

MUSLIM MASCULINITIES IN AUSTRALIA

Negotiating Manhood and Muslim Identity in Contemporary Australia

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Abstract

This study examined how migrant Muslim men's status as a religious minority in Australia affected their masculinities. It addressed the absence of literature of Muslim masculinities in Australia amidst the growing concern on Muslim men in Australia over their association with radical movements and questions over their loyalty to Australia as a nation. The project offered an analysis of the life experience of Muslim men as a minority in Australia through a gender lens. The study proposed an analytical framework based on the premise that masculinity is constructed through relationships (Connell 2005), specifying three contexts of relationships where Muslim masculinities are negotiated: Muslim men's relationship with the non-Muslim majority of Australian society; Muslim men's relationship with Muslim women; and a Muslim brotherhood. The framework was applied through a qualitative study exploring the life of 25 Southeast Asian Muslim men and the religious activities of five Muslim organisations. Employing in-depth interviews, group discussions, and participant observation, the project identified key aspects of negotiation of masculinity observed in the Muslim men's experience in work life, family life, and participation in religious communities.

This study demonstrates that Muslim men's status as a minority has reinforced the religious aspect of their masculinities and bonding of brotherhood while weakening their traditional masculine power as the head or *imam* of family. Muslim men's status and awareness of being a minority and being different to the non-Muslim majority associated with White-Anglo does not imply their sense of being marginalised or experience of marginalisation in the society. Social encounters in the workplace lead to the reinforcement of religious consciousness and commitment among Muslim men as a response to a non-Muslim majority social environment that is typically regarded as suspicious and critical toward religion, secular or agnostic.

This study indicates changes of power relation among the Muslim families and a crisis of men's masculine privilege. While the narrative of men as the head of family was firmly

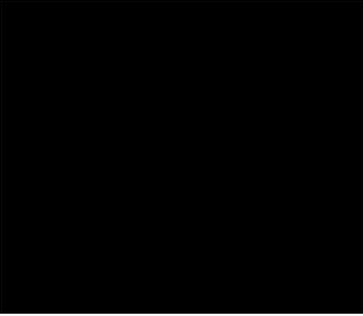
maintained, the men did not necessarily possess the cultural resources to enforce their authority. Mainstream family practices and the broader gender order in Australia, associated with values of individual freedom and equality alongside the need for family welfare, urged the men to adapt their practice of being leaders of the family.

Experience in Australia also reinforced the bonding of brotherhood among the Muslim men. Religious communities centred in its male-only brotherhood network, became the most culturally-religiously comfortable context of relationship for the Muslim men to reclaim and regain their traditional religious status as the normative Muslims. The brotherhood provides a sense of belonging and identification of shared religious minority identity but superior gender identity.

The study identified some key elements of Muslim masculinities including men's individual performance of religious piety, responses to their non-Muslim social surroundings, a sense of belonging to Australia, men's gender privilege, particularly status as the head of family, the narrative of womanhood, values of brotherhood, and the organisation of religious rituals. Future studies on Muslim masculinities in Australia and abroad are also suggested.

Declaration

I declare that this thesis contains no material which has previously been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis contains no material which has previously been published or written by another person,

 nce is made in the text of the thesis.

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Glossary

Du'a: supplication

Dzikr or *Dzikir*: a ritual of remembering God

Eid Fitr: the most widely celebrated holiday in the Muslim world in marking the end of Ramadhan.

Hadith: tradition related to the deeds and utterances of the Prophet Muhammad as recounted by his companions. Hadith is the second most important source of Islamic doctrine/law after the Qur'an.

Halal: lawful to consume, particularly food and meat from animals that have been ritually slaughtered; as opposed to *haram*, or unlawful.

Ibadat or *ibadah*: act of worship.

Imam: Literally, leader of prayer. Many participants in the study also used the term in referring to the leader of the family.

Iman: Arabic for faith

Mighrab or *Mihrab*: a special space located in the front part of the mosque hall provided for the imam of prayers.

Rakaat or *rakat*: a unit in the *salat* consists of prescribed body movements and recitations. A *salat* is performed at a minimum of two *rakaat*.

Ramadhan or Ramadan: The ninth month of the Islamic calendar, celebrated as a holy month throughout which Muslims perform a fasting ritual. Fasting during Ramadhan is an obligatory ritual and the third Pillar of Islam.

Salat: Also pronounced as *salah* or *shalah*, the canonical ritual that differs to the spontaneous petition to God called *du'a*, to pray. As a ritual, *salat* is an act of worship consisting of a series of body movements and recitations, more than the supplication typically associated with the idea of 'prayer' in the West. There are five obligatory (*fard*) *salat* an adult Muslim performs daily: *Fajr*, performed from dawn to just before sunrise; *Zuhr* or *Dzuhur*, performed in the afternoon; *Asr*, performed in the latter part of afternoon until sunset; *Maghrib*, performed just after sunset; and *Isha*, performed at night. See Glasse (2000) for detailed description of *salat*.

Jum'ah prayer: Friday prayer, an obligatory *salat* for men performed on Friday afternoon in substitution of the *Zhur* prayer

Tarawih: Additional prayers performed at night after *Isha* prayer during the month of *Ramadhan*. While not compulsory, the prayers are highly recommended and many Muslims, especially Sunnis, perform the prayers regularly during Ramadhan.

Ustadz: Religious preacher or religious teacher

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

‘Siege headlines generate fears’, read the tagline on Mike Clear’s letter published in *The Sydney Morning Herald* on September 20, 2014.¹ Clear was complaining about ‘excessive and florid media coverage’ that spread fears amongst the community about planned random terrorist attacks, possibly in form of beheadings, by supporters of ISIS targeting Australians on Australian soil. Two days earlier, the Australian Federal Police and the NSW Police had joined in a task force carrying out counter-terrorism raids across Western Sydney and Brisbane's south. The operations had been the largest in Australian history, involving 800 police officers, resulting in one Muslim man being charged with serious terrorism offences and 14 others being detained.² From the middle to the end of 2014, fears and moral panic continued amongst the Australian public as a result of a series of incidents involving Australian Muslim men associating themselves with ISIS; these fears intensified with the Martin Place incident in Sydney (2014) (Commonwealth of Australia 2015).³

This series of incidents have at some points changed the way the Australian public sees and responds to Muslims, particularly Muslim men. Muslim men have become problematic for the Australian identity. ‘We are in the midst of an intense moral panic about Islam,’ George Morgan warned Australian readers in reference to the intensification of Islamophobia.⁴

¹ *Sydney Morning Herald*, September 20, 2014, ‘Siege headlines generate fears’, <http://www.smh.com.au/comment/smh-letters/siege-headlines-generate-fears-20140919-10izzf.html>. Viewed on 10 April 2015.

² ISIS (also known as ISIL or IS) refers to an armed military-political movement in the Middle East naming themselves ‘Islamic State of Iraq and Syria’. ISIS is the newest form of global terrorist threat spreading radical ideology under the banner of Islam. *Sydney Morning Herald*, September 18, 2014, ‘Terrorism raids carried out across Sydney, Brisbane’ <http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/terrorism-raids-carried-out-across-sydney-brisbane-20140917-10igft.html>. Viewed on 10 April 2015.

³ A self-declared sheik, Man Haron Monis, held 18 hostages at gunpoint at the Lindt Café at Martin Place Sydney, on 15-16 December 2014. The police treated the event as a terrorist attack; Haron Monis and two of the hostages were killed. For an official review see Commonwealth of Australia (2015).

⁴ *Sydney Morning Herald*, October 1, 2014, ‘Islamophobia feeds on our fear of an evil within’

Morgan concluded that the sources of this moral panic involved Australian media, government officials and the police, from the initial identification of the 'evil within' to the reproduction of public discourse that 'nobody is safe'. A crucial part of this discourse is a narrative that there is certain element in the society that does not want to assimilate into 'the Australian way', and that this element largely comprises Muslim men. As Morgan commented, this fear is nothing new: it goes back at least as far as a series of local incidents associated with Islam and Muslim men, including gang rapes in Sydney (2000 and 2002)⁵, the *Tampa* crisis (2001)⁶ and the Cronulla riots (2005)⁷ (Aslan 2009; Kabir 2005; Poynting & Mason 2007; Poynting et al. 2004). However, Islamophobia also has a global character linked to international event such as September 11th and the US 'war on terror' (Aslan 2009; IDA 2007; Manning 2003; Poynting and Mason 2007).

Western popular culture views Muslim men as modern demons (Noble 2008; Ratnesar and Zabriskis 2004). Muslim men are widely portrayed as bearded, gun-toting, bandana-wearing men, in the long robes or military fatigues used by some Islamists (Gerami 2005). Their menace and aggression are symbolised by names such as 'Bin Laden', which become political icons of Islamic hypermasculinity (Noble 2008; Poynting et al. 2004). Hostility against Islam has particularly been addressed towards Muslim men. A large portion of public discourse concerning the incompatibility of 'Muslim' identity with 'Australian' values is primarily targeted at men (Chafic 2010; Nilan et al. 2007). Any criticism of Muslim women,

<http://www.smh.com.au/comment/islamophobia-feeds-on-our-fear-of-an-evil-within-20140930-10o073.html>. Viewed 10 April 2015.

⁵ In 2000 and 2002 two cases of serial gang rapes occurred in the southwestern suburbs of Sydney: the first was known as 'the Lebanese gang rapes', as the perpetrators were a group of young Australians from Lebanese-Muslim backgrounds, and the second was known as 'the K brothers', in which the perpetrators were four young Pakistani brothers and one young Nepali. The cases gained attention as the media, policies and politicians argued that race and religion had motivated the crimes, calling them 'racial crimes' in which Lebanese, Pakistani and Muslims men raped White Australian women. For further discussion on how both cases were presented to the public and how they produced Islamophobia in Australia, see Aslan (2009), Kabir (2004) and Poynting et al. (2004).

⁶ The *Tampa* was a Norwegian freighter that rescued over 430 asylum seekers, mainly from Afghanistan, from a sinking ferry departing from Indonesia on August 2001. The captain was threatened by the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs with sanctions designated for people-smugglers under the Migration Act upon entering Australian territorial waters, and was forced to turn around and sail for Indonesia. Other asylum-seeker cases gained attention as fear and anxiety about refugees and asylum seekers, mainly from the Middle East, heightened. For more discussion on this issue see Aslan (2009), Kabir (2004) and Poynting et al. (2004).

⁷ The Cronulla riots broke out in December 2005, involving about 5,000 people gathering at Cronulla Beach, Sydney, who were encouraged to join a mass action that claimed to be saving 'our beach', 'Aussies', and 'our women' from the 'Lebs', which referred to Lebanese Muslims. The action was described as a protest against the Lebanese and as a 'defence of the nation'. For further discussion of this incident see Aslan (2009), Noble (2009) and Poynting (2006).

particularly their veil and supposed seclusion from public life, for example, is a particular attack on their presumed totalitarian husbands (Aly 2007; Aly and Carland 2010). Being a Muslim man does not only mean being small in numbers, but more crucially being different, unwelcome and the 'hostile other' against the 'accepted prototype' of Australian identity (Aly and Walker 2007; Dunn 2005; Hage 2002; 2011; Northcote and Casimiro 2010).

At the same time, Muslim men are traditionally expected to act as leaders of the family (Qaradhwani 1984; Shaikh 1997) and are afforded an advantageous status that determines their identity as men (Baobaid 2006; Barlas 2002), one that may be particularly valued by men who otherwise feel part of a minority that holds less power than the mainstream culture. However, such a comfortable status results in enormous pressure, particularly in regard to Australian standards of gender relations and individual freedom. Pressure and challenges also surface around men's control over religious authority and the appeal to maintain religious and ethnic traditions. In both areas, Muslim men have to struggle to re-comprehend and re-articulate not only their religious identity but inevitably their masculinity as a substantial dimension of their survival effort and establishing their sense of belonging in an overwhelmingly non-Muslim and increasingly secular nation (ABS 2013). Seen from this circumstance, the Australian experience poses a specific challenge for Muslim men; this challenge needs to be examined in gendered terms.

Literature on Muslim masculinities in Australia at this point is arguably absent. This also reflects little interest in gender in the discussion of immigration and multiculturalism in Australia, specifically taking men for granted, and not as a constructed category. When gender has been the concern, focus has mainly been on women's underrepresentation, voices and aspirations (see, for example, Akbarzadeh 2010; Casimiro et al. 2007; Yasmeen 2001). Recent studies on Muslim men record experiences of exclusion, difficulties in civic participation and accessing the job market among recently arrived Muslim men (Chafic 2008). Chafic's (2010) study provides invaluable information about how Muslim men perceive and experience the Australian public from their position as men, as Muslims and as a minority. However, analysis regarding Muslim men's gendered experiences, which are related to their identity and position and involve negotiation of Australian identity, has not adequately developed.

Masculinity as a framework to understand Australian Muslims' issues is crucial in this study considering the domination of men and men's values. These values are contested in both Muslim and secular-Western-inspired Australian public values in day-to-day life. What is it like to live as a religious man in a secular country with certain a certain degree of Islamophobia in the society? This study explores the dynamics of negotiation and reproduction of discourses of masculinity among Muslim men as a minority in the contemporary gender configuration in Australia. In so doing, this project tackles the public stereotype relentlessly perpetuated by media hype depicting Muslim men as a problematic component of the society. The project further aims contribute to an understanding of the centrality of gender in the establishment of identity and the cultural features of religious groups in Australia. This area has gained little attention in the debate on multiculturalism in Australia.

The project examines how Muslim men's status as a religious minority in Australia affects their masculinities. The key argument in this study is that Muslim men's status as a minority has led to the reinforcement of religious elements of their masculinity while weakening their masculine privilege in the family.

This thesis consists of seven chapters. Following this introduction chapter, Chapter 2, *Australian Muslims and Muslim Masculinities* identifies the subject matter of the study – Muslim men and Muslim masculinity – and proposes a theoretical framework to analyse them. The chapter addresses the social-cultural change in contemporary Australia and details the place of Muslims in it. The chapter also examines Muslims as minority in the West and reviews studies on Muslim masculinities in different contexts. Chapter 3 details the *Research Methods*, describing the fieldwork by which the data for the thesis was collected. The chapter specifies the details of different stages of the project, including the recruitment process, interviews, group discussions and participant observations. It also provides background information about the Muslim male participants and the data organisation and analysis processes. The discussion of the research findings begins in Chapter 4, *Individual Freedom, Secularity and Islamic Piety*, by looking at Muslim men's relation to the broader Australian society, with a focus on their experience in the workplace. It consists of three main sections: Muslim men's view toward Australian men and Australia as a society; the challenges Muslim men face in maintaining religious identity in the workplace; and Muslim

men's strategies for dealing with non-Muslim-majority social settings. The discussion continues with Chapter 5 on *Women, Family and Negotiation of Masculinity*. This chapter addresses Muslim men's relationship with Muslim women. It focuses on Muslim men's strategies in the negotiation of their masculinity in responding to the effects of the Australian experience on power relationships in day-to-day family and marital life. Chapter 6 examines the relationship between *Brotherhood and Masculinity*. Comprised of three main sections, this chapter deals with Muslim brotherhood, a crucial relationship that shapes Muslim masculinities. The chapter examines the construction and reproduction of male bonding among Muslims in religious settings. It further analyses how such bonding gives meaning to and serves their masculinity and examines its impact on women's position. The thesis is concluded in Chapter 7, which brings together the research findings on Muslim masculinities in Australia and further discusses some theoretical implications evolving from the research findings for the field of masculinity. The chapter ends by highlighting a number of open areas of inquiry for future studies on Muslim masculinities.

CHAPTER 2

AUSTRALIAN MUSLIMS AND MUSLIM MASCULINITIES

Analysing the demographic profile of Muslims in the 2011 census in Australia, Peucker et al. (2014) discovered that Muslims in Australia represent a disadvantaged minority group, particularly in comparison to any other religious group. The debate on Islam and Muslims reflects the struggle to claim the Australian national identity, particularly in the changing projection of Australia as a 'White nation' (Curthoys 2009; Elder 2007). The continuing work in the politics of multiculturalism and a great change in the Australian religious outlook lead this struggle in a somewhat new direction. As a religious minority, Muslims occupy a significant position in Australia (Bouma et al. 2001). Their remarkable growth characterises a massive change in the Australian religious arrangement in the late 20th century (Bouma 2006). While Christian affiliation has sharply declined over the past fifty years, the Muslim population has significantly increased (ABS 2011; Mason et al. 2007).

This chapter will identify and discuss issues surrounding Australian Muslims, particularly Muslim men. I will begin with highlighting the contemporary trend of religious affiliation and the change in the Australian cultural profile. Multiculturalism will be included in this discussion, followed by an examination of Islamophobia in Australia. Next, I will talk about some studies relevant to my project that examine Muslim men in Europe to develop a broader picture of Muslim men as a minority in Western countries. The chapter then proposes and discusses a framework of analysis in approaching Muslim masculinities, based on the existing literature. I will use the final part of the chapter to argue why studying Muslim masculinities in an Australian context is necessary and important. I will highlight some points featuring the Muslim men involved in this project and state the research questions.

1. Muslims in Post-Christian and Multicultural Australia

This section highlights changes to the contemporary Australian religious profile and policy of multiculturalism, and further discusses the social and cultural situation involving Muslims. Current changes in the Australian social and religious landscape show that Australia is moving from its post-colonial, mono-cultural, British, Christian and predominantly Protestant profile, to a much wider variety of religious forms than had existed previously (Bouma et al. 2001, 55). Bouma (2006) argued that Australia is moving along a post-colonial route, seeking and developing models of cultural independence from the British Empire.⁸ Australia at this stage can be seen as secular, post-Christian and multicultural. The big picture of this change is the massive decline in mainstream Anglican and Protestant groups, and the rapid growth of other religious minorities, especially Buddhists and Muslims. Another crucial trend that characterises post-Christian Australia has been the upward trend of secularisation over the past fifty years. While religious affiliation becomes more diverse, more and more people in Australia are declaring 'no religion' in their census responses (Singleton 2011).⁹ In terms of numbers, Australia is projected to be increasingly more secular in the future (ABS 2013). Figure 1 in page 8 describes this trend of religious affiliation in Australia over the past fifty years.¹⁰

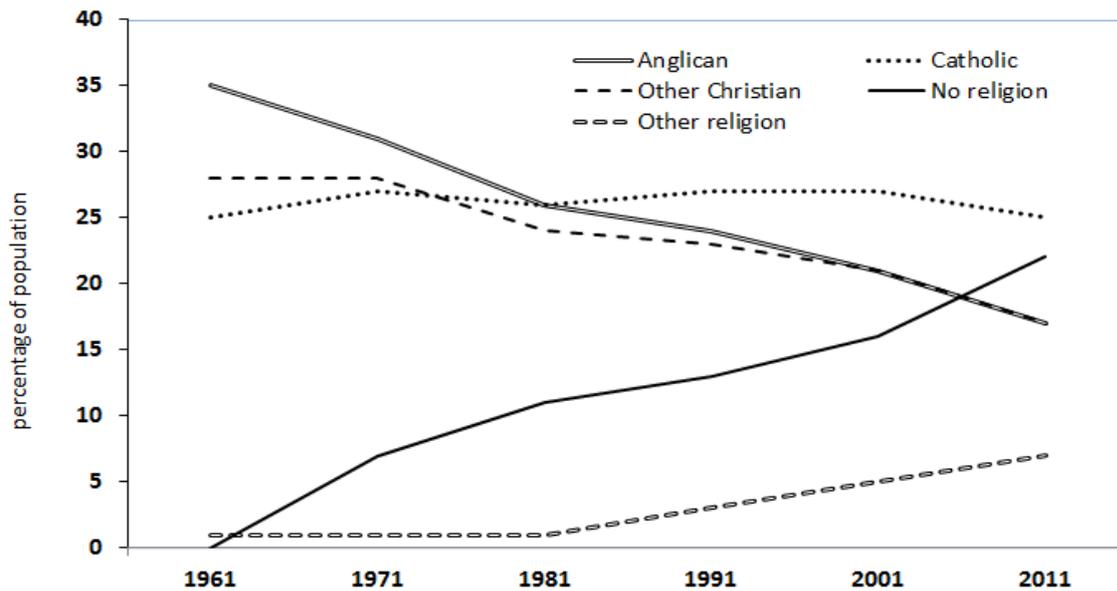
Figure 1 demonstrates three features that characterise broad changes in the contemporary Australian religious landscape: the sharp drop in the number of people professing adherence to any Christian denomination, a remarkable rise in people with 'no religion', and significant growth in people with non-Christian faiths. Singleton (2014) summarised this trend by highlighting the fall of Christian affiliation, which was 96% of the population in 1901, to 86% by 1971, and 61% in the 2011 census (ABS 2011). A major component in this fall, as shown in the graph, is the steady decline of the Anglican Church from 31% of the total Australian population in 1971 to 24% in 1991 and just 17% in 2011.

⁸Bouma (2006) suggests an interesting theory regarding this development of culture and religiosity in Australia as being an effect of changes in the cultural relationship with the British Empire.

⁹For further discussion on the strong trend towards secularisation in Australia, see Singleton (2014) and Mason et al. (2007), especially among younger age groups.

¹⁰ It is interesting to note that in the table, Catholicism has maintained its foothold, while Anglican and other Christian mainstream groups are continuously losing their ground.

Figure 1 Trend of religious affiliation in Australia 1961 - 2011



Adapted from Singleton (2011), ABS (2009), ABS (2001) and ABS (2011).

The 2011 percentage of people affiliating with the Anglican Church is lower than that of those affiliating with no religion, which was 22% of the population, or 4.8 million (ABS 2013). Only 11% of the population fell into this category in 1981 (Singleton 2014) and in 1911 the figure was 10,000 people, or 0.4% of the population (ABS 2013). This change means that the growth of people reporting no religion has averaged 3.9 percentage points per decade, with the latest census period between 2001 and 2011 seeing the sharpest increase (6.8 percentage points) (ABS 2013). This change is most apparent amongst those aged 15-34, with 28% of them reporting no religious affiliation (ABS 2012). Australia is not alone in this change; David Voas (2009) observed the same decline in European religions from between the early and late twentieth century.

The line for the 'other religions' category in the graph, which includes Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and Judaism, has moved upward considerably between 1980 and the most recent census in 2011. This growth is particularly evident in the period between 2001 and 2011, from around 0.9 million, or 4.9% of the total population, to 1.5 million, or 7.2% (ABS 2012). In 2011, Buddhism was the most common non-Christian religion (2.5% of the population), followed by Islam (2.2%) and Hinduism (1.3%) (ABS 2012).

Studies by Mason et al. (2007) and Frame (2009) highlighted the fact that Christianity is enduring a massive decline, manifested most among young people, especially 'Generation Y'. Religious affiliation among this group may also imply the future of secularism in Australia. The first study noted above (Mason et al. 2007) involved a survey of over 1200 respondents aged between 13 and 24, and suggested that a significant (17%) proportion of Generation Y rejected traditional religious beliefs outright, and a larger group were only nominally Christian. Among the older generation, the 'Baby Boomers', the main Christian denominations also demonstrated a decline over time (Mason et al. 2007). It can therefore be anticipated that Christianity will continue to wane in popularity, while secularism will be more welcome in the future (ABS 2013). As a consequence, the expression and articulation of religions and spirituality will be more diverse.

Frame's (2009) study explored seven main factors that have led to the decline in Christian beliefs, which began in the late 1950s. Some problematic components of Christian doctrine and the conservative manner of the churches were the main contributors (Frame 2009). These factors included the growth of non-religious, alternative community organisations and clubs, the Australian community becoming more familiar with non-religious (often naturalist) views of human life and the natural world, and Christian churches' negative attitudes towards the growth of scientific research and personal freedom. These have resulted, not in the conversion of people to other non-Christian religions, but to a steady rise of 'non-believers' in Australia. However, Australian non-believers are not necessarily anti-theists, as they are 'more practical than philosophical, more personal than ideological' (Frame 2009, 187). One point that needs to be raised from Frame's analysis is that while distrust of, and disinterest in, religious institutions is increasing widely, many more Australians take 'a very casual' and 'carefree attitude' to religion. They can join in 'quasi-religious' activities, like Anzac Day commemorations, without being religious, an attitude that Frame (2009) calls 'Christian Agnosticism' (190).

Secularisation in Australia might be understood to mean that religious organisations have lost their control over religiosity and spirituality (Bouma 2006). However, secularism can also be observed as a low level of religious practice; where no teaching of a certain religion is officially introduced to public institutions, the state does not require its citizens to have a religion and religious influence in public life is constrained. Individuals may become religious,

but commitment to a religious community is not compulsory (Frame 2009). In this sense, secularisation is more prominent than religious affiliations. The public demonstrates an overwhelmingly secular ethos and maintains religious expression and practice in the private arena (Frame 2009; Johns and Saeed 2002). A recent report by the Australian Human Rights Commission also observes a dispute between Christian and secular proponents regarding which values are the foundation of Australia's nation state (Bouma et al. 2011). In Australia, religious groups are expected to: express minimal to moderate demands on their adherents; sort out their own affairs; demonstrate support for the State (while allowing and expecting a certain level of critique); and contribute to political debates without dominating (Bouma et al. 2001). While the Australian public might accept religious devotion, they would also expect that religious believers are not too fervent in their devotion.

One of the main issues within which Muslims have to negotiate their Muslim identity in Australia—and which is therefore relevant to address in this project—is the policy of multiculturalism. Comparing the US, India and Australia, Ramakrishna (2013) observed that the multiculturalism in Australia is complex, determined by the balance of separateness of the ethnic groups and cohesion of the society as a whole. As a response to the emergence of ethnic communities in Australia (Hage 1998), multiculturalism reflects the perspective and attitude of the State towards non-white-Anglo minority groups in Australia. This issue is important in discussing the social-cultural space available for Muslims in multiculturalism, and how Muslims negotiate the concept of Australian national identity and the concept of Muslim identity. Australia's multicultural policy was introduced in the early 1970s, replacing a policy of integration and assimilation (Foster and Stockley 1984). The politics of multiculturalism have also become a challenge to Muslims negotiating their religious identity; it tends to homogenise the Muslim community at the national level. The official government rhetoric on multiculturalism and ethnic communities is a crucial factor shaping public opinion towards minority communities. The Australian government's policies (especially under John Howard's prime ministership) and the largely supportive media coverage have shaped public attitudes and views towards Muslims (Mansouri 2005; Poynting et al. 2004). The Australian government (during John Howard's prime ministership) sponsored a version of multiculturalism that acknowledged cultural diversity, but also

asserted the dominance and power of the core Anglo-Celtic Australia at the nation's heart, state institutions and the Australian identity (Hage 2002; Mansouri 2005).

Hage (1998) argued that the mainstream idea of multiculturalism assumes a power relation between social groups that allows the dominant group to exercise tolerance towards minority groups. This manifests particularly in the discourse of cultural enrichment that posits the 'white Australian' in the centre of Australia's 'cultural map' (as the enriched culture) and considers the migrant culture as a different 'mode of existence' and 'exist for' (enriching) the Anglo-Celtic culture (Hage 1998, 121). For a significant period, the Australian government's campaign of multiculturalism placed minority groups in a difficult position, neglecting the importance of cultural identity in providing a sense of belonging (Casimiro et al. 2007; Mansouri 2005). Multiculturalism requires minority ethnic groups to accept that they are all different, with different histories, values, cultures, languages and group associations, but that they still belong to a common community (Cleland 2002; Mansouri 2005). This means that while minority groups are entitled to the right of citizenship and an established sense of belonging to the nation, they are considered different to the mainstream white-Anglo image of Australia. The shift from citizenship and a sense of belonging, to the discourse of 'difference' has produced a confusion and insecurity for those Australians who once felt confident that they embodied concrete values and characteristics that could be termed 'Australian' (Mansouri 2005). The conservative brand of multiculturalism supported by many political elites in Australia preserves the dominance of white-Anglo ethnicity and safeguards the myths of Australian national identity that it has created (Elder 2007; Mansouri 2005).

Muslims in Australia

Muslims first came to Australia in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, from what is today known as Indonesian Makassar, preceding the British colonisers. They settled and established relationships in trade, cultural and familial ties with Indigenous Australia for over two hundred years (Cleland 2002; Worsley 1955). However, it is since the mid-nineteenth century that the Muslim presence has been considered part of the Australian nation (Cigler 1989; Cleland 2001; Morsy 1998; Steven 1989). Australian policy on population greatly affected the rise and fall of Muslim numbers (Cleland 2002; Jones and Kazi 1993; Saeed

2003). Following World War II (WWII) and a new policy on Australian immigration in the 1970s (Bouma 1997; Cleland 2002), a rapid increase in numbers brought the Muslim population to more than 470,000, consisting of 2.2 % of the Australian population in the 2011 Census (ABS 2012). The Muslim population increased by 40 % respectively in the 2001 and 2011 censuses (ABS 2009; 2012). Immigration is the main contributor to this increase, a high-birth rate among Muslims, and to a certain extent, conversion. Currently, Muslims are a younger group compared to the overall population in Australia (FaSCIA 2007),¹¹ with the largest proportion of them (37%) being born in Australia (FaSCIA 2007; IDA 2007). The second largest Muslim group are those born in Lebanon (14%), followed by Turkish born (11%). Other countries of origin include Indonesia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Albania, Afghanistan, Egypt, Iraq, Palestine, Sudan, the Indian subcontinent and some other Asian and Pacific countries.

The literature on Muslims in Australia has been limited and is often found in the margins of different fields of study: Australian history; immigrants in Australia; ethnic and racial minorities; or Muslim minorities in the West (Mansouri 2005; Saeed 2003; Saeed and Akbarzadeh 2001). The very concepts of 'Muslim' and 'Islam' have been problematic for the 'West', as they often involve over-homogenisation, objectification, stereotypes and victimisation on the one hand, and a claim of authority, self-resistance and exclusiveness on the other. While this is a typical point of the debates on Islam in Western contexts, this is particularly the case for Australian Muslims. Saeed and Akbarzadeh (2001) suggest a convenient definition of 'Muslim'. This is that all persons who posit themselves as having at least some form of cultural association with Islam, which may or may not be put into practice, or who see Islam contributing to their culture, and accept the basic teachings of Islam (even while interpreting them differently) can be considered Muslims. Australian Muslims display a remarkable diversity in terms of ethnicities, religious interpretation and practice, and language (Humphrey 2001; Kabir 2005; Saeed 2003). In fact, Muslims as a group carry multi-layered identities: familial, ethnic, provincial, national and Islamic (Roy 2004). The Australian context, especially for the second and third generations, has added a new layer to Muslim identity (Saeed and Akbarzadeh 2001). This has been crucial to the

¹¹ Of the Muslim population in the 2006 census 37% were aged between 15 and 34, compared to 27% of overall Australians for the same age group (ABS 2007).

broad challenge of 'negotiating Muslim identity' that Muslim communities have to deal with, in accordance with their new settlement and state of citizenship. Australian Islam remains a public religion and must be constantly negotiated in day-to-day, secular life (Humphrey 2001).

Bouma et al. (2001) offer three main trends by which Muslims' responses to the Australian public can be grouped. First, the main motive among Muslims in the Australian public environment is to participate actively, and find a rightful place in community life (Bouma et al. 2001; Humphrey 2001). Many Muslims are able to adopt mainstream values and culture in Australia and learn to integrate them into their Islamic practice. Secondly, some Muslims demonstrate backward-looking tendencies by holding on to the society they had left behind when they migrated, and maintain on-going contacts with the old community. They choose to withdraw from public engagement, while only focusing on their own community. They therefore fail to negotiate a place within the new country (Duderija 2010; Johns and Saeed 2002). Thirdly, a minority of Muslims retreat from society and criticise its immorality and decadence, essentially for not being like the society they left or still dream about (Bouma et al. 2001). It is argued that the route to radicalism may open at this point (Duderija 2010; Schmidt 2004).

Many Muslims are comfortable within the mainstream secular Australian community. They may simply participate personally by expressing identification as a Muslim, or by taking on full participation in social and religious activities (Johns and Saeed 2002). They are able to build a certain bond with Australia, without necessarily losing their Islamic and ethnic heritage. Their 'Australianness' complements and puts their Muslim identity and their ethnic traditions into perspective. The result may be hybrid Islamic identities and ethnic traditions (Saeed and Akbarzadeh 2001). In this regard, the policy of multiculturalism offers a great opportunity for Muslim groups and provides important avenues for the development and consolidation of Islam in Australia. The sense of ownership and social responsibility among Muslim Australians is tied to the extent of their inclusion and participation in the multicultural project. Facing such challenges often involves a serious struggle; some Muslims rediscover a Muslim identity that had laid dormant (Johns and Saeed 2002).

A survey taken in Brisbane in 2009, involving 500 Muslim respondents, reported that Muslims highly valued Australia's key social and political institutions, including the democratic system, judiciary, education and healthcare systems (Rane et al. 2009). The preceding year, a project involving consultation and interviews with Muslim men in Sydney revealed that Muslim men stressed the importance of loyalty to their new country, along with civil participation and service (Chafic 2010). The project also reported that Muslim men regarded Islamic teaching as consistent with respecting Australian rules and values.

However, experiences of racism and discrimination were not uncommon for Muslim men (Chafic 2010). This was reinforced by collective experiences of discrimination, such as opposition to building mosques and media stereotyping. Repeated and on-going experiences of such discrimination strengthened familial ties and local social contracts, which were intended to preserve the welfare of Muslim families (Humphrey 2001). Muslim religious practice and organisations have developed from their own environments. In fact, such developments have brought Muslims into contact with the institutions of Australian society. Their claims to the right to practice their religion, and the seemingly contradictory right to resist dominant critiques of their Islamic culture have contributed to these encounters (Humphrey 2001, 49). In many such cases, local-ethnic networks of mutual support have often demonstrated more stability than have formal Muslim associations based on national links.

Muslims in Australia occupy a challenging position. They are a minority in a society that expects its members to not be too enthusiastic in their religious expression and practices, and to keep their religion private. Current Islamophobia locates them as a different group of people with different values in contrast to—and often seen as a threat to—the mainstream Western, white Australian public. Meanwhile, Australia's multicultural policy provides a space for Muslims to find their place in Australian society, where many do feel at home. However, the main idea that underlies multiculturalism restricts Muslims' full sense of belonging, while maintaining their sense of being different, and playing only a minor role in Australia's national identity.

Islamophobia

Besides economic survival and cultural mismatch, one of the most serious challenges for Muslim settlement in Australia is Islamophobia. As a social concept, Islamophobia has neither been defined nor applied consistently or coherently (Grosfoguel and Martin-Munoz 2010). However, its modern form can be considered as cultural and social racism, and an anxiety that has emerged, especially in Western Europe, towards Islam and Muslims, one that has led to discrimination and exclusion against Muslims because of their religion (Aslan 2009). Islamophobia can be described as intense fear or dislike of Muslims (Barkdull et al. 2011, 140) or 'an exaggerated fear, hatred, and hostility toward Islam and Muslims that is perpetuated by negative stereotypes' (Ali et al. 2011, 9). According to Dunn et al. (2007) contemporary Islamophobia in Australia has been reproduced through a racialisation of Islam, public perceptions of threat and inferiority, 'as well as fantasies that the Other (in this case Australian Muslims) do not belong, or are absent' (564). Islamophobia is a complex phenomenon, arising out from multiple factors, as Singleton (2014) suggested:

The rise of Islamophobia is the consequence of many interrelated social factors—long standing Western suspicious of Muslims, a fear of Muslims fuelled by conservative elements in the Western media, anxiety caused by recent acts of terror at Western targets and the perception that Muslims dislike secular, Western culture (169).

The emergence of Islamophobia in Australia coincided with major international crises associated with Muslims, in particular September 11 (2001), the London bombings (2005), and the Bali bombings (2002 and 2005) (Aslan 2009; IDA 2007; Manning 2003; Poynting and Mason 2007). Islamophobia denotes a certain stage in the history of racism in Australia (Adams 2006; Aly and Carland 2010; Elder 2007) and needs to be understood as a crucial part of the complex narrative of Australian identity. It is rooted in centuries-long hatred between the established Christian 'Western ideology' and Islam which is perceived as a threat to the Western world (Aslan 2009; Malik 2009). However, it is important to note that it overlaps with a newer conflict between Islam and secularism apparent in the Australian public (Celermajer et al. 2007).

However, Islamophobia also has distinctly local Australian characteristics (Aslan 2009; Poynting and Mason 2007). A report by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission (HREOC) (HREOC 2004) provides the most comprehensive record of Australian Muslims' experiences of discrimination and racism based on their religion and race. Islamophobia has created negative sentiment against Muslims in Australia, which is very much intertwined with the widespread anxiety and resentment felt towards immigrants and the politics of multiculturalism among dominant Caucasian Anglo-Celtic Australians (Aslan 2009; Elder 2007; Hage 2002, 2011). Some argue that Islamophobia is the latest form of the age-old fear and anxiety to have emerged in Australian history; this had previously targeted the Chinese in the nineteenth century, followed by the Japanese after WWII, southern Europeans—Greeks and Italians—in the 1950s, Vietnamese in the 1970s, Asian Australians in the 1980s, and Indigenous Australia since the arrival of the British (Adams 2006; Aslan 2009; Elder 2007; Kabir 2005).

A new way of understanding religious identity has been implicated during the settlement process among Muslim immigrants (Duderija 2010; Yasmeen 2001). Many Muslim immigrants experienced a dramatic change, from enjoying being part of the dominant group in their home country, to suddenly having to be accepted as a minority (Duderija 2010; Humphrey 2001). One of the main problems lies in the secular pressure of their new home on their Islamic practices. Islamic teachings require expression and visibility, outward signs and commitment: for Muslims, this inevitably raises the issue of executing their religious practices, and visibility (Johns and Saeed 2002). In this regard, one possible response by Muslims to the devaluation of 'Muslim identity' is the widespread conception of Islam as an unchangeable and unchanging tradition. Many Muslims believe that their religion is complete, self-contained and objective (Hefner 1998). This can also result in internal tensions between liberal and conservative Muslim groups.

Another crucial institution that Australian Muslims constantly have to negotiate with is the media. Australian Muslims perceive the media as a source of their victimisation. Events in global politics involving Muslims have contributed to anti-Arab and Islamophobia in Australia (Poynting and Mason 2007; Poynting and Noble 2003; Poynting et al. 2004). Additionally, the media has also contributed to anti-Arab and Islamophobia in local crises, such as 'ethnic' gang rapes in 2000, and the Cronulla Riots in 2005 (all in Sydney). The most current incidents

include the Sydney siege (2014) and Australian *jihadists* joining ISIS (2014). These attitudes towards Muslim and Arab Australians (and immigrants to Australia) are a result of interrelated factors, including media representations and social policies, as well as the deep unconscious influence of 'Orientalist' discourse on perceptions of Islam and the West (Poynting & Mason 2007; Poynting & Noble 2003; Poynting et al. 2004).

2. Muslim Male Identity in the West

In the previous section, I highlighted some of the challenging situations that Muslims in Australia have to cope with, including Islamophobia and multiculturalism. In this section, I will argue for the importance of gender in the analysis of Muslim men's identity as a minority in Australia. While Islam has been a widely discussed topic, attention towards Muslim men in Western contexts is very limited. Several studies have been undertaken in Great Britain, providing important findings about young Muslim men with Asian and Middle Eastern backgrounds. Hopkins' (2004) study showed how young Muslim men illustrated the different markers of being Scottish men in ways that allowed them to identify themselves as Scottish, but at the same time excluded them from complete belonging. Young Muslim men in this research associated drinking, and the pub and club culture, as a substantial part of Scottish culture. Some accepted the drinking culture and chose to ignore it, while others took it as a marker of difference between Muslims and the Scottish people (Hopkins 2004). In these studies, masculinity among Muslim men is closely aligned to Islamic norms in their parent's home culture. This differs from some significant parts of Scottish male cultural practice. In this sense, Muslim identity is a mixed discourse that is neither purely religious, nor specifically ethnic, and may be expressed as a strategy of cultural resistance (Anthias 2001).

In the Northern part of England, Archer (2001; 2003) found that Muslim boys perform, enact, challenge and resist the range of identities associated with Muslim identity and Britishness. Masculinity is constructed through various positionings of the self and others, particularly through the 'ownership' and 'control' of women. Religious identity, for Muslim boys in this study, was expressed in stronger tones than ethnic (Pakistani and Bangladeshi) and national identity (British). They viewed their religious identity as transnational. A

broader Muslim identity provided a means to overcome ethnic divisions within the groups, and connected them to a universal movement. In particular, the discourse of 'strong' Muslim identity was suggested as a way of resisting stereotypes of 'weak passive Asians'. The young men challenged this stereotype of Asian men, replacing it with an alternative association of Muslim masculinity with strength. Brotherhood is a very important aspect of young Muslim male identity. Besides religion, race provides an important component of identity, as it is a way of contrasting their identity to that of white men. Archer (2001) suggests that discussions of violence, action and hardness through religious idealism and martyrdom should be seen as performing and evoking a particularly potent form of masculinity.

Studies based in the UK repeatedly stress the importance of family for Muslim men's identities (Alexander 2000; Archer 2001; Ramji 2007). This implies the relational nature of Muslim men's identity, in relation to women's position in Muslim culture. Archer (2003) notes how male discussion of female behaviours as being un-Islamic allows men to define themselves against women and place themselves as the authentic speakers for Islam and Muslims. Ramji's (2007) research about young Muslim men in Britain examines the use of religion among young Muslim men to assert their identity as leaders in the family and be economic providers. Therefore, they are powerful in contrast to their female counterparts, who are powerless. Focusing on young Muslim women, Dwyer (2000) found 'patriarchal gender relations were reinforced by young men', and this was seen as a 'means by which their own adolescent masculine ethnic and religious identity could be maintained' (479). For young men in her study, policing women was an important way to maintain and assert their own adolescent masculine ethnic and religious identity. Dwyer (2000) found young Muslim men exercised religious discourse as a way of legitimising their authority, as one of the few ways available to young Muslim men.

For the purpose of this project, these UK studies suggest a crucial relational aspect regarding women and the 'other' that shapes young Muslim men's masculine identity. The nature of the relation to women allows young Muslim men to create the boundaries between Muslim and Western identities in terms of the treatment of women (Archer 2003). Thus, the young men used women as a particular discursive arena for drawing divisions and negotiating power between themselves and other, white men. The perceived problems—such as

appropriate dressing—of women’s behaviours being policed are assigned to their ‘Britishness’ and ‘Western life’. This is positioned as incompatible with Islam (Archer 2001).

Attention towards Islamic identity has arisen largely from Western contexts, particularly since the 1990s. In a heated political atmosphere during the Gulf Crisis and the aftermath of September 11, much Western media and many politicians have expressed panic, fear and hostility regarding Muslims. In contrast, some sympathy has been expressed towards Muslims as a minority group who are independent from stereotypes, such as being ‘radical-fundamental’, with which they are often associated. Several studies have attempted to reveal various experiences of racism and discrimination among Muslims and their struggle in negotiating Muslim identity in predominantly white, Anglo and Christian countries (Dunn 2004; Hopkins 2004; 2006; Naber 2005; Sunier 2010).

Men were not the specific focus in these studies, as the question of gender was mainly addressed to women; religion blended easily with ethnicity. In the 2000s, questions about men arose in some countries with a large proportion of Muslims, such as Iran (Gerami 2003, 2005), Yemen (Baobaid 2006), Sudan (Willemse 2005), Pakistan (Ahmed 2006), South Africa (Gaudio 2009) and Mali (Mann 2003). These studies departed from questions of gender and domination that were connected deeply with Islamic religious discourses.

A report of the Muslim Male Project (2010) sponsored by DIAC, provides an invaluable summary of Muslim male statistics in Australia. The population of Muslim men had nearly reached two % of Australian males by 2006, and they have continued to grow faster than the overall Australian male trend, mainly as a result of immigration (DIAC-CIRCA 2010). A large proportion of them (63%) were born outside Australia. Muslim men are younger compared to the overall male population; for example, 48 % are 24 years or under, compared to 34.7 % of the overall population (DIAC-CIRCA 2010). They are less likely to be citizens; 76.0 % of Muslim males are Australian citizens, compared to 85.6 % of all Australian men. Younger Muslim men display even lower citizenship figures. A higher proportion of Muslim males are married (56.1%), compared to all Australian males (50.7%), and a lower proportion (3.8%) of Muslim males are divorced, compared to all Australian males (7.3%) (DIAC-CIRCA 2010).

Muslim men were twice (12.6%) as likely to be unemployed, compared to overall Australian men (5%). They also showed a lower proportion of school attendance compared to

Australian males overall (DIAC-CIRCA 2010). However, Muslim men represented a higher proportion in technical or further educational institutions (10%, compared to 7% of Australian men), and in university or other tertiary institutions (17%, compared to 10.5% of Australian men). Overall, they were less likely than Australian men to work as managers and professionals, but represented a higher trend in machinery operators and drivers, and labourer occupational categories (DIAC-CIRCA 2010).

As previously mentioned, the literature on Muslim men and Muslim masculinities in Australia is very limited. Larger studies on Muslim immigration at a global level have involved large samples of Muslim men, in order to understand issues related to Islam and 'Muslim identity'. Many of these can be taken as exclusively associated with men and masculine traits (religious fundamentalism and radicalisation, for instance). Studies on the early settlement of Muslim immigrants, especially the legendary Afghan camel drivers (Cigler 1989; Cleland 2001; Jones and Kazi 1993; Jones and Kenny 2007; Steven 1989), mostly focus on these men as being the larger proportion of Muslim immigrants in the early Australian colonial period. Examples of Muslim figures in the late 19th century to early 20th century were always men: religious teachers and community leaders, soldiers and traditional healers (Ali 2010; Jones and Kazi 1993; Jones and Kenny 2007; Omar and Allen 1996). However, analysis regarding the gendered experiences of Muslims is very rare.

In the Australian immigration context, some information on Muslim men can be drawn partly from Yasmeen's (2001) study in Western Australia. Yasmeen's study was not aimed at examining men, but rather the exploration of Muslim women's experiences. However, the manner in which her findings were presented (comparing both genders) enables useful information about Muslim men in Australia to emerge, particularly regarding their settlement experiences. Yasmeen's (2001) study revealed that the lack of access to employment, which cannot always be related to Islamic identity, nevertheless placed an emotional strain on Muslim men. Unemployment figures among Muslim men were higher than the national percentage. Muslim men, although able to obtain work, often suffered from a sense of operating in a 'different' environment. Their own feelings of difference, combined with general biases in Australian society about Islam, created a perception of 'us' and 'them'. The family and the home environment carried the emotional impact of this sense of powerlessness and alienation (Yasmeen 2001). Muslim men tended to focus on the

family sphere more than was normal in their countries of origin. As a result, this reduced the space available for women. The unspoken struggle for emotional space created communication and adjustment problems within the home environment. It also sometimes led to domestic violence (Moghissi 2010).

Yasmeen's (2001) research has also demonstrated that Muslim men have a greater fear than women, that their children may abandon the religious and cultural traditions of the family, and that this fear adds to the stress of adjustment (Yasmeen 2001). In a discussion about Muslim communities' needs in their new country, Muslim men revealed a strong sense of community, with an emphasis on their Muslim identity. Muslim men also expressed stronger concerns about their role as providers in the family, and bearers of tradition (Yasmeen 2001). Muslim men also assigned different meaning to needs and issues; for example, education was important for them, not only for its intrinsic value, but also as a strategy for keeping Muslim children in touch with their religion and culture, or to perpetuate an Islamic and cultural identity within non-Islamic society (Yasmeen 2001).

Yasmeen's (2001) study indicated that the Muslim women she researched appeared more adaptable to their new Australian environment than some of their male counterparts. Studies about Muslim immigrants in other countries have revealed similar patterns. Moghissi's (2010) study in the Canadian context revealed that relationships within a family intensified in immigration situations, particularly among Muslim couples. In this situation, family might become a comfort zone, but it may also be an arena where conflict was concentrated. Men found it difficult to play new roles in the family, and executed tasks that were not culturally appropriate in their home culture. For the purpose of my project, these studies highlight a broad trend of transformation in traditional gender roles and the division of labour among Muslim families as an effect of immigration. Muslim men appear to find such changes more difficult to deal with, compared to Muslim women. Such transformation reflects the complexity of gendered experiences among Muslim men, in their traditional male role.

The first two studies to directly address Muslim men in Australia were undertaken by Nilan et al. (2007) and Chafic (2010). The former project raised masculinity as a subject of analysis, addressing Muslim men in Australia. Male participants involved in this project were not

Australian citizens (they were Indonesians with student visas). Therefore, they could not be taken to represent Muslim interests in long-term settlement in Australia; they did not have the experience of negotiating an Australian identity. However, by asking about these Muslim men's opinions regarding Australian men's attitudes and masculinity, the project was able to suggest an important feature of Muslim accounts of masculinity (among Muslims), in contrast to Australian Anglo-Celtic, non-Muslim masculinity.

Taken as an Indonesian form of masculinity, Muslim masculinity in Nilan et al.'s (2007) study was associated with Javanese ideals for men. The ideal Muslim man was described as: emotionally refined, demonstrating full self-mastery, rational, committed to strong solidarity and collectiveness among his peers, sexually repressed and spiritually potent (Nilan et al. 2007; Donaldson et al. 2006). Issues of masculinity that were important to them included: family, sexuality and communality. Muslim male participants in this study contrasted their values against the practices and traits commonly associated with white, Anglo Australian men: as demonstrative, sexually aggressive and demonstrative, individualist, rough and emotional, lacking spirituality and very much devoted to bodily image.

