


“WHO AM I?”: METHODOLOGICAL DILEMMA IN THE FIELD OF TRANSNATIONAL ISLAMIC MOVEMENT

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In this so called “an accelerated world” (Eriksen, 2016), most anthropologists realized that a clear demarcation between home and abroad is getting blurred. Therefore, some arguments stating that cultural identity is a fixed category has always been questioned since it is socially constructed and situated in a given context. This particular condition has shaped and reshaped the way ethnographers depicting the complexity and diversity of socio-cultural practices in one particular locality. Meanwhile, they seem to be less sensitive and/or ignoring the fast exchange of information and knowledge that has also been influencing their subjectivity – as a social being or a researcher, about the field. On the other hand, I assume that the field is not merely as a passive object but also the potential one distracting ethnographer’s subjectivity. This paper is the modification of methodological chapter of my dissertation, in which I engaged with multi-sited ethnography by following Tablighi Jama’at mission – an Islamic reformist group established in India performing “door to door missionary” style from Indonesia to Cambodia. This paper is somehow my reflexivity on how I deal with several positionalities since the early stage of proposal writing into the ongoing research in the field. In short, as a Muslim studying Islam and/or Muslim community will certainly put me into paradox, on one hand this shared religious identity somehow becomes advantageous for me to be easily accepted by board members of Tablighi Jama’at, but on the other hand, my subjectivity – personal social life, has also been distracting my view over this community. Besides that, I have to deal with the pragmatic choice where the Tablighi jama’at members often assure me that in order to understand them, there is no other choice than practicing what they do.

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