as Palembang in Southern Sumatra and Patani in what is today southern Thailand by the eighteenth.¹⁰

Yet, in spite of the much lamented decline of the Acehese kingdom, the outward looking orientation that had for so long defined the region never vanished entirely, and in fact revived by the nineteenth century. In particular, even as the sultan struggled to wield power over his various dependencies, *ulèëbalang* leaders turned their gaze outward towards the demands of the global marketplace and initiated a notable rejuvenation of the pepper trade. Importing a new type of pepper vine from the Malabar region of India that could thrive on the sloping terrain of the Acehese west coast, production of the spice skyrocketed, soaring from only 2.13 million pounds in 1797 to 18.6 million pounds in 1822—thereby accounting for about half of the entire world supply.¹¹ Along with this meteoric growth in pepper, local growers also cultivated other profitable crops such as betelnut for global markets. This resurgence in agricultural production, unsurprisingly, once again turned Aceh into a magnet for international exchange, and traders from around the world descended on the region to reap some of the profits.

One thing that did, however, distinguish the nineteenth century resurgence from the earlier seventeenth century Acehese golden age besides for the relative weakness of the sultanate was the imbrication of Acehese trade in emerging European and colonial networks. In the past, Muslim traders from northern Sumatra had famously constituted a rival and alternative to the hubristically monopolistic aspirations of the Portuguese empire, which somehow sought to control all pepper production across the far-flung expanses of distant Asia. While Acehese commerce nested within cosmopolitan and multinational networks, most of their interlocutors,

¹⁰ Michael Laffan, *The Makings of Indonesian Islam: Orientalism and the Narration of a Sufi Past* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 28.

¹¹ Lee, “Aceh at the Time of the 1824 Treaty,” 74.

with the exception of the Chinese, were Muslim co-religionists. Little direct interaction or exchange with the Christian Portuguese invaders was ever reported. By contrast, in the early nineteenth century, Acehnese *ulèëbalang* welcomed as assortment of non-Muslim foreigners, including British, French, German, and most markedly, American traders to their shore. Merchants from the United States dominated the trade routes leading to Aceh in the first two decades of the nineteenth century, and cities such as Boston and Salem on the Atlantic comprised the final destination for much of the exported pepper. By the middle of the nineteenth century, moreover, as American involvement waned, much of Aceh's exchange gravitated toward the British colonial sphere. The city of Penang, in particular, which sat opposite from Aceh across the Malacca Straits and had been established by the British in 1786 with the explicit design of promoting international trade, emerged as the principal transshipment point for Acehnese goods. Indeed, the vast preponderance of Acehnese pepper flowed to Penang, catalyzed by the money lenders, steamship companies, and fierce competition which made the city such a compelling entrepot. Whereas centuries before Acehnese traders worked mostly with Arab and South Asian Muslims in their own harbors, propelling the rise of a potent Islamic kingdom, now the region appeared mostly to occupy a niche as a primary product producing hinterland for colonial ports controlled by non-Muslim Europeans.

It is easy to exaggerate the influence of non-Muslim colonial powers or the discontinuities from trading patterns of the past. It is true that the ultimate end market for much of Acehnese products was no longer India or the Arabian Peninsula, but Europe and North America. However, beneath the penumbra of British rule in Penang, various Chinese, Malays, and Muslim Indians conducted the bulk of commerce connected to pepper from Sumatra. While ships might have been registered under European flags, it was these non-Europeans who by and

large raised the capital for business endeavors, made the necessary loans, staffed the ships as coolies or even captains, and acted as middlemen of all varieties. It was these non-Europeans who provisioned traders with the supplies for their journeys, supplied rest-houses for traveling traders, and established meaningful working relationships across ethnic boundaries.¹² The Acehnese, by working with these Chinese and Straits Malay and Muslim Indians, in essence gathered back together the cosmopolitan commercial assemblages that had defined their trade in past centuries, except this time adding additional layers of British administrators and European consumers to the mix.

As in the past, Aceh's nesting within cosmopolitan global trade networks also redounded to the kingdom's political advantage. Soaring pepper revenues in the first three quarters of the nineteenth century enriched regional *ulèëbalang* chiefs and the sultan alike, in the process encouraging a relentless expansion of cultivable land in the hitherto marginal coastal regions of West Aceh and Pidie. Although much of these activities empowered the *ulèëbalang* more than the sultan, as local chiefs constituted the true motor force of the move toward pepper and exercised much of the real, effective power, the unprecedented bounty nonetheless quelled the internecine machinations that had for so long bedeviled the kingdom in the eighteenth century. As trade smoothed cooperation and proved mutually beneficial for the sultan as well as the chiefs, political rule stabilized. Indeed, through the support of the *ulèëbalang*, Sultan Muhammad Syah and Sultan Ali Ala'ad-din Mansur Syah enjoyed long and fruitful reigns, from 1823 to 1838 and 1838 to 1870 respectively.¹³ With political comity restored, Aceh once again assumed its earlier position as a powerful indigenous polity, warding off Dutch encroachments to the

¹² Eric Tagliacozzo, *Secret Trades, Porous Borders: Smuggling and the States along a Southeast Asian Frontier, 1865-1915* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 321-2.

¹³ Lee, "Aceh at the time of the 1824 Treaty," 90.

south and exercising considerable influence across the region. The embedment of Aceh within the system of international trade yet again contributed to its political might.

Beyond these continuities in the realm of cosmopolitan trading networks and political strength, Aceh's pepper resurgence also promoted greater interaction with the wider Islamic world. Of course, it might seem paradoxical that the growing significance of British controlled Penang as an entrepot for Acehnese goods, not to mention the outsized influence of non-Muslim Chinese traders, should somehow intensify connections with the global *umma*. However, the same cosmopolitan milieu that brought Acehnese into contact with Chinese or Britons also allowed them to jostle with Malay Muslims from the Peninsula, Indian Muslims from Gujarat, and Arabs from the Hadhramaut in current-day Yemen. Indeed, it appears that Acehnese and Arab populations clustered in much the same neighborhood, around the proximity of Acheen Street, then known as the epicenter of both communities.¹⁴ Since many of the Acehnese themselves claimed some sort of Hadhrami background, the synergies between these two Muslim communities likely intensified in this port city. Moreover, the multiethnic web of capital that endowed Acehnese *ulèëbalang* and merchants with new wealth, in turn, catalyzed growing demand for the *hajj* pilgrimage to Mecca. The lively Acheen Street quarter, with its communities of Arabs and Acehnese, emerged as the focal point of "Haji steamship" business, and people from Sumatra took advantage of these services with alacrity; by 1873, it serviced upwards of 300 such pilgrims a year.¹⁵ In sum, the absorption of Acehnese trading networks into global trade ultimately dominated by Europeans and Christians did not spell the demise of local connections

¹⁴ Wong Yee Tuan, "Penang's Big Five Families and Southern Siam During the Nineteenth Century," in *Thai South and Malay North: Ethnic Interactions on a Plural Peninsula*, ed. Michael John Montesano and Patrick Jory (Singapore: NUS Press, 2008), 209-211.

¹⁵ Khoo Su Nin, *Streets of Georgetown: An Illustrated Guide to Penang's City Streets & Historic Attractions*, 4th ed. (Penang: Janus Print & Resources; Penang: Areca Books, 2007), 25-26; Antje Missbach, *Separatist Conflict in Indonesia: the Long-Distance Politics of the Acehnese Diaspora* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 31.

with the larger Islamic world as one might expect. Quite to the contrary, these global pathways provided new opportunities for travel, pilgrimage and interactions with far-flung communities of co-religionists. Rather than suppressing transnational Islamic connectedness, global trade and European intervention accelerated it, as the two proved symbiotic and mutually reinforcing.

Taking all of these factors into account, Aceh would thus pose a unique puzzle to Dutch authorities by the 1870s. Networked with larger global patterns of trade, economically empowered and politically resilient, not to mention possessed of a deep affinity with the wider Islamic *umma*, Aceh had forged an independent path in the nineteenth century. Rather than capitalizing before the advance of European empire, Acehnese merchants and *ulèëbalang* skillfully profited from it, establishing remunerative connections through British port cities and bringing new wealth to the region. Although these new riches could not paper over differences that had pitted *ulèëbalangs* against sultans or provided the sultan with authority comparable to that of a twentieth century ruler, it nonetheless restored the basic integrity of the Sultanate political system. Meanwhile, the Acehnese had firmly entrenched themselves as the principal market for Penang goods, thus making the disruption of the status quo profoundly undesirable to the Chinese merchants and British authorities who populated the port. By the 1870s, then, Aceh showed every indication of not only surviving, but thriving. If the Dutch wanted to achieve their thinly veiled aspiration of conquering Aceh, military might would likely not be enough; they would need to unwind these multilayered connections between the kingdom and the outside world. As shall be seen, this would be no simple task.

Enclosure or co-optation: the Aceh dilemma

When the Dutch launched their 1873 invasion of Aceh, described in some detail in Chapter Two, they confronted a complicated series of challenges and choices related to the remarkably cosmopolitan nature of the Acehnese kingdom. Embedded in a resilient and supple web of transnational ties, with its overlapping threads of commerce, diplomacy, and religious faith, the Acehnese kingdom hardly constituted an isolated indigenous state at the margins of power. The Acehnese people could, in fact, leverage a variety of resources to mobilize resistance and fend off Dutch advances, ranging from the Arabs they interacted with on the *hajj* to Chinese businesspeople in Penang, from neighboring Sumatrans or Malays across the Straits to sympathetic Britons and Germans in the parlors of colonial diplomacy. In these global connections, of course, the Dutch saw a grave affront to their pretensions of control and sovereignty, an intimation of both fanatical opposition to rule by infidel *kafirs* and treacherous complicity with rival colonial powers who would seek to do the Netherlands harm. Yet, as shall be seen, these premonitions of foreboding did not prompt the invading Dutch to embrace a totalizing assault on these international ties or to attempt to completely shroud Aceh from the outside world. Colonial policy makers hazily perceived on an intuitive level—as opposed to any premeditated strategy—that international networks could cut both ways as leverage and perhaps furnish them with some degree of influence upon Acehnese society. Maybe, the contacts with British diplomats and Arab merchants could supply a point of access to local society and defuse resistance. As a result, the Dutch treaded surprisingly lightly, pursuing a contradictory policy that oscillated between suppression and permission, blind mistrust and grudging tolerance, total warfare and *détente*—a desultory strategy that would never destroy Aceh’s outside ties, but would eventually diminish and constrict them.

Complications arising from the sultanate's external connections came to the fore even before the outbreak of armed hostilities in April 1873, in the diplomatic prelude to war. For many decades, and indeed centuries, the Acehne Sultanate had pursued a vigorous course of diplomacy and international relations to safeguard its extensive trading networks abroad, dispatching emissaries to locales as nearby as Padang, Singapore, and Johor, as well as places as distant as Istanbul and Mecca.¹⁶ By the 1870s, Aceh had thus cultivated a formidable network of ties with neighboring kingdoms, distant Islamic empires in the Middle East, and European Great Powers alike. These connections, in turn, placed Aceh in a unique position among indigenous polities, allowing it to navigate across the eddies of international relations, to exploit tensions among the large powers, and to actively mobilize opposition to Dutch plans in the region.¹⁷ Habib Abdur Rahmann, already discussed in chapter one, in many respects embodied Acehne dexterity in the international arena, gliding through the Arab world in his 1868 trip to Mecca, establishing contacts with European officials and merchants alike, and generally striving to preserve the independence of the kingdom in a world of encroaching colonialism.¹⁸ Moreover, the Dutch invasion of Aceh in April 1873 found Rahman in Istanbul, where he would request material military assistance from the Ottoman Sultan and also plead the Acehne case more publicly in newfangled organs of the mass media like the newspaper.¹⁹ In sum, with figures like Rahman, Aceh could thus work to generate feelings of Islamic solidarity in the Middle East, while at the same time turning rival powers against Dutch plans in the name of economic self-interest.

¹⁶ Hadi, *Islam and State in Sumatra*, 29-33.

¹⁷ For example, see Reid, *Contest for North Sumatra*, 90-94.

¹⁸ See Chapter 2 of this dissertation.

¹⁹ Reid, *The Contest for North Sumatra*, 120-122.

Perhaps even more emblematic, however, of the challenges posed by Aceh's ramified connections with the outside world is a lesser known figure named Tengku Muhammad Arifin. Although his sojourns perhaps did not extend as far in distance as that of Rahman, nor did his religious charisma inspire such deep commitment, Arifin nonetheless skillfully maneuvered across a variety of places and social strata to, at least for a little while, advance Aceh's cause. Born of Minangkabau aristocratic ancestry, Arifin spent the first twenty years of his life residing on the West Coast of Sumatra, but would travel to Banda Aceh in 1863, where he quickly insinuated himself in the cosmopolitan milieu of the Sultanate and would marry one of his relatives. During the 1860s, he would then follow the well-worn path of Minangkabau and Acehese alike to Singapore, deploying his charm not only on indigenous figures like the Sultan of Trengganu and the Maharajah of Johor, but also on influential members of the British and Dutch diplomatic worlds. Indeed, Arifin even acquired fluency in the English language during this time, only deepening his influence in diplomatic precincts. All the while, Arifin maintained contacts with the Acehese kingdom, particular with a fellow cosmopolitan in the Sultan's retinue who served as official harbormaster (Shahbandar) of Banda Aceh, the Indian-born migrant Teuku Panglima Muhammad Tibang. Arifin thus acted as an agile broker between Aceh and a variety of local kingdoms and European power players.²⁰

Arifin's wide-ranging contacts, in turn, set the stage for new alliances and relationships that threatened to imperil Dutch aspirations in Aceh. Specifically, Arifin exploited his English fluency to strike up a convivial bond with a consul from yet another nation, the United States, which had a long history of pepper trade with Aceh and still maintained some commercial interests there. During extensive conversations with the Consul, a man named Major Studer, the

²⁰ Ibid., 91-92.

two discussed the possibility of an American-Acehnese alliance, and even touched upon a potential inspection visit by the US Naval Commander of the Far East—a move that held grave implications for the Netherlands. In January 1873, Arifin expressed this plan with alacrity to Tibang in one of the port master's regular journeys to Singapore. Unsurprisingly, Tibang embraced this scheme as a potential means for warding off the encroachments of the Dutch, and Arifin soon brought him to a meeting with Major Studer, where the three discussed what sort of concessions the Acehnese should offer and appropriate protocol for communicating with the United States Secretary of State. While in the end it appeared that Studer acted largely on his own authority and the alliance would not come to fruition, Arifin's cosmopolitan dealings still constituted a credible danger which might scuttle Dutch plans—a danger which, upon learning of, would provide the pretext for invasion.²¹

While Aceh's ties with governments and kingdoms posed one sort of threat, other forms of cosmopolitan connection outside the realm of high politics and diplomacy—particularly those of a religious nature—also endangered Dutch efforts in the region. As already noted, Abdur-Rahman himself attempted to move beyond discreet negotiations and quiet government contacts by publicly touting Aceh's cause in the Turkish mass media; indeed, he repeatedly invoked pan-Islamic solidarity as the basis for some type of alliance in the court of popular opinion. These efforts, added to his popular following among the devout of Aceh, allowed Abdur-Rahman to bridge the gap between popular and diplomatic cultures.

However, of even greater subversive potential to Dutch aims than the rather airy and notional proclamations of a leader like Abdur-Rahman was the more concrete phenomenon of the *hajj*. Aceh, long known as *Serambi Mekka*, or the gate to Mecca, supplied an ever growing

²¹ Ibid., 93-94.

flow of pilgrims who joined their indigenous Muslim peers from the British controlled Malay Peninsula and Dutch controlled Indonesian archipelago to make the journey to the Arabian Peninsula. Like the rest of their Southeast Asian counterparts, the vast preponderance of Acehese *hajjis* sailed to Mecca aboard the Singapore Steamship Company, owned by a prominent Arab family, the al-Sagoffs, based in that city.²² In 1874, for instance, out of 440 pilgrims travelling on the “Medina” steamship, 25 were Acehese.²³ Along the way, these Acehese thus jostled and interacted with a wide range of Muslims from whom they could solicit spiritual, ideological, and even material support in their efforts against the invading Dutch military. Moreover, upon the outbreak of hostilities, the devout al-Sagoff family emerged as a forceful supporter of the Acehese cause, often disseminating information about the conflict among their hajji passengers, and encouraging Arab headmen from Java to not only lend their assistance to the struggle, but even to join it.²⁴ From the vantage point of the Dutch then, the *hajj*, with its Muslim assemblages of Acehese and Javanese, Malay and Arab, risked becoming a vector of fanatical contamination.

Finally, in addition to the perils posed by diplomatic legerdemain and *hajj*-making, transnational networks also could provide a conduit for problems of a more material variety. Although pepper constituted the principal commodity in the cross-Straits trade between Penang and Aceh, those boats plying the short distance could, and did, carry a variety of other more dangerous items. First and foremost among these were firearms. Long before the Dutch-Aceh war began in 1873, Singapore and Penang had already established themselves as the epicenter of

²² Ibid., 147-148.

²³ George Lavino to Consul of the Netherlands in Singapore, May 2, 1874, Entry 6052, Archief van het Ministerie van Koloniën, 1850-1900 (1932) (hereafter referred to as MK 1850-1900), 2.10.02, National Archives of the Netherlands (hereafter referred to as NNA), The Hague.

²⁴ Reid, *The Contest for North Sumatra*, 148.

a thriving munitions trade. Both clandestinely and in public, British and Chinese merchants collaborated to purvey a range of muskets, rifles, ammunition, and explosives that would find their way from the bazaars of the Straits Settlements across the greater Indian Ocean world.²⁵ Not surprisingly, these communities had long supplied the Acehese Sultanate with the bulk of its weaponry, and such flows showed little signs of abating during the war; indeed, the conflict only made firearms more valuable, ratcheting up the profit incentives to persist in the trade. A prominent Arab living in Penang near the vicinity of the Acheen road, Syed Mohammad Alatas, forged a position as one of the leading weapons smugglers during the 1870s, providing a crucial link between the overlapping Acehese, Chinese, and Arab circuits of the munitions trade.²⁶ In addition to weapons, any commodity that could earn cash for Acehese antagonists, such as opium or even relatively benign pepper, would only advance the cause of resistance. The trading networks that had for so long enriched Aceh thus became a vital issue in the war effort.

To summarize, in the case of Aceh, the Dutch confronted not a moribund local sultanate crumbling under the weight of its own decay, but a still formidable indigenous entity that drew its strength from its very cosmopolitanism. Scholars such as Michel Foucault, Antonio Gramsci, and their myriad intellectual progeny have often cast cosmopolitanism as an irreducible byproduct of European colonialism, as the logic of a predatory universalism in which invading powers justified conquests under the guise of bringing all the peoples of the world together under the framework of civilization.²⁷ The history of Aceh would seem to provide an object lesson in the pitfalls of such a reductionist view. Although dependent on global markets dominated by Europeans, the Sultan, *ulèëbalang*, and the rest of the Acehese people did not simply succumb

²⁵ Chew, 162.

²⁶ Missbach, *Separatist Conflict in Indonesia*, 31.

²⁷ Marianna Papastephanou, *Thinking Differently about Cosmopolitanism: Theory, Eccentricity and the Globalized World* (Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2012), 12.

to the totalizing logic of colonial empire. Instead, building off a historically sedimented experiences of global connections dating back to the sixteenth century, they leveraged their participation in the world markets to deepen their ties with co-religionists around the world, to outmaneuver colonial state games at their own diplomatic games, and to import the necessary material for war-making. It was this pragmatic cosmopolitanism, this engagement with and implication in transnational networks, which ultimately made Aceh such a stout defender of Islam and local sovereignty.

And yet, even as Foucault and Gramsci clearly overlooked some of the more complex operations of cosmopolitanism, in some sense, the case of Aceh suggests that they were also attuned to some of the possibilities for its corruption and co-optation, that cosmopolitanism could become a hook for a hegemonic colonization of consciousness.²⁸ If the Dutch saw Aceh's transnational ties only as a fount of obduracy and recalcitrance, it stands to reason that the colonial powers would attempt to do everything in their power to seal off the province, interrupt the flows of *hajjis*, strangle its commerce, keep out weapons, and isolate its diplomatic representatives abroad. Yet, the initial instinct of the Dutch was quite the opposite. In April 1873, at the moment they launched their first assault, colonial leaders such as J.F.N. Nieuwenhuizen explicitly foreswore the "intention...to establish a blockade...or in any way impede the trade at present existing."²⁹ Historians such as Anthony Reid usually attribute this initial reluctance to a desire to avoid upsetting British officials in the Straits or to the daunting logistical barriers of enclosing such a long and sprawling coastline as that belonging to Aceh. Yet, there was something more to this initial reluctance and the subsequent half-hearted

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Quote in Reid, *The Contest for North Sumatra*, 105.

implementation of the blockade: an understanding, perhaps more intuitive than conscious, that Aceh's outside ties and cosmopolitanism could be redirected to their own advantage.

In the diplomatic, commercial, and even to a lesser extent the religious arenas, the Dutch from the very outset recognized that the international ties that empowered and enriched Aceh could also constitute levers with which to influence their action. Many recent scholarly observers of cosmopolitanism—even those seeking to recuperate it from the taint of empire—have noted that those most likely to embrace “mobility, rootlessness, openness to different lifestyles, and detachment from the nation-state,” in the words of Marianna Papastephanou, inevitably belonged to socially and economically elite classes.³⁰ Many of the most cosmopolitan people associated with Aceh, whether Muhammad Arifin or Sayyid Abdur Rahman or the *ulèëbalang* who prospered from pepper, undeniably belonged to a mercantile elite distinct from the larger Acehnese population. Even the hundreds of rank and file *hajjis* who sojourned to Mecca were not so rank and file, as they would have needed substantial financial resources to make the months-long journey to the Arabian Peninsula, resources which the preponderance of Acehnese simply did not possess.³¹ Given the wealth and power of these cosmopolitans, they stood to lose the most if Dutch obliterated Aceh's external connections. Perhaps, with the correct inducements and compromises, the colonial powers could convince these people to join, or at least passively tolerate, invasion rather than aggressively seeking to thwart it.

From the very outset of the first assault, and even before, the Dutch displayed some understanding of the possibility of bending Aceh's cosmopolitan elites to their will. The most glaring example of this comes from the person of Muhammad Arifin. At the time that Arifin

³⁰ Papastephanou, *Thinking Differently about Cosmopolitanism*, 12.

³¹ Eric Tagliacozzo, *The Longest Journey: Southeast Asians and the Pilgrimage to Mecca* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013): 77-78.

made his proposal to both Panglima Tibang and American Consul Studer for a United States-Aceh alliance, he actually worked in the employ of a Dutch diplomat in Singapore, W.H. Read. A little while after conferring with Tibang, Arifin divulged information of the plot to Read, setting off a firestorm of controversy and eventually providing what Anthony Reid refers to as the *casus belli* of the invasion. Whether Arifin and Read collaborated to entrap the Acehnese and conjure irrefutable proof of the sultanate's disloyal intentions, or whether Arifin simply felt scorned by the unfulfilled promise of a job and salary as Acehnese consul in Singapore is difficult to say. Either way, however, Arifin furnished concrete evidence of the ways in which mobile, connected elites not only helped the Acehnese kingdom maneuver through the vicissitudes of international relations, but could also assist Europeans keen to solicit information and influence.³²

If Arifin provides a very tangible instance of Dutch recognizing the potential to exploit cosmopolitan networks, colonial officials also routinely expressed a more abstract understanding of how such transnational flows could serve their interest. For instance, the Dutch Consul based in Penang, George Lavino, hailed the salutary role commerce could play in conciliating Acehnese to the reality of the colonial rule. In a 1874 letter, for instance, only one year after the initial military assault on the *kraton* at Kotaradja, Lavino observed that "the recent and continued revival of trade is still acting in our favor as far as the sentiments of the inhabitants of this place are concerned."³³ While perhaps an instance of somewhat wishful thinking or willful exaggeration, Lavino nonetheless expressed enthusiasm for allowing the "native craft, commanded by Malay or Chinese," to move across the Straits unfettered and to be able to

³² Reid, *Contest for North Sumatra*, 91-92.

³³ George Lavino to Consul of the Netherlands in Singapore, May 2, 1874, Entry 6052, Archief van het Ministerie van Koloniën, 1850-1900 (1932), 2.10.02, National Archives of the Netherlands, The Hague.

expand the wealth of the Acehnese, not to mention the Dutch themselves. Indeed, Lavino imagined a time when opium, pepper, and other commodities would flow in increasing numbers to Aceh under the watchful eye of colonial officials, who could keep meticulous records and manifests of all such goods entering into port.³⁴ In sum, if the Dutch could acquit themselves as vigorous defenders of trade and the perquisites that flowed thenceforth to wealthy *ulèëbalang*, Lavino believed that the colonial state would not only be able to defuse opposition, but even forge a valuable instrument of control and regulation.

The fact that colonial officials embraced the idea of trade, to which they already possessed a deeply ingrained ideological affinity, or diplomatic legerdemain, with which they enjoyed extensive experience, is hardly surprising; more unexpectedly, however, they also displayed something of a dim, inchoate awareness that the most poorly understood dimension of Aceh's external connections, Islam, could also potentially be harnessed to their interests.³⁵ To be sure, the preponderance of military commanders and administrative bureaucrats would never relinquish their profound mistrust of Muslim faith, which they perceived as a principle driver of resistance to the Dutch take over; however, they did not recoil entirely from it either. At a very basic level, people like George Lavino grasped that as unsavory as they might find it, any semi-permanent effort to restrict the pilgrimage and the movement of well-connected, generally prosperous *hajjis* would only backfire. Indeed, Lavino claimed that the among those Acehnese *hajjis* temporarily stranded in Penang in 1873 by military actions at sea, "several who have for a short time enjoyed the charity offered them by the Netherlands Indies Gouvernement, have expresses their thanks in a very becoming manner."³⁶ While likely inflating the level of support

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

and thanks, such comments do reveal some degree of awareness that persecuting pilgrims would only fuel more opposition.

Beyond trying to adhere to the principle of not doing more harm than necessary, Dutch officials also glimpsed, however hazily, that the *hajj* could even offer them some opportunities to extract information on Acehne rebels. In a rather extraordinary 1874 letter, for example, the resident of the Preanger residency in Java reported on some intelligence concerning Aceh received from a Javanese *penghulu*, one Raja Keujoe Mohammad, who was making the *hajj*. Aboard this ship en route to the Arabian Peninsula, an Javanese member of the Dutch-controlled *inlandsch bestuur* (native administration),³⁷ apparently enjoyed the opportunity to speak with a fellow elite *hajji* on board, a member of the Acehne Sultan's coterie only identified as Said. Among other things, Said divulged to his Javanese interlocutor that the while many "panglimas would like war...the sultan is very much against it," and he boasted that he had singlehandedly "dissuaded" Abdur Rahman from rushing to lead resistance by impressing upon him that he had "no lead, no cannons nor soldiers."³⁸ Furthermore, Said even claimed to have warned the Sultan he could not abide by any rash decision of the *panglima* to join the Dutch in battle:

A few days later I went with my wife and children to board for Mecca; then came the sultan himself the night with me on board, wept and begged not to go to Mecca, I answered him that if they persist with their plan to lead war against the Dutch, I will go to Mecca.³⁹

Said, very much the personification of the mobile Muslim "cosmopolitan," thus preferred decamping to the Arabian Peninsula over participation in the Acehne resistance.

While one can be rightfully skeptical of the veracity of this intelligence gathered from these *hajjis*—Said or Raja Keujoe Mohammad both may have exaggerated or embroidered these

³⁷ For a description of the "Native Administration in Java," see Heather Sutherland, *The Making of a Bureaucratic Elite: the Colonial Transformation of the Javanese Elite* (Singapore: Heinemann Educational Books (Asia), 1979).

³⁸ Resident of Preanger to the Governor General of the Netherlands Indies, April 8, 1874, Entry 6052, Archief van het Ministerie van Koloniën, 1850-1900 (1932), 2.10.02, National Archives of the Netherlands, The Hague.

³⁹ Resident of Preanger to the Governor General of the Netherlands Indies, April 8, 1874

stories for their own purposes—they still furnish a very illuminating window into the ways in which pilgrimage could advance, rather than detract from, Dutch interests. *Hajji* networks concentrated mobile, generally elite Muslim cosmopolitans from across the Netherlands East Indies, including Aceh, in tight steamship quarters leaving from the same district of nodal ports such as Singapore and Penang. Interlaced with devout Javanese *priyayi* and other people willing to collaborate with the Dutch regimes, these *hajji* networks could just as easily act as a conduit for intelligence or information as they could a vector for Islamic “fanaticism” and anti-Dutch sentiments. These individual pilgrims, moreover, frequently comprised of well-travelled and prosperous Muslims did not always fit the profile of rabid zealotry often imputed to them by colonial officials. Some, like Said, perhaps even preferred to relocate to the Arabian Peninsula rather than wage an arduous battle against colonial invaders. Hajji networks, therefore, could just as easily represent a valuable resource for the Dutch as it could a sieve of seditious religious thought.

The evitable blockade, 1873-1880

The potentials and perils of Aceh’s external networks from the vantage point of the Netherlands, at once a possible means of access and influence into the otherwise opaque machinations of the Acehnese sultanate, but also a worrisome conduit for diplomatic intrigue and imagined religious incitement, would whipsaw colonial decision-making over the course of the subsequent decade. On the one hand, an unmitigated policy of isolation and containment risked undermining the limited leverage the Netherlands could exercise for reconciling Aceh to colonial rule. If the Dutch navy completely upended trading networks, the main tether binding the sultan and *ulèëbalang* to the international system, they would also eliminate the primary motivation for

local leaders to refrain from an embrace of total resistance. Likewise, if the Dutch categorically rejected negotiations with representatives of the Sultanate, they stood to lose what limited insight they could glean about the inner workings of their enemy or any hope of cultivating support like they received from Muhammad Arifin. On the other hand, military officials understood that the same ships that transported pepper could easily smuggle arms, and the same diplomatic representatives they engaged with could also betray the Dutch cause on behalf of the British, the United States, or another international rival. Ultimately, these competing pressures would engender a tentative, vacillating, and desultory campaign of enclosure which neither sealed off Aceh nor allowed untrammelled freedom of movement; neither brought decisive military triumph nor peace or respect; neither cut off transnational Islamic ties nor allowed for the blossoming of a cosmopolitan Muslim ethos. It was this indeterminate and indecisive approach that would, as we shall see, place Aceh on a most problematic path in the emerging Indonesian polity.

At the outset of the first invasion in April of 1873, Dutch planners clearly believed that a swift and decisive victory would obviate any need for a blockade. As already mentioned, George Lavino, the Dutch Consul in Penang, promised his British counterparts that no naval cordon of the Acehneese coast was planned and that cross-Straits trade between British Malaya and Aceh would not suffer from any interruption. The Governor General of the Netherlands Indies even managed to strike an understanding with the Governor of the Straits Settlement, Sir Harry Ord prohibiting arms exports to Aceh and thus preventing the inflow of weapons that could sustain resistance.⁴⁰ In sum, the Dutch colonial establishment expected rapid Acehneese acquiescence would make a more aggressive blockade unnecessary.

⁴⁰ Eric Tagliacozzo, *Secret Trades, Porous Borders: Smuggling and States along a Southeast Asian Frontier* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 262-3.

The surprisingly stiff resistance of Acehese fighters in April of 1873 and the subsequent retreat of forces confronted them with a host of fraught strategic considerations. As they planned a second, more robust expedition, for instance, colonial planners needed to decide whether to reverse their promise to avoid a blockade. From the moment war efforts began to go awry, W.H. Read, the Dutch Consul in Singapore, sent warnings to officials in Batavia and The Hague that Acehese in the Straits Settlement would assist their compatriots in Sumatra.⁴¹ Moreover, an international nexus between Arab, Indian Muslims, and Acehese traders seemed to be crystallizing. For example, a wealthy Hadhrami Arab named Shaikh Ahmad bin Abdullah Baschaib supplied a noted rebel in the pepper-growing Simpang Ulim region of Aceh, Teuku Paya, with access to capital and three sailing vessels; at the same time, Baschaib exchanged telegrams and information about the war with his close confidant, Abdur-Rahman, during his sojourn to Constantinople. Two Indian Muslims and one Arab joined five Acehese in forming the Council of Eight, a Penang based group that emerged as the principle mouthpiece of the Acehese resistance.⁴²

Even as the situation rapidly deteriorated and a cosmopolitan alliance of Muslims actively challenged them, Dutch colonial policy makers still recoiled from an outright blockade. Anthony Reid has conclusively demonstrated that the Dutch feared antagonizing their British counterparts. Equally crucial, colonial officials also worried about the consequences of interrupting trade. A complete closure of Aceh to commerce, which ran antithetical to the business-oriented ethos of the colonial establishment, risked repelling locals and making subjugation more difficult. Thus, when the Governor General of the Netherlands Indies launched a formal blockade on 4 June 1873 as preparation for their second Acehese invasion, he included

⁴¹ Reid, *Contest for North Sumatra*, 104-5.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 130-131.

several caveats that, from the very outset, would seem to hobble its chances of succeeding. Perhaps most crucially, the Dutch included provisions for a pass system. In this arrangement, the colonial government would permit Straits merchants who had already paid an advance on delivery of pepper from Aceh to apply for a special pass for traveling to Aceh to collect those advances. Even as the blockade raised British hackles and subjected some 105 people to imprisonment on Dutch naval brigs, the passes facilitated the transport of \$1.5 million worth of pepper in 1873 comprising about two-thirds of the entire crop.⁴³ Furthermore, after the Dutch discontinued the pass system in September 1873, they still continued to dangle the prospect of trading allowances to other *ulèëbalang* chiefs as an inducement for accepting colonial rule. The commander of the Acehese expedition, General Van Swieten affirmed that the blockade could be lifted in return for recognition of Dutch sovereignty and the avoidance of relations with foreign powers. Thus, by the end of 1874, only five particularly recalcitrant Acehese states continued to hold out against this offer. Nearly half of the Acehese ports would be re-opened to international trade.⁴⁴

The reticence of the Dutch to interrupt Aceh's trade and external connection should not be misconstrued as an indication that cross-Straits commerce escaped unscathed from the blockade. The Dutch blockading fleet often behaved in unpredictable ways, sometimes allowing a ship to pass, other times arresting passengers and impounding cargoes, and sometimes even firing upon perceived transgressors. Such instability discouraged Indian Muslim, Europeans and American traders from returning to Acehese ports. Local shipping also suffered, with many Acehese vessels being sunk or captured over the course of 1873.⁴⁵ The only group that

⁴³ Ibid., 106-108.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 113-115,

⁴⁵ Ibid., 114-116.

benefited was a small number of prosperous Penang Chinese merchants who understood the trade well and enjoyed a modicum of protection from the British authorities.⁴⁶ Meanwhile, the interruption of pepper tree planting during the military campaigns of 1873-4 produced a particularly poor harvest, plunging several Chinese merchants into bankruptcy and discouraging Indian and European financiers from extending credit for future endeavors—striking another blow against Acehnese international trade. Whereas Aceh had previously been marked by a riotous cacophony of indigenous Arab, Indian, Chinese, American, and European merchants, the blockade increasingly confined the region's external trade to only a few prominent Chinese from Penang.

Over the course of the two decades that ensued after this first Acehnese campaign, Dutch naval policy would continue along its haphazard course. Time and time again, ill-conceived colonial military strikes ushered in crude attempts to close various ports, punish perceived transgressors, and channel trade through harbors deemed friendly, only to be followed by equally capricious re-openings and new-fangled customs regulations.⁴⁷ While the Dutch relaxed the blockade from 1874 to 1878, they still often closed specific ports or interdicted ships without warning.⁴⁸ During Karel van der Heijden's 1878 campaign of "unparalleled punishment," the Dutch veered away from uncertain leniency and instead moved to seal the entirety of the Acehnese coast to shipping, with the exception of two ports, Ulèlheuë and Idi. By designating this remote port as the only licit port of entry, the Dutch imposed a prohibitively expensive, one hundred mile detour that deterred many small scale Penang Chinese from continuing their Acehnese trade Penang-Aceh. By 1881 colonial officials swerved yet again, lifting the blockade

⁴⁶ Ibid., 177.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 118.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 192-3.

prematurely in the misplaced hope that Van der Heijden's military campaign had finally achieved a decisive triumph. Over the course of the next four years, Dutch policy planners reverted back to closing ports on a case-by-case basis.⁴⁹

In sum, the desultory nature of the first two years of the blockade produced indeterminate results that would not only help to prolong the agonies of the Dutch-Aceh war, but also begin the process of attenuating Aceh's cosmopolitan connections with the outside world. This naval cordon at once proved too ineffectual to intercept much contraband weaponry, yet intrusive enough to provoke condemnation and resistance; too limited to stop the pepper trade entirely, but disruptive enough to repel the cosmopolitan coterie of traders; too permissive to arrest the flow of *hajjis* or of transnational Islamic influences, yet sufficiently harsh to arouse widespread religious indignation among the faithful. Even if the indeterminacy of the blockade failed to provoke a spectacular rupture between Aceh and the outside world, it would begin to slowly unwind the threads of those cosmopolitan connections.

Scheepvaartregeling and Pulau Weh

By 1890, after a decade of rudderless drift, retrenchment, and vacillation, colonial officials in Aceh finally began to grasp the necessity of adhering to a more concerted strategy. The endless dithering over blockades neither destroyed Acehnese trade nor allowed the Dutch to use it an instrument of influence; neither made the situation so untenable for the Acehnese that they needed to submit to Dutch control, nor avoided embittering them. If they actually wanted to exercise some modicum of control over trade and to leverage it for their pacification efforts, the blockade would no longer suffice. Thus, the new governor of Aceh, Colonel van Teijn embraced

⁴⁹ Ibid., 198, 208, 214

a policy of shipping regulations known as *scheepvaartregeling*, regulations which would provide for legal, predictable trade at sanctioned ports under the supervisions of customs inspectors.⁵⁰ In 1893, the Dutch would not only open four strategically sited ports—Pulau Raja on the west coast, Lhokseumawe, Ulèlheuë, and Idi—but also undertook measures to construct new facilities for steamships, expand wharf capacity, and lay telegraph wire between Acehnese ports and Penang.⁵¹ In sum, these enlarged facilities, colonial officials hoped, would turn *scheepvaartregeling* ports irresistible magnets for trade and the collection of customs revenues.⁵²

This shift in direction from inhibitory blockades to a more stimulatory regime of shipping regulations, attested to a growing recognition among the colonial elite of the extreme harm done by trading restrictions. In an influential 1897 *Indische Gids* article, the erstwhile deputy Governor General of the Netherlands Indies, J.N.F. Nieuwenhuis noted that “the Acehnese people have always wished for the freedom to trade with Europeans.” Nieuwenhuis did more than parrot the liberal economic line when observing “trade will clear up many obstacles, while we go backwards by obstructing trade and prosperity.” He also argued that trade could cultivate mutuality between the two parties, allowing the Acehnese to “understand that their interests count the same as ours,” and to “place trust in us.” Through the “promotion of their trading and shipping interests” at places like Ulèlheuë or Idi, Nieuwenhuis imagined that “trade would finally be one of the great pioneers of better conditions in Aceh.”⁵³

While the advent of the *scheepvaartregeling* constituted an important first step, the Dutch still confronted the immovable reality that the principal commercial gateway from Aceh to the outside world did not lay on Sumatran soil. “The Paris of the Acehnese,” in the words of one

⁵⁰ Ibid., 262.

⁵¹ Ibid., 263.

⁵² Ibid, 264-5.

⁵³ W.C. Nieuwenhuijzen, “Poeloe Weh, Zeehaven,” *Indische Gids* 19, no. 2 (1897):894.

Nieuwenhuijzen, was not in Ulèëlheuë, or Idi, or Lhokseumawe; it was across the Straits in cosmopolitan Penang. “Big and powerful,” Nieuwenhuis observed, “are the ties of trade that bind the Pulau Pinang of old with Aceh,” and “the Acehnese consider Dutch occupation on their land as an odious obstacle to being able to partake in the prosperity and wealth of their relationship with Pulau Pinang.” Meanwhile, the problematic weather and shallow harbors of the *scheepvaartregeling* ports in Aceh made it unlikely that any of them could displace Penang. Only “after we prove to them the fact that they themselves no longer need Pulau Pinang,” Nieuwenhuis believed, could the imperatives of trade and pacification be reconciled.⁵⁴

To oust British-controlled Penang from its coveted perch as the epicenter of the Acehnese world, the Dutch authorities thus embarked on a quest to promote an alternative hub of international trade on a small island lying fifteen kilometers off the Acehnese coast named Sabang, or sometimes Pulau Weh. In contrast to established ports on the mainland Sumatran coast, Sabang offered deep waters and a protected harbor suited to large steamships. The Dutch Colonial Minister, W.K. Baron van Dedem dispatched the first civilian Dutch official to the island in 1893 and contracted for the government shipping company to establish a regular route from Sabang to the Padang in West Sumatra. Five years later in 1898, the new governor of Aceh, Colonel van Heutsz also established the mercantile *N.V. Zeehaven en Kolenstation Sabang* to promote the port as an alternative to Penang.⁵⁵ In spite of the fact that the 1890s witnessed a significant decline in Acehnese trade to Penang, this decline did not coincide with any commensurate increase in activity at Sabang. Indeed, as late as 1897, the port remained little more than a remote outpost without so much as basic facilities like a hotel.⁵⁶ The various ports

⁵⁴ Nieuwenhuijzen, “Poeloe Weh, Zeehaven,” 893-4.

⁵⁵ Reid, *The Contest for North Sumatra*, 270.

⁵⁶ “Nota naar aanleiding van de missive van J.B. van Heutsz betreffende Sabang,” December 1901, het archief van de Nederlandse Handelmaatschappij, 1784, 1824-1964, 2.20.01, NNA, The Hague.

sanctioned by the *scheepvaartregeling*, moreover, yielded disappointing customs receipts.⁵⁷

Nowhere appeared on the cusp of supplanting Penang as the “Paris of the Acehnese.”

The decline in cross-Straits trade did not signify a renascent Aceh under Dutch control, but rather a vertiginous collapse in the Acehnese pepper trade. As late as 1894, the first full year of the *scheepvaartregeling*, Acehnese pepper imports in Penang soared to its all-time apex of 194,100 piculs. Yet, by 1898 the pepper trade plummeted to an unprecedented trough of 70,900 piculs.⁵⁸ Although soil exhaustion presents the most straightforward explanation for this decline, the cumulative impact of two decades of blockading likely had an impact as well. Trade between Aceh and Penang, for example, stagnated as the risks of braving the cordon impeded small operators and concentrated remaining business in a few large Chinese and Europeans firms. This shift rendered cross-Straits flows more vulnerable to changed business plan or other sudden whims.⁵⁹ Meanwhile, a region which had historically lagged behind Aceh as a market for Penang, the interior of the Malay Peninsula, began to catch up and achieve rough parity. In all likelihood, many of the small-scale Chinese and Arab merchants—hitherto the lifeline of the Aceh-Penang trade—reoriented their business pursuits toward the comparative safety of this new market. By the time the Dutch lifted its cordon, the momentum toward the Malay Peninsula appeared irreversible, with trade to that region rising exponentially in the 1890s.⁶⁰

Similarly, the grandiose aspirations to promote a rival to Penang at Sabang also reflected an even more fundamental shortcoming: an inability to engage with the Acehnese economy already in existence. Precisely those features of Pulau Weh Island that made it appealing to the Dutch perspective—its remoteness from most Acehnese towns and valleys, the ease with which

⁵⁷ Reid, *The Contest for North Sumatra*, 281-282.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 295.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 117, 294-5.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 268, 288, 294-5.

they could defend the area, and its comparatively sparse settlement—rendered it unsuitable to the task of attracting local traders hence made it a “disappointment” to the colonial establishment.