The second study by Chafic (2010), entitled 'Muslim Men Project', was undertaken in Sydney between 2006 and 2008. The study has provided invaluable information about Muslim men's settlement experiences in Australia, and how they viewed the Australian public. The participants were male refugees and asylum seekers and were members of existing Muslim communities in Sydney. The project reported that Muslim men regarded their Islamic teaching as consistent with respecting Australian rules and values. Loyalty to the new country, and civil participation and service, were considered very important for the male Muslim group in this study. Some younger men expressed that they felt proud to be part of a community, and had a sense of responsibility to act as both good citizens and good Muslims (Chafic 2010). Muslim men were also observed to have a wide range of experiences regarding their sense of acceptance by others, and experiences of exclusion or inclusion in Australia. Some felt neither separation nor exclusion, seeing Australian society as welcoming and friendly to them. However, other Muslim men voiced concerns about discrimination within the mainstream and Muslim community, due to racism, which resulted in them feeling excluded (Chafic 2010).

However, Chafic (2010) did not address the gender question concerning Muslim male experiences, and the project was not about masculinity. Therefore, the question that needs to be addressed is: how can such experiences and points of view signify Muslim men's positions, sense and identity as men? Additionally, it must be asked to what extent do Muslim men's settlement experiences affect their practice of manhood, and how does this affect the way they view women's position and family relationships, and more importantly, how they negotiate patriarchal power?

The existing literature discussed thus far shows that, compared to Muslim women, Muslim men have more concern for their home cultures, the Islamic tradition, and how that tradition is protected in a predominantly white, Anglo-Celtic non-Muslim society. Important elements that signify these traditions include traditional gender roles in the family, Islamic institutions (like mosques and Islamic teachers or the *ulema*) and childhood education. It is a crucial structure in the tradition that men undertake initiatives and control religious institutions, while some hold authority as religious teachers and leaders (*ulema*). This tradition includes the discourse of morality and its practices in the family, community and public spheres. It is also important to note that the Muslim religious identity needs to be seen as a dynamic result of a deep blend of the religious aspects and ethnicities particular to where Muslims have come from.

3. Framing Muslim Masculinities in Australia

The previous section highlighted the importance of gender in understanding Muslim men's identity and the need to employ masculinity as a framework to consider gender. This section provides a theoretical consideration of masculinity as a framework for analysis in this project, to address the specific context of Muslim masculinities in Australia. This project broadly considers masculinity as a social, cultural and political discourse and practice of the gendered self.

Defining Muslim masculinities

Masculinity has been defined in various ways and is used to refer to different phenomena: norms, values, standards, attitudes, identifies or performances that define men as a distinct

social category. It also refers to what men actually do (Buchbinder 1994) or, in a more sophisticated concept, practice (Hearn 1998; Connell 2005). This project will consider a crucial point stressed by some authors: that masculinity is a system of relations and differences and that it requires examination through a relational framework (Connell 2005; Hearn and Collinson 1994). Connell (2005) argues that masculinity defines men (and women) as involved in certain configurations of practices, while engaging in the operating system of gender relations. In such relationships, masculinity can be seen primarily as being an opposite discourse to femininity. Holter (2005) asserts that 'gender is a social psychological link between the individual and the collective' (20). Gender as a system operates as a framework of meaning. It contains relations that draw the sex of a person as a social category, through which the self can embody itself in social arenas (Holter 1983, in Holter 2005). Here, we may consider masculinity as a gender project (Connell 2000; 2005). Masculinity is historical, created by a form of society (with changing forms of patriarchy) and maintained by certain relations of power (Holter 2005). At the same time, masculinities may also reflect a particular social position and its embodiment as a strategy of resistance (Hearn and Collinson 1994). This project will examine masculinity as a set of discourses and practices embodied within a specific system of gender differences and relations.

An examination of the relationship between religion and masculinity would need to assume two possible directions of this connection: whether masculinity constructs religion, or religion produces masculinities. Some studies identify points in which masculinity has contributed to and shaped the religious practices and discourses of spirituality in Christian (Gelfer 2009; Kirkley 1996)¹² and Jewish contexts (Bilu 2006; Kaplan 2006). Many Muslim scholars also contend that patriarchy has inevitably directed the mainstream interpretation of Islamic doctrines (see for example, Ahmed 1992; AL-Hibri 1997; Mernissi 1991; 1996). At another level, in some Muslim backgrounds, religion with its social-cultural-political embodiment appears to be the defining force that shapes the content and formulation of masculinity. Hermansen (2003) observes that the elements constituting masculinity in the Islamic context include the normative dimension of the religion, the Prophet and his

¹² Gelfer (2009) provides an interesting discussion about the emergence of masculine spirituality within Christianity. Managing to distinguish masculine from patriarchal spirituality, his analysis ends up by saying that movements to rebirth masculine spirituality have necessarily reproduced the existing patriarchal spirituality within Christian tradition.

companions as the central model, as well as philosophy, ethics, social discourses and practices. What also needs to be considered is the impact of religious institutions, and how power relations are exercised in the existing gender order (Woodhead 2009). Here, religion is taken not only as a source of values, norms, narratives and myths, models and perspectives, but also as the practices and institutions of manhood that determine men's place in the gender order (in Connell's term) and make them socially and culturally what they are. However, this is not to say that religion makes men visible. In fact, in some Muslim majority countries, religion affords men an uncritical position that renders them invisible.¹³

Muslim masculinity is not a homogenous phenomenon, but is varied and often demonstrates contradictory features, as Muslim identities are not coherently bound. The literature on Muslim men and Muslim masculinities can be grouped roughly into those that address masculinity in Muslim majority societies, and those focusing on Muslims as a minority in Western contexts. The former group includes works by Gaudio (2009) in South Africa, Gerami (2003, 2005) in Iran, Conway-Long (2006) in Morocco, Baobaid (2006) in Yemen and Willemse (2005) in Sudan. Attention on Muslim men as a minority has mainly occurred in several studies in the UK (Ahmed 2009; Alexander 2000; Archer 2001, 2003; Dwyer et al. 2008; Macey 1999; Ramji 2007), in Australia (Nilan et al. 2007) and in Sweden (Gerholm 2003). In Scotland, Hopkins produced extensive works on young Muslim masculinity (Hopkins 2004, 2006, 2007, 2009).¹⁴ These studies cover a range of issues concerning men and masculinities in Muslim communities and do not seem to suggest a broad trend of masculinity among Muslims. However, there are some findings and issues that repeatedly appear across these studies and are therefore worthy of further analysis, to progress understanding of Muslim masculinities.

The existing literature provides invaluable materials and analysis on some aspects of Muslim masculinities that imply certain layers of social relations. This insight allows deployment of a

¹³ In Iran for example, Gerami (2003) highlights the status of the *Mullah* as a powerful masculine prototype that sets the standard for religious morality and symbolises the religious power itself. A similar status, I would suggest, also applies to other religious authorities, such as *Imam* or *Kiai* in Java.

¹⁴ I need to emphasise strongly that the largest proportion of male participants in the existing studies on Muslim masculinities in Europe—Ramji (2003); Archer (2001; 2003); Alexander (2000); Macey (1999); Gerlhom (2003); Hopkins (2001; 2002)—had South Asian (Pakistani, Indian and Sri Lankan) backgrounds that would suggest a specific home-culture interface in their dominant religious discourse that requires further consideration.

relational framework to understand Muslim masculinities. Within this, I suggest three major relational frameworks through which Muslim men may posit themselves in the social sphere, as Muslims and as men. These can be directly linked to the dynamic of production of Muslim masculinities. These are:

1. social class and Muslim men's relationship with non-Muslim society
2. Muslim men's relationship to Muslim women, and
3. Muslim brotherhood.

The three relationships closely intersect with each other. My thesis is an attempt to analyse their specific characteristics and the tendencies that contribute to the distinct features of Muslim masculinities. The following discussion will address these relationships in more detail, by examining the existing studies on Muslim men and Muslim masculinities.

Muslim men's relationship with non-Muslim Society

The first context of relationship that defines the construction of Muslim masculinities is Muslim men's position as marginal members of a non-Muslim society. This appears to be more relevant and explicit in studies of Muslims as a minority group (Nauright 1997; Alexander 2000; Hopkins 2006; Ahmed 2006; Ramji 2007). Authors dealing with Muslim masculinities emphasise the centrality of Muslim men's experience of marginalisation, as one that shapes their responses towards the dominant non-Muslim society.

In this situation, Gerami (2003) argues that the social class of Muslims displays a greater force in shaping masculinities. Gerami (2005) suggests that 'Men's social class and its associated life chances are the primary factors in their identity construction' (286). In Ramji's (2007; 2003) research, Asian Muslim male participants from different social classes expressed different ways of understanding the same subject of religious teaching, resulting in different perspectives of gender identity and expectations (Ramji 2007; 2003). The working class Muslim respondents strongly argued for men's role as the main breadwinner, and opposed the idea of women having access to employment. This is evident in the following statement by one of the respondents: 'Women only need to be educated in Islam, and this they can do at home. They don't need to have lots of education, like a degree [...] well because it's the man's job to earn a living and look after his wife [...] they won't have to

work' (Ramji 2007, 1179). In contrast, the middle class men in the sample adopted Islamic doctrine to enhance their norms of masculinity, which were very close to white middle class masculinity. They demonstrated strong support for a well-educated and employed wife, whom they believed would lift the status of a Muslim man in the community and would enhance his cultural capital (Ramji 2007). As one of the middle class Muslim man stated: 'I would be proud of my wife if she had a good job, it would reflect well on me' (Ramji 2007, 1179). The examples in this project represent Asian Muslim men as a social class that was structurally disadvantaged and had less access to economic capital in Britain (Ramji 2007).¹⁵

As a marginalised group in the UK, Muslim men's access to social and cultural capital has been affected by racism and Islamophobia. Religion is their main accessible cultural capital, which eventually could be mobilised into other forms of social capital (power and authority) or even economics, assuming that religion could possibly create a men-only work scenario (Ramji 2007). When the social and cultural resources that establish self-confidence were not available in other aspects of their lives, Islam became a powerful resource for securing men's dominant gender identity. An Islamic identity that forms the base of male superiority was an effective cultural resource for Asian Muslim men to counteract their lack of capital in economic, social and symbolic terms in British society.

The specific circumstances of social marginality and disadvantage shape the ways Muslim men typically had contact with other non-Muslims in a Western context. This tendency reflects what we can call the 'resistance mode' of Muslim masculinities. Studies of Muslim masculinities indicate various ways in which discourses of masculinity among Muslims were produced as a form of resistance against the dominant Western-white-Anglo, and often Christian, class. This resistance took various forms.

I would suggest that the most direct channel for expressing their resistance to Western culture was, once more, control over women and the maintenance of a related moral discourse. In this context of resistance, Muslim women are posited as a battleground for Muslim men against dominant Western ideology. Studies of Asian Muslims in the UK shared

¹⁵ Ramji (2007) did not provide information about the percentage of her male participants according to her definition of 'working class' and 'middle class'. However, her more frequent reference to those representing working class voices indicates that this group was bigger in number (Ramji 2003).

this conclusion with regard to the assertion of Muslim masculinities. As previously discussed, women's position is crucial in defining Muslim men's identities. To maintain and defend the accepted discourse on women is therefore resisting men's identity too. Women's attitudes, and specifically 'appropriate' women's dress, have been a crucial narrative among Muslim men and 'may also symbolise the deeper fear of corruption by the West and the threat to traditional values and morals' (Macey 1999, 51). To the Muslim community, the control and surveillance of women's dress, behaviour or relationships can be seen as acts of resistance against dominant Western discourse (Archer 2001; Macey 1999). Such resistance may result in either highly orthodox (reactionary) or radical (revolutionary) ideological attitudes, which involve religion in struggles against inequality and oppression (Macey 1999). The maintenance of family is an integral part of this resistance.

Hopkins (2004) in Scotland, Archer (2001; 2003) in Britain and Nilan et al. (2007) in Australia indicate another form of the 'resistance mode' of Muslim masculinities; namely, through the assertion of 'Muslim' as a superior identity for men. Among Muslim men of various ages, education levels and ethnicities involved in these studies, the superior values of Muslim manhood lay in control over the self and sexuality, rationality and spirituality, responsibility in the family, brotherhood and manners in public.

Aggression and violence are also an effective channel of resistance for Muslim men. Alexander's (2000) study delivered a very useful analysis of the way in which the organisation of street gangs and violence served to maintain manhood among Asian Muslim boys, against the dominant-majority middle class groups in the UK. A study by Nauright (1997) in Cape Town, South Africa indicated that aggression and intimidation were also mediated in sport and competition by Muslim men (as rugby players or supporters)—who were largely minority working class—as a form of resistance against the dominant middle and elite class (white) in South Africa. In every form, these resisting modes entailed maintenance of spaces that served Muslim men's ability to maintain their practices of masculinity. In these studies, these practices included family, tradition and religious community, street and sporting competitions.

The above discussion suggests that the next important component of analysis in understanding Muslim masculinities in Australia is a focus on Muslim men's marginal

position, social relations and responses to the broader non-Muslim society. The question is then: how do Muslim men perceive their position as a minority towards the broader society? How do Muslim men particularly perceive dominant Australian masculinity, and how does this affect the way they maintain their masculine standards?

Muslim men's relationship to Muslim women

Authors on Muslim masculinities have reiterated that gendered identity among Muslim men is contextual, provisional and involves complex negotiations in everyday life (Archer 2003; Ramji 2007; Hopkins 2006). A major part of Muslim male identity is defined through contrast, relation and hierarchy over women and femininity. This is the most frequent theme arising across the existing literature in different backgrounds, and can be considered a key narrative of Muslim masculinities. The idea of gender difference is crucial in this narrative. In her study about Muslim men's attitudes on sexuality in Sweden, Gerholm (2003) witnessed the rigid contrast and separation of women and femininity that Muslim men establish to assert their identity. Such contrasts were embedded as a religious discourse on gender, where 'God is supposed to have commanded this strict boundary between femininity and masculinity' (Gerholm 2003, 405).¹⁶ Even more crucial to this narrative is how that difference entails relations of power. This tendency occurs in some leading exegetical authorities among Islamic orthodoxy that, as Shaikh (1997) and Stalinsky and Yehoshua (2004) argue, highlight power and authority as God-granted for men. Men's power and authority lie in their superior qualities, especially rationality and spirituality (Shaikh 1997). Sexuality in some cases appears to be another superior quality for men. In Egypt, for example, research undertaken by Inhorn (2006) addressing cultural issues related to male infertility, found that in common cases of couples with no children, there is a popular narrative that associates infertility with weakness and women's biology.

Studies on Muslim men in Muslim majority societies like Morocco, Sudan, Pakistan and Yemen, underline the importance of superiority over women as a basic notion of

¹⁶ This form of narrative, related to a sharp boundary between masculinity and femininity, is in opposition to some major traditions of Islamic spirituality (mysticism), where masculine and feminine values are blended harmoniously, in order to reach higher spiritual awareness. Murata's (1992) book *The Tao of Islam* provides a rich and beautiful explanation about these inseparable dimensions of Islamic cosmology.

masculinity. A relationship through which such superiority is exercised is, however, specific to men's identity, and is marked by their role and authority to guide, protect, educate and control women's conduct (Baobaid 2006; Conway-Long 2006; Willemse 2005). These interests involve different levels of institutions: the State (in the case of Pakistan and Sudan), the legal system (in the case of Yemen), and the family (in all cases in these studies).

Studies in the UK and Sweden that have addressed young Muslim men as a minority group, display some consistency with the above findings. It was found that young Muslim men in Britain asserted their identity as powerful, in contrast to their female counterparts, who were powerless (Archer 2001; 2003; Ramji 2007). Archer's research (2001) in Britain revealed that some Asian Muslim boys declared themselves as representing what constitutes a 'real' Muslim, in contrast to their female peers who did not. The stress on gender differences, men's privilege, and the relations with Muslim women, was also found among Muslim boys in Scotland. Hopkins (2006) concluded that the young Muslim men in his studies adopted contradictory narratives. They restated a masculine superiority within traditional family relationships, while adopting Scottish values about welcoming women's liberty in public. In Sweden, Gerlhom (2003) highlighted a different way this gender difference was employed to assert masculine discourse. Among Muslim men in her study, there was a strong discourse that acknowledged women for having powerful desires, while they were also regarded as being weak, irrational and incapable of self-control. Women with those qualities were seen as being a constant sexual threat to men's relationship with God; here the men's identity was defined by their capabilities in resisting, exercising caution and self-control. Relations with women produced some discourses that constituted Muslim masculinities across the literature, including as leaders, providers, protectors and educators, as well as possessors of spirituality and rationality.

These narratives form the basis for specific modes of gendered power relations that typically require the reproduction of discourses targeting women as the object of men exercising their power. Analysis of the emergence of different Islamist governments in post-colonial nation-states like Sudan (Willemse 2005), Egypt (Ammar 2000) and Iran (Gerami 2003) underline the centrality of restoring women's traditional position to re-establish superior (Islamic) masculinity and national identity. In some Muslim majority societies, like Yemen and Egypt, women are regarded as the symbol of social stability, moral order and family

honour (Baobaid 2006; Ammar 2000). In Pakistan and Sudan, they were regarded as a national symbol of the continuity and immutability of the nation, and the embodiment of national decency (Willemse 2005; Ahmed 2006). These discourses afford the male exercise of dominant masculinity using religious rationales. In the context of new Islamist elites in Sudan, Willemse (2005) examines where and when women were constructed as 'a threat to social stability and the moral order if they did not keep to their symbolic roles as mothers and wives' (170). Within this construct, men were expected to commit as guardians of social order through the specific roles of protecting their women and controlling their conduct (Stoler 1991). My previous research in Java identified that the major narrative in the construction of Muslim masculinities was the pervasive doctrine of men as the naturally justified leaders of women (Hidayat 2009). Coupled with this narrative was the concept of *sholehah* (righteous) wives, which functions as a controlling discourse about women's behaviours.

If the above context reflects the maintenance of masculinity as a 'gender project' in some Muslim majority counties, in Europe, Muslim men were found to employ comparable strategies when asserting their masculinity in a specific form of power relations to women. In a study about a Muslim community's response to male violence in Bradford, Macey (1999) observed that Muslim men with a Pakistani background displayed a strong interest in controlling women's conduct, which was taken to signify the honour of their families and the wider community. One important point in measuring such honour was observing appropriate female dress and behaviour, with men rigorously policing these aspects (Macey 1999).

Similar to this was the narrative of 'modesty' deployed by Asian Muslim men in Britain, to ensure women comply with the cultural expectation regarding their behaviour in their family (Ramji 2007). For some young Muslims in Britain, policing their female Muslim peers appeared to be an important form of exercising their adolescent masculine ethnic and religious identity (Dwyer 2000). In Sweden, a similar discourse about women's weakness, irrationality and incapability of self-control was grounds for men to protect and control

them, as a basic function of masculinity among Muslims (Gerlhom 2003).¹⁷ At the same time, separation from, rejection of, and resistance to female power in sexual desire and lust—as specific forms of perceived female qualities and femininity—were taken as a fundamental course to establish masculine personas in relation to the sacred power/God (Gerlhom 2003). The above findings may imply a link to the dominant discourse in Islamic tradition. In Islamic exegesis tradition, Ammar (2007) and Stalinsky and Yehoshua (2004) suggest that some interpretations of marriage in Islamic teaching have contributed to a superior and often aggressive image of masculinities, establishing the superiority of men as the religious ideal of masculinity.

Within these discourses, relations with women are especially institutionalised in marriage and families, where men have the right to lead, educate and control the women and children. There has been debate as to whether the centrality of family in Islamic discourse is a distinctively Islamic concept, or if it reflects a wider political and economic constellation affecting current Muslim societies. Scholars like Abu-Lughod (1998a; 1998b) and Wieringa (2002) contended that the re-assertion of the family as a core religious and social institution in Muslim societies like Egypt, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Indonesia is a colonial product that reflects modern prototypes of the European bourgeois family.¹⁸ Nevertheless, it does appear that Muslims have their own discourses about family which are more or less based on their religion.

In the mainstream, Islamic orthodoxy, power and authority are repeatedly pointed to as the core values of male identity in the Islamic family. The discourse of Islamic family or marital law proposes a hierarchal model of gender relations, where men sit at the top and rule the family (see Esposito 1982; Mernissi 1996; Shaikh 1997). Men are religiously obligated to lead, supervise and educate women, as they possess the capability to do so. It is men's relationship with women in marriage that mostly fully determines their masculine potential. This can be compared to what Connell (2000; 2005) calls the 'gender project' at the individual level. Here, family is the space where masculine power is 'exercised through self-

¹⁷ However, Gerlhom (2003) asserted that the idea of women having power in desire and lust is not typically Islamic, as it has similarities with Swedish society: both in the pre-industrial era and at the present.

¹⁸ Indeed, feminist theory has sometimes argued that the model of the nuclear family is characterised by a strict sexual division of labour, where the women as homemakers model was designed for bourgeois elites during the industrial revolution in Europe.

regulation and self-discipline—a process of “identity” work’ (Whitehead and Barrett 2001, 20). By acting in ways that comply with dominant gender norms, men reproduce masculine domination in the family.

For Muslim men, this exercise has a significant religious meaning. This was the case in my research on Muslim masculinities in Java, where teachings regarding the prerequisite of marriage and family appeared to be the most religious aspect of masculinities (Hidayat 2009).¹⁹ Muslim men were expected to marry as the main way to achieve an ideal masculine identity. One of the Javanese participants in my previous research stated, ‘So a man, to be respected as a perfect-accomplished man, according to Islam, has to have a family’ (Hidayat 2009, 43). This discourse of Muslim masculinities echoes those identified among Muslim men in Britain, Scotland and Sweden. Young Muslim men in studies by Ramji (2007), Hopkins (2006) and Gerholm (2003) consistently recorded the centrality of marriage and family to Muslim masculinities. Men as providers and protectors are mostly cited as leading the narrative of Islamic manhood. However, as it was also asserted by most Javanese Muslims in my research, the core measurement of masculine achievement was men’s ability to control their women. As one of Gerholm’s (2003) participants strongly suggested, ‘But a job and income are not enough. If a man has that but cannot manage to control his family, we say he is *khwawal*, which means homosexual’ (413). Therefore, family affords men the means to exercise such control.

Discussion about women’s positioning in the family suggests an important direction in analysing masculinity among Muslims in Australia. The question of women and the family provides a useful insight into understanding men’s gendered identity. How do Muslim men, as a minority in Australia, negotiate their relationships with women, and how do they negotiate the discourse and practices in family relationships, while maintaining their masculine values? These questions have been addressed in this project.

¹⁹ Marriage is one of the central teachings of Islam. In Islam, marriage is considered a practice of worship (*ibadat*) and every adult Muslim is expected to marry (Esposito 1982).

Muslim brotherhood

The Muslim brotherhood is another important theme in the scholarship on Muslim masculinities. However, this particular field has not yet been sufficiently explored in the emerging literature on Muslim masculinity and gender studies. In this project, brotherhood does not mean a particular global network organised to serve certain political and ideological objectives; rather, it refers to a broader sense of connectedness among individual Muslim men as part of their religious practice. While this sense of connectedness may apply equally to women, for Muslim men it enables certain gendered meanings and results in particular practices that reinforce masculinity, as discussed below.

For many Muslim men, brotherhood is not just another men's group, but is a part of their religious commitment. An Islamic ethic determining that all Muslims are part of a big family can be related to this sense (Denny 2000). This teaching mainly refers to a well-known Prophet's saying (*hadis*) that all Muslims are connected like a human body; if one part of the body is injured, the other parts will feel the pain as well (Denny 2000). For instance, all the Muslim boys in Archer's (2001) research insisted that being Muslim was their first and foremost identity, because 'If we all Muslims you're all one' (87). This teaching does not suggest a particular gendered space and practice. However, the dominant gender configuration among Muslims breeds strong masculine meanings and practices regarding this ethic. In Java, Muslim men felt the obligation to create religious communities by organising collective prayers and other religious activities (Hidayat 2009). These were mainly mediated through traditional religious institutions like mosque committees, where men took the initiative and controlled the organisation. The same tendency was also demonstrated by Indonesian Muslim men in Australia, where a sense of collectiveness was highly praised as a male value, practiced through friendship and the mosque community. Indonesian Muslim men are 'very close to each other', so close that they are 'like family' (Nilan et al. 2007, 15). Mosque attendance produces a 'community' that strengthens Muslim men's identities, and establishes masculine solidarity, which to some extent limits individual male competition (Nilan et al. 2007). The gender segregated space (domestic-public) for men and women, accompanied by other gender norms like leadership, afforded men more resources to participate in such institutions, assuming a sense of connectedness is predominantly exercised in public spaces. The widespread practices of some basic rituals also contributed to

this sense of gendered religious connectedness. For example, men should perform *salat* together at mosques (they are also obliged to perform Friday prayer with a larger congregation), giving them a space to collect together at least five times a day.²⁰ Muslim women are not bound by a similar obligation. Thus, this connects the idea of Muslim unity with a practice of brotherhood.

I suggest that the importance of brotherhood for masculinity lies in its potential to create exclusive male spaces, whether real or imagined, that allow for mechanisms of self-control, measurement, strengthening and other collective identity work. Brotherhood enables Muslim men to collectively identify and interpret experience meaningful to their identity, recall and reproduce male narratives, and institutionalise them in a hierarchy. Alexander (2000) delivered a rich analysis of the dynamics of brotherhood practiced among young Asian Muslim groups in Britain. She observed a strong culture among these groups of young Muslim men, largely built by overlapping connections of friendship, personal ties and family. Her analysis implies that respect was a key value that bound the members to each other. This eventually produced a hierarchy within the brotherhood, where older members, according to the family relations, were given a higher rank. The brotherhood links were greatly assisted by maintaining attitudes that were both expected and non-expected by its members. They were also divided according to different ranks in the hierarchy.²¹ Alexander (2000) argued that such expectations were nurtured within the discourse of rights and the obligation of being a brother. Her study revealed that brotherhood worked to reinstate harmony and order between Muslim communities, to resolve internal affairs and conflict, to provide protection and maintain honour, but also to establish and negotiate values or attitudes.

The examination of brotherhood reveals an important feature in which Muslim masculinity rarely appears to be an individual sense of subjectivity, but is exercised as an exclusive practice of connectedness with a distinct boundary (imagined or real) among men. The idea of brotherhood also means that men have strongly recognised rules that they are expected

²⁰ *Salat* is a basic ritual in Islam. Every adult Muslim is obligated to perform *salat* five times a day.

²¹ Age, role in the extended family and community and reputation among peers give a member in the Young Muslims network a higher rank and position and therefore being more respected within the group (Alexander 2000).

to follow. It stresses the communality and collectiveness of subjects, rather than individual subjectivity. Muslim masculinity is unlikely to be a sole individual project of one man. In Britain (Archer 2003; Alexander 2000), Australia (Nilan et al. 2007) and Java (Hidayat 2009), being a Muslim man is a necessary part of being in a larger masculine collective. This would likely be the case, I would suggest, whether brotherhood was exercised in highly religious organisations like a mosque committee, or in much less religious groups like friendship or youth gangs.

Where Muslims find themselves as a minority, the sense of brotherhood may be reinforced as a form of resistance towards dominant values, particularly with the experience of marginalisation and racism. This is especially true where ethnicity is not reliable or is problematic in providing a strong basis for identity, especially among second and third generation Muslims in the West. A number of studies have demonstrated how Muslim minorities in Europe and the US declared religion as a primary component of identity. Religion was seen as stronger than ethnicity (Arab, Asian, African) or nationality (American, British, Scottish) (Gardner and Shukur 1994; Mamdani 2002; Naber 2005; Shaw 1994).²² As a response to experiences of racism, Archer argues that this assertion of Muslim identity cannot simply be read as a refusal to 'integrate' with mainstream values or culture (Archer 2003; Rattansi 1992). Among young Muslim men in the UK, Archer suggested that the employment of Islam and its entitlement of brotherhood has asserted a strong and hard masculinity, in comparison to a weak and soft Asian masculinity (as the vulnerable victim of racism). Archer (2003) determined that the Muslim boys in her study actively engaged with 'white' society, while rejecting 'whiteness' and British identity, by identifying themselves with a 'strong' religion that offered a narrative of Muslim unity across different ethnic backgrounds: 'you got Muslim brothers all over the world' (87).

How is brotherhood relevant in addressing Muslim masculinities in Australia? In terms of its function in facilitating strong masculine identities, I believe brotherhood is comparable to other forms of masculine collective values, such as 'mateship' in Australia. For many

²² The scholarship on Muslim masculinities in Europe discussed here also record that Muslim boys defined themselves in terms of religion first and foremost, rather than ethnicity and nationality (Archer 2001, 2003; Ramji 2007; Hopkins 2003). Indeed, adult Muslim men as the majority in my previous study in Java also declared themselves primarily as Muslims, rather than Javanese (Hidayat 2009).

Australian men, an assured and strong commitment to their mates defines their masculinity, and is often more important than commitment to family (Colling 1992; Altman 1987; Biddulph 1994; Edgar 1997; Webb 1998).²³ However, Nilan et al.'s project indicated that Muslim men may judge mateship as denigrated by what they consider the core ethos of Australian men as being individualistic, selfish and competitive (Nilan et al. 2007). The latter would likely refer to white, Anglo and middle class men. How do Australian Muslim men respond to (resist, adopt or negotiate) these masculine values, in contrast to the sense of collectiveness in brotherhood? This project specifically addresses this question as part of the framework to examine Muslim masculinity in Australia.

Approach to Muslim masculinities in Australia

Scholars of Muslim masculinity in Western contexts repeatedly remind us that Muslim men's gendered identity is contextual, involves complex daily negotiations, and is provisional (Alexander 2000; Archer 2003; Ramji 2007; Hopkins 2003; Dwyer et al. 2008). Muslim men interpret, negotiate and embody their masculinity in a gender system that involves multiple and complex relationships. These shape the discourse of masculinity among Muslim men. This project will introduce the components of Muslim masculinity in Australia. These components will focus on the relational dimension of Muslim men's gendered identity in Australia, which they encounter in their day-to-day experiences.

The first part of the analysis will focus on Muslim men's relationship to the non-Muslim, post-Christian Australian public, and to hegemonic Australian masculinity. The first research question of this project represents this focus: how, as a minority, do Muslim men respond to the perceived hegemonic Westernised, white-Anglo and secular discourse of Australian masculinity in their daily lived experiences? This analysis also addresses the third research question of the project: how do Muslim men maintain and negotiate their norms and values related to male identity, honour and position, as prescribed in their religious beliefs? The analysis will seek to explore Muslim men's daily life experiences as minority group within the growing secularity of Australia, and will also respond to the mainstream discourse of multiculturalism, public discourse on Islam, experiences of discrimination and exclusion in

²³ For more discussion about mateship in Australia, see Altman (1987), Colling (1992), Webb (1998).

their day-to-day experiences. The project will discuss the issue of identity and cultural resistance among Muslim men in the discourse of masculine identity. In particular, the analysis will draw from Connell's (2005; 2000) category of relationships between masculinities, the one she calls 'marginalisation', resulting from the intersection of gender with other structures—in this case, class. The analysis will address Muslim men's responses to Australian manhood, associated with Westernised, white-Anglo and middle class masculinity. I am particularly interested in exploring the extent to which Muslim men resist Australian masculinity and maintain their masculine practices, and the extent to which they negotiate, adopt or transplant the dominant masculine discourse.

The second part of this analysis focuses on Muslim men's relationships with women and the strong emphasis on their attachment to family. This part addresses the second research question of the project: how do Muslim men adapt and negotiate their traditionally superior position in the family, in the light of dominant Australian secular values and the changes to gender relations in the family; and how does this affect the way they view women's position, the family, marital relations and men's position in the family? This part of analysis addresses men's views of, and attitudes to, women, marriage and family, and the dynamics of gender roles in the family. Given that Australia imposes considerably different mainstream systems of gender relationships (Poole 2011; Zajdow 2011), and Muslim men have normative expectations from their home cultures about men and women, how do Muslim men respond, without losing their gendered religious identity? How does the experience of re-settlement in a non-Muslim country affect men's attitudes and responses to women's roles, and to changes in gender roles and relationships? Following Archer (2003), I explore the question of the *patriarchal dividend* (Connell 2005); that is, how Muslim men as minority define, assert and negotiate patriarchal power in their new home.

Finally, the third component of analysis will address how Muslim brotherhood and religious communities affect Muslim masculine identities in Australia. This concern intersects with the first and second components of the analysis. However, a strong emphasis will be given to the relationships among Muslim men in an overwhelmingly non-Muslim society, and how they respond to the tendency towards individualism and competitive values in Australia.

This project has explored the life of mostly first-generation Muslim men from Southeast Asian backgrounds; specifically, Indonesian and Singaporean. They were chosen to suggest a different group of Muslims in Australia to those with Middle Eastern backgrounds, who have been taken as the overall face of Australian Muslims. Indonesia has the world's biggest Muslim population. Indonesian Muslims are characterised by their moderate theological stance and ability to accommodate local cultural values and expressions, integrating them into their own Islamic practice (Hefner 2008). In her review of different ethnographic studies across the archipelago, Robinson (2009) pointed out:

In the Reform era, the patriarchal forms of gender symbolism and gender power of the new Order are being challenged, while Islamic-based forms of gender symbolism and gender power are arising to take place and challenge women's rights in the domestic sphere, civil society and the state. However, Islamists feminists are able to use Islam as a powerful force for a counter gender symbolism and rights discourse, asserting their rights to an equal place with men in a society expressing Muslim ideals (187).

As a reliable cultural resource, Islam gives a discourse and set of practices that shape gender relations, gender symbolism and gendered power (Robinson 2009). The long process of Islamisation recently taking place across the country does not result in homogenisation of gender order. Instead, various forms of gender orders occur in accommodation with the gender norms of the archipelago (Robinson 2009).

Taking the case of these groups of Muslim men in Australia, this project addressed the following three research questions:

1. How do Muslim men perceive and respond to the majority non-Muslim social environment, especially to perceived Westernised, White-Anglo and secular features of Australian male culture in their daily life? How are these perceptions and responses reflected in their own masculinity?
2. How do Muslim men adapt and negotiate their religiously justified privileged position as leader of the family and how does this affect their masculinity?
3. What strategies do Muslim men use to maintain and preserve values and practices associated with their religion that contribute to their masculinity?

The research inquiry aims to address these three questions and provide sociological understanding of Muslim masculinities with regard to Muslim men's life experiences in Australia.

As Gerami (2005) argued, a study of Muslim masculinities is important as it will support further scholarship on Muslim women, both in Muslim-majority and Muslim-minority societies. Scholarship in this field will also help Muslim men to understand and negotiate the rapid social changes they are experiencing. Research on gender relations in non-Western social contexts signifies different images of masculinity and femininity to Western images (Kimmel 2000). The current studies on masculinities should move beyond established Western notions of masculinity by looking at different constructions of masculinity for non-Western men, not only as local cases but as part of a 'global society' (Connell 2000).

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODS

This research conducted a field study using qualitative methods from June 2012 to February 2013 in Melbourne, addressing the research questions and applying the proposed framework. The study comprised participant observations of five Muslim organisations, in addition to in-depth interviews involving twenty Muslim men and group discussions with three to six Muslim men. The study sought to collect Muslim men's views, perspectives, attitudes, life stories and first-hand information about what these Australian Muslim men did and believed, and what made them what they are. The study explored the lived experience of Muslim men as a religious minority in Australia, through a gender lens.

This chapter describes how the data were collected. It begins by discussing the methodological considerations and research design, followed by the ethical issues that arose during fieldwork. Information about the research method design and implementation is then outlined with regard to the in-depth interviews, together with subsequent group discussions and participant observation. Data analysis, interpretation and the research limitations are also covered here.

1. Methodology

In-depth interviews, with occasional group discussions, are a widely applied research method regarding Muslim masculinities. These applications include studies by Archer (2001) and Ramji (2007) on Muslim youth groups in the UK, Hopkins (2004; 2006) on Muslim youth groups in Scotland, Gerlhom (2003) on Middle Eastern Muslims in Sweden, and Samuel (2013) in the UK and the Bangladesh mainland. Nilan et al.'s (2007) research on Indonesian Muslim masculinity only used interviews. Similarly, Chafic's (2010) project in Sydney involved interviews with Muslim men. Previously, I also used in-depth interviews to further develop

findings from group discussions for a study on Muslim masculinities in Java (2009).

Interviewing men allows for exploration of the men's own perspectives about their beliefs, identity and the social world external to them, in various contexts.

Ethnographic research is much less commonly applied in research on Muslim masculinities. Examples of this method include Alexander's (2000) ethnographic study on boy gangs of Muslim youth with Pakistani backgrounds in the UK, Gerami's (2005) observation on post-revolution Iranian men, and Torab's (2007) ethnographic study on the rite of *Karbala* among the *Shi'i* in Iran. Observations of Islamic rituals are surprisingly uncommon, considering the importance of ritual in the reinforcement of masculinity. This lack is particularly the case for the daily basic rituals, such as *salat*. My study addresses this gap in the research by including observations of the performance of *salat* and its contribution to masculinity.

Employing participant observation is not common in this field. To the best of my knowledge, there is no study that employs participant observation for research on Muslim masculinities. Michael Schwalbe's (1996) ethnographic research on mythopoetic men in the US is the best example of this method for research on masculinity. For this very reason, I reflected upon and adapted the considerations, approach and ethical issues of Schwalbe's study to help with my study. Schwalbe (1996) justified the approach used in his study by stressing that the mythopoetic men could not be understood by analysing the texts they used, or the leaders of the movement. He stressed, 'The men and their activities had to be understood directly, by being there as the men tried to figure out what they were doing together' (Schwalbe 1996, 12).

I think the situation is similar to that of Muslim men in contemporary Australia, with the moral panic that occurred among some sections of the Australian public, alongside the 'demonisation' of Muslim men in Australia. Muslim men and their masculinities cannot be associated with the supposed 'wannabe terrorist' depicted in figures such as Haron Monis,²⁴ neither from analysis of lone *jihadists*, nor from Islamic texts. What Muslim men believe about themselves, their religion and what they do in the country they live in, has to be

²⁴ The man who took 17 people hostage at a Lindt cafe in Sydney's Martin Place on 15 December 2014. ABC News. 16 December 2014, 'Sydney siege: Man behind Martin Place stand-off was Iranian Haron Monis, who had violent criminal history', <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-12-16/iranian-man-haron-monis-named-as-man-behind-sydney-siege/5969246>. Viewed on 9 January 2015

understood directly from the men's own perspectives, their practices and their feelings. For this reason, participant observation was the best way to approach Muslim masculinities in Australia, in addition to in-depth interviews and group discussions.

In order to address the research questions and the project's objective, I needed to access personal stories from the men themselves, stories that would provide me with information about the daily lived experiences of their membership of a religious minority in Australia. In accordance with the relational framework discussed in Chapter 2, these stories therefore needed to include men's experiences of relationships with the majority non-Muslim Australian community, relationships with Muslim women and engagement in the Muslim brotherhood, in their position as both man and Muslim. In the social experience of the men, these relationships occur respectively in the workplace, family and by participating in Muslim communities. In their stories, I looked at the men's beliefs, perceptions, views, meanings, aspirations, attitudes, opinions, practices and ways of looking at the self and the external social world, in their position as men and Muslims. I looked at the gendered and religious factors stated as shaping their identities and construction of self.

Three methods were used in this qualitative study. In-depth interviews aimed to explore and collect personal stories of Muslim men regarding their life experiences in the workplace, family and Muslim communities. I focused on the effect of Muslim men's position as a religious minority on their experiences in these social settings. Group discussion was added to the interview method to further explore men's opinions and experiences of specific issues, such as Islamophobia, changes in marital life and practising Islam in Australia. Participant observation was designed to experience first-hand Muslim men's activities and practices in religious settings within Muslim groups of their own cultural background. These activities included the performance of Islamic core rituals such as *salat* undertaken in congregations in (for example) mosques. The observations also addressed cultural expressions involved in the social interactions taking place among the men on those occasions. Further details of each method is provided in Sections 3 and 4 of this chapter. The research design was heavily reliant on my subjectivity as a Muslim man of Southeast Asian background.

Ethics

The project obtained ethical approval from the Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC) (see Appendix 1). My study entailed a considerable risk of exposing the participants' private matters. This risk arose mainly from the issues I dealt with during the interviews and group discussions, which included personal stories of the past, involving: religious-moral sanctions; marital and intimate relationships; problems in family life; experiences of racism that may have involved emotional pain and trauma; and a sense of vulnerability in a minority group. These last two issues might also have caused emotional discomfort or anxiety among the men in the interview process.

Before every observation, interview or group discussion, I reminded participants that their participation was voluntary and confidential. I informed the men that their names, as well as any other name associated with the Muslim communities they belonged to, would not be used in the study. I also advised the interviewees that only my supervisors and myself would have access to the original data resulting from their participation. During the interviews, I reminded the participants that they did not have an obligation to reveal their private details, especially when discussing marital life and intimate relationships, if they did not want to. Only two participants stated, in a small part of the interview, they did not want to be recorded.

In one of the group discussions, the men went as far as talking about and comparing their marital tensions with their wives, to the point where one of the participants repeatedly expressed his desperation, wanting to 'give up' (get divorced). As the flow of the discussion went beyond my control, I interrupted the group by expressing my empathy and respect for their situations and how I appreciated their willingness to share their stories. However, I also reminded them that I was recording their conversation, and if they did not want to reveal their private home matters, they could stop at any time. Responding to my interruption, the men, to my surprise, did not seem bothered. One said, 'That's okay. This is only among us'. Wanting to get their confirmation, I asked them again, 'Do you want me to skip the discussion just now or delete it? It is completely okay for me.' The other men convinced me, stating 'It's okay brother Rachmad. We are fine with that'. Then the exchange continued. Perhaps the close friendship of three men involved provided a comfortable space for them

to be able to share their private lives. At the end of the discussion, the men thanked me for mediating the discussion and allowing them to share their anxieties with other men they knew.

A considerable proportion of the interview sessions were conducted during religious gatherings, in the presence of many other non-participants (men and women Muslims) familiar to the participants. This situation involved a risk that the men might be easily identified by other Muslims who did not participate in the study. Considering this possibility, I asked the participants to consider a different place and time for the interview. However, the men did not show much concern about their participation being known and were happy to conduct the interviews in the presence of other Muslims.

Insider/outsider

A researcher sharing the same culture and gender with participants can help in mediating communication focusing on gender and culture and further in interpreting data (Gill and MacLean 2002; Labaree 2002; Williams 1993). Throughout the study process I was fully aware of my subjectivity and identity as a Muslim man with Southeast Asian background. In fact I took full benefit from my identity as a key element of the research method. From the participant's perspectives, I was not an outsider, but a fellow Muslim brother who showed his interest in the Muslim community and shared the same religious commitment. An insider position encourages participants to interact freely whereby assuming a shared belonging and understanding of cultural context (Gibson and Abrams 2003). When I went to the committee of the Huda mosque, one of the religious venues I observed, to talk to them about the research, one of the committee members warmly welcomed me by saying, 'This is your mosque too. Come anytime you want!' I visited religious and community activities with the five Muslim groups, greeted them with an Islamic greeting (often with handshakes and occasionally hugs), and performed rituals together with the men. I joined Islamic festivals, shared *halal* food, shared their concerns regarding issues surrounding Muslims in Australia, talked about family and sometimes shared knowledge of Islamic teaching. I dedicated myself fully to the communities, as an important part of my belonging and implementation of my religious belief.

At the same time, I made sure that I clarified that my participation in the five groups had a particular purpose; that is, conducting my research. This purpose was mainly enforced by my commitment to feminism, a commitment that has always made me feel different to most of the men. I hold opinions regarding Islamic teachings on gender that are different to the dominant interpretation of Islamic teaching (that I believe is commonly adopted by many Muslim men and women). Indeed, because of my opinion, I feel that I have an obligation to take a critical position towards the dominant discourse on gender in Islam. I found most of the Muslim men I studied were trying to sustain this dominant discourse as a constituting element of their identity.

Despite this, during the fieldwork I felt that my participation was highly appreciated and accepted by the community. I was aware that gender issues and feminism are very sensitive issues for Muslims, which is why I restrained myself from revealing my perspective when discussions about gender emerged among the Muslim men. During interviews, I gave full respect to participants' opinions, beliefs and attitudes, while holding a different perspective, especially related to Islamic doctrines and masculinity. Being among the men, I posited myself as a sociologist who, according to Schwalbe (1996), takes people's accounts as data. My critical position towards the Muslim men was largely maintained in the interpretation of the Muslim men's statements, by focusing on producing sociological explanations of the discourse of masculinity among the Muslim men.

2. Interviews and Group Discussion

Sample and recruitment

This project has adopted Saeed and Akbarzadeh's (2001) definition of Muslims as including all men who associate themselves with at least some of the cultural forms associated with Islam, regardless of their practice; those who see Islam as contributing to their identity and culture; or those who accept the basic teachings of Islam, regardless of interpretation. I was interested in studying Muslim men from Southeast Asian backgrounds, including but not limited to Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore. These groups have been largely

underrepresented in the discussion of Islam in Australia, and Islam as minority in the West overall. Additionally, I intended to invite participants from different social-economic backgrounds and with different marital and settlement experiences.

I used public recruitment methods, with research flyers distributed throughout various media. I also employed a purposive sampling technique using Muslim community networks. I distributed flyers to relay information about the project being conducted, addressing the Muslim public that fell within my research participants' category. A copy of the printed version of these flyers is attached in Appendix 2. The flyer was designed to give general information about the project and to attract potential participants. There were three versions of the flyer. The most frequently used was the small-sized printed version, to be distributed to individual men. In the early stage of the fieldwork, distribution of these flyers was my priority. I targeted individual Muslim men who attended activities hosted by Muslim groups ranging from Friday prayer, religious programmes held on the weekend and *Tarwih* prayer, performed during *Ramadhan* in 2012. The early part of the fieldwork happened to be the month of *Ramadhan* in 2012. While addressing Muslims with Southeast Asian backgrounds, a number of flyers were also given to those who did not appear to fit within this criteria. I also distributed the flyer during community gatherings, such as the *Eid* festival, held by different groups within the category. In total, I distributed around 200 of these small flyers during my fieldwork. The second version was an A4-sized flyer, to be attached to noticeboards, mainly in mosques. I distributed this flyer to a number of well-known large mosques in Melbourne, where potential participants were likely to visit. I also posted the flyer in places where Muslims within the category I was seeking may visit, such as *halal* butchers, the Indonesian and Malaysian Consulate offices in Melbourne, Asian grocery stores and restaurants, and university campuses. The third version of the flyer was electronic. This was distributed to a number of mailing lists involving Muslims from the cultural backgrounds I wished to contact. All three versions of the flyer had exactly the same content and design.

The distribution of the small flyer took place especially during the early stages of participant observation, when I attended activities held by the five Muslim organisations observed. In these Muslim groups, I distributed the flyer on more than one occasion, so that some men might have received more than one copy. I wanted to ensure that every man present at the

activities was aware of my project when I attended their religious or community activities. As a Muslim man born in Indonesia, I possessed a subjectivity that was particularly helpful for the project, especially for the recruitment and participant observation. It helped me to blend in easily with the Muslim congregation during religious activities or community gatherings. Except for one out of the five Muslim organisations I observed in this study, I was a newcomer. A few leaders of these organisations occasionally introduced me and my study to their Muslim audiences. Men in these groups also asked questions about me, as an expression of accepting my presence in the groups. These practices also helped spread information about the study among communities.

I expected that a potential participant would contact me to state his interest and arrange an interview at his convenience. Only one participant contacted me by email on the first interaction. Most participants met me in person while I was present at a religious activity or community gathering of their group. These first contacts were commonly followed by further communication (by SMS) prior to the interview. Many came to me to ask for more information about the study before stating their interest in being interviewed. Three participants were interested in the study after other participants advised them about the study. In fact, I received more than three references for potential participants, but many were not able to participate. A number of men stated their interest in the research, but ended up being unable to arrange a time for interview.

Participants were informed about the topics of the study and main theme of the interview, and how their participation would contribute to the project. They were advised that their participation was voluntary, that they could withdraw their participation at any time before the data were processed, and that some of the questions in the interviews might be sensitive or related to their personal lives. Explanatory statements and consent forms were given in English, accompanied by verbal explanations about the nature of their participation in the study (Burgens 1982).

Overall, the fieldwork involved nineteen men for individual interviews, four of whom also participated in the group discussion with another five men. The data were also obtained from twelve men who shared their views or personal stories as Muslim men in male-only casual gatherings, as I explain further in Section 3 of this chapter. Of the men interviewed

and involved in group discussions, six were from Singapore, two of whom were born in Malaysia. Thirteen men had an Indonesian background, which meant they were born in Indonesia or had at least one parent born in Indonesia. Three of these Indonesians were second generation Muslim and born in Australia, while the rest of the participants were first generation Muslims.

During the fieldwork, I expected to recruit a significant proportion of Muslim men from Malaysia, considering their representation as a major Muslim community in Southeast Asia. However, I discovered that Malaysian Muslims—as Australian residents or citizens living in Melbourne—were difficult to find. The information I obtained about this Muslim group suggested that only a handful of Malaysian Muslim women who married were with Australian men or Singaporean men. Throughout the field study period, I found only one Muslim man from Malaysia, who was actually a member of one of the Indonesian Muslim-based communities, and was not interested in the study. One of the organisations I observed played a coordinating role among the Malaysian Muslim organisations in Melbourne. However, all of these organisations were run by Malaysian students studying in Australia. Considering this circumstance, I concluded that Malaysian Muslims were not a significant category for my study, and I focused on Singaporean Muslims instead. The latter group, to my surprise, had a more significant representation as a Muslim community in Melbourne, in terms of their numbers, organisations and activities. There were three core groups of Singaporean Muslims in Melbourne, two of which were the focus of this study. While having Singaporean nationality, they called themselves ‘Malay’ Muslims, which refers to their ethnicity instead of their position as Singaporean Muslims. The Indonesian Muslim community in Melbourne was much more established with regard to their organisations, independence, activities and a much greater number of members. This is why I had more opportunity to interact with and recruit them, along with men from my own background. I further discuss these groups of Muslims in Section 3 of this chapter.