Pulau Weh may have been distant from the battles that continued to rage in the Acehese interior, but as a consequence it was also far from the cultivators of pepper and other crops. For all the expressions of Dutch concern about drawing local Acehese into the global economy and displacing Penang as the regional entrepot, they had accomplished little other than to create a colonial extrusion at the northern tip of the region, an isolated and irrelevant port removed from the daily lived experience of the Acehese.⁶¹

Enclosure and containment after the blockade

For all the heady talk of promoting commercial development as an antidote to insurgency, and even of drawing locals into the colonial economy, Dutch actions suggest that they still vastly preferred mobile Acehese commodities to the specter of mobile Acehese bodies. Officials across the colonial spectrum, from local governors to merchants to Snouck Hurgronje, expressed an abiding interest in controlling the movement of the Acehese, containing them in discrete spaces, and isolating them from potentially contaminating outside influences. Sometimes, as shall be seen, this penchant manifested itself in a longstanding obsession with the nexus of Pan-Islamic Ottoman officials, Arab merchants, and Acehese migrants converging in Penang. In the 1890s and the first decade of the new century, Dutch officials fretted just as much about foreign Islamic intrigues as they had thirty years earlier. However, the general anxiety also expressed itself in relatively new ways. For instance, many colonial administrators signaled a new trepidation not just with Acehese ties across the seas, but

⁶¹ “Sabang als Uitvoerhaven,” *Indische Gids* 28, no. 1 (1906): 251.

also with connections overland to neighboring regions such as West Sumatra and the east coast residencies surrounding the city of Medan. Moreover, many military officers also evinced a new interest in controlling movement not by trapping Acehnese within, but forcing them to move without through the increasingly popular instrument of exile. All of these developments, in sum, revealed a persistent Dutch ambivalence, and even hostility, to the engagement of local Acehnese with the outside world that belied the putative interest in stimulating economic development.

Although nearly three decades had elapsed since the beginning of their war in Aceh, by the turn of the century, Dutch fears over outside influence still hinged, to a remarkable degree, on the specter of pan-Islamic machinations. An 1898 letter by the successor of George Lavino as Dutch Consul in Penang, S. Nauw, illustrates this striking continuity. Among other things, Nauw warns Snouck Hurgronje, his interlocutor, of the malign “mediation” of shadowy figures from Mecca in that city, of mobile “sayyid” and “sharifs” seducing otherwise loyal Acehnese with plots of insurrection, and of attempts “to win for the Sultan of Turkey the Acehnese affair.”⁶² Hadhramati Arabs yet again emerge as the much dreaded vector of transnational Islamic fervor, providing the crucial link between Ottoman administrators, Meccan religious leaders, Penangite merchants, and Acehnese rulers. Nauw dwells on an especially suspicious wayfarer, one Sharif referred to as “Naeir,” whom had already “passed through the “Native Malay States of the Peninsula and...handed over a letter of introduction signed by the Consul General of Turkey in Batavia to the Sultan of Kedah.” Most distressing of all, the Consul reported that “Sharif Naeir was spotted departing to Deli,” where presumably he “was indeed offering his mediation, which

⁶² Dutch Consul in Penang to Snouck Hurgronje, September 21, 1898, S11.2, Snouck Hurgronje Papers, Leiden University Library Special Collections, Leiden, The Netherlands.

would cost an ample price,” between the Sultans of Aceh and the Ottoman Empire.⁶³ This breathless account of conspiracy-mongering, which materialized despite the fact that Nauw himself acknowledged the Sharif had not “given rise to any particular notice” in Sumatra, illustrates the fixity of the Straits Settlement as a sort of Pan-Islamic lodestar in the Dutch colonial imagination.⁶⁴

At the same time as the Dutch continued to dwell on the far-flung phantoms of Penang, Mecca, and Constantinople, however, their attention also began to shift away toward perceived menaces closer at hand within Sumatra. In the 1890s, as the Dutch escalated counter-insurgency efforts into the interior regions of Aceh, where the resistance remained the most pronounced and colonial control the most tenuous, officials increasingly realized that their longstanding preoccupation with blockades and transnational connections had, perhaps, distracted them from dangers that lurked even within seemingly peaceful areas they controlled. Snouck Hurgronje, scholar of Islam and chief intellectual architect of the 1890s escalation, lamented this misplaced focus in his characteristically blunt and astringent fashion. In an 1896 letter, Hurgronje dismissed the belief that the *scheepvaartegeling* and the maintenance of “all other sea posts...without expanding our influence inland” would somehow quell local restiveness as little more than an “illusion.” Such measures had never been “fatal for Aceh.” The more pressing imperative, in Hurgronje’s estimation, was “to prevent the movement of Acehnese outside their borders with East and West Sumatra.”⁶⁵ Acehnese fighters operating in the interior could slip through mountain passes to neighboring regions, where they would “not lack opportunities on the East

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Snouck Hurgronje to V.D. Wyck, “Nota over den Toestand van Atjeh,” Entry 31: Afschriften van Correspondentie van C. Snouck Hurgronje, Inventaris 9: Collectie Henri Titus Damsté, 1874-1955, H 1084 KITLV Library, Leiden, The Netherlands.

and West Coast of Sumatra to truly cause alarm.” Indeed, Hurgronje asserted that people in West Sumatra and elsewhere, “follow with great interest the course of Acehese affairs.” If left unmonitored and unchecked, Hurgronje thus intimates, the rebellion in Aceh could sow unrest, spill into neighboring areas, and produce a larger, even more devastating conflagration. Only by striving to seal land crossings with the same fervency they devoted to sea lanes, and by “making the Acehese feel our overwhelming force,” could the Dutch stave off this perilous contingency.⁶⁶

At the same time that the Dutch redoubled efforts to constrain Acehese movement and to entrap them in the boundaries of their home regions, colonial officials simultaneously launched a parallel campaign to expunge the most restive elements of local society. Much of this strategy hinged on the infamously harsh and relentless campaign waged by Colonel J. B. van Heutsz against the Islamic *ulama* of the interior regions.⁶⁷ However, equally integral to Dutch plans was the conquest and dispersal of Keumala, the town that had served for decades now as the de facto seat of the Acehese Sultanate in exile. In 1879, the heir apparent to the throne, the teenaged Muhammad Daud, and his powerful Regent, Tuanku Hashim, had fled the invading Dutch armies and decamped to the rugged mountain fastness between Pidie and Aceh Besar.⁶⁸ From there, they transformed the hitherto isolated and inconsequential village into the nerve center of the independent resistance, attracting *ulama*, partisans of the Sultan, and rebels of all stripes from near and far.⁶⁹ For the better part of twenty years, Keumala stood beyond the pale of Dutch control. By the late 1890s colonial officials had finally reached the conclusion that if they

⁶⁶ Snouck Hurgronje to V.D. Wyck, “Nota over den Toestand van Atjeh,” Entry 31: Afschriften van Correspondentie van C. Snouck Hurgronje, Inventaris 9: Collectie Henri Titus Damsté, 1874-1955, H 1084, KITLV Library, Leiden, The Netherlands.

⁶⁷ Reid, *The Contest for North Sumatra*, 278.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 204.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 205.

sought any chance of quelling the resistance, they would need to occupy this village once in for all.

The displacement of the Acehneese Sultanate from coastal Kutaradja to interior Keumala had, in many senses, constituted the culmination and logical endpoint of Dutch colonial policy. The previous seat of the Sultanate, the old capital of Kutaradja, had in many respects epitomized the cosmopolitan outlook of the Acehneese Kingdom. From this worldly capital, the Sultan conducted extensive relations with foreign powers, welcomed European or American traders, played host to savvy Hadhrami political operators, and established a close bond with the prosperous expatriate population in Penang. When the Dutch not only captured this city, but also unilaterally dissolved the sultanate, they, in effect, impelled the remnants of the political establishment to flee deep into the interior of Aceh to an area hitherto little more than a backwater remote from coastal shipping lanes or the most prosperous pepper producing regions. By thrusting the Sultanate from the coast deep into the interior at Keumala, the Dutch had thus appeared to accomplish their long sought after objective of attenuating Aceh's outside connections; indeed, most of the prominent merchants in Penang lost contact with the young Sultan and his representatives.⁷⁰ Although Keumala would slowly grow into a small trading center and the Sultan's representatives would once again dispatch emissaries from this mountainous retreat to conduct foreign relations in the 1880s, it would never recover the dynamism of the old capital.⁷¹ Whereas earlier Dutch officials feared the connectedness of the Sultanate and the specter of international intrigue, now the Sultanate seemed safely buried away in the mountain fastness of Sumatra.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 270.

⁷¹ Ibid., 205.

The very isolation and ruggedness of Keumala would soon confront the Dutch with a whole of series of thorny considerations as they needed to recalibrate their strategy to address a threat from within, rather than without. It was true that the Dutch had effectively constrained the Sultanate, severing it from reliable access to international trading and limiting the extent of contact it could have with potential political conspirators abroad. In this very success, the colonial establishment sowed as many new problems as they solved old ones. Without the moderating influence of economic calculation and self-aggrandizement, or of savvy cosmopolitan operators striving to reach some sort of resolution, there was little that could temper the most rebellious elements in Acehnese society. In fact, by allowing the Sultanate to migrate inland, the Dutch in effect relinquished what few levers of influence they could have exercised. Thus, with little left to lose, the isolated and marginalized Sultanate, once a significant brake on resistance, positioned itself in the 1880s as an unvarnished proponent of war. Keumala became the principal clearing house for adamantine Islamic *ulama*, rebel adventurers, and all manner of holdouts from the Dutch regime. With Keumala as the epicenter of resistance, the insurgency would only intensify in the years to come.⁷²

The eventual conquest of Keumala in 1898 by Colonel J.B. van Heutsz posed a series of conundrums quite unlike those involved with the *scheepvaartregeling* or coastal blockades of the past. In the past, most Dutch colonial measures to control the movement of Acehnese bodies entailed some variation on keeping them in Aceh, of patrolling the seas to prevent flight, maintaining a fortified *concentration* line that essentially kept them trapped in the Acehnese countryside, or more recently, hardening the internal borders with West and East Sumatra. With Keumala, by contrast, the Dutch encountered people who had withdrawn from the shores and the

⁷² Ibid.

concentration line into the rugged interior of the province. Of course, they had never lost contact with the outside world. As Keumala grew, trade stirred along the Pidie River and ramified to the world beyond Sumatra,⁷³ and the Acehese Sultan in exile tried to reclaim his kingdom's heritage of international diplomacy.⁷⁴ Furthermore, the Sultan even cultivated connections that breached the seemingly impermeable divide between the colonial state and Aceh, sending his own son along with an entire contingent of Acehese youth to the Javanese city of Bandung. There, they domiciled and studied with a local Regent appointed and supported by the colonial government.⁷⁵ Thus, the idea of sealing the coast or the border amounted to little more than an illusion. Once the armies of Colonel van Heutsz marched into Keumala and finally overpowered resistance in 1898, they could not plausibly disperse the Sultan, his coterie of followers, or the *ulama* to anywhere further afield without giving them ample opportunities to regroup and reorganize, the very same dynamic that had led to the establishment of Keumala in the first place. Nor did the colonial political authorities entertain any notion of restoring the sultanate or reversing its fateful decision first entered into twenty-five years earlier. Now that the colonial armies had heeded the counsel of Snouck Hurgronje and moved to exert their control over the interior, the whole set of circumstances they encountered essentially confounded the logic of everything they had done before. What remaining recourse, then, did the colonial authorities possess for quarantining the most rebellious Acehese?

To cope with these changing imperatives, Dutch administrators increasingly resorted to new tactics for managing the movement of the Acehese: expulsion and exile. At first, when the *ulama* and the Sultan fled from Keumala once again, the course of action was not immediately

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 258-259.

⁷⁵ Van Daalen to Governor General of the Netherlands Indies, January 26, 1907, Entry 69, Inventaris 10: Collectie Hazeu, Godard Arend Johannes Hazeu (1879-1929), H1083, KITLV Library, Leiden, the Netherlands.

necessary. The colonial army could simply hunt down the recalcitrant parties, and likely kill them in military engagements; however, the surrender of the Sultan and his party four years later, in 1903, posed some vexing quandaries about the proper course of action. On the one hand, if they imprisoned the Sultan and his retinue indefinitely, the Dutch stood the risk of antagonizing the local population even further and courting ongoing restiveness; on the other hand, if they released the Sultan back into the local population, they might inadvertently confer even more legitimacy and respect upon him than he already enjoyed, thereby consolidating his position as a political threat to the colonial state. Confronted with these two unsavory options, Colonel van Heutsz initially opted to pursue a sort of middle course of sorts by evacuating Muhammad Daud back to Kutaradja, by then under the firm grip of colonial rule, and by expelling some of his closest confidants, such as Tuanku Hussin, far from Aceh's shores to Java.⁷⁶ By extricating Daud from the vast, difficult to control hinterlands of Aceh and isolating him, rather ironically, back in his old seat of power, Van Heutsz likely suspected that the colonial government could neutralize whatever remaining capacity the Sultan might have left to mobilize resistance.

Despite being under constant surveillance, the Dutch nonetheless espied the Sultan's involvement in all manner of depredations against the colonial state. By 1907, these anxieties and suspicions only deepened. According to the *Indische Gids*, the official organ of the Dutch government in Batavia, "the Sultan was shown to have had a hand in various events that have occurred recently, such as the March bombardment of Kota Radja, the raid at Seudoe, and the surprise attack at Pakan Bada."⁷⁷ The journal attributed much of the ongoing resistance to him, observing that "the Sultan and his followers are also thought to have kept alive the resistance in Groot Atjeh in the hope that his son, Toeangkoe Ibrahim, who had been raised in Bandung...so

⁷⁶ "De pretendant-sultan van Atjeh naar Java overgebracht," *Indische Gids* 29, no. 2 (1907): 1735-1736.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 1735.

that he could be prepared to have the same powers as that with which the Sultans of Deli and Siak were endowed.”⁷⁸ Unwilling to countenance this possibility, the Dutch government soon summoned the Sultan to the office of the colonial government, an order with which, perhaps tellingly, he complied and “was taken captive along with some of his male followers.” The *Indische Gids* article reported that after “the remaining followers of the sultan were found,” all of them were deported to Java.” Indeed, the Sultan “will get paid f1,000 a month to end his life living in exile.”⁷⁹

The indecision and reluctance to expel the Sultan reflected the contradictions that were, in many ways, intrinsic to the project of containing Aceh. Although the colonial government would no longer allow dissidents and leaders to roam freely around the unsecured countryside, where they could sow discord and slip into neighboring regions like West Sumatra, they still hesitated to expel such leaders abroad from Aceh. After all, the crux of two decades of policy had been to minimize contact with the outside world and obviate the possibility of international machinations; once they departed, how could the Dutch prevent the Acehnese from collaborating with international powers or Arab merchants to the detriment of the colonial cause? For these reasons, the Dutch likely rejected the prospect of sending people like Tuanku Hussin or the Sultan abroad, where they could slip away to Penang or Mecca and cause untold harm. Instead, they dispatched them to the center of colonial gravity in Java. Yet, Dutch officials understood that such a move did not come without its own dangers. The Sultan, after all, had voluntarily sent his son to Bandung to bide time and prepare for an eventual ascension to the throne. Indeed, reports filtered back via Snouck Hurgronje’s replacement as the Adviser on Native Affairs, J. Hazeu, that the Sultan’s son and a large cohort of Acehnese students in residence at Bandung had

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 1736.

been stirring discord in the Javanese province. For a while, Hazeu and other officials debated the nature of what to do with these students; whether to move them a new school, to imprison them, or even send them back to Aceh, a resolution which General Van Heutsz fiercely opposed. In sum, by bringing Acehnese to Java, the Dutch risked establishing linkages between the two regions where few had existed before, and in effect, importing an insurrectionary cohort to the very core of its empire.⁸⁰

After much hand-wringing, however, Hazeu and other officials eventually determined that advantages of keeping Sultan and the young Acehnese students in Java outweighed any potential adverse consequences. By extricating them from their home milieu and placing them in what amounted to a foreign environment, while at the same time bringing them under closer colonial supervision, the Dutch in effect believed they could had finally found the template for isolating and controlling dangerous Acehnese. Stipends would furnish a financial incentive to acquiescence, while distance from their closest kin and colleagues would make conspiracies much more difficult to hatch. Javanese regents and “native” officials could act as exemplars, modeling proper behavior. Reservations about such arrangements, which sometimes degenerated into hyperbolic panics, did persist. With careful monitoring the Dutch mostly convinced themselves that they could keep close tabs on these Acehnese and intervene should they evince any untoward behavior or other efforts to spread anti-colonial sentiment. If anything, Java constituted the best possible fix, a place where the Dutch could parachute meddlesome Acehnese far from home without the attendant fear that they would somehow elude their net, vanish into the interstices between competing empires, and resurface in the transnational Acehnese networks

⁸⁰ Hazeu to Director of Prisoners, October 29, 1907, Entry 69, Inventaris 10: Collectie Hazeu, Godard Arend Johannes Hazeu (1879-1929), H1083, KITLV Library, Leiden, the Netherlands.

stretching from Penang to Mecca to Istanbul. Exile to Java thus represented the least bad of various suboptimal alternatives for dealing with recalcitrant Acehnese.

This turn to exile and banishment—a sort of coercive connection, if you will—developed into a commonplace tactic in the early twentieth century, and presaged a subtle but significant change in colonial policy. While still ever vigilant about patrolling movements in and out of Aceh, the Dutch increasingly appreciated the value of limited, tightly controlled interactions with the outside world, of re-directing the traditional ties linking the region to the Straits Settlement and the Arabian Peninsula toward the more malleable terrain of Java. The Governor General and other officials realized that by cultivating such contacts, they could begin the slow work of re-constituting Aceh's spatial imagination, of unmooring it from the Indian Ocean world and instead anchoring it to the nascent geo-body of the Netherlands East Indies. This interplay would not entail untrammelled exchange and movement. The Dutch would only countenance contacts that redounded to the advantage of the colonial order, and the very coercive dimension of forcible exile revealed just how remote such projects were from incubating a genuine spirit of solidarity and mutual self-interest among various indigenous peoples. The upsurge in exiles did, however, mark the start of Dutch efforts to incorporate Aceh—under their own, coercive terms—into the nascent entity that would become Indonesia.

The afterlife of war: economic drift and the atrophy of Aceh's external connections

By the time General Van Heutsz oversaw the deportation of the Sultan to Java in 1907, the war with the Acehnese, by then in its thirty-fourth long year, was finally approaching its denouement. Besides for the Sultan himself, invading colonial armies had killed many of the most committed of rebels, such as Teungku di Tiro and Teuku Uma, secured the surrender of

other prominent leaders, like Panglima Polem, and won the formal submission of numerous *ulèëbalang* leaders.⁸¹ Dutch forces made unprecedented gains deep into the inland hills of the Aceh Besar and Pidie region, gains they would not willingly surrender this time in the name of frugality or a false peace. The open battles and military campaigns that had punctuated the entire history of Dutch involvement in the region began to abate. In 1910, the Dutch launched one last expedition against the descendants of Teungku di Tiro and several remaining prominent *ulama*, finally compelling their submission in the name of *taslim*, or a just Islamic peace.⁸² The extraction of such surrenders, of course, did not so much reflect a gradual reconciliation with the colonial establishment as exhaustion and war weariness. The Dutch never prevailed upon the hearts and minds of the Acehnese people. Nor did they snuff out all the embers of resistance. For the remainder of the colonial period, the specter of a type of attack known as *Atjeh-Moorden*, wherein lone assailants would lunge at Dutch targets with a long wavy sword known as a *rencong* and kill as many as possible before meeting their own inevitable end, continued to haunt the region.⁸³ Yet, in spite of these latent vestiges of conflict, a bitter peace prevailed after 1911, and would endure until the Japanese invasion of 1943.

While the war might have finally reached an end, its legacy would continue to warp the development of Aceh for decades to come, particularly in terms of economic engagement, political control, and the evolution of Aceh as an Islamic land. As already discussed, besides for their intermittent military offensives, Dutch officials responded to conflict in one of three ways: by trying to suffocate Aceh's economic vitality, by attempting to seal the borders of the province

⁸¹ Amirul Hadi, "Exploring Acehnese Understandings of Jihad: A Study of the *Hikayat Prang Sabi*," in *Mapping the Acehnese Past*, eds. R. Michael Feener, Patrick Daly and Anthony Reid, vol. 268, *Verhandelingen van het Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2011), 194.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 194-5.

⁸³ Anthony Reid, *The Blood of the People: Revolution and the End of Traditional Rule in Northern Sumatra* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1979), 11.

from the outside world, and by attempting to expunge those elements of society deemed toxic to “peace and order.” Many of these efforts, of course, evinced a whiff of futility. The relatively small contingent of colonial forces could not patrol a thousand kilometer coastline and arrest all outward flows of Acehnese. The coercive connections of exile, in turn, could not neatly excise persons deemed threats, as many would eventually migrate back to Aceh or arouse suspicion in their new regions. Even the very policy of economic suffocation fell into disrepute, as prominent colonial leaders questioned the adverse consequences of excluding Acehnese from international trade and began to advocate, somehow, drawing locals into productive industry. In spite of the impossibility of such colonial ambitions, over the long haul, the war did contribute to a collapse of Aceh’s once prosperous pepper industry, a steep decline in *hajjis* departing for Mecca, and the removal of much of the region’s political elite. When the Dutch did reverse their attempts at economic sabotage, instituting the *scheepvaartregeling* and constructing Pulau Weh, they did more to repel than attract Acehnese from the circuits of international trade. These legacies would continue to exert a heavy burden for the rest of the colonial period.

The most obvious aftereffect of the war came in the exclusion and disengagement of Acehnese, whether by design or decades of cumulative drift, from colonial projects of economic development. The years after 1911 constituted a heady time for colonial entrepreneurs and capitalists. During the war, Dutch officials dwelled just as often on how they could contain trade or ensure that it did not finance rebellion as they did on means for promoting it; indeed, during the height of his pacification campaign, Colonel J.B. van Heutsz routinely denied applications for business permits on the basis of poor security.⁸⁴ The advent of *rust en orde* finally opened the

⁸⁴ Muhammad Gade Ismail, “Aceh’s Dual Economy during the Late Colonial Period,” in *Historical Foundations of a National Economy in Indonesia, 1890s-1990s*, ed. Robert Cribb (Amsterdam: Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1996), 233.

floodgates to long pent-up European demand, as Aceh beckoned to colonial entrepreneurs with the promise of boundless riches in petroleum, palm-oil, and rubber exploitation. From 1900 to 1908 alone the number of petroleum concessions soared from 21 to 108, while in the years after 1907, rubber plantations proliferated and the amount of hectares under cultivation rose from a mere 5,000 to 66,803 in 1920 in one region alone.⁸⁵ Growing demand for vegetable oil on international markets also stimulated a dramatic expansion in palm oil cultivation, from zero hectares to over five thousand within the span of two decades.⁸⁶ This rapid intensification in petroleum, oil, and rubber plantation, in turn, would not only reap impressive dividends for entrepreneurs, but would also swell the coffers of the colonial state, placing it on a secure financial footing less dependent on the whims of the government in Batavia .

While the end of the war witnessed a dramatic expansion in cash crop and mineral exploitation, however, these gains did not filter broadly across Acehnese society, or for that matter, impact the local economy much. Almost all of the capital pouring into the region, which came by and large from European sources, centered upon a few frontier zones at the margins of the traditional population centers in Aceh. Specifically, the vast preponderance of petroleum, rubber, and palm oil concessions clustered in East Aceh. Although ample oil deposits and a climate propitious to rubber partially explain the concentration of foreign activities in this one region, other considerations came into play. With its low population density and a history comparatively bereft of war or disorder, East Aceh offered many advantages to investors who feared the potential for sabotage or violence against their projects. One of the most notable aspects of situating their business in this frontier area was that the entrepreneurs really did not need to engage with the Acehnese much at all. Companies recruited most of the requisite skilled

⁸⁵ Ibid., 239

⁸⁶ Ibid., 240.

laborers not from Aceh Besar, Pidie, or other nearby population centers, but from distant Java, believing workers from there to be more pliant and less prone to any sort of restive agitation.⁸⁷

Acehnese, for their own part, also avoided the emerging plantations, which bore the stain of colonial influence and existed far from home. Most Acehnese could earn a sufficient amount of income for subsistence needs by cultivating rice, area palm and coconut on their own land.

In sum, the influx of European capital did not percolate through the structures of daily Acehnese life to any meaningful extent, and in fact, contributed to a growing disjuncture between the colonial and local economies, a phenomenon referred to by one historian as “Aceh’s Dual Economy.”⁸⁸ The pepper markets of old, for all the benefits that they conveyed to an elite class of *ulèëbalang*, also infused the entire society with its vitality. Local peasants in places as diverse as Pidie and the west coast of Aceh cultivated pepper on their own plots of land, alongside the other necessary staples of daily, while *ulèëbalang*, in turn, supervised local ports and ensured the distribution of the product overseas. This system of cultivation articulated all levels of Acehnese society into the world economy, weaving local peasants, *ulèëbalang*, and the Sultan into networks of Arab and Chinese merchants, which in turn supplied the great European powers. The new economies of petroleum, oil, and palm oil, by contrast, followed the template laid out at Sabang of exclusion and repulsion, of being separate and aloof from Acehnese society. Acehnese neither participated in nor benefitted from these new commodities. Moreover, even the most ambitious *ulèëbalang*, who at the outset welcomed and even tried to encourage such development, were denied the right to reap any independent tax revenue or profit from the European ventures whatsoever. These new cash-crop commodities did little to supplant a pepper

⁸⁷ Ibid., 245.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 230.

trade decimated by many long decades of war, or to integrate the Acehnese people into the sinews of the colonial economy.

As oil fields, coaling ports, and rubber plantations came to girdle the periphery of Aceh, extracting revenue without spurring local development or growth, the people of the region increasingly turned inward to go about their own local business and, in the process, effectively withdrew from global trading markets. People gravitated toward the cultivation of rice, coconut, and area palm as a means to pay taxes to *ulèëbalang* and to meet the basic requirement of their subsistence. Rice production actually rose enough during this period to end any need for imports of basic foodstuffs, but the amount of such goods exported abroad was comparatively small. The lack of a viable replacement, in the years ahead, would push Aceh on a steady drift toward impoverishment and economic marginalization. Much of the male population idled, urbanization failed to take root to the extent that it did in other regions of the Indies archipelago, and thousands of Acehnese migrated the Malay Peninsula to take advantage of rosier economic prospects. Even this growing diaspora, moreover, did not indicate connectivity, but rather decline, as the Acehnese populations abroad did not trade much with their brethren back home and by the mid twentieth century had shed much of their Acehnese identity altogether. This decline, as shall be seen, would have profound implications for Aceh's position in the nascent entity known as Indonesia.

Enclosure and the displacement of Islamic cosmopolitanism

The bifurcation of the Acehnese economy into mutually exclusive colonial and indigenous spheres, along with the corresponding withdrawal of local producers into their own self-contained spaces, would produce effects that extended far beyond the strictly commercial.

Indeed, this retrenchment reverberated through myriad elements of local society, from political and social organization to diasporic networking to urban form. The collapse of the pepper trade, for example, not only severed one of the most important bonds linking *ulèëbalang* leaders to the outside world of Arab and Chinese traders, but also undermined the wellspring of their independent wealth. As these leaders saw their source of income fall by the wayside, they grew ever more dependent on their new patrons, the Dutch colonial regime, for their authority and their monthly stipend.⁸⁹ The attenuation of outside ties that conferred legitimacy and income, as well as the poisonous taint of association with the hated colonial regime, placed the *ulèëbalang* in a precarious position. Meanwhile, just as Dutch enclosure efforts exacerbated social divides within local society, it also reconfigured the position of longstanding diasporic communities. For instance, at the very moment that Hadhrami Arab communities escalated their trading profile elsewhere in Java, the Malay Peninsula, and even South Sumatran cities like Palembang, emerging as the dominant player in the exchange of commodities such as horses and spices while also gaining lucrative niches in real estate, finance, and other endeavors, in Aceh they were compelled to pull back from such activities.⁹⁰ As a result, many Acehnese Arabs gradually became disarticulated from the trading ties that produced and reproduced a vital sense of diasporic cohesion. Although many of these Hahdrami retained atavistic vestiges of a distinct, “Habib” identity, the boundaries distinguishing them from the host community nonetheless blurred and dissolved almost to the point of non-recognition, rendering Arabs local Acehnese with unique claims of lineage to the Prophet Muhammad. Lastly, colonial efforts at enclosure not

⁸⁹ For a time, the *ulèëbalang* did continue to exercise monopoly control over the more locally oriented rice market; however, over time, the Dutch began to cut them out of even this source of income. See James T. Siegel, *Rope of God* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 88-90.

⁹⁰ For an examination of the Hadhrami Arab commercial profile, see William Clarence-Smith, “Entrepreneurial Strategies of Hadhrami Arabs in Southeast Asia, c. 1750s-1950s,” in *The Hadhrami Diaspora in Southeast Asia: Identity Maintenance or Assimilation*, eds. Ahmed Ibrahim Abushouk and Hassan Ahmed Ibrahim (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 135-139.

only altered the social, political, and cultural topography of Aceh, but also impacted its physical morphology. By the 1910s and 1920s a wave of urbanization stemming from commercial and economic development swept across much of the Dutch colonial territories, infusing even interior regions previously remote from traditional trading routes with the beachheads of mercantile city life. The florescence of coffee cultivation in West Sumatra, for example, stimulated mid-sized towns and crossroads of commerce like Padang Panjang and Bukittinggi. While such processes of urbanization engendered considerable tumult and capitalistic exploitation, they also produced a much more complex and variegated social system, with more indigenous petty merchants, bureaucrats, school teachers, and the like outside the traditional peasant/chief binaries. The efforts to enclose the Acehnese economy, by contrast, stunted any parallel developments in that region. Rather than a truly transformative force refashioning and reshaping the fundamentals of local society, the purveyors capitalism instead clung to the coastal port cities of *scheepvaartregeling* like Sigli, Lho Seumawe, Kuala Langsa, and Kuala Simpang, an extrusion at the edges rather than a constitutive force in Acehnese life. The vibrant urban sector that materialized elsewhere in the Netherlands East Indies, with its new professions and classes unmoored from rural life, never took root in Aceh

At the same time that the colonial project of enclosure produced an inward retrenchment of Acehnese society—fraying external ties, exacerbating social conflicts, and stalling the advent of urbanization—it would leave perhaps its biggest imprint on Islam, one of the most enduring elements in Aceh's socio-cultural landscape. The Acehnese kingdom had long ago earned the moniker of *Serambi Mekka*, or Gate to Mecca. This reputation stemmed from a number of factors, including the kingdom's distinguished tradition of Islamic jurisprudence, its exemplary piety, and its position as the portal through which currents of religious thought from the Arabian

Peninsula, which would pass into the Southeast Asian “Land beneath the Winds.” This outward looking Islamic profile was, in turn, entwined with the networks of scholars and traders circulating through the kingdom, as well as the prosperous class of cosmopolitan *ulèëbalang* pepper growers with whom they interacted. Decades of the blockading, *scheepvaartregeling*, and war-making had hindered the circulation of Arab and Indian Muslims to the kingdom, ruptured ties with the nodules of global capital, and battered the cosmopolitan classes. A prominent mufti in Mecca had even enjoined his Acehnese co-religionists in the 1890s to forgo the obligation of *haji* in favor of waging *jihad* against the Dutch invaders. While by the 1910s the long war was over, the bifurcation of Aceh’s economy, with its isolation of the local population, threatened to distance the local Muslim population from the swirling eddies of ferment and religious renewal sweeping in from Egypt and Arabia, across South Asia and the Indian Ocean basin, and into much of Southeast Asia. Could a kingdom battered by years of blockades and enclosure, not to mention the harsh tactics of total warfare that killed a large quantity of the local *ulama* class, reclaim its position at the forefront of the cosmopolitan Islamic world of the Indian Ocean?

The 1910s and 1920s appeared to suggest that the legacy of war and enclosure was, in fact, pushing Aceh away from the emergent trends in the Islamic world of Southeast Asia, and one notable trend in particular: Islamic reformism. During the 1910s, the Netherlands East Indies witnessed the emergence of Sarekat Islam and Muhammadiyah, two groundbreaking mass Muslim organizations. Although both groups encompassed a multitude of sometimes contradictory theological perspectives, political objectives, and organizational structures, both Sarekat Islam and Muhammadiyah can be broadly described as revolutionary attempts to harness the venerable religious imperative of *tadjud*, or renewal, to a modern form of subscription based mutual association. Both of these organizations promoted an approach to Islam that can broadly

be construed as reformist, arguing that the Islamic community had fallen into degradation, corruption, and error over time, which, in turn, precipitated the ignominy of foreign control. Sarekat Islam and Muhammadiyah thus both strove to recover and restore what they regarded as the true principles of the faith. Along these lines, the two groups advocated that individual Muslims directly engage with the Qur'an and *hadith*, that juridical precedent should be de-emphasized, and that modern schooling should be embraced. In addition, these organizations regarded the larger Muslim community—embodied by social associations like Muhammadiyah and Sarekat Islam—as the proper field of action field of action for individual faith and morality. Over the course of 1910s and 1920s, these two organizations would prove wildly popular. From their origins in Surabaya and Yogyakarta, Sarekat Islam and Muhammadiyah spread across the entirety of Java and onward to all the major islands of the archipelago, Sumatra among them, opening countless membership branches, schools, charities, and hospitals. Attracting hundreds or tens of thousands of followers respectively, Sarekat Islam and Muhammadiyah thus emerged not only as a fount of Islamic vitality, but also as the most potent form of indigenous mobilization, secular, religious, political or otherwise, in all of the Netherlands East Indies.

Another important dimension of Muhammadiyah and Sarekat Islam lied in their cosmopolitan dimension. Although both organizations were, first and foremost, creatures of their local Indonesian environment, they also cannot be decoupled from a larger transnational context of religious ferment in the Islamic world starting in the late nineteenth century. Multi-directional flows of ideas, print publications, and people increasingly connected reformists from Cairo and Mecca, across the Indian Ocean to South Asia and Singapore, all the way into the Netherlands East Indies. Some of the founders of Islamic Indies groups explicitly cited Egyptian reformers like Muhammad Abduh, Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, and Rashid Rida as exemplars for their

activities. Sarekat Islam and Muhammadiyah also modeled publications and communication strategies on earlier reformist newspapers such as those of *Al-Imam* in Singapore, which in turn, owed a great intellectual debt to Cairene publications like *Al-Manar*. Muhammadiyah, in particular, sent a select group of elite students to the most storied institution of higher learning in the Islamic world, Al-Azhar University, while speakers from the Middle East regularly travelled to Indonesia to lecture at their chapters and schools. And the very existence of Sarekat Islam and Muhammadiyah themselves, unequalled in their size, scope, or social engagement by any other organizations elsewhere in the Muslim world, furnished an inspiration for religious mobilization in the putative Islamic heartlands of South Asia and the Middle East.

The transnational and cosmopolitan element of mass reformist organization in the Netherlands East Indies would, in turn, help determine their geographical distribution and extent across the archipelago. It would not be accurate to say that Muhammadiyah thrived across an archipelago of islands so much as across an archipelagic network of cities and towns. Cross-fertilization between outward looking port centers, such as Surabaya on the east coast of Java or Jakarta on the northern coast, and inland market centers such as Yogyakarta, Solo, and Pekalongan in Central Java, proved especially congenial to the ascent of Muhammadiyah.⁹¹ Transnational flows of peoples, ideas, and print passed through the oceanic port centers, inspiring a broad, outward looking conception of religious reform, while the growing petit-bourgeois and mercantile classes of Muslims in inland cities provided the financial underpinnings for an organization that ultimately relied on subscriptions for its existence. Outside Java, this same convergence of cosmopolitan port city and inland trade centers produced a similar reformist florescence not far removed from Aceh, in West Sumatra, where

⁹¹ Alfian, *Muhammadiyah: The Political Behavior of a Muslim Modernist Organization under Dutch Colonialism* (Yogyakarta: Gadjah Madah University Press, 1989), 175-177.

Muhammadiyah established strong beachheads in coastal Padang and interior Padang Panjang alike.⁹²

In describing Muhammadiyah as a product of a distinct configuration of urban forms, it might be possible to veer into a type of economic or geographic determinism. Contingency and chance, especially in the form of individual actors and leaders, shaped the development of mass Muslim organizations just as much as other underlying conditions. The concentration of a particularly committed cadre of religious leaders in Yogyakarta revolving around the person of Ahmad Dahlan helped ensure that Muhammadiyah grew a larger footprint in Central Java than it did even in coastal port cities. Likewise, a few notably ambitious Minangkabau traders living in Java played a key role in transmitting Muhammadiyah to Sumatra. However, while still recognizing the contingent elements of historical agency, it is possible to say that the processes of urbanization, economic growth, and international trade nonetheless furnished a necessary, if not sufficient, condition for the cosmopolitan reformism of Muhammadiyah. The case of the transmission to West Sumatra only serves to confirm the centrality of a cosmopolitan environment, of the cross-pollination of traders, scholars, and educators from a varied array of regions, to the formation of organizations such as Muhammadiyah. The fact that the Minangkabau were so deeply entangled in archipelagic and oceanic networks made the spread of reformist organization where possible, all of which raises the question: could cosmopolitan religious reformism migrate to the archipelagic location with the longest, most intense experience of war, blockade, and enclosure? Could it travel to Aceh?

Strife-torn Aceh, at first glance, appeared to present much more inhospitable terrain to the advent of Muhammadiyah and reformism than did the neighboring Minangkabau lands to the

⁹² For an overview of the growth and development of Muhammadiyah in West Sumatra, see Alfian, *Muhammadiyah*, 240-298.

south. A combination of factors militated against such development, among them, the bifurcated economy, the comparatively limited reach of urbanization, a small indigenous mercantile class, and a light colonial bureaucratic footprint. Contacts with the outside world had attenuated, whether by colonial design as in the case of the *scheepvaartegeling*, or by the mutual mistrust bred by decades of fighting and the consequent turn inward. The once cosmopolitan classes of *ulèëbalang*, comfortable alike among Arab *alim*, Chinese shippers, and European merchants, morphed into Dutch-backed overlords isolated from the rest of society and with few ties farther beyond. Whereas Minangkabau increasingly circulated in the burgeoning networks tying the Malay Peninsula to Java to Egypt, and thus acted as conduits for reformist ideas from the Middle East and for predominantly Javanese organizations like Muhammadiyah, Acehnese more and more either hunkered down at home or permanently decamped abroad. Of course, the connectivities long associated with this region did not vanish entirely; deep Islamic devotion remained, and the *haji*, discouraged by Dutch and even Islamic scholars alike, showed signs of reviving by the 1910s. However, the constitutive elements of a cosmopolitan milieu that could nourish the new type of Islamic reformism found elsewhere in the Dutch archipelago, for the most part, were not prevalent in Aceh.

In spite of these underlying constraints, Muhammadiyah did establish several prominent beachheads in the coastal districts of Aceh by the late 1920s, and soon developed into the largest indigenous association of any kind in the region. Following the same geographic, demographic, and economic patterns evidenced elsewhere in the archipelago, Muhammadiyah flourished in the very port cities that constituted the fulcrum of the colonial *scheepvaartegeling*, the communities that the Dutch hoped would constitute a controllable portal to international commerce and the outside world. The most prominent branches of the Islamic organization emerged in the Sigli,

Lhokseumawe, Langsa, and the capital city of Kutaradja (Ulèlheue); the organization also formed subsidiary branches in smaller port cities, including the great hope of Dutch economic planners, Sabang.⁹³ Likewise, the organization appealed most to the vestiges and remnants of the old cosmopolitan elites, the *ulèëbalang*. The most prominent proponents of Muhammadiyah were members of this elite stratum who had managed to navigate across the vicissitudes of war and transition from the commercial cosmopolitanism of the past to the colonial cosmopolitanism of the present. For example, the Muhammadiyah Consul in Aceh from 1930-1935, Teuku Mohammad Hasan, came from a venerable *ulèëbalang* family in Pidie, received his education at a colonial school, and relocated to the colonial capital to work for the colonial government. Likewise, Hasan's successor, Teuku Cut Hasan, graduated from a MULO school and also decamped from his home area around Meuraksa for the colonial capital.⁹⁴ Muhammadiyah thrived in precisely those cities and among the population with the most ties to the ruling Dutch regime.

Once lodged on Acehnese soil, in turn, Muhammadiyah pursued their trademark fusion of modern educational work and internationally-inspired reformist activism. On the one hand, the organization cooperated with Dutch authorities in the creation of a system of schools with all the trappings of the most cutting-edge pedagogies and educational theories, such as classes divided by age into grades, textbooks, blackboards, science training and the like. In 1928, Muhammadiyah opened its first primary school with the imprimatur of colonial acceptance, an H.I.S. (*Hollandsch-Indisch School*) primary school for "natives" in the capital city of Kutaraja. In the years ahead, the organization worked with another indigenous group, *Taman Siswa*, to launch another seven such H.I.S. schools, which educated thousands of students and almost

⁹³ Reid, *Blood of the People*, 20; "Moehammadijah Sabang," *Pergaoelan*, 12 April 1923.

⁹⁴ Reid, *Blood of the People*, 20.

matched in size those schools operated by the government directly.⁹⁵ On the other hand, at the same time that Muhammadiyah worked with the Dutch and presented a politically palatable face to the authorities, they also strove to disseminate a message of *tadjud*, or religious renewal. All of the schools operated by the organization featured a substantial amount of Islamic theology and instruction in their curricula, stressing hallmarks of reformism such as individual study of the Qur'an and *hadith*. This religious instruction also assumed an international inflection: rather than relying on teachers or materials from Aceh alone, Muhammadiyah strove to connect its students to the larger *umma*, importing textbooks from the Middle East, bringing news of the various parts of the *Dunia Islam* (Islamic World), and even facilitating the travel of *alim* to and from Egypt, as in the case it invited a speaker from Cairo to help inaugurate the opening of their school in Sigli.⁹⁶ In effect, Muhammadiyah thus helped to resurrect the Aceh's cosmopolitan tradition of bridging the divide between European and Middle Eastern worlds in the far flung corners of the eastern Indian Ocean world.

The implantation of Muhammadiyah in port cities with a heavy colonial presence, it should be added, was more than a mere coincidence or happenstance; the colonial establishment actively promoted the organization as a peaceful and legitimate alternative to more violent expressions of Acehnese Islamic identity. Since the conclusion of outright war in 1911, a frightening, albeit quite limited, type of religiously inspired attack known as *Atjeh-Moorden* had beset the colonial regime in Aceh. This sort of guerilla tactic, which fell under the rubric of *prang sabi*, or holy war, featured a lone, suicidal assailant who would swear his loyalty to God and perform various ritual ablutions, before unsheathing a sharp, wavy dagger known locally as a *rencong*. The "Atjeh-Moorden" would then ambush and lunge at some unsuspecting Dutch

⁹⁵ Ibid, 22.

⁹⁶ "Pendirian Gedong H.I.S. Pidie (Sigli)," July 7, 1931, *Soeara Moehammadijah*.

colonial, attempting to kill as many infidel, or *kafir*, before he met his inevitable end and won his reward in heaven. Muhammadiyah, by contrast, with its commitment to education and “progress,” appeared to provide an antidote to the perceived “geestdrijfverij,” or fanaticism, of such tactics. In a 1929 political report, the colonial governor of Aceh, O.M. Goedhart, explicitly commended Muhammadiyah not only for its “loyal attitude,” but also for its role as an exemplar of religious propriety and for its “position in the region taken against the spread of the false doctrine of Prang Sabi.” The practitioners of *prang sabi* and *Atjeh-Moorden*, in Goedhart’s view, acted from some sense of spiritual inadequacy, as in the case of one such assailant, Teungku Dido Amin, who was deeply “bothered... that he lacked enough money to make *hajj*” to Mecca. By contrast, Goedhart believed, Muhammadiyah incarnated Islamic orthodoxy, and could thus temper those violent tendencies of Acehnese borne of theological error. In this way, Dutch officials increasingly envisioned Muhammadiyah as an Islamic counterweight to religious violence in Aceh.⁹⁷

The success and influence that Muhammadiyah appeared to enjoy in the coastal cities of Aceh proved to be more a veneer than a result of widespread acceptance, a mask that concealed the organization’s utter failure in penetrating Acehnese society. From the very outset, Muhammadiyah boosters recognized just how forbidding the local terrain was for the group. For example, *Oetoesan Goeroe*, the newsletter of indigenous Acehnese schoolteachers—including those at Muhammadiyah schools—declared in no uncertain terms that “this organization had existed in Koetaradja for a while, but during this time was lacking the attention of the people.” The existence of schools, in other words, did not translate into widespread enthusiasm or even

⁹⁷ “Governor of Atjeh and its Dependencies, Goedhart, to the The Governor General of the Netherlands-Indies, “Verslag politieken toestand Atjeh en Onderhoorigheden over 1928,” 16 January 1929, Mailrapport No. 130x/29., National Archives of the Republic of Indonesia, Jakarta.

recognition from most of the population. Muhammadiyah not only struggled to make inroads into the Acehnese population, but in fact aroused considerable suspicion, a fact that might seem curious for an avowedly Islamic group in the “Gate to Mecca.” Part of this wariness of Muhammadiyah undoubtedly stemmed from the taint of colonial collaboration and the generally enthusiastic support the group received from the Dutch regime. However, a short-lived Acehnese newspaper and avid Muhammadiyah proponent, titled *Muslimin*, pinpointed a perhaps even more potent explanation of its struggle in a 1928 article:

Among the masses in the past few years, we see, very little attention by Muslim society in Aceh to Moehammadiyah. What is the cause of this? It is not because Acehnese Muslim society does not understand the concept of an “association” and not because Acehnese Muslim society “hates” or has “an aversion to Moehammadiyah, but because much of the Acehnese Muslim society thought Moehammadiyah belong to the Javanese and the Minangkabau.⁹⁸

For the majority of Acehnese, who rarely travelled to the coastal port cities and inhabited a distinct economic zone, Muhammadiyah did not represent a bridge to far-flung networks extending from Java to Malay and onward to Egypt. Instead, the group constituted an alien presence. Minangkabau and Javanese, who comprised a disproportionately large percentage of the Muslim Indonesian population in places like Sabang, also comprised the majority of students in Muhammadiyah schools and almost all of its teachers.⁹⁹ The group thus appeared to represent almost as alien an extrusion upon the Dutch landscape as the Dutch dominated port communities in which they operated.