Due to the fieldwork circumstances, I was not able to obtain detailed information about some of the participants, especially those involved in the group discussions but who did not participate in the individual interviews. The following information about the participants only covers the men who participated in the in-depth interviews. The Muslim men participants were aged from 24 to 65 when the interviews were undertaken, with the largest

proportion of those over 40. Most of them were married, with at least one child, while two of the participants were single. In terms of employment, the occupation of the participants reflects the information given by DIAC-CIRCA (2010). Most (16) of the men worked, or had previously worked, as machinery operators, as labourers or in technical work such as engineering or as mechanics. Two of the men held managerial positions in a company founded and run by their own. One participant worked in the research and science field. Three of the participants worked casually, having retired from their previous employment.

Regarding their living experience in Australia, all the participants had lived in Australia for more than ten years when the fieldwork was conducted. One had lived in Australia for more than fifty years, being born in Australia. For those participants born overseas, they had come to Australia for various reasons, ranging from: study, followed by work, seeking job opportunities, to earn a better living, following parents, employment reasons and marriage. None had come to Australia because of conflict or forced immigration.

The fact that they were recruited mainly through their attendance at religious activities or involvement in religious organisations reflects that all of the Muslim participants in this study were practising Muslims. This means that they demonstrated a meaningful degree of religious devotion and influential consideration of the importance of religion for their lives in Australia. Appendix 3 provides list of the participants' details. Below I provide a brief description of each of the male participants, all of whom are identified by pseudonyms.

Afdhal (28) was a second generation Muslim with parents from West Java. He has three children from a marriage with a second generation Muslim woman also with an Indonesian background. Graduated as an engineer, Afdhal (28) was the most knowledgeable of the participants about Islamic teaching. He travelled in different countries to study Islam for several years and was considered a religious preacher.

Amin (53) was one of the most active participants in the study. He was keen to share his views about Australia and the Muslims and occasionally approached to me to do that. His complicated story illustrates his life struggle as a Muslim man. Amin (53) married an Australian White woman who later converted to Islam. They had one son who was close to graduating from his study when the fieldwork was conducted. However, Amin (53) hinted that he rarely saw his son, as he lived separately from his wife and son, while not declaring

that they were divorced. He never told me what actually happened in his marital life, but he kept complaining about his wife during the interviews, group discussions and other occasions of conversations. Amin (53) once felt that he had 'lost his way', 'not knowing religion' but during the study he felt himself 'wanting to be close to religion' and wanted to 'repent'. He was a loyal member of the Huda mosque community.

Aslaam (61) was a Singaporean father of three children. He first came to Australia in 1992 for a job program before marrying his Singaporean wife and moving permanently to Melbourne. Aslaam (61) was an important figure in Singapore Muslim communities and a dedicated leader of his group.

Budiman (50) was a second-generation Muslim who spent most of his childhood with Australian White boys. As the Indonesian Muslim community grew, he came to know them and got more involved in the community. His wife is Indonesian-born; they have three grown children.

Deny (50s) was a highly dedicated organiser of Insan Indonesia and previously was the coordinator of the Huda mosque committee (*takmir*). He was a father of two children who always showed his support to young Muslim groups in the community.

Fahroni (44) first came to Australia in the early 1990s for a short training program, which led to his interest in Australia and prompted his decision to return to Australia a few years later. In Perth he met his prospective wife, an Indonesian-born Muslim woman who had grown up in Australia. The couple had two children. During the interview, Fahroni (44) shared his difficult situation with his wife whom he thought embodied Australian mainstream characteristics.

Firman (24) was the youngest son of Usep (65) (described below); he came to talk to me probably due to the impact of his father's enthusiasm for the study. In his own interview, Usep (65) had expressed a desire to introduce me to Firman (24), who had just come back from Indonesia after Islamic training in a *pesantren* (traditional Islamic boarding school). Firman (24) was single and born in Australia. Following high school he decided not to go to university, but to seek employment experience. Although he had graduated from a

pesantren, Firman (24) was not as highly motivated to attend Huda mosque as his father. However, he told me that he had begun to take Islam more seriously as he matured.

Hamzi (55) had been a police officer of significant rank in Singapore before moving to Australia, where he found a much lower position compared to his previous status. Fierce competition in Singapore, which was worsened by constant unfair treatment as a minority Malay, gave him a convincing reason to move to Australia. 'You have to work extremely hard to get little recognition when you are a [Malay] minority in Singapore,' he told me. Hamzi (55) has three children, all of whom are actively involved in different organisations. He also has a connection to Java, as his mother was born there.

Hanif (50s) did not give me adequate chance to obtain his details during the interview. Aslaam (61) had introduced me to Hanif (50s), who, being informed of what I was doing with the Singaporean group, pulled me into an intense conversation about Islamophobia in Australia. It was in the middle of the Eid Festival with hundreds of other men surrounding us with noise, as we ate our meal. Hanif (50s) rarely came to the regular religious activities held by the Singaporean group, and that was my only chance to interview him. But Hanif (50s) looked very enthusiastic and wanted his voice to be heard. I assumed he was among the Singaporean engineers whose migration to Australia had been sponsored by their company.

Jamil (57) came to Australia in the early 1990s on the same company program as Hanif (50s) and some other men in the Singaporean group. He was a regular participant in religious gatherings organised by Jami Melayu, one of the Muslim groups I observed. Jamil (57) had two daughters and two sons, whose story illustrates an effort by a Muslim father to maintain his authority in the family. I discuss this story in Chapter 5.

Jundy (43) came to Australia in 2004 for study and upon graduation he found a highly skilled job at a national research institution in Australia. Jundy (43) possessed the highest academic qualification among the participants in the study. He was married to an Indonesian Muslim woman and had two children. Among the participants, Jundy (43) was perhaps the most consistent in expressing religiosity in terms of appearance, especially dressing, in speaking and in discussions of his spiritual perspective.

Karim (56) was one of the key organisers of Baitul Melayu, one of the Muslim organisations I observed. In Singapore his parents had trained him to be a devoted Muslim, and he dedicated his knowledge and skills, especially in reading the Qur'an, to a program run by the Baitul Melayu. Even considering the time he devoted to religious activities in Singapore, he asserted that living in Australia afforded him more time 'for religion and for others'. He had three children, all in their 20s.

Shaleh (60s) was a Singaporean expert on oil drilling who had had a very good job in Singapore. However, in the late 1990s, he moved to Australia with his Singaporean wife and son for the same reasons shared by other Singaporean Muslim men in this study: unhealthy competition, demanding job targets, and experience of discrimination as a minority in Singapore.

Roy (35) came to Australia in 2001 when he was 24. He had a strong Islamic background. His parents' ethnicities were Gorontalo and Lampung, both among the most highly religious provinces in Indonesia. He was born and grew up in Tanjung Priok, which is also known for its strict Islamic community. He married a second-generation Australian Muslim woman with Indonesian parents; they had three children.

Subagya (60) worked in Europe for a number of years before moving to Australia. He and his wife, a woman from Jakarta, had two children. During the study he retired from his job but now runs a small company. He was a regular attender of Huda mosque.

Suyanto (42) was born in Java, but his parents sent him and his brother to Australia when he was teenager. He spent his youth and early adulthood in Melbourne before marrying a Javanese woman; they had two children. Suyanto (42) felt that he had enough bitter sweet experience of living in Australia and was happy living as a Muslim in the country.

Umsa (50) met an Australian woman in Singapore; the couple fell in love, married and moved to Australia. However, after living for a number of years in his wife's hometown, he did not feel at home and decided to move to Melbourne. After a lengthy negotiation and persuasion, his attempt to ask his wife to join him in Melbourne did not succeed, and their marriage broke down. Umsa (50) loved music and Indonesian martial arts, and was keen to maintain Islamic and Malay culture through music.

Usep (65) was a loyal and highly devoted Muslim in the Insan Indonesia community, one of the groups I observed. He and his Indonesian-born wife had two sons and one daughter. He came to Australia with a bachelor's degree in farming and an expectation of employment suited to his training. However, he was disappointed upon finding that the farming system and products in Australia were completely different to what he had trained for in Indonesia. He then found a different job, and felt pleased with the realisation that 'here in Australia, any job is okay'.

Zainuddin (48) was born in Sumatra; for a reason he did not explain to me, he came to Australia in his 20s. He was married to an Indonesian Muslim woman, with whom he had one daughter. He was among the highly motivated participants in the Indonesian Muslim community. Zainuddin's (48) story is that of a born-again Muslim man who had once felt the freedom and 'pleasure' of living in Australia, but now far more strictly observed Islamic practices.

Zakky (49) was born in West Java, Indonesia. He came to Australia in his late youth, married a second-generation Australian Muslim woman with Sumatran background and has lived in Australia ever since. He was one of the influential figures in Sumatra Bersatu (one of five Muslim groups I observed in this study).

Interview design

As explained in Chapter 2, this study analyses three relationships through which Muslim masculinities are negotiated: Muslim men's relationships as a minority in Australian society, Muslim men's relationships with Muslim women in the family, and Muslim brotherhood. These aspects have become areas of enquiry applied to three areas of Muslim men's experience as a minority in Australia: life at work, family life, and engagement in the Muslim community. These are the areas of enquiry to be explored in the interviews and group discussions.

To facilitate the interview process, I created an interview guide consisting of 88 sequences of questions in six sections: one collecting participants' details and five exploring their life experiences, including work life, family life, religious life and participation in Muslim communities, history of arrival and settlement in Australia and views on their identity.

Participants were asked questions such as: 'I am interested to know: why did you choose and decide to move to Australia and not another country?', 'Could you please tell me your experience of obtaining your current job?', 'While doing your job, do you have an experience that you feel in conflict with your beliefs as a Muslim? If yes, how do you deal with that?', 'I am really interested to know your opinion on Australian men in general. Could you please say how you see them?', 'In your opinion, what should a good Muslim husband be like?', 'Do you agree that a man should be the head of the family? What does it mean in your understanding?', 'Do you think it is harder to be a Muslim husband here than in Indonesia/Malaysia/Singapore?', 'Do you think you have more interaction with non-Muslims than with Muslims while living here?', 'Could you please tell me about activities you have been involved in (name of organisation)?' and 'What is the most important benefit of this involvement (in religious activities) for you as a Muslim man?' Appendix 4 provides a copy of the interview guide.

While always having the interview guide in hand, I planned the interviews to flow in accordance to the direction set by the participants' story by allowing for considerable flexibility. I wanted to make the interview like the life activity of sharing a story between two Muslim fellow men, not a structured interrogation between a researcher and his respondent (Bruner 1986; Riessmann 2008). The interview was thus also open to any unexpected topics that may have provided useful information about Muslim masculinities in the Australian context.

The group discussion method was designed to be undertaken following the interviews, mainly involving those who had already participated in the individual interviews. I intended to arrange the activities with some of the interviewees at the time and place of their choice. I also expected the activity to engage participants from the two nationality groups, Singaporean and Indonesian, while the discussion would be conducted separately. The method was intended to explore broader topics related to shared and different experiences of settlement, experiences as husbands, fathers or sons and responses to Australian masculinity.

Conduct of the interview

As I expected, many of the interview sessions with individual participants were organised in advance. This arrangement allowed me to apply the procedural steps of explaining the nature of the interview, accompanied by providing the participants with an explanatory statement and a written consent form prior to the interviews. Questions exploring participants' identity, such as year or place of birth, highest education level attended, family and marital status and employment, were also able to be raised, allowing me to obtain details of the participants' backgrounds in the first instance. However, a significant number of interview activities in this study were unplanned and took place spontaneously. This happened when, during a religious or community event, I was involved in a conversation with another Muslim man attending the event, who was discussing a topic related to my study, commonly falling within the general topic of Muslims in Australia. In such conversations, I stressed the importance of the topic, and further pursued the conversation to explore more about the participants' personal experiences and perspectives as Muslim men, by asking questions derived from the interview guides. Before the conversation progressed, I asked the participant's consent to record the conversation and use it as data in my study. This strategy allowed me to obtain data more naturally and spontaneously, while simultaneously allowing the participants to contribute to the study in a way familiar to them: a practice of conversation between fellow Muslim men during a religious or community gathering.

Religious and community activities were the most common setting where an interview was conducted. Some of the interviews were conducted in mosques, where these events were held. Some other interviews were conducted in public facilities, such as a community hall, where occasions were held. A couple of men invited me for lunch or dinner in a café or restaurant while doing the interviews. One participant addressed my questions and shared his experience while driving, escorting me to his workplace from his house. We stopped in a *Mushalla* (a small mosque) where the Muslim community of his group held their activity.

Interviews with a participant required from thirty minutes to more than two hours. Some of the interviews consisted of two sessions undertaken at different times. Most participants demonstrated enthusiasm in the study and offered me additional interview arrangements

after the first one had been completed—even within an hour—knowing that some of my questions had not yet been addressed. A couple of other participants were not able to allocate an hour for the interview, but frequent meetings between myself and the participants in the religious gathering allowed us to divide the interviews into two sessions. The religious gatherings that were held regularly at the weekend by four of the five Muslim organisations I observed, allowed me to meet many of the men on a regular basis. In some cases, this provided opportunities for shorter interviews.

Shared language and culture between interviewer and interviewee can impact on the interview (Poindexter 2003). I planned to conduct all of the interviews and group discussions in English. However, the spontaneous, casual and cultural nature of the conversations led to the use of Bahasa Indonesia, instead of English, for six of the interviews. One participant stated his request to use Bahasa Indonesia for his convenience. As mentioned above, some interviews took place spontaneously without prior arrangement, when the participants were with me (standing or sitting next each other and involving in conversation) in a community or religious gathering. In a situation like this, the men would speak in the language of their Muslim group (Indonesian for the Indonesian men and English for the Singaporean). At the same time, they were aware that I was conducting a study about Muslim men in Australia, a topic that they liked to share. In a couple of arranged interviews, the men just simply started talking at length about the Muslim community and their lives as Muslims, without waiting for me to ask questions or to explain the interview procedure before it began. Here, the men talked in the most convenient language, be it English or Bahasa Indonesia. With the spontaneous and casual nature of some interviews, mixing English with Bahasa Indonesian or English with Malay seemed unavoidable. These mixing did not cause issue during the study as I am an Indonesian native and fluent in Malay.

While most of the interviews were successfully recorded using a recording device, three of the interviews did not produce an audible record for appropriate transcription. These conditions were due to surrounding noise that severely impacted on the participants' voices as recorded in the device. Two of these interviews were conducted during the *Eid* festival, where hundreds of other men were present in the venue, causing disruptive noise. One interview was held in a similar situation during a religious gathering, where the venue was quite noisy. However, in all interviews I always took notes of the key information. This

procedure enabled me to retrieve the main information given from each participant in the interviews.

During the interviews I was aware that gender shapes the research process (Williams and Heikes 1993; Pini 2005) and in the study of masculinity such as this one, my identity as a man might have influenced both the interviews and the rapport building process with my male participants (Salee and Harris III 2011, 410). Some participants might have exaggerated their masculine performance during the interview in response to my identity as a male researcher (Salee and Harris III (2011, 426). Different studies have also shown that power relations between researchers and participants during interviews can also be determined by class (Edward 1993), race or ethnicity (Riessmann 1987; Troyna 1998), age (Cotterill 1992; Phoenix 1994), sexual identity (Halberstam 1997) and professional status (Ribbens 1989; Tang 2002). While I was younger than most of the participants and was regarded as a newly married man, my professional status as 'the PhD brother' gave me an advantage in that power dynamic. I spent a little more effort in building rapport with Singaporean participants than with Indonesian men partly due to my nationality.

The men's group discussions took place three times in the Huda mosque (not a real name), involving three to six Muslim men associated with one of the Indonesian Muslim groups observed in the study. I planned for group discussions to be conducted with appropriate arrangements regarding the time and place, and informed the participants about the set of topics. This plan, however, did not work. This failure may be due to a number of reasons. First, I found that it was not easy to find the most suitable time for the participants to gather outside their community activities. Second, the recruitment stage for the interview proceeded fairly slowly, and gave me very little space to plan for a meeting involving more than two participants by the end of the fieldwork period. Last, I observed that the Muslim men did not seem comfortable with the formal features of such an arranged meeting. This observation discouraged me from thinking of any plan to arrange interviews with the men while I was still waiting for more men to participate in interviews.

In fact, the group discussion among the men occurred spontaneously. One important practice of Muslim men in the groups I observed was the male-only conversations that occurred during religious gatherings, but outside the ritual activity. The three men's group

discussions of this study happened as part of this practice, with the men discussing issues related to the project. However, there was a designed aspect of this practice, as I joined the groups of conversation and raised questions to the men, regarding issues I wanted to hear about from their perspective. The Muslim participants were aware of my intentions, as I was confident that they were well-informed about my research and perceived my presence as a researcher and a Muslim brother joining the ritual with them. These discussions took place in Huda mosque (not its real name, a mosque associated with one of the Indonesian Muslim groups I studied) after *Tarawih salat* (see glossary) on the nights of *Ramadhan* 2012 (after 10 pm). This spontaneity enabled the discussion to flow freely, and every man had enough opportunity to speak at his convenience, without the pressure of having to produce 'clever' responses to other men regarding the issue being discussed. At the same time, I had a good chance (and permission from the men) to record all of the conversation, while taking notes and asking them questions.

During the discussions, the men talked about various issues, all related to Muslims in Australia and their identity and challenges as Muslim men. These issues included: Muslim men's experiences of relationships with non-Muslim members of Australian society, including experiences of racism and Islamophobia; Australian men and Australian women; challenges and issues of their relationships with their wives, including men's and women's position and role in the family; dealing with Australian practices, such as partying, clubbing and the dominant alcohol culture; raising children in Australia; problems of Muslims overall, including those in Indonesia; the progress and challenge of Muslim communities as a minority in Australia and in the West; and practising Islam in Australia.

Overall, the three separate group discussions involved nine Muslim men contributing to the discussion. Four were interview participants, and these men greatly helped me in maintaining the focus of discussion on the issues I sought to explore, by consistently demonstrating their interest and concern about these issues. In fact, one of the discussions involved only three of the interviewees; this allowed the discussion to move deeper into the men's very personal stories regarding their marital relationships, which they considered to be greatly affected by Australian encounters. The men's discussions lasted from sixty minutes to roughly two hours. Due to its spontaneous nature and cultural association,

throughout the discussion, the men spoke in their group's language, Bahasa Indonesia, occasionally mixed with English.

3. Participant Observation

Participant observation took the most time throughout the fieldwork period. This method started and concluded the fieldwork activity. It addressed religious activities involving men's congregations, and the social practice among the men, mediated by and further institutionalised within the religious events.

Selection of the Muslim groups

The selection stage of the Muslim groups or communities was divided in two processes: selecting Indonesian Muslim groups and selecting Singaporean/Malay Muslim groups. I am familiar with one of the Indonesian Muslim communities near my home, and I visited the mosque, Huda mosque, several times. This was the basis for exploring a wider Indonesian Muslim community in Melbourne, which I found fairly big and dynamic. I used personal networks and followed the activities posted online by some active groups. Overall, I collected information about more than 30 Muslims groups with overlapping members and activities, including some involving Indonesian students studying in Australia. Among these 30, I identified the five most active organisations that held regular activities across south-eastern, western and Northern Melbourne and the CBD. I first chose Insan Indonesia due to my familiarity with it and its status as a hub for Indonesian Muslims. I chose Sumatra Bersatu because of its long history in Melbourne, regular activities and predominant membership of Australian citizens and permanent residents. I also had a contact person who was very reliable in maintaining my contact with the group, a condition which I could not find with other groups.

The selection of Singaporean/Malay Muslim communities started with my personal network with a Malaysian student at Monash University who linked me with a contact person from Baitul Melayu, one of two Singaporean Muslims I observed. The contact person then offered me an invitation to a festive of *Isra Mi'raj* (the night journey and elevation of the Prophet

Muhammad) held by the organisation. She also gave me a personal contact with the secretary of the organisation, to whom I introduced myself and informed him about my study. The secretary welcomed me and invited me to come to their event, and made an appointment for a meeting in person. At first, I was informed that they were Singaporean Muslims as their organisation name reflected a Malay identity. When I arrived at the venue I met with the key organisers, explained my purpose for research and sought their approval. After joining the *Isra Mi'raj*, which allowed me to have conversation with a number of men who attended, I quickly decided to choose this group for observation. They then told me about Jami Melayu, another Singaporean Muslim group I observed. My contact with Ramai Malay, the fifth organisation I observed, was not enabled by other Singaporean groups, but by Zakky (49), who introduced me to a number of men during an occasion of Friday prayer. Among these men was Hamzi (55), one of the organisers of Ramai Malay, who later invited me to the group meeting. The Singaporean Muslim community in Melbourne was significantly smaller than that of their Indonesians fellows, which made it easier to select groups to observe.

Throughout the fieldwork, I could not find any Malaysian Muslim organisation in Melbourne with a membership of predominantly Australian citizens or permanent residents. There were a fairly significant number of Malaysian Muslim groups in Melbourne, but they were all predominantly run by students. This was the reason I finally, after several months' exploring, decided to drop this group from my list and focused on the Singaporean Muslims instead.

Participant observation design

My objective for participant observation was to obtain first-hand information about how the men's involvement in group religious events was meaningful to their masculinity. This method allowed me to systematically and consistently record the information without being intrusive to the social interaction being studied (Ellen 1984; Shaw and Gould 2001). My focus was the production and preservation of the Muslim brotherhood on religious occasions. The key strategy of Schwalbe's (1996) method was his engagement with the mythopoetic rituals through which he shared feelings and experiences with other men and gave support when needed.

I used the benefit of my identity as a Muslim man to merge among the men and to share their feelings and experiences in the practice of religious activities first-hand. This means I adopted reflexivity as an important feature of my research (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995) I wanted to know the feeling of being part of the men's congregation and participating in the rituals together; the meaning of being present in a congregation to men's gendered status as Muslims; and the kind of feelings or sensation that emerged through a collective performance of rituals for the individual men who participated. I also wanted to find out the meaning of the religious discourse circulated among the men during the activities for their status and gendered self-concept. I wanted to reflect such feelings in my field notes and attribute meanings to the data (Blaxter et al 2003; Emerson et al 2001).

The method also intended to collect descriptive records of the men's activities and practice; these would provide information about the production of Muslim brotherhood or other aspects contributing to masculinity. This included the mode of interaction taking place in the religious setting among the men and between men and women. Upon this observable aspect of men's practice, I took handwritten notes for every session of observation I conducted.

Conduct of the participant observation

Participant observation focused on five Muslim organisations, with Singaporean and Indonesian backgrounds mentioned above. As a small, but necessary addition, I also conducted observations of religious activities hosted by other Muslim groups, but involving Muslim men from Southeast Asian backgrounds, such as Friday prayers held in different mosques around Melbourne. For confidential reasons, I will not use the real names of the five Muslim groups I observed. In this thesis, I call them 'Jami Melayu', 'Ramai Malay', 'Baitul Melayu' (organised by and for Muslims with Singaporean-Malay backgrounds, but open to non-Malay Muslims as well), and 'Insan Indonesia' and 'Sumatra Bersatu' (organised by and for Muslims with Indonesian backgrounds). Sumatra Bersatu was specifically aimed at serving Muslims with a certain Sumatran ethnicity, as indicated in its name. These groups organised a variety of activities, but also organised rituals of worship: festivals of Islamic holidays were the main activity. Among the five groups, Insan Indonesia was the most established and active organisation, with the largest number of members compared to the other four groups. Except for Ramai Malay, all of the groups had been established for more

than ten years when the study was undertaken. Ramai Malay is the youngest Muslim group; it had been established for eight years by the time of the study.

I attended and observed six different religious gatherings hosted regularly at the weekend by four out of those five organisations. Only Ramai Malay did not hold regular religious activities, as they did not have a large community to organise, and had a different priority for running their organisation. I call these activities 'religious', as they included the performance of obligatory and non-obligatory worship rituals. These activities were also deliberately intended to have a 'gathering' function, targeting Muslims of their background. Therefore, they had social, cultural and ritual aspects. The activities I observed consisted of:

- 1) religious gatherings conducted on Saturday evenings by Baitul Melayu
- 2) religious gatherings on Sunday evenings by Jami Melayu
- 3) fortnightly religious gatherings on Saturday evenings held by Sumatra Bersatu
- 4) fortnightly religious gatherings on Sunday evenings held by Sumatra Bersatu
- 5) *Isha* and *Tarawih salat* held throughout *Ramadhan* 2012 by Insan Indonesia
- 6) religious gatherings on Sunday mornings held by Insan Indonesia.

Among other activities conducted by the Muslim groups, these six religious gatherings were the core programmes, and had been held regularly for years. In the observation, I also attended and observed other communities and religious activities hosted by the groups, such as Friday prayers, the *Eid* festival, the *Qur'ban* festival, and occasional religious sermons.

Two aspects of the participant observation method placed me in a somewhat contradictory position. The participation aspect of the method is something that I am very familiar and comfortable with. As a Muslim-born man in a predominantly Muslim country, I have participated in religious rituals since my childhood. This practice of performing rituals and community gathering is part of my cultural practice. Being in a mosque and performing *salat* in a group or just by myself, for example, is part of my life's routine that I am very comfortable with.

The observation aspect of the study, however, demanded a critical distance from what I did, in relation to the Muslim men I observed. Before committing to this study, I had never asked

myself how that practice had been fundamentally gendered. This study brought this question forward in my consideration as an observant Muslim man. This method asked me to employ a critical distance to my cultural practice, a distance which posited me as 'torn between participating and observing' (Schwalbe 1996, 11). As an observer, I wanted to know the mechanism by which the gender construction embedded in Islamic rituals sustains the gender order outside the ritual setting. I wanted to examine, for example, whether a mosque can be deemed a masculine institution. However, being a Muslim man enabled me to merge easily with the masculine atmosphere and to reflect on my own feelings about men's religious activities towards my own masculine privilege, which I believe is shared with other men in the same religious setting.

During my participation in the religious gatherings mentioned above, I observed Muslim men's activities and social-cultural practices when they were present together on religious occasions, when performing or not performing rituals. I observed the interaction among the men: how they gathered together in the venues, what they discussed, their languages, the way they spoke, their greetings, their body postures, their facial expressions, numbers of people participating, the length of time they spent there, and with whom they came to the venues. I also observed the men's activities in performing rituals: the way the men dressed, their physical positioning, the recitation involved in the rituals, the way these recitations were delivered in the congregation, the material of religious sermons, the collective and individual performance of rituals, and the type of rituals performed.

To record these first-hand materials, I took hand written notes describing what I observed. Most of the time, I was able to make notes while participating and observing. When the activity involved performing rituals such as *salat*, it was impossible to observe, much less take notes. When the situation was obstructive to taking notes, I adopted what Schwalbe (1996) called making 'mental notes' (11), before making my notes later, describing the men's activities and what they said. A considerable part of the notes were transferred into electronic written documents in words. For this thesis, the data generated from the participant observation were used mainly to discuss the links between Muslim brotherhood and masculinity in Chapter 6.

4. Data Analysis and Interpretation

The three qualitative methods explained above produced two sets of data: first, electronically recorded verbal expressions of the Muslim men participants; and second, descriptive field notes of Muslim men's social and ritual activities, social and cultural practices, attitudes, performance (including dressing and body posture during rituals) and contents of religious discourse that largely took place in the religious and community occasions. The field notes also cover general information about the five Muslim groups observed in the research, including names, events and places relevant to them, and key issues of the men's opinions during interviews and group discussions. The audio data are expressed mainly in English, with some (six interviews) spoken in Bahasa Indonesia. These data contain the Muslim men's perceptions, views, self-reflections and personal stories, as well as the attitudes and beliefs regarding Muslim men's identity, position and challenges as a religious minority in Australia, men's status and challenges in marriage and family life, religiosity, Muslim communities and Muslim brotherhood.

The audio data were transcribed, coded and organised in part using NVivo 9. The interview data were typed up to reproduce participants' expressions and statements into text documents as close as possible to the audio versions. Three interviews could not be transcribed due to surrounding noise, which resulted in an inadequate quality of participants' voices in the recoding files. However, I had anticipated this and took interview notes to back up the audio data. For the participants' expressions in Bahasa Indonesia, only those passages quoted in the discussion were translated into English. Data organisation was undertaken in three steps. First, I created categories of findings that consisted of three major themes derived from the three main fields of enquiry in the study: a) Muslim men's relationship with the majority non-Muslim Australian society; b). Muslim men's relationships with Muslim women and family; and c) Muslim men's engagement with, and the meaning of, Muslim brotherhood. Each of these themes is a descriptive category to collect and organise fragments of participant statements that contain ideas, information and clues regarding the issue represented by the theme. Second, by adopting a grounded theory approach (Glaser and Strauss 1967), analysis was then undertaken to identify and organise fragments of participants' statements that contained the same ideas relevant to one of the three major themes above. This step produced lengthy collections of fragments of participants'

statements under one of the three major themes. Within each of these lengthy collections there are a number of more specific ideas, or information that is typically shared by two statements or more.

The third step employed further analysis to identify these specific ideas within each fragment, to create specific categories of topics that were only relevant to the major theme. The second major theme—Muslim men’s relationship to Muslim women for example—overall consisted of more than eighty fragments of statements, with different lengths. These fragments contain a significant number of specific ideas that created more specific categories within the theme, such as ‘Muslim men’s beliefs about men’s position in family’, ‘Muslim men’s perception of women in Australia’, ‘Muslim men’s strategies in maintaining marital life’ or ‘Muslim men’s belief about women’s status in the family’. The coding activity transformed the three major themes into three big idea structures, comprised of a number of related key ideas, which are supported by fragments of participants’ statements. These structures of statements were raw material ready for further analysis and interpretation.

When addressing these materials, in general the interpretation intended to seek meaningful answers to the research questions. In particular, it was expected to produce sociological explanations about how Muslim masculinities are constructed through the three contexts of relationship explored in the study. To be more specific, the interpretation attempted to seek explanations regarding Muslim men’s perceptions and responses to the majority non-Muslim (presumably secular) society; the impact of their position as a minority on their identity and practice as a man; the importance of religion in such situations; their responses to the challenge to their early accepted gender roles in the family, especially in their position as a husband and father; the men’s strategies in maintaining their expected position and identity as the men in the family; and the men’s engagement in the Muslim brotherhood and its meaning for their gendered religious identity. I particularly paid attention to the employment of religious discourse and narrative, as giving meaning to Muslim masculinity in the three contexts of relationship. I strongly emphasised the gender and power relations underpinning these topics, and how these relationships shaped men’s religious identity and practice.

The second set of data was originally handwritten descriptive notes. Most of these data were transformed into documents by re-narrating the information taken in the notes, and typing it up in a Word document. I performed this re-narration on a regular basis during the participant observations, and created a daily journal of the fieldwork. After that (from the journal), I created more text documents to classify the contents of information contained in the notes, for example: descriptions of ritual activities among the groups, descriptions of non-ritual activities and description of materials of religious teaching being delivered. These classifications were also grouped according to the five Muslim groups observed.

Next, from these classifications of narrative descriptions, I identified key information to explain how Muslim brotherhood was created through religious and community activities. In fact, this identification of key information was already undertaken throughout the observation activities, and gave direction to my observation work. During this process, I also identified key information regarding the preservation of cultural elements and practices among the Muslim groups studied. Finally, from this identified key information, which is fairly large in content, I constructed logical structures of practices and theory about the production and practice of Muslim brotherhood among the men in religious settings. In addition, I also created a theory about the preservation of other aspects of masculinity; namely, religiously associated men's honour, through cultural practices in the religious setting.

The next three chapters present the results of the analysis and interpretation of the data. Chapter 4 discusses the analysis of Muslim men's relationship with the mainstream non-Muslim setting of Australian society, particularly as it takes place in their work life. Chapter 5 performs an analysis on Muslim men's relationships with Muslim women, which take place in the institution of marriage and the family. Chapter 6 covers an analysis of Muslim brotherhood. In these three chapters, I indicate participants' age, and use pseudonyms for all names, including participants, Muslim organisations, and places of worship (except for those I indicate as real names). In any direct quotation from the participants, I put the sign '[...]' to add words skipped by participants while they were talking, '(...)' to provide additional information about the subject that participants referred to during the talk, and use *italics* for emphasis given in the statement.

CHAPTER 4

INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM, SECULARITY AND ISLAMIC PIETY

I begin the discussion of Muslim masculinities by analysing the first context of negotiation: Muslim men's relationship with the predominantly non-Muslim Australian society. The discussion rests on the premise that the social status of Muslims is a powerful force in shaping their masculinities (Gerami 2003). I especially pay attention to the way that Muslim men view and experience their status as a minority and their responses to the broader non-Muslim, presumed Western-dominant society. I examine whether Muslim men's experiences of racism, Islamophobia, and marginalisation is a relevant aspect affecting their masculinity. My main concern in this chapter is how Muslim men's status as a religious minority defines their social position and relationships in Australian society, and how this relationship further affects the dynamic of Muslim masculinity. This chapter examines Muslim men's attitudes towards Australian society; how they respond to 'Australian' (a kind of shorthand for white, mainstream society) values, such as individual freedom, equality and secularity; how they cope with the Australian cultural practice of happily drinking alcohol as a form of social bonding; how they cope with racism and Islamophobia; how they negotiate their religious expression; and how they obtain their position in society.

My main argument in this chapter is that encounters with Australian society have different effects on the dynamics of Muslim masculinities among the Muslim men in this study. This difference is reflected in the different expressions and attitudes towards Australian social experiences. However, these encounters simultaneously lead to reinforcing the religious aspect of men's practice and their conception of the religious-self. This chapter also suggests that the Islam-West dichotomy does not appear to be a determinant in the way the Muslim men in this study expressed their masculine identity. In examining these encounters, this chapter develops an analysis of the individual basis of Muslim men as a minority in Australia,

and explores aspects of the struggle among Muslim men when they encounter social situations in Australia.

In this chapter, I concentrate on the men's experiences in the workplace (although the discussion is not limited to this area). As mentioned earlier, I consider employment the main social site for Muslim men to engage in direct social interaction with the broader Australian society on a daily basis. The data that build the analysis in this chapter are generated from interviews, with minor additions from the group discussion. Most men in the interviews were able to share their workplace encounters, producing adequate material for examining their social experiences in mainstream Australian social life. Apart from work life, a few participants had significant experience in spending leisure time with Anglo-Celtics and/or non-Muslims.

This chapter is divided into four sections. It begins with a description of the social environments in the workplaces of the participating men. This description provides background information for the discussion in the second section, which will focus on the Muslim men's view of the Australian public, in an attempt to understand the way Muslim men (as a minority) position themselves in Australian society. In the third section, the chapter continues with an analysis of the men's negotiation of religious expression and practice in predominantly non-Muslim social arenas. I focus on (but do not limit my discussion to) the men's experiences in the workplace as the main area of their social engagement with Australian society on a daily basis. This discussion considers negotiation of religious piety in the workplace as a negotiation of the religious aspect of their masculinity. In the last sections, I present the analysis of Muslim men's strategies towards the non-Muslim Australian public in preserving their religiously associated masculinity.

1. The Experience of Muslim Men in the Work Place

The particularities of the men's place of employment appeared to be important in shaping the experience of social interaction they encountered. This experience may further inform the way Muslim men respond to their predominantly non-Muslim social surroundings and their social position within these surroundings. Chapter 3 notes that most male participants

worked in mechanical jobs. Three men had managerial positions, as they ran their own companies. Three, although retired, worked casually; two of whom had worked in service professions before retirement. There was one teacher among the participants. This configuration of type of employment suggests that their social interaction with other individuals in the workplace was varied.

Many of the male participants worked with tools and machinery in blue-collar occupations, including Umsa (50), Afdhal (28), Budiman (50), Zakky (49), Firman (24) and Aslaam (61). Zakky (49), Budiman (50) and Karim (57) ran their own industrial-production businesses making machinery and heavy construction tools. They all employed a number of Muslim men in their companies, some of whom shared their nationality. Prior to their retirement, Usep (65) had worked for the Australia Post while Subagya (60) had worked in the area of hospitality. Jundy (43) worked as a science researcher.

The following information from Firman (28) about his job in construction gives an example of what the Muslim men experienced in the workplace:

I pretty much get the tools, the labour at work, the materials.... It's kind of rough. Well, it is kind of like an offence. No rules. The target is to get your job done as fast as you can. 'I don't care how you do it. Just do it.' You know what I mean? It is pretty rough (Firman, 24).

Aslaam (61), who was an automotive engineer, worked in very different circumstances, which appears to have been better than Firman's (28), although it was similar in dealing with tools, production and physical construction. During the interview he spoke of having late working hours for a few years:

Yeah, my job is not usual with [regard to] the timing. [I] start in the evening, 8 p.m., and go home around 4 a.m. I had a day job [normal working hours] before; I've been at this one for a few years ... Basically it [my job] is very mechanical. We use sophisticated machinery (Aslaam 61).

In terms of social interaction, while the workplaces were more or less similar in that they involved working with machinery, they had varied practices of social communication and

interaction. Aslaam (61) said that the nature of his job restricted interaction with other people:

But we work with quite lot of people [in the same shift]. In the other sections [there are] about the same number [of people]. There are some Muslims as well. But we talk a little, sometimes before going home, sometimes during coffee. But we know each other (Aslaam 61).

Hamzi (55), who worked as a security officer, seemed to communicate more with his colleagues, while still feeling it was limited. He and Aslaam (61) indicated that there were other Muslims working with them, but that did not seem make the nature of social interaction in their workplace more engaging, as religious affairs were taken to be a private matter, even amongst the Muslims. Hamzi (55) was aware that such an atmosphere might be affected by the nature of his job, which deals with the security and safety of others. He commented:

Even among us Muslims [in my workplace], especially the Turkish, they don't really know each other. When it comes to religion, *'yours is yours' and 'ours is ours'*. The non-Muslim Australian might be [a little] curious about us [the Muslims]. They ask a little bit about what fasting is, why [we are] praying. They pose questions, and [if we ask similar questions to them] they answer openly. So more or less we [the Muslims and the non-Muslims] exchange information on this area. Other than that, [we talk] a bit about food, a bit about coffee and not really beyond that. We feel that we have to be very serious, you know. Maybe if I worked in another kind of occupation, we would talk more. [But in my job now] we have to be very serious when working in uniform, you know, like in the airport (Hamzi 55, my emphasis).

The personalities of the male participants, I believe, may also affect the intensity of their social encounters. Aslaam (61) spoke few words and rushed when he did. He was also very serious and focused on what he was doing. Hamzi (55) was talkative and cheerful, while also being very serious about his job. Hamzi's (55) comments indicate that exchange between him and non-Muslim men, while limited, did take place, and religious matters did allow people to interact.

A Muslim man may also have a quite routine working-life experience that did not make him satisfied or enthusiastic within the social environment in his workplace. Such experience was part of Roy's (35) everyday life:

It is a classic [life experience], you know. A routine kind of life. You go to work in the morning, [then] work [all day], do the job and go home late afternoon. The same thing [happens] tomorrow. Like every day (Roy, 35).

Firman (28), who spends most of his working hours outdoors at construction sites, indicated having more chances for socialisation. However, his collegial interaction did not seem as enjoyable as he wished; for example, he characterised his working environment as populated with 'rough people':

Usually these guys are atheists.... It's all right. They can be friendly. If they think you are arrogant, da da da, if you judge them the same way, they'll judge you the same way. [They] are just like normal people.... They're all right. I meant, they are normal people. Like I said, they are rough people, but it's all right. They don't care [about others' affairs], they just do whatever they want (Firman, 24).

Many more of the Muslim men in this study, however, reported close, supporting and meaningful friendships with their non-Muslim co-workers. Subagya (60), who worked in a company dominated by men from Switzerland, recalled their companionship during his period of loneliness in Melbourne. Sport helped him to mingle with the non-Muslim majority. Usep (65) had a happy memory during his employment in two different companies for significant lengths of time. The two men recalled:

When I was lonely, I did not have any [Muslims] friend here before I joined their group [his colleagues]. [Especially] I joined the Swiss men's group. We played football and [did] other things [together]. Because most of my friends were from Switzerland, they called me 'the Muhammadan'. I just smiled when they called me that. They didn't carry the Islam thing; just, 'He is a Muhammadan, he is a good person.' [I guess] they knew some about us [the Muslims] (Subagya, 60).

When I previously worked at the post office, I had a good time. I really enjoyed my experience working there. We [he and his co-workers] were always helping each other. As I mentioned before, when I wanted to pray, they supported me. Just the same with my experience of working at Yarra company [not its real name] too for 13 years (Usep, 65).

Suyanto (42) shared the strategy he used to blend into the non-Muslim social setting in his workplace. He pointed out the need 'to be an Australian' as part of a Muslim man's ability to connect and get along with his co-workers, by showing interest in the common issues Australians pay great attention to. Sport is important among such interests. Suyanto (42) explained:

Sometimes, if we work in Australia you have to be an Australian, have to be the Australian. Because it's the best way to blend with them. For example, Australians love footy. So you have to choose your own team. Because, when you come to work, everyone will talk about footy or cricket or tennis. And your boss will love it. I bet you, all of Australian bosses will have [their own favourite] team, and that's something to talk about. How you approach your mates through that [as well], all the same ... Because before I was a manager, to approach my boss, first I had to talk about what he liked, talk about general information that flows in the country, maybe about footy, maybe about some gossip on the TV, Julia Gillard, or something else, or some economics, or the house – and then the job (Suyanto, 42).

The participants' structural position in their company also contributed to opportunities for interaction. Zakky (49) and Budiman (55) for example, while working in heavily mechanised and physical jobs, reported lively and engaging interactions in their workplaces, since they had considerable managerial roles as well.

In their experience of social engagement with the non-Muslim majority, most of whom they presumed to be Western-White, a sense of being treated differently or marginalised could occur. However, such experience might not necessarily result from their commitment to certain religious practices. Language or perhaps other non-Western cultural aspects could also have affected the way the majority responded to them. Suyanto (42) shared his observation and experience about how language may affect one's social position in the work place:

At work, people know who you are by your English language. First, when you start out speaking less English, they know that you're new. All right, and there's other people that treat you differently and there's other people that treat you the same. But most of the time, because they can't understand the language we speak to them, they look down on us a bit because, I don't know, that's how it is (Suyanto, 42).

Suyanto's (42) experience does not characterise the overall experience of Muslim men in this study with regard to their social position in the workplace social environment. Men like Subagya (61) and Usep (65) reported full acceptance and a sense of equality. The same was true for other participants like Jundy (43) and Zakky (49), as I will discuss in the last section of this chapter. In his interview, Subagya (61) repeatedly stressed his social position as an equal part of his workplace community:

I don't feel I am being treated differently, *seriously, no*. [Even for] just one bit, I never feel being different. *Absolutely not*. What is important here is we know the rules. We show respect to them, they will certainly show respect to us. It's that simple (Subagya, 60, his emphasis).

In rather a different way, Jundy (43) shared his similar experience of being part of the work community in the research centre in which he worked. Jundy's (43) story is especially important in that it indicates a different response by the non-Muslim majority: appreciation, sensitivity and support toward Islamic religious expression. This response is in contrast to what Firman (28) described as a work environment in which others were 'usually atheist.' As Jundy (43) expressed:

In my research centre many of us have family so we talk about how we are teaching our kids. In my research centre we have close relationships, including the manager and staff members. There is not so much gap between us. We talk nicely.... They [co-workers] didn't show any different response to me. *Alhamdulillah*. Sometime we had problems with our research, and [my co-workers] said, "Oh, you go for pray ask for help" It was a surprise. So this is good for us.... They said, "Don't be too focused, everything is under the hand of God, as long as God wills it, everything will be easy. *Alhamdulillah*. Sometimes the managers even make sure we have halal food at our internal group meetings (Jundy, 43).

The description provided in this section suggests that the participants' experiences of relationships with the non-Muslim majority in the workplace are varied. There is no general story or experience that characterises the patterns of that experience. However, the social experience shared among the men revealed significantly more positive stories about their social engagement and friendship they established with the non-Muslims they worked with, most of whom they presumed were White-Anglo Australians. How do such different experiences relate to the Muslim men's perspectives on Australian society, especially Australian men? This question will be addressed in the following section.

2. The Best – Yet Most Challenging – Country for Muslims

Scholars of Muslim masculinities in a Western context have found that Muslim men's experience of marginalisation has greatly influenced their responses towards the dominant non-Muslim society (Nauright 1997; Alexander 2000; Hopkins 2006; Ahmed 2006; Ramji 2007). This experience further contributes to the construction of these men's masculinities. In this project, many of the male participants had experienced at least one incident of racism or Islamophobia. Muslim men also demonstrated concern about some negative aspects of what they saw as the 'Australian' lifestyle. However, the participants generally expressed positive and respectful opinions towards Australian men and society. More importantly, this study found that, while fully aware of their difference and status as a minority, the male participants of this study did not feel especially or enduringly marginalised. This is true for both the first- and second-generation Muslim men involved in the study. This finding suggests different lived experiences in a minority of the Muslim men, compared to those Muslims being examined by the studies mentioned above, which are based in Europe and involve mostly second-generation Muslims.

In their interview with five Indonesian Muslim men studying in Australia, Nilan et al.(2007) asked their participants about Australian men. Their study collected views that contrasted Indonesian Muslim men with Australian men, through which the Muslim participants described the non-Muslim Australian men with phrases such as, 'do body-building', 'get big muscles' (10), 'work with their body' (11), 'screaming and yelling' or 'grunt like a gorilla' when watching sport and 'like a coolie' (12). The Indonesian men also saw Australian men as

being obsessed with appearance (13), and 'very selfish' (14) and that they 'love drinking' (18). All of these masculinity signifiers describe what were seen as the negative characteristics of being a man, according to the cultural perspective of the five participants. These participants reflect a Javanese perspective (Nilan et al. 2007).

An important part of the interviews I conducted was to examine participants' perceptions and views regarding Australian men. I expected to obtain similar responses to those recorded in Nilan et al.(2007), with the participants giving particular attention to what they saw as the characteristics of Australian men. Such information would allow me to look more precisely at the way Muslim men identify their masculinity as a minority within the larger context of Australian masculinity. However, my participants did not reveal any such particular attention, and did not seem interested in talking about Australian men in particular.²⁵ Instead, they shared general ideas and views about the Australian public, their values, the cultural ethos and individual attitudes, without specifically mentioning gender. This attitude among the men suggests that the Muslim men in this study did not specifically construct their masculinity in contrast to, or opposition with, Australian masculinity. Responding to my questions, the Muslim men in this project perceived Australian men from within the social routines in which they were taking part. From this position, comparisons between non-Muslim Australian and Muslim men did occur, but it was in a completely different way, as I discuss below. As such, this position is different to that of the men in Nilan, Donaldson and Howson's (2007) study, who posited themselves as 'long-detached observers of Australian men' (8), employing their own cultural perspectives about being a man.

My participants' attitudes towards Australians were closer to Rane et al.'s (2009) survey in Brisbane, and particularly to Chafic's (2010) study in Sydney. Muslims participating in Rane et al.'s survey in 2009 showed high regard for Australia's social and political institutions, especially the education and healthcare systems (Rane et al. 2009). In Sydney, Chafic's (2010) qualitative study of young Muslim men collected a range of positive attributes about Australia, including strong support for an individual's freedom, greater respect for

²⁵ In fact, as I will show in the next chapter, some of the men had stronger concerns about Australian women.

individuals and the association of Australia as an open, fair and multicultural country and a safe and peaceful country with an effective legal system (28).

In line with the views recorded in both studies, Muslim participants in this project expressed optimism and positive views regarding the Muslim position in Australia. These views arose especially as an outcome of Australia's religious freedom, which allows religious expression and practice. Two participants saw Australia as the best country for a freedom of religion that benefitted Muslims. For example, Afdhal (28) stated his view:

I see that Australia is the best country in the world [for Muslims practicing as minority]. In my travels overseas [I found that] even in some Muslim countries Muslims do not have religious freedom as what we have here in Australia. Obviously there are still a lot of roots to grow [for Muslims to establish their belonging in Australia], there are a lot of bridges to be built in the community [to connect Muslims to the wider Australian society]. But I think Australia has become a multicultural country to begin with. Many the bridges have been built. Some bridges sometimes do not really go, such as the media [that sometimes contains] propaganda against Islam. But it (propaganda in the media) is not [a] secret thing, people know. In terms of comparison, I like to think that we are living in a country with Muslims as a minority and we are able to practice [our] religion freely; to have a safe environment in a very good system, very socially just system and with all other benefits we have. It's amazing, I think. Maybe one day Australia will see the truth of Islam and praise it. *Insyallah* (Afdhal, 28).

Participants also paid attention to and had positive opinions about the characteristics of Australian individuals. One such positive characteristic was observed by Singaporean-born Karim (56). For him, Australian men (especially White-Anglo men) demonstrated honesty in doing business, an attitude he rarely saw back in Singapore, even among the Muslims. He said:

We just do business with the Whites and it has nothing to do with religion. We [are] just talking to them; have meetings and discuss about business. [In doing these business activities] we (the Singaporean Muslims) need to be honest, but many times we are not able to [be]. One thing good with these Whites is that *they are very honest*. They haven't come to the stage where people [are] doing business like in Singapore. In Singapore, we do business in the way the majority Chinese do it. They have lots of tricks (Karim, 56, my emphasis).

Usep (65) observed different aspects of the dominant positive characteristics of individual Australians. These aspects included traits such as emotional maturity, egalitarianism, helpfulness and friendliness. Fahroni (44) noticed the politeness and commitment of Anglo-Celtic men:

Basically they (Australian people) are very good. They are not emotional, they really calm down, they accept others' opinions, I am very happy making contact with them. As I mentioned before, when you are good to others, they are good too to you (Usep, 65).

Some Australian men are very nice, most of them are nice, even most of the women most are nice. I mean like very polite, I would say the mature people. But somehow very bad too, driving badly, and also swearing, even though you're not making any mistakes; they're swearing because look you different or something. But these are bad people, only a minority, I would say. But most of them are nice. For example, if they [make a] promise, they keep it, they keep on time, while Indonesian people are not very on time. But they (the Australian) keep promises, all this, they stick with the rules, most of them. And they don't care [about] your background, most of them: as long as you follow the rules, they will respect [you]. That's it. Very positive, you know (Fahroni, 44).

It was also common to hear very positive praise for Australia from Muslims, through statements that associate Australia with Islam. In these statements, many basic aspects of the Australian system and values are believed to be Islamic in spirit. For example, Fahroni (44), while criticising individual freedom and secularity in Australia, valued the Australian system as 'very Islamic'. Roy (35) went into further detail about what he meant in labelling the Australian people and country as Islamic:

I feel that this country and the people is like a reminder [from God] for us [the Muslims]. In my observation [in] the social order here they employ Islamic concepts. Such as the tax; it is exactly the same to our obligation as Muslims to spend [a] certain percentage of our income [on the] public good and those in need. They have also Medicare and Centrelink. I [am] convinced that these are the implementation of Islamic concepts. So this is how I see my religion is *seriously applied here* (in the social order and governance for the people) (Roy, 35, my emphasis).

Such claims reflect the complex and ambiguous accounts of Muslims regarding the relationship not only between Muslims and non-Muslim Australians, but also between Islam and the West. On the surface, these claims are resonant of the apologetic narratives of Salafists, who argue that contemporary political systems and institutions such as democracy, nation-states, constitutionalism and socialism have their foundation in Islamic scripture (Fadl 2005, 77). This narrative implies that Islam is, while a superior tradition according to this narrative, compatible with modern values that happened to be developed by non-Muslims. Roy's (35) opinion may imply how good Islam is as a social and welfare system to be applied in modern society, as it is proven to work well when, according to Roy (35), 'seriously applied' in Australia.

However, I also observed honest acknowledgement among the participants regarding positive examples of non-Muslim Westerners' attitudes toward Muslims themselves. The men made comparisons between non-Muslim Australians and Muslims (Indonesians or Singaporeans), while admitting Muslims did not do so well with their own values. As quoted earlier, Karim (57) made a comparison between the 'very honest' 'Whites' and Singaporean Muslims who are often 'not able to' be honest in doing business. Fahroni (44) compared Australians who are 'very on time' with 'not very on time' Indonesians. Honesty and punctuality are among the elementary Islamic teachings that Muslims are expected to embrace.

These comparisons signify a comparison of Muslims and Westerners in a broader context. It is fairly common among Muslims from Indonesia to complain about their own country as never actually being successful in executing noble concepts such as good governance, law enforcement, transparency and accountability, while they experienced how these concepts worked very well in Australia. In one of the interview sessions, Zakky (49) —while advocating the need to invite religious teachers from Indonesia for the benefit of Muslims in Australia— admitted the religious hypocrisy that has arisen among Muslim elites in Indonesia. He made a satirical comparison between the former Indonesian President and former Australian Prime Minister:

We have to [be] aware that studying Islam from Indonesia alone does not guarantee that we will be a better community. Just look at the Department of Religious Affairs – they are among the most corrupt institutions in the government. Hey, your President (Indonesian President Susilo

Bambang Yudhoyono), how about him?! He is a Muslim man, married, he looks like a good Muslim, doing *hajj*. He is a general, isn't he? But hey,...he leads one of the most corrupt countries in the world with a lot of Muslims in it. What a hypocrite! [Laughs] In this country, the Prime Minister is a woman (the then-Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard), unmarried, living with her boyfriend and she is an atheist. But leads a very clean (accountable), responsible government. [The] legal system works properly and you never hear [about] any case of corruption. Would Julia Gillard be accepted as a President in Indonesia? No way! [Laughs] (Zakky, 49).

Zakky's (49) comments about Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono can be seen as a harsh attack on a powerful model of the Indonesian man: a devoted Muslim with a strong military background and refined self-composure; a combination of Javanese (Clark 2004) and Islamic characteristics. According to Zakky (49), this figure has failed. His sarcasm suggests that the complete opposite of such a figure—as epitomised by Julia Gillard, an atheist, unmarried woman—exhibits better leadership; a figure that is widely unacceptable to Indonesian Muslims. According to Transparency International in 2014, from 175 countries, Indonesia ranked 107 in the world in the Corruption Perceptions Index, while Australia ranked 11.²⁶ This means that Indonesia was among the world's most corrupt countries for that year, and Australia was among the most accountable nations.

Zakky (49) was not alone in his concern about the integrity of Indonesian Muslim communities, especially the elites. Among the Indonesian Muslims group I studied, including Sumatra Bersatu, it was very common for people to express their frustration and desperation over what they called 'the condition of Muslim *ummah*', which generally denotes religious violence, corruption, conflict among the elites and cultural immaturity in Indonesia. The participants sometimes included these issues in the general theme of religious hypocrisy. Amin (53) and Budiman (50) shared a good example of such concern. I will quote Budiman's (50) story below:

I have many friends in Indonesia, for [things to do with] our business in the past. One of them occupied a top position in the local government, in Sumatra. He offered me a job [to stay there] helping him. He looked like a devoted Muslim, going for *hajj* more than once. He put Islamic

²⁶ https://www.transparency.org/country#IDN_DataResearch_SurveysIndices.

artworks [calligraphies] in his office, his pictures from [his travels to] Mecca, the Qur'an and a beautiful, very expensive *sajadah* (praying mat) he said bought from Turkey. But when he spoke [explaining] his plot to keep his position, manipulating [government] reports and finance, all of this fraud and manipulation, uhh man... I did not see all of these Islamic symbols [that had been conspicuous in his office] in his speaking. That's it, I know what you want. I am leaving (Budiman, 50).

The concern expressed by some participants regarding Muslims, compared to what they had experienced in Australia, reflects a crisis among the men regarding their masculine identity. The Muslim men could not find inspiring models in the Muslim world from whom they could learn. Instead, they found better examples among non-Muslims. This contrast created uncertainty in the men regarding the contradiction between Islamic values and the reality of the Muslim world they observed. This situation was part of a broader experience among the Australian-Indonesian/Singaporean Muslims similar to 'the crisis of cultural reference' happening among second-generation Muslims in Europe (Roy 2004, 121). Australian Muslim communities were struggling in establishing what they imagined as Islamic culture appropriate to the Australian experience by using mainly Islamic discourse and the practice in their home countries. Traditional *ulamas* invited to Australia brought with them Islamic discourse heavily embedded in Indonesian or Malay cultures, even though a significant part of it was not applicable in the Australian context. Nevertheless, holding the belief that Islamic values were somehow being embodied in Australia gave the men a strong sense of belonging to Australia and its society.

Islamophobia remains a part of Australian experience. A number of this study's participants had had at least one experience of being the victim of Islamophobia. Many did not remember the event exactly, because at a certain level, they did not see it as something to bother about. They generally acknowledged that Islamophobia exists in society; at certain times it is revealed, especially mediated through social media. However, the men believed that this sentiment did not necessarily characterise the Australian public's attitude towards Muslims. At certain moments, when individuals use Islamic symbols to pursue their objectives and cause a backlash against Muslims globally (such as with the September 11 attacks in the United States of America, the Bali bombing and the emergence of Islamic State

of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in the Middle East), Muslims feel that the pressure upon them is heightened. In moments like this, being a Muslim carries a set of social-political burdens, consisting of moral responsibility, guilt, a sense of vulnerability, and distress.

In my study, several men admitted they had (at one point) felt uncomfortable and fearful about showing their Muslim identity. This was especially so following the September 11 attacks and the Bali bombings. Fahroni (44), Firman (24) and Roy (35) were among the men who experienced this. Firman (24) occasionally had to deal with the association of Islam with terrorists coming from his workmates. He said:

I told them that I am Muslim. Some of them know that I am Muslim, I told them that I have a religion. They said, 'Uh, okay'. Sometimes they said a few bad things about our *agama* (religion). I brushed them off. They said stuff like 'uh, terrorist'. They do it sarcastically. You've got to be able to handle situations like that. Eehhmm, by thinking peacefully. Stuff like that... I don't think it's because [of] the Bali bombing or something like that. It is just their mindset. Do you know what I mean? I think they are scared of something new. I think that's how it is. That's how I see everything, as I always say are they scared of change. What are they scared of? That could be anything (Firman, 24).

Firman (24) held the view that Islamophobia in the community does not imply people are concerned about certain political issues, but rather reflects a particular condition in their mentality: 'it is just in their mind set'. I suggest that this way of understanding his experiences with Islamophobia helped Firman (24) cope.

Fahroni (44) is a perfect example of a Muslim man who had taken on all the burden of being a Muslim man in Australia, while also believing that Australia is the best country for Muslims. I have previously included his statement about how Australians are good. In the following excerpt, I quote his self-reflection on being a Muslim at one point in his life in Australia:

Somehow ... Islamophobia is always there. One day I felt ashamed and uncomfortable to be a Muslim. Somehow, I didn't know why. I was fearful and scared of using Islamic symbols. [As] the time passed by, I was like, 'Uh, why I did I feel ashamed? These guys (the non-Muslim Australian) are doing their own things and they don't mind me.' And then I thought, 'It is up to us to show who we are' (Fahroni, 44).

In a different story, Suyanto (42) recalled a youthful experience with his group of friends, Asian boys who were regularly involved in fights, bashing and fighting with groups of Australian boys:

When we (the Asian boys) went down the street, and walked just by ourselves and we met them, a group of Australian boys, they would call us 'Nips'. 'Nips' isn't a slang [word], but it's shortened from 'Nippon', which is Asian, or Japanese. So, if that happened then [it] would turn into [a] fight, like yelling, and they probably chased us and we had to run away from them. If the same thing happened, when we (Asian boys) were together, all Asian, and we met some Australian boys alone we called them 'Skips', 'Skippy' (Suyanto, 42).

'Nip' and 'skip' are pejorative terms which were particularly popular as insults in the 1970s and 1980s, a period when large numbers of Asians migrated to Australia, and a time of some anti-Asian sentiment in the community. Suyanto's (42) story does not clearly indicate a particular expression of Islamophobia; however, it does reveal the practice of racism among the boys. Budiman (50) had a different story about Islamophobia. As a second-generation Muslim in Australia, he had many non-Muslim Australian friends who supported him. He said they protected him once when his Muslim identity was attacked:

I am an Australian. Not all Australians are racist and hate Muslims. Like me, once I got assaulted for my religion, but I got my White friends [to] cover me up against those attacking me. These guys were not Muslims, but they helped me as friends (Budiman, 50).

Apart from Islamophobia, the participants also reveal the main values and traits of Australians they considered negative: individual freedom, secularism, egocentrism and hedonism. Individual freedom and its social practice among men was one of the participants' main concerns. The danger of freedom for Muslim men is that it suggests an inversion of the fundamental values of the Islamic faith: obedience and submission to God. Suyanto's (42) story of his youth in Australia reveals how freedom had led him to neglect his religious awareness:

When you live here alone, you survive on your own. Our expectation was just like most Indonesian people. I was expected to go school, finish high school and continue to uni. But then, I did not meet that expectation. Because there're challenges when you live by yourself. Number one was friends. I started to make friends, Australian friends. Well, being a boy, a young boy, distraction came from [a] girlfriend. In fact it was more than one girlfriend. And you know that your parents are not here and so you have lot of freedom here. If I had lived in Indonesia, being young, I would have been taught about the religion and read the Qur'an. But here I don't have to read the Qur'an, I don't have to pray ... Some of my friends got Australian girlfriends. When I had to study, I [found] distractions. Because [of] being a young boy, I fell in love with an Australian girl and we expected to have money because my parents [were] not there. I wanted to have fun with my girl. We wanted to have a car, those kinds of things (Suyanto, 42).

Freedom was particularly problematic for Muslim men because of its effect on people's commitment to the marital relationship. For example, Umsa (54) said that freedom resulted in unhappy marriages in Australia. Commenting on the high rate of marital divorce in Australia, Umsa (54) said, 'The divorce rate here is very high. That [is] because [of] the freedom of what they want to do. Freedom, they can marry and divorce anytime'. Family is a fundamental institution for Muslim masculinity. The connection between individual freedom and family is discussed further in Chapter 5.

The next Australian value that concerned the Muslim men participants was secularism. Frame (2009) has suggested that the current development of secularity in Australia has little to do with ideological clashes between theism and atheism. Secularism does not become commonplace due to an increased acceptance of atheism or a rising rejection of theism. Instead, it is an increasing trend of pragmatic theism, where religious believers show carefree or casual attitudes towards religion. For Fahroni (44), religious negligence alone can be a sign of disbelief, as it affects many believers in Australia, including Muslims. He said:

To many people it doesn't matter whether Muslims or non-Muslims, they don't believe in 'the day of judgement'. Many Muslims are becoming Oz. They are out of the Islamic way. When they become Oz, they act like Oz, they don't believe in God, they don't follow a religion, whether Islam or Christianity or whatever religion. This attitude of not believing in religion—some are good, but I would say most of them are not good (Fahroni, 44).

The way they (the Australian) respect their parents shows that they are lacking in respect. This is obvious. I asked many teachers from Australia, also teachers from Indonesia. Not necessarily

Muslims or non-Muslim, they [the teachers] experience the same attitude from the students. So, I think we should do something for the people. Why Australians have this attitude, I think it's maybe because of the freedom ... So this is also the sign of unhappiness. So I would underline that high income does not necessarily mean happiness. Even though the system is very Islamic in Australia (Fahroni, 44).

Seeing this issue from Fahroni's (44) perspective, the danger of Australian values is not that they rival Islamic values, but that making a religious commitment does not seem relevant to the Australian lifestyle. This is what Frame (2009) explained as the increasing attitude of religious agnosticism. Frame (2009) did not use the term 'religious agnosticism', but 'Christian Agnosticism' (190) to describe people with religiously casual attitudes. This category could be applied to other religious believers, including Muslims, which means that Muslims may adopt Australian 'agnosticism' too. In his statement above, Fahroni (44) referred to this agnostic phenomenon among Muslims as they 'become Oz'. People do not reject religion as a barrier or as being bad for humanity *per se*, but do not see it is necessary for daily life. Religions are increasingly losing their power to contribute to individual's lives in Australia.

In this research, there are examples among the men's stories that indicate this attitude of Muslim agnosticism, or 'becom[ing] Oz' (in Fahroni's words). That is, the men had, during periods of their lives, shown a casual commitment to religion and had taken their religious obligations lightly. Firman (24) gave an example of his younger self, when he did not really care about performing the obligatory *salat*:

Well, I am not a fanatic Muslim. I say it right now. Sometimes I don't pray *dzuhur* or *ashar*, but I try to pray. Now I try to be a better self. But when I was younger, I didn't really care. Now I am older, I kind of understand it, the benefit, and so on (Firman, 24).

While Firman's (24) casual religious commitment affected his observance of rituals, a few of the participants went much further by completely abandoning their faith during their youth in Australia. Previously, Suyanto (42) shared his youthful experience at being away from parents and enjoying a great deal of freedom, which allowed him to neglect religious

teaching, as he wanted to 'have fun'. Amin (53) and Zainuddin (48) are two men who reflected on their youth, when they were religiously ignorant. Zainuddin (48) shared his story in the greatest detail. He recalled his youthful 'dark past' as a period of *jahiliyah* (moral ignorance), a term commonly used to refer to the pre-Islamic period in Arab countries. Zainuddin (48), however, did not tell me much about his 'dark past', which he associated with the Australian lifestyle. He said:

I got some bad habits in that past that I managed to lessen, from smoking to other kinds of vice that I did in the past. I thank God for the back injury in 2005 that stopped me in doing such immorality. [Because of that behaviour] I damaged myself. Uh, in that *jahiliyah* time I had done all sorts of immorality (Zainuddin, 48).

Zainuddin (48) reached the point of acknowledging his behaviour in the past when he had an accident at work that resulted in a back injury, which did not allow him to work as usual but, according to him, also prevented him from continuing his bad behaviour. Instead, during a year of desperation due to his condition, he attended the mosque, responding to repeated invitations from Amin (53), whom Zainuddin (48) said was his '*jahiliyah* mate'. Zainuddin (48) recalled that moment:

...[O]ne night [in the mosque] I heard one of the *ustadzs* say something about vices that are prohibited in Islam. At first I didn't get the message and did not pay attention. After that talk came again few times I started to catch the lesson. I heard and made self-introspection. *Allahu Akbar!* (O Lord most great). This is where I felt I was being reminded by Allah. I made self-introspection and found myself spending my whole life doing nothing good, never worshipping. At that point I got the understanding. That was the beginning of my self-finding (Zainuddin, 48).

At the same time, however, Australian values, which were generally seen as problematic in the view of the Muslim men, sometimes led to a very positive outcome with regard to the men's religious identity. This is especially implied in the men's view on individual freedom for allowing them to be a true believer. In one of the group discussions, the men compared the experience of being a Muslim minority in Australia with their observation of Muslims in Indonesia. While living in a Muslim-majority country like Indonesia obviously offers many

benefits, Australian experience as minority warrants a defined process of self-regulation to become a true Muslim. Suyanto (42) described this process:

[What we like] in Indonesia, we have big Muslim communities. [It is] easy to find mosques and most food [is] halal. Madrassah [Islamic schools] are everywhere. Here [in Australia], we have to make more effort to get that. But, that [being a minority in Australia] is the true test from *Allah*, I think. We can be a true Muslim, because we are free to decide. People respect your choice, you want to pray or not, it is up to you. Even though it is not easy [to be a Muslim in Australia]. In Indonesia, it is hard to tell who [are the true] Muslims and who [are] just followers. There are a lot of fakers. You know what I mean. Here, it is all transparent [whether a person wants to be a Muslim or not]. That is what I don't like in Indonesia (Suyanto, 42).

Previously, Afdhal (28) and Fahrni (44) had talked about how religious freedom being seriously applied allowed Muslims to express their belief. In the quotation above, Suyanto (42) reflected how individual freedom being applied by a religious minority group could lead to a genuine religious-self, not 'fakers'. Suyanto's (42) comparison between a true believer of the minority and a 'fake' believer among the majority marks another important issue concerning the individualisation of Islamic piety among the Muslim men. I will discuss this issue in the next section.

The above discussion indicates there is a rather contradictory social setting that Muslim men see in the Australian context. On the one side, there are positive and encouraging features of Australian practices and social systems, from which Muslims could learn, benefit from and contribute to. In contrast, the dominant values of secularity and individual freedom seem to be the main basic cultural component that Muslim men have to adjust to, alongside their commitment to religious expression. These values and their practices pose certain challenges for Muslim men in consolidating their masculinity.

3. Piety as Masculinity

The previous discussion uncovered Muslim men's perceptions and attitudes towards Australian values and society. In this part of the chapter, I discuss piety as a religious aspect of Muslim masculinity. Discussing this topic allows me to address the main issue that a

Muslim man has to deal with in expressing his religious commitment and identity in a majority non-Muslim social setting.

In the literature on Muslim masculinity, there is little on Islamic or Muslim piety. Samuel (2011) can be regarded as the first researcher who emphasised piety in discussing masculinity among Muslims. In his analysis on community members of *Jamaat Tablighi* in the UK and the Sufi movement in the UK and Bangladesh, Samuel (2011) pointed out the production of 'less patriarchal', gentler, non-aggressive and 'more gender-tolerant' forms of male identity through the discipline of Islamic pietism (309). What he meant by Islamic piety is the embodiment of Islamic teaching especially through exercise of discipline in controlling the self, emotion, desire and anger (Samuel 2011). While he explained a certain model of religious life, his reference to these disciplines as forms of piety is too narrow in that it neglects the broader practice of religious expression within larger Muslim populations. In the following discussion of piety among the Muslim men in this study, I will use Riaz Hassan's (2008) survey on Muslim religiosity in Muslim countries and Oliver Roy's (2004) analysis of second- and third-generation Muslims in Europe.

Religious piety is close to what Riaz Hassan (2008) referred to as religious commitment and Oliver Roy's (2004) definition of religiosity. Indeed, Hassan (2008) used the term 'Muslim piety' as a sociological measurement of religious commitment (64). According to Hassan (2008, 64), religious commitment is an important expression of Muslim identity. A large part of his research published in the book *Inside Muslim Minds* (2008) was a survey on this religious commitment among more than 6,000 Muslims living in seven Muslim-majority countries. Roy (2004) suggested that religiosity points to a relationship between the self and religion (149), a relationship that is also assumed in Hassan's (2008) definition of religious commitment.

However, such understanding takes religion to be a set of given cultural structures that operate on their own. Religion is built on defined religious texts and their accepted interpretations, which are preserved by religious communities, be they religious institutions or ethnic groups. Islam becomes a community's cultural asset, which eventually defines the community members' shared identity. Being a Muslim means being associated with these

structures and communities, a process of construction of the self. Religion is primarily seen as 'objective reality'.²⁷

What is being left out in this understanding of religion is the individual, the self. Roy (2004) himself did not seem clear about his concept of religiosity, arguing also that religiosity or faith implies the Muslim individual's relation to himself/herself (185). In this study, I emphasise the individual Muslim man giving meaning to the religious, in relation to his identity. The importance of stressing an individual analysis of religious piety lies primarily in the process of the individuation of religious identity in Western contexts, and the decreasing power of religious institutions in controlling religious practices among individual believers. This is particularly the case with the Australian Muslims I observed. Previously I quoted Suyanto's (42) remark about being a true believer in Australia that entails this individuation of identity; he compared such believers with 'fake' Muslims who use religious symbols to mark a group membership. In a similar comparison, Amin (53) spoke about the individuation process among Muslims in Australia:

The good thing [of being a Muslim] here [in Australia] is that it is all your choice, nobody bothers you. Right? When we commit ourselves [to perform religious practice], it is because we know of its benefit. While in Indonesia, you *salat* because your friends do that. Right? Or your *ustadz* ask you to do so, your parents [also], because we have done it since we were kids. Right? [In Indonesia, people also pray] so you look good, so people will think, 'Oh he/she is a good Muslim' (Amin, 53).

Both Hassan (2008) and Roy (2004) provided discussion for analysis of individuation of religious identity. Roy (2004) observed this process of individuation, especially among second- and third-generation Muslims. Roy (2004) labelled this process the 'triumph of the religious self' (p.148), referring to an increasing role of the individual to seek understanding and define what it means to be a believer. Hassan (2008) adopted Stark and Glock's (1968) conception on religious piety, and introduced five dimensions of Islamic piety that he then surveyed (66). Two of these dimensions—devotional and experimental—are relevant in

²⁷ By using this phrase I adopt Peter Berger's (1968) conceptual division between society as objective reality and subjective reality.

analysing the Muslim men's expression of piety in the workplace, which implied the individuation of Islamic piety. The devotional dimension relates to adherence of religious obligation, including but not limited to rituals. Hassan (2008) argued that while a Muslim's participation in formal religious ritual, such as praying *jamaah* in the mosque, might not indicate religious piety, observing the same ritual privately or personally implies religious commitment (69). It was private and personal adherence of religious obligation in the workplace that marked the experience of Muslim men's of this study. The experimental dimension relates to individual feeling, emotion and knowledge arising from a type of communication or connection with ultimate divine reality. It also entails personal vision about presumed contact with supernatural existence (Gellner 1982). The chief nature of this dimension is an individual sense of personal relationship with his/her object of faith, the divine power. In this study, the Muslim men verbally expressed this sense of relationship many times. The two dimensions of piety require endeavour at an individual level in the interpretation and execution of religious messages, which eventually reflect their meaning for the religious-self.

One important finding of Hassan's (2008) major study (and published in his book *Inside Muslim Minds*) is that the embodiment of Islamic piety is widely variable among Muslims in different countries, political contexts and social settings. These various forms of Islamic piety can be classified into traditional and non-traditional piety (290). Traditional piety is characterised by ideological orthodoxy, emphasis on ritual and devotionism and grounding in reading of traditional scripts, while non-traditional piety is characterised by lack of these aspects. This classification helps in identifying the type of religious piety demonstrated by the Muslim men, which, seen from its social setting, I would argue, falls within the non-traditional category. It is in the form of a non-traditional orientation of piety that individuation of religious identity mainly occurs. In the case of my study, this situation was also an effect of the crisis of cultural reference mentioned earlier. The religious organisations I studied were not able to produce religious discourse or doctrine applicable to the men's cultural situation in the workplace, forcing the men to interpret the basic message of Islamic values and making their expression relevant to the men's social context.

With an emphasis on the individuation of Islamic piety, religion is seen as a subjective reality, being involved in the construction of the self by the individual man. Religious devotion—

which takes various forms, including dietary requirements, ritual performance, social attitudes and self-discipline—are primarily understood as the regulation of the self, not as cultural participation. In short, religious piety is an embodiment of the believing-self. Religion is then taken as more than a set of given cultural traditions, but a framework of relationships between the self and the object of the Islamic faith. However, as the findings of Hassan's (2008) survey suggested, Islamic piety is historical and socially constructed (64, 290). The very premise underlying the discussion in this thesis implies that piety is gendered and serves as a category of masculinity. It contributes to the meaning of becoming a man. It defines a particular set of men's practices as methods reflecting that meaning. Piety becomes a masculine category. It is central to the concept of the masculine self, in relation to the realm beyond the self and the social reality that is God (submitting to, being a worshiper, being God's servant and participating in the divine's purpose). Being a Muslim man means being meaningfully committed to that relationship, which at minimum degree is practised by performing basic rituals.

Islamic piety, in the forms of observance of rituals and adherence to religious requirements, while participating in social activities or Australian cultural practices such as barbeques or parties where mostly non-Muslims are present, is a common issue for Muslims in Australia. For Muslim men, religious piety entails practices that are uncommon in their work life and social world, such as daily prayer during work time and abstinence from commonplace cultural practices such as the consumption of alcohol. When a Muslim man observes religious acts in his own Muslim group, it becomes a shared statement of cultural identity. When executed within a social setting where non-Muslims are predominant it becomes a marker of difference to the majority. As such, observing piety means performing different practices to those of being an Australian man. The male, Muslim participants of this study were fully aware of these values that made them different. According to Hamzi (55) and Afdhal (35):

So in religious matters, I still remain as I am. They (my work mates) may look at me differently.... I am a Muslim. I am not in the same life or enjoy what they do. But I don't feel different. I don't feel odd. I just feel as I am. I [am] just consenting as I am. I just pray. After that, I just go with them (Hamzi, 55).

I told upfront in the work interview process that I am a Muslim and there are certain things that I don't do; there are other things that I do... (Afdhal, 35).

Combined, the statements given by Hamzi (55) and Afdhal (35) above best illustrate the way the Muslim men positioned themselves in their Australian working communities: 'Not in the same life or enjoy what they do', 'there are certain things that I don't do; there are other things that I do.' At the same time, 'I don't feel odd ... I just pray. After that I just go with them.' These statements reflect the men's awareness of their identity difference, but that they also did not feel different in terms of their social position.

The first challenge for a Muslim man in his work life is to state this difference to the non-Muslim majority in the first instance. Afdhal (28) stated this clearly:

In the work interview I requested five minutes in my lunch break, or if we have lunch break, I use it for prayer. Most guys are very tolerant and give advice, and really good. Friday prayer is going to be a big challenge. Because it is a little bit longer, for 45 minutes to one hour. Other employees or the boss may know, but the other employees may think that you go for two or three hours. That's definitely [a] challenge there and most Muslims that I know tell them that they can cope with that. Mostly, the culture we can't tolerate is drinking. The culture of Australia likes to drink alcohol or wine to celebrate. We say that we cannot do that and they understand it too. So it is a matter of being upfront and confident. In most cases, they tolerate it [because of workplace-equity laws]. They do that and provide solutions for both parties. As long as we do the right thing and do our job right. *Alhamdulillah* (Afdhal, 28).

This difference also raises other markers of difference. An Islamic-associated name, for example, can easily signify this identity. This was what Hamzi (55) encountered in his workplace:

With the name of Hamzi, I have (an Arabic name). I feel that if I hide myself, still one day they know that I am a Muslim, among so many of us who work in this place. So we can find a lot of staff that are together with us. Some, they just keep looking. So they may have a thousand questions. We'll never know. So, with the name 'Hamzi', some say [to me], 'Oh, you are a Muslim.' Some were very interested [in] such a thing, and asked a lot of questions. 'So you are fasting? You don't eat. How you can stand it?' ... I just feel the same, I feel natural, I don't feel

overestimated, intimidated, nothing I just expose myself as I am. Sometimes in a situation so-called more Western, it's really the way they behave in that manner, but I still stick as I am. So I just be what I am (Hamzi, 55)²⁸.

Suyanto (42) admitted that the religious practices of manhood are not always easy to execute. Sometimes they require a continuous struggle to cope with a different job and different company. As Umsa (50) shared, with the issue of performing rituals in his busy working hours, his company did not always allow for his religious observances. Umsa (50) was an electrical engineer working for a company providing accommodation services. He worked as a maintenance person, whose main job included fixing broken appliances according to customers' complaints, conducting regular tests on electrical systems and appliances and ensuring the power installation worked properly. He covered 200 rooms by himself. About performing *salat* while on the job, Umsa (50) complained:

They [the managers] know that I am a Muslim. But they do not understand that I have to do rituals, as did another company where I worked before. They prefer me to work [rather than stop for praying]. I don't know how to allocate my time. If I finish with one job then I have to rush to another, then I do the prayer in five to 10 minutes. Then I go to [the] job again. Because I have to do my job room by room (Umsa, 50).

However, many more men in this study had better working situations than Umsa (50), Firman (24) and Hamzi (55). They remarked that while doing their job they had a very good relationship with their manager or superior and were able to perform daily rituals without it affecting their work. Subagya (60) and Suyanto (42) reported that they did not have any problems in requesting prayer times and locations, as their managers were supportive and aware of their need. Both men shared their experience:

If I wanted to pray I just went to pray. But if I needed to get permission, I just let them know, 'I want to go pray.' [And my manager would say,] 'Oh, yeah.' Sometime they were generous to me and provided me with a certain space for praying, and said, 'You can pray here. Don't pray there! Too many people.' These people, if we do something they consider as a good thing they

²⁸ Arabic names are typically associated with Muslims in Australia; however many non-Muslims also have Arabic names.

give us a kind of compliment: ‘Oh, you work very hard, you know. Gee, how can I work like you?’ Sometime I work on Sunday and Monday too. If they are wondering [where I am] when I am praying, [they just ask] ‘Where have you been?’ ‘I was praying’. [They may reply,] ‘Oh, you pray. You are a good man’ (Subagya, 60).

In my experience, for me, I’m pretty lucky, I got no problems for [praying]. Except *jumat* prayer. I can’t go out for one hour (Suyanto, 42).

Other men, like Zakky (49), Jundy (43), and Usep (65), reported similar ease in performing rituals. Their non-Muslim managers and co-workers demonstrated sensitivity and respect towards their practice. *Jum’ah* prayer (Friday prayer), a ritual that takes much longer, however, often remained an issue that required a certain strategy to negotiate. For Karim (57) and Budiman (50), who ran their own companies, managing time for prayers was never a problem.

The difference felt by the men as a result of their commitment to piety is also marked by a certain sense of separation from the mainstream non-Muslim majority. This separation is often revealed in the disengagement from what they assumed as the common practice of Australian work culture. Abstinence from consuming alcohol is a common mark of this cultural separation. Some participants indicated that alcohol consumption was part of the routine among their co-workers. In Indonesia, alcohol is more than just a substance prohibited by the majority’s religious doctrine. For Muslims in Indonesia, alcohol is a cultural symbol of religious sin, ignorant values, social disease and even moral degradation—not as bad as drug abuse, but worse than gambling. This is why Muslims have a very strong psychological rejection of alcohol consumption. Such anti-alcohol sentiments in Muslims are stronger than their rejection of pork; this may be because pork does not make people inebriated. In dealing with the common practice of alcohol consumption, the men indicated different strategies that allowed them to not participate. Firman (24) and Zakky (49) gave examples of such strategies:

These guys [his colleagues] drink alcohol. Yeah ... it’s like after office, but I don’t drink, though they offer me. I just sit around. Okay, I say I am driving. I just go and have fun, socialising. But I don’t drink alcohol (Firman, 24).

My colleagues are Australian men, those who love to drink [alcohol], get drunk or do any other similar kind of habit men do here [in Australia]. [When they asked me to join them doing that] I would say to them that at this hour [after hours or weekend] I have to pick up my wife and kid, or I have to bring my kid to the mosque. And they showed respect for that (Zakky, 49).

The two cases demonstrate different responses and strategies among the Muslim men in keeping their social position in a non-Muslim masculine social setting of their co-workers while carefully maintaining religious piety. Firman (24) decided to keep socialising and ‘sit around’ with his all-male co-workers, and used a specific tactic to avoid alcohol. Zakky (49) chose to avoid his male co-workers’ group and their alcohol consumption. To accomplish that, he comfortably revealed the religious and family interest of his practice to the men (‘pick up my wife and kid’ and bring them ‘to the mosque’). The fact that Firman (24) did not reveal this religious reason was likely that he anticipated the reaction shown by his co-workers, whom he had previously described as ‘pretty rough’, ‘sometimes say[ing] a few bad things about our religion’; among whom ‘religion is not a nice topic to talk about’. Zakky (49), in contrast, obtained full respect from his non-Muslim men’s social group.

Religious dietary commitments and performing obligatory rituals is the next mark of cultural separation encountered by the Muslim men. Some of the participants in this research reported that sometimes they had to decide not to participate in social gatherings or cultural activities organised by people they knew, and felt close to, in the work place. Such decisions can be based on mainly religious reasons but also on technical situations; for example, it is not practical to perform prayer on a snowy mountain while skiing. Amin (53) and Jundy (43) had this experience of cultural separation:

Sometime in research projects we have a group. Sometime the professor entertains us [those in the group]. He invites us to come to his house and we go out somewhere, skiing, camping or whatever, together in one group. But [in activities like that] it is difficult for me to manage time for *sholat*, or to get [halal] food [so I prefer not to go]. But a social gathering is okay for me. But sometimes I say to them that ‘I feel like I would like to be alone’. [And they respect that, responding,] ‘Oh, please...please, no problem.’ Sometimes [in gatherings with my colleagues] I just eat vegetarian or sometimes I don’t eat or sometimes I bring my own food. They don’t bother with that. But sometime they provide *halal* food for me. *Alhamdulillah* (Jundy, 43).

With my situation it is more challenging. My wife is an Australian. If she and her friends want to celebrate Christmas, it is not easy if I am not coming. So, in the beginning I forced myself to follow her [by joining the Christmas party]. It is hard [to do], but I am coming. But I carefully kept my dietary restrictions. I don't eat pork, I don't drink beer. But that time was before I knew my religion. After I committing myself more seriously to my religion, I said to them, 'You can do Christmas at my place but don't bring alcohol!' Obviously they didn't like it. So they looked for somewhere else (Amin, 53).

The stories of the both men show that religious dietary laws and ritual become cultural gaps, although they still can participate in social activities, even those that would be considered forbidden in Indonesia for a Muslim to join, such as Christmas. While many Muslims believe that a commitment to *halal* food is a good practice for health reasons, it is also more than a health or environmental issue, as it is for vegetarians. Again, it is more a sign of one's commitment to piety.

The above discussion shows that Muslim men have to deal with daily situations in the workplace to maintain their religious identity. For the participants, such negotiations were affected significantly by the social environment they worked in, and the responses given by their colleagues. In their situations noted above, Zakky (49) and Jundy (43) were confident in stating that their religious commitment received a respectful response from their colleagues, giving them a sense of approval and acceptance. Other men may have encountered more difficult situations to negotiate, but many reported a positive reaction from their non-Muslim colleagues.

4. Muslim Men's Strategy in Dealing with Non-Muslim Social Settings

In the previous sections, I have addressed the study participants' perceptions of Australian society, especially those of non-Muslim Australian men. I have also discussed the challenges that these Muslim participants encountered in negotiating piety as a male practice in their work life. In this final section, the chapter analyses the strategies employed by the participants in positioning their religious execution and pious manhood and practice as a response to challenges in their social space, especially in the workplace. The previous

discussion suggested that maintaining religious piety was a fundamental agenda to preserve and maintain Muslim men's identity. At the same time, Muslim men had to cope with the majority (presumably secular) social setting. These two agendas created tension around Muslim men's practice and identity in the dominantly non-Muslim social context. The question is: what strategies do the men employ to maintain piety as part of their masculine identity and while dealing with presumably secular social settings in the workplace? These strategies inform the impact of the mainstream Australian social context on Muslim masculinities.

Using participants' data from interviews and group discussions, I have identified two main strategies employed by Muslim men in responding to the Australian social setting. The first strategy is resistance to Australian social and cultural practices, accompanied by the consolidation of Islamic discourse and practice. This strategy sees Australia public life as unavoidably full of moral risks and cultural traps, from which Muslim men should maintain a necessary safe distance to protect their religious identity and piety. In contrast, the second strategy sees confident encounters with Australian public life as an effective social space to perform Muslim masculinity. In this strategy, Muslim men engage in mainstream social practice by introducing religious piety into that practice, signifying their difference. This confident strategy considers mainstream social interaction as an opportunity where Muslim men are able to contribute to society exactly by employing Islamic piety in public spaces, suggesting a religious alternative to Australian masculinity. The two strategies reflect two different features of Muslim masculinities in relation to the social position within the broader Australian society.

What is crucial in these strategies is that, while different in their orientation towards Australian practice, they both require consolidation of religious components regarding the discourse on, and expression of, masculinity. How this reinforcement is taking place, and its impact on men's practice is an important issue to be discussed. Maintaining, preserving and expressing piety is a central agenda that signifies the distinctiveness of Muslim men among non-Muslim men in their social space. I will discuss this approach further, beginning with the first strategy.

Strategy 1: saving the faith, keeping one's distance

For some Muslim men, contact with the predominant non-Muslim society may create a sense of insecurity about their religious commitments. As mentioned earlier, several men in this study admitted that they had lost this religious commitment, due to a long involvement in the dominant social-cultural practices of Australian men. For the men who viewed religion as a fundamental element of their identity, there was always a degree of cultural caution when social contact was made with the perceived secular majority. At a certain point, this caution developed into a resistance that called for disengagement from dominant social practice. The strategy of Muslim masculinity discussed here centres on its required degree of disconnection from dominant Australian social-cultural practices. This response towards Australian society reflects a considerable sense of insecurity about religious identity.

This strategy consists of two main actions: the first is resistance to dominant Australian social-cultural practice; the second is the reinforcement of religious knowledge, devotion and practice. This strategy attempts to limit contact with mainstream Australian social-cultural practices, and consolidate religious discourse to protect and preserve men's position and identity. The purpose of this approach is to protect the piety that helps form the religious component of men's identity from being eroded due to intensive and continuous encounters with Australian values that are considered to oppose, or be unsuited to, the religious component of masculinity. The Islamic narrative tries to overcome these values, and their popular practices, such as secularity, hedonism, emphasis on physical and material pleasure, satisfaction and gain.

This strategy comes from evaluating that Australian social-cultural practices (such as nightclubbing, partying, using public spaces and even television programmes) are full of moral risks and cultural traps for Muslim men. Most, if not all, of these practices (with their underlying values) are not appropriate for, or contradict, certain Islamic values. Some men, like Fahroni (44), Amin (53), Zakky (49) and Umsa (50), admitted this risk. However, Zainuddin (48) demonstrated the biggest concern and nominated it as a fundamental issue to deal with regarding piety. His opinions reflect the logic that, due to their minority position, Muslim men cannot engage in these practices without losing a degree of faith. Engagement or contact with these practices will risk further involvement and the possible

establishment of these practices as routine for Muslim men. This could result in such men experiencing moral tension regarding piety: according to Zainuddin (48), this is likely to lead to men cross the religious line and leave the religion. In the previous discussion, Fahrni (44) and Zainuddin (48) discussed Muslim men crossing religious boundaries and losing their religious identity as they 'become Oz'. To cope with such powerful tendencies in Australian public life, there is no better option than to minimise contact and maintain a necessary distance. However, this should also be accompanied by improved piety and religious devotion, knowledge and commitment of the self to strengthen religious identity.

Among the participants, only Zainuddin (48) consistently demonstrated this strategy. Although only represented by one participant, this response is significant, as Zainuddin's (48) case resonates with the tendency towards isolation among a small number of Muslims in Australia regarding their attitude towards Australian society (Saeed and Akbarzadeh 2001). Samuel's (2011) study about members of *Jamaah Tabliqhi* in the UK observed a similar tendency, where Muslim men limited their contact with the non-Muslim majority to ensure religious piety.²⁹ These similarities suggest a small but noticeable trend among Muslim minorities in Western contexts regarding their social position in the broader society. My purpose is to see what this trend implies about certain features of Muslim masculinity.

As mentioned earlier, Zainuddin (48) was a 'born-again' Muslim who experienced losing his religious commitment during his youth in Australia. His attitude towards Australia should be understood in this context. He arrived at the point of being '*jahiliyah*' (morally ignorant) and lost his way, in his opinion, mainly because of encounters with Australian practices and values, especially freedom, the absence of religious consideration and the powerful social habits of achieving physical-material pleasure, or hedonism. Apart from the absence of control and monitoring from his family, Zainuddin (48) admitted that he had undergone all kinds of 'sinful' activities considered forbidden in Islamic teaching. He further disregarded basic religious obligations, such as daily prayer or *salat*. While spending most of his time with Indonesian men, he and his youth groups embraced the Australian lifestyle. He (now) wanted to be serious in purifying himself in terms of religious devotion and faith. He thought

²⁹ It is interesting to note that Zainuddin (48) was not a member of *Jamaah Tabliq*, while two participants who showed themselves as members of *Jamaah Tabliq* in my study supported exactly the opposite strategy to Zainuddin's (48) approach.

that any attempt to engage in Australian secular practice would be very risky for religious minorities.

Zainuddin (48) saw that the moral risks in Australian life for Muslim men took many forms in Australia. They can occur in the Australian free lifestyle, worldly and material orientations and physical satisfaction. Few participants saw sexual temptation as the only part of Australia's free lifestyle, but they considered it a characteristic Australian encounter. According to him, Australian women's practice in dressing is the centre of this sexual temptation. About this, Zainuddin (48) commented:

Who doesn't like to see beautiful and hot women? But that is what I want to stay away from! That is the challenge (test) for us to live in this country. We go everywhere, we see women [of attractive/provocative appearance]. Here, the women love to exhibit their chest, legs, belly button, even their tattoo on the back. Even if we do not want to see them, they like to show it to people. 'If you got it, show it!', that is what they say [about revealing their body in the public]. This is the world we live in!... It [seduction] can come from a TV programme; [for example,] if you look at SBS [Australian TV broadcasting station] programmes after 11pm [which often include programmes with sexual content for adult audiences]. I want to tell you honestly. That is why, I think, Islam forbids what we regard as pleasure (*haram*) [because it is risky for one's faith] (Zainuddin, 48).

Muslim men in Australia can feel themselves surrounded by such temptation and moral risks. The greatest challenge regarding religious identity, then, is to maintain religious consciousness and orientation. This task involves purifying the intention and mind from temptation; in striving for this, there is always a place for monotheistic beliefs. Zainuddin (48) said, 'So in my view, it is a matter of how we (Muslim men)] maintain our heart (truthful moral commitment), our desire, so that we keep remembering Allah, *dzikrullah* (remembering God)'.

However, in Zainuddin's (48) case, it was also necessary to avoid what he saw as the practices of Australian life. During two interview sessions, Zainuddin (48) also shared his views and criticisms of his fellow Muslim men, whom he saw as embracing an Australian lifestyle. Commenting on what he observed as the Australian lifestyle, Zainuddin (48) said:

What are we (Muslim men) actually looking for? If you try to understand what it (the Australian lifestyle) all finally leads to, turn it upside down or feel it from different sides, at the end it is just [physical] satisfaction/pleasure. There is nothing there. I have been through all that. It's empty, nothing, just physical pleasure (Zainuddin, 48).

Considering the perceived moral risk and temptation in Australian life, there was no better option for Muslim men than to withdraw. For Zainuddin (48), involvement in such behaviour would mean mixing his religious commitment with other commitments considered sinful according to Islam. As Zainuddin (48) argued:

If we [Muslim men] are unable to maintain the degree of our faith, it can be mixed up with the *maksiat* (vice or sinful behaviour). That can be dangerous [for our religion as a Muslim man]. That is why if we are conscious about our situation, [we] hold the religion firmly; otherwise we could [start to lose] our way. If we [Muslim men] are among young women, such a situation might be open for seduction. [I can say that] because I have been in such [an] experience before. [That is why I think] we [Muslim men] have to stay away [from such temptation and desire] (Zainuddin, 48).

Zainuddin (48) admitted that employing this attitude was not always easy. It often involved the negotiation of different interests and making decisions that affected other people in the family, for example, his children and wife. However, he was very firm about this choice and action. During one of the group discussions, he gave an example of how his use of his position as the leader of family to sustain his principle affected other members of his family:

This choice is not always easy. I experience it that with my own family. [For example,] we want to be healthy and fit. Going swimming is a very good option. But I realise that there is not much we can do with going to [a] swimming pool because there is a complicated situation. My daughter wanted to go to a swimming pool. That made me feel stressed. I asked my wife to go with her because I cannot, I do not feel comfortable inside the swimming pool. But my daughter only wanted to go with me, and that made my wife unhappy and she did not want to go either. Then I had to decide: there is no more swimming pool. This is for her own good and mine too. [As a Muslim man] I do not feel comfortable seeing women in swimming suits. We have to reduce this kind of activity that causes seduction. This is a kind of sinful sight which we can find everywhere here. But we can limit it (Zainuddin, 48).

In one of the group discussions that Zainuddin (48) participated in, Amin shared his experience and dilemma of joining a break-up party among the parents of his son's school. Amin admitted the moral risk involved in the party at the chosen place where the party was hosted, and how the parents enjoyed the party. He said that the place was chosen in a location where people would be engaging in what he considered vices (he used the term '*maksiat*', referring to a bar): specifically, the consumption of wine. Amin (53) stressed that while he attended the party because of his son, he did not drink, and stated to the group that he did not drink alcohol for religious reasons. Responding to Amin's (53) story, Zainuddin (48) criticised him for joining the party in the first place:

The way I see it, if you have done with your *jahiliyah* (moral ignorance) [in the past] and want to repent to God, then do it earnestly. Do not do it half-heartedly! Allah has given you '*kenikmatan*' (blessing in form of good life and happiness), so if you want to repent and ask for forgiveness, do it truthfully. I have gone through all that (behaviour oriented to material pleasure/satisfaction). I have enough. Allah has given us this pleasure as a reminder. We cannot just go continuously doing activities that causing sins and vice. I want to be grateful for what I have now [the family, religious devotion]. I keep my emotions calm. I really want to control them. I have to also able to set an example for my family (Zainuddin, 48).

The above statements from Zainuddin (48) implied that Amin's attempt to socially engage with his son's school friends' parents, while maintaining his Muslim identity, did not show serious religious devotion. Zainuddin (48) saw this even in a purely religious perspective. He focused on the 'vice place' and the wine, and he perhaps implied what people would do with such a combination of place and forbidden alcohol. I would suggest that such a combination of place and activity was at one time very familiar for Zainuddin (48); he also stated that he had had enough of that practice.

This approach towards what he considered the Australian lifestyle raises concerns about the tension it causes with Islamic piety. Zainuddin's stance strongly stressed religious reinforcement and consolidation for the self. This consolidation is inward in its nature, and is addressed to the masculine self as discipline, and not as performance. This exclusion

strategy results in a religiously pious manhood that is centred in the individual man-God relationship, with the expression of piety as a continuous inward statement of the masculine self. Regarding its social position, this masculinity reflects a significant degree of insecurity and a lack of confidence towards the broader discourse of Australian masculinity that makes this form of masculinity closed and exclusive for the religious individual.

Strategy 2: performing religious masculinity on the secular stage

In contrast to the former strategy of masculinity based on a disconnection from mainstream Australian social-cultural practice, the second strategy discussed here is based on the engagement of Muslim men in mainstream Australian social settings. This strategy relies on the view that Muslims and Muslim men should be able to take part in the progress of society. It also suggests that the opportunity to do so is available in Australian social settings. In fact, this strategy is more representative of this study, as it was discussed by more participants. Therefore, this strategy can be taken as a stronger feature of Muslim masculinities with regard to their social position in the Australian context. While the previous strategy considered Australian practice and values as inherently risky, eroding Muslim men's devotion to their religious teaching, the second strategy takes these values as a social space for Muslim men to perform alternative practices and values of masculinity to claim their position in society. This performance of practices and values reinforces religious piety as a crucial component of masculinity.

Muslim engagement with broader Australian society has become an important issue for two reasons. First, persistent Islamophobia, which involves the narrative of Muslim incompatibility with Australian values, has created a virtual gap between Muslims and non-Muslim Australians. Muslims feel they need to overcome this gap and to show that the Islamic way of life is in accordance with the basic values of Australia, or at the least that Islam can adapt to Australian culture and social practices. Second, the cultural gap has been created by Muslims themselves regarding Australian social-cultural practices they see as mirroring the Western way. For Muslims, the secular features of Australian society remain an aspect to be wary of, and the main issue to deal with. This gap between values produces disadvantage for Muslims themselves, and they feel the need to address this gap and make an effort to adapt their religious practice and expression.