This ambivalence toward Muhammadiyah, however, should not be conflated with some sort of antagonism to Islamic reformism in general; the *Muslimin* article identified a parallel Acehnese interest in mobilizing around the venerable idea of “insyaf,” or “realization,” on a local, neighborhood by neighborhood level. Asking rhetorically whether the Acehnese *ulama*

⁹⁸ “Gerakan Kaoem Moeslimin di Atjeh dengan Moehammadijah,” October 25, 1933, *Muslimin*.

⁹⁹ Reid, *Blood of the People*, 22.

“together make a movement like the one that has taken shape in Muhammadiyah, the article then instructs the reader to “look at the individual neighborhoods they inhabit”:

In Moentasik, there is Djadamnja; in Blang Pase there is Djami'atoek Diniahnja; in Mt. Ol. Doea there is Al Moeslimnja and in several other places; are these religious organizations recommended by ulama as the beginning of a new age of a current of (*insyaf*) realization? As there is in Sibree, Indrapoeri, and Simpang Oelim.

These religious groups have been organized in the "dozens" through the advice of the Acehese Muslim ulama, many of which already have religious schools each made according to their own arrangement/regulations.

Thus, there is the establishment of schools standing by themselves. They do not have a bond with each other, whether in the affairs of organization or in the affairs of teaching and training. This is who we are!¹⁰⁰

The article thus captures the essence of the dilemma confronting Muhammadiyah and impeding its spread throughout Aceh. With their venerable traditions of *tajdid* and renewal, the Acehese might well embrace the cornerstones of Islamic reformism, such as schools and the concept of *insyaf*. However, after decades of war and enclosure, blockades and strife, the people of this region evinced little desire to harness their aspirations to a trans-local group whose leaders came from distant lands or the compromised cosmopolitan precincts of Kutaradja and Sabang. Instead, they sought to organize in their own villages and neighborhoods rather than in Kutaradja, among their own people, rather than with Minangkabau or Javanese or “rootless” *ulèëbalang* who cooperated with the Dutch. In spite of such obstacles, the writers from *Muslimin* predicted that the imperative of “legal unity” among Muslims spelled out in the Qur’an and the *hadith* would eventually compel Acehese to look beyond their village and embrace Muhammadiyah. But would they?

For all of the difficulties encumbering Muhammadiyah in Aceh, however, it was not preordained that the organization should fail or exercise little influence in the region. Elsewhere across the archipelago, it was ultimately incumbent on particularly adroit leaders, such as Hadji

¹⁰⁰ “Gerakan Kaoem Moeslimin di Atjeh dengan Moehammadijah,” October 25, 1933, *Muslimin*.

Rasul in West Sumatra or Ahmad Dahlan in Java, to translate the cosmopolitan ethos pervading Muhammadiyah into a local idiom and to persuade people from smaller villages to join their movement. The long history of enclosure and war had not irrevocably laid waste to Aceh or rendered its soil forever fallow; an entrepreneurial leader could harness the region to a larger, outward looking movement for religious revival, a movement grounded both in its local people and also a capacious understanding of the transnational *umma*. With the right guidance, Muhammadiyah, or some other group or organization, could be implanted in the Acehnese ground.

If one person could embody the contradictions of the late 1920s moment for Aceh more than any other, could crystallize both the enduring resonances of Aceh's cosmopolitan past and the pressures pushing the region inward, both the possibilities of an Islamic florescence and perils of a turn toward a revanchist vision of local nationalism, it was Teungku Muhammad Hasbi Ash al-Shiddieqy. This educator ultimately rose to fame less on the basis of his work in Aceh than on the contribution he made to the larger cause of Indonesian nationalism and Islamic thought. In his seminal study of Indonesian Islamic Law, R. Michael Feener highlights Hasbi as one of the principal progenitors of religious jurisprudence in post-colonial Indonesia and describes much of his biography in detail.¹⁰¹ In 1951 Hasbi permanently decamped from his homeland to accept a position as a professor at the newly formed Yogyakarta campus of the Indonesian system of State Islamic Studies Institutes (IAIN). From there, he not only ascended the ranks of this new, state sanctioned system of religious higher education, becoming a Dean of the Faculty of Shari'a in 1960, but he also played an instrumental role in formulating a distinctive Indonesian *madhhab*, or school of Islamic law. Before he acquired distinction on the

¹⁰¹ R. Michael Feener, *Muslim Legal Thought in Modern Indonesia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 59-69.

national stage, he spent his childhood in Lhok Seumawe and his early career promoting the cause of none other than Muhammadiyah in his homeland.¹⁰² The follow questions thus arise: why did the prodigious skills of the young Hasbi not translate into greater success for his favored organization in Aceh? Why did he, in contrast to many of his scholarly Muslim peers, eventually depart his homeland? And what implications did this hold for the future of Aceh?¹⁰³

Hasbi's childhood and his immersion in the remnants of Aceh's cosmopolitan milieu can help to provide some context for his affinity with Muhammadiyah. Born on 10 March 1904 to an Arab family claiming a genealogical connection with the Prophet's companion, the first Caliph, Abu Bakr al-Siddiq, Hasbi grew up in the port city of Lhok Seumawe, a port city. After decades of warfare and strife, the Dutch had done much to disrupt the ties of that community to the outside world, and the days of easy intermingling with European traders and Acehnese alike had passed. Hasbi's father, a prominent member of the *ulama* class, specifically enjoined his son from studying the Latin alphabet, associating it with the "Dutch infidels." However, in spite of such parental strictures, the young Hasbi retained traces of the cosmopolitan past of his community, and intellectual curiosity eventually impelled him not only toward a varied Islamic education, but also to cross the colonial divide to the capital of Kutaradja, where he studied the Dutch language with a Dutchman. Hasbi's precociousness, however, sent him in other directions as well. Indeed, the young student had an opportunity to meet the noted reformist *alim* and *Al-Islam* newspaper editor from Singapore, Shaykh Muhammad Ibnu Salim al-Kalali, during one of his trips to Lhok Seumawe. Al-Kalili, a Hadhrami Arab, introduced Hasbi to many of the great orthodox reformist thinkers across the span Islamic history, including Ibn Taymiyya, Ib al-

¹⁰² Ibid., 59.

¹⁰³ R. Michael Feener, "Indonesian Movements for the Creation of a Nationalist Maddhab," *Islamic Law and Society* 9, no. 1 (2002): 89-90.

Qayyim al-Jawziyya, and Muhammad Abduh. In this way, the cross-Straits bond had proven more resilient than the Dutch perhaps had hoped, continuing to transmit Islamic knowledge and ideas well into the late colonial period.

The contact with Shaykh al-Kalali, in turn, thrust Hasbi on a voyage that had until then been traversed not by choice, but through forcible exile, as the young scholar left for the first time to Java. At the behest of al-Kalali, Hasbi travelled to the East Javanese hub of Surabaya in 1928 to enroll at one of the leading reformist *madrasahs* of its time, the Hadhrami operated al-Islah wal Irsyad. During his time at the school, Hasbi not only burnished his Arabic language proficiency and studied at the feet of the famous Ustadz Umar Shaykh Ahmad Surkati, but also became exposed to an organization actively organizing at the time in the burgeoning metropolis: Muhammadiyah. This period in Hasbi's life would help solidify his connections to that organization. It would also act as a crucible for his ideas on the subject of Shafi'i jurisprudence, forging his conviction that the Islamic community must move beyond *taqlid*, or fealty to precedent and one particular school of legal thought, to pursue their own theological reasoning. Possessed of these new connections and ideas, Hasbi would go on to make the return trip back home that the exiled Acehnese Sultan had never made, and leave his imprint on the local Islamic community.

After leaving Java and further deepening his commitment to reformist ideas at the *al-Irsyad* Islamic school, Hasbi again returned Aceh in 1928 and dived headlong into the task of propagating his religious message through "education and *dakwah*" not just in the large cities of the coast, but throughout its rural precincts.¹⁰⁴ Among other teaching positions, the young Acehnese reformer established and directed a branch of the *al-Irsyad* school in his native city of

¹⁰⁴ Ali Hasjmy, *Ulama Aceh: Mujahid Pejuang kemerdekaan Dan Pembangun Tamadun Bangsa*, (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1997), 176.

Lhokseumawe, emerged as a representative of the Jong Islamiten Bond, and worked as a teacher of Islamic religious in a variety of official Dutch-run village (HIS) and intermediate (MULO) schools throughout the province.¹⁰⁵ According to local biographies, Hasbi's efforts proved especially attractive to "groups of young Acehnese or those animated with the spirit of youth," and he inspired a cadre of "students and loyal followers." He also forged a position as the foremost proponent of *taqlid*. His devotees and colleagues "thereupon in the following 20 and 30 years established a widespread system of reformist Islam in the land of Aceh."¹⁰⁶ And of all the tasks that Hasbi engaged in, perhaps the most notable was Hasbi's energetic work on behalf of Muhammadiyah in the province.

Indeed, upon his return to Aceh, Hasbi almost immediately thrust himself into the campaign to promote and expand the presence of Muhammadiyah, in the process placing special emphasis on its extension into the rural expanses of the region. Indeed, Hasbi did not hesitate to use his perch as an educational leader to spread the message of Muhammadiyah, launching a major outreach effort throughout the Sawang district of North Aceh from the religious school he oversaw in the village of Kreung Mane, about halfway between Lhok Seumawe and Bireuen.¹⁰⁷ These campaigns soon reaped considerable dividends, attracting many new members, and simultaneously ensuring that the Kroeeng Mane religious school, in the words of one Dutch *controleur*, G.L. Tichelman "grew to very large proportions."¹⁰⁸ Furthermore, these efforts by Hasbi comprised a part of what appeared like an inexorable rise in Muhammadiyah's fortunes in

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, 177.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Tichelman to Jongejans, 22 June 1931.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

the Aceh, as Tichelman felt that due to “its emphasis on religion...Muhammadiyah is destined to win over the Acehnese population earlier than other groups.”¹⁰⁹

In spite of Hasbi’s estimable strengths as a theologian and organizer, significant forces ultimately conspired to constrain Muhammadiyah’s rise, perhaps most notable among them, the rising wariness of the colonial region. Despite their previous support for religious reformers in Aceh, the ascent of Hasbi and the “noteworthy...expansion and increased activities” of Muhammadiyah in the region began to elicit some consternation amongst the colonial ranks. These phenomena particular rankled Controlleur Tichelman from the Meureudu district of North Aceh. Tichelman acknowledged that in the past, colonial administrators such as Governor Goedhart had perceived Muhammadiyah as an ally and that “it was the opinion of that government that in this organization was a counterbalance against the more radical type of nationalists and the like.”¹¹⁰ In contrast to other groups, the low-level Dutch official notes, “Muhammadiyah still holds back from the political terrain, at least in public.”¹¹¹ Tichelman even noted that the colonial authorities had cooperated with Muhammdiyah in establishing a jointly-run H.I.S. primary school in Banda Aceh. In spite of these acknowledgments, however, Tichelman increasingly held the workings of this colony-wide Islamic group in suspicion and came to “see in Muhammadiyah a real danger” in Aceh.¹¹² For example, the *controlleur* disparaged Muhammadiyah as a haven for “unprincipled adventurers who have tried to improve their position and to serve their own interests.”¹¹³ Tichelman openly rued the establishment of schools, dismissing “the only teachers who are placed to work there” as “incompetent.”¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

Perhaps the most important reason impelling the Dutch to action against Hasbi was not colonial mistrust or contempt alone, but the prospect of social unrest and opposition among their most stalwart allies in the local population. Indeed, colonial officials feared that the Islamic agenda of Muhammadiyah and its chief theological exponent, Muhammad Hasbi, could disrupt Aceh's carefully balanced political arrangements. Tichelman observed that Muhammadiyah's reformist inclinations impelled them to "challenge popular practices that are not in agreement with their teachings or are such that they are unworthy of believers of Islam."¹¹⁵ This mission, in turn, could assume a specifically political cast, because most of the hereditary Acehnese *ulèëbalang* chiefs who acted as the custodians of customary law (*adat*) and constituted the closest collaborators of the Dutch authorities, were viewed as insufficiently religious by these reformers. "Among these chiefs it is of course," observed Tichelman, "not unknown that Muhammadiyah takes the modern position of considering that the numerous institutions of *adat* are unworthy of adherents of Muslim duty."¹¹⁶ For the *ulèëbalang* and Dutch alike, religious reformers like Hasbi who were conversant in the works of Egyptian reformers like Muhammad Abduh and who advocated a more direct relationship between individual believers and their faith, could pose a daunting challenge. As a result, "Muhammadiyah was received in a very unfriendly manner" by these chiefs who felt their legitimacy threatened.¹¹⁷

Tichelman discerned precisely such a potential for political conflict upon the arrival of Muhammad Hasbi in the district of Kroeeng Mane in Sawang, North Aceh. In fact, Tichelman attributed growing opposition against Dutch political plans—specifically, the elevation of a pliant *ulèëbalang* named Teuku Lotan as Sawang provincial leader—to the malign machinations

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

and religious activities of Hasbi. According to Tichelman, just as Hasbi's "religious school quickly grew to very large proportions and Muhammadiyah moved to take a propaganda tour to Sawang...there also emerged all of a sudden opposition against T. Lotan and more intrigues against him were hatched."¹¹⁸ For the *controleur*, this interference in colonial administration represented a grave threat, as "the issue of succession in Sawang and peace in the administration is too important of an issue for me to be able to tolerate that it become clouded."¹¹⁹

Judging the threat to local comity as too severe for inaction, Tichelman found recourse in a strategy that had long served the colonial well: enclosure and exile. The controlleur specifically moved to cite the pretext that Hasbi was not a "native of Sawang" as a reason for banishing him and leaving "religious education in the hands of someone who came from the territory."¹²⁰ The ejection of Hasbi also dovetailed with his enthusiasm for allowing *ulèëbalang* to "forbid natives from outside their territories who are known propagandists of Muhammadiyah from the action of entering upon their territories," and more generally, with his intent to "intervene strongly against the spread of Muhammadiyah among the native population."¹²¹ Hasbi and other Muhammadiyah members no longer appeared to fit in with Dutch political aims. In this fashion, the colonial regime and the *ulèëbalang* class, in essence, conspired to control the movement of religious reformers out of their territories and to restrain their rise in the vast rural swaths of the region.

The convergence of Dutch and *ulèëbalang* interests played an essential role in dampening the spread of Muhammadiyah, but there was also one other significant factor at work: divisions and rivalries within the social milieu of reformist Islam. From his very arrival in Aceh, Hasbi polarized the population and aroused heated debate. Along with his committed disciples,

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid.

according to Teungku Ali Hasjmy, a fellow reformist who would later go on to become governor of Aceh in the postwar period, “as a person of reform, a bringer of reformism, he had friends and enemies.”¹²² Indeed, Hasbi even spurred Hasjmy to observe that “a person of friendship will protect his friends from death,” while an enemy will “slander and let fall his enemy.”¹²³ For all the resonances and overlap in their theology, Hasbi apparently never prevailed upon all his natural enemies. For example, the Hadhrami *alim* failed to persuade one of the most famous religious figures from Aceh, Mohammad Daud Beureueh, to join Muhammadiyah. Instead, in the years that followed, an intense rivalry formed between the two men. Beureueh, who never travelled to Java or other places in the archipelago, would, in fact, spearhead an organization, PUSA, or the Persatuan Ulama Seluruh Aceh (All-Aceh Ulama Association) that looked not to the entire Indies as the proper field for action, but rather, to Aceh alone for its inspiration. Although Beureueh and Hasbi would share stages together and participate in *tabligh*, or public Islamic rallies, with one another, they continued to bitterly clash. Ultimately, just as *Muslimin* had noted in the early 1930s that Acehnese in the *kampong* preferred to organize schools and associations at the local level, by 1939, Acehnese decisively chose an Acehnese organization over the more broad based Muhammadiyah.

Conclusion

While not universally rejected by all colonial administrators, the sentiments of *Controleur* Tichelman reflected a growing realization among the Dutch that their efforts to incubate “good Muslims” through Muhammadiyah seemed to be contributing to a reinvigorated Islamic consciousness in Aceh and could entail adverse consequences for their administration.

¹²² Hasjmy, *Ulama Aceh*, 178.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

Although Muhammadiyah publications retained its non-violent cast, it did over time begin to embrace a more strident call for self-determination on the parts of Acehnese and Indonesian Muslims more generally. Two years after Tichelman voiced his reservations about Muhammadiyah in 1933, the principal mouthpiece for advancing the organization in Aceh, the *Muslimin* newspaper, actively endorsed the need for Muslim society to reclaim their dignity and slough off an imperial regime that was, after all, ultimately grounded in an alien “Christian” society.

The increasingly politicized tone of reformism found in groups like Muhammadiyah reverberated across Acehnese Islamic society and most likely contributed to the formation of the most aggressive religious group of a local character in 1939: PUSA, or the Persatuan Ulama Seluruh Aceh (All Aceh Ulama Association). While perhaps the first organization to fuse Islamic reformism with a specifically Acehnese identity, PUSA nonetheless shared many characteristics with Muhammadiyah. Like their Netherlands East Indies wide counterpart, PUSA advocated for a modernization and standardization of Islamic schools across the province, for a more direct connection between the individual Muslim believer and Islamic source materials such as the Qur’an, and for greater popular religious participation.¹²⁴ Both organizations posed considerable challenges to the customary, lineage-based class of Acehnese leaders known as *ulèëbalang* by frequently insinuating that the right to rule should derive from adherence to Islamic precepts rather than custom, or *adat*.

While personal and organizational rivalries would later engender considerable enmity between these two organizations in the 1940s, as the historian Anthony Reid has demonstrated, Muhammadiyah in Aceh and PUSA nonetheless operated in much the same reformist milieu. An

¹²⁴ Reid, *Blood of the People*, 25-28.

overarching interest in transforming Islamic consciousness still united these two organizations. Muhammad Hasbi, the Muhammadiyah theologian most noted for remaining “aloof” from PUSA,¹²⁵ participated in many public Islamic assemblies (*tabligh*) across Aceh together with the figure who would stages during the 1930s together with the figure who would later emerge as PUSA’s principal leader, Teungku Mohamed Daud Beureuh. In fact, as an account of one 1932 *tabligh* from the pages of the Acehnese weekly newspaper *Pergaoelan* indicates, both men spoke together on the same stage and orated to over one thousand Acehnese Muslims on very similar themes of spiritual realization (*insyaf*) and the unity of the Islamic people in Aceh.¹²⁶ In this manner, the roots of PUSA can be clearly traced back to the reformist currents enveloping northern Sumatra in the late 1920s and the 1930s. Thus, in their haste to underwrite Muhammadiyah as a non-violent Islamic antidote to *prang sabi* in Aceh, the Dutch colonial leadership may have, ironically, helped to give rise to a strident, anti-colonial Islamic movement that eventually culminated in the creation of PUSA, an organization that played a leading role in Acehnese anti-Dutch opposition in the mid-1940s.

¹²⁵ Ibid, 26.

¹²⁶ “Openlucht Lezing,” February 12, 1932, *Pergaoelan*.

Chapter 5

Muhammad Tahir Jalal al-Din, West Sumatra, and Entangled Islamic Cosmopolitanisms

The history of war and conquest in Sulu and Aceh offers poignant lessons on the afterlife of failed schemes of collaboration. After spurning or undermining potential Muslim allies, colonial invaders found themselves bereft of support, isolated, and powerless to win their battles from within local society. As a consequence, Dutch, Spanish, and American instead embarked on a long struggle to triumph from without through a project of enclosure, to batter these two Muslim kingdoms into submission by cutting them off from their multifarious external connections with the outside world, connections that had for centuries radiated across the globe without end or edge. These campaigns of enclosure by turns encompassed both wanton brutality and extreme indifference, radical intervention and heedless withdrawal, violent engagement and callous disengagement, often by the same colonial armies and actors, sometimes even simultaneously. In Sulu, Spanish forces eviscerated Tausug trade and shipping, while Americans re-fashioned the local economy to contain people within regimes of property and cash exchange. In Aceh, by contrast, Dutch troops mixed “unparalleled punishment” with a fitful policy of neglect and withdrawal, slowly eroding ties with the outside world while creating a parallel colonial sphere on the margins of Acehnese society. For all of these vagaries and variations, projects of enclosure nonetheless realized their aims of setting both Sulu and Aceh on a slow drift toward isolation, marginalization, and exclusion, of disconnecting two of the most powerful Islamic kingdoms in all of Southeast Asia from the wider commercial and religious networks in which they had long been embedded. In sum, enclosure shunted these two regions to an imagined colonial periphery or edge where there had before been none.

If the failure to forge ties of collaboration had laid the groundwork for decades of enclosure and exclusion, however, an important question arises: what happened in the places where colonial powers did manage to bridge the divide and establish viable ties with a local Muslim partner? The inability to cultivate cooperation spurred colonial powers towards projects of dissolution and disconnection, to the task of unwinding the networks that had for so long sustained Aceh and Sulu as cosmopolitan hubs in the wider Indian Ocean realm. But did the obverse stand to reason, that in places where colonial powers did work within local society and create alliances, would new connections and re-connections materialize? Could collaboration, in fact, go beyond the mere consolidation of a colonial order to provide opportunities, even unintended opportunities, to local Muslims for developing new ties with co-religionists well beyond their home region? Whether or not these re-connections could form, whether new, virtually endless or edgeless forms of Islamic exchange, association, and religious imagining could actually be re-constituted amidst the entanglements of colonial rule, perhaps provides a truer measure of the ultimate impact of projects of enclosure on the Southeast Asian Islamic world.

Fortunately, in addition to the instances of collaboration spurned or undermined, there are also cases of cooperation across the chasm of war, such as the aforementioned alliance between Tuanku nan Tua and Dutch invaders during the Padri War (1817-1838) in West Sumatra. The first chapter discusses the ways in which civil war among the local Muslim population of Minangkabau and the weaknesses in the early nineteenth century Dutch forces combined to create a unique marriage of convenience, a contingent bond of collaboration between the family of a respected Muslim *alim* and non-Muslim invaders. Through the assistance of this esteemed Islamic scholar and leader, colonial troops managed to quell resistance in a West Sumatran

region, Agam, which had hitherto been beyond their grasp. This first victory paved the way for the eventual Dutch triumph over Padri forces in 1838. Moreover, colonial administrators elevated the son of Tuanku nan Tua, Shaykh Ahmad Samiang Jalal al-Din Faqih Saghir, to the position of Regent of Agam—in effect consecrating this alliance as the foundation of colonial rule. The improbable relationship between a devout Muslim family and invading non-Muslim soldiers would, therefore, play a key role in the integration of West Sumatra into the colonial sphere.

This chapter will thus address the following question: when Tuanku nan Tua took the rather extraordinary step of reaching out to the Dutch—the *orang Kompeuni*—did he help set in motion a long term process of connection and re-connection among local Muslims, or did he simply lend his own religious authority and credibility to colonial hegemony and enclosure? A quick gloss of his descendants suggests that the former. A half century after the conclusion of the Padri War, as the Dutch-Aceh war raged several hundred kilometers to the north, the great grandson of Tuanku nan Tua, Shaykh Muhammad Tahir Jalal al-Din would embark upon a long, peripatetic career that took him not only to Mecca for twelve years of study in the holy city starting in 1881, but also to Cairo (1893), colonial Malaya (1899), and British-administered Singapore (1906).¹ During these sojourns, Tahir established his bona fides as an accomplished theologian and a committed reformist, studying at the most celebrated institution of Islamic learning in the Muslim World, Al-Azhar University, forging a friendship with one of the leading proponents of Islamic modernism, Rashid Rida, and contributing to the famous Egyptian

¹ Hafiz Zakariya, “Islamic Reform in Malaya: The Contribution of Shaykh Tahir Jalaluddin,” *Intellectual Discourse: The Journal of the Faculty (Kulliyah) of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences* 13, no. 1 (2005): 51-52, 55.

newspaper *Al-Manar* (The Lighthouse).² In the thriving British colonial port of Singapore, Tahir launched his own reformist newspaper, *al-Islam*, and would play a leading role in disseminating these religious ideas to a new generation of Minangkabau students who travelled through this city. Young Tahir's connections reverberated beyond the Muslim world into colonial networks, as he struck a relationship with the Sultan of Perak, a stalwart of indirect colonial rule in British Malaya, that would garner him an invitation to travel to London and attend the coronation of King George—the very pinnacle of imperial glory in the age of Empire.³ The descendants of Tuanku nan Tua thus stood at the vanguard of the process of forging and re-forging ties that extended across the globe through intertwined Islamic and colonial worlds.

The remarkable century long arc of Tuanku nan Tua's family from the war torn rural highlands of West Sumatra to the regal halls of Westminster Abbey is suggestive of the possibilities for connection and re-connection; however, this process of re-connection did not come without friction. Even as Tahir thrived in the cosmopolitan ports of Singapore and Malaya, where he could take advantage of the British non-interventionist stance toward religious matters,⁴ he encountered suspicion and outright hostility from the same regime that had enabled his ascent in the first place: the Dutch colonial government in his home region of Minangkabau. In the very same year that Tahir traveled to London, the Dutch *controleur* of the Old Agam district ominously depicted the prominent Minangkabau theologian as “a great friend of the English and an enemy of our government.”⁵ While Tahir never permanently returned to his home

² Ibid., 69.

³ Mukhtar Ramli, *Inventori surat-surat Persendirian Sheikh Tahir Jalal al-Din* (Kuala Lumpur: Arkib Negera Malaysia, 1980), viii.

⁴ William Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, Yale Southeast Asia Studies, eds. Harry J. Benda, Harold C. Conklin, and Karl J. Pelzer, no. 2 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), 71.

⁵ Controleur van Oud Agam to Resident van Sumatra's Westkust, Fort de Kock, 8 November 1908, Number 34, Archief van L.C. Westenenk [levensjaren 1872-1950], (1643) 1893-1928, code toegang: 2.21.205.71, National Archives of the Netherlands, The Hague, The Netherlands.

region, he did maintain contacts with his family and cultivate new friendships with reformist Muslims who shared his religious aims, a development that colonial officials saw as very menacing. Finally, with communist and religious ferment appearing to gain traction in the 1920s, Dutch authorities moved to arrest the well-known Shaykh upon one of his trips back to West Sumatra in 1927, eventually consigning him to permanent exile in British Malaya.⁶

This chapter will thus employ the family of Tuanku nan Tua as a lens for making sense of these fraught processes of Muslim re-connection and reconfiguration in a colonial age. On the one hand, the initial circumstances of collaboration in West Sumatra articulated Minangkabau Muslims into the larger social, political, and economic circuits of the colonial state to an extent unknown in areas subject to projects of enclosure, like Aceh. This chapter will argue that just as the external networks of Acehnese Muslims frayed amidst war and withdrawal, these very ties shifted south, recrystallizing in Minangkabau around Shaykh Tahir Jalal al-Din, his students, and a wave of new religious organizations. While collaboration constituted a precondition for Islamic re-connection and helped drive the reconfiguration of international networks away from places like Aceh to West Sumatra, neither were these Minangkabau Muslims compliant creatures of Dutch rule. For many religious activists, Shaykh Tahir Jalal al-Din included, the Dutch did not represent an ally in their campaigns to purify Islam, but rather, an enemy. This chapter will posit that even as colonial collaboration gave rise to Muslim re-connections and modernity, these very religious connections also provided the backbone of a vibrant anti-colonial movement that would ultimately help to undermine Dutch hegemony.

⁶ Audrey Kahin, *Rebellion to Integration: West Sumatra and the Indonesian Polity* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1999), 51.

The offspring of Tuanku nan Tua in the aftermath of the Padri War

Although Tuanku nan Tua constitutes a major presence in the historiography of the Padri War, his descendants largely fade from view in the subsequent decades. Two prominent Dutch scholars, Wolter Robert van Hoëvell and P.J. Veth, played instrumental roles in translating, publishing, and popularizing the manuscript left behind by Tua's son, Shaykh Ahmad Samiang Jalal al-Din Faqih Saghir during the 1850s.⁷ This hagiographic account recounted in detail the theology of Tua, his struggles against more militant Padris, and their eventual embrace of Dutch intervention, providing a key source for insight into the perspective of local Muslims during the time of war and struggle. Samiang Jalal al-Din revealed little about his own personal biography and nothing about his children.⁸ While Hoëvell and Veth reflected an enduring Dutch interest in the Padri War, most colonial officials in the middle of the nineteenth century chose to concentrate their attention not on devout Muslims, but rather, on *adat* elites, viewing them as their principal collaborators and as the key to ruling the region.⁹ Thus, even though Samiang Jalal al-Din served as the collaborationist Regent of Agam, Dutch documents yield little information about his career after the Padri War or about his son, the grandson of Tuanku nan Tuo, Muhammad Salim gelar Faqih Muhammad. From the 1840s through the 1860s, the Tua clan thus appears to vanish.

Despite this scarcity of sources and general lack of colonial interest, the ascent of later generations of Tuanku nan Tua's clan into positions of prominence within Minangkabau Islamic

⁷ Michael Laffan, *The Makings of Indonesian Islam: Orientalism and the Narration of a Sufi Past* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 98.

⁸ See Ulrick E. Kratz and Adriyetti Amir, eds., *Surat Keterangan Syeikh Jalaluddin Karangan Fakih Saghir* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 2002).

⁹ Elizabeth E. Graves, *The Minangkabau Response to Dutch Colonial Rule in the Nineteenth Century* (Ithaca: Cornell Southeast Asia Program Publications, 1981; reprint, Jakarta: Equinox Publishing, 2010), 77-79. (page citations are to the reprint edition).

movements suggests that the influence of his family likely never ebbed, but instead persisted and even expanded outside the notice of colonial officials. Tuanku nan Tua's great grandson, Muhammad Tahir Jalal al-Din, emerged by the turn of the twentieth century as one of the foremost intellectual luminaries of the reformist Muslim movement not only in Minangkabau, but across the entire Malay-Indonesian world. Additionally, other relatives would also attain great notoriety, such as Tahir's first cousin by way of his maternal lineage, Shaykh Ahmad Khatib, who permanently re-settled in Mecca in the 1870s. Shaykh Ahmad Khatib forged a career not only as a distinguished jurist and a Shafi'i imam at the famous Al-Haram Mosque, but also as a renowned teacher of Minangkabau *hajjis* and sojourners from across the Malay-Indonesian world.¹⁰ By becoming a vituperative critic of two mainstays of Minangkabau society, matrilineal inheritance and Sufi *tariqa*, on the grounds that both deviated from Islamic law, Khatib staked out a position as an avid religious reformer.¹¹ In turn, Khatib also had a cousin, Hajji Agus Salim, who would arise as one of the most significant propagandists and leaders in an organization devoted to Islamic solidarity across the Indonesian archipelago—Sarekat Islam.¹² This familial concatenation of religious notables begs the question: how did the descendants of Tuanku nan Tuo manage to claim such prominence more than half a century after the end of the Padri War?

While the dearth of documentation hinders any effort to present a full reconstruction of Tuanku nan Tuo's family history, it is nonetheless possible to piece together their social,

¹⁰ Rusjdi, "Generasi Terakhir Keluarga Paderi," *Gema Islam* 4, no. 1 (March 1962), 25; Jeffrey Hadler, "Home, Father, Succession: Three Generations of Amrullahs in Twentieth Century Indonesia," *Indonesia* 65 (April 1998), 129.

¹¹ Laffan, *The Makings of Modern Indonesian Islam*, 177-183.

¹² Robert Elson, "Absent at the Creation: Islamism's Belated, Troubled Engagement with Early Indonesian Nationalism," in *Anthony Reid and the Study of the Southeast Asian Past*, ed. Geoff Wade and Li Tan (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2012), 316-317.

economic, and political standing from the biographical details that we do know. Chapter one has already demonstrated that Shaykh Ahmad Samiang Jalal al-Din Faqih Sagir, the son of Tuanku nan Tuo, cooperated with the Dutch and accepted a position within the colonial apparatus as the Regent of Agam. Little is known about the particulars of his participation in the government, besides that the Dutch saw his piety and religious charisma as an asset.¹³ Likewise, Faqih Sagir produced a son, Muhammad Salim gelar Fakir Muhammad, whose traces in the colonial record were even fainter than those of his father. We can still infer a few key details about Fakir Muhammad's career and character. For example, the fact that he would later in his life attain the title of *Tuanku*, the highest designation of esteem a religious scholar can achieve in Minangkabau society, thereby re-christening him as Tuanku Cangking, indicates that the *alim* carried on the theological traditions of his father and grandfather.¹⁴ That Fakir Muhammad retained the family vocation is perhaps unsurprising, given the genealogical patterns of religious scholarship typical in West Sumatra.

Another biographical detail, however, also suggests that the concerns of Fakir Muhammad and his family extended beyond those of an otherworldly, spiritual nature. In particular, Faqih Saghir arranged to have his son Faqih Muhammad marry the granddaughter of the erstwhile Regent of Agam he had replaced: Datuk Bagindo Chatib.¹⁵ This strategic union suggests a certain social and political shrewdness of the part of Fakih Muhammad, as marrying into the family of a one-time rival allowed him to conciliate potential enemies and reinforce his

¹³ H.J.J.L. Ridders de Stuers to the Minister of the Colonies, Padang, October 23, 1826, Number 52, Het Archief van het Ministerie van Kolonien, Code Toegang: 2.10.01, The National Archives of the Netherlands, the Hague.

¹⁴ Rusjdi, "Generasi Terakhir Keluarga Paderi," 24.

¹⁵ Ibid., 24.

position within the elite of Agam. In sum, the position of Tuanku nan Tua's family seemed secure well after the close of the Padri War.

The early childhood of the succeeding generation, in turn, supplies additional clues about the social, economic and political standing of the Tuanku nan Tua clan. In 1869, only two years before his death, Fakh Muhammad fathered the protagonist of the introduction, Muhammad Tahir Jalal al-Din, in the Empat Angkat area of southern Agam. Deprived of his father in 1871, Tahir's mother would perish a mere six years later, leaving him an orphan at age eight.¹⁶ However, such misfortune did not force young Tahir to turn to a life of hard agricultural toil and labor. Instead, befitting a family with ample political, social, and economic capital, the aunt of Tahir could lavish attention and energy on her orphaned nephew, providing him with instruction in the Qur'an and sending him to a surau for further study in the evenings.¹⁷

More significantly, Tahir's family would enroll him for a three year stint in one of West Sumatra's newest institutions in 1875: the Dutch *volksschool*, or primary school.¹⁸ The decision to place Tahir and his cousins in a new *volksschool* clarifies a great deal about the family's social, political, and economic standing. It suggests that the alliance Shaykh Faqih Saghir constructed with the Dutch amidst the crucible of the Padri War had not attenuated in the intervening decades, but in fact deepened, as Tahir's relatives did not evince any reticence about associating with a colonial institution or view participation in such institutions as in any way incompatible with the dictates of Islam. Indeed, it is possible to interpret Tahir's enrollment as an indication of escalating ambitions on the part of his family within the context of colonial society.

¹⁶ Hafiz Zakariya, "Islamic Reform in Colonial Malaya: Shaykh Tahir Jalal al-Din and Sayyid Shaykh al-Hadi" (PhD diss., University of California-Santa Barbara, 2006), 133-135.

¹⁷ Ibid., 136-137

¹⁸ Ibid., 137.

The historian Elizabeth Graves has noted that the system of *volksscholen* established by the Dutch in the 1870s constituted a gateway to the expanding opportunities of the colonial realm, as through these schools indigenous Minangkabau society could aspire to pursue thoroughly bourgeois careers such as that of civil service, teaching, or medicine.¹⁹ In addition, as these schools expanded, Graves asserts that increasing prestige accrued to those who attended and had some interest in the colonial milieu.²⁰ Thus, it would appear that the clan of Tuanku nan Tuo embraced rather than eschewed these opportunities for advancement and social prestige. Indeed, two of Tahir's famous cousins, Shaykh Ahmad Khatib and Hajji Agus Salim, would also be placed within this nascent educational system, suggesting that Dutch schooling was an objective across the entire family.²¹ The Tua clan may have shared that view of the *volksschool* as a means for consolidating and extending the standing they had earlier achieved by supporting the colonial war effort and joining the Dutch government as regents.

Beyond the question of social ambitions, the decision to enroll Tahir in a government *volksschool* can also help us deduce some general observations about the economic conditions of his family. The fact that Tahir could attend school full-time alone reveals a certain degree of comfort and prosperity. At the turn of the century, even amidst a general blossoming in coffee production, trade, and commerce, the demands of subsistence agriculture and survival still governed the lives of the vast preponderance of the Minangkabau population. Sending a child away from the intensive labor of rice fields and other forms of agricultural production to study full-time represented a major sacrifice, a sacrifice which most could not afford to make.²²

¹⁹ Graves, *The Minangkabau Response*, 179.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 179.

²¹ Michael Laffan, "Between Batavia and Mecca: Images of Agoes Salim from the Leiden University Library," *Archipel* 65 (2003), 109; Deliar Noer, *The Modernist Muslim Movement in Indonesia, 1900-1942* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 31.

²² Graves, *The Minangkabau Response*, 181-2.

Consequently, as late as 1878, only several hundred students attended the fourteen Dutch-operated elementary schools in the Padang Highlands—a fraction of the potential school-age population.²³ The family of Tahir Jalal al-Din thus belonged to a small minority who could forego the labor of their children and aspire to look beyond the horizons of ordinary agricultural life.

The relative privilege suggested by the educational ambitions of Tahir's family also coincides with other circumstantial indications of their prosperity. While the advent of the Dutch coffee cultivation system imposed significant hardships on the agricultural masses of the highlands, often requiring peasants to grow coffee crops whether they wished to or not, it also afforded significant opportunities to a small class of local merchants.²⁴ As Elizabeth Graves explains, the construction of reliable roads for the delivery of coffee simultaneously facilitated local trade in a range of other export crops and the emergence of a Minangkabau mercantile class.²⁵ Prominent families from the Agam hill valley regions proved especially adept at profiting from this commercial expansion. By leveraging the influence of relatives in the government service, and by merging their joint resources of capital and expertise, several Agam families managed to build what Graves refers to as highly profitable “merchandising firms.”²⁶

Moreover, it just so happened that some of those families who accumulated the biggest fortunes were from none other than Kota Tua—the home of the Jalal al-Din clan.²⁷ Although we do not have concrete information on how Tahir's relatives may have fit into the web of local and familial merchant prosperity, we do know that his great-grandfather, Tuanku nan Tua, in addition

²³ Report of Inspector Grivel, *Verbaal*, March 31, 1873, no. 43.

²⁴ E.B. Kielstra, “De Koffiecultuur ter Westkust van Sumatra,” *Indische Gids* 10, no. 2 (1888): 1453; C. Lulofs, “Koffiecultuur en Belasting ter Sumatra's Westkust,” *Indische Gids* 26, no. 2 (1904): 1643.

²⁵ Graves, *The Minangkabau Response*, 114-115.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 115.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

to being a respected Muslim theologian and teacher, also amassed substantial wealth from trade.²⁸ Ahmad Samiang Faqih Saghir, Datuk Bagindo Chatib, and other relatives served in the colonial administration.²⁹ Young Tahir and his cousins attended government schools, the very fount of mercantile ambition.³⁰ All the details about this family suggest that they were very well-positioned to benefit, either directly or indirectly, from the substantial new wealth flowing through Kota Tua's elite class.

The alliance struck between Tuanku nan Tua and the Dutch colonial governor during the Padri War persisted throughout the middle of the nineteenth century generating considerable advantages for the Jalal al-Din family and pulling them ever more tightly into the colonial orbit. By all accounts Shaykh Ahmad Samiang never relinquished the title of Regent of Agam, and his family pursued strategic marriages that strengthened their connections within the collaborative local elite. In turn, through these multifaceted political connections, the family was able to profit from the mercantile boom of the nineteenth century, solidifying its comfortable place in the elite rungs of Minangkabau society and perhaps even attaining substantial riches. By the 1870s, the Jalal al-Din clan was so thoroughly immersed in the Dutch order that they possessed not only the means, but also the desire to send their children to the surest gateway to success in the colonial order: the *volksschool* elementary school. The cooperative bond struck in the 1820s thus appeared likely to endure for some time to come.

Even as the Jalal al-Din family gravitated toward the colonial sphere, their commitment to religious probity never waned and perhaps even intensified. Whatever the actions of his myriad cousins and relatives, Tahir's father, Faqih Muhammad, devoted himself to a life of

²⁸ Dobbin, *Islamic Revivalism*, 125.

²⁹ Rusjdi, "Generasi Terakhir Keluarga Paderi," 24-25.

³⁰ Noer, *Modernist Muslim Movement*, 31; Zakariya, "Islamic Reform in Colonial Malaya," 137.

theological scholarship and spiritual devotion; the reason he attracted such little notice from the Dutch was that he chose a life of quiet religious contemplation over that political and economic engagement.³¹ Likewise, the first priority of Tahir's aunt during his early childhood was to see to her nephew's education in the Qur'an and to send him at nights to the local *surau* school.³² While Dutch elementary school might appear to represent a digression from this path, moreover, not only Tahir, but also his two cousins, used it as a springboard to fulfilling one of the most sacred obligations of the devout Muslim: making the *hajj* to Mecca. Whether the elders of the family expected that Tahir and his cousins Ahmad Khatib and Hajji Agus Salim would stay for as extended a period as they did—in Hajji Agus Salim's case, five years, Tahir, twelve years, and with Ahmad Khatib, a permanent relocation—is impossible to say.³³ Quite possibly the family anticipated that these young men would make a more standard *hajj* journey of less than a year, and return home, with their religious rectitude established, to join the colonial bureaucracy or tend to commercial enterprises.

Either way, however, it is quite clear that the Jalal al-Din family did not interpret participation in colonial society as embodied by the *volkscholen*, or the necessity of accumulating wealth, as incompatible with the exigencies of a pious Muslim life. In fact, the very economic standing and social notoriety of the clan is what made the *hajj* seem not only feasible to them, but also like an almost routine undertaking that all of its young men should fulfill, a circumstance which, religious strictures notwithstanding, had not been applicable to the experience of the vast majority of Minangkabau Muslim families in the past. In turn, the ability

³¹ Tuanku Muhammad is not mentioned in any important Dutch reports; instead, we know of him principally through oral reports given to Minangkabau historians. See Rusjdi, "Generasi Terakhir Keluarga Paderi," 25.

³² Zakariya, "Islamic Reform in Colonial Malaya," 137.

³³ Laffan, "Between Batavia and Mecca," 112; Zakariya, "Islamic Reform in Malaya," 51; Noer, *Modernist Muslim Movement*, 31.

of Tahir and Ahmad Khatib to maintain themselves and stay long term in such distant lands as the Arabian Peninsula, in all likelihood, probably owed a great deal to the financial resources of their family. Hajji Agus Salim, moreover, embodied this emerging synthesis between Islam and colonialism to an even greater extent, travelling to Arabia not as an independent *hajji*, but as an employee for the Dutch legation in Jeddah.³⁴

As we shall see later, the fact that colonial economy and society played a large role in accelerating connections with the Islamic heartlands of the Middle East did not make Tahir, Ahmad, or for that matter, even the government-employed Salim, simpatico with Dutch political aims; quite far from it. The experience of the Jalal al-Din family does reveal the extent to which the emerging colonial order of West Sumatra overlapped, intertwined, and intersected with Muslim Minangkabau society, and in so doing, the changing dynamics of colonial society would also be responsible for thrusting Tahir and his relatives into eddies of reformist thought and cosmopolitan consciousness swirling through the Islamic world in the latter part of the nineteenth century.

West Sumatran society in flux: coffee cultivation system and economic transformation

Before turning to the activities of Muhammad Tahir Jalal al-Din in Mecca, Cairo, and Singapore, it is necessary to consider how the economic, social, and religious ascent of his family embodied larger, macro-level changes at play across Minangkabau society in the middle and late periods of the nineteenth century. While the Jalal al-Din family personified the budding, albeit highly awkward, symbiosis between colonial society and Minangkabau Islam, the forces driving these two uneasy bedfellows together were also at work throughout West Sumatran

³⁴ Laffan, "Between Batavia and Mecca," 111.

society. The surge in coffee cultivation and commodity exchange, for example, brought with it a sweeping transformation to economic organization of the highlands, especially in the vicinity of Agam. In turn, these economic shifts provided the stimulus for an acceleration in religious piety, Islamic education, and perhaps most significantly, exposure to the larger Muslim world beyond the confines of Minangkabau society. It was this synthesis of economic change, political stability, and religious reawakening that would soon enough produce one of the most unique configurations of Islamic cosmopolitanism in the entire Netherlands East Indies.

The transformation of the Minangkabau economy actually started well before the Dutch imposed effective rule over the region. As early as the last decades of the 1700s, a surge in global demand for coffee provided the impetus for the introduction of the crop to West Sumatra, where it could thrive on the steep volcanic slopes of the interior highlands. Dutch reports indicate that it was areas at the margins of the traditional *adat* villages and rice growing areas, in the rugged hills of eastern, southwestern, and northern Agam, which proved most congenial to coffee cultivation.³⁵ The influx of revenue to such historically peripheral areas bolstered religious insurgents and other social upstarts, perhaps furnishing the Padris with the wherewithal to launch their infamous civil war in the first place. While coffee exports skyrocketed exponentially during the initial period of hostilities, rising from 4,464 piculs in 1819 to 32,887 in 1825, such numbers stagnated during the period of relative calm around 1830 and 1831.³⁶ One historian even posits that Minangkabau peasants turned to coffee in times of turmoil as a less-intensive, more transitory alternative to rice, but then reverted back to the essential foodstuff

³⁵ Dobbin, *Islamic Revivalism*, 36-38.

³⁶ Graves, *The Minangkabau Response*, 95.

once calm was restored.³⁷ All of this suggests that coffee enjoyed an existence quite independent from the dictates of colonial policy.

Once Tuanku nan Tuo entered into his seminal act of collaboration with the Dutch, helping to bring the Padri War to a close by 1837, colonial officials embarked on a multi-decade campaign to expand coffee cultivation and to canalize profits into their own coffers. In an exhaustive 1839 report, the new resident of West Sumatra, General Michiels, identified the seepage of coffee eastward along the interior rivers toward the Straits of Malacca and British Singapore, rather than west to the Dutch-controlled port of Padang on the Indian Ocean, as the principal threat to an expansion in revenues. To plug this leak, Michiels determined that the colonial regime would need to assume control over every aspect of the coffee trade, including cultivation and delivery.³⁸

By 1847 authorities in Batavia gave permission to implement this wide-ranging policy that would become known as the “Coffee Cultivation System.” Under this regime, Dutch authorities mandated that highland villages reserve extensive territory for coffee planting, and, in turn, to sell this their crop yield to government warehouses in emerging highland administrative centers such as Bukittinggi City and Padang Panjang.³⁹ To ensure that the Minangkabau actually complied with such regulations, Dutch officials relied on Minangkabau *adat* functionaries, many of whom owed their positions to colonial machinations in the first place, to oversee and enforce this agricultural re-organization, even incentivizing their participation with cash payments in for each picul of coffee collected.⁴⁰ Authorities also constructed several major roads through the

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Report of General Michiels on Coffee Cultivation, February 4, 1839, in Kielstra, “Koffiecultuur,” 1450-1451.

³⁹ Kielstra, “Koffiecultuur,” 1484-85.

⁴⁰ Graves, *The Minangkabau Response*, 105.

steep mountain passes which separated the coast from highlands, connecting upland warehouse centers to lowland Padang in a reliable manner and thereby funneling the coffee trade through the principal Dutch port.⁴¹ These efforts soon reaped considerable dividends for the colonial authorities: coffee exports from Padang tripled over the course of the decade from 1847 to 1857, rising from 58,000 to a peak of 190,000 piculs, before stabilizing at an elevated level well above 100,000 piculs for most of the 1860s and 70s.⁴² The coffee cultivation system thus emerged as the dominant agricultural and commercial fact of West Sumatran life.

The re-organization of coffee cultivation, in turn, spawned dramatic dislocations and transformations across the breadth of the Minangkabau economy. Dutch requirements for coffee production and transport required a large, almost entirely new bureaucratic apparatus, as the colonial government hired clerks to manage the new government warehouses, day laborers to haul the bulky crop around these warehouses, and inspectors to supervise the regularity and quality of coffee beans picked at the village level. This bureaucratic apparatus numbered well into the hundreds, creating a new category of employment for native Minangkabau.⁴³

Beyond direct employment, the coffee cultivation regime also catalyzed a wide range of concomitant economic activity. The sheer enormity of government warehouses, which stored upward of 274,000 pounds of dried coffee beans, necessitated the construction of ancillary offices, homes, schools and covered markets that could service such a massive operation.⁴⁴ The establishment of regular transport between the warehouses of the uplands and the port in Padang, in turn, stimulated a market for coffee houses, rest-stations, and an array of other small-scale

⁴¹ Ibid., 98-99, 112-114.

⁴² *Encyclopaedie van Nederlandsch Indie*, vol. 2 ('s-Gravenhage: M. Nijhoff, 1917), 275.

⁴³ Kielstra, "Koffiecultuur," 1484.

⁴⁴ Graves, *The Minangkabau Response*, 115.

vendors who could satisfy the needs of the traders traversing the new government roads.⁴⁵ The exchange of coffee also cascaded into new commercial opportunities for wholesaling in a variety of other goods besides for coffee, thereby accelerating the development of indigenous retail and merchant concerns.⁴⁶

Past the reaches of the highland Minangkabau “heartlands,” the trade in coffee also powered the transformation of Padang, which before amounted to little more than a sleepy trading outpost, into a magnet for transnational financial concerns and local culture. Among other firms, the Java Bank; the Chartered Bank of India, Australia, and China; the Hong Kong & Shanghai Banking Corporation; and the New Oriental Bank Corporation all opened offices in the port city.⁴⁷ Along with such international businesses, Padang also attracted a steady influx of Minangkabau workers from the highlands, for the first time turning the city into a significant epicenter of Minangkabau culture and incubating a vibrant indigenous media and newspaper scene as early as 1865. Thus, by tying together the upland communities to the ports of the West Coast, the Dutch coffee cultivation system did more than divert a preexisting trade; it also succeeded at incorporating West Sumatra into the globalizing, international economy.

While it might be tempting to regard the advent of a modern commerce and exchange in Minangkabau as an unqualified boon for the people of the region, as a marker of progress, it also inflicted heavy hardships on a wide cross-section of the local population.⁴⁸ In particular, the coffee cultivation system marked an unprecedented intervention by the colonial government in the daily lives of ordinary Minangkabau peasants. Cultivators had before enjoyed the ability to

⁴⁵ F.A. Heckler, “Memorie van Overgave van het Gouvernement Sumatra’s Westkust,” entry 163, het archief van de Memories van Overgave, 1852-1962 (1963), Nummer Toegang: 2.10.39, National Archives of the Netherlands, The Hague.

⁴⁶ Graves, *The Minangkabau Response*, 114-115.

⁴⁷ Hadler, *Muslims and Matriarchs*, 127.

⁴⁸ Graves, *The Minangkabau Response*, 111.

evaluate their own subsistence needs, mixing in rice with coffee planting and performing other economic pursuits such as weaving that could be useful for the barter trade.⁴⁹ Peasants now experienced immense pressure to devote all their limited resources to coffee, thereby exacting a very real burden. With Dutch buyers offering a stingy fixed price for coffee that did little to compensate for the lost benefits from rice planting, weaving, or iron forging, many Minangkabau actually suffered from greater food insecurity than they had previously.⁵⁰ Fees doled by the government to *penghulu* chiefs and other *adat* functionaries escalated the incentives for corruption, coercion, and other types of unscrupulous behavior.⁵¹

Moreover, beyond the direct ambit of agriculture, Dutch authorities also mobilized staggering quantities of forced *corvée* laborers to construct the attendant infrastructure of roads, warehouses, and offices necessary for the smooth functioning of the coffee system. At one point, Elizabeth Graves estimates that the colonial regime conscripted nearly twenty five percent of the eligible Minangkabau population for this unpaid work.⁵² In sum, even as West Sumatra made an ever growing contribution to the world economy, the hardships of the local peasantry only seemed to multiply.

In spite of the very real burdens imposed by the coffee cultivation system, the Minangkabau population—so infamous for its restive and rebellious spirit just a few decades before—remained peaceful this time, and prosperity began to filter widely, if unevenly, across West Sumatra.⁵³ Indeed, the colonial government appeared to take several steps that served to

⁴⁹ Ibid., 106.

⁵⁰ Van Vollenhoven, *Padang en het Gouvernement* (Rotterdam: J.P. Bladergroen, 1872), 6-8.

⁵¹ F.A. Heckler, “Memorie van Overgave van het Gouvernement Sumatra’s Westkust,” entry 163, het archief van de Memories van Overgave, 1852-1962 (1963), Nummer Toegang: 2.10.39, National Archives of the Netherlands, The Hague.

⁵² Graves, *The Minangkabau Response*, 116.

⁵³ Ibid., 119.

buffer the region from the worst effects of its economic revolution and prevent any general revolt. First, shortly after they launched the coffee cultivation system, the Dutch simultaneously invested a great deal of energy in ratcheting up the rice production of the highland valley regions.⁵⁴ While much of the output was intended for export to Padang, Java, and farther afield, growing harvests probably forestalled any serious outbreaks of hunger and filled the gaps left behind by the dislocations of the transition to coffee in the highlands.⁵⁵

Second, the government pumped substantial sums of money into the hands of hill village *penghulu* via coffee delivery commissions, money that would eventually circulate throughout local communities. Traditionally, the social gap between ordinary peasants and local chiefs in the marginal hill areas of Minangkabau had not been very wide.⁵⁶ Thus, while hardly immune from the temptations of corruption or self-aggrandizements, the *penghulu* actually invested a great deal of their newfound windfall back in the *nagari*, particularly in a flowering network of private elementary schools that took root between the 1840s and 1860s, creating educational opportunities for a large subset of the population.⁵⁷

Third and finally, the Dutch exercised unusual foresight in their decision to open up the swelling ranks of the colonial bureaucracy to Minangkabau. Elsewhere in the Indonesian archipelago, most government positions went to Europeans or the progeny of entrenched native elites. In West Sumatra, however, officials concerned about expense rejected the possibility of importing a large number of Dutch civil servants to staff the warehouses, offices, and schools of the uplands; instead, they recognized an opportunity not only to pay workers at a lower pay-

⁵⁴ P.Th. Couperus, "Aanteekeningen Omtrent de Landbouwkundige Nijverheid in de Residentie Padangsche Bovenlanden," *Tijdschrift voor Indisch Taal-, Land-, en Volkenkunde*, 5 (1856): 286-289.

⁵⁵ *Kolonial Verslaag*, 1850, 81-2; *Kolonial Verslaag*, 1869.

⁵⁶ Graves, *The Minangkabau Response*, 144.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 142-3.

scale, but also to begin to incorporate the local population into structures of colonial control.⁵⁸ Furthermore, the expansion of the private school system, which itself was funded indirectly by Dutch coffee commissions, also served to transmit the skills necessary for work in the government service to a significant segment of the local population. As a result, a wide cross-section of Minangkabau enjoyed opportunities in an entirely new category of remunerative employment, relieving at least some of the pressures imposed by the forced cultivation system.⁵⁹

Thus, in spite of the interventionist and coercive nature of the agricultural regime that took shape in the mid nineteenth century, the Dutch colonial state managed to mitigate the most destabilizing elements and to distribute economic benefit just widely enough to thwart any nascent resistance to colonial control. Growing numbers of Minangkabau earned income from the coffee cultivation system, attended private schools indirectly supported by colonial profits, and even began to work directly for the state. None of which is to say that West Sumatrans embraced the Dutch or meekly complied with the dictates of colonial rule. Farmers often planted crops besides for the mandated coffee bean, government clerks skimmed substantial revenues for themselves, and private schools frequently spurned the pedagogical advice of colonial educational advisors. More open defiance, as shall be seen, would not be too far away in the future. While the interests of the Minangkabau and Dutch were very far from being harmonized, the coffee cultivation system did succeed in subsuming a large portion of local economic activity into the colonial sphere and fusing West Sumatra into larger systems of global capitalism. The fortunes and fates of the colonizers and colonized were more entangled than ever before.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 121.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 125.

Economic transformation, religious renewal, and the foundations of cosmopolitanism

Changes within the Muslim community bring this intertwining of the Minangkabau and Dutch communities into even starker relief. The long economic expansion of the middle nineteenth century not only coincided with, but acted as a stimulus for, marked shifts in the institutional, theological, and experiential bases of Islam in West Sumatra. With the coffee cultivation system penetrating deeper into the highlands, taking its firmest hold in the old epicenter of Padri piety and devotion, Agam, it did more than simply elevate the economic position of higher profile Muslim collaborators such as descendants of Tuanku nan Tua; although, as shown earlier in this chapter, it did do that. The infusion of cash, bureaucratic positions, and new merchant opportunities also trickled throughout the mass of rural, and increasingly, sometimes urban, Minangkabau Muslims. With these greater resources now at the disposal of ordinary Muslims, three specific bulwarks of Minangkabau Muslim life would undergo a distinctive phase of renewal and transformation: the *surau* school, the Sufi *tariqa*, and the *hajj* pilgrimage to Mecca.

The institution of *surau* encapsulates the mutually constitutive dynamics of economic growth and religious renewal especially well. As seen in Chapter One, the *surau* school had functioned as the lynchpin of Muslim life in West Sumatra since at least the time of the Padri War, if not before, removing students from the matriarchal customs of the local village and inculcating an appreciation for the Qur'an, Islamic law, and inward spiritual devotion. Most of the exponents of Padri piety, not to mention the combatants in the Padri War, studied at a *surau*. Moreover, as the historian Christine Dobbin has demonstrated, these Islamic schools were from the very outset deeply embedded in the commercial networks of the region. Since the *surau* existed outside the structures of *adat* governance, they had little choice but to experiment with

creative methods for raising funds, as students planted valuable cash crops like coffee, participated in local markets, and worked with itinerant traders to sustain their institutions. Tuanku nan Tua even developed a reputation as the “patron of traders.”⁶⁰ In the decades following the Padri War, moreover, this commercial connection endured. In the late 1870s and 1880s, several Dutch observers noted that the *surau* continued to act as a magnet for all types of merchants from around the region, and that the boundary distinguishing them from religious students often blurred, with many itinerant traders folding prolonged periods of religious study into their commercial sojourns. In turn, gifts from these traders, often made not in cash but in staple products and luxuries, provided extra income to the *shaykh* in charge of these schools.⁶¹

It is thus not surprising that the advent of the coffee cultivation system, along with the attendant injection resources into the Minangkabau economy, would help spur a dramatic florescence in these venerable religious institutions. In 1896, a Dutch lawyer in Padang remarked that “it may safely be claimed and accepted that the expenditures of the population for religious end has increased in a not insignificant manner.”⁶² Looking at the *surau*, this proposition would appear incontrovertible. With increased revenues filtering through the treasuries of local nagari councils, *adat* leaders not only poured money into a range of private schools that could prepare local students for the burgeoning bureaucracy; they also furnished initial funds to *surau* which could satisfy the spiritual needs of their community. Indeed, the support of these prosperous *adat* lineages often proved indispensable to the maintenance and expansion of Islamic institutions of

⁶⁰ Dobbin, *Islamic Revivalism*, 127.

⁶¹ The Dutch administrator Verkerk Pistorius gives an especially thorough examination of the nature of traders and markets in the Islamic *surau*. See A.W.K. Verkerk Pistorius, *Studien over de Inlandsche Huishouding*, (Zalt-Bommel: Joh. Naman en Zoon, 1871) 228.

⁶² J. van Bosse, *Eenige Beschouwingen omtrent de Oorzaken van den Achteruitgang van de Koffiecultuur ter Sumatra's Westkust Benevens Eenige Opmerkingen Omtrent de Economische en Politieke Toestanden Aldaar* ('s Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1896), 33.

education. *Surau*, therefore, proliferated in number and expanded in size with breathtaking speed. As early as 1871, the educator and scholar Verkerk Pistorious, reported that at the very minimum, fifteen large *surau* flourished across the breadth of rural West Sumatra, including one such significant institution in Kota Tua—the home of Tuanku nan Tua’s family.⁶³ Moreover, the burgeoning networks of trade and exchange in which *surau* were ensconced sustained ever larger student populations. Among those fifteen schools Pistorious actually identified and visited, which he concedes were likely only a fraction of all the actual such *surau* in existence, there was an average student body of 250 *murid*, with no individual school dropping below 100 and one particularly enormous institution in the Limapuluh Kota region peaking at an astonishing 1,000 students.⁶⁴ By the 1890s, Dutch government officials reported that every highland district possessed a *surau* and that the *murid* constituted an ever-growing force in the affairs of West Sumatran society.⁶⁵

Besides these *surau*, another example of the correlation between economic growth and the revivification of Islam comes in the form of one of the most sacred obligations in Islam: the *hajj* pilgrimage to Mecca. This journey, of course, had always figured prominently in the sacral imagination of Minangkabau Muslims; the esteem and reverence accorded to several Padri leaders during the earlier war period, in no small measure, derived from their status as *hajjis*. In the early nineteenth century, pilgrimage remained a rarified act, a rite performed only by a handful of the most religiously committed. The costs of making a long and perilous journey to an unknown land were immense and exceeded the capabilities of the ordinary Minangkabau

⁶³ Pistorius, *Studien over de Inlandsche Husihouding*, 222-223.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ken Young, *Islamic Peasants and the State: The 1908 Anti-Tax Rebellion in Sumatra*, monograph 40, Yale Southeast Asia Studies, Yale Center for International and Area Studies, ed. James C. Scott and Marvel Kay Mansfield (New Haven: Yale University Southeast Asian Studies, 1994), 114.

peasant. Even as renowned a religious figure as Tuanku nan Tua had never embarked on this trip, and in fact, the dominant *Syattariyah* Sufi *tariqa* of the time downplayed its significance—likely bowing to the practical constraints making the *hajj* an impossibility for most.⁶⁶

Rising prosperity for a subset of the Muslim Minangkabau population, coupled with technological changes in canal construction and steamship technology, abetted a large-scale popularization of the *hajj* in West Sumatra. During the time of the Padri War, the numbers of pilgrims probably numbered less than one hundred, perhaps in the low double digits. Yet, the coffee cultivation system would bestow upon many Muslim Minangkabau a degree of wealth sufficient to render the costs of boat passage, food, and prolonged room and board abroad much more feasible. A Dutch government report specifically attributed the ability of locals to make this journey to “the sums accumulated by some” as a result of coffee and the subsequent expansion of railroads in the 1880s.⁶⁷ Meanwhile, the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 and the invention of the steamship significantly reduced travel time to the west coast of Sumatra from an order of many months to mere weeks, making the trip far less arduous. These factors combined to produce a rapid boost in the number of Minangkabau *hajjis*. From only 258 in 1855, the number of pilgrims soared to 435 in 1888 and over 1,200 in 1890—a testament to the declining economic barriers to travel across the Indian Ocean world.⁶⁸

The concentration of *hajji* embarkations in the Dutch port city of West Sumatra, Padang City, further highlights the growing entanglements of West Sumatran Islam not only in the colonial economy, but also in the circuits of global trade underlying that economy. Whereas in 1855 many of the *hajjis* who sailed to Arabia departed from a variety of coastal cities, including

⁶⁶ Ibid., 112.

⁶⁷ Bosse, *Eenige Beschouwingen omtrent de Oorzaken*, 17.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 34.

Painan and Pariaman, by 1890 the vast preponderance of them went through Padang, passing not far from the transnational banking institutions of the financial district, right through the same ports that shipped West Sumatran coffee around the world. Additionally, the transport of *hajjis* also proved susceptible to the same entrepreneurial logic that facilitated the international exchange of other goods and commodities. As the Padang lawyer P. Bosse observed, the “steamship owners,” most of them Dutch and European, recognized opportunity in the “religious revival which was found to have taken place among the adherents of Islam.” Thus, in accordance with their own “self-interest,” they made a concerted effort to “place a premium on the recruitment and transport of Mecca-goers, so that this recruitment and transport was a sort of industry, bringing a significant increase in the number of Mecca-goers.”⁶⁹ The incentives of capitalism thereby articulated Muslims from the hinterlands with merchants from Europe, all in the maritime arena of Padang. In its role as a node of commercial exchange or a conduit for goods on their way to international markets, Padang thus doubled as something more: the principal interface between local Muslims and the broader Islamic world.

The *surau* and the *hajj* thus illustrates the tightening connection between global markets, the colonial economy, and Muslim Minangkabau society; however, on its own, it still does not speak to Islamic cosmopolitanism, one of the core contentions of this project. Although transnational capitalism and colonial policy played a key, albeit inadvertent, role in the dizzying growth of the *surau* and the *hajj*, they did not create them. The *surau* and the *hajj* existed before the Dutch imposed control or established the coffee cultivation regime; they remained irreducibly Minangkabau and Muslim institutions. Moreover, while the sheer weight of statistics and numbers might prove that growing number of people attended schools or travelled to Arabia,

⁶⁹ Ibid., 33.

they cannot attest to any changes in the mental landscape of those students or *hajjis*.⁷⁰ The mere act of proximity to international banks or of travelling abroad does not imbue people with transnational horizons that transcend their home regions. Likewise, an enlarged pool of students did not guarantee any sort of mental transformation. The question then arises: did the growing interpenetration of the globalized colonial economy and Minangkabau society serve to reconfigure the intellectual horizons of local Muslims?

Ferment within one particularly critical Islamic institution, the Sufi *tariqa* order, foreshadowed the growing impact global entanglements would begin to have on the thought and theology of Minangkabau Muslims. The *tariqa* orders, whose leaders, membership and spiritual thrust often overlapped with or were even coterminous to that other local religious institution, the *surau* school, had long comprised the cornerstone of Islamic life in West Sumatra. As discussed in Chapter One, the *tariqa* brotherhood, literally meaning “path,” furnished the social glue for local religious practice. Organized around the unyielding devotion of students (*murid*) to their teachers (*shaykh*), venerated lines of scholarly genealogy traceable back to the Prophet Muhammad, and a total immersion in the pursuit of spiritual education, the *tariqa* constituted a small, but close knit and committed community of Muslim believers. These Sufi orders, tantamount to a spiritual cadre of sorts, played a crucial role in the transmission of Islam to the Padang highlands.⁷¹

While these orders assumed a myriad of guises across the larger Islamic world, with a panoply of practices, scholarly commitments, and beliefs, in West Sumatra the Sufi movement

⁷⁰ For an interesting theoretical discussion about the nature of cosmopolitanism, i.e. whether proximity or movement alone can constitute criteria for Islamic cosmopolitanism, or whether cosmopolitanism is essentially a mental or material process, see Will Hanley, “Grieving Cosmopolitanism in Middle Eastern Studies,” *History Compass* 6, no. 5 (2008), 1347-1349.

⁷¹ For a good overview of the role of the *tariqa*, see Dobbin, *Islamic Revivalism*, 121-125.

had long been dominated by one specific *tariqa*: the Shattariyya. Brought from Mecca to Aceh in the 1600s by the famous Sufi scholar, Abd al-Ra'uf al-Singkili, and not long thereafter to West Sumatra by his student, Shaykh Burhanuddin, the teachings of the Shattariyya—particularly the belief that God proceeds into the natural world through seven stages of emanation—became deeply entrenched within Minangkabau culture in the 1700 and early 1800s.⁷² While not immune from rivalries or personal jealousies, almost all the West Sumatran *tariqa* subscribed to the basic tenets of the Shattariyya, and a general consensus on correct religious belief and practice prevailed until the middle of the nineteenth century.⁷³ Almost all the Padri emerged from the tight-knit Shattariyya milieu, including both Tuanku nan Tua and his more militant foes.

The advent of an upstart *tariqa* order, the Naqshbandiyya, would not only pose a formidable challenge to the scions of Shattariyya, but also signaled the rising salience of Mecca, reformist theology and cosmopolitan Islamic geographies to the masses of Minangkabau Muslims. The precise origins of the Naqshbandiyya in West Sumatra remain a bit murky. One prominent historian, Michael Laffan, contends that it is at least plausible that the Naqshbandiyya established a beachhead in the coastal Pariaman district of West Sumatra as early as the 1820s in the person of Shaykh Da'ud of Sunur, a prominent religious scholar.⁷⁴ Yet, various Islamic writings and polemics do prove that by the 1850s, one of the pupils of Da'ud, Isma'il al-Minangbawi of Sunur, embraced the teachings of Naqshbandiyya during an extended period of study in Mecca as a *hajji*.⁷⁵ He joined an offshoot of the Naqshbandiyya called the Khaliddiyya,

⁷² Azra, "The Surau and the Early Reform Movement," 67.

⁷³ Young, *Islamic Peasants and the State*, 109-110.

⁷⁴ Laffan, *The Makings of Indonesian Islam*, 42.

⁷⁵ B. Schrieke, "Bijdrage tot de Bibliografie van de Huidige Godsdienstige Beweging ter Sumatra's Westkust," *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal-, Land-, en Volkenkunde* 1, no. 9 (1920): 265-267.

named after its Kurdish Iraqi founder, Khalid al-Shahrazuri al-Kurdi,⁷⁶ which would soon emerge as the primary medium for the transmission of Islamic reformism and cosmopolitanism to West Sumatra.

Among the multitudinous Islamic groups in Mecca, the Naqshbandiyya-Khaliddiyya stood out not only for their unremitting zeal, but also for their protean political and social character, their transnational appeal, and a nascent interest in science. As with other reformist groups, including the Wahhabi who inspired an earlier generation of West Sumatran Padris, the Khalidiyya expressed a commitment to restoring the pristine, unsullied Islam of the Prophet Muhammad's time.⁷⁷ This commitment included an emphasis on returning to the sayings and practices of Prophet Muhammad, known as the *sunna*; the rejection of all heretical innovations (*bid'a*), including the Shattariyya belief in seven levels of divine emanations into the physical world (*wujud*), which they rejected as a pantheistic blasphemy against the unity and transcendence of God; and lastly, a strict adherence to the dictates of Islamic law, or *shari'a*.⁷⁸ Beyond these fairly standard reformist beliefs, however, the Khalidiyya also evinced some more unique attributes and tendencies. As the Khaliddiyya grew enormously popular in the Ottoman lands of Western Asia, they attracted a following among social elites and soon garnered a substantial amount of direct patronage of political authorities in Istanbul. In contrast to other *tariqa*, the Khalidiyya also relaxed the requirements for prolonged study and contemplation, arguing that the path to enlightenment could be short. Thus, this *tariqa* opened up to a more socially diverse constituency, endowing it with an unusually populist orientation for a Sufi

⁷⁶ Butrus Abu-Manneh, "The Naqshbandiyya-Mujaddidiyya in the Ottoman Lands in the Early 19th Century," *Die Welt des Islams* 22 (1984), 1-3.

⁷⁷ The progenitor of the Khālidiyya sub order of the Sufi Naqshbandiyya-Mujaddidiyya Sufi order was in fact in Mecca making *hajj* at the time of Wahhabi rule in Mecca, although we cannot be sure of the precise impact of this encounter on his theologies and teachings. See, Abu-Manneh, "The Naqshbandiyya-Mujaddidiyya," 3, 13.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 12-13.

order.⁷⁹ Furthermore, the Khalidiyya also departed from their other *tariqa* counterparts by arguing that the measurement of moon cycles—a task critical to the Islamic lunar calendar and the dating of such important religious festivities as Ramadan—should not be left to the blind eye. Instead, devout Muslims must embrace the most scientifically accurate methods for such calculations.⁸⁰

During his time at the famous Khalidiyaa retreat (*zawiya*) on Abu Qubays hill in Mecca, Isma‘il al-Minangkabawi appeared to imbibe this idiosyncratic blend of reformist zeal and cosmopolitanism. For example, upon his temporary return to Southeast Asia in the 1850s, al-Minangkabawi composed several important works on points of doctrine, canonical obligations, and prayer, as befitting a newly-minted, reform minded Sufi.⁸¹ Bestowed with a prestigious *ijaza*, or a license to teach the religious precepts of his *tariqa*, al-Minangkabawi also took on a number of students from West Sumatra and across the Malay-Indonesian world, again following in the footsteps of many Sufi *shaykhs* who preceded him.⁸² Even his bromides against the philosophy of divine immanence, while contentious, did not represent a marked departure from previous campaigns of reform and renewal in the region.

Al-Minangkabawi also engaged in some more unconventional activities. Unlike most other *tariqa* teachers, for example, Isma‘il did not limit himself to a small circle of pupils for an extended period of time; instead, he interacted with a large number of students from across the Malay-Indonesian world, often for short, if intensive, bursts of religious training.⁸³ Beyond the

⁷⁹ Laffan, *The Makings of Indonesian Islam*, 50-51.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 62.

⁸¹ Martin van Bruinessen, “After the Days of Abu Qubays: Indonesian Transformations of the Naqshbandiyya-Khalidiyya,” *Journal of the History of Sufism* 5 (2007), 226.

⁸² K.F. Holle, “Mededeelingen over de devotie der Naqsjibendijah in den Nederlandsch-Indischen Archipel,” *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal-, Land en Volkenkunde* 31 (1886), 67-81.

⁸³ Laffan, *The Makings of Indonesian Islam*, 53.

tutelary domain, reports suggested that al-Minangkabawi also supported the political cause of pan-Islamism, and that during a trip to Singapore, he even waved an Ottoman flag brought back from Mecca, perhaps reflecting the influence of Turks and Ottoman patronage in the Khalidiyya *tariqa*.⁸⁴ This spark of political activism also explains why al-Minangkabawi never actually returned to his home area of West Sumatra or anywhere else in the Dutch-controlled East Indies, instead choosing to teach his students remotely from Singapore, the nominally autonomous sultanates of the Malay Peninsula, and Mecca itself.⁸⁵ Al-Minangkabawi also championed the new techniques for calculating lunar cycles and the start time of the holy month of Ramadan. In sum, al-Minangkabawi and the teachings of Naqshbandiyya-Khalidiyya epitomized an emerging category of what some religious studies experts have referred to as “Sufi Modern.”⁸⁶

The efforts of al-Minangkabawi, in turn, sparked new synergies between the emerging transformations in the Middle Eastern *tariqa*, on the one hand, and the West Sumatran socio-economic sphere on the other hand. At first, the spread of Naqshbandiyya in the Minangkabau region unfolded slowly, as al-Minangkabawi’s students trickled home from Mecca, Singapore, and Malaya in the 1850s to impart their reformist wisdom to locals. In contrast to the tightly-knit and selective *tariqa* networks of the past, these returning *hajjis* proved willing to employ the popularizing techniques they had learned in Mecca and expand their efforts beyond a limited number of potential pupils. Rather than dwelling on a handful of long term *murid*, the new Naqshbandiyya instead endeavored to convey their religious message to the widest possible

⁸⁴ Ibid., 50.

⁸⁵ Bruinessen, “After the Days of the Abu Qubays,” 226.

⁸⁶ Laffan, *The Makings of Indonesian Islam*, 62.

group of people, including ordinary peasants, petty-traders, and others who could not immerse themselves in full-time religious study. Even women were recruited.⁸⁷

Meanwhile, at almost the same time as Naqshbandiyya sought to broaden their appeal to encompass the entirety of Minangkabau society, the economic transformations described earlier enabled ever-growing numbers to of rural West Sumatrans to fulfill their religious obligation of pilgrimage to Mecca. Changes within the Sufi community and the local economy thus proved mutually reinforcing, creating a positive feedback loop of sorts. Naqshbandiyya-Khalidiyya *hajjis* returned from Mecca and sought to proselytize as many Minangkabau as possible, which in turn sparked an escalation in the number of *hajjis* visiting Mecca and the Khalidiyya *zawiya* retreat on Jabal Abu Qubays. More Naqshbandiyya adepts returned home, leading to a repetition of the cycle. These synergies quickened the pace of *tariqa* penetration like never before; only a little over a decade after the first Naqshbandiyya missionaries returned to West Sumatra, a Dutch educator observed in 1871 that one eighth of the entire Minangkabau population subscribed to this *tariqa*, and in the following decades, these numbers continued to climb.⁸⁸ Easily eclipsing their Shattariyya rivals, by the 1880s and 90s, the Naqshbandiyya constituted the principal vehicle for Islamic expression in West Sumatra.⁸⁹

The ascent of Naqshbandiyya thus catalyzed the beginning of a long period of Islamic reform and renewal in West Sumatra, of which this specific *tariqa* only constituted the first stage. By the 1860s, Naqshbandiyya began facilitating the transmission of Meccan and Middle Eastern orthodoxy back to West Sumatra.⁹⁰ During this decade, Naqshbandiyya *ulama* travelled

⁸⁷ Young, *Islamic Peasants and the State*, 110-112.

⁸⁸ Pistorius, *Studien over de Inlandsche Huishouding*, 232.

⁸⁹ Young, *Islamic Peasants and the State*, 109-110.

⁹⁰ Martin van Bruinessen, "The Origins and Development of the Naqshbandi Order in Indonesia," *Der Islam* 67 (1990), 164.

throughout the district, decrying not only the perceived transgressions of the *adat* matriarchy, but also the innovations (*bid'a*) of their fellow Sufi Shattariyya, especially their fealty to *wujud* theories of divine emanation, tomb worship, and other perceived deviations from the correct practices of Islam.⁹¹ At the same time, emphasis on the observance of proper religious rituals and duties grew, while the number of mosques proliferated. With the subsumption of an ever greater proportion of the Minangkabau population into the *tariqa* fold, including women, religious leaders also renewed their efforts to bring the most intimate details of daily life—marriage and divorce—into compliance with *shari'a*.⁹² Naqshbandiyya leaders strenuously denounced the Shattariyya preference for calculating lunar cycles with the naked eye. Instead, they argued that the determination of these cycles, and consequently the dates for fasting month of Ramadan, must be brought into accord with the “scientific” *hisab* practices followed in Mecca, Cairo, Istanbul, and other centers of the Islamic world.⁹³ In view of these developments, it is fair to say that the Naqshbandiyya *tariqa* effectively galvanized a spirit of religious renewal that would persist for decades, a spirit that would outgrow, outlast, and eventually, overwhelm the Sufi *tariqa* system itself.

In sum, Naqshbandiyya-Khalidiyya crystallized the emerging entanglements between Dutch colonial rule, Islamic cosmopolitanism, and religious reform in West Sumatra. The very same commercial circuits that extracted coffee from the Padang highlands and distributed it across the globe also carried an ever growing number of Muslim Minangkabau to Mecca to make their *hajj*. This connection, in turn, fuelled the advent of an unprecedented popular turn toward piety and Islamic orthodoxy in the region.

⁹¹ Bruinessen, “After the Days of the Abu Qubays,” 173.

⁹² Young, *Islamic Peasants and the State*, 110.

⁹³ Laffan, *The Makings of Indonesian Islam*, 61.

To point out the uncomfortable fact that colonial society and Minangkabau Islam grew together in a symbiotic fashion—a fact that would undoubtedly not sit well with apologists for the Dutch regime or with devout Muslims—is not the same thing as saying that these two forces existed in social, cultural, or political harmony. Just because Dutch economic policies amplified the salience of the *haji*, reform, and the larger Islamic world does not necessarily mean that colonial administrators encouraged or even trusted any such developments. Likewise, the fact that orthodox *ulama* benefitted from opportunities provided by the colonial regimes did not, *ipso facto*, translate into unconditional support or loyalty, much less respect, for their non-Muslim rulers. Even as their own companies transported Naqshbandiyya *hajjis* to Mecca, Dutch officials espied in their *tariqa* the intimations of a nefarious cabal of Pan-Islamic conspirators plotting to overthrow the government.⁹⁴ Similarly, while Muslim Minangkabau participated in the colonial administration and received money from government coffers, they still sometimes execrated the Dutch as *kafir* infidels and, at the most extreme, even waged an occasional uprising against them.⁹⁵

The nature of the relationship between colonial rule and Muslim Minangkabau was thus an exceedingly complex one: at once reciprocal, yet oppositional; mutually constitutive, but autonomous; strident, yet ambiguous. These contradictions thus beg the question: how would Muslim reformers and Dutch administrators alike navigate the minefield of colonial politics, both during the time of the Naqshbandiyya and during the subsequent emergence of the modernist Islamic movement? To answer this question, it is necessary to turn our attention back

⁹⁴ J. Ballot, Governor of Sumatra's West Coast, to the Governor General of the Philippines Islands, 28 February 1913, Entry 98, Collectie 10: Collectie Hazeu, Godard Arend Johannes Hazeu (1879-1929), H1083, KITLV Library, Leiden, the Netherlands

⁹⁵ Various incidents in West Sumatra included rebellions of diverse origins and causes in 1897, 1908, and 1927. See Young, *Islamic Peasants and the State*, 60-82, 121-128; Kahin, *Rebellion to Integration*, 46-49.

to the one family that embodied all the manifold contradictions of Minangkabau history, which acted as the connective thread between the Padris, the Sufi Naqshbandiyya, and the anti-Sufi modernist Muslims to follow; which would bring collaboration, anti-Dutch agitation, and cosmopolitan modernity all together. That family is none other than that of Tuanku nan Tua and Shaykh Mohammad Tahir Jalal al-Din.

Muhammad Tahir Jalal al-Din and the Cairo-Singapore nexus

The decision of Tahir Jalal al-Din to travel eastward to Cairo from Mecca in 1893 and to enroll in the most venerable institution of higher learning in the Islamic World, Al-Azhar University, marked the beginning of a seminal shift in the orientation of *Jawi hajjis*.⁹⁶ For centuries, the vast preponderance of Southeast Asian Muslims who travelled to the Middle East went to the “Holy Lands” (*haramayn*) of the Arabian Peninsula, Mecca and Medina, as prescribed by the *Qur'an*. Whereas networks of prominent *ulama* and *shaykh* had tied the Arabian Peninsula to Southeast Asian port cities since at least the seventeenth century, acting as an important source of inspiration and instruction for Muslims across the archipelagic world, the *Jawi* presence in Egypt remained quite small well into the 1870s and 80s.⁹⁷ Even as the number of Southeast Asian *hajjis* soared into the thousands after the opening of the Suez Canal, their presence in Cairo remained negligible. A tiny dormitory for Malay and Indonesian students, the *Riwaq al-Jawa*, did exist at Al-Azhar University in 1871, with a reported six students, but by

⁹⁶ Zakariya, “Islamic Reform in Colonial Malaya,” 98-101.

⁹⁷ Laffan notes that very few *Jawi* trickled to Cairo, and that Mecca was the true “lodestar” of mobile *Jawi* Muslims. See Laffan, *The Makings of Indonesian Islam*, 53.

1875 it had dissolved and all of these pupils had departed.⁹⁸ Thus, when Tahir Jalal al-Din chose to devote four years to study in Cairo, it constituted something of a singular act.

By contrast, in the decades following Jalal al-Din's four year stint at Al-Azhar University, Cairo emerged as a popular and influential station on the Southeast Asian *hajji* circuit. As historians such as William Roff, Mona Abaza and others have demonstrated, ambitious *Jawi* students increasingly regarded Egypt as a suitable sequel to Mecca, a place where they could pursue advanced religious training beyond that offered in the *haramayn*, as well as studies in scientific and literary subjects not specifically Islamic in nature.⁹⁹ By the 1920s, the number of *Jawi* students swelled to over two hundred at Al-Azhar University, in the process spawning vibrant student associations, newspapers, and political organizations geared toward the Southeast Asian presence in Egypt.¹⁰⁰ Among these burgeoning contingents of *Jawi* students in Cairo, moreover, a disproportionate number came from West Sumatra, and many of the most prominent leaders in organizations like the Djama'ah al-Chairiah student group and the *Seruan Azhar* newspaper were Minangkabau.¹⁰¹ Moreover, as the numbers of students escalated, the influence of the Cairo *Jawi* community upon the practices, beliefs, and politics of Muslims throughout the Indo-Malay world would only grow.

Until now, much of the scholarship on the Indonesian presence in Cairo has been interpreted through the lens of those Muslim students in the 1920s rather than through earlier sojourners such as Tahir Jalal al-Din. As a result of this focus, historians such as William Roff have cast Cairo as a source of religiously-inspired radicalism and nationalism in Indonesia.

⁹⁸ Mona Abaza, *Indonesian Students in Cairo: Islamic Education, Perceptions and Exchanges*, vol. 23, Cahier d'Archipel (Paris: Association Archipel, 1994), 39.

⁹⁹ Abaza, *Indonesian Students in Cairo*, 39.

¹⁰⁰ William R. Roff, "Indonesian and Malay Students in Cairo in the 1920s," *Indonesia* 9 (April 1970), 74.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

Animated by the growing anti-colonial sentiment of the post-World War I moment, Indonesian and Malay students in Cairo embraced a strident position against non-Muslim hegemony in Southeast Asia, and their principal intellectual organ, the *Seruan Azhar* newspaper, was in fact banned by the Dutch.¹⁰² Many Indonesians in Egypt assumed positions of importance in the nascent anti-colonial political parties of the time upon their return home.¹⁰³ Moreover, several of the most prominent members of the Indonesian community in Egypt had not left home voluntarily, but fled because they had been exiled as part of a general crackdown by colonial authorities—accentuating the impression that Cairo was a refuge of sorts for pious Indonesians away from the depredations of the Dutch.¹⁰⁴

This tendency to stress the political import of Cairo also serves to obscure the entanglements of that city in the emerging global colonial order and the sinuous ties of filiation that lead from al-Azhar University back to Islamic activism in places such as West Sumatra. The Egyptian capital did offer a heady, cosmopolitan brew where Southeast Asians could interact with Muslims from around the Islamic world, pursue studies that went beyond the narrow religious purview of a place like Mecca, and even engage in political agitation.¹⁰⁵ Not all of the trends percolating in the coffee houses and dormitories of Cairo necessarily set returning *Jawi* into conflict with Dutch authorities. In fact, the experiences of Tahir Jalal al-Din suggest that the ascendant ideas of Islamic renewal contained a distinctly apolitical dimension, and that the modernizing objectives of religious reformers could potentially coexist with the colonial order of the Netherlands East Indies.

¹⁰² Ibid., 73-74.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 73.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 87.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 75.

Unfortunately, we do not know a great deal about the circumstances and motivations that impelled Tahir Jalal al-Din to depart from the well-trodden Meccan path for a four year stint in Cairo. Nevertheless, we can still venture some informed conjectures. As the child of Tuanku Cangking, the most celebrated Naqshbandiyyah *alim* in West Sumatra, young Tahir undoubtedly came of age in a milieu that valued Islamic learning, *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), and a broader conception of *umma*, or the Islamic community.¹⁰⁶ His decision to stay in Mecca not only for a year or two, but for twelve, suggests that Tahir may have been graced with an unusual facility for religious scholarship.¹⁰⁷ However, these two considerations alone do not distinguish him from earlier *Jawi ulama* in the *Haramayn*, almost all of whom had a familial tradition of Islamic study and some of whom permanently decamped to Arabia.¹⁰⁸

What did set Tahir apart from his forebears was the changing Meccan and Middle Eastern context? Tahir's primary mentor and teacher in Arabia, his cousin Shaykh Ahmad Khatib, waged an increasingly vitriolic campaign against the deviations and blasphemies of the Sufi *tariqa*, a campaign which soon came to define reformism across the Islamic world.¹⁰⁹ With the *tariqa* still exercising considerable sway in the Meccan religious scene in the 1890s, it is likely that Khatib would have encouraged Tahir to seek additional religious training beyond the narrow confines of the Arabian Holy Cities. The Islamic intellectual milieu of Cairo, with its deep respect for *fiqh*

¹⁰⁶ Bruinessen, "The Origins and Development of the Naqshbandi Order," 164.