However, it seems that among the Muslim men in this study, there was interest in demonstrating what Muslims could contribute to Australian society. For men like Karim (56), Jundy (43), Zakky (49), Usep (65), Umsa (50) and Amin (53), Muslim men should be able to contribute to society precisely by employing Islamic practices in public spaces, to suggest alternative men's practices in Australian life. This consideration implies confidence in Muslim men's position in society, and their capacity to contribute. This approach takes Australian public life as a stage of masculine performance and an exhibition of the religious ethos of the men's practice. As Karim (56) commented:

Muslims cannot exist on their own. The Muslim community must engage, interact and live together with [the] non-Muslim majority. So when we bring up the children, we have to prepare them to play that role. They must be religious and able to engage with non-Muslims as well. Not only engaged but also contribute. Not only contribute, they must be able to enhance their capacity. So they should be able to play [a] bigger role in general society. And our role [as parents] becomes harder. We have to make sure that the children are religious at the same time they are well educated and able to engage with non-Muslims, and [we must] bring them [up] to be good Muslims. We cannot let the education of our children to instil the mentality of being inferior to others. We must be able to teach our students as good Muslims, obedient Muslims, [with] strong *aqidah* (religious knowledge and commitment), strong *iman* (faith), but at the same time they possess very high capabilities, high abilities, [are] well educated, well trained, so people can depend on them. If we can contribute to the society's wellbeing, we can lift up the reputation of the Muslims as the best people (Karim, 56).

As described earlier in the first part of this chapter, some men, like Hamzi (55), Aslaam (61), Firman (24) and Afdhal (28), had jobs that involved little communication with other people. It seemed that these men gained little from their interactions in terms of meaningful relationships or helpful friendships. However, people like Zakky (49) and Budiman (50) had similar jobs and did not seem to limit their social interaction with non-Muslim co-workers in the workplace. A person's personality can affect the intensity of social interaction in the workplace (e.g., Aslaam (61) is quiet and focuses on what he is doing, while Budiman (50) is talkative and loves making friends).

Men like Zakky (49) and Jundy (43) shared the stories of this 'religious men's mission' with the greatest detail and clarity of the men in this study. These men demonstrated the

religious dimension of their masculine practice to Australian secular audiences in their social space at work. Both men spent a considerable portion of their interview focusing on religious performance in the workplace. They wanted to share what they do while on the job as Muslim men. Both men wanted to show how good and useful Islamic piety was for men by practicing modesty, professionalism, care towards others, religious perspectives on work, brotherhood and committed discipline to religious rituals. I use Jundy's (43) and Zakky (49)'s stories to illustrate the performative feature of Muslim masculinity in the workplace. I discuss Zakky (49) first, followed by Jundy.

Zakky (49) runs his own company with mainly Indonesian employees. His company partners with bigger companies to undertake projects that he sometimes refers to as 'my projects'. In the interview, he referred to the people from this bigger company as 'my boss'. It was his boss that he employed as representing the Australian male he focused on during the interview. Zakky (49) wanted to show his Australian colleagues the beauty of the Islamic way of living, by giving examples of what he did at work (often these were simple things), particularly relating to his boss and employees. About this, he stated:

I want to be Australian as well as Indonesian. I make an effort to put [these identities] together, and to support and complement each other so it can be a powerful resource. We [my wife and I] hold firmly the Indonesian etiquette based on Islam and gain the opportunity that is wide open here in Australia. In my work life [for example], the etiquette that we hold from Indonesia works greatly. It works in the way I approach my boss. The standard of politeness makes them show respect to us [the Muslim men].

Being a Muslim man is my identity. This is my way of life. I practice it at work too. For example, one day at 5am I bought hot coffee from McDonalds. When I arrived at the inspection point the big bosses were already there. Out of the car I brought the coffee for them. They looked surprised [and amazed]. Another example, one day during lunch we were very busy and had no chance to find food. Then I decided to bring food for the workers on the field or I made fried rice for them. This kind of activity looks simple but it shows that we [the Muslims] care about other people. That made them happy at work. *The point is, I do it based on Islam.* I shared that [with] my boss and he looked amazed (Zakky, 49, my emphasis).

As previously discussed, observing obligatory rituals during working hours was a common challenge for Muslim men to deal with when expressing piety in Australia. Zakky (49) was very confident in explaining this religious practice to his superiors and colleagues, and he performed it consistently. He believed that demonstrating good performance and professionalism at work would help non-Muslim co-workers to understand, accept and further approve of his religious devotion in the workplace, although this practice was not usual for many men. Zakky (49) believed that such a productive work ethic was actually representative of the Islamic ethic he was committed to. Zakky (49) explained this strategy at length:

At the beginning I worked with these Australian men, they looked confused [about my religious practice during work]. They asked the same questions, ‘Doesn’t your religion give another time for you to pray (outside working hours)?’, ‘With such dirty conditions at work, how can you focus while praying?’, ‘Don’t you have other time for praying after work, at 6pm perhaps?’ [Responding to the questions] I only said that this is part of my belief which is brought by my messenger (the Prophet Muhammad). [But] consistently producing good performance in work, not [being] delayed, be on time, work professionally [I feel that] while previously they felt uncomfortable with my religion, they [are] now happy to be our partner at the project. It is because [of our] Islam. Situations like this have been happening [for] quite [a] long time. *[The key is,] we demonstrate what we can produce, showing a positive work ethic and that it is based on my religious faith at work.* Doing Friday prayer, for example, at first I didn’t insist about going for Friday prayer. But later on I explained to them (Zakky’s bosses or superiors) that on Friday I have to observe Friday prayer (at lunch time). [I believe] because of my hard work doing the job, they trust me. My current boss even said that because it is your religious obligation to make everybody happy, he gave permission (to do Friday prayer). He even requested, ‘Please don’t forget to pray for me’ (Zakky, 49, my emphasis).

It is clear that Zakky (49) did face uncomfortable situations in his workplace as a Muslim. He eventually forced himself to abandon obligatory rituals like Friday prayers to cope with that situation. Responding to that situation, Zakky’s (49) strategy was very simple: talk little but do your best. He did not spend time explaining *salat* from Islamic teaching, nor why he did it, or what its benefits were, in responding to questions. Zakky (49) simply comfortably said that it was part of his belief. However, he focused his effort on the quality of his work and professionalism, which he believed was based on Islam. Zakky’s (48) case shows that while

Muslims should be able to perform their religious obligation in workplaces by law, there are situations where some Muslims have to make a significant effort to exercise that right. Zakky (49) continued:

In contrast, if we showed no motivation at work, not showing discipline, expressing too many complaints, the Australians [colleagues] would see that Muslims are not professional. They (Australian men) actually understand (about the Muslims praying at work). Because we do not show it off when doing the prayer, like laying the praying mat in the dirt. It can be done in the truck, inside the car or in the lunch room. At first, [a] few people seemed fazed, but since I do the *salat* in two or three minutes then it is okay. There is no problem. When we have a new director, the supervisors would explain that it is my religious ritual. Islam is a way of life, *if we can show that this way is great [making you more productive on the job] then they would be happy*. That is what they told me: that they are happy with our Islamic practice. I told them that this is my way of life (Zakky, 49, my emphasis).

Zakky (49) believed that Islamic teaching should be performed in front of others to demonstrate what Islamic values are. From this, he could seek opportunities to gain acceptance from non-Muslims in the social environment. His confidence in doing so, I presume, was also encouraged by the positive reactions from people around him.

Zakky (49) was fully aware of his dominant non-Muslim surroundings, and the Australian-associated practices of masculinity. However, he showed great confidence and seemed comfortable in stating and expressing his religious piety to obtain respect from his colleagues. From them, he sometimes heard criticism and attacks against Muslims and their associated 'dark' political reputation. Responding to such critics, Zakky (49) was confident with his response. Focusing on producing positive images of his religious piety was his main strategy in responding to such critics:

Sometimes they complained about what other Muslims [were] doing around the world, in Syria, in Egypt, in Libya, [countries where] a Muslim man acts like a dictator.³⁰ Or Muslim militant groups create horrors by killing others. [Responding to these judgements,] I said that those cases have nothing to do with the religion, but the people. I turned back [the criticism] that the same

³⁰ Zakky (49) and his workmates referred to the leaders of these countries who acted like dictators: Mubarraq (Egypt), Qadafi (Libya) and Assad (Syria).

thing also happen to the Christians for example. They abuse drugs and alcohol; employed apartheid in Africa and use religion to justify their actions. As for me, I give examples such as teaching my daughter to give donations (*shadaqoh*) to the poor in Indonesia. I also organise the Muslim community [*NurMushalla*] to collect donations, then I deliver [them to] poor kids in Indonesia. My boss said about that, ‘That is amazing’ (Zakky, 49).

The above statement suggests that Zakky (49) wanted to show that his narrative of piety involved a different aspect—that is, a social role—to his activity at the workplace. He was trying to build a connection between what he did at work and what he contributed in responding to issues happening in the broader social setting outside the workplace. Again, Zakky (49) signified how the religious narrative made this connection meaningful.

Zakky (49) even made further effort in seeking acceptance and approval from his manager regarding his religious identity, by introducing his manager to the larger observation of Indonesian Muslim community life beyond the workplace. He invited his manager to visit an annual Indonesian festival, where the community’s lively social-cultural interaction could be observed. Zakky (49) liked to promote aspects of community life that he considered lacking in the Australian lifestyle; namely, a strong communal spirit, adherence to standards of etiquette, and discipline in ritual: all things that represent religious piety. He wanted to show that these religiously associated characteristics were practiced in Australian contexts and social events beyond a person’s working experience. Zakky (49) recalled:

Our community love to gather together, our relationship is very close. That aspect makes them (the Australian boss and colleagues) very interested. For example, I asked my [current] boss to visit an Indonesian cultural festival, the food festival in Box Hill. He saw that [the] Indonesian community (in Melbourne) is amazing, the relationship among the people is respectful. He also saw that our people [the Muslims] are very disciplined. Their social relation is based on religion. He could not understand when seeing people in the festival [who were mostly Muslims] stopped in the middle of their activities (which was fun) to perform *salat* (prayer).³¹ Because in the community where he belongs people do not do that. He asked, ‘Why does your ritual disturb your activity? Is there ritual which does not disturb your activity?’ I just explained that [it is a simple thing to do;] we [the Muslims] go to the toilet to take *wudhu* (ablution) and perform the

³¹Zakky (49) perhaps referred to people observing *Zuhr salat* at lunch time or *Asr salat* in late afternoon.

ritual together [after that in a different room]. For him, that was an amazing experience (Zakky, 49).

Another important aspect of Zakky's performative practice was revealing his spiritual perspective about his employment relationship. He interpreted that his earnings from employment gave an ontological meaning relevant to his relationship with his God. Again, this aspect illustrates Zakky's confidence and comfort in expressing a belief that is not common in the Australia working context. Here, he brought the position of his manager directly into his relationship as a man with his God, and the beneficial outcome of such relationship in form of income (*rejek*i, blessing). He said:

At the moment, I [am] especially close to my current project manager. [Sometimes I shared with him the way I see it through a religious point of view]. I said to him that God has been giving me so much blessing in form of earning (*rejek*i) through him (the project manager). I get a lot of earnings for my kid and my wife too, to go for holiday. I gave some of the earnings too to the poor in Indonesia ... [I also told him that]. There are a lot of people in Indonesia from my family who live in difficulty; [I] shared these earnings because of my partnership with him (the project manager) (Zakky, 49).

Zakky's (49) statement about income for holidays and donations is a form of appreciation for the opportunity his employer has given him. Zakky's (49) masculine performative agenda encouraged him to emphasise those parts of his relationship with the manager. His target was clear: to demonstrate the spiritual narrative of his social relationship, even when it took place in a capitalist space. He also wanted to show how such a narrative involved human interest (the earnings shared with the poor) that went beyond the materialistic setting of social interaction at the workplace.

In the end, Zakky (49) was very confident that his performative strategy as a Muslim man in the non-Muslim dominant social setting was successful in gaining acknowledgement, respect and further approval from his manager, as a representation of the majority men in his social milieu. He claimed:

That is my story to keep the religious etiquette in my life, in my work. He (Zakky's boss) showed great respect [for] my life principle, because I am a Muslim (Zakky, 49).

Zakky's story shows a Muslim man performing his religious commitment as piety on a masculine secular stage in Australia. It shows the emphasis on Islamic practice appropriate to men's position and situation that characterises Muslim masculinity. This strategy entails consolidation of the religious aspect of manhood in the form of its performance and contact with a non-Muslim context.

A similar performative feature of Muslim masculinity in Australia is also presented in Jundy's (43) case. As I described in Chapter 3, Jundy (43) was perhaps the most consistent participant in expressing Islamic piety in terms of appearance, especially with dressing, in speaking and in his spiritual perspective. While Zakky (43) was casual in dressing (perhaps mainly due to his working nature), looking like most other men, Jundy (43) was quite orthodox, with a half-moon praying cap, growing a beard (while rather short and thin), and wearing a long, loose male Muslim dress (*gamish*) in a light plain colour, which was often covered by a thick, warm jacket. He confirmed during the interview that he never changed that style of dressing, even in his workplace. More than any other participant, he constantly and consistently spoke of a relationship with God, especially by using praising words such as *Alhamdulillah* (all praise is due to God), *Subhannallah* (glorified be God), *Insyallah* (by the will of God), and *Masyallah* (God has willed it). He exhibited a strong spiritual perspective in understanding his actions and social interactions.

During the interview, Jundy (43) talked about the institution where he was employed when this fieldwork was undertaken. For confidentiality I use 'the centre' to refer to this institution. In the unit where Jundy (43) worked, there were five people, and within the department hosting the unit, there were 15 people. Jundy (43) was very confident and comfortable in expressing his religious piety and Muslim identity. First and foremost was his appearance and attire, as mentioned above. Even for a very pious Muslim man, wearing a prayer cap while working is very uncommon. Second, he adhered to obligatory daily rituals and food consumption. Jundy (43) described receiving full acceptance and support from his

colleagues at the centre over his Islamic dress and appearance, as well as his religious practice. 'There are no silly questions so far about Islam', he described. He further explained:

So far I don't feel [I am] being treated differently. Even [though] I am appearing like this (wearing a praying cap, having a beard, wearing an Afghan gamish) in the office. No problem. It fulfils my interest as a Muslim, including doing *salat*. They didn't show any different response to me. *Alhamdulillah*. Sometimes when we got a problem with our research they asked me, 'You go pray [to find the solution].' *To me it is quite surprising that they aware of my religious way of thinking*. So this kind of understanding is good for us. One day they said, 'Don't be too focused on the job! Everything is under the hand of God, as long as God wills it, everything is will be easy.' *Alhamdulillah*. Even when we have internal group meetings, they asked to provide *halal* food also. They tried to be careful for me. As I didn't want to put a burden on them, I said, 'Don't worry about the *halal* food. I can eat by myself.' It would be hard to look for *halal* food. I did not know how they finally did that (Jundy, 43, my emphasis).

Jundy's story suggests that his religious identity might have attracted some of his colleagues to express interest in religious related discourse, such as the 'hereafter' (*akhirat*). This finding suggests there is no single reaction from his non-Muslims colleagues regarding religious matters. Typically, Muslim participants in this study perceived non-Muslim Australians to be religiously uninterested. Jundy's experience shows that some were interested in certain religious matters and had positive reactions. Such reactions differ to those experienced by Umsa (50), Firman (24) and Hamzi (55), as previously discussed. Overall, Jundy (43) enjoyed a lively social interaction through the simple and seemingly regular common practice of conversation with his colleagues, which signified closeness and intimacy. Regarding this, he said:

I am also often involved with them. So I know about their values, about what they are thinking about Islam, sometimes about what they think about *akherat*, about why we live in this world. [We come to this kind of talk when] sometimes we talk about business. When we talk about work, suddenly the talk turns about here or about there and arrives to that point (about life after death). We chat during free time, sometimes in the middle of work, sometimes just a way of being relaxed. Like a time like this, for example, or before we go home. Sometimes they do not want to talk about this. They are worried, afraid. I can see that from their face. I don't want continue that, and I talk about something else nicely. In my centre many of us have family so we

talk about teaching kids. In my centre we have close relationships, like manager and staff. There is not so much gap among us (Jundy, 43).

During the interview, Jundy (43) spent a significant amount of time sharing his experience with his manager. Both men had different backgrounds, but spent time together on many occasions due to their work at the centre. This experience revealed Jundy's (43) practice with his rituals during travel, including any other aspect of practice surrounding the rituals, and how his manager worked with that. Jundy (43) recalled some moments of such experience in detail:

I am very close with my manager. I have known him for about four years. He is Dutch. We are about the same age or maybe he is one year older than me. We travel together sometimes. He likes driving, but I like sleeping during travelling. We went to Europe together. And he knew that I already prepared for the ritual. 'Oh, you already prepared the timetable for *salat*, the mosque in this place and that place.' I had prepared the addresses. The first thing I prepare before travelling is the timetable for *salat*, and the mosque's address in the destination city. If I have a contact, I contact people. If they are difficult to contact, it's no problem, I have the address. And I know how to get there, by bus. I know how to get to the hotel. I can go by train or by bus. I know what should I take. Because it's not good to ask him to drive all the time (Jundy, 43).

During his travel with his manager, Jundy (43) shared significant moments with him. The two men helped each other and were occasionally involved in religiously meaningful conversations. Jundy's (43) manager was familiar with Muslims and showed great respect and support for Jundy's (43) beliefs. He also showed interest in Islamic teaching and mentioned that to Jundy (43) in a respectful manner. The relationship between the two men illustrates that the performative tendency of Jundy's (43) masculinity was well supported in his non-Muslim context. In the following story, Jundy (43) shares how such travel experience is meaningful for the relationship of the men. In this story, the experience relating to a mosque provided them with an opportunity to help each other, and somehow led to a meaningful conversation:

We went to Europe together few times. In Holland there are many Muslims also. So he is familiar with Muslims. Sometime he informs me about a mosque in Holland when we travelling there. He said, 'Do you want to pray? I know one mosque over there'. At another time he wanted to go to the toilet [and we had no place to go]. I said, 'We can go to the mosque.' He [was] concerned: 'Is it no problem if I go there?' I said, 'No, no problem'. He felt bad about that but he went to the mosque. He thought the mosque was exclusively for Turkish people. At that time we were waiting for *dhuhur*. He said, 'I want to ask about Muslims, but please don't be angry. When a man came out from the mosque, I saw a lady coming in. Was the lady cleaning the mosque?' I replied, 'Oh no, in *masjid* we have different sections for ladies and for men. Maybe they came late.' We also talked about same-sex marriage: 'Why [does] Allah prohibit this?' I explained for him. *Alhamdulillah* [he seemed to understand]. But sometimes I could not answer his questions. I just said, '*Asyhaduallah ila ha ilallah*, I don't know the answer.' Somehow he can understand (Jundy, 43).

One particular experience of being together with his manager was when both men were hungry in Denmark after a Friday meeting. This story shows how Muslim brotherhood, combined with Jundy's (43) habit of carefully planning ritual activity before travelling, helped them resolve a rather complicated situation. This experience illustrates how the performative action of Muslim masculinity could involve different aspects of religious practice and discourse, in this case brotherhood among Muslim men. This moment started when Jundy (43) had to leave a meeting to catch *Jum'ah* prayer (noon-time Friday prayer). However, Jundy (43) did not bring his lunch with him when leaving the meeting, saying:

One day we attended a meeting in Denmark [for which] my manager had to go back, driving to Denmark from the Netherlands. I already contacted one brother (in Denmark) before we went to Denmark, asking him the address of the mosque [I would visit for *Jum'ah* prayer]. In the meeting I asked him (Jundy's manager), 'I have to pray *Jum'ah* at this address. Is it far?' He said 'Oh, it's very nearby. What time?' [I said] 'One o'clock.' The meeting started at 10am. I hoped that before 1 p.m. we would be finishing. But the meeting turned into a very hot discussion. I started to worry, 'Uh, it is 12 p.m. now and the meeting is not finished yet. I'll take a bus'. [The manager said,] 'Okay, I will drop you in the mosque and go for lunch.' Then I went for *Jum'at* prayer. But after the prayer my stomach was already screaming and I didn't bring my food. And I didn't want him waiting for me too long since he had travelled from the Netherlands to Denmark; that was 12 hours' driving (Jundy, 43).

Jundy's (43) description indicates that the two men left the meeting in the afternoon, around the time for *Jum'ah* prayer. It also indicates that the meeting host did not provide lunch for the men, as Jundy's (43) manager had to find lunch for himself. While feeling hungry, Jundy (43) met the Muslim man he had contacted after the *Jum'ah* prayer. As it turned out, the man invited Jundy (43) for lunch. However, Jundy (43) could not have the meal with the man because he did not want to make his manager wait any longer. Jundy (43) asked for another portion of a meal for his manager, thinking that they might have the meal together, while knowing his boss was going for lunch when he was praying. The Muslim man responded positively to Jundy's (43) request. Jundy (43) said:

Then one person from the mosque called to me: 'Excuse me, brother' ...as he noticed I was a foreigner. He had never seen me before. He asked me, 'Did you call me yesterday?' [I said,] 'Yes, my name is Jundy.' [He replied,] 'Oh, okay, brother, I invite you for lunch with us'. *Subhannallah*. [That was a relief because I was starving.] But I had to leave early and I said, 'Sorry, brother, this is not my blessing' [He replied,] 'Oh, no problem, I can make it take away for you.' And we went to the canteen. At that moment I was thinking that I was not alone, I was going with my friend, my boss. [Then I asked him,] 'Excuse me, brother, can I have one more? It's for my friend.' 'Oh, no problem,' [he said]. 'He is non-Muslim.' 'It's okay. It's good to prepare,' [he convinced me]. They prepared kebab for both of us (Jundy, 43).

In short, the two men in the story were starving at the afternoon after *Jum'ah* prayer, especially Jundy's (43) manager, who had been driving for 12 hours before the meeting.³² The value of Muslim brotherhood was proven as Jundy (43) travelled back with his manager, who could not get lunch for himself as he did not have the correct currency to buy food. At that point, Jundy's (43) initiative to ask for an extra meal was helpful. The following quotation recounts the exchanges of conversation between Jundy (43) and his manager that Jundy (43) reconstructed during the interview:

[Back to my manager] Then I went with my boss driving. We talked and talked, then I asked him, 'So how was your lunch?' 'Oh ...' 'What happened?' [He explained] 'I went to McDonalds. I picked up my chicken and [tried to] pay with Euro. The cashier said no, they

³² The background time of this story was probably around 2pm, as the *Jum'ah* prayer started at 1pm, according to Jundy's (43) information.

didn't except Euro. Only Danish currency. But I didn't bring [Danish] money. So I could not buy the food.' [I confirmed his situation] 'So you didn't have lunch?' 'No.' And I said, 'Don't worry, Allah have mercy.' 'Why?' [He asked]. 'I bring two meals. One for me, one for you.' [He wondered and asked] 'Oh, how much did you buy?' [I said,] 'No, I didn't buy!' [He was curious] 'From where [did the food come]?' [I tried to convince him] 'From the mosque.' [He was still curious] 'Do you know them?' 'No, I don't know them. But they are my brothers. It is normal in the Muslim world when we travel very far we have brothers to help. Please have one.' But I knew he did not want to eat. So I waited. But [because I couldn't hold on any longer,] then I went, 'Sorry, mate, I have to eat'. 'Okay, you eat.' [He let me eat]. Maybe he looked at me eating and couldn't help wanting to as well. [So I convinced him:] 'Please don't worry. I am eating this and I don't die. No poison in it. It is okay!' [He looked convinced] 'Oh, okay, then I eat'. *Subhannallah*. This was an answer from Allah *Subhanna huwa ta'ala*. This unity of Muslims, even I from Australia, he [the Muslim man who gave the food] is from Denmark, we came from different backgrounds, but *subhannallah* [we had such a meaningful interaction]. This is the value of *ikhram* [in Islam] (Jundy, 43, my emphasis).

The key aspect of the above story is Jundy's (43) emphasis that while he did not know the brother who helped him, he had faith that the brother would help his situation. For Jundy (43), that was a advantageous practice in Islam which he could demonstrate to his manager. This narrative of the advantage of Islam is a fundamental part of this performance of masculinity. Exactly because of a belief in this narrative, Muslim men like Jundy (43) and Zakky (49) feel confident in their actions and want to share this religious advantage with non-Muslim social audiences. It also can be seen that these men were trying to find spaces where they could be true to their religious-selves. The narrative encourages Muslim men to perform better, as Jundy (43) pointed out:

Do I feel like I'm part of the society? Oh yes! Sometimes I feel little bit different. But this is common in any country. In Indonesia we will find different ethnicities. In here (Australia), I don't really care [if people look at me differently]. I just try to be a better person [in terms of attitude and manner towards others]... Because Islam is a complete *dien* (guidance) [so I have to express it that way]. It covers *iman* (faith), *ibadah* (worship), *muamalah* (social action/attitude), *muasarah*(relationship). *Muamallah* is dealing with social action, *akhlak* (mannership or personality). So it is good for us to mingle. *You don't need to talk about how Islam is like this or like that. But we give example; our behaviour* (Jundy, 43, my emphasis).

In the last sentence of this statement, Jundy (43) noted crucial information regarding the way he saw himself in society, his strong belief in the Islamic framework, his religious social mission and the strategy to achieve this mission. Jundy (43) was very confident of his position, being part of society. This is similar to Zakky's (43) practice, as discussed earlier. Muslim men demonstrated their advantaged masculine value associated with Islam by performance and being a good example, rather than saying something about their religion.

The performative orientation of masculinity demonstrated by Zakky (49) and Jundy (43) can be categorised as a 'non-traditional' form of Islamic piety in Hassan's (2008) category. While the emphasis on ritual remained important, it did not come as result of traditional reading of the scripts, nor was it a product of a defined religious doctrine set by the Muslim organisations to which they belonged, nor imported fatwa from Indonesian Muslim bodies. It was a result of the men's individual responses to broader tensions about Muslims' position in Australia and public opinion about Islam which they saw as affecting the local social context of their workplace. Both Zakky (49) and Jundy (43) (in these examples of the performative strategy of Muslim masculinity) claimed the success of their strategy in obtaining a social position, acceptance and further support of their piety as practiced in the workplace ('they respect', 'he was amazed', 'they understand', 'he was surprised'). Their statements inform the positive response from their non-Muslim colleagues at work towards what they did and believed, as men with a particular religious devotion. At the same time, they also seemed successful in elaborating the religious practice and discourse that was relevant and appropriate for their needs.

I would suggest that, in the case of Zakky (49) and Jundy (43), this strategy reflects a construction of masculinity that entails the characteristics of being confident in their religious self-concept, centred in piety, performative in orientation, flexible in practice (in accordance with the context), but at the same time deeply religious. The last feature, the religious component, reflects the Muslim men's attempts to maintain and embrace a different practice of masculinity, while also benefitting and contributing to the secular dominant Australian context.

The comparison between the two strategies of Muslim masculinity as discussed above lead to important findings regarding the impact of Muslim men's position as a religious minority.

Both strategies depart from reinforcing the religious component in consolidating masculine identity. However, the two strategies demonstrate contrasts in their orientation towards Australian social practice. While the resistance strategy (Zainuddin, 48) stresses disconnection from Australian social-cultural practice, the performative strategy (Zakky, 49, and Jundy, 43) uses engagement to find a position in the broader context of Australian social life. The first strategy of masculinity results in identifying the masculine self as a practice of discipline deeply focused on a man-God relationship (faith/piety). In Jundy's (43) and Zakky's (49) case, the successful strategy was also significantly influenced by the kind of people they dealt with. The second, performative strategy also focuses on a man-God relationship. However, it emphasises the display of such a relationship in social arenas for the benefit of Muslim men's position in the broader context of Australian social life. The latter strategy can also be argued as more representative and therefore more important for Muslim masculinity in this study, as its main message of Muslim engagement with Australian social life was supported by many of my participants.

Conclusion

This chapter addresses the gap in the literature on Muslim men and Muslim masculinities in Australia, particularly in relation to Muslim men's social class, by examining Muslim men's day-to-day experience of social interaction with predominantly non-Muslim colleagues in the Australian workplace. While there is reliable information about Muslims' positive attitude toward Australia (Rane et al 2009) and more specifically Muslim men's positive view and attitude toward Australia as a country and society (Chafic 2010), little is known about Muslim men's daily experiences as minority and how that experience shapes their masculinity, as well as their gendered religious identity and practice.

The discussion in this chapter emphasises a different discourse and practice of Muslim masculinities in a Western context compared to other studies of Muslim men and Muslim masculinity, mainly conducted outside Australia. Muslim masculinities in this study largely appear to be influenced by positive to very positive attitudes of Muslim men towards their non-Muslim-majority social environment. Religious identity is seen as part of a commitment to engage and contribute to the wide society. Such a discourse is in contrast to a tendency

towards resistance against Western society amongst Muslim men in Europe (Ramji 2007; Macey 1999; Archer 2001; Alexander 2000). The positive tone of Muslim masculinities as expressed by the Muslim men of Southeast Asian background was influenced by several factors. Firstly, many of the men believed that the Australian ethos embodied some important Islamic messages (such as highly respect individual's freedom in religion) which many Muslim governments and communities fail to produce in their home countries. Such a view is contrary to finding in other Western contexts where Muslim men perceived Western values and system as a threat to Islam and Muslims (Macey 1999; Archer 2001). Next, the study recorded positive and supportive responses to the men by their non-Muslim colleagues in the workplace, which generated a sense of acceptance and belonging. Finding a supporting and accepting response from a non-Muslim social environment is an important contribution of this chapter to the discussion of Muslim masculinity, considering the current literature pays greater attention to experiences of discrimination, racism and exclusion encountered by Muslim men as minority [from Asian background in the Europe (Archer 2001; Alexander 2000) and South Africa (Nauright 1997)] which in turn created reactionary ideological attitudes among the Muslim men (Archer 2003; Hopkins 2004). In this study, the Muslim men turned concern over racism and Islamophobia into encouragement for their masculine performative strategy on secular environment of their working environment. Lastly, most of the Muslim men supported and embraced the perceived Western value of individual freedom, a principle that allowed them to consider religion as vital for the survival of their masculine identity.

The fact that the men embraced what are considered to be Western values and western practices, and employed them to the benefit of their religious performance, identity statement and equality in social position, suggests that they did not adopt the Islam-Western tension or dichotomy, as some would suggest (De-Sondy 2014; Roy 2004). This is especially evident in the case of the performative strategy through which the men employed religious expression and practice to gain social acceptance and approval in non-Muslim Western contexts.

This chapter further contributes to the literature on Muslim masculinities by expanding discussion and analysis on Islamic piety as an important aspect of Muslim masculinities. While piety is a central concept for religious expression and practice, and shapes individual

actions in Islam (Hassan 2008), only one study is found addressing Islamic piety as a component of masculinity (Samuel 2011). The emphasis on religious identity and discourse became important for the men's identity consolidation as a minority. Being a Muslim man was a core signifier of their workplace identity, and was much stronger than their ethnicity (Javanese, Sundanese, Sumatran, Singaporean or Malay). Applying a religious framework and practice in social life became a way to state their identity in front of the presumed non-religious majority. This finding resonates with other similar studies that suggest the increasingly important position of religious identity, compared to other components, especially ethnicity (Archer 2001, 2003; Ramji 2007; Hopkins 2003).

Most of the Muslim participants in this study were the main income earners for their family. This situation suggests that what they did in the workplace and the social experience occurring there was crucial to their position in the family. The next chapter will discuss Muslim masculinity and family, and examine how family life in Australia affects the powerful position traditionally associated with the men's gendered identity.

CHAPTER 5

WOMEN, FAMILY AND NEGOTIATION OF MASCULINITY

This chapter enters the next context of the negotiation of Muslim masculinities in Australia: Muslim men's relationships with Muslim women. The chapter will focus on marriage and the family as the institution that governs this relationship. Family is very important for Muslims, including Muslim men, because, according to Afdhal (28), it is 'the foundation of the society'. Mainstream Islamic orthodoxy provides a large set of teachings that detail how Muslims should organise family life. These teachings include doctrines that define men's and women's roles, positions and status in an Islamic family. While the impact of these doctrines on women's gender identity has produced a lot of scholarly and theological debate, the implication of these doctrines on men's gender identity has been largely overlooked. This chapter argues that these doctrines safeguard the core component of Muslim masculinity, by which men inherit a specific status and rights that establish their superior identity both as men and as Muslims. How this interacts with the Australian context is critical to this discussion.

In countries such as Indonesia, Singapore, and Malaysia, where most of the participants of this study, or at least one of their parents, were born, Muslim men are supported by social, cultural and political resources to benefit from this superiority. In these countries, Islam is a powerful resource in establishing the gender order, which operates by maintaining men's domination (Hasyim 2006; Robinson 2009; Ong 1995; Peletz 1995). However, as a minority in Australia, Muslim men are not provided with those resources. Participants faced views and practices about marital relationships that in many aspects were in discord with what they believed to be the unquestioned Islamic doctrine they had been taught, especially those implying men's superior status. This chapter discusses the strategies employed by Muslim

men in this study in the negotiation of their religiously associated superiority as men in the family.

Among other issues, there were several aspects of the family relationship that most of the Muslim participants in this study spoke about and that appeared to strongly affect their sense of manhood. These were men's position as the leader of the family; women's position as wife and mother; and children's attitudes in the family. I address these aspects in three parts of this chapter. The first part discusses men's strategies in negotiating their position as the head of the family. Following that, the second part examines men's strategies in responding to the practices of womanhood in Australia as embodied by their wives, and men's negotiation of changes in women's status and position in Muslim families as an aspect of Australian experiences, which also affected the men's practice of manhood. The last part of the discussion deals with men's strategies in maintaining their status as fathers and the respect of their children. All of these discussions suggest that changes in women's and family practices as they are affected by Australian experiences lead to important changes to the discourse and practices of Muslim masculinities.

1. Muslim Men's Strategy in Defending Their Status as Leader of the Family

The first thing that the Muslim men participating in this study had to deal with in their marital life after they came to Australia was reconsidering their status as the leader of the family, or 'imam', as it is called in the Muslim tradition. This status can be regarded as the core component of Muslim masculinity, in that it establishes the main construction of the gendered dimension of Muslim men's identity. Men's ability to sustain this status reinforces their traditional and religiously justified sense of manhood. This section outlines the mainstream Islamic doctrine on men in the family. It then briefly contrasts this part of the discourse of masculinity with Australian practices of gender relations, particularly within the family, indicating the challenges encountered by Muslim men in their position as a minority in Australia. A larger proportion of the discussion will focus on strategies employed by Muslim men in this study in negotiating their status as the imam of the family.

Imam of the family as a prototype of masculinity

Men's relationships with women are especially institutionalised in marriage and families. A doctrine shared by some widely followed schools in Islamic orthodoxy (such as Syafi'is, Hanbalis and Malikis) is that a man is the head or leader in the family. The debate regarding this doctrine has been centred on the interpretation of an Arabic word '*qawwāmūn*' in verse 34 of Chapter *An-Nisa* of the Qur'an. This word has been interpreted differently in Islamic exegesis: 'the protector' (Ali 1988), 'the maintainer' (Ali 1988), 'the breadwinner' (Hasan 1990), or 'the caretaker' (Asad in Engineer 2005), all of which are intended to invoke what the Qur'an says about men's position in relation to women in the family (Barlas 2002; Engineer 2005). However, the more widespread understanding of the word among Muslims is 'the leader' or 'in charge' (Barlas 2002; Engineer 1992).³³ For some Muslim scholars, the verse also indicates the reason as to why a man should be the leader; that is, because God has made 'some to excel others' (Engineer 1992, 45). Some prominent Muslim scholars have interpreted this phrase 'to excel others' by explaining a number of qualities associated with male privilege, such as intellectuality, power, spirituality and physicality (Barlas 2002; Shaikh 1997; Qaradhawi 1984).³⁴

Nevertheless, while strongly influential, such interpretations are not without critique, and do not reflect the actual social practice of all Muslim families. Some Muslim scholars contend that patriarchy has inevitably directed the mainstream interpretation of Islamic doctrines dealing with women and family (Al-Hibri & El Habti 2006; Ahmed 1992; and Mernissi 1991; 1996, to mention a few). Several Muslim scholars argue that leaders' status is not determined by the male gender, but by a person's qualities, and this is what the Qur'an actually refers to in the verse discussed above. Therefore this status is a negotiable and exchangeable role between men and women, not an absolute status that belongs to men (Barlas 2002; Engineer 2005; Abou-Bakar 2015).

³³ Chapter VI verse 31 of the Indonesian Marriage Law (1974) officially declares that the husband is the head of the family. This law remains the core legal document endorsed by the state that guides the practice of marriage and family especially among Muslims in Indonesia.

³⁴ The medieval Al Zamakhshari, supported by Al Razi, stated that that '*qiwama*' is based on a natural quality of men granted by God ranging from intellect and determination to literacy and ability to ride (see Shaikh 1997 p 59). Even the much more modern Maududi used the word 'superior to' when describing men's status relative to women in his translation of the verse (See Hassan 1990). Yusuf Ali in his translation work of the Holy Qur'an commented on the verse discussed above that God has granted men 'strength' to qualify them to maintain women (Ali 1988).

In Muslim-dominated societies, however, this doctrine is the bedrock of male superiority in the family and makes the religious status as the head or imam of the family a powerful prototype of masculinity. For Muslim men, being the imam in the family is not simply a social role with certain required skills. The doctrine is part of a broader discourse that implies men's dominant position in marriage and family. These include the doctrine that men have the right to observe whether a wife is being non-compliant (*nuzus*) to him; the right to declare a divorce in his own behalf; and an entitlement to polygamy (for restricted reasons) (Mir-Hosseini 2009). Men are also commonly believed to have an obligation and right to educate, supervise or guide their wife about religious matters (Mir-Hosseini 2009; 2015). Because this doctrine has theological grounds, many Muslim men believe that it is part of the divine plan. If a man is acting as an imam, this means he is enacting this plan in the social world as an embodiment of his faith.

Yusuf Qaradawi, a prominent scholar, endorsed men's privilege at home, because, as 'the "natural" leader of the family' (1984, 205), men are considered to be entitled to the obedience and cooperation of their wife. To lead, supervise and educate women is considered to be men's religious obligation. Their masculine potential could be fully achieved through the exercise of their relationship with women in marriage. Such a discourse could be seen as a 'gender project' (Connell 2000; 2005). Masculine power is exercised through self-regulation and self-discipline – a process of 'identity work' operated in the family (Whitehead and Barrett 2001, 20).

Men as a partner in Australia

In Australia, Muslim men encounter different practices of relationships with women and in the family. These practices are exercised around very different values, including individual freedom, equality between persons, and secularism. Mainstream Australian practices embrace more practical instead of religious reasons for marriage. The notions of partnership and equality are predominant expectations for many couples, and many couples do not feel it is necessary to marry to establish a relationship traditionally called family. Further, while wedding ceremonies are often held in churches as a Christian ritual, and many undertake marriage for religious reasons, marriage in Australia is legally a civil, not religious, institution.

This practice of being a couple does not demand a type of hierarchal relationship between men and women. It therefore does not necessarily require a man to occupy a culturally superior position, while a man's domination in marriage may take on different forms. A man's marital status does not seem to be crucial to the common features of Australian manhood, while other elements of domination over women remain (Colling 1992). Men's status as a 'partner' is much more familiar and comfortable for many, compared with being a 'husband'. To apply a man's status as a leader of the family in Australian context, therefore, hardly accords with the mainstream discourse of partnership, where a man is expected to act as a partner rather than as a leader. The Muslim men in this study felt that these differences forced them out of their comfort zone and that they were experiencing a kind of culture shock, as Amin (53) and Usep (65) recalled:

An Indonesian family who arrived here for the first time would get a culture shock. Right? They have a difficult adjustment to make. Men, for example, in Indonesia they were used to being served by women. Right. But they cannot get that here. Everybody is the same here (Amin, 53).

When a husband acts as a leader, he is used to being the only one giving orders all the time. He doesn't give good examples. In this society like Australia, it is completely different to the situation in Indonesia (Usep, 65).

Holding the belief that men possess greater qualities in terms of rationality, spirituality, and personality than women due to their gender would mean holding values in opposition to the equality underlying the idea of partnership in Australia. Also, to assume that one gender (here, women) possesses by nature a lesser intellect and lacks the ability to make a decision – more or less the assumption underlying the notion of the imam in Islamic doctrine – would mean supporting sexism. Accepting the practice of partnership and restricting themselves to a position as a partner rather than a leader would mean Muslim men losing the determining element of their gender identity within the religious framework. Yet, preserving the status of the imam is at odds with the Australian context. How do Muslim men respond to this situation? There were two main strategies Muslim men in this study employed in their negotiation of this dilemma: resisting, and adapting the practices of partnership.

Resisting Australian secular partnership

Most participants in the study resisted the discourse of equality and restated the notion of the man as the leader or imam of the family. This strategy seemed to be adopted primarily as a way of securing their masculine identity. By this strategy Muslim men wanted to defend and feel secure in their religiously justified dominant identity from the threat posed by Western views of partnership. Below are some of their statements:

Since the beginning, since I got married I am the imam. Right. As I said before, the husband is the leader in the family. 'Leader' in a broad meaning (Subagya, 60).

Men as the imam, women as the followers (Afdhal, 28).

Man is the leader. So he has to show that he can lead (Jundy, 54).

[For men] the role of imam is more like a guide, actually (Fahroni).

The man is the imam, which means 'the protector of the family' (Usep, 65).

My wife had a wish, but she never told me before. She wished that I can perform as an imam [in prayer] at home. That was her wish long before. After I did it, acting imam, then she told that to me. Uhh, I praise to God. (Zainuddin, 48)

There were two considerations that the men discussed in resisting the Australian view of relationships as a partnership. These were religious considerations, and consideration of maintaining the narrative of men's superiority.

For some men, resisting the Australian view of relationships as a partnership was part of their rejection of secularism and other Western values, such as individual freedom and equality. In taking this stance they were employing religious considerations. These Muslim men considered freedom in its Western meaning as inherently secular; in other words, requiring the rejection of the idea of an absolute being above humankind. Singaporean-born Umsa (54) gave a clear rejection of both values as he tried to defend the concept of the imam against Western views of relationships. He said:

Men have to be the leader and the Western [people] don't accept that. They say, 'You are a man and she is a woman, we both have brains, sometimes some women are better than men. We are western and we are freedom. We can do anything.' But the Quran says that [a man is the leader over woman]. There must be reasons. Because I have experienced it myself regarding the difference between a man and a woman when they act as a boss. My manager before was a woman, now it is a man. They are completely different. Because they are responsible as a boss, they have to understand all departments including the maintenance department. [Referring to his

former manager:] Ask her for a screwdriver [for example]. What is a screwdriver? Just a small task she [the former manager] cannot do. That's women, [they are] difficult to deal with when acting as leader (Umsa, 54).

In this statement Umsa (54) referred to what he perceived as Australian values by saying 'both have a brain', 'freedom' and 'can do anything', values that are commonly associated with Western societies. Umsa (54) rejected these views for religious reasons, 'because the Quran says that.' I should clarify that Umsa's (54) statement above did not represent his general opinion about Australian women, which in fact was very positive and respectful.³⁵ That his positive opinion turned into harsh criticism against his former female manager suggests how sensitive the association of leadership with masculinity was in Umsa's (54) view. An important aspect of such criticism was that it came out as a resistance to Western ideology especially when dealing with gender. Umsa (54) shared this resistance with some other participants, who, like him, understood equality in a different way. Fahroni (44), for example, expressed a strong opinion about this idea of equality. He said:

In Australia, justice means equal. Equal is not always right. But justice should mean that you put things, or someone put something, in the right place. This is justice. Not everyone is equal ... Men and women are always different. Justice is, in Islam for example, justice is when you put things in the right place. Men should be [considered] more, [because] they have more responsibility than women (Fahroni,44).

And I'm talking about [the] Islamic view. It is true, the [idea of] justice – this is [part of a] very dangerous movement of emancipation of woman. They try to be equal with the man. If men play soccer, women also want to play soccer. But, what about if they play soccer and are pregnant? Do you think it's good for their health? When they have got their period, and all this gives them damage. So, justice should be put in the place where it is the right place (Fahroni,44).

Fahroni (44) represented the typical response of many Muslims responding to the question of equality between men and women.³⁶ He suggested a religious reason for the man in a family to gain more or deserve more: it is to help him carry out his responsibility associated

³⁵At least it is shown in his view towards his female colleagues, whom he saw as 'disciplined', 'respectful', 'know how to take care of themselves,' 'independent' and 'polite'.

³⁶ A similar idea can be found in Islamic narratives on justice related to gender is of justice as proportionality, meaning justice is when everybody gets according to the proportion of his or her needs in a given situation.

with his position as imam in the family. But why is this responsibility attached to men's identity?

The emphasis on religious considerations often went together with a reinforcement of the consideration of men's superior identity. Referring to Umsa's (54) quotation above, he was reflecting on his own experience in his workplace. He recalled the narrative of men's superiority over women by comparing his former manager, who was female, to his current male manager. To support his belief in the Islamic doctrine about men's superiority, in the interview Umsa (54) told me another experience he had had with his former female manager. He said:

I think there should be a reason why the man has to be the boss. The reason is that men are more capable and stronger, while women are [a] little weak. Sometimes when my former boss got panicked, she became aggressive. That's the different between men and women. Leadership has to be cool, relaxed, no panic. One day I was having lunch, and a contractor came to her office. She didn't know what questions to ask the contractor. It is my job to talk to these people. But I was having my lunch! She came down here to my table [and did not allow me to finish my lunch] and she just dragged me [to see the contractor]. She didn't want to talk to the contractor, she wasn't confident. That's a woman [when acting as a boss]. For a man [like my boss at the moment] he is good. He goes for a meeting, conducting interviews, doing the similar job [properly] even when I wasn't there (Umsa, 54).

Umsa (54) talked about men's leadership in a general way, in his case as an employee of a large company. The much younger Afdhal (28), a second-generation Muslim with Indonesian parents, talked about men in the specific matter of family. Afdhal (28) also used religious reasons and the male superiority narrative but in a different way. Responding to my question about men in the family he gave a straightforward statement to link Islamic perspectives on family and men's superior position over women. He said:

The family institution in Islam is very important as the foundation of the society: man as imam and woman as the follower. In fact if we are the imam, we are actually the ones who are carrying the woman. We protect them, we guard them, because they are the mothers of the future (Afdhal, 28).

Among participants in this study, Afdhal (28) was the most knowledgeable in terms of Islamic teaching. He had given religious speeches on many occasions and had significantly more experience in studying Islam than the other participants. In his statement he switched

directly from stating Islamic perspectives on family to clearly stating men's and women's place in it and detailed men's superior roles over women. It should be noted that Afdhal's (28) statement above at the same time entails an idea of obligation and responsibility toward women that is attached to men's status as the leader. This idea is shared with Fahroni (44), who also used the term 'responsibility' to speak of men's role in the family. This aspect of responsibility suggests practices of identity that a Muslim man is expected to perform in his leadership position in the family. The combination discourse of superiority and responsibility builds the ideology of men's privilege as the leader who plays roles that requires a superior quality attached to men's identity. According to Afdhal (28), the imam is the one who carries, guards and protects women. To Afdhal's (28) list other participants added roles such as 'guide' (Fahroni, 44), 'educator' (Jundy, 54), 'leader' (Subagya, 60, and Jundy, 54), 'exemplar' (Usep, 65, and Roy, 35), and 'breadwinner' (Roy, 35 and Afdhal, 28). All of these practices (or responsibilities, to use Fahroni's word) contribute to a Muslim male's identity. These are what a Muslim man does, and what makes a Muslim man in contrast to a Muslim woman. The frequent links between references to Islam and considering men's superiority implies that to survive in Australia the men's superiority discourse requires religious backing, something that Muslim men are familiar and comfortable with.

On a practical level, for some of the Muslim men in this study a claim to be an imam did not always lead to superiority in day-to-day marital relationships, as will be discussed as part of the second strategy of negotiation. However, during interviews, some other men described their attitudes toward their wives using expressions that indicated certain practices of superiority performed from their position as imam:

I taught her how to be independent (Usep,65).

That's because of the way I teach them (Zakky, 49).

I gave a strong emphasis to her that [...] (Amin, 53).

I always teach her [about religious matters] [...] (Roy, 35).

I do a religious learning activity for the family, where I teach them about religion (Jundy, 54).

These men claimed their ability as the leader by exercising their authority and superiority over the behaviour of other family members, especially their wives. The strong tones used by these participants in these expressions, and the way they referred to women's position during the interviews, reflect that these ideas came from a point of imagined authority that allows men to produce those outcomes. Zakky (49), in his statement above, was talking about the successful strategy he was employing as a man in managing family life according to his Islam-associated framework to overcome the side-effect of too much freedom and equality being applied in the Australian family. Amin (53) was talking about what he did as a Muslim husband in overseeing his wife's attitude. Roy (35) was claiming how he as a husband possessed more knowledge about Islam compared to his wife and how he used this advantage to supervise his wife with regard to her attitudes.

These claims, however, are far from indicative of a relationship of domination as a result of the men's insistence on the status of imam in the family. The interviews and group discussion did not reveal any indication of this by Muslim men in this study. The opposite was true: as the participants' Muslim wives expressed very strong demands for equality and individual freedom, they enjoyed considerably more freedom and gained a strong position in the family, something that many Muslim men had to struggle with and adjust to. For some men, this is exactly what made restating the imam's position in the family very important. The claim of leader or imam of the family often served to make participants feel secure with their masculinity. That is, their superior religious self was not being completely degraded by the mainstream views on equality in Australia.

Adapting the practice of partnership

For some Muslim men, however, a claim to be the imam or leader in the family did not prevent them from adapting Western practices of partnership into their relationships with their wives. Men like Usep (65) and Suyanto (42) adopted common practices of being a partner while they maintained the status of being imam in the family. For both men, it was more realistic in Australia to act as a partner and share many responsibilities with their wife. Not acting or making decisions on their own, sharing their thoughts, and seeking approval from their wives were among the types of partnership practices the men performed.