¹⁰⁷ Zakariya, "Islamic Reform in Malaya," 51.

¹⁰⁸ See for example books about networks of Indonesian *ulama*: Azyumardi Azra, *The Origins of Islamic Reformism in Southeast Asia: Networks of Malay-Indonesian and Middle Eastern 'Ulamā' in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004), 1-3.

¹⁰⁹ Laffan, *The Makings of Indonesian Islam*, 177-183.

jurisprudence and aversion to the mystical speculations of the Sufis, probably beckoned as a viable alternative.¹¹⁰

Al-Azhar University itself exerted a growing pull on the Islamic world at this time. While always one of the most venerated and respected institutions of religious learning, Al-Azhar witnessed breathtaking growth in the later nineteenth century, as its student rolls swelling to well over ten-thousand.¹¹¹ The majority of the student body actually came not from Egypt, but from an exceptionally diverse range of Muslim lands stretching from South Asia through Morocco, endowing the institution with a notably cosmopolitan profile.¹¹² Many of these variegated students and graduates circulated through Mecca, and news of the school undoubtedly reached Tahir during his twelve year stay. On a more individual level, al-Azhar University also offered advanced training in Islamic astronomy, a subject close to the heart of an erstwhile devotee of the Naqshbandiyya such as Tahir Jalal al-Din.¹¹³ In sum, circumstances were ripe for an ambitious *Jawi* of an orthodox inclination, like Tahir, to begin sojourning to Cairo.

Tahir arrived at an Al-Azhar University during a historical moment of contentious debates and upheaval. Once the bailiwick of *ulama* concerned mainly with legal scholasticism and the task of re-producing what one historian called “the living chain of transmission” of Islamic knowledge, Al-Azhar confronted increasing pressure from the secular school system and

¹¹⁰ For an overview of the emphasis on Islamic law and fiqh in Cairo, as distinct from Sufis who were more popular in rural regions of Egypt, see Meir Hatina, “Historical Legacy and the Challenge of Modernity in the Middle East: the Case of al-Azhar in Egypt,” *The Muslim World* 93, no. 1 (2003), 51-53.

¹¹¹ Indira Falk Gesink, *Islamic Reform and Conservatism: Al-Azhar and the Evolution of Modern Sunni Islam*, (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 2010), 123.

¹¹² For information on Moroccans at Al-Azhar, see Edmund Burke, “Pan-Islam and Moroccan resistance to French Colonial Penetration, 1900-1921,” *Journal of African History* 13, no. 1 (1972): 103; for informations on Indians at the university, see Michael Laffan, “An Indonesian Community in Cairo: Continuity and Change in a Cosmopolitan Islamic Milieu,” *Indonesia* 77 (April 2004): 3.

¹¹³ Tahir would specialize in the field of Islamic astronomy. See Zakariya, “Islamic Reform in Colonial Indonesia,” 148.

from government officials who wanted to prize authority away the religious scholars.¹¹⁴ Students clamored for instruction not only in theological subjects, but also in practical, mathematic and scientific fields that could help them land positions in the burgeoning civil service. Reformers decried the fealty of *ulama* to the practice of *taqlid*, whereby they accepted the precedents of schools of Islamic law without question, and encouraged all Muslims to pursue the study of the Qu'ran through own reasoning, or *ijtihad*.¹¹⁵ Al-Azhar groaned under the weight of the enormous student body, as teachers could not cope with their massive numbers of charges, buildings endured significant overcrowding, and sanitary problems caused periodic outbreaks of cholera.¹¹⁶

As a result, the *khedival* government pressured the university to embrace the imperatives of efficiency and “progress.” During the 1890s, the government appointed university rector (*shaykh*) implemented a number of reforms, such as curricular requirements in the physical and natural sciences, a streamlined system of classroom instruction to accelerate time to graduation, and new certification requirements to ensure teacher competency. Perhaps most important of these reforms, at least from political perspective, was the creation of an Al-Azhar Administrative Council directly responsible not to the *ulama*, but to the state Council of Ministers, thereby effectively stripping religious scholars of control of the university and placing it for the first time in the hands of the *khedival* government.¹¹⁷

Although we do not have a great deal of granular detail on how Tahir Jalal al-Din spent his time in Cairo, it is still nonetheless possible to infer that the ferment sweeping across Al-Azhar University and Egyptian Islamic society in the 1890s left a lasting imprint on the

¹¹⁴ Gesink, *Islamic Reform and Conservatism*, 111, 115-116.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 74-76, 116-118, 165-196.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 123-124, 143-144.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 129-132.

precocious Minangkabau scholar. Much of the basis for this assessment rests on the enduring relationship he forged with one of the leading religious reformers of the time: Rashid Rida. A Syrian born *alim* and a student of another famous Islamic intellectual, Muhammad Abduh, Rida epitomized the temper of his times. Among other things, he distinguished himself through his rejection of unquestioning fealty to the precedents of Islamic jurisprudence, his promotion of reason and independent reasons as a means to return to the true teachings of the Qur'an and Prophet Muhammad, and his advocacy of modern scientific learning as a means to fend off the encroachment of non-Muslim colonizers.¹¹⁸ Rida developed a large following at Al-Azhar University, and by 1898, he would start a pioneering newspaper, *al-Manar* (The Lighthouse) to communicate his ideas to the larger Muslim public.¹¹⁹ Where exactly the young Tahir Jalal al-Din first befriended this reform leader is not known. However, we do know that they exchanged several letters that Jalal al-Din would serve as a key distributor for Rida's *al-Manar* newspaper, and that later in the 1950s, Rida would pen an introduction to one of Jalal al-Din's books referring to him as "my old friend and loyal associate."¹²⁰ Clearly, Jalal al-Din established a durable working relationship with this leading luminary of the Egyptian Islamic reform movement.

Aside from these documented examples of contact between Jalal al-Din and Rida, the symmetry in the ideas and actions of these two men also speaks to the significance of their

¹¹⁸ For overviews of the thought of Rashid Rida, see Charles C. Adams, *Islam and Modernism in Egypt: A Study of the Modern Reform Movement Inaugurated by Muhammad Abduh* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1933); Malcolm Kerr, *Islamic Reform: The Political and Legal Theories of Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Rida* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966).

¹¹⁹ Azyumardi Azra, "The Transmission of Al-Manar's Reformism to the Malay-Indonesian World: The Case of *Al-Imam* and *Al-Munir*," *Intellectuals in the Modern Islamic World: Transmission, Transformation, Communication*, ed. Stephane A. Dudoignon, Komatsu Hisao, and Kosugi Yasushi (New York: Routledge, 2006), 144.

¹²⁰ Shaykh M. Tahir Jalal al-Din, *Kitab Ta'yid Mutabbi' al-Sunna fi al-radd 'ala al-Qā'il bi-alsunniyat al-rak'atain qabla al-Jum'at*, (Penang, Malaysia: n.p., 1953), 58-59. Quoted in Zakariya, "Islamic Reform in Colonial Malaya," 102.

connection. Much as Rida deplored what he perceived as the backwardness of his own Arab peoples and lamented the gaps separating Arabs from Europeans, Jalal al-Din worked at a newspaper that devoted a great deal of energy to decrying the deficiencies and inertia of the Malay people.¹²¹ Like Rida, Jalal al-Din imputed these shortcomings to the religious failings of the Malays, particularly their failure to follow the Qur'an and the *sunnah*, as well as their acceptance of "innovations." Just as Rida promulgated a more capacious view of religious education that could encompass instruction in the physical sciences, history, mathematics, and other ecumenical subjects, Jalal al-Din wrote that "it is obligatory upon us...to acquire perfect knowledge in all aspects, including religious knowledge and skills, which the Europeans possess... We also must have enough material wealth."¹²² From these affinities, it becomes clear that Rida exercised a considerable degree of influence on the thought of Tahir.

In the years following his graduation from Al-Azhar University, Jalal al-Din would continue to espouse the teachings and actions of Rida back in Southeast Asia. The most obvious example of this enduring impact comes in the form of the noted journal of reformist thought, *Al-Imam*. Established by Tahir in 1906 in the port city of Singapore, *Al-Imam* emulated Rida's Egyptian newspaper *Al-Manar* in almost all aspects of form and content. The balance of question and answer sections, religious instruction, and socio-political commentary in *Al-Imam* closely mirrored that found in its Egyptian counterpart.¹²³ Like *Al-Manar*, almost all 31 editions of *Al-Imam* contained at least one article on the socio-political maladies of the Muslim peoples, and in this case, the Malay in specific.¹²⁴ Pan-Islamism, or solidarity between the multitudinous peoples

¹²¹ William Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), 57-61.

¹²² Tahir, "Tahir's Note on His Dialogue with Datuk Batuah" MS Tahir's Personal Papers, National Archives, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (listed as SP.10/118-146); quoted in Zakariya, "Islamic Reform in Colonial Malaya," 205.

¹²³ Azra, "The Transmission of Al-Manar's Reformism," 46.

¹²⁴ Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, 57.

of the Muslim World, was advanced as an antidote to the depredations of European colonialism. *Al-Imam* also lauded the virtues of an updated Islamic education, praising one school in particular, Singapore's Madrasah Al-Iqbal, for not only including instruction in Islamic subjects, but also a diverse array of fields like history, geography, English, and even town planning. Under Jalal al-Din's guidance, *Al-Imam* became one of the primary conduits for the dissemination of Egyptian style reformism to the shores of Southeast Asia.

One other striking aspect of *Al-Imam* deserving of notice was the decision to base this fledgling journal not in Jalal al-Din's home region of West Sumatra, but instead in Singapore. At first glance, this port city might seem like a curious choice. Unlike most of the Netherlands East Indies and Malaya, Muslims did not constitute the majority of the local population, but instead represented only one social element amidst a teeming admixture of Chinese, Indians, and Europeans communities. After Cairo and Mecca, why not settle in Agam, Surabaya, or Batavia instead?

In spite of, and perhaps because of, this multiplicity of languages, ethnicities and peoples, Singapore proved quite a fortuitous location for *Al-Imam*. As the central node of commerce and exchange in the Southeast Asian world, for example, Singapore lured not only Chinese or Europeans, but also Muslims from all the disparate corners of the Malay-Indonesian archipelago.¹²⁵ Singapore thus comprised a convenient hub, a place where the *Al-Imam* editors could disseminate and distribute their journals across Southeast Asia through far flung Malay networks. Indeed, we have already seen in chapter three that *Al-Islam*'s influence radiated out to places like Aceh, as another editor, an Acehnese merchant named Shaykh Mohammad Salim Al-Kalali, had come into contact and made a lasting impression on the prominent reformer

¹²⁵ Ibid., 37.

Muhammad Hasbi al-Shiddieqy. Meanwhile, the same forces powering Singapore's commercial rise also turned it into the principal point of embarkation for all Malay-Indonesian *hajjis*, and many of these pilgrims stayed in the city for several years to earn sufficient money for the journey.¹²⁶ Singapore thus featured an unusually mobile and unmoored Muslim population.

Uprooted from their homes and familiar social settings, willing to live in an alien city for years at a time, and committed to making a trek that remained, the invention of the steamship notwithstanding, long and arduous, Singaporean Muslims thus furnished a natural audience for *Al-Imam*. Immersed in change and physical dislocation, these *hajjis* would be more predisposed to the journal's call for a thorough reformation and modernization of Islam than would the traditional religious leaders found in small, local villages.

The very things that would appear to inhibit Singapore's rise as an incubator of Islamic reformism, its cosmopolitan nature and its large non-Muslim population, in fact acted as an impetus for the type of religious renewal embodied by *Al-Imam*. Of course, it is important not to sentimentalize the diversity of Singapore. Just because European Christians, Chinese Buddhists, and Malay Muslims resided in close proximity to one another does not mean they freely mingled across the boundaries of religious and ethnicity or enjoyed harmonious relations. Class and status disparities particularly disadvantaged local Muslims in comparison to their European and Chinese counterparts; however, this very friction could also spur creative adaptation and change. The fact that new public secular schools in Singapore taught English, math, and science, thereby preparing its students for entry into the competitive job market, not to mention reproducing the class privilege of their overwhelmingly Chinese and European charges, only made the need for reform within the Muslim community more acute. Indeed *Al-Imam* endorsed scientific training

¹²⁶ Ibid., 39.

and instruction in English as a means of enabling students to prosper in the larger, cosmopolitan society, while simultaneously placing such modern necessities in a religious, Islamic context.¹²⁷ Thus, by distilling the challenge of modernity into such a concrete and lived presence, Singapore offered fertile ground for reformers like Tahir Jalal al-Din to carry on the work they had done earlier in Cairo.

Finally, along with its cosmopolitan character and its status as a hub of Indo-Malay Muslim networks, there was one last counterintuitive, politically awkward, factor that rendered Singaporean society conducive to the reformism of Tahir Jalal al-Din: British colonial rule. The notion that non-Muslim foreign rule, the very object of so much religious ire, could in some way nourish Islamic renewal, appears on its face almost absurd. After all, reformers sought to bolster their faith precisely so that they could safeguard the *umma* from European colonialism and the shame of subjection, marking them in many scholarly analyses as the paragons of a proto-nationalist movement in the Muslim World.¹²⁸ Rashid Rida resuscitated the long dormant idea of an Islamic caliphate explicitly as a means for presenting a united front against non-Muslim imperialists, going so far as to even call for the cooperation of the Shi'a and Sunni communities.¹²⁹

While there can be no denying that Rida, Tahir, and their reformist compatriots, in due time, envisioned ejecting all foreign influence from Muslim lands, their ideas also contained a surprising degree of ambivalence. Rida singled out the British Empire, in particular, for its tolerance and respect of Islamic religious practice. However far from ideal colonial subjugation

¹²⁷ Ibid., 58.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 57. 65.

¹²⁹ Mahmoud Haddad, "Arab Religious Nationalism in the Colonial Era: Rereading Rashīd Riḍā's Ideas on the Caliphate," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 117, 2 (April-June 1997), 255.

of any kind might be, the British, in his opinion, constituted the least objectionable colonial government, and Rida conspicuously steered clear of any open calls for armed insurrection or revolt against them, instead preferring to focus on the creation of a new Muslim political entity in Mecca. His Minangkabau friend Tahir Jalal al-Din went one step further in his praise for the British, lauding “the great [British] government, which protected this eastern country [Malaya]” for the fact that it “does not like to interfere in, far less to change, the religious law and custom of the native people.”¹³⁰ The British administration offered Indo-Malay Muslims unparalleled freedom to launch publications, enjoy basic press freedoms, and express not only political, but also theological opinions, without significant restrictions. Likewise, with *hajjis* generating substantial profits for commercial shipping concerns, Singapore rulers shied away from intervening in the flow of Muslim pilgrims and in fact took steps to streamline the visa process and facilitate such travel, a marked contrast to restrictive Dutch policies.¹³¹ Singaporean policies toward science even appealed to Tahir. In sum, in spite of the scholarly tendency to regard Islamic revivalism and empire as irreconcilable foes, it can be said that in this instance, a certain synchronicity materialized between them.

When one pushes past the binaries of the colonial/anti-colonial paradigm, it becomes evident that Islamic reformers not only coexisted with imperial regimes, but also depended upon them for support in their theological struggles against fellow Muslims. In fact, the real targets of their campaigns were not the British or the Dutch, but rather, indigenous Islamic authorities. As evidenced by their writings and other activities, Islamic reformers devoted most of their energies to combatting the numerous local practices that were not mentioned in the authoritative sources

¹³⁰ Zakariya, “Islamic Reform in Colonial Malaya,” 206.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 153-155.

of the Qur'an or *sunna*, and thus constituted unacceptable innovation (*bid'a*). Tahir, for example, composed treatises on theological subjects that might strike the outside observer as arcane, such as whether not it was necessary to utter an intention to pray before actually praying (unnecessary), or if the Friday *khutbah* services required a minimum of 40 worshippers.¹³² These issues struck to the core of Islamic liturgy and provoked strong reactions among the other faithful. Such theological polemics proved especially threatening to the traditional guardians of religious faith in the Malay-Indonesian world, who saw their practices denounced as innovations and their very claim to authority undermined. Many of the *ulama* thus encouraged their political patrons, the *rajas* of Malaya and the various indigenous elites of the Indies archipelago, to restrict the activities of reformers or even to expel them from their territories altogether.¹³³ Thus, people like Tahir had little choice but to establish their newspapers and schools in colonial sanctuaries such as Singapore where local rulers exercised little sway.

The long, winding road from Singapore to West Sumatra

Although Singapore constituted the base of Tahir Jalal al-Din's operations upon his return from the Middle East to Southeast Asia, he did not limit his activities or travels to that colonial port city alone. From 1903 to 1905, Tahir journeyed across the breadth of the Netherlands East Indies archipelagic world, visiting Java, Bali, Sumbawa, and Celebes.¹³⁴ In subsequent years, he would also spend long stints in the Malay kingdoms of Johor and Perak, whose sultans welcomed the reformist ideas touted by Tahir, in marked contrast to most of

¹³² Ibid., 195.

¹³³ Ibid., 154.

¹³⁴ Ibid., 153.

indigenous potentates on the peninsula.¹³⁵ Beyond the Malay-Indonesian world, Tahir would make several return trips back to Cairo and Mecca, accompanying the Sultan of Johor and Perak on their visits to Islam's most holy sites. As mentioned before, Tahir even made the voyage to London to attend King George's coronation. Amidst all his perambulations and wanderings, nowhere did Tahir cast a longer shadow than the place to which he would not physically set foot until 1923, his own home region of West Sumatra.

In West Sumatran history, Tahir stands out both for his hovering, almost larger than life presence and his conspicuous absence. Lionized by writers as the primary inspiration for Egyptian-style religious reformism in the region, celebrated in contemporary news articles as the progenitor of anti-colonial nationalism, and derided by Dutch authorities as a pan-Islamist provocateur, Tahir assumed a status of almost mythical proportions. Before we have any record of his actual travel to Minangkabau, local journals acclaimed Tahir's piety and moral probity, while Dutch officials spun stories of a shadowy figure working to incite rebellion and Pan-Islamist sentiment.¹³⁶ Indeed, as early as 1908, a colonial *controleur* in Agam alleged that Tahir lent his support to the spasm of anti-tax rebellions in the rural highlands, and even went so far as to claim he propositioned the Japanese "kaiser" for support with an offer of 13,000.¹³⁷ The *controleur* further theorized that this scheme was sanctified through a Qur'anic oath sworn at the graveside of none other than Tuanku nan Tua.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 159-163

¹³⁶ In one letter, for example, the colonial governor of the West Sumatran region talks about Jalal al-Din as the leading front of a pan-Islamic movement stretching to Istanbul, Mecca, and Cairo. See J. Ballot, Governor of Sumatra's West Coast, to the Governor General of the Netherlands Indies, 28 February 1913, Entry 98, Inventaris 10: Collectie Hazeu: Godard Arend Johannes Hazeu (1879-1929), Hazeu, H1083, KITLV Library, Leiden, the Netherlands

¹³⁷ Controleur van Oud Agam to Resident van Sumatra's Westkust, Fort de Kock, 8 November 1908, Number 34, Archief van L.C. Westenenk [levensjaren 1872-1950], (1643) 1893-1928, code toegang: 2.21.205.71, National Archives of the Netherlands, The Hague, The Netherlands.

Meanwhile, on the indigenous side of the ledger, newspapers ran stories that practically canonized Jalal al-Din as the patron saint of the reformist movement. Upon his return to West Sumatra in 1923, for example, these Minangkabau papers spoke glowingly of his speeches delivered “elegantly and with passion,” of the large crowds that received him, and of the critical advice he dispensed to adoring followers among the ascendant reformist camp of the local Muslim population, known as *kaum muda*.¹³⁸ After this tour, Jalal al-Din would go back to his adopted home of Malaya before visiting West Sumatra one final time in 1927. Upon this second journey, Dutch authorities promptly detained and expelled him; Tahir spent the rest of his long life in Malaya, never again returning to Minangkabau.

The outsized persona of Tahir which emanates both from Minangkabau and Dutch accounts, however, seems a little bit incongruous with what we know about Tahir’s work and career in Malaya, especially with respect to politics. While not averse to conflict or theological polemics, particularly with his foes among the indigenous *ulama*, Jalal al-Din nonetheless refrained from tangling with colonial authorities and wrote most extensively on issues of prayer, proper observance, and astronomy. At most, he broached the plight of colonialism in a general, fairly innocuous manner, exhorting spiritual renewal as the key to, one day in the future, finally being able to stand their own against non-Muslim foreigners. In his very brief time in West Sumatra, colonialist and reformist Muslim alike ascribed to him explicitly nationalist motivations, portraying him as the catalyst for anti-colonial political parties and rebellion.¹³⁹

The gap between the perception of Tahir in West Sumatra and his actions in Malaya thus begs the question: what role did he play in the development of Minangkabau Muslim reformism.

¹³⁸ Hamka, *Ayahku: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abd. Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangang Kaum Agama di Sumatera*. (Jakarta: Djajamurni, 1967), 123.

¹³⁹ See foregoing discussion in last section of this chapter.

When we disentangle the myth of his political persona from the facts of his life, the people he interacted with, the models he provided, and the ideas he inspired, it is still possible to conclude that Jalal al-Din, even in absentia, wielded enormous influence on the development of reformist Islam in his home region. However, this accounting will show that the type of revivalism propagated by Jalal al-Din hinged less on any explicitly political program than on a well-articulated conception of religious modernity and a series of very specific theological critiques. In fact, rather than acting as an enemy of the Dutch regime, Islamic reformers depended on it, thriving as a result of the economic, social, and political dislocations spawned by a fast changing colonial society. The principal Minangkabau heirs of Jalal al-Din's theological legacy maintained cordial relations with colonial authorities, even sometimes calling upon them for assistance against their traditionalist religious foes, thus further underlining the symbiosis between colonialism and Islamic reform. And as we shall see, it is only in the later 1920s that the very same colonial conditions that fuelled reformism would, with the help of some wrongheaded policy maneuvers by Dutch administrators, begin to radicalize it, making it an important source for nationalism in West Sumatra.

Abdullah Ahmad, urbanization, and Al-Munir

Although absent from the land of his birth for well over two decades, by the early 1900s, Tahir Jalal al-Din would nonetheless begin to make his presence felt in the social, religious, and political life of West Sumatra. As early as 1908, for example, the *controleur* of Old Agam district described the enduring relationship between Tahir and his brother, the *penghulu* of Kota

Tua.¹⁴⁰ While we should not doubt that this peripatetic reformer maintained some semblance of a relationship with family members from his hometown, Tahir had by now outgrown his sympathies to the Naqshbandiyya sufi order, which still dominated the rural stretches of Agam. As mentioned before, he had embraced the anti-*tariqa* crusade of his older cousin, Shaykh Ahmad Chatib, and turned to the modernizing impulses described during his time in Cairo and Singapore.¹⁴¹ Given the shift in his religious orientation, it is unlikely he exerted his greatest sway in the area of his birth or other similar rural areas. Instead, we can only begin to piece together the early influence of Tahir by turning away from the highland villages that traditionally constituted the locus of Minangkabau culture and society toward the emergent urban hubs of Padang Panjang and Padang. Only in the West Sumatra's burgeoning urban milieu can we find the religious activist who perhaps bore the most responsibility for the transmission and transplantation of Tahir's reformist ideas to the region: Hajji Abdullah Ahmad.

Born ten years later than Tahir in 1878, the early years of Abdullah Ahmad revealed subtle, but significant, shifts in Minangkabau Muslim society that would hold great import for the future of Islam reformism. Like Tahir, Hajji Ahmad grew up in a family where commercial and religious fortunes were entwined. For example, the father of Hajji Ahmad benefitted from the penetration of the market economy into West Sumatra and amassed significant wealth as a merchant, while at the same time solidifying his reputation as a prominent *alim* and theological eminence. Like Tahir's family, Ahmad's evidently saw no contradiction between the duties of their faith and enrolling their son in a government run elementary school. Moreover, this heady

¹⁴⁰ Controleur van Oud Agam to Resident van Sumatra's Westkust, Fort de Kock, 8 November 1908, Number 34, Archief van L.C. Westenenk [levensjaren 1872-1950], (1643) 1893-1928, code toegang: 2.21.205.71, National Archives of the Netherlands, The Hague, The Netherlands

¹⁴¹ Laffan, *The Makings of Indonesian Islam*, 183-184.

combination of affluence, religious aptitude, and colonial credentials thrust young Ahmad on the same path to Mecca that Tahir tread.¹⁴²

One subtle difference did distinguish the childhood of these two reformers. Whereas Tahir grew up in the ancestral home of his family, Kota Tua, the intensifying commercial economy of the 1890s lured Ahmad's father away from the life of the small rural village to Padang Pajang, the booming urban crossroads of the highlands. Seat of the local Dutch administration unit and home to the largest government coffee warehouse in the entire highlands region, Padang Panjang witnessed dramatic population growth throughout the late nineteenth century and soon assumed the mantle of second largest city in all of West Sumatra. Moreover, beyond the numbers, this growth also entailed an increasingly complex economy, sustaining a range of indigenous bureaucrats, petty traders, transport workers, and wholesalers. As a consequence, the circle of economic opportunities widened and the penetration of colonial capitalism into Minangkabau society only deepened. Whereas before only the grandchildren of collaborationist regents, like Tahir Jalal al-Din, could claim the benefits of the capitalist transformation, by the 1890s, these rewards began to trickle down to a larger subset of the population, including Abdullah Ahmad's father. In sum, Abdullah Ahmad and Padang Panjang symbolized the emergence of a mass Muslim society beyond the confines of the traditional Minangkabau village.¹⁴³

The nascent urbanization of West Sumatran society symbolized by Abdullah Ahmad had weighty implications for the development of Muslim Minangkabau society. City life attenuated the influence of Sufi *tariqa* and *surau*, which for so long had been the fulcrum of Islamic life in

¹⁴² Noer, *Modernist Muslim Movement*, 38.

¹⁴³ Kahin, *Rebellion to Integration*, 31.

the rural highlands of the region. The highly personalized bonds of the teacher-student, *shaykh-murid* relationship did not translate well increasingly depersonalized urban social realms, while the skills imparted by the *surau* increasingly did not address the needs of a diversifying, sophisticated modern economy. As a result, Sufi schools and orders almost universally steered clear of the expanding cities, remaining a rural phenomenon.¹⁴⁴ At the same time, the customary *adat* frameworks for village government, which employed a large cohort of Muslim religious functionaries—many of whom were Sufi-aligned—did not extend into the biggest towns. As a result, Islamic life in places like Padang Panjang was much more fluid than in most of the rural villages. Perhaps most significantly, the economic and social flux re-shaping urban life in West Sumatra not only altered the daily lived experiences of the Minangkabau who moved there, but also rendered the challenges of modernity more acute. How could Muslims continue adhering to their faith while navigating through government schools, colonial coffee warehouses, and a social world largely turned upside down? The old, rural institutions of Sufi Islam increasingly struggled to answer these questions.

Given the mounting upheaval and fluidity of urban life in West Sumatra, it is not surprising that by the time young Abdullah Ahmad made his voyage to Mecca in 1895, he would prove receptive to the modernizing message of reform espoused by men like Tahir.¹⁴⁵ According to written and oral historical accounts, the first encounter between these two men came in 1897, through the introduction of Tahir's cousin, Shaykh Ahmad Khatib, immediately following Tahir's return to the Hijaz from a four year stint in Cairo.¹⁴⁶ Over the course of the next two

¹⁴⁴ Young, *Islamic Peasants and the State*, 96.

¹⁴⁵ Amalsip, "Hadji Abdoellah Ahmad: Seorang Oelama, Journalist, Politikoes dan Organisator di Minangkabau," *Pandji Islam* 6/2, 6/3, 6/4 (January 9, 16, 23, 1939).

¹⁴⁶ Zakariya, "Islamic Reform in Malaya," 54-55.

years, Tahir and Abdullah forged a close and fruitful friendship that would endure well beyond their time in the Middle East. After both men returned to the Malay-Indonesian world in 1897, Tahir to Malaya and Ahmad back to his native West Sumatra, the two continued to visit one another and exchange correspondence for decades afterward.¹⁴⁷ This relationship likely served as a critical bridge between the reformist streams of the Middle East, Malaya, and West Sumatra.

Although we lack specific information about the time these two men spent together, whether in the Middle East or Southeast Asia, we do know that Abdullah began to disseminate many of the same ideas espoused by Tahir upon his return to West Sumatra. In 1899 when Abdullah returned to his hometown of Padang Panjang and began work as a teacher, he acquired a reputation as a forceful scourge of the Sufi *tariqa*, condemning many of their practices as unlawful innovations, or *bid'a*. Over the course of the next decade, Ahmad would travel across the breadth of his home region to spread this particular message of Tahir's and to deliver a series of *tabligh*, or public sermons.¹⁴⁸ In these sermons, he denounced the *tariqa* for permitting the impermissible, saving special scorn for such practices as grave worship, standing during ritual celebrations of the Prophet's birthday (*maulid* festivals),¹⁴⁹ and the contemplative remembrances (*dhikr*) that were supposed to bring the believer closer to God—all deemed to be *bid'a*. So scathing were his castigations of traditional Minangkabau Islam that, in some quarters, he earned the epithet of being a "Wahhabi."¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁷ Noer, *Modernist Muslim Movement*, 34-35, 38..

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 38.

¹⁴⁹ The particular theological critique here was that Muslims conflated Muhammad with God and that Muhammad had in fact enjoined people to only rise for God and not himself. See Nico Kaptein, "The Berdiri Mawlid Issue among Indonesian Muslims in the Period from Circa 1875 to 1930," *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land-, en Volkenkunde* 149, no. 1 (1993): 134.

¹⁵⁰ "Kaoem Moeda di Minangkabau III," *Pandji Islam*, February 17, 1941.

Beyond his criticisms Ahmad's message also mirrored that of his friend Tahir in its inclusion of a positive, prescriptive message that he saw as central to the uplift not only of individual Muslims, but also of the entire Islamic community in an age of Empire. In particular, he implored his co-religionists to embrace the attested practices of the "pious ancestors" included in the *hadith* and Qur'an; in other words, to become *salafiyyah*. Specifically, believers needed to take responsibility for their own religious rectitude by casting off their unthinking devotion to canonical interpretations of Islamic law, by questioning the teachings of traditional teachers, and by engaging with the Qur'an directly through their own analogical reasoning, *ijtihad*. Ahmad, like Tahir, believed that the neglect of such core responsibilities of religious duty explained much about the parlous social condition of the Minangkabau, attributing colonialism to his people's own moral failings as Muslims. Only by performing the tasks outlined above, as well as by embracing the modern, scientific practices ignored by the old purveyors of religion, Ahmad believed, could Muslim Minangkabau redeem their moral community and the humiliation of rule by the *kafir* Dutch.

After almost seven years of teaching in his hometown, Ahmad re-located to West Sumatra's burgeoning coastal metropolis of Padang and immersed himself in a decade of frenetic religious activism. The ostensible reason that Abdullah moved to Padang, which lay outside the traditional heartlands of Minangkabau culture in the coastal *rantau*, was to serve as the replacement for his late uncle in a teaching position.¹⁵¹ This alone might not seem to distinguish him from earlier Muslims who moved from the interior to Padang. That very same year, Abdullah also did something else in this city: he became the principal West Sumatran distributor for Tahir's newspaper, *Al-Imam*, launching what would become a long and varied career as a

¹⁵¹ Noer, 38.

distributor, editor, and journalist working in the service of religious reform. Over the course of the next decade, Abdullah would help to transform Padang, once a city of little consequence to the Muslim life of the highland interior, into a formidable center of Islamic modernism.¹⁵²

As a relatively cosmopolitan and open port city, Padang offered many of the same advantages to a fledgling reformist movement that Singapore offered to Tahir and his followers. Much as Singapore lay beyond the grasp of obstreperous religious authorities in the kingdoms of the Malay Peninsula, Padang rested at a significant physical and social remove from the Sufi *tariqa* networks, thereby furnishing a base of operations relatively immune from traditionalist meddling. Likewise, Padang's position as a transnational hub of communication and transportation ensured a lively interchange of ideas and people similar to that of Singapore. Just as the harbor funneled a steady stream of *hajjis* on their journey to Mecca via Singapore, telegraph lines and printing presses transmitted new idea from the outside world in, thus transforming Padang into a key interface between the Muslim society of the interior and modernizing trends abroad. Connected to this human and intellectual mobility was a notable amount of ethnic diversity in the city. Although it did not rival the Straits Settlement port city in terms of sheer ethnic and religious diversity, Padang nonetheless was home to substantial Chinese, European, and South Asian communities that played an outsized role in the intellectual and commercial life of the city. While the presence of such communities did not necessarily translate into harmonious inter-confessional mingling, it did contribute to a lively debate in ideas and underscore the necessity of reform if Muslims hoped to reassert control over their own

¹⁵² Taufik Abdullah, *Schools and Politics: The Kaum Muda Movement in West Sumatra, 1927-1933* (Ithaca: Cornell Southeast Asia Program Publications, 1971; reprint, Singapore: Equinox Publishing, 2009), 44. (page citations are to the reprint edition).

destiny in the colonial age.¹⁵³ In sum, much as had been the case with Singapore, all of the factors outlined above combined to making Padang an exceptionally yeasty environment for the development of Islamic reform.

While cultural, intellectual, and ethnic fluidity undeniably constituted important background factors in Ahmad's decision to move Padang, the raw economic might of the city likely played an even more direct role. If the young *alim* hoped to effectively distribute *Al-Imam* and disseminate the ideas of Tahir, Rashid Rida, and Muhammad Abduh, he needed to find an audience who could afford to buy such a journal. From the very outset, then, Ahmad did not limit himself to the work of advocacy or preaching; he tapped into his own familial expertise in commerce and began forging contacts and networks in the growing Muslim merchant community of the city. He struck an especially close friendship with another active and prosperous merchant, the shipping agent Abdullah Baso Bandaro, and together they established the Entrepreneurs' League (*Sarekat Usaha*). Conceived as a mutual assistance society to help protect Muslim commercial interests against Chinese and Dutch preeminence, speaking again to the competitive dynamics of cosmopolitanism, the League also began to host cultural and religious events. As a result, the League provided a convenient forum for the release of periodicals like *Al-Imam*. This entrepreneurial mutual aid society also began to pool funds for other religious, educational, and cultural activities, among them would be several new ventures of Abdullah Ahmad.¹⁵⁴

Drawing from the resources of the Entrepreneurs League, Ahmad launched two particular projects of consequence for the reformist history of West Sumatra: the Adabijah School and the

¹⁵³ Freek Colombijn, *Patches of Padang: The History of an Indonesian Town in the Twentieth Century and the Use of Urban Space* (Leiden: Research School CNWS, 1994), 68-69.

¹⁵⁴ Kahin, *Rebellion and Integration*, 44.

Al-Munir newspaper. After his mentor, Tahir Jalal al-Din, took him to visit the Madrasah Al-Iqbal during a trip to Singapore in 1908, Ahmad resolved to replicate Al-Iqbal in West Sumatra and merge the principles of modern education with Islamic learning. One year later, in 1909, Ahmad opened the Adabijah School in Padang to a class of twenty pupils from merchant families.¹⁵⁵ Above all else, the school sought to break from the tradition of *surau* schools by emulating the pedagogical techniques of the Dutch Hollands Inlandse School (HIS) and emphasizing the importance of rational inquiry, while still retaining critical courses in the study of the Qur'an and religion.¹⁵⁶ Among other things, the school was the first to replace the traditional circles of the *surau* with hierarchical grades based on age, desks, chairs, and printed textbooks in an Islamic setting. The first formal textbook, *Path to Heaven*, also placed a heavy stress on accumulating information through empirical reasoning i.e. the five senses and external news.¹⁵⁷ In sum, the Adabijah school essentially incarnated the reformist ethos espoused by Rida, Abduh, Tahir, and others.

Two years later in 1911 Ahmad undertook his second major initiative: publication of the groundbreaking *Al-Munir* newspaper. Drawing from the financial support of the Entrepreneurs' League and Abdullah Baso Bandaro, as well as from the expertise of a Chinese printing press that would publish it—a reflection of an important cosmopolitan context—Ahmad endeavored to turn his new journal into the principal mouthpiece of religious reformism in West Sumatra.¹⁵⁸ Based out of Padang city, Ahmad published in Arabic script (Jawi) and modeled *Al-Munir* on the template of his mentor Tahir's newspaper, *Al-Imam*, often borrowing stories, columns, and

¹⁵⁵ Noer, *Modernist Muslim Movement*, 43.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Hadler, *Muslims and Matriarchs*, 101-2.

¹⁵⁸ Kahin, *Rebellion to Integration*, 44; Hadler, *Muslims and Matriarchs*, 101.

formats directly from the Singapore journal. As with its Straits Settlement counterpart, *Al-Munir* published a wide range of material under the editorial supervision of Ahmad, among them subjects such as theology, self-help, question and answer columns, and Islamic law. Such self-help and Q&A features, in turn, provided tangible opportunities for readers to actively engage the Qur'an and other canonical texts, to employ reason (*ijtihad*) in deciphering its meaning, and to cast off their devotion to the calcified judgments of old legal scholars (*taqlid*), all key reformist aims.¹⁵⁹ Much as was the case with *Al-Imam*, *Al-Munir* also lamented the parlous condition of the colonized Minangkabau people, blaming their plight on errant religious practices and an inability to adapt to the needs of modernity, or progress (*kemadjuan*).¹⁶⁰

To emphasize all these points, Ahmad also made sure to imbue *Al-Munir* with a cosmopolitan orientation and to stress events going on outside the confines of West Sumatra. *Al-Munir* was one of the first publications to introduce international reportage and a run-down of world affairs to a Minangkabau audience. Ahmad also made sure that the newspaper introduced the writings of Egyptian religious thinkers, most notable among them, Rashid Rida and Muhammad Abduh, to its readership.¹⁶¹ Perhaps reflecting his close relationship to Tahir, Ahmad enjoined his readers to turn to Cairo although few of them, himself included, had yet ventured there. In one particular revealing article, *Al-Munir* opined:

This is the beginning for us people of this place [Minangkabau] to try sending our children in the search for knowledge at that place [Cairo]. Indeed we all hope that they will increasingly serve as a model for the future children of our *bangsa*. And [we hope] that they will be a torch lighting the way for them and safely return bringing with the various seeds of knowledge which will lead the people of our *bangsa* on the straight path of religion.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁹ Noer, *Modernist Muslim Movement*, 96.

¹⁶⁰ Azra, "The Transmission of Al-Manar's Reformism," 154.

¹⁶¹ Jutta Bluhm, "A Preliminary Statement of the Dialogue Established between the Reform Magazine Al-Manar and the Malayo-Indonesian World," *Indonesian Circle* 32 (November 1983): 35; Michael Laffan, *Islamic Nationhood and Colonial Indonesia: The Umma below the Winds* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 172.

¹⁶² *Al Munir*, September 24, 1911; Quoted in Laffan, *Islamic Nationhood and Colonial Indonesia*, 138-9.

For Abdullah Ahmad and *al-Munir*, the international *umma* thus represented the path to religious redemption.

Al-Munir and the Adabijah School together constituted seminal events in West Sumatran history; however, in historical narratives, they also tend to contribute to a slightly misleading narrative about Islamic reform in the historical literature. *Al-Munir* and Adabijah, for example, fit very conveniently into a narrative structure of modernization favored by many historians. With his printing presses and printed textbooks, his celebrations of self-help and empirical reasoning, the worldly editor seemed at the forefront of yanking his co-religionists into the more secular stream of *kemadjuan*, or progress. In this narrative, moreover, the religious rhetoric of people like Ahmad often gets subsumed into this political teleology, as *ijtihad*, the critique of Sufi *tariqa*, and *bid'a* gets conflated with a general impulse toward modernization.¹⁶³

A third aspect of Ahmad's reform agenda reveals a more theologically particular and politically conservative aspect to reformism. For all of the interest Ahmad expressed in issues of world-historical significance like colonialism, progress, and modernity, he still nonetheless joined his mentor, Tahir, in devoting much, nay most, of his energy to the paramount goal of upholding religious orthopraxy. Along with his newspaper *al-Munir*, for instance, Ahmad used the very same printing press to publish bromides against seemingly obscure aspects of religious practice such as *berdiri mawlid*, wherein worshippers stand up during certain parts of the reading of Prophet Muhammad's biography. Ahmad devoted a whole one hundred page treatise to his practice, excoriating it as an unacceptable innovation (*bid'a*) which conflates Muhammad with

¹⁶³ To see a similar argument about the subsumption of theology into rubrics of politics, see Kaptein, "The Berdiri Mawlid Issue among Indonesian Muslims," 125.

Allah.¹⁶⁴ We can trace this preoccupation back to his mentor, Tahir Jalal al-Din, as Ahmad specifically wrote a question regarding *berdiri mawlid* that was published in *Al-Imam*. Similarly, Ahmad also expressed opinions elsewhere about the necessity of strictly adhering to Islamic law on the subject of marriage, including the proper period before a divorced woman could re-marry.¹⁶⁵

Along with this theological dimension, Ahmad also evinced little reticence about enlisting colonial support in his various religious campaigns against *bid'a* and *tariqa*. In fact, Ahmad successfully lobbied the Dutch colonial regime for his appointment to a state-sanctioned religious council for all of Sumatra.¹⁶⁶ In this capacity, Dutch rulers actually sought his advice on matters such as marriage and other aspects of correct orthopraxy, while at the same time investing him with a great deal of authority to impose his rulings on fellow co-religionists. Likewise, the colonial regime also abetted Ahmad in his various campaigns against the Sufi *tariqa*, whom they regarded with suspicion due to their role in a short-lived 1908 peasant revolt against Dutch authority. In sum, Ahmad emerged as a key functionary of the colonial state in the religious sphere.

Cooperation between Ahmad and the colonial regime on issues of theology also points to one inescapable underlying reality: the compatibility of Islamic reformism, or at least its earlier manifestations, with Dutch colonialism. Much as Tahir thrived under British tolerance in Singapore, Ahmad flourished most in an atmosphere like Padang permeated by Dutch colonialism and soon became known among colonial administrators as a stalwart supporter of the

¹⁶⁴ Abdullah Ahmad, *Muqaddima: Pendahuluan Notulen Rapat Memperkatakan Hukum Usali Dan Berdiri Mawlid* (Padang: De Volharding, 1919).

¹⁶⁵ Abdullah Ahmad to Religious Teacher at the Adabiah School, August 27, 1928, Entry 111, Inventaris 10: Collectie Hazeu, Godard Arend Johannes Hazeu (1879-1929), H1083, KITLV Library, Leiden, the Netherlands.

¹⁶⁶ Laffan, *Islamic Nationhood*, 168.

colonial regime. This cooperation makes sense on several levels; reliant on wealthy benefactors for his myriad of projects, not to mention being quite wealthy himself, Abdullah Ahmad and his peers had little interest in antagonizing the prevailing powers. Without the refuge of a cosmopolitan city and colonial support, it might have been less probable that Ahmad could withstand the counter-attacks of the Sufi *tariqa* and other traditionalist Muslim figures.

Furthermore, those very projects most cited as placing Ahmad and his type of reformism on the cutting edge of modernity—*Al-Munir* and the Adabijah School—was, in fact, openly supported by the colonial regime as in keeping with their own objectives for the uplift of West Sumatra. Far from being a fount of anti-colonial politics, Islamic reformism was in fact very much interwoven with the colonial economy, the colonial state, and colonial society, just as it had been since the collaborative bargain initially struck by the great grandfather of Ahmad's mentor, Tuanku nan Tua, more than a century earlier during the Padri War.

Conclusion

The symbiosis of empire and religious reform in a global regime of colonial cosmopolitanism, however, did not mean that the political interests of the regimes would remain aligned in perpetuity. Leaders like Abdullah Ahmad and Tahir Jalal al-Din perhaps came from the elite strata of indigenous Muslim society, a strata well situated to take advantage of growth in the colonial economy and to push a politically pliant brand of reformist. In the years ahead, Ahmad would expand upon his initial Adabijah venture to help launch an even more successful reformist experiment in Padang Panjang, the Sumatra Thawalib School. Soon, this institution would branch out across the hinterlands, seeping into every corner of West Sumatra. The modernizing ideas first propagated by affluent merchants would hold a different resonance

for people lower down in the demi-monde of highland towns and rural villages as they would provoke a call for rights and dignities that the colonial regime was not willing to provide.

Eventually, the students at these schools would turn against their teachers like Abdullah Ahmad, calling for communism and nationalism. As we shall see in later chapters, this new direction for reformism, rather than making West Sumatra a hotbed of resistance or violence, would make it a key pillar of the Indonesian nation, and the successor to the Dutch colonial state.

Chapter 6

Reconfiguring Islamic Cosmopolitanism: Zamboanga in the Colonial Sulu World

On 14 August 1927, the preponderance of Indonesian and Malay students in residence at Cairo gathered near al-Azhar Mosque to commemorate a signal event: the second anniversary of the founding of the *Seruan Azhar*, the journal of the Welfare Association of “Jawa” Students at the University of Al-Azhar. Founded in October 1925 by a Minangkabau, Djanan Thaib, *Seruan Azhar* brought together and acted as the collective mouthpiece for a diverse range of Southeast Asians from Java, Sumatra, the Malay Peninsula, and Siam. By assembling this varied group, *Seruan Azhar* began to crystallize a nascent sense of Muslim community that transcended the traditional boundary of village, region, or island, a sense of community that seemed suggestive of a broader unity across the full span of the Indo-Malay world. After celebrating the redemptive light of Islam and reciting passages from the *hadith*, the speakers at the anniversary party explicitly touted this overarching commonality. One speaker cited the oneness of Indonesia and Malaya, while another appealed to students from Siam to become more active in the newspaper. Amidst these encomiums and paeans to the unity of the Southeast Asian Muslims, or *Jawa*, one discordant, conspicuous absence emerged. Abdul Kahar Muzakhar, the secretary of the newspaper, rose to express his “regret...that there were no Filipino students here.”¹

The dearth of Filipino representation at the *Seruan Azhar* celebration is both cause and symbol of a more general occlusion of Midanaoan Muslims from the vibrant academic literature on Southeast Asian Islam in general, and Islamic reform in particular. While an ever proliferating corpus of scholarship covers the full spectrum of the Indonesian and Malaysian Islamic experience, tracing theologies, lived experiences, transnational connections, and political

¹ Quoted in William Roff, “Indonesian and Malay Students in Cairo in the 1920s,” *Indonesia* 9 (April 1970): 85.

valences, the extant literature on Mindanao, with only some exceptions, remains silent on these issues. The preponderance of studies aspiring to present a broad-gauge survey of Islam across the Malay-Indonesian World, of course, cannot escape mention of Mindanao, citing it as both the formidable eastern flank of the *umma* and as an integral component in regional religious networks. However, this presence almost always proves to be little more than an evanescent mirage, with the Southern Philippines receding from view behind the regional religious centers of Java, Sumatra, and the Malay Peninsula.

Simultaneously, scholars working on Mindanao have perhaps inadvertently exacerbated this occlusion by failing to engage with the broader Southeast Asian literature on Islam, instead privileging ethnicity over religion by focusing on territorially specific expressions of Tausug, Maranao, Maguindanao, and other types of Mindanaoan Muslim identity. Even those works that do move beyond territorially circumscribed frameworks to examine connections with the larger Southeast Asian world, such as James Warren's *Sulu Zone*, tend to emphasize the ways in which piracy, slavery, and trans-regional trade generated ethnic identity across the boundaries of what are today known as the Philippines, Indonesia, and Malaysia. Networks of Mindanaon Muslims *qua* Muslims, as religious students or scholars, Sufis or Saints, *hajjis* or reformers, rarely factor into historical or anthropological analyses. To the extent that that Islamic identity does enter into the equation, moreover, it usually does so in the binaries of domination and resistance, as a wellspring of rebellion either against colonial invaders or the post-colonial Philippine state. The fate of Mindanaon Islam, all too often, gets left to students of conflict and war.

Amidst the general exclusion it is possible to catch fleeting glimpses of the interconnectedness of Mindanao with the broader Southeast Asian and global Islamic World. As described in Chapter Three, the very first Sultan of Sulu and the person most responsible for the

spread of Islam to Mindanao in the fifteenth century, Sharif al-Hashim Sayyid Abu Bakr, traced his genealogy not to a small Philippine village, but to the Middle East and the Arab world.² In the centuries ahead, Mindanao would continue to figure into wider circuits of Islamic scholarship and religious devotion. In the eighteenth century at least one Mindanaoan *alim* travelled over two thousand kilometers to Aceh, then an important regional center of Islamic scholarship, and wrote an important jurisprudential treatise now deposited in the Indonesian National Library of Jakarta.³ Meanwhile people and texts from across distant lands continued to circulate through Mindanao in the centuries ahead, as Arab itinerants from Afghanistan taught local students and Qur'ans from as far afield as Dagestan in Central Asia passed through local mosques.⁴ By the middle of the twentieth century, *ulama* from Aceh, Borneo, and elsewhere played an integral role in the establishment of modern *madrasa*, while Filipino students finally began to take advantage of new scholarship opportunities to study where they had been hitherto absent: Al-Azhar University of Cairo.⁵

This tantalizing, albeit sparse and incomplete, record of Mindanaoan connections with the wider Islamic world, however, goes almost entirely silent in the Spanish and American colonial period. Extant historical literature on the colonial era, especially during American rule, dwells almost exclusively upon the military conflicts, rebellions, religious clashes, and other

² Cesar Adib Majul, *Muslims in the Philippines* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1973; reprint, Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1999), 61-63 (page citations are to the reprint edition). Engseng Ho asserts that Muslim Mindanao has had Hadhrami leadership dating back to the fifteenth century, presumably in reference to Abu Bakr. See Engseng Ho, "Empire through Diasporic Eyes: A View from the Other Boat," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 46, no. 2 (April 2004): 216

³ Midori Kawashima and Oman Fathurahman identify a Mindanaoan *alim*, Abd al-Majid al-Mindanawi, who travelled to Aceh and whose manuscript is now held at the National Library of Indonesia. See KAWASHIMA Midori and Oman Fathurahman, "Islamic Manuscripts of the Southern Philippines," *The Journal of Sophia Asian Studies* 29 (2011): 254.

⁴ Annabel Teh Gallop, "From Caucasia to Southeast Asia: Daghistani Qur'ans and the Islamic Manuscript Tradition In Brunei and the Southern Philippines," *Manuscripta Orientalia* 14, no. 1 (2008): 33-34, 43-52.

⁵ Thomas M. McKenna, "Saints, Scholars, and the Idealized Past in Philippine Muslim Separatism," *Pacific Review* 15, 2 (2002): 546-547.

trials and tribulation that appear to define the Mindanaoan past. Thomas M. McKenna, a distinguished anthropologist of the Southern Philippines, crystallizes the pervasive view that the violence of colonialism above all else served to detach Mindanao from the broader currents of the Islamic world, arguing that “the interference of Western colonizers in Southeast Asia ensured that Islam developed *in situ* in the Muslim Philippines with relatively little influence from distant Islamic centres.”⁶ In essence, American rule irreparably separated and isolated Mindanaons from their co-religionists across the world—an assessment compatible with the conspicuous dearth of Filipinos in places like Cairo in the 1920s. In lieu of Islamic connections, historians have instead devoted most of their time to chronicling the processes by which American colonialism oriented Mindanaons not west toward the Indian Ocean and the Middle East, but north to Manila and the emerging Philippine nation-state.⁷

While Mindanaons likely did not experience the same intensity of contact with the wider Islamic world as did other places, this attenuated bond nonetheless raises a host of questions that remain unanswered by historians. If what Thomas McKenna said is true, that “Western colonizers ensured that Islam developed...in the Muslim Philippines with relatively little influence from distant Islamic centres,” where exactly did Spanish and American conquest rupture such nascent connections? It is important for historians to attempt to specify how precisely colonialism might have interrupted or inhibited flows between Mindanao, neighboring

⁶ McKenna, “Saints, Scholars, and the Idealized Past in Philippine Muslim Separatism,” *Pacific Review* 15, no. 2 (2002): 546.

⁷ The best examination of Mindanao’s place in the larger Patricio Abinales, see Patricio Abinales’s description of Maguindanao as a Southeast Asian society and the contraction of the Mindanao Muslim World, 47–48, 55–60; also, see Shinzo Hayase, *Mindanao Ethnohistory beyond Nations: Maguindanao, Sangir, and Bagobo Societies in East Maritime Southeast Asia* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2007): 16–38; also, see James Warren’s classic formulation of a trans-regional, transnational Sulu Zone, James Warren, *The Sulu Zone 1768–1898: The Dynamics of External Trade, Slavery, and Ethnicity in the Transformation of a Southeast Asian Maritime State* (Manila: New Day Publishers, 1985). In spite of this plethora of excellent scholarship, however, a full examination of how colonial era Mindanao-Sulu fits the larger Islamic world.

portions of Borneo and Sulawesi, and more distant locales such as Sumatra, India, and the Arabian Peninsula—the following chapter on the legacy of military encounters in Sulu and Lanao will grapple with just this issue. There also is another type of question preempted by the narratives of colonial interruption. While there can be no denying the destructive dimensions of colonial control in Mindanao, is it perhaps possible that the imperial age also in some way re-produced, reconfigured, and reconstituted extant Muslim networks into new arrays and forms? Could the same technologies that powered war-making—print, steamships, and telegraphs—perhaps also have served to compress the seemingly insurmountably vast distances between Mindanao and the rest of the wider Muslim World? Chapter Three illustrated how the entanglement of Minangkabau Muslims from West Sumatra into colonial structures and global economic circuits served to link local Minangkabau communities to the wider world of Singapore, Mecca, and ultimately, Cairo. Why could not such a process develop in the Southern Philippines?

This chapter will examine the issue of colonialism and re-constituted Muslim networks by examining one of the principal colonial cities of Mindanao: the erstwhile capital of Zamboanga. As the foregoing chapter on West Sumatra demonstrated, much of the catalyst for the reconfiguration and reproduction of cosmopolitan Muslim networks can be traced back to urbanization, with places such as Padang and Padang Panjang comprising vital nodes in the circulation of Islamic reformist ideas from abroad. The extant literature on Mindanao rarely touches upon cities as an important part of the social landscape. A vast and sparsely populated region, most scholars have instead focused on the rural ancestral domains of various Muslim ethno-linguistic groupings of the Southern Philippines, including the Maguindanao, Maranao, Samal, and Tausug. Zamboanga City, by contrast, founded by Jesuits in 1635 and known as a

lonely, frequently besieged outpost of Spanish military influence, seemed to be little more than an alien colonial extrusion thrust upon Muslim Mindanao.

After its selection as the capital of the newly established American “Moroland” Province in 1903, however, Zamboanga growing position as an urban hub of administration, politics, and international trade began to attract a substantial inflow of Muslim residents. From a ramshackle Spanish garrison, Zamboanga City grew into the largest city of the entire Mindanao region, with its population soaring to 65,096 in 1918, and doubling yet again to 131,727 by 1939.⁸ Of these new inhabitants, a large proportion was Muslim, including some forty percent in 1939, making Zamboanga not merely the largest city of Mindanao, but also the largest Muslim city. This Islamic population, in turn, jostled with a motley assortment of American, Chinese, European, Japanese, and Catholic Filipinos who all converged on Zamboanga to take advantage of growing economic opportunities, prompting the writers of Cook’s Travel Guide to trumpet the city’s “cosmopolitan” character.⁹ Moreover, alongside this diversity, Cook’s also noted the propitious proximity of the city to the wider world of Muslim Southeast Asia, observing that it’s “position with respect to Borneo, Dutch East India, [and] the Malay Peninsula...make it of great importance.”¹⁰

Given the capital city’s role as a nascent urban frontier for Mindanaon Muslims, this chapter will reinterpret Zamboanga as an important arena for the reconfiguration and reconstitution of Philippine Islamic connections with the wider world during the period of US rule. In particular, it will argue that Zamboanga stood at the forefront of American efforts to

⁸ H. Valderossa, “Report of the Mayor of the City of Zamboanga to the Secretary of the Interior,” pg. 1, July 18, 1939, 1939 Annual Report of the Province of Zamboanga, Box 98, Part VII: Provincial Papers [Check Official Designation], Manuel L. Quezon Papers, Manila, Philippines.

⁹ “Cook’s Guide: The Department of Mindanao and Sulu,” n.d., Charles Cameron Papers, Xavier University Library, Cagayan de Oro, Mindanao, Philippines.

¹⁰ Ibid.

articulate the people of Mindanao into overlapping networks of international trade, religious exchange, and globalized colonial modernity. However, where similar circumstances enabled the advent of a thriving, indigenous movement of religious reform in Padang and West Sumatra in the Netherlands East Indies, no such movement ever took root in Zamboanga during the American period. Instead, this chapter will argue that economic underdevelopment, bureaucratic exclusion, and a process of marginalization in the larger Philippine national sphere that might be called “minoritization,” all served to stymie the re-constitution of ties with the global *umma*, thereby inhibiting the development of a viable reformist movement in the colonial capital. This absence, while perhaps unnoticed and unmissed by colonial authorities, would ultimately hold grave implications for the future of Mindanao.

Zamboanga during the Spanish Period

When US troops arrived on the shores of Zamboanga in 1899, the city had already established itself as the political, military, and administrative epicenter of colonial rule in the Southern Philippines. Starting in 1635 with the construction of a formidable naval installation known as Fort del Pilar, the Spanish developed Zamboanga over the succeeding centuries into a relatively impregnable stronghold amidst an island that otherwise, by and large, eluded their grasp. Within the safe confines of Zamboanga, Spanish authorities erected governmental buildings, gave wide latitude to the Catholic Church, and encouraged a modicum of small-scale commerce—thus creating the closest simulacra of a normally-functioning colonial city to be found in the Mindanao region.¹¹ From within the coral walls of Fort del Pilar, military officials launched countless naval expeditions over the course of centuries to subdue the independent

¹¹ Malcampo, *History of Zamboanga*, x.

Muslim kingdoms of Sulu in the neighboring Sulu archipelago and Maguindanao in the central part of Mindanao island, a task they only achieved during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. In Zamboanga alone, moreover, Spanish authorities managed to secure a stable peace with local Muslims rulers, thus providing the foundation for peace and order in the city.¹² Given this history, it is little wonder that Americans turned to Zamboanga as the site for their own provincial capital in 1903.

In spite of its comparative stability as a redoubt of colonial authority in an otherwise turbulent region, Zamboanga still never amounted to much more than an overgrown garrison town during the Spanish period and exhibited little indication of economic potential. Surrounded by a hostile Muslim population and mired in an almost perpetual state of siege, Spanish authorities in Manila refrained from investing serious resources in the remote Zamboanga outpost. Mercantilist policies discouraged trade with the vibrant ports of the British-controlled Straits Settlement, Malayan Peninsula, and North Borneo region. As a result, the locus of economic activity in the region remained beyond the grasp of Spanish authorities in Sulu and Maguindanao.

The indigenous Sulu Sultanate just to the south vastly surpassed Zamboanga in terms of economic appeal and began to occupy an important niche in the booming international trade between British India and China during the latter half of the eighteenth century. Enterprising British and American merchants travelled to the capital of Sulu, Jolo city, to exchange cheap manufactures, cotton, opium, textiles, gunpowder and other arms in return for marine-jungle products, spices, and handicrafts much sought after in the Chinese market.¹³ These exchanges,

¹² Ibid.

¹³ James Warren, *The Sulu Zone 1768-1898: The Dynamics of External Trade, Slavery, and Ethnicity in the Transformation of a Southeast Asian Maritime State* (Manila: New Day Publishers, 1985), 42-3.

according to the prominent historian James Warren, yielded returns in excess of 100 to 200 percent over initial investment.¹⁴ Moreover, Spanish authorities compounded the growing irrelevance of Zamboanga by signing a trade agreement directly with the Sulu Sultanate in 1773. Tacitly acknowledging their inability to subjugate Jolo and their fear of being excluded from the profitable Sulu trade, Spanish officials in Manila consented to the direct exchange of basic commodities such as rice and sugar with Sulu in return for local sea and jungle products such as *tripang* that could be sold at a profit in China.¹⁵ Zamboanga, by contrast, under siege much of the time and severed from the interior forests and seas that could produce commodities of worth in China, was shunted to the margins of the burgeoning “Sulu Zone” economy.

By the late nineteenth century the commercial fortunes of Zamboanga started to improve. No longer willing to countenance the threat to its sovereignty posed by the growing flow of weapons from British Singapore to Jolo, Spanish authorities launched several major naval assaults on the Sulu Sultanate and finally succeeded in subjugating it in 1876. With the Tausug territories under effective colonial control for the first time, Manila attempted to begin the process of channeling the lucrative regional trade away from indigenous Jolo to the local Spanish capital. In 1885, the Spanish decided to create an office of Marine Health and a Customs Office in Zamboanga to facilitate what they expected to be an increase in trade through the city.¹⁶ These efforts began to reap dividends for Zamboanga by the end of century. Furthermore, the possibility of economic growth also occasioned an expansion of Spanish colonial institutions beyond those directly linked to trade, including the formation of new charitable Catholic organizations and a Bureau of Public Instruction.¹⁷ With colonial control over its hinterlands

¹⁴ Ibid., 45.

¹⁵ Ibid., 53-56.

¹⁶ Malcampo, *History of Zamboanga*, 104.

¹⁷ Ibid., 103.

firmly established for the first time, Zamboanga appeared poised to start tapping its hitherto unrealized economic potential.

The arrival of the American regime and Zamboanga as cosmopolitan colonial showcase

In spite of some progress during the late Spanish period, the arrival of US troops on Mindanao Island in 1899 did not immediately appear to augur well for the prosperity or growth of Zamboanga. The troubled experience of their Spanish predecessors in the region and the fearsome reputation of the Mindanaoan Muslims, known as the Moros, prompted American officials to establish a special administrative jurisdiction under the direct authority of the US Army. This jurisdiction, christened the “Moro Province,” prevailed from 1903 through 1913, placed all responsible positions into the hands of military officers, and circumscribed the participation of any civil officials. The Moro Province wielded centralized, almost untrammelled power over its territories, or as Patricio N. Abinales memorably referred to it, a veritable “regime within a regime.”¹⁸ Moreover, as an expressly military organization, the most important task of the Moroland Province, unsurprisingly, was the subjugation of the many unruly areas of the region’s hinterlands. Indeed, the preponderance of Moro Province expenditures flowed into various military campaigns and expeditions. Civilian preoccupations such as economic development, urbanization, and good government might appear to constitute second-order priorities, objectives that even if desired, surely lied well beyond the competencies and skill set of the many lower ranked officers filling the Moro Province administration. In this environment, Zamboanga city might have been expected to languish and stagnate.

¹⁸ Patricio Abinales, *Making Mindanao: Cotabato and Davao in the Formation of the Philippine Nation-State* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2000), 18-19.

While perhaps most concerned with the gritty details of combat and conquest, the military officers in charge of Moro Province also nursed aspirations that reached far beyond that of mere military action; they also sought to bring with them nothing less than civilization itself. Animated by the reformist zeal of the Progressive movement, the first governor of Moro Province, Major General Leonard Wood (r. 1903-1906), was especially aggressive about trying to elevate the condition of his supposedly benighted indigenous charges.¹⁹ Among other things, Governor Wood invested a great deal of effort in education, infrastructure, economic development, and other activities that could accomplish this uplift. As in the United States itself, Wood also sought to overcome what he perceived as the petty discords of ethnic or religious affiliation and to forge various communities into a singular, “united” people. In the case of Moro Province, this meant bridging the divide between the Muslim, Christian, and Animist groups that populated the Southern Philippines. Only by doing pursuing such objectives, Wood believed, could the Moro Province truly claim its place in the circle of modernity.

Given this modernizing zeal, it is then not surprising that colonial attention would often turn away from jungle battlefields and isolated rural expanses to the one place already firmly under their grasp: the colonial capital of Zamboanga. While its origins perhaps rested in Catholic proselytism and Spanish conquest, Zamboanga played a seminal role in the history of Mindanao, emerging as the embodiment of urban aspirations and ambitions in the southern Philippines during the US colonial era. Even as much of the island remained sparsely inhabited, rural, and dominated by ancestral *datu* rulers, American rulers sought to transform Zamboanga into a shining example of what Mindanao could become, a model of economic growth, progress, and

¹⁹ Patricio Abinales, “Progressive-Machine Conflict in Early Twentieth Century U.S. Politics and Colonial-State Building in the Philippines,” *The American Colonial State in the Philippines: Global Perspectives*, ed. Julian Go and Anne L. Foster (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 166-167.

modernity. Zamboanga, in the imagination of leading US military figures, would develop into a formidable port city that could one day rival Manila or even Singapore in the British Straits Settlement, exporting the much sought-after products of the Mindanao seas and Filipino interior to the distant corners of the globe. Commerce, in turn, would thrive, enriching American merchants and locals alike. In a 1906 address commemorating the American arrival seven years earlier, the Zamboanga inspector-general, Major John Nichols, gave voice to this vision and commended the progress already made, singing the praises of “a prosperous community, a clean and beautiful city with sixteen miles of metalled roads and bridged streams, highways for the surrounding country.”²⁰ Although much of this American vision would in the end remain unrealized, with Davao eclipsing Zamboanga as the primary port and commercial engine of the region by the end of the colonial period, the provincial capital did continue to grow.

The most concrete embodiment of US ambitions came in the form of audacious infrastructure and construction plans in the engineering of a capital city befitting the potential glory of Mindanao. During the very first year of US administration, the public works of Zamboanga took precedence over all non-military projects, with the Moro Province Engineer C.F. Vance noting that “the appropriations for the first four years were chiefly devoted to the District of Zamboanga.”²¹ US officials, among other tasks, “engaged in reconstructing the provincial building at Zamboanga, as well as the streets of the town, building a provincial jail, repairing wharves, constructing schoolhouses, and repairing district and municipal buildings at the principal towns of the province.”²² Among these projects, roads and schools occupied a

²⁰ “Copy of an Address by Major Nicholks, Inspector-General, at Zamboanga, Mindanao, November 16, (Occupation Day) 1906,” Tasker Bliss Papers, Folder 66 (1907 July 12-August 14), Tasker Bliss Papers, Library of Congress Manuscript Division, Washington, D.C.

²¹ C.F. Vance, “Public Works of the Moro Province,” *Mindanao Herald: Historical and Industrial Number Commemorating a Decennium of American Occupation of the Land of the Farthest East and Nearest West*, February 3, 1909, 31.

²² Wood, *Annual Report of the Governor of the Moro Province: September 1, 1903 to August 31, 1904*, 14-15.

particular prominent place, with American officials working feverishly to improve the transport network both within Zamboanga city proper and from Zamboanga to smaller villages and agricultural settlements in its immediate hinterlands. Major General Leonard Wood, meanwhile, asserted that “the schools in the town of Zamboanga have been particularly successful and, everything considered, are really excellent.”²³ Last but not least, the Zamboanga government also planned to sink a considerable amount of money into repairing the city wharf, deepening its slips for boats, and otherwise preparing it for the anticipated rise in international shipping.

Beyond the realm of prosperity, Zamboanga City also furnished a vessel for another American ambition: the fusion of Mindanao’s diverse Christians, Muslims, and animist populations into a singular “Moroland” community. In a 1907 proration at the Zamboanga Fair, the governor of Moroland, General Tasker Bliss, stated the following aspiration:

The only hope of peace and order in this province is the gradual welding together of its various races into one homogenous body under a common civilization, and that this can be done only under the guiding hand of a nation strong enough and just and wise enough to now impose upon all that in the remote future and intelligent majority of all will impose its own free will.²⁴

Zamboanga city seemed to offer a promising venue for the realization of such an ambition.

While much of the vast tracts of Mindanao land were dominated by a single group, whether Muslims, Christians, or Pagans, in Zamboanga these communities jostled against one another in close proximity. Even if Catholics controlled many of the most important political and commercial institutions, Muslims still inhabited city neighborhoods like Rio Hondo and immediate ex-urban communities like Taluksangay only a few kilometers removed from downtown. Zamboanga remained the only region evenly balanced between Muslims and Christians for much of the colonial period. In 1916 the Zamboanga governor reported a relatively

²³ Wood, *Annual Report of the Governor of the Moro Province: September 1, 1903 to August 31, 1904*, 14.

²⁴ Tasker Bliss, “Speech on Occasion of 1st Annual Fair of Zamboanga,” n.d., Folder19 (1907 February 16-19), Tasker Bliss Papers, LC Mss Div, Washington, D.C.

even split of 58,000 Christians and 45,000 Muslims in the Province,²⁵ and this ratio persisted until 1939, when the Zamboanga mayor reported the share of non-Christians in his city at about forty percent.²⁶ Of course, it is important to be cautious about imputing the vaguely utopic connotations of “cosmopolitanism” to this diversity. US officials like Tasker Bliss did not envision the diversity of Zamboanga in terms of co-equal communities, but instead hoped to impart to Zamboanga the “leaven of Christian civilization.” In spite of obvious power imbalances and the coercive dimension underlying the moniker of “cosmopolitanism,” the significance of Zamboanga as the first example of intimate intermixing between the communities of Mindanao should be not be underestimated.²⁷

Zamboanga as international trading node

While US officials valued Zamboanga for its handsome infrastructure, its diverse population, and more broadly, as the very physical embodiment of colonial ambitions, is also consistently envisioned this capital city as something more than a symbolically resonant showcase. US officials also hoped to transform Zamboanga from an administrative center into a key node for international shipping and a veritable commercial powerhouse that could, in turn, catalyze economic development throughout the Mindanao region. As early as 1904, the first governor of the US Moro Province, Major General Leonard Wood, explained the role Zamboanga would serve as the principal commercial interface between the interior of Mindanao and international markets:

The Provincial government is at present engaged in correspondence with various steamship companies looking to the subsidizing of several small steamers to make trips about the island of Mindanao, from Cateel, on the east coast, to Iligan, on the west, including the Sulu Archipelago, for the purpose of picking up jungle produce, hemp, timber, and plantation products and bringing them to Zamboanga for shipment to

²⁵ F.W. Carpenter, “1916 Report of the Department of Mindanao and Sulu,” 27.

²⁶ Valderossa, “Report of the Mayor of the City of Zamboanga,” 8.

²⁷ Tasker Bliss, “Speech on Occasion of 1st Annual Fair of Zamboanga.”

foreign ports, and also for the purpose of distributing supplies from Zamboanga to the various outlying places.²⁸

The US did not simply seek to displace the old Sulu Zone trade from Jolo to Zamboanga, but also to stimulate a revamped system of “plantation” agriculture in which “an influx of such people as built up the West” would provide “an example” to natives.²⁹ These American settlers, in turn, would promote the cultivation of commodities such as hemp, abaca, copra and coconut among the indigenous inhabitants of Mindanao.³⁰ The logistical center of this American settler population would, of course, be the provincial capital. Zamboanga, in sum, would thus not only function as the entrepot for a slightly reconfigured indigenous trade, but as a catalyst for the wholesale transformation of the Mindanao agricultural economy.

For a little while the economic reality of Zamboanga lagged well behind these grandiose ambitions. While still referred to as “the principal port” of the Southern Philippines, for instance, colonial authorities only funded modest repairs of the city wharf and as late as 1910, lacked suitable deep-water landing slips for “the largest ships afloat.”³¹ In 1904, the Governor-General of the Moro Province, Major-General Leonard Wood, acknowledged the lack of demand for freighter service made private shipping lines prohibitively expensive and necessitated the use of a publicly-funded “coast-guard line.”³² Wood’s successor, Major-General Tasker Bliss, expressed similar frustration at the lack of direct international shipping, noting that subsidized inter-Philippine Island shipping diverted a great deal of commerce through Manila and thus deprived the Moro Province in Zamboanga of lucrative customs receipts. In a reply to Bliss,

²⁸ Leonard Wood, *Annual Report of the Governor of the Moro Province: September 1, 1903, to August 31, 1904* (Washington: Bureau of Insular Affairs, 1904), 24.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 20.

³⁰ Gowing, *Mandate in Moroland*, x.

³¹ “The Port of Zamboanga,” *Mindanao Herald: Historical and Industrial Number Commemorating a Decennium of American Occupation of the Land of the Farthest East and Nearest West*, February 3, 1909, 64.

³² Wood, *Annual Report of the Governor of the Moro Province: September 1, 1903 to August 31, 1904*, 24.

Leonard Wood averred that “the only way to beat the Manila crowd is to sacrifice other things and establish a first-class wharf and a bonded warehouse at Zamboanga.”³³ Further compounding the commercial woes of Zamboanga, abaca production began to flourish in the previously underpopulated regions of Southern Mindanao, aiding the development of Davao city as an alternative shipping destination.³⁴ The economy of Moroland’s capital, thus, appeared to languish behind colonial visions of the city as a commercial powerhouse.

In spite of this initial sluggishness, US authorities did not abandon their visions of Zamboanga and the commercial fortunes of the city revived within a few years. The city emerged by 1906 as the foremost port town in the entire Philippine Islands in terms of customs receipts recorded.³⁵ Moreover, the long-anticipated renovation of the city’s port in 1911, which according to the *Mindanao Herald* newspaper, had been expanded “at a cost of P65,000” and as a result possessed “a sufficient depth of water alongside to accommodate any of the ships coming here regularly,” augured well for continued growth in international trade.³⁶ While the writers of the *Mindanao Herald* did trumpet “the large increase in exports...to coastwise ports (principally Manila and Cebu), they sounded especially heartened by the development of international trade. Of the “277 consignments of Philippine products” sent from “the port of Zamboanga to foreign ports, the greatest part...went to Singapore,” according to the newspaper, and this included a substantial shipment of commodities such as copra, hemp, and gutta percha.³⁷ The capital of the Moro Province seemed on the precipice of capitalizing, in the words of the

³³ Leonard Wood to Tasker Bliss, April 20, 1907, Folder 63 (March 30, 1907, to April 27, 1907), Tasker Bliss Papers, Library of Congress Manuscript Division, Washington, D.C.

³⁴ Patricio Abinales, *Making Mindanao*.

³⁵ Abinales, *Making Mindanao*, 20.

³⁶ “Customs Collector’s Report Shows Encouraging Conditions,” *The Mindanao Herald*, August 3, 1912.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

Cook's Travel Guide, on its "position with respect to Borneo, Dutch East India, the Malay Peninsula," and the rest of the Southeast Asian maritime world.³⁸

Irrespective of actual economic conditions, the fact that Zamboanga played such a central role in the imaginings of US colonial officials meant that the city would continue to exert an important influence on the Moroland Province. For much of the US period, the prominence of Zamboanga attracted a relatively large number of American and Christian Filipino merchants, generated a substantial number of jobs, and fostered a number of public-works projects. While far behind colonial hopes, Zamboanga captured a great deal of Mindanao's commercial activity and remained, at least for the first two decades of US rule, the undisputed hub of the island's political-economy. As such, Zamboanga would continue to function as the symbolic showcase of the American drive for economic progress and modernity.

The importance of Zamboanga begs the question: what impact, if any, did this city have upon the lives of Muslim Filipinos? The ancestral Muslim domains of Mindanao, whether that of the Maguindanao of the Pulangi River valley, the Maranao of the Lanao Lake area, or the Tausug of the Sulu Archipelago, could appear remote from the commercial and political preoccupations of the Moroland capital. Moro Muslim society during the US Colonial period remained, at its core, rural and agricultural in nature, with the typical peasant cultivator most concerned with the dual exigencies of meeting their subsistence requirements and paying dues to their ancestral *datu* chiefs.³⁹ The business enterprises of Zamboanga, owned by American and Christian Filipinos, did not appear very relevant to the daily lived experiences of most Muslims.

³⁸ "Cook's Guide: The Department of Mindanao and Sulu," n.d., folder C-63.5-074-80, Charles Cameron Papers, Xavier University Library, Cagayan de Oro, Mindanao, Philippines.

³⁹ For more on the role of the *datu* in Moro life, see Jeremy Beckett, "The Defiant and the Compliant: The Datus of Maguindanao under Colonial Rule," in Alfred W. McCoy and E.C. de Jesus eds., *Philippine Social History: Global Trade and Local Transformations*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1982), 396.

While this indigenous agricultural system did, in fact, support a thriving trading sector, most of this commerce did not pass through Zambaonga and seemed to inhabit an almost parallel universe. In a 1907 letter to the Philippine Governor General in Manila, Brigadier General Tasker Bliss summed up these parallel spheres of exchange:

There are two distinct classes of trade. One is that which is carried on by means of regular Steamship lines to meet the demands of Americans and foreigners generally, and for the better class of Filipinos, Chinos, etc., who live in such places as... Zamboanga. This trade is all under the eyes of the custom houses and gives us no trouble. The other class of trade is that which is carried on by the innumerable native boats to meet the demands of Moros and Pagans who have never bought their goods at the centers of commerce, but rely solely on what is brought to them by these native boats.⁴⁰

In other words, Moro goods traversed almost entirely autonomous networks of exchange, with products produced by slaves in the Mindanao interior carried by “swarms” of “thousands of native boats” to neighboring colonies such as British Borneo and the Dutch East Indies.⁴¹ Thus, while very much intertwined in the burgeoning system of global commerce, this Moro trading system still also managed to take advantage of indigenous networks to circumvent the authority of American customs inspectors in Zamboanga.

Vexed by this loss of custom revenue, it is no surprise that that US officials would seek to delegitimize indigenous trade as “smuggling” and to re-direct Muslim exchange toward “centers of commerce” like Zamboanga. Coercion and military deterrence constituted a significant part of the American efforts to combat this problem. As Governor Bliss noted in 1907, “nothing will protect the revenue except the establishment of an efficient cutter fleet that will cruise steadily for months on the outskirts of these Islands toward Borneo and the Celebes.”⁴² Only by actively patrolling the seas and interdicting native ships could American officials guarantee a cessation of unsanctioned trade. However, while “a rigid cutter service” and system of native patrol could

⁴⁰ Brigadier General Tasker Bliss (Governor of Moroland) to General James Smith (Governor General of the Philippine Islands), February 2, 1907, Folder 60 (February 19-30, 1907), Tasker Bliss Paper, LC.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Bliss to Smith, February 2, 1907.

deter “smuggling,” US officials also appreciated that if they were to succeed in incorporating Muslim Filipinos more fully into the structures of the colonial economy, they would also need to somehow draw them into the marketplaces of Zamboanga. They would need to devise a program that not only punished scofflaw traders, but could also impose colonial capitalist hegemony and re-fashion Muslims into dependable economic subjects. How could the colonial regime achieve such objectives?

Moro exchange, colonial fairs, and constitution of Zamboanga as a Muslim commercial hub

The most prominent example of the US campaign to entice Muslim Filipinos into the colonial economy and transnational circuits of commerce was the Moro Exchange, the first of which was established by Captain John Finley in Zamboanga City in 1904. Above all else, US officials envisioned the Exchange as a means to control the most minute aspects of Moro trade and, simultaneously, to incentivize their participation. In a 1907 letter explaining the concept behind Finley’s Moro Exchange, Tasker Bliss characterized Muslim Filipinos as a benighted group in need of defense against the predations of Chinese and Christian merchants. Only by concentrating all Muslim trade in the “Moro Exchanges” and by making sure that the Moro not be allowed “to sell his merchandise either on the streets or in the municipal market, nor must anybody except the Moro or non-Christian be permitted to sell in the Moro exchange.”⁴³ The Moro Exchange would thereby furnish a protected space of sorts, a venue “where the Moro can exhibit his wares and where he can receive information from a proper official as to what is a fair price for him to demand.”⁴⁴ Along with this supposedly benevolent expertise, moreover, Bliss

⁴³ Brigadier General Tasker Bliss to Major A.B. Foster, July 30, 1907, Folder 60 (January 19-February 10), Tasker Bliss, Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Washington, D.C.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

also betrayed the determination of American administrators to integrate Muslims into the emerging cash economy. “The second thing which makes the Moro exchange a success is to prohibit any sale except for cash,” explained Bliss, as “this prevents any Moro from being cheated by exchange of commodities.”⁴⁵ Thus, Captain Finley in turn believed that the “Exchange at Zamboanga” would serve as a means of “rebuilding the social fabric of the Moro people and directing their energies in the way of earning an honest living.”⁴⁶ In other words, the Moro exchange would discipline Muslim Filipinos into modern economic subjects.

In addition to describing these logistics, Bliss clearly expresses his belief that the Moro Exchange of Zamboanga would not only serve as a local market for Muslims in the immediate vicinity of the city, but also as a key point of articulation between the Mindanao hinterlands and international capitalist networks. In his letter celebrating the virtues of the Moro Exchange enterprise, for instance, Brigadier General Tasker Bliss observed the necessity of facilities for cooking and sleeping at the market site. Whereas “formerly, in Zamboanga, the Moro who came from a long distance with his goods...had to sell before nightfall at whatever prices he could get,” with the inclusion of accommodation facilities, Bliss noted, “now, if he [a Muslim Filipino] is told by the proper official that there is a good market for his wares at a certain price, he can stay at the exchange, where he can be protected from the Chinos and others, until he effects his sale.”⁴⁷ As Muslim traders now able could stay the night, American officials hoped that the Moro Exchange could allow Zamboanga City to emerge as a focal point in the Muslim commerce of the entire Mindanao region.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ John P. Finley, “Rules, Regulations, Instructions, Reports and Decisions on the Organization and Management of the Moro Exchange System of the District of Zamboanga, Moro Province, P.I., 1904 to 1909, Mindanao and Sulu, P.O.--”reports, etc., 1908-1912”, volume 7, Dean Worcester Papers, University of Michigan Special collections, Ann Arbor, MI.

⁴⁷ Bliss to Foster, July 30, 1907.

With the opening of the Zamboanga Moro Exchange, Muslims from across the Southern Philippines took up the invitation to visit the market in the Moroland capital, and soon began clamoring for smaller exchanges in their own community. Maguindanao, Maranao, and Tausug visitors all made their way to the Zamboanga exchange. As General Bliss reported in 1907, Muslims transacted business at the Zamboanga fair valued at some 500,000 pesos.⁴⁸ Impressed by what they saw, these visitors also began to petition colonial authorities for the establishment of smaller markets in their own communities, and sure enough, by 1908 the number of Moro Exchanges proliferated to a remarkable twenty-five.⁴⁹ The Zamboanga Moro Exchange thus became the center of an ever-expanding web of markets penetrating deeper into the hinterlands of Muslim Mindanao.

Just as the Zamboanga Moro Exchange became a key site for aggregating Muslim produced products from across Mindanao, American colonial officials also hoped that it would serve as a gateway to larger international networks of capital and exchange. The original founder of the Moro Exchange, John Finley, invested a particularly significant deal of energy in forging ties with international banking concerns and markets. In a rather remarkable letter written in 1904, for example, Finley contacted the Manager of the International Banking Company in Manila to seek advice for the “establishment of an agency...in Hongkong [sic] and Singapore of the Moro Exchange of Zamboanga.” By aiming “to secure connection with business men of the highest standing,” Finley believed, it would be possible to effect the sale of the products of their [Moro] industry” and to “become generous purchasers of a considerable variety of manufactured articles which I desire to obtain for them through reliable agencies.” He also touted the fact that “I have about forty thousand Moros under my control and many of them are excellent workers,

⁴⁸ Bliss, “Speech on Occasion of 1st Annual Fair of Zamboanga,” Tasker Bliss Papers, LC, Washington, D.C.

⁴⁹ Michael Hawkins, “Imperial Historicism and American Military Rule,” 127-8.

including the women and children.” In sum, Finley felt that the incorporation of Muslim Filipinos into transnational commercial networks would not only elevate the circumstances of Moro Filipinos, but also augment the coffers of the Moro Province government.⁵⁰

These efforts to incorporate Muslim Filipinos into the modern colonial economy were supplemented by a more symbolic display of Moro Province unity: colonial fairs. Although the US conducted other district-level fairs in Mindanao before, the Zamboanga Agricultural Fair and Industrial Expo in 1907 was the first that aspired to bring Moroland together in its entirety: all districts, all peoples, all creeds. Muslim Filipinos from across the Southern Philippines inundated the capital city to witness the pomp and pageantry of the fair. Indeed, on the morning of 7 February 1911, an astonishing 10,000 Moros marched down the streets of Zamboanga in full, multicolored battle regalia.⁵¹ Governor Bliss proudly trumpeted the fact that this fair “was the largest attempted so far” and that “every district was represented by its leading headmen, datu, and officials.”⁵² With disparate collections of Maguindanao, Maranao, Samal, and Tausug Muslims gathered together in Zamboanga, Bliss did not waste the opportunity to lay out his unifying vision for the future of the Mindanao, exhorting the crowd to “bury all pretty social and religious prejudices and meet together with the government on common ground to work for the welfare and development of the Moro Province.”⁵³ The US governor believed that together, united, Muslims could move toward progress and modernity under the benevolent tutelage of

⁵⁰ Captain John Finley, Governor of Zamboanga, to Mgr. International Banking Co., Manila, P.I., May 23, 1904, Dean Worcester Papers, University of Michigan Special Collections, Ann Arbor, MI.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 1, 136.

⁵² Bliss, June 30, 1907, Folder 65, Library of Congress, Manuscripts Division, Washington, D.C.

⁵³ Oration Delivered at the Opening Ceremonies, Zamboanga Industrial and Agricultural Fair, Tuesday, February 12, 1907, by Brig. Gen. Tasker H. Bliss, U.S.A., Governor of the Moro Province,” *The Mindanao Herald*, 16 February, 1907, p. 2. Quoted in Hawkins, “Imperial Historicism and American Military Rule.”

their American rulers. The Zamboanga Fair literally instantiated the vision for a singular Moro Province imagined by the US colonial administrators.

In addition to its obvious symbolic portent, the Zamboanga Fair also supplied an opportunity to expand upon and reinforce the economic project represented by the Moro Exchanges. While perhaps the highlight of the occasion, Muslims did not visit the Zamboanga fair solely to view the spectacle and pageantry of the parade. They also came to exhibit goods, sell products, and to participate in commercial competitions—unvarnished capitalism in action. After committees composed both of Americans and Moros judged the best commercial entries, the sellers could, in turn, purvey their goods to the huge crowds of people and reap a handsome profit.⁵⁴ The fair, in effect, constituted a market unprecedented for its size and scope in Mindanao history, a venue where Muslims could offer their wares and participate in the competitive cut and thrust of a modern economy. In a 1911 reprise of the fair in Zamboanga, for example, brass manufactures from Lanao and Cotabato managed to sell upwards of 20,000 pesos of brassware alone.⁵⁵ In this fashion, the Zamboanga Fair operated not only as a symbol of political and cultural unity, but also as a simulacrum of the type of Islamic capitalist system sought by the colonial regime.

Reconfiguring Islamic networks: John P. Finley, the “Sheik-ul-Islam,” and “Modern Mohammedanism”

With its heterogeneous population and vibrant ports, its elaborate fairs and dynamic Moro Exchanges, Zamboanga City seemed to stand at the forefront of the slow-motion transformations re-shaping colonial Mindanao. Clearly, US officials hoped to cultivate

⁵⁴ Hawkins, “Imperial Historicism and American Military Rule,” x.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 130.

international trade, develop a thriving urban economy, and ensure a modern Muslim economy. These developments, American believed, would help to extinguish the remnants of violent resistance that still burned in some corners of Mindanao and diminish what the “retrograde” influence of traditional *datu* rulers. While this chapter has thus far concentrated on US economic projects; some questions still remain: did the very networks carrying the products of Muslim Filipinos to Singapore and beyond also carry Muslim Filipinos themselves? In turn, would increasing economic contacts foster new religious synergies and a livelier Muslim public sphere in Mindanao? As we saw in chapter three, Singapore—the object of so much American scheming—was the site not only of colonially oriented commerce, but also of overlapping networks of Muslim believers extending in alternative directions toward Mecca, Cairo, and other destinations of the Islamic world. From the cosmopolitan hub of Singapore, various Minangkabau Muslims had transmitted currents of reform influenced by the Middle East and new expressions of Islamic journalism back to smaller West Sumatran port cities such as Padang. Eventually those changes would reverberate throughout the entirety of the region, catalyzing a widespread process of Islamic reformation. Could a similar process of motion, transnational exchange and religious reform begin to influence the Southern Philippines?