Suyanto (42) was born in Sumatra but grew up in Melbourne. After years of having relationships with different White Australian girlfriends during his youth he married a Javanese-born Muslim woman and has two sons. He reflected on his consideration to always share thoughts and decisions with his wife and son. He said:

I'd like to be agreed with for decisions [I make] for all of us [in the house]. So, if we try to make a decision, that has to be agreed with my wife. Basically that's it. I can't be selfish. Even though I'm the leader of the family and I can make a decision without asking my wife. [But] Maybe [because] I grew up here, so I should take an Australian way to adopt to being a Muslim here. It is better to think with two heads instead of only one. I ask their [his wife's and sons'] opinions and manage to not be selfish (Suyanto, 42).

Suyanto (42) struggled in his position as a husband in the early period of his marital life. He learned that not being selfish was key in his position as imam and he called his practice being a 'Muslim husband in an Australian way'. Suyanto's (42) experience and strategy was closely related to the situation of his relationship with his wife, which will be discussed further below.

Usep (65) was a highly regarded member of the Indonesian Muslim community I studied. He shared a detailed story about what he learned from the Australian experience of being a husband (or 'partner' as he used few times) for over 25 years of his marital life. He repeatedly stressed that for a Muslim man the situation in Australia is completely different to that in Indonesia. Usep (65) emphasised that the Australian situation urged men to act in ways that are more practical for the needs of the family. He believed that a man cannot act like a boss as he may have done in Indonesia. For Usep (65) sacrifice was the key word for a man acting as imam. He strongly espoused this principle:

First because the situation here is different to that in Indonesia. When you love your wife, your partner, your children, you have to sacrifice. To be the head of the family is not easy. You have to sacrifice; sacrifice feeling, time, energy. There is also, as I mentioned before, a condition that in Indonesia we can afford to pay a housekeeper, and the wife can do anything else. But here we can't afford that. So if you really love your wife or partner, we have to share with her for anything. It's not like "this is her job, this is my job". It is not like that (Usep, 65).

For Usep (65), sacrifice as a part of men's position as imam meant letting some privilege and authority go by sharing burdens and responsibilities with his wife and loosening the strict

division of labour between husband and wife. Usep (65) was the only participant who used the term 'partner' in the interview when he talked about his relationship with his wife. Instead of superiority or authority, he stressed the centrality of love that enabled him to perform this strategy.

During the interview, Usep (65) also spent a significant amount of time recalling a practice that many Muslim men in Indonesia would not do: participating in the delivery of a baby. He proudly mentioned that he learned about and was involved in antenatal preparation, the delivery, providing support to his partner during labour, and handling the newborn. He acknowledged that those practices were due to maternity services in Australia that expect the man to be involved in the maternity work:

Here when the wife is expected to have a baby, we [the men] have to go to the hospital [to attend sessions] to learn how to wash the baby, learn about what to do when the mother is having the baby, delivering the baby in the labour room. So we have to learn all of these, [also] learn how to calm her down. They [the man] have to do that because as partners they have to know. [...] I am very proud of myself when the doctor asked me to cut the [umbilical] cord. I am very proud (Usep. 65).

Usep experienced the births of all of his three children about 30 years ago, and believed that men should be involved in the reproductive duties, especially delivery. The fact that he could recall the story in detail and with enthusiasm shows the importance of that experience for him as a man. Usep (65) believed that childbirth, an area that is considered strictly a women's domain in many Muslim communities in Indonesia, is a 'very important' part of men's practice in the family.³⁷ Moreover, he shared his practice with maternity service providers in Indonesia:

Then I shared my experience with one doctor I knew in Indonesia. He said, 'Oh yeah, I might to do the same thing', and he did. Because it's like taboo in Indonesia [to have the man being involved in the childbirth in the labour room], and I shared my experience here to my relatives, the patients and the doctors, and they opened their minds, and they practised it. There was no such thing [a procedure involving the partner in the labour] before [where they lived]; maybe it

³⁷ My previous study on men's involvement in reproductive health in Java (Ilyas et al. 2006) collected a range of cultural constraints that strongly prevent men from participating in childbirth as Usep (65) did in Australia. These constraints included taboos, sins, ethics of sexuality, religious beliefs and social habits mostly intended to protect reproductive responsibilities as strictly a women's area. It is not considered masculine for a man to enter this area, except for the male doctors.

was prohibited. Because they never do it [in Indonesian maternity services], but here the system works like that [involving the male partner in the maternity activities] (Usep, 65).

Usep (65) wanted what he did as a husband to become a good example of Muslim men's practice for his own sons. In this stance, he employed his position as the imam, whose role, according to Usep (65), should include setting a good example for other family members. He especially gave strong reminders to his own sons about what a husband's responsibility is in that practice:

I told to my sons that one day when you have a wife and she delivers a baby, you have to go there [in the labour room with her] (Usep, 65).

When asked whether he considered these practices to be in accordance with Islamic teaching, Usep (65) quickly and firmly replied, 'This is Islam, that's realistic!' Usep's (65) interpretation of 'the leader of family' can be associated with the interpretation on Islamic marriage suggested by some Sufis and Muslim feminists which centres on mutual love, respect, and cooperation. This interpretation is based primarily on two verses of the Qur'an that determine that marital relationship should be performed under the principle of *mu'asyarah bil-ma'ruf* (consort in righteousness, respect and honour)³⁸, where the husband and wife are described as protecting, covering and honouring each other (Ilyas et al. 2006; Murata 1992; Munir 2002).³⁹ Love is a central value for Usep (65), as it is in this interpretation (Murata 1992). Ibn al-Arabi, one of the most influential Sufis, for example, argued that love shown to a woman is a way of following the Prophet Muhammad, and it becomes an obligation to all Muslim men (Murata 1992). Usep (65) gave examples of sacrifice, and particularly shared burdens during critical times in his wife's life, such as delivering a baby. The Qur'an illustrates pregnancy as *wahnān 'ala wahnin* (a pain above pain)⁴⁰ and the baby's delivery as *kurhan* (exhaustingly difficult).⁴¹ Usep's (65) emphasis on

³⁸The Qur'an, Chapter *An-Nisa* (4) verse 19.

³⁹The Qur'an, Chapter *Al-Baqarah* (2) verse 187. The central passage in this verse is the Qur'an's illustration of the meaning of a wife for a husband and vice versa by stating, "They are a garment for you and you are theirs."

⁴⁰Or extremely weak condition. The Qur'an, Chapter *Luqman* (31) verse 14.

⁴¹The Qur'an, Chapter *Al-Ahqaf* (46) verse 15. Stated in a hadith by the Prophet Muhammad, it is in fact a form of *jihad* as an impact of which the mother's casualty is considered to be *syahid* (martyr) (Ilyas et al. 2006).

men's responsibility in this basic reproductive role may be a reflection of that interpretation of Islamic teaching regarding his position as leader of the family.

Usep's (65) case, and Suyanto's (42) case mentioned earlier, illustrate how Muslim men have adopted practices of partnership while still using religious resources to claim their position as imam. Their strategies suggest that the practice of being imam in Australia can vary among Muslim men, but the discourse of men having greater responsibility in carrying the family seems to remain the same.

The discussion in this section suggests that Muslim men in this study felt they could not afford to lose their privileged status as imam of the family. They expressed stronger resistance to Australian discourses about gender and men's position in relation to women in the family. The Muslim men interviewed proposed religious reasons for rejecting the views that they saw as a main component of secularism in Australia, and managed to preserve the narrative of men's superiority. The mainstream Islamic discourse provided a powerful resource for the men in maintaining this claim. In some cases, the claim of being imams served as a way of making men feel secure with their religiously associated manhood. Defending this status, in one way or another, meant securing the core component of their gendered identity as a self who is religiously superior to women. How does this claim of being an imam affect Muslim men's attitudes toward their wives in Australia? The following part of the chapter will address this question.

2. Muslim Men's Strategy in Dealing with an 'Aussie'-acting Wife

The discussion now moves into the second field of negotiating Muslim masculinity: the practice of wifedom and its effect on the marital relationship in a Muslim family. The purpose of this part of discussion is to indicate how the Australian context has affected the wives of male participants in this study and further to examine the different responses given by Muslim men toward these practices of wifedom as strategies of negotiating their masculinity. I will first briefly outline what mainstream Islamic doctrine says about women in family. This is to illustrate the understanding of womanhood that Muslim men in this study pursued. It will then discuss the participants' perceptions of womanhood in Australia. The

remainder of the section will focus on Muslim men's strategies in dealing with these practices of wifehood and how these strategies reinforced the construction of their masculinity.

Women in Islamic doctrine

The mainstream Islamic doctrine on family remains a powerful source for Muslims, men and women alike, to obtain some of the fundamental understandings about womanhood. Two of these appeared most relevant for male participants in this study. The first was the doctrine of the righteous wife. The main source of this doctrine is traced back to verse 34 of the *An-Nisa* chapter of the Qur'an (mentioned in previous section). The verse mentions the '*qanita*' wife. Within Islamic orthodoxy, this notion has led to a compelling doctrine of womanhood that a good wife is the one that does not conduct '*nuzus*'; in other words she is compliant to her husband (Shaikh 1997; Sharmani 2013). Further to this, a more established discourse of wifehood in mainstream Islamic orthodoxy lies in the doctrine that a good wife should be submissive (Munir 2002). However, what is strongly implied by the narrative of womanhood given by prominent schools and Islamic orthodoxy is that a good wife is supposed to be so because men are the leader of women (as discussed in previous section). If men's status as the imam is unconditional and non-negotiable, then women should be the ones who submit to this authority (Sharmani 2013; Qaradhawi 1984). Mainstream Islamic orthodoxy puts greater effort into establishing theological grounds as to why a woman cannot be an *imam* of prayer or leader in the family than why women should be submissive to their husbands (Eissa 1999; Mernissi 1991; Mattson 2009). This doctrine has a different variation, which states that obeying the husband is a form of religious observance for a Muslim woman and a sign of obedience to God (Al-Hibri 1997; Munir 2002).

The second component of womanhood evolved from Islamic doctrine deals with women's role in the family. Mainstream Islamic doctrine states that women's main role in the family is as a housewife and homemaker, spending most time at home, rearing and educating children. These all assume that, first, a wife is not an income-earner for the family and, second, the family strictly applies segregated roles and position based on gender (Esposito 1985).

In countries such as Indonesia and Malaysia, where Muslims are a majority, these two doctrines of womanhood are part of broader cultural discourses that serve as a highly reliable religious resource, especially for men who are seeking cultural tools in managing (and controlling) the marital relationship in accordance to the dominant discourse of manhood (Hasyim 2006; Robinson 2009). What is more, in societies where a sense of communality remains strong, this discourse also serves as a tool of social control among the members of Muslim communities about what to expect in the practice of being an Islamic husband or wife.

Women's practices in Australia

In Australia, Muslim men face a very different practice of womanhood: one that is exercised around values such as individual freedom and equality. Muslim men in this study were fully aware of the challenge that this brings to Muslim families, which also means a challenge to their position in the family. For some Muslim men individual freedom and equality have become an undesirable combination that results in a type of women's practice that is seen to have caused damage to the institution of the family in Australia. The main indication of this damage is the high rate of divorce in Australia. Afdhal (28) expressed a strong statement about this condition when he said 'divorce is the future tense of marriage. Two of three marriages in Australia fail'. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (2014) reported that in 2013 there were 47,638 divorces granted with crude divorce rate (the number of divorces per 1,000 estimated resident population in that year) was 2.1. According these numbers Afdhal's (28) account of Australian marriages is an exaggeration, although the divorce percentage might be considered as high.

According to participants, Australian women are characterised by strong independence but an egotistical tendency. The independent character alone caused some concern among the men. For Afdhal (28) this character would create challenges; for Fahrni (44) it brought danger for women, especially Muslim women. The men said:

So it is challenging, especially with women who are covered with similar [Islamic] culture, who understand this idea of women's power, women's independence. You know, 'I don't need the man to do things'. That's a potential challenge [for a man as husband] (Afdhal, 28).

[Here, practicing Islamic teaching in family is not easy,] just like what I did. [I said to my wife] 'If you want to go out, [you should] get permission from the husband.' [She replied] 'No way! I go wherever I wanna go. Don't tell me! Don't tell me what to do! If you don't like it, that's your bad luck.' We know in a wedding party, if Australians have a gathering at least they have wine. So, one day I asked her to not go (for a party), 'because you will drink, it's not good for you, get drunk.' But she didn't listen to me and just left. She got back home, got drunk badly, [then] vomited in the house (Amin, 53).

In line with that opinion, Fahroni (44) and Amin (53) had the following exchange in one of the group discussions about the attitudes of wives in Australia related to their sexuality:

But the women here behave rather badly. [Reflecting on his wife] If we [husbands] ask them [wives] to make love but they do not want it, there is nothing we can do, even though we have 'moving around the bed' [to indicate that he really wants to make love] (Fahroni, 44).

Indeed, how they do it here, if we [husbands] insist on it [sexual activity with wife] it leads to a rape (Amin, 53).

In many cultural contexts, including Indonesia or Malaysia, Amin's wife's resistance to his request not to go to a party would be regarded as an act of disobedience that is culturally inappropriate. A survey by Hakimi et al. (2001) about women's health and their experience of domestic violence in Central Java, for example, showed communities' expectation that women should be obedient to their husbands. A qualitative study by Munir (2002) about religious perceptions among Muslim women suggested a similar expectation among some Muslim husbands in Java. When Amin (53) and Fahroni (44) complain above about not being able to pursue what is considered by many orthodox Islamic scholars to be a husband's right over his wife – that is, sexual satisfaction – the men encountered what they saw as typical attitudes of Australian women, attitudes that they regarded as a challenge.

Afdhal (28) admitted that 'Australia is a very individualistic, egotistic society.' Independent women were seen as being more of a threat to family unity. Suyanto (42) learned this from his own experience when he felt he lost a meaningful familial bond with his brother who married a White Catholic woman. In one session of the group discussions he revealed his situation with his brother. He said:

In Indonesia if I have a brother or a sister I will help my brother or sister when I see them needing financial help. That's because the sense of family is still very strong in Indonesia. But

here it doesn't work that way. My brother now is very rich. But because he married with a White woman who is independent, she has a principle. 'Your brother is your brother with his [own] life.' If he behaves that way, that's it. There is no way that he would help me. Because there is a gap that 'Your brother's life is his own life, you don't need to help' (Suyanto, 42).

Suyanto (42) stressed that his brother had become a more individualistic person because of his non-Muslim wife. The other four men joined in the discussion and supported Suyanto's (42) point, including Amin (53), who shared a different story about family break-up because of these characteristics of Australian women:

I saw it among my friends. Some of them had been able to buy an expensive house in a very good place. [They] got tired after working for so long, isolated themselves. Many of my friends isolate themselves, because they wanted to buy this, buy that. Once they reached the peak [and were able to get what they wanted] the women said, 'Hey look, I don't love you anymore.' We were shocked (Amin, 53).

The women here know very well how the system works. If a couple have a house already and the woman has children, when they get divorced she will win. The children will go with her and she gets the house too. The husband might just get a few percent from that (Suyanto, 42).

Facing this circumstance in mainstream Australia, Muslim men felt they had to, in Afdhal's (28) terms, 'bring the balance' to negotiate the impact that Western society and its values have on the practice of womanhood among their wives.

The next section examines how Muslim men in this project perceived Muslim wifeness in the Australian context and discusses their strategies in negotiating its impact on their sense of masculinity. There were several common strategies among the men in this study: resisting understandings of Australian womanhood; adaptation; and acceptance of certain Australian practices. Often these strategies were applied simultaneously, and sometimes they contradicted each other. For example, a Muslim man might put consistent effort into resisting Australian practice by expecting a basic prototype of Islamic womanhood, but at the same time seemed to accept mainstream Australian womanhood practices that his wife was performing.

Resisting Australian womanhood

Many Muslim men in this project resisted Australian practices of womanhood as a strategy for preserving the Islamic doctrine. However, they exhibited differences in the degree that the doctrine affected the negotiation of their masculinity. The doctrine of the compliant wife may have remained more crucial and more sensitive for Muslim men: first, because this doctrine is directly linked to men's position as the imam (discussed in the previous section); and second, because this doctrine has more political implications compared to the doctrine of the wife's role, which is more functional in its application. Many men were happy to have their wives working outside the home, as it helped them with income while not necessarily diminishing their claim as the imam in the family. Persisting with the compliance doctrine was also part of the crucial strategy of maintaining men's patriarchal dividend. Men such as Amin (53), Usep (65), Fahroni (44), Aslaam (61), Zamil(57), and Karim (56) still expected this doctrine to be observed by their wives to different degrees, from the expectation that they show a greater respect toward the husband to simple lip-service to make the man feel good (or secure). Usep (65), for example, said, '[whatever a wife does] at least she still shows compliance at [a] minimum level [to the husband]'.

For other men, including Fahroni (44), Amin (53), Suyanto (42) and Zainuddin (48), the issue of women's independence in an Australian context was the most challenging in managing their marital relationship. Fahroni (44) called the attitude of independent wives women becoming 'too Aussie'. During the group discussions, these men revealed that more conflict had occurred between them and their wives during considerable periods of their marital life. Only Fahroni (44) and Amin (53), however, perceived their difficult marital situation as a matter of their wives not observing the doctrine of the compliant wife. Moreover, a few times in the interviews and group discussion the two men blamed their wives for being 'too Aussie'. Commenting on the general attitudes of their wives, the two men had the following exchange in a group discussion:

'Fahroni's wife is just like my wife' (Amin, 53).

'Yeah, their heads are the same. The first one is red, the other one is black, but what is inside [is] the same' (Fahroni, 44).

Both men had in fact lived separately from their wives for several years before the research was undertaken.⁴² Their inability to enforce the doctrine of the righteous wife and the persistence of their attitudes about the doctrine might have contributed to their situations. That did not stop Fahrni (44) and Amin (53) from criticising what they perceived as women's practices in Australia, while insisting on the importance of compliance to their religion, and therefore to the husband. Amin remembered one moment of conflict with his wife:

The media gave bad images [about Islam]. [They said Islam forbids many things,] you cannot do this, you cannot do that. Therefore this affected our effort to stop them [their Australian wives] from doing their bad habits which is fun for them (Amin, 53).

Some men were more persistent with the second Islamic doctrine about women's role as mother and housewife (described above). Participants including Subagya (60), Aslaam (61), Afdal (28), Karim (57), and Jundy (43) shared with many Muslims the belief that Muslim families need to have the mother spending most of her time at home guarding the children and educating them about Islamic values. Muslim men in this project had serious concerns about how to deliver Islamic values and their cultural references of conduct to their children while protecting them from Australian values they felt were un-Islamic. They felt that they could not obtain these objectives from the educational institutions available to them. Many men in this study employed the idea of family as an education institution mainly by insisting on the importance of women's role for the children. Men seemed to hold the biggest responsibility in defending the family's Islamic values from the penetration of 'secular and liberal' values. Afdhal (28) provided the clearest explanation about this belief, when he said:

There's a challenge that we face today that family is being driven to have women to go out to work, and the men are happy. It's all about the rights. Because women have *normal responsibility in the society*. They have to notice their children and upbringing ... Now we have playgroup, play school, and child care as well. That's the potential problem in this life. Again, if the focus is on the responsibility of educating and providing good habits to the children, the proper conduct of Islamic traditions and mannerisms, it's going to be impossible for women [to

⁴² Both men were in an uncomfortable and complicated situation: they lived separately from their wives but were not officially divorced. Both still claimed that they were married, acting as husbands and fathers during the interview.

work outside as well]. Having one child is a full-time job, having two children is also a full-time job (Afdhal, 28, emphasis added).

Afdhal's (28) discussion of women's 'normal responsibility' reflects a strong belief in women's reproductive nature. Enforcing traditional women's roles at home was seen as a crucial method to protect Islamic values. At several religious gatherings I attended, the preachers continually reminded the congregation about the importance of women's position in preserving Islamic teachings. Afdhal's (28) response conveys how the practice of working couples in Australia is challenging this role:

There's a time when a man goes to work and it is enough for the whole family. [Today] even the two people are working, between husband and wife, sometimes the wife has taken two jobs. This is the modern slavery. The economy is [the] force now ... That's the imbalance in the society. Absolutely. The imbalance in the society is the increase of difficulty to *maintain equilibrium* that would sustain the family unit (Afdhal, 28, my emphasis).

Afdhal (28) suggested the importance of maintaining the equilibrium - the maintenance of different roles between men and women in the family - in marital relationships. He suggested that sustaining women's roles that require them to spend much of the time at home, particularly for the purpose of bringing up and educating children, is substantial for equilibrium to remain in the family. This equilibrium is also implied in the persistence of women's identity as 'mother of the future' and 'follower' in the family relationship.

Adapting and accepting Australian practice of womanhood

Some Muslim men demonstrated an adaptive orientation toward women's practices in Australia that their wives were performing. In its early stage this adaptation strategy can involve a significant degree of resistance before a man comes to accept these practices. This situation can relate to their wives' personal attitudes while being Australian. Muslim men adapted to their wives' personal attitudes, which included expressing more independent outlooks, disagreeing with traditional job divisions proposed by the men, not always agreeing with traditional division of household duties, and demanding men to play roles commonly not associated with men in their home culture. The Muslim wives also wanted to

have a stronger influence in the decision-making with regards to family matters and their position in the family.

Compared with other men in this study, Suyanto's (42) case provides the most information about how a Muslim man can undergo adaptation in dealing with his wife. During the interview, Suyanto (42) commented on the power relations in his day-to-day marital relationship. He admitted that his wife often has a stronger influence than he does over the way they organise the family. He said:

I would say my wife is the boss. Because sometimes I can't do anything without her agreement, you know. But that doesn't mean I'm weak with her (Suyanto, 42).

The nature of Suyanto's (42) expression did not suggest that he was objecting to his wife's position; rather he was fully aware of it and took it as a natural part of his marital life. He quickly added the emphasis of his own position for not being 'weak with her' in order to assert that he had not completely lost the important values associated with men in the family. Earlier, I mentioned that Suyanto (42) explained that this way was his choice in playing the role of the imam in the family.

Suyanto (42) came to this point after years of adjustment to his wife's approach to marriage. Suyanto (42) recalled the early years of his marital life in Australia:

Honestly, in the first year, the second year of our marriage we fought a lot. I fought a lot with my wife. That happened until my sons grew up (Suyanto, 42).

Suyanto's (42) wife expressed significant disagreement with him. He also implied that she had taken an independent stance that did not always allow Suyanto's (42) expectation about how to undertake family affairs to run as he expected. She clearly had her own ideas about being a wife and about the husband's role in the family. Suyanto (42) remembered:

I expected her to be Indonesian, but she expected me to be Australian. She was like, 'Okay, maybe the Australian rule is we divide the job. I do the cleaning, you the washing. Or maybe, I take care [of] the kids, then you have to wash the dishes' (Suyanto, 42).

However, her expectations were not fulfilled: Suyanto (42) did not like this family structure because he thought those jobs were women's work, not men's. Suyanto (42) wanted to keep the traditional marital division of labour, with the woman acting as a housewife who takes cares of the children and the man being the breadwinner. But his wife wanted him to share the housework:

Honestly, I didn't like house duty. I didn't like to wash dishes, I didn't like ironing my clothes, or washing clothes. Because this is supposed to be a wife's job (Suyanto, 42).

I had [lived with] Australian girlfriends before [I married], [but] I never did the dishes. I knew some people living together in relationship and the boys washed the dishes. But, in my life, [living together] with Australian girlfriends, never I did the dishes (Suyanto, 42).

Different expectations were coming together, and his wife persisted in her own views and made Suyanto (42) take these into account. (Suyanto did not say that his wife was acting like a non-Muslim. He admitted that she comes from a family with a stronger Islamic background than his.). Suyanto (42) was initially insistent that she play the traditional woman's role. He recalled:

A wife has to do what a wife has to do. Look after the kids, look after the household. What the husband does? Find a job and bring some money home (Suyanto, 42).

Her demands would require Suyanto (42) to practise what he saw as 'a wife's job' and he had never done that before, such as 'doing dishes'. His wife's persistence gave him a reason to accept it and adapt it into his way of being a husband: for example, participate in discussions with his wife and get involved in household duties.

After years of difficulties and disharmony with his wife, Suyanto (42) came to the point where he started to realise her point of view ('slowly' he said) and accepted his situation. He said, 'It came from the ego.' This changed his perception and practices of manhood in the house, by taking on what he previously saw as women's practices, especially activities that he didn't like:

At the end, now, *I do the dishes. I do, yeah.* I think it came from the ego. Before, I could not let go of the ego. At the end, I realised this, I think, because of coming to the mosque, becoming more committed with other people, and hearing a sermon given by the *ustadz*, a knowledgeable Moslem preacher. It changes your perception towards what you already knew. Your *ustadz* is

[talking about] letting your ego go. Because ego is *massa*. Everything is about me, me, me, me. Now you know, everything is not about you, it's about other people; your sons, your wife. If you live with your wife, if you live with your sons, you've [got] to be able to share those [things], in the house. Let's start from the house first. If you can manage the house, then start going beyond the house ... Now it's all different. As I said again, I slowly started to learn that [whether it's me or my wife doing the housework] it doesn't matter. And maybe this comes with spirituality as well. You come to the mosque and start realising the facts of life. You start knowing that, oh, Allah makes us to become a better husband. And we have to be *ikhlas*⁴³ to do what is needed for our wife, for our children, it doesn't matter if this is a man's job or not (Suyanto, 42, his emphasis).

He mentioned spirituality helped him change his attitudes and approach to being a husband:

Well, it's bit liberal. But I think this [discussion, sharing thoughts] is the best. For me, it's the best. Because this way, we can be open to each other [between me and my wife]. It's not being selfish. Okay, you're Muslim, you have to follow this, because you can say that in the Quran you have to follow this. That will be more stressful. How about if I do this and my son doesn't like it or my wife doesn't like it? I'm becoming *dzalim*. I make them pursue something they don't like. Honestly, if it is told by the Qur'an, hadith, if they don't like it, then I have to do that. But if it is something general, half side of that, I think it is not hard to ask them, you know. If we agree on something, we have to accommodate each other (Suyanto, 42).

Suyanto (42) emphasised the importance of his activities in the mosque that changed his mind about family. However, the main factor that contributed to these changes was his marital relationship and family that he must deal with on a day-to-day basis. Suyanto (42) however found religious meaning to guide the change he underwent with his manhood.

Usep (65) is an example of a Muslim man who comfortably accepts Australian practices of womanhood and embraces a flexible discourse of masculinity within a religious framework. He was more confident in accepting and adopting Australian practices of womanhood and developed a different idea of the imam's role and position in the family. He repeatedly stressed the distinct situation Muslim men encounter in Australia: they cannot exercise men's practices in the way Muslim men do in Muslim-majority societies. Referring to this difference, Usep (65) stated firmly:

⁴³*Ikhlas* is an Islamic ethical concept concerning the attitude of the self. It means more or less to accept and to let things that happen to oneself, especially those commonly seen as problems, difficulties, suffering, pain, or disappointment, go without rejection and denial; taking them as part of the maturing process of the self. It can also mean to perform actions or spend valuable possessions upon objectives beyond the interest of the self. Suyanto (42) referred to this latter meaning in this statement.

In Indonesia we can have a domestic helper, the one who does a lot of things, especially in the kitchen, in the house, the housekeeper. But in here [Australia], it's not like that. Because we don't have a domestic helper, so for us, the husbands, there is no such thing [job division] at home. The wife has to cook, to do housekeeping, the man has to do gardening, there is no such thing [as job division at home]. In the society [like Australia], whoever has the energy, whoever has time, just does it (Usep, 65).

Usep (65) mentioned what seems to be a simple matter in the household: the absence of a domestic helper whom otherwise he could easily afford to pay if he lived in Indonesia, can change the discourse of the gendered division of labour between husband and wife. This situation in turn changed the practice of masculinity required in Australian society. Usep (65) expressed a strong opinion that this change is a valid practise of Islamic manhood:

There is nothing wrong with a man doing ironing when the wife is cooking, it's nothing wrong if a husband is cooking when the wife is working, because the children are at home [and somebody needs to take care of them]. As a leader we have to give examples to the children and also to the wife. When we feel we have each other, when we understand each other, then the family itself will be okay (Usep, 65).

What is important in Usep's (65) case is that while he maintained the notion of imam of the family, with all the superior attributes attached to it, he saw the role of imam as different by including practices traditionally associated with women. With that he did not actually change the core component of Muslim masculinity, but he exercised it through new practices. The Muslim men views regarding women's position and their practice suggest not only religious framework but also cultural values.

The dynamics of manhood negotiation at home

Many Muslim men in this project claimed to resist Australian mainstream practices of womanhood and expected women to adhere to womanhood discourses associated with Islam. However, this claim did not necessarily reflect men's ability to fully exercise their culturally accepted privilege as the leader of the family in determining their relationship with their wife. In reality, the strategy often involved a dynamic of negotiation that took place over the period of their marital life. Roy's (35) story, below, best illustrates how a Muslim man can experience this dynamic.

Roy (35) had a strong Islamic background. His parents' ethnicities were Gorontalo and Lampung, both among the highly religious provinces in Indonesia. He was born, and grew up, in Tanjung Priok, which is also known for its strict Islamic community. Before he came to Australia, Roy (35) left his job several times for religious reasons, when he felt he 'could no longer stand the circumstances' where he was working because it 'wasn't at ease with the voice inside my heart'. Roy (35) joined a Sumatran Muslim group in Sydney a year after his arrival, where he met his prospective wife, a second-generation Australian Muslim of Sumatran parents. They knew each other for less than a year before they married, and had three children. About how he was attracted to and decided to marry his wife, Roy (35) recalled:

My wife has a unique situation. Perhaps not many Indonesians have a similar situation to her. She grew up in Australia, but her parents asked her to join this group (the Sumatran group). Back then the girls in this group were just like my daughter now. Maybe around fifteen to twenty of them. I met her for the first time when she was around 20. When I saw her, I said to myself, 'Ah, she is different.' One day I called her on the phone, asking, 'Are you going somewhere at the moment?' She said, 'I am joining a religious class.' I was surprised. She was 20 and grew up here but she joined a religious class? I didn't really bother about how committed she was with the program. But I observed her [and wondered], 'Ah, this girl is compliant?' Joining religious activities in Indonesia is becoming a trend. But here, I am sure [it] is not. I knew her for just about six to seven months, but I quickly decided to marry her (Roy, 35).

Among other things, Roy's (35) first impressions of his wife came from her involvement in religious activities organised by the Sumatran group. He wanted a degree of religious commitment from the woman he married. He did not expect that it would come from an Australia-born woman, as he expected he could more easily find this among many Muslim women in Indonesia. Performing an observable degree of religious devotion but being an Australian was what made his wife 'unique'. However, what mattered most for him was to have his prospective wife a compliant woman.⁴⁴ This was the attitude he was looking for in a woman. To find this attitude in an Australian-born woman was surprising, and convinced him that indeed she was 'different'. In fact this combination of acting compliantly and being Australian at the same time worried him. He said:

⁴⁴ Roy (35) did not specify to what subject the compliant attitude was directed, but it could mean toward her parents or elder members of the group and that she was devoted to religious obligation.

Yeah, before we were married for sure I was concerned whether she would be too independent as a wife. Once I asked her, 'What do you want with our relationship?' I wanted to make sure that this cultural clash [between Islam and Australia] could be minimised ... As her prospective husband, I was quite afraid that she would not be an obedient wife. Because she grew up here. I had no idea whether she [would] be compliant to her husband or act something like that. But thank God, in fact she is because even though she grew up in Sydney, she was among this [religious] group in Sydney. She was very active in this group and her mother was one of the most active women in the group too (Roy, 35).

Roy's (35) insistence on his wife's conformist attitude towards Islamic doctrine demonstrates his resistance to more liberal or independent attitudes among women that are commonly associated with Australia. He wanted to be sure that he could avoid these attitudes in the first place when he married. The fact that his wife was born and grew up in Australia suggested to him a need to put more effort into making sure that Australian 'independent' practices did not affect the compliance principle of Islamic womanhood. Roy (35) was sure he could expect this from his wife's own words; he recalled, 'When we got married, she said to me, 'I am ready to adopt the principle that I am a housewife.'" The Sumatran group and the religious program that was run by it helped him greatly to nurture this perceived Islamic element.

However, Roy's (35) persistence about the compliance doctrine did not bring about the results he wanted. He had to deal with conflicting standards regarding a wife's role in the family, between what he believed was Islamic doctrine and Australian practice. Roy (35) was fully aware that 'what people do here, the husband goes for work, the wife goes for work.' Responding to this practice, he told his wife that 'in Islam, a wife's role is to take care of and educate children.' This also meant that he expected her not to take paid work outside the home. The fact that his wife both worked outside the home and took care of the home for a considerable period of their nine years of marriage shows that his expectation of ideal Islamic womanhood did not quite work. Roy (35) became more demanding about her teaching their children, as they had three children, and used his position as the imam of the family to argue this point:

I gave a strong emphasis to her like this, 'It is okay we live with minimum income. But you work taking care [of] the children, I work [for money]' (Roy, 35).

However, his wife did not fully spend her time at home taking care of the children as he would have expected. About this Roy (35) expressed only a few complaints:

The first time we had a baby, she returned to work quickly when our first child was 10 months old. She decided to put her in a childcare. She had regrets about that. When we had our second child, she returned to work when our child was two years old. That wasn't too bad (Roy, 35).

When they were having their third baby, Roy (35) seemed to become more resistant when he observed that his wife was doing what many Australia wives do:

I said to her, 'Right now working is not your priority. Children are still number one.' I said to her, 'It's okay if I have to be away from home for a week working as a father, but you stay at home.' Or sometimes I put it rather extremely, 'It's fine we live on a minimum wage, but you don't need to go out for work. There is no use, say, if we have a thirty-storey house, and acres of land, but nobody is taking care of our children' (Roy, 35).

Again, that did not stop his wife from going back to work. The interview with Roy (35) was conducted when his third child was about eight months old, and he said, 'Tomorrow morning she will be back to work again.'

Roy's (35) situation demonstrates how the negotiation of masculinity involves contradictory strategies in adopting Australian values of women's participation in the workforce while maintaining the core components of Islamic discourse. In his case, these strategies were resisting, acceptance and adaptation. Roy's (35) enduring persistence in keeping the doctrine of Islamic wifehood as a framework to manage the marital relationship was not as successful as it would be if practiced in Indonesia or Malaysia. He knew that he also needed a significant degree of acceptance of certain dominant forms of Australian values that his wife was practising, which were in contrast to what he believed. He reflected on his situation:

I see what other [Muslim] people do, among my friends [within their marital life]. They commented about her, 'As a wife, she should be behaving in ways people do in Indonesia, like this way or that way.' I cannot treat her like that! That's true that she has Indonesian blood in her. But she grew up here (Roy, 35).

He understood and accepted the fact that his wife 'had begun working when she was 13.' She also seemed to be assertive and 'always asks me questions.' That urged Roy (35) to adapt his ways of communication and approaches to her in pursuing his will:

But I was really careful with her. I didn't directly state my demand on her. No, I didn't! I calmly asked her first, 'Do you enjoy working there [a bank in the city of Melbourne]?' The first time we had a baby she said she enjoyed it. I explained to her how it should be in Islam. I explained to her how childcare means taking care of children (Roy, 35).

Roy's (35) adaptive attitude towards Australian practices of womanhood greatly contradicts the conventional Islamic narrative of manhood that he initially embraced. Nevertheless, he managed to persist with the narrative of men's superiority, mainly by saying 'I returned it to religion.' This 'return to religion' strategy helped him greatly in securing his masculinity, mainly because mainstream Islam provided him with a unchallenged place for his masculinity, culturally allowing him to claim, 'I have [a] little more knowledge [about Islam]' or 'I always teach her [about Islamic norms]' (Roy, 35).

The analysis in this part of the chapter suggests that Muslim men in this study tended to resist the mainstream discourse of womanhood in Australia. They expressed deep concern regarding the individualistic attitudes and selfishness of what they saw as a distinct character that accompanied the independent attitude of Australian women. Muslim men considered this character as a challenge for Muslim men and women. However, this study indicates that this tendency by Muslim men did not appear to be the determining force that constrained Muslim women in Australia from acting more independently and being able to express their freedom. Muslim men's insistence on sustaining the traditional discourse of womanhood associated with Islam reflects Muslim men's will in defending their superior status as a Muslim self - the leader of the family and the breadwinner. However, this attitude did not necessarily characterise Muslim men's attitudes in Australia. A few men chose to redefine some important aspects of their masculinity to adapt to the Australian practice of womanhood.

3. Preserving the Authority of Father at Home

Parenting is a major area for the negotiation of masculinity for Muslim men in Australia. Being a father and fathering are very important practices of masculinity for a Muslim man and reinforce a man's position as the *imam* or the leader in the family.⁴⁵ Fatherhood is widely discussed as an issue of masculinity by examining men's involvement in caring activities (Dowd 2012; Marsiglio and Pleck 2005; Marsiglio and Hutchison 2002). This chapter, however, pays greater attention to power relations that governs father-child relationships and takes authority and the father's position in the family as an important aspect of masculinity (Tosh 1996; Segal 1990; Seidler 1988). This part of the discussion addresses a Muslim man's position as a father and examines how the predominant practice of equality in parent-child relationships in Australia had an impact on the masculinities of Muslim men in this study. This impact particularly affected men's honour and authority as a father, an important element of Muslim masculinity. I will first briefly summarise what Muslims believe about respect and obedience as the basis by which children should approach their parents, especially fathers. Then I will outline concerns among Muslim men about the practice of equality and individual freedom taking place at the family level. The larger part of the discussion will focus on strategies employed by Muslim men in negotiating the impact of this practice of equality in parent-child relationships on their sense of manhood.

Muslim men's beliefs on parent-child relationships

Muslim men in this project maintained the notion, widely shared by Asian parents, that there should be a hierarchy in the family where men possess the highest respect and honour as the leader of the family. Children exist as the most inexperienced members of the family. It is ethically and culturally valid for parents, or a father in particular, to demand acknowledgment, obedience, and submission from their sons and daughters even if they are adults. Children are expected to demonstrate that they value their parent more highly than themselves through politeness, good manners, and obedience (Suseno 1997). Language use is a crucial measurement of this expression. This is in line with broader values associated

⁴⁵This study distinguishes being a father from fathering; the former is a status while the latter is a practice. Both contribute to Muslim masculinity.

with agrarian society, where the younger members of the family or communities are expected to express higher respect to the older ones (Suseno 1997). Similarly, in Islamic ethics, to love and to honour parents is considered to be a religious obligation. This ethic, in fact, posits the mother in a much higher position than the father as person to whom the children should address their respect and honour.⁴⁶

For Muslim fathers, the value of respect to parents becomes more important in the Australian context. There are a number of reasons for this. Muslim men in this study expressed great concern about the teaching of Islamic values to their children; as the leaders of their families they felt the most responsibility in making sure that this teaching would take place. The men also believed that this would happen more easily if they were able to preserve the respect of their children, as this would allow them to exercise greater control over their activities as Muslims. Another important reason is that the Muslim men in this study encountered different values that they felt could diminish the value of respect in the family sphere: equality and individual freedom. The diminishing of the value of respect for parents could mean that men would lose their traditional sense of privilege and superiority, which would eventually affect their traditional masculinity.

Participants' view on Australian practices of equality in the family

Most participants agreed that one of the main challenges of raising children in Australia came from mainstream values of equality and individual freedom as they applied in parent-child relationships. They observed that Australians are happy and proud, and celebrate individual freedom and equality among people. When it is exercised in public and in the community, the participants commonly considered that the value of equality is very good. However, the value affects the family and creates a very different mode of parent-children relationship that contrasts in many ways to their belief about how this relationship should be practised. For many of the participants, Australian ways of parent-child relationships

⁴⁶ A very popular and valid hadith of the Prophet Muhammad lays the base for this ethic: the prophet stated that the mother is the highest of the top three person to whom a Muslim should dedicate their sense of respect and value, whereas the father sits only in fourth position (Ahmad 1996). Another hadith that supports this ethic states that paradise lies beneath a mother's feet (Ahmad 1996).

were odd and did not work in their ethical perspective. Zakky's (49) comment below reflects this opinion:

Obviously Australians themselves are very happy with their standard of life. They want freedom and approach every person as equal, whether it is in the family order or in the order of the society. Children can just call 'you' toward their father or mother, while the parents posit their children in the same position as themselves. This is especially so when the children reach 18: they [the Australian parents] treat their children merely as friends. I reckon there is something lacking in that, a gap that we [Muslim parents] can fill [in life in Australia] (Zakky, 49).

Zakky (49) is an Indonesian-born father with one daughter. Referring to his comment above, in Indonesian and Malay languages and culture using the personal pronoun 'you' when having a conversation with parents (or a person considered to be an elder) is considered very rude and inappropriate⁴⁷ and an exhibition of disrespect and arrogance. Zakky (49) was fully aware of how, in contrast, it is well accepted in English. However within his Indonesian ethical framework (which is shared with many other Southeast Asian cultures) he could not entirely understand how the practice of addressing parent using 'you' contributes to the parent-child relationships in Australia. Zakky (49) and many men in this study considered this practice as a potential problem.

For Muslim men in this study, the biggest problem with equality and individual freedom at the family level is that parents are likely to fail in bringing up politely behaved and obedient children according to their ethical standard. With the practice of equality and individual freedom, children learn to build confidence, feel no pressure in expressing their opinions and learn to be independent individuals. However this freedom can also result in rebellion, disobedience, and disrespect that challenge parents' expectations about their children's manners and etiquette. The potential for rebellion and disrespect caused many issues for the Muslim men in this study. Hamzi (55) observed how far this rebellion can go, while Amin (53) had a bitter experience himself with his 22-year-old son:

⁴⁷ The languages have a number of words that mean 'you': 'kamu', 'engkau', and 'anda'. The first two words are inappropriate to be used in conversation with parents or older partners in a conversation. The last one is very formal and polite but not to be used in parent-child conversations.

The independent but sometimes rebellious attitudes of our kids, especially when they reach the teenage years, often troubles us. *We Asian parents find it difficult to adjust to*, with what they adopt and learn from their schools and peers (Hamzi, 55, my emphasis).

My son did threaten me. He said, 'If you marry again, I will be become a Christian.'
Astagfirullah [God forgive me] (Amin, 53).

For a Muslim man, what Amin's (53) son said was disrespectful to the father's position and honour. In Islamic teaching, speaking to a parent like this is not considered proper conduct of a son or a daughter. Among Muslim or Asian families it is a serious sin against parents. However, Amin's son demonstrates an acceptable element of equality in that he was commenting on an important family issue that may affect his position as a member of the family. Amin (53) therefore could not force his will even if he could provide a cultural-religious justification that would be acceptable for many Muslims. This is the next problem with equality in the family: it lessens a man's cultural resources to control the family and therefore threatens his honour, in what Hamzi (55) referred to in his comment above as a 'difficult adjustment' in dealing with children who grow up in Australia.

As fathers and the imams of their families, Muslim men in this study had conflicting attitudes toward the values of equality and individual freedom. On one hand, they praised these values and indicated support of their sons and daughters in practicing them at home. On the other hand, they often demonstrated caution and resistance to them. This response reflects the difficulties in the negotiation of masculinity, particularly with regard to the important element of honour. Usep's (65) comment below best represents the concerns Muslim men in this project had about the practice of equality and freedom among their children:

Here in Australia I really appreciated that the children have their own opinion. They do not just always follow [parents' or others' opinions]. Before they follow an opinion they have to ask [questions to test the argument]. I like it that way, every child that is born here is forthright ... *But one thing, they have to respect the parents!* Here the children have little respect towards their parents! (Usep, 65, original emphasis).

After expressing his appreciation and admiration for Australian-born children for being independent and confident in their opinions and their ability to make up their own mind, Usep (65) was quick to state what he thought a serious lack in their attitudes, and expressed his criticism of these behaviours. Lack of respect toward parents and frequent disobedience

were his major concern, and that of many other men in this study, regarding children's attitudes at home. These conflicting attitudes among Muslim men also offer insights into their strategies to maintain their status as a father, as discussed below.

Adapting Australian values of equality and individual freedom at home

Muslim men in this study generally considered that having children with an independent attitude and maturity in thinking was a very good thing. They saw something positive about the values of equality and freedom that their children learn from schools, society and their peers. However, they showed different degrees of support and acceptance of children's independent attitudes. Again, Usep (65) offers an example of a Muslim father confidently adopting mainstream Australian values in his fathering role. The fact that he presented significant details of his story compared to other participants makes his case more reliable. Usep (65) had one daughter and two sons, all of whom were in their twenties when the interview took place. He supported his sons and daughter for being outspoken and for comfortably expressing their ideas:

Here in Australia they [children] have more independent opinions. It has to be like this. The schools teach attitudes like that. That's normal here because society is very strong. But we as parents, we try hard at home. Say it this way: I sent my daughter to Salaam College⁴⁸. At Salaam College she had lots of friends from different societies, so her mind was spinning [and she didn't seem like it], because she was shown [that] this society is like this, that society is like that. But I told her 'you better stay there because I know what's going on there.' At the beginning, Salaam College didn't have so many subjects. They didn't have music, they didn't have hospitality, they didn't have sport. My daughter complained, 'I want this subject and they don't have it.' Another day she questioned, 'Ayah [Dad], do you think the girls in Salaam are better than 'outside?' 'Of course they are,' I said, and she said 'Nooo!'. I replied, 'You are always thinking about the minority [the Muslims]; we also have to think about the majority [the problems in mainstream society]. If we think only about the minority, you cannot make a proper conclusion.' So, my daughter does not just follow me, but she has her own mind (Usep, 65).

Usep's (65) acceptance of his daughter's independent and confident attitude reached the point where he regarded this attitude as compulsory, and something that is in accordance with the mainstream Australian view. In response to this standard, according to Usep (65),

⁴⁸An Islamic college in Victoria; not its real name.

Muslim parents need to support this attitude by 'trying hard at home' to adapt to it. He revealed some negotiation between him and his daughter regarding her situation at Salaam College. Among Muslim communities in Melbourne, Salaam College is fairly well-known and one of the few Islamic schools available for these communities. The college became an issue for Usep's (65) daughter because of its limits in programs and facilities soon after its establishment. Her daughter also did not feel satisfied with the students' background and what she possibly saw as social inferiority among the Salaam girls. While he maintained a certain degree of his authority as a father (for example he 'sent my daughter' and told her to stay at the college because 'I know what's going on there'), Usep (65) expected and welcomed complaints and objections from his daughter. He also suggested a way of resolving her situation, in the way she understood it. What he stressed in the interview was that his daughter was comfortable and confident to make her own decisions and express her mind, and he was happy with that.

Nevertheless, there was a time when Usep (65) had to ignore the individual stances taken by his sons and daughter. For things that Usep (65) and most Muslims would consider as religious principles, negotiation and argumentation with children should be directed to measurement to adherence to that principle. Observing obligatory prayer, or *salat*, five times a day falls within that principle. Again, in an area like this, Usep (65) insisted on exercising his authoritative position as a father and imam of the family, instead of allowing his sons and daughter to choose or decide whether they were going to adhere to the principle. Usep (65) gave an example of how he maintained his stance:

I always manage to restrain myself from demanding or insisting [on] my own interest to my children if they have their own. Except for something I consider principle: I have to be firmer in insisting [on] some principles in Islam. I mean like performing *salat*. They used to delay doing it again and again, when the time for the prayer is nearly over they got too lazy to do it. In an issue like this I have to work harder [to make sure they do *salat* on time]. But with an issue like smoking, since it has nothing to do with the obligation of worship, I have no problem (Usep, 65).

However, in the case of observing obligatory *salat* five times a day, Usep's (65) authoritative approach did not work very well. Usep (65) complained about his youngest son, and the son himself, Firman (24), who also participated in this study, admitted to me that he did not always observe *salat* five times each day. Firman (24) was aware that his father was not

happy with him, but his explanation was that the conditions of his employment did not always allow him to pray. Usep (65) seemed to give up on Firman's (24) attitude to his religion. Although Firman (24) once spent two years at an Islamic boarding school in Indonesia, as he grew older his adherence to the obligatory *salat* seemed to weaken.

One issue among some Muslim men in this study associated with their status as a father was dealing with children's attitudes regarded as normal in Australia but that might challenge the standard of politeness expected by their cultural background. Men such as Amin (53), Fahroni (44), and Karim (56) admitted that they had had experiences when they felt they were being challenged and insulted by their children. When I asked Usep (65) about this, he replied, 'Oh yeah, many, many times.' One of his memorable moments was when his daughter was engaged to a non-Muslim Australian man and wanted to marry him. Usep (65) was very worried about his daughter and insisted that she should be looking for a Muslim man for her prospective husband; Islam prohibits a Muslim woman from marrying a non-Muslim man. Usep's (65) insistence only caused his daughter irritation and, according to Usep (65), she warned her father angrily, 'Ayah [Dad], don't tell me about who's going to be married to me, because its me who is married, not you!' While he felt uneasy about his daughter's reaction, Usep (65) commented that he could understand her state of emotion by reflecting on his own experience of being urged to marry by his parents. This situation was resolved by Usep's (65) insistence that his daughter's fiancé learn about Islam before the wedding took place, leading him to eventually convert. This case shows the use of a father's authority over support for children's individual freedom. In the next part of the discussion I look at the use of this authority in father-child relationships.

Resisting equality and preserving the value of respect

The Muslim men who participated in this study employed several approaches to moderate the potentially rebellious attitude among their children they believed was caused by equality and individual freedom. First, they tried to nurture the values of honouring elders or parents to be practised by their sons and daughters. Second, some men managed to maintain their authority as a father and the leader of the family by controlling the decision-making for certain crucial affairs of the family. Both approaches were overlapping and closely interconnected. These approaches are discussed below.