Although there might have been no Filipinos at Cairo’s Al-Azhar University in the 1920s, we do have some evidence suggesting that Zamboanga emerged as an important point of embarkation for another Islamic journey: the *hajj* to Mecca. Unfortunately, we lack comprehensive statistics of the number of Mindanaon Muslims who made the sojourn to Mecca, as the United States government never created any regulatory agency for *hajjis* analogous to that found in the Netherland East Indies. However, a 1912 article from *The Mindanao Herald* demonstrates that at least some, and likely many, Mindanaon Muslims went on *hajj* sojourns

very similar to those of their Indonesian counterparts. In this article, an anonymous *hajji* recounts his tale of traveling from Cotabato to Zamboanga, and then onward “to Singapore for P20.00.” Once there, this *hajji* recalls extensive interactions with the larger, cosmopolitan community of Muslims in the city preparing for their journey to Mecca, describing how “At Singapore we went to Sheick House; here we paid P25.00 and we could stay as long we liked”; that on the boat from Singapore to Jeddah “there were a lot other pilgrims on the boat from all ports of Malaysia”; and that once he returned from Arabia to Singapore, “our money...was getting short...we were compelled to borrow a good deal of money in Singapore to help us out.” Indeed, this *hajji* said he relied on “a letter of credit to all good Mohammedans of that place.” This journey illustrates how regular, affordable steamship travel between Zamboanga, Singapore, and Mecca, in conjunction with the presence of larger community of Southeast Asian *hajjis* for aid and support, enabled growth in the Mindanaoan pilgrimage circuit.⁵⁶

Such fledgling connections between Zamboanga, the once impregnable fortress of Spanish Jesuits, and the larger Islamic world, did not arise in an entirely spontaneous fashion. As the new colonial capital and the seat of their authority, American officials in the United States soon realized that Zamboanga provided a safe haven of sorts, a refuge from the treacherous terrain of island sultanates or the forbidding mountain fastness of the interior in which most Mindanao Muslims dwelled. By rewiring and reconstituting the regional circuits of transnational Islamic networks such that they passed not through the venerable ports of Jolo Island or the rugged riverine arterials of central Mindanao, but right into the very heart of their nascent Moroland dominion, alongside European commercial vessels and US military transports, American officials sought to do more than monitor the movement of local Muslims. They, in

⁵⁶ “A Pilgrimage from Cotabato to Mecca,” *The Mindanao Herald*, June 15, 1912.

fact, sought to harness these transnational Islamic ties to the larger task of quelling resistance and reconstructing Mindanao residents as “modern” Muslim subjects. The US colonial regime, in sum, sought to leverage the larger world of Islam for its own purposes.

No other American official better encapsulated this interest in reconfiguring networks and reconstructing Muslims than did the governor of Zamboanga District, Major John Park Finley. Compared to the other military officers serving in Mindanao, Finley arrived with a unique background and set of skills. Born in 1854 to a prominent farming family from the state of Michigan, the young Finley pursued an education in science and soon enlisted in the U.S. Army Signal Service, where he received instruction not only in military work, but also in meteorology and meteorological observation. Standing at 6 feet 3 inches tall and weighing close to 200 pounds, Finley cut an imposing figure in the world of military supported scientific research, and he soon rose through the ranks to pursue a budding interest in tornadoes, traveling throughout the American Great Plains and Midwest to catalogue incidences of severe weather. By the 1890s, Finley had pioneered the field of tornado tracking and prediction, providing the first serviceable warnings of impending dangerous weather. Indeed, he acquired a reputation as the “First Severe Storms Forecaster.”⁵⁷ Thus, when the project of colonization and conquest thrust the longtime military veteran to the distant outposts of empire in Mindanao in 1903, it is hardly surprising that he approached his duties with a certain ethnological fervor, cataloging both the natural and ethnological facets of the Zamboanga Peninsula in extensive detail.⁵⁸ Moreover, the intellectual curiosity also propelled Finley into an engagement with the religious faith of his

⁵⁷ This name comes from a hagiographic article produced by an employee of the National Weather Service; see, Joseph G. Galway, “J.P. Finley: The First Severe Storms Forecaster,” *Bulletin American Meteorological Society* 66, no. 11 (November 1985): 1389-1395.

⁵⁸ See for example John P. Finley’s contribution to early Subanu ethnography: William Churchill and John P. Finley, *The Subanu: Studies of a Sub-Visayan Mountain Folk of Mindanao* (Washington: Carnegie Institute of Washington, 1913).

subjects, and eventually, toward a thoroughly unorthodox understanding of the role the broader Islamic world beyond Zamboanga's shores might play in US pacification efforts.

Upon first inspection John Finley's views with respect to his local subject population did not deviate appreciably from the mainstream of the US military establishment in Mindanao. Like most of his peers, Finley sought to balance a ruthless determination to eradicate trace of opposition to American rule with a sometimes rather perfunctory profession of respect and tolerance for the religious beliefs and cultural practices of those he now ruled. For instance, as befitting a close ally of Governor-General Leonard Wood, a leader with a well-known predilection for overwhelming force, Finley expressed little compunction about the employment of military means against religious trouble makers. In particular, "priests" and purveyors of "fanatical" religious doctrines, many of whom were of Arab background and who preyed "upon the superstitious and credulous masses, justifying all manner of excesses," must be extirpated root and branch.⁵⁹ Only by sundering some of those ties that had for linked Mindanao to the Hadhrami community and the larger Arab world, Finley believed, would American succeed at quelling *juramentado* and "*magsabil*" attacks.⁶⁰

However, even as Finley advocated unremitting assaults on "priests" and other mobile Muslims, he at the same time stressed the imperative of displaying a modicum of "respect" for Moro religion. Drawing inspiration from the "inviolable American policy of non-interference between church and state," Finley believed that the colonial government should make every possible solicitude and forbearance for the religious customs of the subject population. In an especially telling comparison with the Netherlands East Indies, Finley noted that "if the Moros'

⁵⁹ John P. Finley, "A Review of the Moro Petition, Its Origin, Scope and Purpose, and How Its Object May be Realized in Aid of the American System of Control," John P. Finley Papers, Military Historical Institute, Carlisle, PA.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

religion had been respected, all else would have been easy. The Dutch in the East Indies, with their 35,000,000 of Mohammedans, know that.”⁶¹ This assessment, of course, might constitute a wildly Panglossian interpretation of events in neighboring Indonesia, which appears to take little cognizance of the Dutch-Aceh war, to name but one of many violent encounters there hardly satisfied any reasonable measure of “respect.” Nonetheless, it did attest to a real and widespread sentiment, partially born of the credo of the separation church and state found at home in the metropole, that Moro “Mohammedan” faith must be tolerated whatever its faults and superstitions. And it also attested to the very real contradiction of trying to realize such a nebulous concept of “respect” in practice while waging an ongoing campaign of pacification.

If John Finley had stopped at protestations of “respect” and an “inviolable” desire to heed the boundaries between “church and state,” he would have differed little from his peers. Many American officials, even those most committed to harsh military tactics, nonetheless foreswore the proselytizing efforts of their Spanish predecessors and claimed to tolerate Islam, however begrudgingly, as the legitimate faith of the Moro peoples. Most of these other military officers, however, left their engagement with Islam at such protestations, deferring to local religious authorities on domestic issues such as marriage and inheritance while otherwise going about their pacification efforts as they saw fit and arrogating to themselves supreme political power. John Finley, however, believed that the somewhat contradictory mix of non-interference and pacification would ultimately prove insufficient to the task of quelling resistance. The Americans could not simply root out the problematic branches of transnational Islam as embodied by certain “Arab” priests and other malcontents.⁶² They would also need to reconfigure those networks, to

⁶¹ John P. Finley, “The Mohammedan Problem in the Philippines,” *The Journal of Race Development* 5, 4 (April 1915): 359.

⁶² Finley, “A Review of the Moro Petition,” Finley Papers.

re-pattern them in a fashion congenial to colonialism, and in fact, to re-constitute their Muslim subjects altogether. “To campaign successfully against these insidious and very serious among the Moros,” declaimed Finley, “requires intervention by the government through the instrumentality of modern Mohammedanism.”⁶³

Much of what Finley conceived as “the instrumentality of modern Mohammedanism,” of course, bore little direct relationship to religion or theology per se. Being a modern “Mohammedan,” for instance, often meant conforming to a variety of behaviors, tendencies, and attitudes that could just as easily obtain in the case of non-Muslims. In a 1915 letter, Finley declared that modernity could only be achieved when locals acted to “surrender their weapons as instruments for piratical gain of livelihood, to liberate their slaves, and to accept an industrial scheme organized under the name of the Moro Exchange System of markets and stores.”⁶⁴ Through such exertions, the people of Mindanao could make “an honest and progressive effort to better themselves according to modern ideas.” Beyond the predictable bromides on peace and economic uplift, Finley also believed that modern “Mohammedanism” might conform to a certain cosmopolitan ethos of tolerance and mutual respect, emphasizing the “importance of friendly intercourse among the various non-Christian tribes” and of seeking a common ground of business and of religious toleration.”⁶⁵ Moreover, Finley also rather tellingly revealed that he conceived of a specific type of person when he spoke of modern Mohammedanism, a “better class of Moros.” A “better class” who might spearhead the “campaign against...vicious habits of his peers,” and uphold a standard of personal rectitude that would satisfy American experimentations.⁶⁶ In sum, much of what Finley imagined as “modern” simply entailed

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

embracing the universalizing, hegemonic ethos of colonial capitalism, along with its self-serving corollary of mutual tolerance, understanding, and propriety along American terms.

For all of the obvious self-aggrandizement of his position, the US governor of Zamboanga also clearly interpreted “modern Mohammedanism” as something more than Muslims sloughing off their faith or compartmentalizing it within the strictly private realm of individual belief, as Americans or Europeans might. In his study of colonial cosmopolitanism, the scholar Peter van der Veer observes that within the liberal tradition, the idea prevails that “religious people can be cosmopolitans, but they have to become modern Christians, modern Hindus, or modern Muslims, that is to say progressive liberals with private, religious world-views.”⁶⁷ John Finley was clearly quite attuned to such concerns, taking pains to state the caveat that cooperation with Muslims did not imply an “endorsement of the Mohammedan religion as against any other faith” or any sort of “special privilege and protection.”⁶⁸ However, the governor did insist rather forcefully that the United States must act through, rather than against, the local Islamic faith. Noting that the “special form of government was devised by Governor Taft, not because the people concerned are of Malay extraction, but from the fact that they are and always have been Mohammedans,” Finley contended that only by harnessing the power of local Islam could the United States achieve a durable, lasting peace.⁶⁹

Thus, the promotion of a cosmopolitan brand of “modern Mohammedanism” was not for Finley tantamount to secularization or liberalization; instead, it signaled a desire to pursue a more profound engagement with the religious faith of his subjects, to bring Moros into contact with their co-religionists from around the world, to elevate their religious devotion rather than to

⁶⁷ Peter Van der Veer, “Colonial Cosmopolitanism,” in *Conceiving Cosmopolitanism: Theory, Context, and Practice*, ed. Steven Vertovec and Robin Cohen (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 172.

⁶⁸ Finley, “A Review of the Moro Petition,” Finley Papers.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

impair it, and in the process, to ameliorate tensions with the colonial regime. Ongoing resistance to American rule, in Finley's view, emanated not from their religiosity, but rather, from their theological "ignorance" and their fealty to a "degraded form of Mohammedanism."⁷⁰ "After a careful study of the Koran," Finley wrote rather sententiously in a 1915 article, "and an equally careful inspection of their teachers, we found that they were not being taught in accordance with the doctrines of their religion as laid down in the Koran."⁷¹ If only the United States could somehow assist the Moros in their plight of religious ignorance, to advise and assist them in the project of arriving "at a better and truer Mohammedan faith," then they could "protect them from those "ignorant native priests [who] do no live by the Koran" and defuse what resistance remained.⁷² The governor "thereupon embodied in our next report, a request for teachers of accredited learning and rank." Such a teacher would "now the Koran and the life and purposes of the Prophet," as well as be "familiar with the sacred Arabic, the prayers and forms of worship."⁷³ Such sentiments did give a considerable whiff of paternalism and presumption, the belief that somehow, by merely reading the Qur'an, an American could understand Islam better than its Moro practitioners. And yet, Finley's thinking also suggested a genuine interest in cultivating Muslim devotion in his domain.

To enhance the quality of Islamic practice in Mindanao, Finley turned his sights to what he conceived as the wellspring of the faith: the distant lands of the Middle East, and specifically, the Ottoman Empire. With its aspirations of realizing a global caliphate, and perhaps even more important, its claims to modernity and its myriad formal institutions of education and higher learning, it is perhaps not surprising that Constantinople would beckon to someone of Finley's

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Finley, "The Mohammedan Problem in the Philippines," 360.

⁷² Finley, "A Review of the Moro Petition," Finley Papers.

⁷³ Finley, "The Mohammedan Problem in the Philippines," 362.

scientific training and ethnological proclivities. There, in one of the “various institutes of learning at or near” the Ottoman capital, the Americans might just find one of those “accredited” teacher of Islamic faith for whom they were searching.⁷⁴ Indeed, Finley and his closest Muslim Filipino interlocutors believed that the importation of an educator from the Ottoman Empire could provide a panacea of sorts for all that ailed Moroland:

A modern Mohammedan from Constantinople, selected with due care and official approval, may be brought to the Moro Province to aid the government in successfully combatting the vicious habits of the Moros that now so seriously retard their progress, and which American laws and Christian priests have not been able to reach.⁷⁵

Once brought to Mindanao, this cosmopolitan, modern Mohammedan could thus “instruct as to the provisions of Al Koran and the American laws against vice, slavery, unlawful use of weapons, and of resistance to lawful authority.”⁷⁶ By inculcating “loyalty to both the government and the church,” this Turkish teacher would help in the fashioning of “good citizens” and “good Mohammedans.”⁷⁷

The enthusiasm for Middle Eastern Islam, and what some perceived as its tempering influence, spilled beyond the Governor’s office to the larger colonial milieu of Zamboanga. No less an institution than the *The Mindanao Herald*, the mouthpiece of the arch-conservative settler community and a one-time apologist for US Army massacres in nearby Sulu, held up the Muslims of the Middle East for their piety and as an exemplar of proper behavior. In one article titled “The Folly of Juramentado,” for example, an editorialist posed a series of rhetorical queries to the local Moros, asking “do you not know that Turkey, Persia, and other Muhammadan countries not only live in peace with the surrounding nations, whether the latter are Muhammadan or non-Muhammadan, but also protect the unbelievers within their borders, not

⁷⁴ Finley, “A Review of the Moro Petition,” Finley Papers.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

even requiring the poll tax?” The editorialist even goes so far as to invoke quotations “from the Koran and the Hidayah” to show that the “juramentado far from carrying out the precepts of the Koran violates its express commands. The editorialist even goes so far as to lecture his readers about the meaning of *jihad*, declaiming that “the *jihad* enjoined in the Koran is war—and war is the concerted action of a large body of men. The indiscriminate and treacherous killing of his fellow men by a single assailant is not war—it is assassination.” The article concludes with a final invidious comparison between Moros and Muslims from the rest of the Islamic world:

How can such an inconsiderable portion of the Islamic world—a portion which practices its religion so carefully—take upon itself to create the new religious doctrine of the juramentado which enjoins the taking of life and which is not practiced by the Arabs, nor Turks, nor Egyptians, nor Berbers, nor Persians, nor Indians, nor Malays, nor by anyone else on the face of the earth save by the Moros of Mindanaw and Sulu?

Although it is probable that the *Mindanao Herald* invoked the “Arabs” and the “Turks” more for their own tendentious and polemical purposes than out of any genuine identification with them or their faith, it still nonetheless attested to a general willingness, however tentative, to enlist the larger Islamic world in their campaign to quell resistance in Mindanao.⁷⁸

Amidst this curiosity about the Middle East, Governor Finley embarked on a 1914 trip to Constantinople with the objective of recruiting a “modern” Mohammedan official for service in Zamboanga. Finley persuaded the United States Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, Oscar S. Straus, to seek “an audience with the Sultan, Abdul Hamid,” and request that he, “as the Caliph of the Moslem religion to act in behalf of his followers of Islam in the Philippines.” Although the Ottoman ruler “was not aware of such a body of Mohammedans,” Finley and Straus persisted in their overtures, detailing the terms of employment they envisioned for their new hire.⁷⁹ Among other things, the Turkish instructor “should be recognized as an official of the Moro Province

⁷⁸ “Folly of Juramentado,” *Mindanao Herald*, November 4, 1911.

⁷⁹ Finley, “The Mohammedan Problem in the Philippines,” 356.

and to that extent given a title, such for example, as Moro Agent and Instructor, Travelling Moro Deputy, or Provincial Moro Advisor.” Finley also clarified that “that he should be paid at least a nominal salary, under such official designation and permitted to occupy a desk in the Provincial Building at Zamboanga.”⁸⁰ Finley thus aspired to incorporate this new Turkish official into the apparatus of American the colonial state, and to imbue the Moroland regime with the legitimacy of transnational Islamic connections. If successful, this gambit would essentially reconfigure the transoceanic Muslim networks of old and transform the colonial capital of Zamboanga into the key Philippine nodule for Islamic exchange.

Negotiations with the Sultanate in Constantinople soon culminated in the selection of a young Hadhrami scholar from the city of Nablus in the Ottoman hinterlands of Palestine, one Sayyid Wajih al-Kilani, to make the voyage across the vast expanses of the Indian Ocean to that most remote outpost of American Empire, Zamboanga City.⁸¹ Heralded by John Finley as the “Sheik ul-Islam” of the Philippines, Finley brimmed with enthusiasm at the prospect of al-Kilani working through the “agency of the public schools” to educate his “benighted” Muslim charges.⁸² Indeed, Finley wasted little time in organizing a public procession of great pomp and circumstance in Taluksangay, a predominantly Muslim coastal district of Zamboanga, for which to introduce the young Ottoman to the general population. The governor of Mindanao and Sulu from 1914 through 1920, Frank Carpenter, reported that al-Kilani “was met by Colonel Finley with great formality and introduced accordingly to a great concourse of Mohammedans from various parts of Mindanao-Sulu including all resident Turkish and Malay Mohammedan

⁸⁰ Finley, “A Review of the Moro Petition,” Finley Papers.

⁸¹ William Clarence-Smith, e-mail message to author, June 21, 2013.

⁸² F.W. Carpenter to Carl Moore, Department Superintendent of Schools, June 1, 1918, Provincial Papers, Box 253: “Manobos-Moros,” Manuel L. Quezon Papers, Philippine National Library, Manila, Philippines.

missionaries who took part in the reception which was...impressive.”⁸³ Zamboanga, with its American-employed *alim* from the distant lands of Palestine, could thus serve as a focal point, a cosmopolitan site of articulation between Turkish or Malay networks and the scattered Moro communities of the Mindanao-Sulu complex. Moreover, Finley clearly did not envision the tutelary role of al-Kilani in primarily secular terms. Instead, the governor embraced the idea that the new sojourner from the Ottoman Empire would strive “to purify Mohammedanism” in Mindanao. The phrase “purifying Islam,” then something of a mantra in reformist Muslim circles across the world not only in Constantinople, but also across the Middle East, India, and Malay-speaking regions, suggests that Finley, however superficially, absorbed some of the spirit of religious renovation sweeping across the global *umma*. With the active “purification” endeavors of al-Kilani, and the benign oversight of the American government, Zamboanga could thus act as a key node of transmission of Islamic reformism to the Muslim Philippines.

Finley’s campaign to promote a reformist, “modern Mohammedanism” in Mindanao through al-Kilani, however, was not welcomed by his counterparts in the colonial establishment; quite to the contrary, it engendered a fierce backlash. While the governor’s social peers in Zamboanga, such as the editor of the *Mindanao Herald*, perhaps might indulge in praise of Middle Eastern Muslims in the abstract—especially as a propagandistic cudgel against Moros—a real, live Hadhrami *alim* in their midst was quite another matter. Frank Carpenter, for instance, did not look kindly upon Finley and al-Kilani’s efforts. Lamenting the “troublesome” implications of the “so-called Sheik ul-Islam” upon the “potentialities of [the] public order situation at the time,” Carpenter regarded Taluksangay not as a site of “modern Mohammedanism,” but as “the great stronghold of Mohammedan religious fervor and

⁸³ Carpenter to Moore, June 1, 1918.

propaganda in Mindanao-Sulu” and as “a source of opposition to the good purposes of the government.”⁸⁴ Carpenter was likely not alone in these sentiments. Finley’s rather lonely ideas on “modern Mohammedanism” and his support of the “Sheik-ul-Islam” probably factored into erstwhile Moroland Governor John J. Pershing’s assessment of him “an old pessimistic windbag of the most inflated variety.”⁸⁵ Indeed, these ideas on “modern Mohammedanism,” combined with Finley’s imperious demeanor and penchant for inter-bureaucratic wrangling, likely only exacerbated and amplified the extensive opprobrium that he would rain down upon him in the aftermath of al-Kilani’s arrival.

News of Finley’s experiment evidently reverberated not only through Muslim networks, but through mutually entangled inter-imperial networks, as no less a personage than Snouck Hurgronje, the preeminent Dutch colonial expert on Islam and the first ever “Adviser for Oriental Languages and Mohammedan Law” in the neighboring Netherlands East Indies, inveighed against such endeavors. Although Hurgronje never explicitly mentioned Finley by name, he did mention the travel of the “Shaykh-ul-Islam” to the Philippines in a letter to the Netherlands Colonial Minister. Among other things, Hurgronje noted that the Shaykh also had “recently made the acquaintance” of the Dutch Consul General in Beirut, Albertus Hotz, and generally had attempted to convey a sense of “friendship.”⁸⁶ However, he interpreted this friendship as little more than a ruse, an attempt to “make the impression with the native population” of the Philippines that he wielded great influence with the Americans and thus to gain power for a nefarious pan-Islamic agenda. Hurgronje warned “such trust would however

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ John J. Pershing to Francis E. Warren, February 9, 1912, Box 371, John J. Pershing Papers, Library of Congress Manuscript Division, Washington, quoted. in Frank Vandiver, *Black Jack: the Life and Times of John J. Pershing* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1977), 1:523.

⁸⁶ Jan Just Witkam. “Albert Hotz and his Photographs of Iran: an Introduction to the Leiden Collection,” in *Iran and Iranian Studies: Essays in Honor of Iraj Afshar*, ed. Kambiz Eslami (Princeton: Zagros, 1998), 276.

be...misplaced” and that “one does not only need to be naïve, but also of the highest imprudence to act on such expressions in light of the unanimous hostility of the unofficial as well as the free pan-Islamic press” in Istanbul. For Hurgronje, flirtations with the forces of pan-Islam embodied by persons such as al-Kilani constituted nothing less than administrative malfeasance.⁸⁷

The commotion over the arrival of al-Kilani on Zamboanga’s shores would, ultimately, scuttle Finley’s dreams of installing a permanent “Sheik-ul-Islam of the Philippines.” Although the Zamboanga governor intended that al-Kilani should serve a term of eighteen months in the colonial capital, machinations for his removal began to unfold almost immediately upon his arrival. Frank Carpenter, in his capacity as the new governor of the Department of Mindanao and Sulu, spearheaded this effort. Ruing the fact that “a written contract appears to have been entered into by Finley” with the Ottoman *alim*, Carpenter observed that “it was not an entirely simple matter to eliminate this distinguished individual from the Philippines.” However, the governor saw to it that just such an outcome would be realized, although al-Kilani decided “to go via Constantinople to the United States to appeal to the President at Washington...the matter settled itself by his timely death at a health resort near Washington.” This contingency, in Carpenter’s view, would only help the United States ensure that “Mindanao-Sulu may be brought under effective Government control.” For all of Finley’s grandiose rhetoric and his genuine desire to engage with the larger Islamic world, the era of the Sheik-ul-Islam of the Philippines would be abbreviated indeed.⁸⁸

⁸⁷ Snouck Hurgronje to Minister of the Colonies, het archief van het Ministerie van Koloniën, 1900-1963: Openbaar Verbaal, 1901-1953, Code Toegang: 2.10.36.54, National Archives of the Netherlands, The Hague, The Netherlands.

⁸⁸ Carpenter to Moore, June 1, 1918.

Haji Abdullah Nuño and the local movement for Islamic reform in Zamboanga

The unceremonious ejection of al-Kilani from Zamboanga by and large signaled the end of direct American efforts to cultivate a cosmopolitan brand of Islamic reformism in their territories. While Finley's engagement with the Sheik ul-Islam of the Philippines constituted an important episode in the history of Mindanao, it also to some extent represented something of an aberration, an evanescent dalliance with the Islamic currents crossing the Indian Ocean. In the years ahead, as in the past, the vast preponderance of American officials would see the Philippines, and not the wider category of the Islamic World, as the most germane frame of reference for making sense of Mindanao. In the year ahead, Manila and a segment of the colonial establishment would intensify their efforts to integrate Mindanao into nascent Philippine nation-state, and Islam, for the most part, fell to the wayside as a secondary concern.⁸⁹ Of course, a fair number of American officials continued to see religion as an unyielding point of division between the peoples of the Catholic north and the Muslim South. While some toyed with the idea of detaching Mindanao from the remainder of the Philippines or even annexing it to the United States proper, much of this interest stemmed from opposition to the Filipino nationalist project and rather naked self-aggrandizement, as opposed to any interest in the Islamic world.⁹⁰ In any case, none of the schemes designed to separate Mindanao ever gained much momentum. Politics and patronage seemed to be in the process of drawing the principal Muslim notables of Mindanao, almost inexorably, into the Catholic dominated Philippine national sphere. The dream of the Islamic world writ large seemed to dissipate.

⁸⁹ See the scholarship of Patricio Abinales. Specifically, Patricio Abinales, *Making Mindanao: Cotabato and Davao in the Formation of the Philippine Nation-State* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2000); and Patricio N. Abinales, "From Orang Besar to Colonial Big Man: Datu Piang of Cotabato and the American Colonial State," in Alfred W. McCoy, ed. *Lives at the Margins: Biography of Filipinos Obscure, Ordinary, and Heroic*, (Madison: University of Wisconsin, Center for Southeast Asia Studies, 2003), 210-11.

⁹⁰ Howard T. Fry, "The Bacon Bill of 1926: New Light on an Exercise in Divide-and-Rule," *Philippine Studies* 26 (1978), 259-60.

However ephemeral the specific ambitions of Governor Finley, one should not discount, *prima facie*, the possibility that a cosmopolitan type of religious reformism, geared outward toward the larger Islamic world, might nonetheless begin to take root. As the case of West Sumatra in Chapter Five demonstrated, Islamic reformism, while very much entangled within the budding networks and transformations of the colonial era, could and was in fact more likely to flourish without a direct catalyst or program from their foreign overlords. Economic growth and the increasing compression of distance wrought by new technological developments provided ample opportunity to local Muslims to seize the initiative and forge their own connections with the broader *umma* beyond Mindanao's shores. The very diversity of Zamboanga, the evenly balanced, highly urbanized populations of Muslims and Christians living side by side in close proximity to one another, could perhaps offer a uniquely catalytic sense of competition, a relational impetus that might drive local religious leaders to experiment with novel organizational forms and theological adaptations. From the cosmopolitan diversity of Zamboanga, there might thereby emerge a revitalized sense of Islamic affiliation.

The principal local partner in the schemes of John Finley, Haji Abdullah Nuño of Zamboanga, is indicative of the possibility that the dream of "modern Mohammedanism" might also begin to permeate the local population and to take on a life of its own quite apart from any colonial planning.⁹¹ The leader of the Taluksangay ward, Hadji Abdullah Nuño, in many respects personified the possibilities for Islamic development in cosmopolitan Zamboanga. A victim of

⁹¹ There have been several brief sketches of the life of Haji Nuño in the Zamboanga historiography. See Helen N. Mendoza, "The Moro Tapestry," in *Zamboanga Hermosa: Memories of the Old Town*, ed. Antonio E. Orendain II (Manila: Filipinas Foundation, 1984), 237-238; Kawashima Midori, "Transformation of the Concepts of Homeland and People among the Philippine Muslims: The Bangsa Moro Revolution and Reformist Ulama in Lanao," in *Proceedings of the Symposium on Bangsa and Umma: A Comparative Study of People-Groupings in the Islamic Areas of Southeast Asia, May 12, 13 & 19, 2007, Tokyo and Kyoto*, eds., Kawashima Midori, Arai Kazuhiro, and Yamamoto Hiroyuki (Tokyo: Institute of Asian Cultures, Sophia University, 2007), 193-194; Margarita Cojuangco, *Kris of Valor: the Samal Balangingi's Defiance and Diaspora* (Manila: Manisan Research and Publishing, 1993), 155-158.

the Spanish expulsion of Samal Muslims from Balangingi Island in the second half of the nineteenth century, spent most of his childhood far from home, in the Spanish-controlled, predominantly Catholic island of Luzon. Once there, Nuño “was used by the Commandant of the Cavite Naval Station as a houseboy and compelled to submit to Christian baptism,” before being turned over “by the Spanish Government to the Compania Tabacalera and shipped to the latter’s hacienda in the Cagayan Valley.”⁹² Thusly exiled and thrust into an alien environment, Nuño toiled along with his Samal peers in the thriving tobacco plantations of the regions, one of the biggest profit generators in the Spanish colonial universe. While the precise details of the young boy’s time in Cagayan remain rather murky, historians do know that over the decades, Abdullah carved out a position as the preeminent leader of the Samal community in Cagayan and also accumulated some degree of wealth.⁹³

The experiences of dispossession and exile did not irreparably sever young Abdullah’s attached to his religion, but instead enhanced it, propelling the young exile to make the long journey to Mecca for *hajj* in the 1880s at a moment when few beyond the Sultan of Sulu’s retinue or a small circle of *datu* made the journey from Mindanao.⁹⁴ Through the pilgrimage, Abdullah acquired a religious charisma and legitimacy that would allow him to consolidate his leadership position. All the while, Nuño simultaneously cultivated a relationship with the Spanish authorities, or, at least managed to avoid alienating them enough such that he “secured permission from the Spanish Governor-General to return with some of his people to Zamboanga.”⁹⁵ Amidst the searing crucible of exile, Nuño had thus proven adept at negotiating

⁹² Carpenter to Moore, June 1, 1918.

⁹³ R.F. Wendover, *Philippine Magazine* 38, 8 (1941): 337.

⁹⁴ Carpenter to Moore, June 1, 1918.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

between the colonial Catholic and indigenous Muslim realms, thereby establishing himself as one of the foremost local leaders in the Zamboanga region.

By all accounts, in the years following Haji Nuño's return to the Zambaonga Peninsula, the Samal leader continued to balance a savvy ability to maneuver through colonial politics with a passionate commitment to religious reform and purification. For instance, as early as 1904, the United States government assisted Nuño in the brokering of a deal with the a Spanish tobacco planter in Isabel, Francisco Boher, in permitting the remaining Samal exiles to depart from Cagayan de Isabela and to return to Mindanao once in for all.⁹⁶ After this signal agreement, Nuño became a stalwart supporter of the US colonial regime in general, and John Finley in particular. Assisting the American military regime with the construction of a local government in Zamboanga, Nuño, among other things, sat on the Zamboanga provincial board, participated in the US sanctioned tribal ward system, and helped police his local community. In spite, or perhaps because of, the searing experience of dislocation, the erstwhile exile embraced the cosmopolitan ethos espoused by the Americans, observing that "we all have an equal part, Muslim, Filipino, and America [in local administration]...the Christian Filipino is governor, the American is the secretary-treasurer, and the Muslim is the third member."⁹⁷

Perhaps it is unsurprising that Nuño, who had already demonstrated a certain commercial acuity during his time in Cagayan de Isabela, should enlist in one of John Finley's most cherished innovations, the Moro Exchange. By making Nuño the agent in charge of "the purchase of native products from the Moros, Subanos and Kalibugans," the US government also empowered him to collect the Moro Exchange tax of one percent on all transactions and to set "a

⁹⁶ R.F. Wendover, *Philippine Magazine* 38, 8 (1941): 337.

⁹⁷ *Addresses on the Occasion of the Inauguration of Provincial Government at Zamboanga, September 1, 1914* (Zamboanga: s.n., 1914).

reasonable price in cash” for his purchases—thereby furnishing a regular income flow. Thus, Nuño’s activities went beyond Finley’s ambition of fashioning modern Moro economic subjects. The Zamboanga leader also reaped a considerable financial reward of his own, negotiating the terms of exchange with suppliers in a favorable manner and exploiting his perch to smuggle in goods like tobacco from Cagayan, often in plain sight, that would not be available to local leaders elsewhere in Sulu.⁹⁸

Meanwhile, at the same time that Nuño immersed himself in the colonial milieu, he continued to engage with the same currents of Islamic reformism that he most likely encountered on his sojourn to the Middle East. Among other things, Nuño invited a range of *alim* scholars from around the wider Islamic world to his home district of Zamboanga City, Taluksangay, including a Hadhrami scholar named Shaykh Muhammad Bahsuan, an Arab from Mecca named Shaykh Ahmad Mustafa, Sr., and a Shaykh Abdulgani of Banjarmasin from relatively nearby Borneo. This collection of international *alim* soon transformed the otherwise unassuming coastal district into a magnet for devout Muslims from across the Mindanao-Sulu region, with thousands descending on the mosque not only from nearby stretches of the Sulu Archipelago, but even as far away as Lanao and Cotabato in central Mindanao. The energy radiating from Taluksangay and Nuño, unsurprisingly, caught the attention of Governor Finley and provided one of the central inspirations for the “Sheik-ul-Islam of the Philippines” episode.⁹⁹

The case of Zamboanga’s Haji Nuño illustrates that for all the inflamed rhetoric and violence that attended Islamic-imperial encounters in the Philippines, these two forces were not

⁹⁸ John P. Finley, “Rules, Regulations, Instructions, Reports and Decisions on the Organization and Management of the Moro Exchange System of the District of Zamboanga, Moro Province, P.I., 1904 to 1909, Mindanao and Sulu, P.O.--”reports, etc., 1908-1912”, volume 7, Dean Worcester Papers, University of Michigan Special collections, Ann Arbor, MI.

⁹⁹ “Taluksangay: The first center of Islamic propagation,” *Zamboanga Today Online*, 13 June 2013, <<http://www.zamboangatoday.ph/zamboangatoday/index.php/opinions/14211-taluksangay-the-first-center-of-islamic-propagation-hataman-a-new-breed-of-politician-basilan-has-ever-produced.html>>, accessed 21 October 2013.

locked into an intrinsic state of struggle; quite to the contrary, their fates were inextricably intertwined. Nuño's stature and charisma, in no large measure, derived from his long personal history of entanglement with foreign rule, from his experience of forced exile by the Spanish, to his dexterity in maneuvering through the tobacco haciendas of Cagayan de Isabela, to his emergence as a key ally of US rulers and a well-placed official in the Moro Exchange. The resources and capital supplied by colonial networks, in turn, ultimately played a decisive role in enabling this Samal commoner to surmount the constraints of his background, to make an extraordinary journey to the Arabian Peninsula half a world away, and to forge a formidable redoubt of Islamic reform right in the very shadow of the US colonial capital. To be sure, not all US officials looked kindly upon such developments. Governor Frank Carpenter, for example, maligned the coastal district as "by far the most important and assertive center of Mohammedan propaganda," and accordingly, he disparaged Hadji Nuño as a "descendant of a direct line of famous Moro pirates."¹⁰⁰ Yet, in some sense, the situational predilections of colonial personnel were immaterial. For whether or not an individual US official and a cosmopolitan Islamic reformer liked each other, trusted one another, even resorted to violent blows against the other, they were nonetheless still bound up in a mutually implicated process of historical transformation spawned by colonial conquest. It was this symbiotic relationship, ultimately, that infused outward looking religious reformers, like Haji Abdullah Nuño, with their dynamism and power.

¹⁰⁰ Carpenter to Moore, June 1, 1918.

Urban nodes, their hinterlands, and the stunting of religious reform in Zamboanga

The long career of Nuño thus demonstrates that the reformist impulse in Zamboanga enjoyed a momentum quite independent of the fanciful schemes of John Finley, a momentum that might allow it to outlive the governor's ignominious departure and offer a viable alternative to the Manila-centric world of patronage and politics which increasingly drew Mindanao's *datu* class into its vortex. In West Sumatra, for example, the colonially entangled mobilities of Minangkabau *alim* such as Haji Mohammad Tahir Jalal al-Din and Abdullah Ahmad not only implanted the spirit of reform in cities like Padang and Padang Panjang, but also catalyzed an institutional revolution. As chapter five demonstrators, by the 1910s and 20s, these actors spawned a formidable organizational infrastructure of religious schools, associations, and political parties.

Such developments might be anticipated in Zamboanga as well. After Abdullah Nuño passed away of old age in 1917, his son, Ali Tahir, thrust himself into educational work by going into the employ of the US Superintendent of Schools in Zamboanga, suggestive of the same sort of educational collaboration between Dutch colonizers and Minangkabau reformers in West Sumatra.¹⁰¹ Meanwhile, in 1915, the new Catholic Filipino governor of Zamboanga province, Luis Lim, reported in 1915 on a vibrant new Islamic milieu in the city, and in specific, fretted over the ominous communal meetings and social organizing among Muslims that he detected, the rudiments of a new type of communal social group.¹⁰² In 1924, this social and religious ferment culminated in the formation of the "all-Filipino" Muslim organization in Mindanao,

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Leon Lim to Manuel Luis Quezon, July 8, 1915, Box 98 Zamboanga, MLQ Papers.

which took the name of the “Sarikatul Islam Association,” also in Zamboanga.¹⁰³ According to the then Director of the Bureau of Non-Christian Tribes, Teopista Guingona, still the governor at the time, “Sarikatul Islam Association,” aspired “to gather the largest possible number” of Muslim Moros together under a single institutional banner, much like the eponymous Sarekat Islam organization in the Netherlands East Indies.¹⁰⁴ Much as the cosmopolitan peregrinations of devout Muslims from West Sumatra constituted the necessary catalyst for the transformation of Minangkabau cities like Padang into hubs of religious reform, replete with vibrant schools and religious associations such as Muhammadiyah, Haji Nuño appeared to presage a similar transformation in the colonial capital of Mindanao and Sulu.

The incipient stirrings of an Islamic reformist milieu would never quite gain the traction that it did over a thousand miles away in the coastal plains and rugged hills of faraway Sumatra. Although a few scattered *madrasa* organized along modern lines, with blackboards, classes sorted by age, modern systems of testing, and printed textbooks—including Arabic ones from Egypt—materialized elsewhere in the Mindanao region, there is no record of any such institution in Zamboanga City itself. Likewise, for all the promise of Sarikatul Islam as an association on the cusp of realizing the organizational promise of Islamic reform seen across the Dutch East Indies at the same time, the group proved evanescent, fading into obscurity over time and disappearing altogether. While the now defunct Sarekat Islam is celebrated in Indonesia as the key antecedent for the multiplicity of religious organizations that would follow, Sarikatul Islam is almost completely forgotten in Zamboanga today, a footnote of history relegated to the colonial archive. Finally, the idea that the movement initiated by Haji Nuño at Taluksangay

¹⁰³ Michael Mastura, “Assessing the Madrasah as an Educational Institution: Implications for the Ummah,” *Muslim Filipino Experience: Collection of Essays*, edited by Michael Mastura (Manila: Ministry of Muslim Affairs, 1984), 98.

¹⁰⁴ Teopista Guingona to Manuel Luis Quezon, Jr., January 1, 1924, Box 253 Manobos-Moros, MLQ Papers.

would mark a wider theological flowering or turn the Zamboanga region into a hub of reformist Islamic ferment, with its emphasis on sloughing off the constraints of legal precedent and direct interpretation of the Qur'an and the *hadith*, never quite came to fruition.

Of course, none of this is to say that the continuously expanding Muslim population of Zamboanga receded to the background or did not make their presence felt. A 1931 newspaper report, for instance, reveals that the Moro students of a US run educational institution, Zamboanga Normal School, or today's Western Mindanao State University, took an active role in expressing their religious commitment, organizing a large Hari Raya (Idul Fitri) celebration. Indeed, echoing John Finley, this report from the Manila Herald trumpeted that "in true modern fashion Moslems will celebrate the end of the period of fasting," and noted that "all the Moros feel that this will be the most successful celebration of its kind ever held in Zamboanga."¹⁰⁵ This institution illustrates the enduring synergies between colonialism and Islam, as institutional developments and opportunities like the Zamboanga Normal School attracted ever growing numbers of Muslim migrants to the cities while also furnishing opportunities to organize. In spite of such opportunities, a full-fledged reformist movement comparable to that found in West Sumatra or other places across the Southeast Asian Islamic world, never did fully take root.

The question then arises, in spite of all the parallels and resonances between the two cases, why did the theological ferment and organizational innovation so pronounced in West Sumatra never arise in the principal nodal hub of the Mindanao world? Why did the colonially entangled, cosmopolitan peregrinations of Haji Abdullah Nuño, so reminiscent of those of Mohammed Tahir Jalal al-Din, never quite produce a corresponding transformation in the

¹⁰⁵ "Hara Raya Festival Following Ramadan, In True Modern Fashion Moslems will Celebrate the end of the Period of Fasting," *Manila Herald*, February 14, 1931, found in Box 30, Number 10: Clippings, 1934-1935 concerning the Province of Sulu," Joseph Ralston Hayden Papers, Bentley Library, Ann Arbor, MI.

religious universe of his home region? Taluksangay should have comprised the nucleus of a more normalized and urbanized Islamic milieu, a sphere that would exist beyond the binaries of domination and resistance, colonial conquest and *jihad*. It could have even supplied a Moro Muslim political alternative to the top-down, elitist rule of the traditional *datu* rulers, much as their Minangkabau Muslim counterparts upended many of the extant social and political arrangements in their home region. If anything, the growing cooperation and incorporation of these *datu* into the patronage structures of the Manila-centric political world should have made Zamboanga ripe for just such a challenge. Yet, no great reformist-cum-political movement surfaced in the tumultuous 1930s. To address these absences and elisions, it is thus necessary to revisit two central issues at the core of this inquiry: the economic circumstances surrounding Zamboanga's rise, and the meaning of Islamic cosmopolitanism in a city almost equally split between Muslims and Christians.

If the development of Zamboanga, in many respects, paralleled the rise of Padang as an important second-order commercial node crucial both to regional, national and international trading networks, its economic profile nonetheless diverged from that of its West Sumatran counterpart in a very important respect: the role and function of the adjacent hinterlands. In his seminal article on port cities as nodes in the Indian Ocean world, Kenneth McPherson cautions against understanding coastal cities in isolation or in a strictly oceanic context. Instead, McPherson lays special emphasis on the relationship between a port and its surrounding countryside, asserting that "the port could not exist in isolation from its hinterland, and the process of interaction between port and hinterland was...drawing the hinterland into a larger

global community.”¹⁰⁶ The economic, political, and socio-cultural prospects of any given port city was very much contingent on the contours of the relationship it forged with its surrounding environs. By widening the analytic lens to include not only the limited confines of Padang and Zamboanga themselves, but also their proximate islets, hills, and plateaus, it becomes clear that the surrounding environment betokened disparate futures for these two cities.

Over the course of the nineteenth century Padang owed much of its prosperity to symbiotic transformations that swept across the upland plateaus and hillsides immediately inland. Before the Padri War, this Indian Ocean port typified the standard, somewhat forlorn VOC trading outpost. Understaffed, detached from the surrounding indigenous communities, and susceptible to all manner of siege or attack or malarial outbreak, the handful of hardy Dutch merchants who passed through Padang could only ever manage to skim a very small fraction of the local agricultural and handicraft output. Instead of constituting an integral component of the surrounding environment, Padang of the eighteenth century acted more as an alien extrusion, and a vulnerable, exposed one at that.

The Padri War radically altered Padang’s position within. As chapter one demonstrated, military engagements in the early nineteenth century effectively subordinated the interior of West Sumatra to Dutch colonial rule and bound the scattered coffee producing hill regions to the coastal strip of land that had hitherto been marginal to the Minangkabau heartlands. This military triumph, in turn, laid the groundwork for a root and branch re-ordering of the regional economy. Chapter five illustrated how global markets and the colonial policy of “forced cultivation” spurred the rapid intensification of coffee production, as this crop infiltrated countless garden

¹⁰⁶ Kenneth McPherson, “Port Cities as Nodal Points of Change: The Indian Ocean, 1890s-1920s,” in *Modernity and Culture from the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean, 1890-1920*, ed. Leila Fawaz, C.A. Bayly, and Robert Ilbert (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 93.

plots and hillside tracts across the highland Minangkabau universe. It was this re-orientation of the entire economic system of the highlands around the caffeinated elixir of coffee that powered the ascent of Padang as the principal portal to international markets. Moreover, the effects of coffee did not stop at this one coastal city. The demands of transport, shipping, and administration stimulated the rise of several subsidiary regional centers in the highland regions. Indeed, government warehouse sites in Padang Panjang and Bukittinggi morphed into thriving entrepôts of their own, attracting crops, people, and entrepreneurial energy while feeding the insatiable demand of European buyers and a growing cohort of indigenous merchants in Padang itself. Padang thus functioned not only as funnel point to international markets, but also as the principal hub for an interactive, constantly ramifying network of cities, towns, and villages that penetrated into every corner of the adjacent interior.¹⁰⁷

Zamboanga, by contrast, never entirely outgrew its provenance as a besieged Jesuit fort grafted onto a hostile island of Muslims and animists. For all the ambitions and aspirations of American planners to transform Zamboanga into the indispensable trading node, for all the benefits that accrued from its designation as the capital of all Mindanao and Sulu, the colonial regime never quite succeeded in articulating Zamboanga with the surrounding islands, fishing villages, or market towns. Situated at the northern end of the Sulu Archipelago less than one hundred miles away from Jolo Island, strife, insurgency, and pacification lapped at Zamboanga's shores for much of the American colonial period even as the city provided a notable haven from such troubles. Indeed, just across the straits from Zamboanga in Basilan Island, the United States army waged a series of difficult military campaigns even into the 1910s.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁷ See analysis in Chapter 6.

¹⁰⁸ Gowing, *Mandate in Moroland*, 181-182, 233-234

While such violence did not prevent a significant influx of local Tausug and Samal Muslims into the city, as described earlier in this chapter, it did impede any efforts to weave Zamboanga into a frictionless web of commercial and social connection. Surrounding communities, for instance, withstood the unending importunities of the colonial government to cultivate cash crops that might reap a windfall equivalent to that of coffee, such as abaca, gutta percha, rubber, or even something as basic as lumber. Much of the production of these cash crops, ultimately, came from the scattered American homesteaders who settled in the region.¹⁰⁹ Meanwhile, custom duties at the Zamboanga harbor repelled many local traders, who easily circumnavigated around the city through the innumerable channels, coves, and mangrove swamps to continue their long-established commerce with Borneo away from the prying eyes of the colonial regime.¹¹⁰ The Moro Exchanges, for all its ballyhooed potential, only harnessed a small fraction of local trade. All of this conspired to constrain Zamboanga's growth, as the city never moved much past its role as a convenient transshipment point to harness the potential synergies that would have followed from a more thorough going integration into the local commercial and cultural ecosystem. Consequently, much of the economic dynamism shifted away from the colonial capital to the Catholic Filipino settler zones of southern Mindanao in the vicinity of Davao.¹¹¹ Thus, in spite of its shiny veneer of colonial modernity, Zamboanga remained little more than an isolated extrusion thrust into an alien environment.

The striking contrasts between the port-hinterland of Padang and Zamboanga, in turn, would ultimately hold far-reaching implications for the development of local Muslim

¹⁰⁹ For an excellent overview of American economic development of Mindanao and Sulu, see Douglas Hartley's dissertation. For example, in chapter 2 he chronicles the rise of rubber; in chapter 3, hemp; in chapter 5, corporate expansion; and in chapter 6, American agricultural colonies. See Douglas Thompson Kellie Hartley, "American Participation in the Economic Development of Mindanao and Sulu, 1899-1930," (Ph.D. diss., James Cook University of North Queensland), chs. 2-6.

¹¹⁰ See analysis in Chapter 5.

¹¹¹ Hayase, *Mindanao Ethnohistory beyond Nations*, 178-179

communities. One of the most distinctive features of the reformist Islamic movement of West Sumatra—besides for the cosmopolitan peregrinations of many of its leaders—was its region-wide scale. Indeed, Islamic reformers leveraged the social and economic complexity of local networks to great effect. Circulating between small villages, upland crossroad towns, and the local metropolis of Padang, religious reformers could mobilize the religious fervor of the countryside, hold large *tabligh* public meetings in medium size towns, and raise funds from prominent Muslim entrepreneurs on the coast. All of these activities proved mutually reinforcing, as a large flock of inland followers made it easier to enlist financial resources, while financial resources facilitated the recruitment of ever more followers. Moreover, the penetration of coffee cultivation, market economies, and a substantial colonial bureaucracy, populated predominantly by Minangkabau, endowed a broad cross-section of the local population with access to at least limited sources of income and capital. This diffusion of financial resources permitted devout Muslims to support newspapers such as *al-Munir*, to underwrite schools like the modernist Sumatra Thawalib, and to pay dues to organizations such as Muhammadiyah. These region wide cross-fertilizations, in turn articulated with transnational circuits of Islamic thought, thus proved critical to the flourishing of Islamic reformism in West Sumatra.¹¹²

Zamboanga, by contrast, struggled to benefit from such region wide scales of religious regeneration. Many Muslims did pour into Zamboanga to escape war, dislocation, or poverty from the surrounding islands and hills, but ultimately, these communities did not enjoy the same access to income or capital that those people who circulated through Padang did. The hinterlands of Zamboanga did not feature smaller, thriving centers comparable to Padang Panjang or Bukittinggi that could funnel religious flows to the local metropolis or easily stimulate their own

¹¹² See analysis in Chapter 6.

infrastructure of religious reformism.¹¹³ Instead, many of these areas, like Jolo and Basilan islands, continued to experience the ordeal of pacification and counter-insurgency throughout the period under discussion.¹¹⁴

Moreover, one other factor not only played a crucial inhibitive role in the formation of Islamic reform in Zamboanga, but also calls into question prevailing definitions of cosmopolitanism used for understanding the Moroland capital. Perhaps the single largest factor determining the dissemination of a religious revivalist movement in West Sumatra had been the early entanglement of local Muslim populations with institutions of colonial influence and statehood. From an early era, a network of schools at least partially supported by the Dutch colonial government brought a discrete, but still sizeable, proportion of the local religious community into the tutelary sphere of the colonial state. Similarly, Dutch colonial officials took the crucial decision to staff their local bureaucracies not with Europeans or even with indigenous minorities from regions outside West Sumatra, like Batak Christians. Instead, they hired mostly Minangkabau Muslims. The inclusion of the principal ethnic and religious group in the apparatus of the local state furnished critical income, not to mention a modicum of control over local economic resources, administrators in coffee warehouses, for instance.¹¹⁵

By contrast, the levers of the colonial state in Zamboanga alternately remained unattractive, or inaccessible, to the influx of displaced Muslim circulating through that city. Although US officials incessantly professed a devotion to incorporating students from all local

¹¹³ Although not insubstantial in size, outlying cities on Basilan and Zamboanga Peninsula like Lamitan and Bolong never developed a vibrant economy based on an internationally popular cash crop as did places like Bukittinggi and Padang Panjang in West Sumatra. See Hartley, "American Participation in the Economic Development of Mindanao and Sulu."

¹¹⁴ In 1908, for example, John Finley is very busy sending constabulary troops and intelligence officers to Basilan to suppress nascent insurgency, see for example, John P. Finley to Harry C. Hale, April 4, 1908, Mindanao and Sulu, P.I.—reports, etc. 1908-1912, vol. 7, Dean Worcester Philippine Historical Collection, University of Michigan Special Collections, Ann Arbor, MI.

¹¹⁵ See analysis in Chapter 6.

traditions into the nascent network of colonial schools, Moros by and large, with some notable exceptions like the son of Haji Abdullah Nuño, refrained from sending their children there. Part of this reticence most likely stemmed from the ongoing war and violence which imbued anything American with the taint of foreign oppression. Part of it probably derived from the preponderance of Christian Filipinos within the ranks of its teachers, which likely exacerbated the view that American schools constituted little more than an instrument for proselytization. Indeed, as late as 1910, the Superintendent of Schools reported that out of “79 native teachers...sixty-nine of the entire number were Christian Filipino, 9 were Moros and 1 a Bagobo.”¹¹⁶ As a consequence, the number of Moro Muslim students enrolled in these schools fell far short of their proportion of the population, and the opportunity for Muslims to inflect and influence the local curriculum for their own purposes—as occurred in West Sumatra—remained limited.

This disparity between Christian and Muslim students and teachers in the ranks of Moro Province schools, meanwhile, attested to a wider imbalance in the ranks of the entire American colonial bureaucracy. Like their Dutch counterparts, American officials hoped to leverage their bureaucracy as a means for socializing indigenous inhabitants, promoting administrative competencies, and otherwise reconciling the local population to colonial rule. However, in contrast to West Sumatra, this colonial bureaucracy became an instrument for a larger project known as “Filipinization,” which practically translated into the employment of Catholic Filipino migrants from Luzon and the Visayas.¹¹⁷ In the 1910s, colonial officials and representatives of the Moro community repeatedly pointed to the exclusion of Muslims from the proliferating

¹¹⁶ Charles Cameron, “Seventh Annual Report of the Superintendent of Schools of the Moro Province: School Year 1909-1910,” pg. 5, Charles Cameron Papers, Xavier University Archives, Cagayan de Oro, Philippines.

¹¹⁷ Gowing, *Mandate in Moroland*, 274-275.

positions of the colonial bureaucracy, citing this exclusion as principal grievance.¹¹⁸ Later on, by the end of the 1920s, certain officials like US governor James Fugate of Sulu attempted to correct this imbalance, speaking of the importance of filling municipal offices and bureaus with local officials.¹¹⁹ However, such a delayed undertaking could not counteract the effects of past disparities, and the bureaucracies of cities like Zamboanga, in particular, remained predominantly Catholic Filipino institutions.

The asymmetries in local participation in the colonial bureaucracy thus indicate the potential drawbacks of a cosmopolitan environment like Zamboanga City. While local Moro leaders might exploit the nodal position of the city to engage in far-flung voyages and transnational interactions, Muslim and Christian communities did not operate from positions of equality. The predominance of the Catholic Filipinos in the bureaucracy attests to the ability of that community to control a larger share of the political, economic, and cultural resources of the city. While the relational dynamics of competition between Christian and Muslim populations might drive a degree of religious experimentation and adaptation, it also attests to the social reality that these populations did not share a great deal of interaction with one another in their daily lives. An evenly balanced population like that of Zamboanga lent itself just as well to J.S. Furnivall's plural society thesis, of communities living side by side could comprise self-contained entities with little meaningful contact or exchange, rather than the ethical cosmopolitan ideal expressed by scholars such as Kwame Anthony Appiah.¹²⁰ Indeed, these plural communities could overlap with and reinforce economic inequality and exclusion. It was

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 274.

¹¹⁹ James Fugate, Governor of Sulu, to Director of the Bureau of Non-Christian Tribes, March 25, 1930, 11, Box 29, Folder 14, Joseph Ralston Hayden Papers, Ann Arbor, MI.

¹²⁰ See discussion of Furnivall and implications for cosmopolitanism in Freek Colombijn, *Patches of Padang: The History of an Indonesian Town in the Twentieth Century and the Use of Urban Space* (Leiden: Research School CNWS, 1994), 66-69; see also Kwame Anthony Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006).

these factors, which constrained the local Moro community and partially inhibited the advent of a reformist Islamic community akin to that found in Padang.

Conclusion

Of course, Zamboanga's lack of a reformist infrastructure analogous to that found in Padang and its hinterlands should not be misconstrued as a sign of religious decline or abeyance in the local Muslim community. In his groundbreaking new book on Islam in the much larger Indian Ocean colonial node of Bombay, on the distant subcontinent of South Asia, Nile Green describes in detail alternative templates for religious expression and identification apart from an almost Protestant like Islamic reform movements. Popular religious movements among the emergent Islamic proletariat of that city embraced a sort of "enchanted" model of piety centered upon shrines, brotherhoods, and a devotional literature of poetry and pulp fiction.¹²¹ A similar sort of milieu very possibly took root in Zamboanga City; while the Middle Eastern and South Asian Islamic ecumene had long, rich textual traditions that filtered down to the urban proletariat congregating in places like Bombay, written traditions in the areas adjacent to Zamboanga were more recent and limited to the *tarsila* form of royal genealogies. The lack of textual tradition, to some degree, occludes the proletariat history of Muslims in neighborhoods like Campo Muslim and Rio Hondo.

As figures like Haji Abdullah Nuño and organizations such as Sarikatul Islam make clear, a thriving Islamic milieu did develop in this erstwhile Jesuit mission, and the milieu persisted and expanded in the years ahead. Indeed, in the post-independence years, Zamboanga became a haven of sorts for devout Muslims across the Mindanao-Sulu region, for Middle East-trained

¹²¹ Nile Green, *Bombay Islam: The Religious Economy of the West Indian Ocean, 1840-1915* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011): 3, 18.

alim, and for Christian-Muslim dialogue. The cosmopolitan Islamic ethos that emerged in the colonial period, for all of its very real constraints and limitations, would continue to inflect and influence the post-colonial future.

Chapter 7 Conclusion

Imperial-Islamic encounters and the paradoxes of war

The preceding chapters have sought to reframe Islamic-imperial encounters in terms of war and collaboration, disconnection and reconnection. The violence at the heart of colonial conquest has long cast a spectral shadow over Muslims in the colonial age, at once acknowledged as an outsized presence looming over troubled histories of resistance and strife yet rarely subjected to serious scrutiny as a force driving the economic or spiritual relationships within Islamic communities. This ghostly ubiquity obscured recognition of a fundamental paradox inherent to projects of war-making. At the same time that colonial conquest visited death and devastation upon Muslim communities, it did not destroy them. Although the crucible of warfare eliminated many longstanding relationships, especially in the old networks of the Indian Ocean world, it also simultaneously forged new ones, linking not only colonial administrators to local partners, but also allowing Muslims to re-connect with their co-religionists. The very same technologies of the steamship and telegraph that allowed colonial powers to pursue conquest with growing confidence also provided Muslims with the tools to make the *hajj* pilgrimage, to disseminate religious theologies or ideologies, and to learn of news in the distant Islamic lands of South Asia and the Middle East. Warfare created at the same time it destroyed, rerouting and reconfiguring Muslim networks through colonial schools, ports, and cities, thereby producing religious connections and communities at once entangled in the colonial order but also quite distinct from it.

The history of two Southeast Asian islands, Sumatra and Sulu, crystallize these paradoxes of war. In both places, battle-scarred lands coexisted next to thriving port cities, naval blockades

with renewed trade and exchange, Islamic insurgency with more pacific movements for religious education, mutual aid, and reform. Two especially devastating wars wracked the Islamic kingdoms of Aceh and Jolo, costing tens of thousands of lives, spawning protracted resistance movement, and exerting heavy pressure on old external ties. At the same time, however, in the nearby regions of West Sumatra and Zamboanga, Islamic reformers launched a panoply of vibrant newspapers, reached out to their co-religionists in the wider Islamic world, experimented with novel forms of religious schooling, and helped develop new types of community organizations—all while nesting, albeit rather uncomfortably, within the embrace of the colonial state.

Through the juxtaposition of such paradoxes, this dissertation recasts colonial conquest and violence not just as forces for destruction and control, but also as catalysts that generated alternative forms of Islamic modernity. Specifically, this dissertation demonstrates that colonial warfare engendered a profound transformation in the physical and conceptual geographies of the Islamic world. By reconfiguring Muslim networks through the circuits of colonial power, military campaigns in fact spurred new urban nodes of religious exchange and amplified the universalistic ethos already deeply encoded in Islamic theology, promoting a renewed sense of connection and belonging to the global community of believers, or *umma*. In so doing, colonial warfare provided opportunities to Muslims at the putative “edges” of emerging spaces to fashion themselves as subjects in a wider “Islamic World,” as peoples who at once opposed the depredations of the non-Muslim crusader or *kafir* infidel, but also embraced new ideas about education, social advancement, and political organization in the form of the nation-state. Thus, from Sulu to Afghanistan to Morocco, war played a vital role in shaping a new geography of Islamic modernity on the periphery.

Paired comparisons and re-conceptualizing the periphery

Much of the extant literature has overlooked these striking antinomies, focusing instead on either destruction or creation, on violence or on fledgling colonial milieus, but not both simultaneously. The emphasis on local history, while producing many important, fine-grained studies of individual regions such as Aceh or West Sumatra, Sulu or Zamboanga, also tends to isolate their case studies from one another or to locate them only in relationship to the assumed space of the nation-state. Thus, dramatic titles such as *Blood of the People* predominate in discussions of Aceh, while more innocuous monikers such as *Schools and Politics* hold sway in the West Sumatran historiography.¹ However, by widening the analytic lens ever so slightly to juxtapose neighboring regions, to situate colonial warfare side by side with the growth of cities and Islamic rebellion next to religious reform, it becomes possible to ask how these two disparate phenomena might in fact be connected with one another. In short, it allows us to answer broader questions about the seemingly contradictory nature of Islamic-imperial encounters.

This blindness to the paradoxical duality between creation and destruction, moreover, extends beyond local histories to more general scholarship. Those works that should be best equipped to tease out larger patterns, such as comparisons that extend beyond an individual colony or nation space, instead tend to dwell on instances of violence and colonial warfare to the exclusion of any other subject. Thus, comparative literature in political science often reproduces the shortcomings of local history by plucking Aceh and Sulu from their regional context and simply placing them alongside other places wracked by rebellion, such as Patani in southern

¹ See Taufik Abdullah, *Schools and Politics: The Kaum Muda Movement in West Sumatra, 1927-1933* (Ithaca: Cornell Southeast Asia Program Publications, 1971; reprint, Singapore: Equinox Publishing, 2009); Anthony Reid, *The Blood of the People: Revolution and the End of Traditional Rule in Northern Sumatra* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1979).

Thailand.² Thus, while such studies might produce an illusion of generalizability by virtue of their transnational scope, they in fact lift violence-wracked areas from their immediate regional context and omit a large part of their history. Conversely, historical studies that focus on Islamic reform manage to transcend the boundaries of an individual case study to trace networks of devout Muslims, but in the process, they often overlook the role local violence might play in excluding peoples and places from such networks.³

This dissertation has proposed a methodology of paired comparison that can overcome such shortcomings and highlight the paradoxes at the heart of Islamic-imperial encounters. In particular, the juxtaposition of Aceh versus West Sumatra in Indonesia, and Jolo versus Zamboanga in the Philippines, allows us to combine the benefits of local, regional, and comparative histories in innovative ways. By delving into the complexities of individual localities, for example, we can understand the particularities and contingencies of colonial violence, as well as the specific personalities and institutions that drove new currents of Islamic reform. Then, by placing these superficially disparate, yet geographically proximate phenomena into dialogue with one another as component parts of a larger region, it becomes possible to test and explain the factors that might contribute to such paradoxical pairings. Finally, comparative analysis across two separate colonial spaces and two different colonial rulers helps to illuminate those circumstances which might be specific to Dutch interactions with local Muslims in Aceh and West Sumatra, as well as those factors more broadly applicable to colonial interactions in both the Aceh/West Sumatra and Jolo/Zamboanga cases. This wide frame comparison will thus yield a better sense of what is generalizable about Islamic-imperial encounters. In sum, by

² See for example, Peter Chalk, "Separatism and Southeast Asia: The Islamic Factor in Southern Thailand, Mindanao, and Aceh," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 24, no. 4 (July 2001): 241-269.

³ See for example, Michael Laffan, *Islamic Nationhood and Colonial Indonesia: The Umma below the Winds* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 114-180, 190-206.

facilitating analysis at once grounded in a small number of local case studies, yet attuned to general patterns that transcend individual place and colony, the paired comparison approach enables a nuanced understanding of the paradoxical processes of destruction and creation that defined Islamic-imperial encounters.

Beyond the innovative blending of local, regional, and comparative levels of analysis, the paired comparison approach also contributes an important reconceptualization of spaces perceived as “edges” or violent “peripheries.” For all of the deep, granular details generated in local histories, the center of the colonial state almost always persists as the implicit or explicit referent point by which all events are judged. Even those studies that prioritize local characteristics and personalities over the question of integration into the colonial sphere still, nonetheless, set up high politics and the capital as an unspoken foil of sorts—a distant antipode to the mundane and prosaic activities of local actors.⁴ However intrinsically valuable, these rich local studies do not significantly disrupt the entrenched paradigm of centers and peripheries or challenge the perception of places like Aceh or Sulu as distant, troubled Muslim lands at the edge of the nation-state. Comparative studies, moreover, often compound these shortcomings by highlighting relationships to the center as a key variable, an indicator of difference or similarity across cases and nations.⁵ Neither the local or comparative level of analysis, on their own, can do much to problematize the center/periphery metaphor that so often informs the study of regions like Sumatra and Sulu.

The paired comparison approach, by contrast, re-centers imagined “peripheries” as the key pivot for understanding paradoxical processes of disconnection and reconnection. By

⁴ See for example Timothy P. Barnard, “Local Heroes and National Consciousness: The Politics of Historiography in Riau,” *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land-, en Volkenkunde* 153, no. 4 (1997): 509-526.

⁵ Deborah Cohen, “Comparative History: Buyer Beware,” *GHI Bulletin* 29 (Fall 2001): 26.

replacing distant capitals with neighboring areas as the primary referent, by making West Sumatra the appropriate frame for making sense of Aceh rather than Jakarta and by defining Zamboanga as the departure point for analyzing Jolo instead of distant Manila, it becomes possible to see regions on their own terms. These lateral comparisons place Sumatra and Sulu at the center of their worlds, tracing how war did not materialize in these areas because they were inherently violent or separatist or peripheral. Instead, the experience of colonial conquest fashioned the very concept of an edge. By degrading the ties of powerful kingdoms that had long been central nodes in the wider Islamic world, while simultaneously advancing new opportunities for Muslims in neighboring areas to forge external connections, war redefined what it meant to be a peripheral area or a space integral to the nascent nation. In sum, paired comparisons illustrate that colonial warfare played a key role in the constitution of shifting peripheries and centers.

Disconnection and reconnection, enclosure and coercive cosmopolitanism

Through its juxtaposition of neighboring regions, the paired comparative approach lays bare a central dynamic unleashed by colonial conquest, a dialectic between exclusion and inclusion, disconnection and reconnection. In those locations where warfare proved most intense, rendering negotiated settlement a virtual impossibility, colonial powers moved to batter their enemies from without, to isolate and contain local Muslims so that they could not draw any sustenance from their connections with the outside world. In short, invading armies engaged in a project of “enclosure,” a project whereby they sought to detach and disarticulate local Muslim kingdoms from those global networks without edge or end that had for so long been the fount of their power. Meanwhile, in other nearby regions, invading powers managed to overcome the

destructive legacies of warfare and consecrate collaborative arrangements with Muslims across the violence-torn colonial divide. These collaborative ties, in turn, would lay the foundation for a long term process of entanglement, a process by which local Muslims became inextricably intertwined within the economic, political, and cultural circuits of the colonial state. Although this entwinement in the colonial order was quite often repressive and prejudicial to local Muslims, it also, paradoxically, provided them with the resources to propagate revitalized theologies of religious reform, to forge new religious organizations, and to re-connect with their co-religionists from around the world; a process of “coercive cosmopolitanism.” In sum, this powerful push and pull between enclosure and coercive cosmopolitanism constituted one of the signal forces driving the reconfiguration of Islamic networks in the imperial age.

The preceding chapters of this dissertation have traced this dialectical dynamic between enclosure and coercive cosmopolitanism from the outset of colonial conquest to the eve of independence. Chapter Two sets the stage for the disjuncture between these contradictory forces through a comparative analysis of warfare and collaboration. In particular, it demonstrates how the contingencies and particularities of military campaigns generated considerable variations in outcomes. The intensity of violence in the traditional nodes of the Southeast Asian world, Muslim sultanates such as Aceh and Sulu, undermined cooperation across the colonial divide, provoked stiff religious resistance, and ultimately sustained decades-long pacification campaigns—thereby placing colonial armies on a path towards enclosure. On the peripheries of these great sultanates, however, in locations such as West Sumatra and Zamboanga, fissures within local Islamic society combined with far more flexible military strategies on the part of colonial armies to produce viable collaborative arrangements and a successful demobilization of resistance forces. These cooperative arrangements enmeshed local populations within the fabric

of emerging colonial societies, thereby laying the groundwork for future regimes of coercive cosmopolitanism.

Chapter Three pivots from a broad comparative frame to fine grained studies of enclosure with individual case study of Sulu. Sulu furnishes an example of a notably interventionist campaign of disconnection and exclusion. Over the course of the second half of the nineteenth century, Spanish forces subjected the people of the region to unremitting naval bombardment, thus making local seafarers into criminals within their own waters and exerting severe strain on the commercial and religious ties that had long integrated Sulu into the larger fabric of the Southeast Asian maritime world. Similarly, Spain's successor empire in Sulu, the United States, pursued an aggressive project of economic enclosure that attempted to sever local ties with the outside world and to re-direct them through colonial channels. The cumulative weight of these projects never did succeed in entirely severing Sulu's external ties. However, they did gradually contract the maritime universe of local seafarers and disarticulate them from the networks of global trade radiating outward toward Singapore, the Indian Ocean, and Europe, placing the kingdom on a slow drift toward isolation.

Chapter Four illustrates a variation on the theme of enclosure with a close study of Aceh. In contrast to the highly interventionist policies brought to bear in Sulu, Dutch forces in Aceh vacillated between an ineffectual blockade of the seas and almost total inaction, in the process rarely taking any concrete steps to impede the movement of local Muslims to and from the region. The relative weakness and fitfulness of colonial policy did not indicate a total abandonment of enclosure. Quite to the contrary, targeted cases of exile combined with the uncertainty borne of desultory blockades and a conscious policy of economic withdrawal, gradually enervated the commercial connections that had long sustained Aceh's power. In fact,

as the Dutch cultivated a parallel sphere of economic extraction at the margins of local society, Acehnese gradually faded from those commercial and religious networks in which it had once been so prominent. While withdrawal, neglect, and isolation by the Dutch provided a stark contrast to the more aggressive tactics of the Spanish and Americans three thousand miles away, it produced much the same result: the extrication and disarticulation of Aceh from its outward looking external connections.

Chapter Five transitions from the push of enclosure toward the pull of coercive cosmopolitanism with an examination of the intertwined genealogies of colonial rule and Islamic reformism in West Sumatra. Specifically, it traces the genealogy of an influential family of Muslim *alim* from the formative moment of collaboration during the early nineteenth century Padri War well until the anti-colonial nationalist period in the 1930s. Through their connection to the colonial state, the descendants of Tuanku nan Tua obtained influential political positions, amassed considerable wealth, and enjoyed the opportunity to attend Dutch schools—all benefits, paradoxically, that eventually propelled one member of this family, Mohammad Tahir Jalal al-Din, to Cairo, Singapore, and into a distinguished career as a prominent Muslim scholar. In turn, these genealogies converged with economic growth and urbanization—itsself the product of West Sumatra’s integration into the colonial sphere—to produce considerable religious ferment. Indeed, Jalal al-Din’s students took advantage of an economically ascendant class of Muslim Minangkabau, fundraising and collecting subscription dues that allowed them to launch new religious institutions like the Adabijah School and local chapters of Muhammadiyah. Thus, even as many of these Muslim activists fell under Dutch suspicion, colonial political and economic arrangements nonetheless played an important role in re-connecting local society to wider, transnational currents of Islamic reform.

The last part of this dissertation, Chapter Six, concludes with a study of re-connections and reform in the Philippine city of Zamboanga. As the colonial capital of the new US province of Moroland and as a city populated predominantly by Catholic Filipinos, Zamboanga provides an incongruous example for the possibilities of Muslim inclusion. However, it was in precisely this city that Haji Abdullah Nuño , a local who had endured decades of exile in distant reaches of Catholic Luzon, would develop a thriving mosque and hub of Islamic scholarship, attracting teachers from the Arab and Malay world while simultaneously drawing devout Muslims from across Mindanao and Sulu. The activities of Haji Abdullah Nuño , in turn, attested to a fecund urban environment for religious devotion, as Muslims poured into the city other war-torn areas of Sulu and even helped give rise to new organizations like Sarikatul Islam. This study of a Muslim religious milieu in a predominantly Catholic colonial city further illustrates the idiosyncratic entanglements of coercive cosmopolitanism in a colonial age.

Complicating disconnections and reconnections

One shortcoming in comparative historical research is a tendency to over-determine results across multiple case studies in an attempt create generalizable patterns.⁶ Such a risk is especially pronounced in comparisons that transcend an individual colony or nation. This dissertation has attempted to mitigate such shortcomings by focusing on a limited number of paired case studies, each of which, Aceh versus West Sumatra, and Jolo versus Zamboanga, juxtapose contiguous and historically connected regions within the same colony. By limiting the range of case studies to these two paired sites, it becomes possible to at once attend to local history in all of its richness and granular detail, while simultaneously illuminating the

⁶ Ibid., 25-27.

paradoxical processes of enclosure and coercive cosmopolitanism other studies might miss.

However, in attempting to elucidate this dialectical dynamic, there is still a risk of overstating the distinction between disconnection and reconnection, of overlooking how these tendencies might blur, overlap, and intersect.

The previous chapters have sought to remain mindful of these nuances, explaining how in spite of broader patterns, connections could nonetheless sometimes prove resilient in Aceh and Sulu, while pressures for disconnection at other times prevailed in West Sumatra and Zamboanga. It is impossible to draw a comprehensive, one-to-one mapping between concept and region. The competing pressures of enclosure and coercive cosmopolitanism cut across convenient geographical boundaries, exerting their push and pull dynamic in all four of the individual cases under discussion. Enclosure thus weighed more heavily on Aceh, but figures like Muhammad Hasbi nonetheless maintained contacts that extended from modernist Muslim newspapers in Singapore to Hadhrami schools in Java, a network that would propel him to a prominent role as an Islamic theorist in Jakarta in the post-colonial era. Likewise, seafarers from Sulu continued to cross international boundaries and ply distant waters well after Spanish steamers and American coast guard cruisers did their worst. Conversely, Dutch administrators in West Sumatra did not shy away from exiling some of the most prominent Muslim reformers from that region, nor did American officials in Zamboanga always smile upon Islamic activities in their capital city. The dialectic between disconnection and reconnection thus constituted a continual and fluid process, a process at work across all times and places.

The fact that aspects of the enclosure and coercive cosmopolitanism can be seen in all regions does not alter the fact that the first of these proved more powerful in Aceh and Jolo, while the second was more salient in West Sumatra and Zamboanga. However much a few

Muslims might travel beyond its shores or however entangled *ulèëbalang* collaborators might become in its colonial institutions, the cumulative historical weight of exclusion and enclosure in Aceh nonetheless stunted the ability of locals to forge thriving and lasting external connections. Thus, the spirit of renewed religious consciousness, or *insyaf*, which swept across Aceh in the 1930s did not redound to the benefit of translocal Islamic organizations such as Muhammadiyah that tried to gain a foothold in the region, but instead, created ethnically particularistic organizations such as PUSA.⁷ Conversely, however much Dutch officials exiled or imprisoned leading Muslim activists in West Sumatra, the density and longevity of connections between that region and Cairo and Java ensured that nationalism remained more prevalent in those regions.⁸ Thus, in spite of contradictory pressures, the long shadow of colonial warfare would prove difficult to escape, setting in motion the longterm disconnection of Aceh and Sulu, as well as the reconnection of West Sumatra and Zamboanga: a process emblematic of the reconfigured Southeast Asia's Islamic networks.

Epilogue

In ways both predictable and unpredictable, the afterlife of war and colonial conquest left an indelible imprint on the post-colonial histories of Muslim Southeast Asia. As projects of enclosure and coercive cosmopolitanism simultaneously disconnected and reconnected, reconfiguring flows of people away from the powerful kingdoms of the past towards port cities that appeared to herald the future, Islamic networks became ever more entwined with the

⁷ James Siegel, *Rope of God* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 98-133; Edward Aspinall, *Islam and Nation: Separatist Rebellion in Aceh, Indonesia* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2009), 28-30; Reid, *Blood of the People*, 26-31.

⁸ See for example Abdullah, *School and Politics*, 51-52; Audrey Kahin, *Rebellion to Integration: West Sumatra and the Indonesian Polity, 1926-1998* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1998), 53-57.

colonial order. Where once traders and *hajjis* coursed through the sultanates of Aceh and Sulu, by the nineteenth century new opportunities and movements of religious revival instead drew them toward one-time peripheries, to places like West Sumatra and Zamboanga. The underlying geography of exclusion and inclusion created in these years, in turn, would prove remarkably resilient even amidst the transition from colonialism to independence and beyond. The same peoples and regions that had navigated successfully across diverse arrays of organizations and institutions, between colonial schools, fledgling Muslim associations like Muhammadiyah, and Islamic universities in Cairo, would be the ones to undertake the work of looking beyond their individual home regions toward trans-local communities of belonging and political integration. By contrast, those peoples and regions that had been marginalized from these reconfigured networks would gravitate in a different direction, embracing more localized projects of identity and self-rule.

The legacy of reconfigured Islamic networks, to be sure, cannot be subsumed under some teleological model tracing a direct line from exclusion to separatism or inclusion to national integration.⁹ In all the areas under study here, the period from the 1930s through the present witnessed surprising deviations from predictable trajectories. Places infamous for their independent streak and general unruliness like Aceh or Sulu would, at certain junctures, swear their undying solidarity and commitment to nationalist movements for independence. During the Revolutionary period of the 1940s, for instance, Acehnese Muslims committed themselves to the

⁹ There has been a great deal of scholarship demonstrating that colonial-era networks, paradoxically, comprised the foundation for independent post-colonial nations. Thus, even though anti-colonial nationalism portrayed themselves as the foe of colonial states, they in fact reproduced their ideologies, institutions, and political characteristics. For now, this epilogue is operating from this premise, but will subject it to scrutiny later. See for example Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).

cause of the Indonesian nation and the fight against Dutch military forces.¹⁰ Likewise, those areas later known as stalwart pillars of the post-colonial nation, such as West Sumatra and Zamboanga, sometimes became engulfed in strife and rebellion. In 1958, military officials and Islamic activists in West Sumatra launched a two year rebellion known as the Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Indonesia (PRRI), in turn triggering swift reprisals from the central government in Jakarta.¹¹ Similarly, Zamboanga's longtime position as a refuge from the insurgencies against Manila that embroiled its neighbors in Sulu gave way to a rebel charge by the Moro National Liberation Front within the city's boundaries just this past year in September 2013, a charge that soon led to the devastation of many of the city's Muslim districts.¹² In sum, colonial enclosure did not place regions on an inalterable path against wider nationalist projects, while coercive cosmopolitanism, just as surely, did not guarantee a seamless incorporation within the post-colonial nation.

Yet, even if the colonial reconfiguration of Islamic networks did not preordain divergent post-colonial futures, they did, nonetheless, predispose them. The density of intra- and inter-national connections in West Sumatra and Zamboanga did not prevent the formation of distinctive ethnic nationalisms among the Minangkabau and Moros. However, they could temper attendant impulses toward separatism. Ties forged during the colonial period helped to sustain dialogue with new capitals in Jakarta or Manila, to delay the outbreak of resistance in some

¹⁰ Edward Aspinall, "Sovereignty, the Successor State, and Universal Human Rights: History and the International Structuring of Acehnese Nationalism," *Indonesia* 73 (April 2002): 3-4.

¹¹ Kahin, *Rebellion to Integration*, 211-236.

¹² Approximately 110,000 people were displaced from the Zamboanga area by fighting between the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and the Government of the Republic of the Philippines. 160 MNLF fighters were reported killed. See Julie S. Alipala, "Disgruntled MNLF men hunting down Misuari too, says military official," *Philippines Daily Inquirer*, October 14, 2013, <<http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/506639/disgruntled-mnlf-men-hunting-down-misuari-too-says-military-official>>.

cases, and to facilitate relatively quick rapprochements in the cases when rebellion did erupt.¹³

The attenuated connections with Aceh and Sulu, by contrast, rendered feelings of solidarity and loyalty to post-colonial centers much more fleeting. Thus, in spite of transitory instances of mutual-interest and cooperation with the post-colonial nation, weak external ties in Aceh and Sulu would ultimately pose little counterweight against separatist movements.¹⁴ While ultimately beyond the purview of this dissertation, an examination of the complex filiations and genealogies leading from the colonial experience of disconnection and reconnection to post-colonial separatist movements would constitute a promising avenue for future research.

These complexities in the post-colonial period point to one of the central conclusions of this dissertation: that the conflicting push and pull between enclosure and coercive cosmopolitanism, of disconnection and reconnection, constantly re-shaped and re-made the putative “edges” of the Islamic world. Colonial warfare unleashed a dialectical dynamic that inverted the Muslim networks of Southeast Asia, turning the central nodes of Aceh and Sulu into isolated peripheries, while elevating one-time hinterlands such as the West Sumatra and Zamboanga into new hubs of Islamic connectedness. Thus, where once Acehnese and Tausug welcomed scholars and traders from across the Indian Ocean littoral, it was now people from colonial cities like Padang and Zamboanga who immersed themselves in religious networks

¹³ Until the violence of September 2013, Zamboanga had been known as a refuge and safehaven from other parts of Mindanao-Sulu, a city that was secured and generally peaceful. See the reflections of a specialist in the anthropology of Islam in the region, Jowel Canuday, “Personal Essay: Zamboanga Dreams: Freedom from Fear,” *MindaNews: This is OUR Mindanao*, September 14, 2013, < <http://www.mindanews.com/peace-process/2013/09/14/commentary-zamboanga-dreams-freedom-from-fear/>>; likewise, resistance faded after the PRRI rebellion in West Sumatra after the early 1960s and by the mid-1980s the New Order government had succeeded in re-integrating the region into the Indonesian mainstream, a place it has remained, see Kahin, *Rebellion to Integration*, 252.

¹⁴ The persistence of the Gerakan Aceh Merdeka (Free Aceh Movement), the Moro National Liberation Front in Sulu, and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front in Maranao from the 1960s through the turn of the century shows the greater resilience of separatism in those areas. See for the Free Aceh Movement, Aspinall, *Islam and Nation*, 2; for the MNLF in the Philippines, see Eliseo Mercado, “Culture, Economics, and Revolt in Mindanao: The Origins of the MNLF and the Politics of Separatism,” in *Armed Separatism in Southeast Asia*, eds., Lim Joo-Jock and S. Vani (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1984): 151-175.

without end, extending to Mecca and Cairo, London and Washington. Likewise, if before it had been people in the highlands of Minangkabau or the tribal realms of Zamboanga that had fought against the dominance of their nearby neighbors, now it was the people of Aceh and Sulu who struggled against absorption into the emerging hegemon of the post-colonial nation-state. This dialectic subjected the Southeast Asian Islamic world to continuous flux, deconstructing and reconstructing fluid boundaries that belied the very concept of a stable, linear edge.

This reality of contingent, ever-shifting edges does more than simply collapse the boundaries between war-torn peripheries and integral cores; it also highlights the variable synergies of place, space and time that defined multiple Islamic modernities. On the one hand, the churn of peripheries in flux propelled a wide-ranging, general transformation in the sense of place that affected almost all Southeast Asia Muslims. However seemingly contradictory, both the exclusionary, oppositional pressures of enclosure, as well as the inclusionary, absorptive logic of coercive cosmopolitanism, forced individuals to look beyond their immediate surroundings, to see that the bonds of family or village would no longer suffice against the colonial onslaught. Instead, these disruptive forces prompted Muslims to revisit the universalist ethos already embedded in their faith and to conceive of themselves as belonging to a much wider community of believers—a global *umma*. A universal sense of place within the *dunia Islam*, of belonging to the “Muslim World,” took hold.

However, the very same dialectical forces that inspired a universal sense of place and belonging to the *umma* also spawned remarkably divergent synergies of space and time.¹⁵ In those regions that experienced the full brunt of war-making and enclosure, the sense of belonging to a larger Islamic world was mediated by a deeply entrenched mentality of siege,

¹⁵ Edward Aspinall briefly sketches out these considerations of time and space. See, Aspinall, *Islam and Nation*, 28-30.

resistance and disconnection. As a result, the peoples of Aceh and Sulu came to understand their participation in universal religious projects through a powerful sense of opposition, a sense of fighting against invading infidels, outside powers, and anyone else who might not respect their religious faith. This oppositional dynamic had two important implications. First, it provided a strong incentive to realize the universalistic credos of Islam through a limited spatial realm.¹⁶ Rather than imagining their religious mission in terms of the broad spaces of the colonial world, in terms of Indonesian and Philippine nations-state, Acehnese and Tausug instead gravitated toward a much more limited geographic frame predicated on the ties of a single ethnic group. Thus, these two regions ultimately witnessed, in the latter half of the twentieth century, the rise of various groups like the Association of all-Aceh Ulama (PUSA) or the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) that fused religious nationhood with an ethnically particularistic and spatially limited political vision.

This oppositional tendency borne of enclosure also produced a marked temporal dynamic. The deep imprint of war inspired many people from Aceh and Sulu to look backward into their history to seminal moments of resistance and insurgency as a template for moving forward to fulfil their place in a global *umma*.¹⁷ This temporal tendency had the effect of extending rebellion into the future as a viable recourse against the perceived depredations even of majority Muslim nation states like Indonesia. These spatial and temporal factors would, ultimately, solidify Aceh and Sulu's continued position on the periphery within new nations and the larger world order.

By contrast, coercive cosmopolitanism engendered different synergies of space and time in regions like West Sumatra and Zamboanga. This dissertation has demonstrated that the long

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

experience of connection and entanglement in colonial networks predisposed people in these places to search for the realization of universalistic Islamic visions not through the circumscribed imagined spatiality that could only include members of a single ethnic group, but instead, through the multiethnic space bequeathed to them by colonial powers—through the vehicles of Indonesia and the Philippines. As a result, Minangkabau Muslims in West Sumatra tended to establish Islamic groups like the Union of Indonesian Muslims (PERMI) or Muhammadiyah that found its primary referent in the Indonesian nation.¹⁸ Indeed, in many ways, these religious movements imagined West Sumatra as an alternative center tying the peoples of the nation to the *umma*.

The experience of coercive cosmopolitanism also inflected the sense of time in these regions. The long integration of Minangkabau Muslims into colonial networks, as described in Chapter Five of this dissertation, reduced the resonance of long past rebellions like the Padri War and instead turned people toward the forward-looking project of forging new political parties, associations, schools, and other assorted institutions. Meanwhile, even if the dynamics in Zamboanga were markedly different from West Sumatra due to the large Christian presence, there was a similar tendency to at least accept, if not embrace, a broader spatial conception of “Muslim Filipinos” over “Moros,” as well as to forget the wars of the past in favor of navigating through the educational and political realms of the present. The spatial and temporal synergies unleashed by coercive cosmopolitanism would have the effect of reinforcing Zamboanga and West Sumatra’s positions as central nodes, well-integrated into the institutions of the nation-state.

¹⁸ Kahin, *Rebellion to Integration*, 53-57.

These variables of place, space, and time, in turn, can help provide a flexible yet precise template for understanding trends well beyond the confines of Southeast Asia. Instead of imagining a sweeping linear arc that connects the so-called “hot-spots” of the Islamic world from Afghanistan to Sudan to Morocco into one vast transcontinental periphery or edge, we can instead see a long series of kaleidoscopic constellations encompassing multiple centers and edges, cores and peripheries. The conflicting tendencies to look outward versus inward in space, or forward versus backward in time thus generated innumerable pockets of inclusion and exclusion. In so doing, this dialectical push and pull set the groundwork for multiple expressions of Muslim modernities throughout the globe. At some times and places, Muslim peoples might envision themselves as fighting for brave new ethnic nations and resisting the depredations of central powers. At other times and places, Muslims struggled to piece together and solidify the nations forged in the age of colonialism. However, one cannot understand either of these dynamics in isolation from another. By understanding these dialectic processes as part of a shifting of core/periphery sets moving across time and space, as the product of the forces of enclosure and coercive cosmopolitanism, it becomes possible to understand how Muslim networks coalesced into a patchwork of fragmented and overlapping modernities.

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