A common feature demonstrated by Muslim men in this study (including those observed in their regular religious gatherings and rituals) was insisting on the practice of honouring parents so that it became routine for their sons and daughters. Muslim men undertook this task with great care and diligence. They taught their sons and daughters a number of practices, including: kissing hands of fathers or elders at home and at religious rituals; maintaining the standard of politeness in attitudes, especially in speaking with those of Indonesian and Malayan cultures; asking permission before undertaking activities outside the home; maintaining the use of a title to call the father commonly used among Muslims or their ethnic group ('Ayah', Bapak' and 'Abi', among Indonesian groups and 'Abi' and 'Papa' among Singaporean groups), even when they speak in English; and the use of the Indonesian and Malayan languages when speaking with parents.

This study found many of these practices in use during the observations of participants' regular religious gatherings and rituals. The men also discussed some of them during interviews and group discussions.

Surprisingly, the Singaporean Muslim group observed in this study made more effort to maintain particular practices such as kissing hands and keeping a standard of politeness and a level of obedience among their sons. I expected these features to come from Indonesian groups, as they possess a stronger agrarian cultural background and better-established Muslim communities in both Indonesia and Australia. During religious gatherings organised by the Singaporean groups⁴⁹, members of the younger generation kissed the hands of the members of older generations⁵⁰ when the latter greeted them. In every religious gathering the groups closed the ceremony with a ritual hand-shake where everybody shakes everybody else's hand. In this ritual, the younger generations kissed the older generations' hands. I was considered part of the older generation in these groups and the junior members of the group always tried to kiss my hand when they approached for a handshake, even if they did not know me. This practice rarely occurred among the Indonesian groups observed in this study. This may be due to the fact that the Indonesian groups consisted of Muslims with different streams of Islamic teaching and differing practices, while Singaporean Muslims exhibited shared religious understanding.

⁴⁹Organised regularly during weekend.

⁵⁰The members in their father's generation.

While many of the study's participants were happy with their active and expressive children, maintaining standards of politeness, especially in speaking to parents, was an important part of the practice of honouring the father. In conversations, this was done by lowering voices, keeping an appropriate degree of passivity, not dominating the conversation, and putting oneself in the position of a receiver of messages delivered by the parents. There was also no tolerance of swearing. Maintaining the use of the parents' first language, Indonesian or Malay, was crucial for delivering this standard of politeness. Most men spoke in their first language at home and when speaking to their children, even if this way was not always successful in preventing the children from losing their parents' language.⁵¹ Both Indonesian and Malay are very similar in terms of grammar and vocabulary, and were used effectively in expressing the standard of politeness as part of the value being preserved (or at least to give the parents an effective resource in setting the ethical standard of communication).

Maintaining the use of spoken words in Indonesian and Malay to address the father during conversation was a crucial aspect of politeness and a significant practice of maintaining a sense of respect and honouring the father. The system and the culture of Bahasa Indonesia and Malay allow these words to be used as a personal pronoun in the second person. That way, the children can avoid using 'you' in addressing their fathers in a conversation, even when they speak in English. The use of those words in their language would maintain the status of the father and a sense of respect. Among Indonesian Muslim groups observed in this study, some of the younger generations called me 'Om' or 'Om Rachmad' (an Indonesian spoken word meaning 'uncle') and refrained from using 'you' or to just call me by name in a conversation, to maintain similar sense of respect⁵². Similarly, the younger generations of the Singaporean groups called me Pak Cik' (which in Malay means 'uncle') or 'Abang' (which in Malay means 'older brother'). All these practices maintained the imagined hierarchy between the older generation and the younger generation, but this has a more specific impact on father-son relationships.

The Muslim men in this study employed a number of methods to preserve the practice of respecting parents. These methods included: maintaining the use of their mother languages especially in communication at home; enrolling children in Islamic boarding school in

⁵¹ All participants from Singapore had a Malay background and Malay as their first language.

⁵² 'Om' also implies a sense of closeness and familiarity.

Indonesia and Malaysia; teaching the younger generation the etiquette and practice of politeness especially in relation to elders from the same cultural background; practising the etiquette in religious congregations or community gatherings: and familiarising the younger generation with the mosque or Muslim community where most Muslims maintain this etiquette. Usep (65) explained his plan for his sons and daughter:

That's why I sent all of my children to Indonesia. They just came back from Indonesia. My purpose was I wanted them to learn about religion; the second was I liked them to learn about the culture. I meant, to learn the ethics; the attitude of how to respect the elders, the parents (Usep, 65).

All these methods were applied as part of the way Muslim communities preserved their cultural values and practices. These methods also appeared to be part of cultural work and religious education. In religious sermons, for example, dedication and commitment to parents was a very popular topic, especially among Singaporeans.

The next approach of the Muslim men in this study in dealing with the potential impact of the practice of equality in the parent-child relationship was to exercise their authority as a father and leader in determining certain family affairs that, seen from a religious consideration, were very important. Even Usep (65), who was the most adaptive to the Australian mainstream of the study's participants, exercised his authority in such important affairs. In this study, examples of family affairs included children's religious attitude and education, and when a son or daughter wanted to marry a non-Muslim.

The ability to ensure that children abide by and are devoted to Islam was a great source of pride among Muslim men. A failure to do so, in contrast, was a cause for embarrassment. Aslaam (61), for example, knew the great impact this failure could have on his reputation as a respected figure in the Singaporean Muslim community. He recalled several incidents with his daughter that indicated, to him, his failure in giving her a proper Islamic education:

Like my daughter, sometimes she doesn't wear hijab [when] mixing around with people in the Muslim community. Uh, I feel so embarrassed. You cannot do that [not wearing hijab] while in the middle of the Muslim community. That's why I repeatedly told her that I am the leader of the community. I talk to the people. But my daughter is not wearing hijab. I said to her, 'You are embarrassing me! (Aslaam, 61).

In Aslaam's (61) case above, a daughter's non-adherence to an aspect of the Islamic code of conduct, in this case dress, was taken as an attack on the honour of the Muslim father. The masculine honour of the father appeared more important than the religious adherence itself. Aslaam's (61) remarks suggested that he was more concerned about his reputation as a Muslim father and community leader than his daughter's actual commitment to Islam.

This study's fieldwork in Muslim organisations revealed obvious, repeated and numerous clues regarding the importance of giving religious education to children for Muslim men's sense of manhood. The most common indication was Muslim men's practice of bringing their sons or daughters to the religious gatherings held by their Muslim group. Besides the cultural practice that made religious gatherings a family event, bringing sons or daughters was part of a religious project at the levels of the community and the Muslim family.⁵³ Parents, especially fathers, were a powerful force to make sure that their children were involved in the activity. It was common to observe among the youth group of a Muslim congregation that the young Muslims came with their fathers, or the fathers exhibited pride in bringing their children with them to religious activities. Another important indication of fathers' authority embedded in children's religious education was observed in Muslim men's pride in their children's achievements as a result of religious training. These achievements could appear as simple things. Zakky (49), for example, was proud to show how his little daughter had memorised a few short chapters of the Qur'an (known as *juz'amah*). Hasan (50s) exhibited intense pride in his son's confident leading of the *Tarawih* prayer in Singaporean Muslim groups. On another occasion, Amin (53) expressed his admiration of Musawir (20s), a young second-generation Muslim who, in one of the *Ramadhan* nights in Huda Mosque, led a much bigger congregation of *Tarawih salat* with impressive mastery of the Qur'an chapters and a beautiful voice. However, Amin (53) admired Musawir's father even more than Musawir himself, saying, 'His father must be very excellent and successful in training his son. That is what we [Muslim fathers] dream of.' The discussion above about Usep (65) and his children also demonstrates the exercise of a father's authority upon children's religious education.

⁵³ This practice is not commonly found in Indonesian and Singaporean contexts. Perhaps the availability of religious schools in both countries gave the parent choices of proper educational experience or training for their children.

Zamil (57) spent most of his interview sharing his situation of having his daughter and son both fall in love with and want to marry a non-Muslim Australian. Zamil (57) was born in Singapore. As part of his job responsibility, he had come to Australia about 10 years earlier. He had two sons and two daughters. His three oldest children had married, although his oldest daughter was divorced from her White Australian husband when the interview took place.

Zamil's (57) oldest daughter, 'Suzi', wanted to marry her Australian non-Muslim boyfriend. But Zamil (57) disagreed and insisted the man convert to Islam before the wedding could happen. ⁵⁴Following some pressure from Zamil (57), the man eventually converted to Islam so that he could marry Suzi. About this pressure Zamil (57) explained:

I was okay if she loved him and she looked very insistent. But she had to understand that the religion does not allow a Muslim woman to marry a non-Muslim. I cannot marry my daughter to a non-Muslim man.... Her husband must be a Muslim (Zamil, 57).

Zamil (57) himself admitted that he preferred to have a Muslim man from a Malay background as his son-in law. The negotiations about Suzi's wedding took two years before the couple finally married. However, they lived together only a few years. Suzi divorced and Zamil (57) informed me that the Australian man had reverted from Islam. Zamil (57) did not explain the situation surrounding Suzi's marital life; there is a strong taboo in Malay culture against revealing private matters to others outside the family. However, his remarks suggested that there might be a connection between the divorce and the fact that the man had already abandoned Islam.

Learning from Suzi's experience, Zamil (57) demonstrated a firmer approach when his son wanted to marry his White non-Muslim Australian girlfriend. While their marriage may have been religiously legal, Zamil (57) expressed the same insistence toward his son, 'Omar', demanding that his prospective wife should be a Muslim. Omar was employed and financially independent, and was ready to start family life. Zamil (57) told me that Omar and

⁵⁴ According to some influential Shariah law, a Muslim woman is not permitted to marry a non-Muslim man. Some Islamic scholars, however, have argued that Muslim women are allowed to marry 'people of the book' – Christians and Jews – but they are prohibited from marrying unbelievers. In contrast, in all religious legal thinking, Muslim men are permitted to marry women from other religions, especially Christians and Jews (For further discussion about women and gender in Islamic Law see Tucker 2008 and Welchman 2004).

his girlfriend had known each other and had been engaged for two years before they expressed their wish to get married. However, the negotiation of Omar's girlfriend's religion took longer than in the case of Suzi's fiancé, and Zamil (57) wanted to make sure that Suzi's experience was the first and final such case for his family. Omar's girlfriend did convert to Islam. However, the couple needed five years before Zamil (57) was finally convinced that they were ready to marry and gave his approval. Zamil's (57) attitude was in contrast to that he showed toward his younger daughter, who was much younger than Omar and Suzi. This daughter met her Muslim Malay boyfriend and got married after only eight months' engagement. About this, Zamil (57) commented:

She found the correct boy. He is Muslim and shares the same culture with us. Religion is very important. She likes him, so why should we wait longer. The sooner the better (Zamil, 57).

The discussion in this part of the chapter illustrates how Muslim men exercise their authority over children based on religious considerations, agendas and interests. In the cases discussed here, the authority of fathers appears to be powerful in determining their relationships with their children. In Zamil's (57) case men's authority was especially employed to maintain the power relationship that favoured them as men. Again, religious reasons provide effective media and material that allow this masculine aspect to be embodied at the family level.

Conclusion

The chapter contributes to the field of Muslim masculinities by expanding discussions about men's relationship with women in the Australian context and the impact of a crisis of men's power at home. The study suggested the enduring centrality of men's status of the leader or imam of the family among Australian Muslim men of Southeast Asian background. However, the chapter argues that the discourse about men's leadership status in the family in the Australian setting cannot be compared to Muslim men in their home countries where Muslims are a majority and where a Muslim man has the cultural resources to exercise his power (Brenner 1995; Robinson 2009). The chapter suggests that Australian experience can change power relations between men and women which in turn affects the meaning and

practice of manhood among Muslim as the men's traditional authority weakens. This finding presents a different understanding from those in other studies which place emphasis on men's insistence of their superiority and Muslim women's inferiority in traditional family relationships (Gerlhom 2003; Inhorn 2006; Archer 2001, Hopkins 2006). As some men modified the meaning and practice of their status as imam while holding that status, Australian practices and values contribute to this change without significantly reducing the religious doctrine associated with that status.

The Muslim men in this study were forced to deal with the mainstream values of individual freedom, equality between persons and secularity in Australia that affect their marital relationships and the practice of family. In such a situation, they felt that they had to maintain the religious discourse of manhood they were accustomed to. This study found that Muslim men as a minority in Australia could not afford to lose the main components of their masculinity, as expressed in the superior identity of being the imam of the family. Maintaining their status as imam of the family while resisting the idea of partnership was their main strategy in negotiating masculinity. This strategy was coupled with their insistence on the traditional discourse of womanhood associated with Islam: the compliant wife and housewife. However, several men comfortably adapted the Australian practice of partnership while maintaining the religious narrative of imam of the family. These men managed to redefine their practice of being a man and found a new meaning in being an imam that better suited the Australian context. This strategy was employed without losing their superior gendered identity in relation to women. This approach of maintaining the narrative of imam demonstrated Muslim men's strategy in negotiating the patriarchal dividend that they inherited from the religiously-associated discourse of masculinity among Muslims.

The emphasis of resistance strategy among the men reflects a broader sentiment generally observably shared among the men regarding the tension between Islam and the West. Here Muslim masculinities are embodied as a strategy of resistance (Hearn and Collison 1994), in this case to what they considered as Western culture. The most direct channel of expressing this resistance has once again been control over women and the maintenance of its related moral discourse. In this context of resistance, Muslim women are posited as a battleground for Muslim men against dominant Western-White ideology. Studies among Asian Muslims in

the UK have shared this conclusion in regard to the assertion of Muslim masculinities. As previously discussed, women's position is crucial in defining Muslim men's identities. To maintain and defend the accepted discourse on women is therefore to resist men's identity. Women's attitudes, and specifically 'appropriate' women's dress, have been a crucial narrative among Muslim men and 'may also symbolise the deeper fear of corruption by the West and the threat to traditional values and morals' (Macey 1999, 51). The control and surveillance of women's inappropriate dress, immodest behaviour, or unapproved relationships can be seen as actions of resistance against dominant Western discourse (Archer 2001; Macey 1999). The maintenance of family is an integral part of this resistance.

However, this study indicates that such resistance does not reflect the real presence of men's power in exercising their traditional authority. Instead, it was quite the opposite, in that the Muslim men felt the weakening of their traditional privilege in the family as an impact of their Australian experience. The next chapter will discuss religious-cultural strategies practiced beyond the family in maintaining and preserving values and privilege constituting their masculinity that the participants associated with their religion.

CHAPTER 6

BROTHERHOOD AND MASCULINITY

This thesis now arrives at the last context in the negotiation of Muslim masculinities: the Muslim brotherhood. As mentioned earlier, by 'Muslim brotherhood' I am not referring to the political movement or organisation operating in the Muslim world, especially in the Middle East, that names itself the 'Muslim Brotherhood' (*Ikhwanul Muslimin*). In this thesis I use the term to refer to the collective expression of a lived, religious and gendered identity shared among men. My main argument in this chapter is that brotherhood is a key to the construction of masculinity among Muslim men in Australia. This chapter focuses on two questions. First, how was brotherhood produced and practiced among Muslim men in this study? Second, in what ways did brotherhood contribute to the dynamic of Muslim masculinity in the Australian context?

The narrative of the Muslim brotherhood has its grounding in the Islamic teaching of the bond of faith among believers. The Islamic discourse uses the term '*ukuwah*' (bonding, solidarity) as a concept referring to this bond. For many Muslims, this teaching is an important Islamic ethic to be employed as a countervailing force to the growing individualistic tendencies among Muslims. The teaching is generated from a number of *hadiths* by the Prophet Muhammad and verses of the Qur'an (Eijaz 2011). This teaching reminds Muslims not only to respect those who share the faith, but also to value them as they value themselves; to love, protect, and regard them as part of their family and to minimise conflict.⁵⁵ In the context of Muslims' status as a minority in Australia, this teaching of the bond of faith, combined with shared cultural and political backgrounds of nationality

⁵⁵ The information about *ukuwah* and the concept of solidarity in faith in Islamic is available in many resource about Islamic. See for example Danish (2003,259) and Eijaz (2011). It is also posted online in many website personally managed to address general audience; for example Buckley (no date) http://myquran.or.id/forum/showthread.php/11341-The-concept-of-brotherhood-in-Islam-%28ukhuwah%29-_ and <http://al-islami.com/islam/unity/brotherhood.php>.

and ethnicity, provides invaluable support for Muslim individuals in the settlement experience.

As described in Chapter 3, this project studied five Muslim organisations around Melbourne: Jami Melayu, Ramai Malay, Baitul Melayu, Insan Indonesia and Sumatra Bersatu. The need to observe ritual within a congregation invites Muslims, especially men, to gather on a regular basis, which further allows Muslims to establish faith and culturally-based communities. In the future each of these organisations intend to establish their community into one that, while a minority, is independent and capable of actively contributing to the strength and richness of the wider Australian society. This means that they aim to grow into an identity that has the capability to express their faith and execute their practices without feeling insecure or in conflict with dominant Australian values. Establishing a reliable social support among their members by sharing religious sentiment and ethnicity is an important aspect of this social project. It serves as a response to the ethos of individualism deeply rooted in Australian culture, and is also an embodiment of the spirit of communality exhibited in Southeast Asian society. Above all, a community bonded in a solid relationship, and religious commitment, employing the teaching of *ukuwah* combined with shared ethnicity, is the most reliable resource to reach this goal.

The fieldwork involved participation and observation on six religious gatherings organised regularly at the weekend by four of the Muslim organisations studied (the exception was Ramai Malay). In addition, I also observed *Isha* and *Tarawih* salat hosted by Insan Indonesia. These activities had, for years, been the core programs of these communities. Because of their regularity, it is my argument that these activities greatly contributed to the continuation of Muslim communities in the four groups. I would suggest further that these gatherings were the main religious setting that mediated the embodiment and preservation of brotherhood among the Muslim men studied in this project, as I discuss below. Thus, this chapter focuses on these religious gatherings in its discussion of Muslim brotherhood.

I divide the discussion in this chapter in three parts. The first part examines the practices that produce and reproduce Muslim brotherhood. This part involves a detailed description of Muslim men's activities while participating in religious gatherings hosted by the Muslim groups. This description is generated from participant observation conducted during

fieldwork. The second part deals with interview data addressing the meaning and experience of brotherhood for the Muslim men in this study. In this part, I explore how the sense and practice of connectedness among Muslim men has affected men's gendered religious identity. Based on the data discussed in the previous two parts, the last part of the chapter develops the argument of how brotherhood contributes to Muslim masculinities in Australian context. In this part, I further discuss how gender segregation is fundamental to the enactment of the Muslim brotherhood and how it subsequently impacts on women.

1. Forming the Muslim Brotherhood

This section examines how the bond of brotherhood among Muslim men is formed and enacted in religious gatherings. The religious gatherings hosted by the Muslim groups enabled personal interactions among Muslim men in an atmosphere that socially and culturally suited them. This consisted of a number of aspects that the men were longing for as cultural minorities in Australia, including religiously oriented activities that centred on rituals; a religiously comfortable venue (like a mosque); the use of first language in the activity (although for most Singaporean Muslims English is their first language); consistent adherence to Islamic and background-culture etiquette in social engagement especially around gender segregation; shared concern over issues affecting Muslims in Australia; expressions of piety especially in dressing and speaking; priority accorded to family participation; and the consumption of halal food. Combined, these aspects created an environment suitable for the men's practice and religious-cultural reference and thus contributed to the establishment of brotherhood among Muslims over the long term.

A typical religious gathering of the kind I observed went like this: a Muslim man meets other men of his cultural background, be it Indonesian or Malay, who share his religious beliefs; he greets them with the Islamic greeting of '*assalamu'alaikum*' (peace be upon you), shakes their hand, or sometime shares hugs and kisses. Leaving all his social status and position behind, he is conscious that he comes mainly for a religious purpose, entirely believing that all the men around him share the same consciousness. He enters and is present in a sacred place for a sacred deed, and has dressed to express his religious commitment. He is likely to have brought his wife and children; he shows them to the community and allows them to

have a good time with their own group at the gathering, feeling confident that his children are in a good social environment to grow. The men pray together, do the *dzikir* (the act of remembrance) together, recite the Qur'an and perform supplication together, performing the rituals of submission to the same God.

At these gatherings the men also shared the sense of being different as Australians; they were a member of a minority group that held values that many in Australia did not understand and were sometimes suspicious about and were often the victim of public resentment as a result of the actions of other men in Australia or abroad who abused Islam. They participated in male-only conversation activities, often without feeling the absence of their wives and children; most of this conversation was light, but could turn flexibly into serious talk using their first language. The men shared jokes, gossip, personal stories, family issues and concerns over issues affecting Muslims. The men shared and enjoyed *halal* Indonesian or Malay cuisine. For the Muslim men, the religious gathering was not just another gathering at the weekend. This was more than a breakaway from the dry, mechanistic and worldly daily routine in the workplace. It was a work of identity consolidation and cultural refreshment. If they were first-generation Muslim Australians, the gathering instantly connected them to the memory of the home country. If they saw themselves as what Oliver Roy (2004) calls a 'born-again' Muslim, the gathering gave a sense of belonging.⁵⁶ If they were second-generation Muslims, the gathering helped them consolidate their religious learning and, in imagining their future community, to maintain their religious identity. The men were looking for a religiously true, loyal and devoted community for their identity survival.

While organised by different organisations, the religious gatherings shared a similar composition in terms of activities and the social practice involved. All of these activities were organised around obligatory and non-obligatory rituals that were performed in *jamaah* (conducted collectively in a congregation). These rituals included: *Isha salat*, *Tarawih salat*, *Mahgrib salat*, religious sermon (*siraman agama* or *kuliah agama*), Qur'an recitation, *dzikir* and *du'a* (see glossary). Another important activity that characterised the gathering was the practice of casual-informal conversation and engagement among the participants, men and

⁵⁶ The term 'born-again' Muslim refers to an individual Muslim whose Islamic faith suddenly becomes central in his/her identity construction and self-projection for his/her entire life (Roy 2004, 186).

women alike, that was practiced outside the rituals. This activity took place in any space that could accommodate the group, including the mosque hall, the mosque veranda, parking areas, just outside the mosque or the building area, and even in the kitchen. This social practice was not planned, was not part of religious agendas, and sometime had no relevance to religious interests at all. Nevertheless, this casual activity was fully expected by the congregation and became an important part of the religious gathering to the point that it had been institutionalised into a routine for years. For many Muslim men, coming to the mosque or other venues of worship is more than performing rituals. Often, ritual is just an anchor: men, and women too, claim religious reasons for their coming together. The encounter of meeting those who shared faith and cultural background often turned out to be a stronger motivation for the men who participated in this study to stay involved in their communities.

All of these activities produced a Muslim brotherhood in a regular and continuing religious setting and can be classified into two types: informal social interaction and formal ritual. Muslim brotherhood was produced informally through the practice of male-only social engagement outside the rituals. These practices included group conversation among the men before, between, after and even during (but not as part of) the rituals being performed. I consider these informal practices as the first method of brotherhood- work for a number of reasons. First, these informal practices often took a longer period of time in the gathering than the rituals. Second, the men were more deeply and socially engaged as they became more active in male-only interaction. Third, these practices directly strengthened individual bonding among the men involved. Considering these characteristics of informal interaction, I suggest that this informal method had a stronger impact on male-only bonding among Muslims than the rituals they observed.

A second method of forming Muslim brotherhood was through the practice of rituals of worship, which were observed according to particular procedures and routines. A Durkheimian understanding of ritual can be used to understand Islamic ritual as a means of uniting Muslim male congregations and creating solidarity among them (Bellah 2005; Olaveson 2001; Pickering 1994). At the individual level rituals in Islam are intended to preserve spirituality, faith, the relationship between the believing self, and God. However, when they are performed together (or *jamaah* in Islamic terms) – and in Islam men are

encouraged to perform the obligatory rituals that way – rituals reinforce the bond of faith among the men involved. In fact, this bonding effect within the congregation present is the other intention behind the teaching of performing rituals, especially *salat* in *jamaah* (Glasse 2002).

In the following two sections, I examine these informal and formal methods of producing and reinforcing the shared experience of Islamic masculine brotherhood. I begin with the informal method.

The Informal Method: The 'parking duty' of Insan Indonesia

In the situations observed in this study, the informal method of establishing Muslim brotherhood happened through spontaneous, live, dynamic, and routine male-only interactions that took place outside the ritual agenda. These occurred in all religious gatherings I observed and had become a common and expected feature of the activity. The men created chat groups before, between and especially after all of the ritual sessions were completed. All of the religious gatherings observed consisted of more than one form of ritual activity. These activities took place both inside and outside the space where the rituals were observed. While not planned or scheduled, these male-only interaction activities were eagerly anticipated and desired by the congregation, especially the men. In fact, the gatherings were organised in such a way as to enable this practice taking place, such as the provision of halal food (as I discuss below). While the conversation was intended to be casual and relaxing, the religious atmosphere of the activity was carefully maintained. This combination of informality and religiosity was the most striking feature of this process of construction of Muslim brotherhood.

The interaction practices demonstrated unique characteristics that attracted Muslim men's participation. First, they happened spontaneously. A men's group of conversation required at least two men in the same spot (normally the same regular spot in every weekly gathering). Once started it would flow freely, in a way that was unstructured, natural, fluid, and very dynamic. Its dynamic nature came mainly from the participants and the issues being discussed; the participants could join and leave at any time, while the issues loosely moved from one to the other with no one in charge. In the interaction group, the men

engaged in live and immediate interaction by direct communication that ran without procedure, rule, or timing. This kind of interaction provided a supportive, respectful, and relaxing way of communication. These effects were also a result of the use of the men's first language (Indonesian, Malay, or English) and references that made the men culturally familiar and secure. However, such communication could only involve at most five to eight men in a group. When conversation was undertaken during meal times (during breaking fast for example), the atmosphere was more relaxed. While informal and spontaneous, this practice was only possible due to the ritual agenda and took place as a routine part of the regularly organised ritual. Also, as it was conducted in a religious space and a religious setting, the men were careful to maintain standards of Islamic ethics, especially by explicitly expressed respect toward other men and the exclusion of cultural taboos from the discussion. This allowed the men to establish a male-only interaction that was more lively and personal, and very effective in forming close friendships. I discuss these characteristics further and how they affect the formation of brotherhood with an example of this male-only interaction practice in the following discussion.

Among the male-only interaction in the six religious gatherings I observed, I have selected the example of 'parking duty' among Indonesian Muslim men to illustrate how this practice established the bond of brotherhood among them in an informal method. This practice took place during the *Tarawih salat* in *Ramadhan* 2012, hosted in Huda Mosque. The mosque is the home of Insan Indonesia. This is where Indonesian Muslims perform the obligatory *salat* five times daily. The mosque is also the centre of various activities serving Indonesian Muslims in Melbourne. It hosts a regular Sunday morning religious lecture, a full 29-30 nights *Tarawih salat* in *Ramadhan*, an annual *Eid* Festival, *Isra'-Mi'raj* (the night journey – elevation of the Prophet), the Islamic new year, the Qur'an night and the Prophet's Birthday. In addition to that, a significant number of non-ceremonial and non-ritual social and education programs are organised in the mosque by different segments of the community.

The following narrative is reconstructed from my field notes in 2012 (see Chapter 3). It describes one occasion when 'parking duty' took place in Huda Mosque. As I discuss the details, I give notes analysing the activity. I have typed the narrative in *italics*.

Standing a few metres from the mosque's rear gate I could see the main road where Huda Mosque is located. In front of me was a five-metre-wide service road to which the mosque's visitors had to turn their vehicles and make a short drive to reach the mosque's rear gate and find the car park. This road was about 60 metres' length, covered by walls on each side: the mosque wall on my left and a shop wall on my right. A couple of days earlier, Dimas (50s) had asked me if I could volunteer to help the parking team during the nights of Ramadhan. I was happy to volunteer but I couldn't do that for the whole 29 nights. Dimas (50s) convinced me that I didn't have to come every day and gave me a roster for me to indicate those days I could come and help the parking unit.

So, here I was standing outside the mosque area and waiting for jamaah (congregation) to arrive in their cars and assisting their parking 'practice'. I will return to why this simple thing was so important to deal with for the mosque. There were seven of us, more than on previous nights, Dimas (50s) told me. Next to me were Imran (30s), a newcomer in the community, Indra (40s), and Dimas himself. We were stationed at Post 2. Post 1 was on the other end of the service road directing visitors coming from the main road. I saw Suyanto (42), Fikri (30s), and Zainuddin (48) in that post standing at the right corner of the road facing the front gate of the mosque on the other side of the road, while keeping an eye on the parking lot in front of the small shopping centre just to the right of their position. They had a crucial job to do and they could not fail: making sure that absolutely no congregants parked their cars in that parking lot in front of the shopping centre. Parking had been a very sensitive issue in the mosque's neighbourhood: the mosque had lost the permission to host Jum'ah salat (Friday prayer) for about two years at the time I did the fieldwork due to repeated parking disputes, and they did not want that happen to Ramadhan's programs too. When congregants arrived at the mosque front gate with their cars, Post 1 would promptly direct them to us in Post 2, and it was our job then to direct them to a parking spot in the main

parking area just behind the mosque. This role of managing parking spots was very important because we wanted to contain as many cars as possible in the area.

The appointment of the all-male parking unit in Huda Mosque marked the process of how the male-only interaction began. The mosque committee saw parking assistance as a completely male job and appointed Dimas (50s) as the first coordinator. Dimas (50s) was very clear about the masculine nature of the job and recruited male-only volunteers. He printed a half-filled roster of the job and pinned it on the notice board to allow anybody who wanted to volunteer to register themselves. The notice board happened to be in the mosque's main hall, which was reserved only for men. Also, technically, it was a lot easier for Dimas as a man to recruit men volunteers as he could easily move around the mosque hall and veranda, which were predominantly occupied by the men of the congregation. In other words, the gender segregation in the mosque contributed to this creation of a male-only parking unit. Recruiting a female volunteer never crossed Dimas's mind. As expected, only men volunteered for the parking unit. This maleness of membership further developed a masculine atmosphere, as I will discuss below.

From the field notes:

What I mean by the 'main' parking area was not actually part of the mosque property, which was why not many congregants, including myself, were informed about the availability of the field, especially in the first week of Ramadhan. The mosque had a small parking area at its front gate that could only contain ten cars. Cars could also be parked along the main road near the mosque, which was free after 5 p.m. But Ramadhan nights were very busy: more than 300 people might come to the mosque in 80 to 100 cars parked throughout the 29 days of the month. Late comers would miss the parking spots close to the mosque, and would have to walk more than 200 metres to and from their cars. This was not easy for those with children, but still wanted to catch the starting salat. In that situation, it was tempting to park in the

shopping centre, which was just few steps away from the mosque. However, those who did that were committing a highly undesirable act against the mosque committee. A single complaint from one of the shop owners to the City Council concerning this parking behaviour would mean no Tarawih salat at all in the mosque, and this would be a nightmare for the Insan Indonesia community. Dimas knew this very well and he showed a very strict approach toward the mosque visitors. This was why a 'special force' called the 'parking unit' was needed in a busy season like Ramadhan. The unit's task was to direct the congregation in the main parking field. This field belonged to a school located just to the left of the mosque. The mosque committee hired the field when they organised an activity involving a large congregation. It was a large empty space of grass, bush and wet ground, with absolutely no parking lines at all. If we at Post 2 could organise every incoming car in neat rows, this field could contain more than 70 vehicles.

When I was informed about how a parking dispute could affect the mosque activity, I thought my job in the parking unit would involve tension, focus and thrill. My first night proved the opposite. As it very soon turned out, the two posts had become conversation zones and the job of the parking volunteers had transformed us into part-time gossipers outside the mosque and the ritual activities. We were very good in using any spare time for doing conversation among us in the groups; in fact we spent more time engaging in conversation than helping with parking. While the busy period lasted no more than 30 minutes, some people would spend more than two hours in the posts, mostly engaging in conversation and gossiping.

This information demonstrates the spontaneous nature of the male-only interaction practices. While on duty, when it was not the busy period, we had nothing else to do but have a chat. Nevertheless, when the men had the option to perform the ritual inside the mosque, several men chose to join the chat group instead (see the field notes on page 184-185). While spontaneous, the creation of conversation groups only occurred around ritual

activities. In the case of the parking duty, the conversation groups in the two parking posts were attached to the ritual (*Tarawih salat*), as the parking unit was created to assist people in attending the rituals. It also took place regularly in accordance to the rituals throughout the nights of Ramadhan. In every religious gathering I observed, there were at least two men's interaction groups taking place at the same time. These groups occurred prior to the rituals but were more visible in the concluding sessions of gatherings. Baitul Melayu had the fewest congregants. When their gathering on Saturday evening completed all its ritual sessions, there would be two or three men's groups of three to five men in the venue. Similar men's groups appeared much more often in the gatherings of Jami Melayu, Sumatra Bersatu, and Insan Indonesia.

Meal-time was a great opportunity for the men to make a group and engage in chat and gossip. Except for the *Tarawih salat* held by Insan Indonesia in Ramadhan, all the gatherings provided halal food. The congregation prepared the food voluntarily by rotating among themselves. Conversation practice during meal time created a lot more fun, excitement, and unlikely discussions of serious issues. The Indonesian or Malay food was often an interesting topic of discussion and brought back some memory that connected the men together. I observed that food is also a marker of religious-cultural identity, especially as Muslims often struggle in dealing with the mainstream alcohol culture in Australia. (This issue of food and masculinity among minority Muslims is another important area to explore, but it is beyond the scope of this study.) At the gathering the men felt completely secure that all food was *halal* and there was absolutely no alcohol to worry about.

The spontaneous character of these groups does not imply that the men came from a highly expressive and talkative culture; the opposite is true. Southeast Asian culture generally gives more importance to attitude and restrained verbal expression. However, this culture demonstrates a strong spirit of communality. Spontaneity merely reflects the men's strong will to gather together among themselves. The practice of creating time and space for informal chat indicates how the men of the congregation strongly expected this to happen. The fact that this practice had been occurring for years suggests that the men's groups of conversation had evolved into their own informal institution within the religious agenda.

I continue with my field notes:

The two parking posts also attracted a number of congregants, who regularly stopped by and joined the conversation groups. As they made their way from the car park to the mosque's gate, Dany (60s), Danang (60s), Anis (40), and some other familiar faces one by one joined us in Post 2 and instantly merged into the gossip sessions. These men were not parking volunteers and their actions marked the habit of many of the mosque attendees of stopping at the parking posts before entering the mosque to pray. Some men were actively involved in the talking, while other passively listened and joined in the laughter at any jokes. People like Suyanto (42), Fikri(30s) , Budiman (50), and Indra (40s) seemed to enjoy their duty and talk fairly actively. Apparently these speakers knew each other very well. I did not have the chance to know many of these men individually, since they came and left in the posts. Along with the senior members of the community, the second-youngest generation, albeit fewer in number, sometimes also showed up at the posts, especially Post 1, becoming involved in the talking or creating their own conversation group. In the freezing winter night this habit gave a very relaxing, warm and cheerful atmosphere to the two posts. Post 1 tended to be the favoured spot, especially during the second half of the total duration of parking assistance. I think it was because the post was more comfortable in terms of the lighting (Post 2 was rather dark and cold) and the spot closer to the main road. Budiman (50), Fikri (30s,shyly), Imran (30s, hesitantly), and another man I hardly had the chance to know sometimes lit their cigarettes while joining the groups. (Smoking is not allowed when you fast. So these men had a good time with their habit at night after breaking the fast.) As for Dimas (50s), Indra (40s), and Danang (60s), a cup of coffee was a perfect supplement.

This information suggests the fluid and dynamic characteristics of the male-only interaction practice; the participants can freely join and leave. The male congregation who later joined the parking posts did not regard those of us on parking duty to be conducting a parking assignment. Instead, they just saw their fellow Muslim men gather together, and it looked to them that everybody enjoyed it. This view attracted them to join. In fact once a man joined the group, he seemed to have a good time gossiping in the cold night. He could stay there for a while and share some interests until the last minute before the ritual inside the mosque began, or he could leave the group earlier and if he preferred to perform individual rituals in the mosque before the main ritual began.

However, the parking duty only attracted certain men: Indonesian men who spoke Indonesian. Many men visiting the mosque were not Indonesian and they were not interested in joining the groups. They greeted the men in the posts with '*assalamu'alaikum*' and went straight to the mosque. So did the female congregants even if they shared the same cultural background as the men at the parking posts. These characteristics of the group participants reflect a specific masculine feature of the men's interaction groups in the six religious gatherings I observed. In the gatherings organised by the two Malay Muslim organisations, only Muslim men with a Malay background could join and participate in the men's group. These groups were the space for the men of their cultural and ethnic background. The men gathered together for their shared gender, religious and cultural identity; a man, Muslim and Indonesian or Malay.

Seen from the men's perspective, the men's group attracted men like Irfan (40s), Rudi (60s), Anis (40s), and other men who joined the parking posts because it connected to their subjectivity as a devoted Muslim, a man and Indonesian. This kind of connection did not happen in their normal working life. Their experience as minorities always made gatherings in which the men shared their specific masculine identity attractive. (In fact, the men in the groups were people they already knew closely). This implies that a simple informal activity like parking duty could have an impact on the reinforcement of religious identity, but also foster a sense of cultural or ethnic belonging. The men's use of their first language throughout the activities and references they made to home culture suggest that ethnicity is important in the making of this male-only interaction function in the way the men wanted.

I continue with the field notes:

This activity of gossiping and group conversation ran even during the Tarawih salat was being performed inside the mosque. Post 1 was the main zone for group conversation. While most of the congregation were observing the Tarawih salat inside the mosque, a handful of people who were on duty did not enjoy a great time involving in group conversation. (Tarawih salat was observed between 8.10-9.30p.m., and sometimes to 10.00p.m.). A Muslim is allowed to observe Tarawih salat at any time after Isha salat and before the Fajr (sunrise), and in any place, together with other Muslims or just by him- or herself. It is not an obligatory ritual; thus the religiously observant can skip praying Tarawih together at the mosque and do it on their own, or hold their own prayer group later in the evening.

However, the encouragement to come to the mosque and pray together is intended to boost the spiritual and social message of the ritual. While the flow of congregants had stopped at about 10 minutes past 8p.m., when the Tarawih was about to begin, Dimas insisted that there is always a chance of people coming late, and that may lead them to park their car in the shopping centre. One of the imams also stressed that activities to make sure that Muslims are able to perform rituals to please their God has an equal value to the ritual itself, and handling parking was one of that activities. I suspect that these attitudes help the team to confidently skip the Tarawih and stay at their post instead. During my observation nights practically no cars at all passed by Post 1 in the first five to 10 minutes after the Tarawih salat started. However, I found on other occasions that this parking volunteer work continued with three to five to six people engaging in group of conversation at Post 1 and staying until most of the cars in the main parking field already gone.

In both Singaporean Muslim groups, men tended to leave sooner than those in both Indonesian Muslim groups. In Huda Mosque and Nur Mushalla (where the Sumatra Bersatu hosted its activities), a few men would stay until close to midnight on Saturday evening. One of the men's group discussions that involved three men in Huda Mosque ended at nearly 1

a.m., and one of the interviews, also at Huda Mosque, finished at 11.45 p.m., while the men in both Singaporean groups would already left the worship venues by 10.30 p.m. (In Summer they would perform the activities until 11 p.m., because the *Isha salat* time is close to that hour during summer.) This different length in the men's group activities could be attributed partly to the fact that the Singaporean congregants were older than those in both Indonesian groups (especially Sumatra Bersatu, which was dominated by younger men). The other reason lay in the venue. Both Singaporean groups hired a public facility, which they had to clean up after each use. In contrast, both Indonesian groups owned their own place of worship and had the freedom to stay there as long as they wanted to. Overall, a regular male attendee at the mosque could spend two to five hours at the gathering; men in Sumatra Bersatu tended to stay longer than those in the other groups.

Being involved in a relaxing conversation using their first languages about things that connected them was the key experience that established male bonding in the groups. This was what made the conversation groups not only important but meaningful for the men, as Muslims, and as members of a minority group. These men demonstrated an appropriate degree of religious devotion in that they committed significant time on a regular basis to participate in activities that involved religious rituals. Through light conversation the men shared their gendered identity, commitment to religious practices, concern over the community, and personal stories of maintaining piety in the secular public. The conversation groups (and the religious gathering to some extent) served as a cultural enclave for the Muslim men through which they created an imagined cultural boundary between themselves and the social world outside them.

From the field notes:

Over the observation period of this activity of about four weeks I found that people talked about anything, but never strayed far from family, jobs, gossip, mosque activities, personal experience of observing fasting in Melbourne, foods and diet, issues affecting Muslims in Australia, and breaking news from Indonesia. In the first week people tended to compare this year's Ramadhan and what they had done the previous year. The rewards and challenges of working while fasting was another issue of interest, as well as what Muslims

from different backgrounds do in Ramadhan. Some gossip concerning parking disputes that affected Muslims' religious activity was a hot topic in the first few days, and it was sometimes revisited on the other days.

People also reflected on their personal situation as Muslims in a simple manner. In one of the observation occasions, we talked about the attitude of the mosque congregation. 'We often come to this stereotype that we Muslims and Asians are just a mess, disorganised. We do not go with rules and regulations' said Dimas (50s) once. 'That's really sad, but true. Just look at these people. They know that parking is a bit of a concern here. We asked them to come early. But they come in the last second before the prayer, and they make chaos,' Dimas (50s) added. 'Our people can be very good citizens actually, when they are in traffic or in public facilities for example, but when it comes to our own program their true habit comes out instantly' Imran (30s) complained. Fikri (30s) nodded: 'Yeah. It's really weird, isn't it?' Dimas (50s) defended Indonesian Muslims, arguing, 'But our Indonesian fellows behave a lot better compared to Pakistani or Arabic brothers. These people are stubborn and like to argue.' Dimas (50s) once told me that there were a couple of incidents where non-Indonesian congregations stubbornly parked their cars in the shopping centre and argued with him. Against this behaviour the committee showed no tolerance, and the incident ended up with the visitor leaving the mosque.

A few seconds later, the men expressed excitement about Ramadhan. 'We love Ramadhan when it comes,' said Dany (60s), who had just joined us. 'Especially for us as Muslims here. Well, it is not as fascinating as in my hometown in Indonesia, but it is more meaningful, you know. Because it is about us, the Muslims. Look at how enthusiastically people come here,' Dany (60s) explained. They also exchanged information about events and activities hosted by other Muslim groups. One night Suyanto (42) and Imran compared how the Tarawih salat was performed differently by different Muslims groups. They mentioned a very distinct practice of Tarawih salat where the ritual was conducted at 2a.m. to 4.30a.m.

The fasting ritual prompted discussion about food and diets. The group agreed that, ironically, people tend to consume and spend more money on food during Ramadhan and actually gain weight by the end of the festival. 'This is a moment when all kind of foods we love from our home country are being served to celebrate the festival. How can you resist it?' Zainuddin (48) made an excuse about the change in diet during Ramadhan. 'We eat more when breaking our fast to make us feel happy after a long day starving. Also serving fasting people is an act of worship' argued Danang (60s). Food is an important signifier of identity for Indonesian as well as Singaporean Muslims, especially signifying the non-alcoholic culture these groups were embracing. Joking and teasing took place throughout the parking duty.

As they talked, the men discussed the many issues that arose from their day-to-day experiences, their interests, concerns, fears, excitement, hopes, and ideological stances as Muslim men and as a minority in Australia. These issues, while seemingly trivial, allowed the men to connect. They also shared the excitement of the Australian experience from simple things such as enjoying public spaces ('the new Botanical Garden in Cranbourne is cool') or trying a new halal restaurant, to something a little more important such as how to arrange a hajj pilgrimage from Australia. They moved between Australian and Islamic subjects; their conversation constantly explored both how being a Muslim affected their life in Australia and how living in Australia affected their practice as a Muslim. Ramadhan and the Eid Festival are special for minority Muslims because it is the moment when they can truly feel that they are Muslims. The men would begin with light issues based on their personal experience, but the chat could easily turn serious. The interview with Budiman started as an informal conversation where he was talking about his experience with Islamophobia. The three men's-group discussions conducted in Huda Mosque (Chapter 3), one of which arrived at a very private issue for the men involved, began with informal conversation. The topic of Muslims' position and vulnerability in Australia was of continual interest to the men. When I conducted the fieldwork, Muslims in Australia were in the media spotlight as a result of controversy over the movie *'The Innocence of Muslims'*. When I was writing this chapter they were under heavier pressure due to the terror escalated globally by the Islamic State of Iraq

and Syria (ISIS).⁵⁷ The two issues had generated significant Islamophobia in society and abroad that was affecting all Muslims regardless of their cultural background or country of origin. In situations like these informal conversations became the most comfortable space for the men to share their confusion and disbelief about what was happening, their concern over Muslims' situation, their anger, frustration, and sense of vulnerability. For the men, this was more than an act of communication; it was a lived practice of identity survival and solidarity consolidation.

The flow of conversation from one topic to another and who initiated a new topic or maintained the current topic of talk reflected the dynamics of men's interaction practices. There was no moderator. Nobody controlled what issue would be discussed and in what ways, or whose opinion should be taken regarding some issues and why. Every participant had an equal position in directing the flow of the conversation. With that characteristic, every man could feel that everybody else in the group heard his voice, and demonstrated the same commitment to others' stories. This dynamic suggests that the male-only interaction practice is a very democratic space in which the men can participate.

From the field notes:

There were moments when more private issues were revealed during parking duty. On one occasion, Dimas (50s) shared with me his dilemma between his job and family. He had been offered a job that was suited to his professional training in medical field. 'The money is very good, you know, because the job requires a very specific skill in which I had been trained,' Dimas (50s) said in a heavy voice. He had been involved casually with the job before and his Australian business partner had asked him to work full time. He liked that job very much. However, it requires four hours' driving every day to reach the place or an overnight stay at the workplace. He felt that he could not leave his family and asking his wife and children go with him would mean his wife's rising career as a researcher in an Australian national research institution would be disrupted. 'I decided to stay here for my wife and kids,' he concluded

⁵⁷ Australian National Security. 'Islamic State'. <http://www.nationalsecurity.gov.au/Listedterroristorganisations/Pages/IslamicState.aspx>. Viewed on 8 May 2015.

reluctantly. On another occasion, Budiman (50) shared with a different group of people at Post 1 how he approached his prospective Indonesian wife, who lived in Sydney, while he was in Melbourne. With great enthusiasm Budiman (50) told us how he flew to Indonesia to meet his then father-in-law and convinced the man to approve his marriage proposal. Imran revealed to us his working experience while fasting. Imran was an engineer who worked for an international electrical company. Every day, his job involved driving long distances to support the company's customer-complaint division. He often had to leave home very early before taking the sahur (pre-sunrise meal a Muslim takes before fasting during daylight hours). In that situation he said confidently, 'Sometimes I don't have a chance to take sahur, you know. When that happens I have one banana, a can of Red Bull and a cigarette and I am ready for the day.'

Since the first night of duty, I found that this interaction practice at the two posts gave me a strong impression about bonding among the men who were involved in it. That night, being part of the parking team gave me the chance to get to know Indra (40s), Imran (30s), Fikri (30s), and some other men better. I had met Indra (40s) and Imran (30s) a couple times in the mosque before Ramadhan, but we had barely had the chance to introduce ourselves to each other. Indra (40s) and Imran (30s) were newcomers in the community. Both had lived in Victoria for about four years when the observation was conducted. As for Dimas (50s), I had known him and his family for several years before the study, but I had had little close personal communication with him. Budiman's (50) interview in fact unintentionally took place during parking duty when he shared his childhood story as a second-generation Muslim, his work life, and his involvement in the Muslim community. The conversation groups gave me a chance to get to know more people and form closer friendships. I believe it worked too for people in the community. Men like Imran (30s), Fikri (30s), Zainuddin (48,) and Wawan (60s) would not come to the mosque as often and as intensely at other times of the year as they did in Ramadhan, which gave them a good reason to prioritise the experience of being with other Muslim

men doing other activities. To the group this interaction signified a sense of belonging and bonding to the men's community of the mosque.

While no rule was explicitly applied in managing the conduct of the discussion, the men very carefully maintained a standard of etiquette in accordance with Islamic ethics. You should not insult or attack others, talk about things considered taboo, or talk about sex (the men would use symbolic phrases when they referred to sexual activity but firmly within marital framework⁵⁸). It was more than a technical matter that the discussions were conducted in religious settings, so demonstrating an impolite attitude would spoil the religious atmosphere carefully maintained in the venue. It was exactly that effort to keep offensive topics away from the discussions that made the men feel different, and that they were men who were deeply committed to certain principles. These practices of politeness served as norms that bound the men together and allowed them to demonstrate piety as an expression of their religious selves. When speaking, a participant would sometimes show religious devotion particularly by using Arabic phrases such as *insyallah* (by the will of God), *astaghfirullah* (I ask God for forgiveness), *jazzakallah khair* (May God reward you goodness), *masyaallah* (God has willed it), or *alhamdulillah* (all thanks to God). He might also seek spiritual solidarity to other men by saying, 'I beg you pray for me.' Another visible code of Islamic ethics was expressing respect and acceptance toward every man in the group. These norms could result from their shared gendered religious identity, and were very crucial in establishing male bonding among them as Muslims. The experience of being involved in the conversation groups where men could exchange their stories clearly had a positive impact on their commitment to maintain these norms.

The discussion about the informal method of the construction of Muslim brotherhood shows that male bonding can be produced among religiously devoted men through spontaneous, casual, and relaxed practices of social interaction that took place regularly in a religious atmosphere. Muslim men used religious gatherings as a social space to create a supportive group of fellow Muslim men and consolidate their religious-masculine identity. The social

⁵⁸ Talk about sexual activity was very rare among the men. When it happened, it would be under the topic of marital relationships, done quickly and covered in funny terms. The men handled talk like this neatly. Fahrani's (44) phrase 'circling around the bed' and 'request' quoted in Chapter 4 are example of such practice.

interaction among the men was grounded by their shared, gendered religious identity and cultural background, and strengthened by their status as a minority. The key to the performance of this practice was that the men knew that as men they were especially privileged, and as Muslims in Australia they were distinct in being part of a minority and far from home but united by being Muslim men. This practice demonstrates one of the powerful effects of religion that enabled Muslim men to produce a shared communion of believers. As will be discussed in part 3 of this chapter, this practice has impacted on sustaining men's power and marginalisation of women in the religious institution. Through this social practice, the men used talking and communication in a manner that was relaxing but respectful and religiously conscious, and that established identity and solidarity. Informal conversations allowed them, using their first language, to actively involve themselves in sharing stories, issues, and interests that from the point of view of their shared identity were meaningful, important and interesting. The Muslim men were rarely able to do such activities in other social spaces in the wider Australian public context involving people from different beliefs and cultures. This was the space where Muslim men expressed respect and acceptance toward those who shared their gendered religious identity.

The Formal Method: The Isha salat in Huda Mosque

The formal method of establishing Muslim brotherhood is through fulfilling religious obligations in the performance of religious rituals in a congregation of men. . This means that rituals as a formal religious activity in the Australian context give way to the production of male-bonding work among the Muslim men. Looking from a ritualistic perspective, I consider Durkheim's view that holds that ritual is the basis of religion, and even society as a whole (Durkheim 1995: 352, 374). I am further interested in Rappaport's thesis (1999) that more specifically describes ritual as a 'basic social act' (138). A Durkheimian understanding of ritual allows me to analyse Islamic ritual as practice of solidarity and bonding among Muslim men. When believers of the same religion perform rituals together, they may be experiencing what Durkheim called 'collective effervescence': an experience that can unite them, strengthen their solidarity, and reinforce their collective identity (Singleton 2014, 9). Indeed in Islamic doctrine, ritual is the core of religious belief. As a Muslim, I was taught that Islam has five pillars, all of which are rituals. It is rather surprising that the existing literature

on Muslim masculinities pays very little attention to ritual and how it preserves and produces a religious-masculine ethos and shapes Islamic manhood. In this section I argue that the practice of ritual among Muslim men makes a considerable contribution to their bonding, and indeed to Muslim masculinities.

Performance of ritual was the centre of the six religious gatherings studied in this project. Except for the Sunday morning sermon hosted by Insan Indonesia, all the gatherings were centred on *Isha salat*, an obligatory ritual conducted at night, the last of the *salat* a Muslim is obligated to perform five times daily.⁵⁹ In addition, the gatherings also included other obligatory *salat* and non-obligatory rituals. The weekend gathering held by Jami Melayu, Baitul Melayu and Sumatra Bersatu shared the same components and sequences of activities. I will use Baitul Melayu's program to give an example of these components and sequences in a typical weekend religious gathering. In Melbourne, the *Isha* time changes slightly from around 6.40 p.m. in winter to around 10.30 p.m. in summer. Thus the gathering timing changed periodically to follow the ritual. The committee negotiated this timing to allow the community to gather and perform the rituals within the same period of time. From winter to mid-spring (June to September) the gathering at Baitul Melayu started with *Maghrib salat* (at around 6.00p.m., see glossary) and concluded with *dzikir* and *du'a*, finishing around 9.30p.m. *Isha salat* was observed one-and-a-half hours after *Maghrib*. Before and after *Isha salat* the congregation performed *dzikir* (see glossary) together and *Sunnah salat* (non-obligatory *salat*) individually, and sometimes recited the Quran. While recommended, these are not obligatory rituals. From mid-spring to summer (October to January), the gathering started earlier with *Asr salat* (see glossary) at around 5 p.m. *Maghrib salat* and sermon (if scheduled) were conducted in the middle of the program, which resumed with *Isha salat* at around 10 p.m. (10.30 p.m. at the latest). In spring and summer short Qur'an-reading groups involving adults as well as children also ran before the gathering began. Meal-time was always between *Maghrib* and *Isha salat*. In short, at the gathering a Muslim man performed sequences of rituals collectively and individually, making the gathering busy and dynamic.

⁵⁹ For detailed information about *salat* in Islam, see Glasse (2002, 396-401).

I focus on the performance of the *Isha salat* at one of these gatherings when discussing the construction of brotherhood among the Muslim men. On one occasion at Baitul Melayu, Mansur (50s), who was considered the imam of the group, stated that *salat* is a principal sacred deed for a Muslim. *Salat* is stated in the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad as the pillar of religion (Ahmad 1996). It can be regarded to be the most basic act of worship, while worship (*ibadat*) is the ultimate teaching in Islamic ethics (Glasse 2002). Performance of *salat* by the Muslim men in the gathering demonstrates important aspects of rituals that allow a certain type of bonding among the performers to be created and preserved. I briefly discuss these aspects in the following paragraphs.

Salat as a practice of worship demonstrates some key features of ritual, as suggested by Durkheim and those working under his influence including Collins (2000), Asad (1993), Bellah (2005) and especially Rappaport (1999), that allow the creation of male bonding and solidarity among the men. One of those features is performance (Rappaport 1999, 37).⁶⁰ Rappaport (1999) sees ritual as performative act: something that is not symbolic but to be conducted. Islamic teaching holds *salat* as *ibadat* (an act of worship): something to be performed, to be enacted (Glasse 2002, 396). In fact, Islamic theology gives *salat* the religious status of *fard 'ain*, or a compulsory act for every adult Muslim. *Salat* consists of basic elements of Rappaport's (1999) definition of ritual: 'acts' and 'utterances' (24), the fundamental relation of which establishes 'convention in ritual' and social contract and morality (126). As a performative action, ritual requires a commitment from which actions in the future can be expected; solidarity among the committed performers is the basis of that expectation (Bellah 2005, 193).

Salat can also be understood as a symbolic action of submission toward the object of the Islamic faith (Schimmel 1975). By this understanding *salat* is seen as a sacred action consisting of a set of acts and utterances that can impart meanings contributing to the discourse of monotheism in Islam. However, considering its practice among Muslims and the way they understand *salat*, my argument in this regard is that *salat* is more than a symbolic act to impart certain meanings and messages. *Salat* is an action of self-discipline that is performed through a distinct method aiming to continuously sustain the relationship of

⁶⁰ In fact Rappaport (1999) also includes formality as one of the key features of ritual, a feature that I also use to categorise the process of forming Muslim brotherhood in this discussion.

submission between the believing-self and the Object of this belief, mentally and bodily. Based on this view, I adopted Asad's (1993) consideration of ritual as discipline. In its status as discipline itself, the performance of *salat* embodies the submissive mood of the Muslim-self. The performance of *salat* as ritual is characterised by a shared focus and spiritual mood among the actors, where each becomes aware that others maintain the same focus (Collins 2000). This shared focus and commitment fosters a sense of membership among the actors and creates a moral boundary between the performers and the people outside this membership (Collins 2000).

From the performance of *salat* in the six religious gatherings mentioned earlier I use the performance of *Isha salat* among mainly Indonesian Muslim men in Huda Mosque during Ramadhan 2012 to illustrate a formal method of enacting Muslim brotherhood. The following narrative in italics is a description of one occasion of observation during the rituals, reconstructed from my field notes (see Chapter 3). Analysis and discussion are provided after the description.

Waiting for the Isha salat one night of Ramadhan in 2012, I was seated in the mosque's main room, the hall. It was a large space with a simple design. In the front was a wide plain concrete wall painted in light green. In the middle of this wall was the mighrab, typically the main feature inside a mosque. The mighrab is a special site occupied only by the imam while leading prayers. In Huda Mosque, it was a small open room built deep through the front wall. The mighrab had an arch shape on its top and roof, painted in dark green in its entire wall. Over the top of the mighrab entrance, located in the front wall of the hall, a short calligraphic (an art product of writing Qur'an verses) was written on a dark green background (I did not record what this calligraphic said, or from which verse of the Qur'an). A large sajdah (a small rug produced to perform salat individually) lay on the mighrab floor. This mighrab of Huda Mosque was very small and simple in design relative to those of many other mosques, such as Eiwad Mosque and At Taqwa Mosque outside the Melbourne CBD.

On the left side stood a wall of glass within aluminium frames. This wall

contained the main entrance, twin roller doors in the southern section of the wall, just few steps away from my sitting position. Another set of twin roller doors was located in the northern section of the wall. Through this wall I could see the mosque veranda, a two-metre-wide space outside the hall stretching along the glass wall. This space was actually an open area, but that night it was covered by a thick, dark brown, translucent plastic material. This cover, while it looked very firm, did not seem to be a permanent installation of the veranda. A few metres behind me and next to each other were doors to the toilet and the kitchen. The mosque floor was neatly covered by a thick, dark green carpet with an arch motif commonly found in mosques. This carpet provided warmth and comfort especially when one sat on the floor for some significant duration (a sermon can last in 60 minutes or longer). Sitting on the floor, as everybody did in the mosque hall that night, is a common body position throughout ritual sessions and during mosque attendances. An instant but very strong sensation when I sat in the middle of the congregation was the male atmosphere inside the mosque. The congregants where I was present were all male. As a born Muslim, I have been in such situations since I was 6 or 7. I do not remember the first time I attended a mass congregation in a mosque. However, I am very familiar with this impression every time I participate in a religious gathering. As I grow older this impression gets clearer and stronger.

The strong male presence did not mean that there was no female congregant with us joining the ritual in the mosque that night; in fact, there were many. A large number of men had brought their wives and daughters, as a religious event is a family event for many Muslims. Although the family came to the gate together, the women had to separate themselves from the men to enter the mosque from another (smaller) entrance leading to the women's section. From the position of the rear gate of the mosque, they had to make a further effort to reach this entrance, which was located at the far opposite to the glass wall. From the main entrance, the women's entrance was unseen, and on the way to reach this entrance from the rear gate a woman just disappeared from

sight once she passed through the outer side of the mosque veranda. You would never see her again until the whole ritual session had concluded. If she came from the front gate, which faces the main road, you could not even see her coming at all. The women's section in Huda Mosque was not in fact a separate compartment, but a shared space within the mosque hall where the men were also present. Some sets of light green curtain separated and obscured the women's section from the rest of the hall's space. The curtain rails hung below the roof, separating less than a third of the hall's space on my right side. While not permanent, the curtains were high enough and tightly installed so that you could not notice women's presence from any position inside the main hall, where the men were present. In practice you could not even hear their voices. The curtain was very successful in creating the impression that only men were present in the mosque and performing the ritual. I could not sense women's presence while performing the ritual in this men's group. It was just an assumption that they were there, and often the men congregants never assumed it at all. From the mosque hall, women did not exist.

Here in my position, I was merged into a group of more than 150 men, filling nearly the whole mosque hall. Sitting in the floor mostly with legs crossed, they made organised lines stretching from the glass wall on my left all the way to the curtain on the other side. Muslims call this line formation praying as shaf. All faced the mighrab direction, which was also the kiblah (praying direction); this is to the west in Australia. From the line of congregants closest to the mighrab in front to the last line, which was a couple of lines behind me, there were ten lines in all. The lines were separated by gaps of less than 1.5 metres, enough space for a man of average height to do sujud (prostration). The arch motif on the carpet helped the men to form this praying formation. The main hall still left a few spaces behind the congregation. Except for the first four lines from the back, each line consisted of twelve to sixteen men. Judging from their faces many of these men were of middle age, many others were more mature. However, younger congregants were also a noticeable presence. A

handful of men brought their sons and daughters into the middle of the congregation. [Kammal (60), a mosque committee, did not like this practice and became easily annoyed by their noise]. Not all of them were Indonesian. These men came from different backgrounds: Middle Eastern, Asian (Pakistani-Indian), Malay and a handful of African and White Australians. In contrast to the warm, relaxing, spontaneous and cheerful scenes in the parking posts described earlier, the atmosphere inside Huda Mosque hall was serious, calm, tranquil, and quiet. Everybody remained silent. When there was a talk, it was quiet and brief. Only the noise of sliding doors disrupted the silence each time a man entered the mosque every two or three seconds, followed by the greeting 'assalamu'alaikum.' Many men seemed to be mumbling dzikr, and some in the front line were reciting the Qur'an with very low voices, using a printed Qur'an version or a copy on a phone or gadget. The most observable attitude among the men was that everybody seemed to be concentrating on himself and ready for worship. Faces looked down to the floor. The dark, cold weather outside the mosque gave another ingredient to the religious aura inside.

Scanning the congregation behind him, after a couple seconds Kammal (60s) rose from his seat and called iqamah. It was a call for the Isha salat. Iqamah asked the congregation to be prepared, organise themselves in praying formation and make themselves psychologically ready for worship. Kammal's voice was loud, firm, and clear.

'Allahu akbar, Allaahu akbar

Ashhadu 'an la ilaha illallaaah

Wa asshadu 'anna muhammadan rasulu llaaah

Hayya 'ala s salaah, hayya ala l falaa'

Qad qomat as-salah, qod qomat as-salah

Allahu akbar, Allahu akbar

Laa ilaa ha ilallaaah'

(*'God the Greatest, God the Greatest*

*I bear the witness that there is no submission but to God
And I bear the witness that Muhammad is the messenger of God
Let us perform salat, let us achieve nobility
The call of salat is being proclaimed, the call of salat is being proclaimed
God the Greatest, God the Greatest
There is no submission but to God')*

Before Kammal (60s) reached the fifth line of iqamah, every man was rising from their seat, standing in their position shoulder to shoulder, feet to feet and tightening the lines so that there was no gap between two men standing. When Kammal (60s) had finished, the men were still making neat and tight lines. There was no instruction given before all this simultaneous movement; it happened in silence, without a word. Only a slight noise of people moving, ground being pressed gently. Everybody seemed know exactly what to do, or at least the majority did, and the few uninformed men just followed what everybody else was doing. In standing position a line of men congregants could contain more people. There were 18 men now in the front line behind the mighrab. There is no requirement for a man to fill the front shaf. If he comes first to the mosque and wishes the position, he has the right to fill it regardless of his age, job, status, ethnicity, or level of piety in religion.

From the very front shaf the imam of the night's prayer took his position in the mighrab. A first-generation Muslim, Ahmad (50s) acted as the imam for the worship that night. He wore a long dark grey gamish, a White half-moon praying cap and a plain, white cloth triangle to cover his shoulders and back. Stepping into the praying mat in the mighrab, he did not position himself in readiness to pray, instead turning to face the congregation. After a few seconds scanning them, he remarked to the men congregation before him, 'Straight lines, brothers, as the perfection of our shafs is part of the salat perfection!' That was a procedural instruction before leading the salat. Many imams would quote its original Arabic version from the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad.

When everybody had stood up and the lines were tidied up, I could feel the

seriousness in the room deepen. We were going to make an obligatory prayer together in this holy moment. Everybody kept quiet, faces down to the floor behind the jamaah standing in front of them. When the imam delivered a reminder to tidy up and straighten the lines, I felt that all the men in the room were ready for the worship action. At this point, we recited the du'a before the salat, each whispering to himself, 'Usholli fardhal isyaa-i arba'a raka'a atim mustaqbilal qiblati adaa-an lillaahi ta'allah,' ('I am intending to perform the obligatory Isha prayer four rakaat facing myself to Qiblah for the sake of Allah') and expecting the first takbir (the word Allahu akbar) spoken by the imam very soon. Behind my position, I still heard people coming from the main entrance in a rush, as they did not want to be left behind by the congregation. A couple of seconds later, I heard a clear, powerful, but calm voice from the mighrab pronouncing takbir: 'Allaaahu akbar!' I responded right away with takbir in a low voice, as did the male congregation. In that short moment the mosque hall was filled with takbir being pronounced softly by every man who had joined the worship. The Isha salat had begun.

Isha salat is performed in four rakaat. There is no place here to describe in detail every part of action of the Isha salat that night. The salat also significantly contains some repetitious movements, as every rakaat consists of almost the same ritual acts. I will highlight here some aspects that particularly important and relevant aspects, in that the ritual that night was conducted during Ramadhan. Isha is among the five-times-daily salats that are obligatory, regardless of whether it is Ramadhan or not. I noticed two things that made that night's Isha salat more special than when it is performed in other months. First, the spiritual enthusiasm in observing the salat showed in the number of congregation involved. In a normal night the jamaah (congregation) of Isha in Huda Mosque will include no more than 20 men. In a Ramadhan night it was at least 150. Large numbers of congregants bring a much more powerful aura of religiosity/spirituality, as well as bond of solidarity. Second, the spiritual intensity was deepened in Ramadhan as the motivation for worship grew stronger. One noticeable element of this intensity

was the reciting of the Qur'an verse in the salat. In the first two rakaat of Isha salat the imam recites a chapter or some verses of the Qur'an loudly to be heard by the jamaah. Throughout the nights I did the observation, the selection of verses to be recited by the imams tended to be much longer. A few imams, like Amir (30s), loved very long verses or chapters of the Qur'an. On another night outside Ramadhan, an imam typically would select a chapter with no more than 15 verses in one rakaat. In Ramadhan, they could go for 20 to 30 verses in one rakaat. It gave a strong message that we were performing a very special practice of worship at a holy moment. The lengthy reading of verses in salat can be quite tiring since the congregation stands while listening the recitation, which is the longest part of salat. However, I hardly heard anyone complaining, even for those men in their 60s (such as Usep, Subagya, Kammal, Wawan, and Danang⁶¹). This reflects the spiritual level that the men wanted to gain. That night the salat was concluded with two salam (greeting) by the end of the fourth rakaat, a shorter form of the ritual.

There are two aspects of the *Isha salat* as it was performed by Muslim men in Huda Mosque that night which can be analysed as establishing brotherhood among the men. The first is the features of intrinsic ritual that allowed men to engage in ritual experience together. The second is the social meaning given to the experience derived from Muslims' position as a minority in Australia. I will discuss these aspects in the following paragraphs.

When performing *salat* together, the male-only congregation in the mosque shared the same focus, which was directed to the imagined existence where the performance was being presented. The male congregation also shared an emotional and spiritual mood and moral expectation, and believed that other men maintained that the same focus. What was more important, as men, they shared what Connell (2005) calls a 'patriarchal dividend' in the form of spiritual privilege. The shared moral and emotional mood generated during the ritual is a fundamental aspect in the effort of regulating the self. This mood is addressed toward the

⁶¹ Many of these men did not participate in the interviews and group discussions.

Absolute realm, as embodiment of the submission of the religious-self.⁶² When shared among men participating in the ritual, this consciousness instantly conferred individual respect, honour and solidarity. This solidarity generated what Collins (2000) names a sense of membership and the creation of a boundary between the performer and the world outside them. In such an atmosphere, the mosque became a moral-religious territory that helped the men maintain their privilege. This sense of connection and bonding was further reinforced by a shared experience of what McNeil (1995) mentioned as ‘keeping together in time’ (10): the Muslim men presented at the same time and place for a sacred performance.

Being present in the *salat* venue alone, I felt the mens’ sense of group religious-gendered identity and moral bonding. When they further performed the same action of submission at exactly the same time and place, they created spiritual solidarity. They recited almost the same recitations, proclaimed the same *takbir*. The more congregants involved in *salat*, the stronger this impact could be. Performed in *jamaah*, every part of the ritual should be taken together by all congregants present, but only at the command of the imam. This command was the same spoken praise word of *takbir*, ‘*Allahu Akbar*’ (God the Greatest). Hearing the *takbir* by the same imam, then together performing each part of the *salat* reinforced a sense of togetherness and spiritual connectedness.

Considering Asad’s (1993) suggestion, I hold *salat* as more than a symbolic act, but a regulated discipline of the self. This discipline consists of performative components (Rappaport 1999) of ‘utterances’: the recitation and ‘acts’ – different body positions and movement from one position to the other. *Salat* may impart certain messages meaningful for its performer. However, such meaning, I believe, would hardly result from the effort of its lay Muslim performers to interpret their acts and utterances. Such meaning could be derived from the men’s social position and experience, as I discuss below. The components of *salat* could be interpreted as containing certain meanings and some Muslim scholars have attempted to interpret those meanings.⁶³ However, I believe that the Muslim men at Huda Mosque that night, as for many other Muslims, were not familiar with such interpretations,

⁶² The second line of a widely practiced version of recitation after the first *takbir* (called the *Ifitahdu’a*) can be loosely translated as “Indeed I am standing here directing my face and my heart with truthfulness and complete surrender toward the Existence who created the earth and the universe.” This line reflects the degree of focus required in *salat* performance; see Glasse (2002).

⁶³ Schimmel (1975), for example, collected some results of this interpretation of each body position in *salat*.

which require sophisticated interpretation of Islamic texts, and therefore these understandings did not affect the performance of *salat* among the men.⁶⁴ The recitations components in *salat* do have literal meaning that is accessible for everyday Muslims to understand. These recitations are in Arabic, and all praise God and make a statement of self-submission to God. While the recitations can be easily translated into Malay or Indonesian, for a non-Arabic speaker, such as nearly all members of the five Muslim groups examined in this study, these recitations have little symbolic meaning. Except for the most common and simplest utterances, such as '*Allahu akbar*' (God the greatest), '*Amin*' (may God grant our prayer), '*Bismillah hi rahman ni rokhim*' (in the name of God, the most merciful, the most loving) or the *Al Fatihah* chapter of the Quran, with which many Muslims are familiar, I believe that most of the men did not understand the recitations' meanings in either their own languages or in English. The men did not know the meaning of the words they uttered during *salat* and I would suggest it was of little importance to them.

At this point the performance of *salat* by these men cannot be understood as instilling meaning for its performers. For the men in Huda Mosque, the most important thing was to perform the *salat* in accordance to the religious requirement: five times a day, preparing by cleaning oneself by taking *wudu* (ablution), being on time, having a true intention (*niya*), and above all performing it earnestly. The men in Huda Mosque were committing an act of submission fundamental to their religious masculine identity, not seeking meaning. At certain points, such as in the month of Ramadhan, this discipline is transformed from an obligatory status to a desirable and anticipated action, something that the men celebrated and longed for.⁶⁵ This is one aspect of ritual in Durkheimian understanding: that ritual transforms an obligation into something that is desired (Olaveson 2011). It is precisely this shared commitment to the discipline of submission – not its symbolic meaning – that instantly generated identity bonding among the men.

The next crucial aspect in the performance of *salat* has to do with the social-political context of Muslims as a minority in Australia. Observing mainly the US context, Hughes (2013, 143)

⁶⁴Only a small number of Muslims would be interested in searching for the meaning of 'body technique' in *salat* as presented by Schimmel (1975); those interested in and practising sufism would be included in this group.

⁶⁵ As a Muslim man in Huda Mosque said in one of the conversation practices, "The Ramadhan feast is about us, the Muslims."

states that actions and symbols associated with Islamic ritual are becoming a noticeable way of self-definition for Muslims against the mainstream. He further argues that in a world perceived to be increasingly secular and where Muslims inhabit a minority status, the belief and practice of ritual has become one of the primary sites of identity creation and contestation, both individually and collectively (Hughes 2013, 143). Indeed, a number of studies across different countries, many of which are Muslim majority states, have indicated how ritual in Islam has been enacted as identity creation and preservation (Stewart and Strathern 2005).

For the Muslim men in this study, performing *salat* together as part of Australian religious experience served as reinforcement of collective, religious, gendered identity. They were conscious that they did what the majority of men in the secular Australian public did not, and that made them different. Also, as men, they could gain a moral-spiritual benefit that Muslim women would not likely be able to. In other words, being in the mosque and performing ritual provided a transformative sense of identity among the men. Outside the mosque they were a minority, but inside they were leaders and religiously blessed. Such consciousness would not have been generated if the ritual had been performed in Indonesia, where *salat* is a daily routine of the society. During the nights of Ramadhan, performance of *salat* in mosques (such as the one performed by Muslim men in Huda Mosque) is part of the annual mass religious festival, and mosques are everywhere in Indonesia for Muslims to take part in rituals. Performing rituals in Australia felt very different for the men in this study, and gave stronger meaning to their identity. While Hughes (2013) defines this identity creation in certain contexts as a form of politicisation of belief, I do not see that the performance of *salat* by the men in Huda Mosque was political. The male congregants were making an identity statement with their ritual. However, that statement was directed towards their religious-selves (as a mechanism of identity work) and had an impact on the identity survival of the minority group.

The discussion above regarding formal methods of constructing Muslim brotherhood suggests that male bonding among the Muslim men in this study was not established as an exhibition of masculine energy, but through focus on oneself in relation to the Absolute realm, shared emotional and spiritual moods, and shared commitment to the act of self-discipline in a performance of daily religious ritual. The shared self-identification among the

men as a minority group generated a power that further reinforced their collective religious and gendered identity. In ritual, masculine solidarity and approval toward men's practice is not gained through display of a man's ability to explore his self-independency and personal achievement in the physical realm. Instead, it is gained by expressions of commitment to a fundamental moral order that requires self-mastery to maintain the relationship of submission to the Highest reality. All of this collective ritual experience is only possible due to spatial segregation in ritual space. (I discuss how spatial segregation between men and women in the religious setting is crucial for the enactment of the Muslim brotherhood in part 3 of this chapter.)

2. The Meaning and Experience of the Muslim Brotherhood

The previous sections examine the establishment of Muslim brotherhood in religious gatherings. In this part of the chapter, I discuss what the bonding of brotherhood meant for the Muslim men in this study with regard to their religious masculine identity.

A sense of brotherhood may reflect resistance towards dominant values, particularly due to the experience of marginalisation and racism. As Archer (2003) suggested, the employment of Islam and the discourse of brotherhood offer a model of a strong and hard masculinity among Muslim boys in the UK, in comparison to a weak and soft Asian masculinity (as the vulnerable victim of racism). Archer (2003) emphasised that the Muslim boys in her study rejected 'whiteness' and British identity, while engaged with 'white' society, by identifying themselves with a 'strong' religion that offered a narrative of Muslim unity across different ethnic backgrounds.

The men in this study referred to the bond of brotherhood among them in slightly different ways, but all characterised a specific form of male-only relationship that was enacted within Muslim communities. They illustrated the bonding produced as a relationship that was 'more than just friendship', 'like a family', 'as brothers' or 'a community of best friends'. These terms reflect their understanding of the relationship as developing beyond the religious setting as well. A Singaporean-born Muslim, Karim (57), eloquently expressed the intensified feeling of connectedness in his engagement with Baitul Melayu. He said:

In Singapore, I used to have relatives and friends. Here in Australia, the people around me [the Muslims members of Baitul Melayu], became more than friends. Maybe not as close as relatives, but definitely more than just friends. In fact, these people were not related to me before. They were a new experience for me. So friends are friends, relatives are relatives. But this community [Baitul Melayu] is a place where you make friends to be close as they are relatives. Also our relationship [in Baitul Melayu] grows naturally because we talk to and get together with them every week. In Singapore, may be you have a few close friends, what they call a 'clique'. But for me this community [Baitul Melayu] is not a small 'clique' but a community of my best friends (Karim, 57).

Such strong feelings of connectedness reinforce the same expressions of belonging and connectedness found among Indonesian men in Nilan et al.'s (2007) study. In their interviews with five Indonesian Muslim men studying in Australia, Nilan et al. (2007) recorded a shared sense of connectedness among the men enacted through the mosque community and friendship. They felt they had 'very close' relationships, shared a sense of belonging and felt like a 'family' (15).

Ethnicities may appear to be central in the creation of Muslim communities and Muslim brotherhood. The men in this study shared the same first languages, ate foods from the same ethnic cultures, talked about affairs happening in their home countries, discussed issues meaningful to their background cultures, shared memories attached to their homelands, and dressed in fashions inspired by their cultures. All of these brought the men together, made interaction and communication effective and further built meaningful friendships. However, these aspects associated with ethnicity are additional resources that do not directly contribute to the materials, values, meanings and objectives of the brotherhood, particularly to the dimension related to the men's identity. It is religion that provides these elements. Religious activities centred in rituals became the core programs that gathered members of the communities together on a regular basis. While Indonesian and Malay foods were very attractive, it was their status as *halal* that made them meaningful. Sumatra Bersatu, for example, officially is an ethnic-based organisation. However, its priority programs are hosting Islamic rituals combined with Qur'an classes, *Eid* festivals and *Tarawih salat*. Building a mosque was one important project, rather than a cultural centre. They used the Qur'an as a source book, subject of learning and activities such as classes, sermons and recitation. They also planned to organise a *Hajj* pilgrimage, something Baitul Melayu and Jami Melayu had done. Many parents in the five Muslim

groups would not forgive themselves if they failed to teach Bahasa Indonesia or Malay to their children, the second-generation Muslims. However, they would put much more effort into making sure that their children could read the Qur'an and obtained adequate religious education. The transition of religious knowledge to the second generation is an obvious indication that they showed greater concern about religion than ethnic background. It was apparent that their children felt more comfortable identifying themselves as Australian Muslims rather than Indonesian or Singaporean Muslims. All of these aspects demonstrate how fundamental religion is for the establishment of Muslim communities and identities, and particularly the Muslim brotherhood.

The intense connection among the Muslim men in my study indicated some important features of their male bonding that were egalitarian, direct, and non-rational. The most important of these, and one that enabled the brotherhood to be maintained, was egalitarianism and equality in faith. One distinct feature visible in the enactment of brotherhood was that there was no hierarchy among the men in any of the groups. Indonesian groups consisted of about 200 men, although Sumatra Bersatu tended to have fewer members, and both Singaporean groups slightly fewer still. When I asked a number of men in each of these groups whether they knew all of the members of the group, they confidently replied that they mostly did, and 'especially the old members'. Only about 30 to 40 of these members were active participants in the communities. Among these smaller groups, there were core groups of 10 to 20 men that showed the highest dedication to running the organisations. The Muslim men attending the gathering worked in different institutions and were rarely in contact outside the religious gathering. This condition made the religious gathering even more special for them. In Roy's words, 'We have something to look forward to every weekend.' In terms of status and wealth, a few men were very successful in their careers in White-collar jobs, while most others were middle-aged. By Indonesian and Singaporean standards they were fairly to very wealthy, especially the Singaporeans. However, all men equally presented themselves merely as Muslim men in the gathering or outside the rituals. While a few men were considered imams and more learned in Islamic doctrine, they too did not emphasize this religious status when merged into the men's interaction groups.

The men typically identified themselves as Muslims, and this was a core component of identity that fundamentally connected them: their monotheist faith was much stronger than their ethnicities. I discuss how gender is relevant to this understanding below. In this section I focus on the men's experience with this direct, egalitarian and non-rational bond. The mosque as a spiritual-moral territory fundamentally imposes a male-only egalitarian atmosphere upon the congregation. As the ritual space, a mosque requires a visitor to strip off his/her formal social status, position, and rank and concentrate on the ontological relationship between the human and the Divine. What is important for the analysis of brotherhood is that this requirement results in the equality of self among the Islamic believers when they present in this spiritual-moral boundary. Believing in God is taken to be the basic state of humanity, but also a way of relating to the belief that God, through their faith, has called them together for unity. Social status and social hierarchy are no longer relevant. Such an egalitarian atmosphere was more or less maintained across all the activities in religious gatherings, including the men's interaction practices.

I suggest that the mainstream Australian practice of individual equality affects this strong feeling of equality among the men. Among the two Indonesian Muslim groups, the use of the titles 'Pak', 'Da, ' or 'Mas' to call or address a male person in a culturally respectful way did not result in hierarchy among members of these organisations (as it likely would if practiced in an Indonesian context). In Sumatra Bersatu there was a slight hierarchy of seniority and familial status of the members, but all centred on the value of respecting the rank and elders. This sense of equality was more visible in both Singaporean groups. The men in these groups were very familiar, using first names only in addressing or calling a person in a conversation, a practice that was characteristic of both the Singaporean and Western context, except on formal occasions, when the Malay title 'Cik' or 'Pak Cik' (Mr.) was used. Kareem, for example, who was much older than I, could call me just by my first name, and he expected me to call him by his first name too. I found this practice being used amongst men of different ages. The Muslim men adopted this mode of acceptance towards others from the Australian they had been living with for years and with which they felt comfortable.

For the Muslim men's gender and religious identity, this sense and practice of brotherhood had important meanings and functions. All of the participants who were involved in the

interviews highly praised the benefit they gained from regularly participating in the Muslim gatherings and being part of the brotherhood among Muslims. The men felt that the brotherhood relationship helped them in accessing a network that gave social and religious support, developed a sense of belonging and connection, protected and maintained their religious commitment, and protected them from being deeply influenced by the Australian spirit of secularity to the point of losing their faith. Brotherhood enabled them to protect and preserve the Muslim-self and form a faith-based family, allowing them to establish a sense of belonging and connection.

As I discussed in Chapter 4, Islamic piety as a socially visible devotion to a religious way of life is a crucial component of Muslim masculinity. Keeping the commitment to Islamic piety without losing a meaningful presence in Australian society is a significant part of identity work for Muslims. The interviewees who addressed this issue stressed the importance of intense and mutually-supportive relationships with other Muslim brothers. The men who were involved in the religious gathering felt that the bond of brotherhood helped them to sustain and protect the commitment to Islamic piety from a liberal and secular life ethos. A first-generation Muslim born in Indonesia, Zainuddin (48) revealed his feelings of being accepted and fully supported when he joined Huda Mosque community and engaged in the men's practice in the mosque, after he felt he had 'lost' his faith in his younger years. Asked about what is the most important thing about joining the mosque community was for him as a Muslim man, he said with enthusiasm:

Being part of a religious environment like this of Huda Mosque I feel peaceful. Because the brothers here always remind me about what is good and what is bad [according to Islamic teaching]. I feel so comfortable and peaceful. I feel like we are a family ... From the first time I stepped into this mosque until now, it has been seven years. Even when I am at home, I feel anxious, I just want to be here all the time. It is really weird if I think about it. But it is very true (Zainuddin, 48).

Zainuddin (48) felt peaceful being in the mosque because there he felt closely connected to the Muslim brothers who 'always' reminded him about 'what is good and what is bad'. His statement about his Muslim brothers reflects the men's practice of maintaining piety and religious identity. This practice protected him from being drawn back into what he called the

'pleasure-hunting', materialistic lifestyle he admittedly had followed in his younger years ('been there, done that').

The religious reason for brotherhood among the men affected their position in the family too, as husband and imam of the family. Brotherhood reproduced the gender ideology underpinning popular religious narratives about the masculine practice of piety. This was the case for Zainuddin (48) and his wife's response toward his involvement in the men's group in the mosque. He said:

Alhamdulillah, because my wife is beginning to know more about Islam [so she supports me being active in the mosque]. And I teach her as well. She knows that as men pray together at the mosque *maghrib* is especially a priority. I sometime pray together at home with my wife and daughter, then pray *isha* here [in the mosque], so I manage my time. My wife knows that I spend time here [at the mosque]. So she is happy with that because that was her wish a long time ago (Zainuddin, 48).

During the interviews, some men, such as Roy (35), Aslaam (60), Fahroni (44), Usep (65), and Zakky (52), echoed Zainuddin's (48) opinion about the importance of Muslim community and involvement in the brotherhood in maintaining the religious-self. Fahroni (44), for example, stressed the importance of being present in the mosque and gathering with the other Muslim brothers to overcome the impact of the individualistic ethos of Australian culture. Fahroni (44) talked about a number of issues relating to secular life in the Australian experience that may affect Muslims.⁶⁶ Feeling lonely is one of the impacts of such experiences. He said:

Here [in Australia] if you are lonely that's it [you're stuck with it]. You have no one to talk to, even to share [your feelings]. This is a bad value of you becoming too Oz. I don't know if it may be because we have fewer people, then we are more individualistic. I don't know what is so wrong. But this feeling of loneliness, you can't feel it here (in the mosque). I've had the same feeling myself. That's why I always come to the mosque, gather with the brothers. It is very important and helpful [as a Muslim]. It's not good to be alone. Sometimes I need to be alone, to do my stuff. But, I think as a human being, we need a social life (Fahroni, 44).

Giving a similar example, Aslaam (61), an organiser of Jami Melayu, explained that the function of weekend program is preserve 'the religion'; more precisely, to open space for

⁶⁶ By 'secular', Fahroni (44) meant people not believing in God, in the hereafter, or in the day of judgement.

Singaporean Muslims to practise ritual together and learn elementary knowledge about Islam. These activities served at the same time to maintain religious identity. He said:

We organise this activity [the weekend religious gathering] to invite people to come, to join together.... It is very important. We do it for the religion, to serve the religion. For the kids too so they can learn about Islam. But of course it is for us too as the adults. It is very important for our own benefit. If we don't do this, nobody will do it for us (Aslaam, 61).

Zainuddin (48) also mentioned about being a part of a family among the men's community in Huda Mosque. The feeling of being strongly connected to other Muslim men who visibly shared the same faith-based commitment was one of the distinct features of Muslim brotherhood that was mediated by the men's community practice in religious settings. The men who actively participated in the religious gatherings felt that they were engaging in a very close relationship with their group's Muslim community. This sense of connectedness was strong to the point where the men felt that they were engaged as a family with the community. Roy (35), Indonesian-born, described this specific relationship with the men in Sumatra Bersatu and Insan Indonesia. He said:

The bond among us [in Insan Indonesia and Sumatra Bersatu] is very strong. We are here with the Sumatra Bersatu community. We created a strong relationship with each other, as Indonesian Muslims who live here. With the Insan Indonesian we feel that we have a mutual sense of belonging to each other. I never ask for anything in return for everything that I have done for the Insan Indonesia. And I feel they do the same with us in Sumatra Bersatu (Roy, 35).

Their experience as a religious minority in Australia clearly had a determining impact on this connectedness among the Muslim men in this study. As recounted in the beginning of this section, Karim (57) compared the 'small clique' relationship in Singapore and the 'community of best friends' in Australia; this suggests an Australian impact on brotherhood. He thought that this connected experience would not result in such closeness had it occurred in Singapore, where people generally make 'small cliques'. I believe that Karim's experience would apply to other men engaged in the Baitul Melayu group as well. The need to preserve religious devotion encouraged the Muslims to participate regularly in the gatherings and make close contact with other members of the group who were culturally familiar to them. The lack of availability of social-cultural resources in Australia that had been easily found in Singapore or Indonesia had made the men's reliance on the Muslim

groups even stronger. The familial relationships that provided a sense of belonging were not readily available in Australia. At this point the group also played a replacement role for the family. Many men came across to Australia alone, including Roy (35). For him, Sumatra Bersatu was more than a group of people of the same faith, but also his family.

One of the functions of this community [Sumatra Bersatu] is to maintain identity as a Muslim. Second, to have a family. I myself do not have any family here with me. So this group [Sumatra Bersatu] is my family (Roy, 35).

However, even when close family members were present in Australia, intensive exposure to the mainstream Australian lifestyle did not guarantee that the family relationship would progress as the men wished according to their cultural-religious framework. This happened to Suyanto (42), whose brother married an 'independent and demanding' Italian wife in Australia. The couple's cultural preference led Suyanto's (42) brother to strongly adopt Australian individualism to the effect that Suyanto (42) felt he had lost a strong relationship with his brother. With men in Insan Indonesia, he found more meaningful bonding, similar to the family bonds he had been wishing for, and he learned that shared faith and commitment to religious piety among the men had a great impact on this:

But sometimes our relationship as brothers is not determined by blood, but by religion; by sharing the same faith. I feel that brother connection by faith suits me better [with the Huda Mosque community], instead of blood. [I can say that because] that is my own experience with my brother. My brother has a blood relationship with me, but he is not close to me (Suyanto, 42).

The men seek togetherness, from which they could provide support and complete the social elements they used to possess in their home social milieu, but were missing in Australia. Karim (57) again stressed the need for social components as a result of migration and status as a minority in Australia:

The community of course is not only for the children. It is for the members themselves, for us, for our sponsors, for all of us. So we need to be together. It's not only for children. It is also for us. We need friends, we need siblings, we need cousins (Karim, 57).

In his tearful farewell remarks in front of the mainly male congregation of Huda Mosque (he was returning home to Indonesia), Andie (30s), an Indonesian student who had been an active attendant at the mosque, delivered a typical impression about the life of the Insan Indonesian community, especially among the men. He said:

This congregation of Huda Mosque has been my family. I, my wife and kids had been being taken care of very, very well, from the top of my hair down to the toes. It is very true, you know. When I need a haircut, Pak Zainuddin is the barber. When I was looking for a place to stay, the brothers helped me settle. When I needed a job, the brothers here helped me to get one. When I was looking for a used car I got useful information just by being here to listen to the sermon. Even when I got my muscle twisted after badminton, Pak Imran gave the massage. My wife and kids also have very good friends here. Ustad Shaleh once told me that this congregation resembles those Muslims communities in the early days of the Prophet Muhammad in Madinnah. There are carpenters, musicians, artists, doctors, nurses, engineers, a historian and some service cleaners. Again we have been taken care of very well. I don't how to say it [how grateful I am]. Just thank you, thank you, and thank you (Andie, 30s).

During and after the fieldwork I could clearly feel the sense of connectedness in being part of the men's communities in the five organisations. With Insan Indonesia, which I had already known prior to this study, this sense of connectedness was reinforced as a result of my attendance in the gathering. This experience could be easily understood, as I possessed the same background (being a Muslim man of Indonesian origin) with the men in Insan Indonesia. However, I did not expect that an instant acceptance and sense of relatedness would also be established fairly quickly with the other four organisations, even Ramai Malay, which did not organise regular religious gatherings (although of course the connection I felt in this group was not as strong as that with Insan Indonesia). In both Singaporean groups, I was warmly welcomed and quickly considered part of the 'family'; my connection to Jami Melayu formed more slowly. I came to know a few men personally within a couple of observation sessions. At first I thought it was due to my position as a 'brother researcher', which they saw as a special position. However, in both Singaporean groups there were non-Singaporean men as well. They too were active members of the groups and seemed to be part of the family. The spirit of equality, the norm of respect, and what appeared to be shared commitment to piety contributed to this response to my presence. Gender too had contributed to this, an issue I discuss further in the next part of the chapter. The Southeast Asian practice of friendship may have also contributed to this quick sense connectedness, where people could raise questions that would be considered to be too personal in

mainstream Australia, such as age, place of origin, marital status, and even number of children. For me, brotherhood enabled the men to establish a meaningful sense of belonging and attachment to these groups.

The discussion in this part of the chapter reveals that Muslim brotherhood, as it is enacted in the religious setting by Muslim men in this study, demonstrates a relationship that is direct, egalitarian and non-rational. The ritual and religious practice in the mosque underpins this. Egalitarianism and equality in faith further determines the intensity of relationship maintained among the men, and the relationship is grounded in what is believed in Islamic doctrine to be the basic state of humanity: believing in one God. Operating with this egalitarian quality, the Muslim brotherhood benefited men in at least two functions: as a site of protecting and preserving the Muslim-self, and establishing sense of belonging and a faith-based family. The discussion of these two functions demonstrates a key position attached to the bond of brotherhood for the Muslim men: identity survival and reproduction. How does gender contribute to this key role of brotherhood in Muslim masculinity? I address this question in the next section.

3. Loyalty to the Brotherhood as a Distinct Feature of Muslim Masculinity in Australia

I have demonstrated so far how Muslim brotherhood is produced and what impact it has on the lives of the Muslim men in this study. In this section, I will discuss how brotherhood contributes to a sense of distinct masculinity among Muslim men as a minority group in Australia. Men's gendered practice can be considered as an embodiment of homosociality (Bird 1996). By this consideration, men's practice is seen as men performing manhood in front of and approved by other men (Kimmel 1994). In all-male social milieus a man seeks approval from other men, either by seeking identification of himself in others or competing against them. Men further attempt to enhance their status in hierarchies of masculinity, mainly by demonstrating 'markers of manhood' such as wealth, a successful career, personal achievement, power and social status, physical prowess, and sexual achievement (Kimmel 1994, 129). In her influential work, Heidi Hartmann (1981) argued that male bonding can effectively sustain men's gendered power (11). With that power men create solidarity and

inter-dependency among themselves that enables them to dominate women and results in women's exclusion (11).⁶⁷ Informal male bonding, for example, often becomes a sustaining mechanism to men's dominance in politics and the economy (Flood 2008). I consider Muslim brotherhood as a performance of manhood that reinforces men's power and superiority as Muslims and examine how it contributes to masculinity. First, however, I begin with the discussion of brotherhood as an important value of masculinity.

The main premise in the discussion of brotherhood in this chapter is that brotherhood among Muslim men is one of the key values of masculinity. Brotherhood suggests the importance of being a man in determining an identity and practice that is connected to other men. With brotherhood as a value, Muslim masculinities do not produce a single male warrior-hero prototype where a man is seen as a tough actor who doesn't need others' help to pursue his mission.⁶⁸ Instead, a Muslim man is part of a larger relationship of men of at least his theological background. This relationship is not imagined, but a real one operating in day-to-day life and vital to becoming a Muslim man. Becoming part means actively embracing the connectedness ethos, support from, and friendship with other men of the same faith.

This further means that, instead of the individual's sense of capability being the centre spirit, it is the ability to be part of a supporting and giving relationship that strengthens Muslim masculinities. Being a loner (even if you are a married man) is not considered a positive practice. In fact, the opposite is true: to engage yourself in a position that allows you to access and give support and help to and from other men is the positive practice of masculinity. With brotherhood as a value, Muslim masculinities are a communal ethos of being a man.

The Muslim men in this study clearly celebrated this connectedness and spirit of togetherness. For example, Roy (35) regarded this as being in line with what he considers

⁶⁷ Hartmann's (1981) argument is crucial to an understanding of male bonding in that it highlights that male-only oriented relationships set the foundation for patriarchy.

⁶⁸This does not mean that no type of Muslim masculinities will suit the discourse of warriorship as a powerful masculine value. Gerami's studies (2002, 2005) in the Iranian context about the discourse of *jihad* and martyrdom in pre-revolutionary Iran entails a form of discourse of Islamic warriorship, even if Gerami herself does not address this discourse using the Western term 'warrior'.

the typical practice of Australian men as displayed by his workmate. Speaking about how he was proud of the Sumatra Bersatu group, he said:

And I see my Australian mate's lifestyle. At the weekend he can spend \$500 to \$600 only to get drunk. He could not wake up on Monday morning for work. So they work hard to earn money, but seek pleasure seriously too ... I compared my activity with this kind of lifestyle. I come to the community gathering not only to recite the Qur'an, but also to greet and be together. I am proud of that. One day I told my Aussie mate about our gathering, [and asked] whether they [mainstream Australians] envied or not what we do? I did not know. But I am proud of us, that is what matters most for me. I asked him, 'What did you do during the weekend?' He said, 'Uh, I had a party, with eight people.' I thought that that was a small number. Then he asked me back, 'What did you do during weekend?', 'Uh, just had some time together with my Indonesian people.' He asked, 'How many people?' I showed him the photos on Facebook, and he was amazed ... And that was only the children, I said to him. In total there may be around 150 of us. 'That happens every week?' he asked. 'Oh, yeah,' [I said proudly]. Well, what do you think of that? That [the weekend religious gathering Roy joining] gives you a sense as a human (Roy, 35).

Roy's (35) claim about the number was not an exaggeration; I estimate that the congregation every Sunday can reach 80 to 100 men and women, and on Saturday night with children it could reach even more than 150, especially during Ramadhan. Roy's statement reveals at least two comparisons between Australian men and the Muslim men of Sumatra Bersatu. First, judging from how Roy (35) framed his friend's story, it can be stated that Roy (35) wanted to indicate that according to his standard of men's togetherness his Australian mate's activity was less exciting because it only involved 'a small number' of eight people, whereas his weekend practice could involve more than a hundred people. Number was a very important sign of communality, dynamism, and togetherness. The larger the number of men involved, the stronger the implied sense of bonding.

Second, Roy's friend's masculine practice was meaningless, because it was intended 'to only get drunk.' What he did with Sumatra Bersatu was much more beneficial and meaningful to him because it was not only to recite the Qur'an (which he always found useful and meaningful) but also 'being together.' What was more, this weekend activity took place regularly. Roy (35) was very proud of that practice, and that was the most important feeling to him as a Muslim man.

The Muslim brotherhood can also be seen as a performance of manhood that preserves, sustains and strengthens other components of masculinity that bring about men's gendered

power. These components are particularly associated with religious discourse including men's gender privilege, normativity, and spirituality. In this discussion, I draw on the first two components and exclude spirituality due to space limitations. The Brotherhood also functions as a medium for men to control each other and exchange feeling as men and shared men's privilege. For minority Muslims this function appears more explicit. When the men in this study had group conversation during parking duty or conversed after observing *salat*, they were articulating men's issues, interests and aspirations.

The enactment of male bonding is often exclusive among group members and is strictly closed to women. Flood (2008), in his discussion of homosocial practices among young heterosexual men in Australia, reminds us that male bonding is often necessarily achieved by excluding women and emphasising a deep-rooted gender ideology of men's difference and superiority over women. Research into men's group solidarity shows that intensified connection between men in groups can be constructed in a wide range of contexts, including war, physical conflict and military combat (Fox 2005; Page 2002; Pease 2001); sport and sport fandom (Townsend 1994); shared heterosexual sexual experiences (Flood 2007); men's experience of sexual violence against women (Boswell and Spade 1996); homophobia and violence against homosexual men (Herek et al. 2002); ethnic gang violence (Alexander 2001); men's past experiences of grief and loss (Schwalbe 1996); and minority groups' experiences of exclusion (Archer 2010). Some forms of male bonding produced in these contexts involve the maintenance of certain values and practices that are only meaningful for the men involved and have an impact on women's position as either victims or objects.

While practising the male-only interaction groups and performing rituals in a congregation, the men dominated the mosque and the attendance at religious venues, controlled the ceremonies, monopolised the main space of the rituals and used much more time establishing bonding among themselves. One chief practice fundamental to the preservation of men's privilege in the building of Muslim brotherhood was the spatial politics embodied in the ritual space. The men in the six religious gatherings I observed employed what Daphne Spain (1992) called 'the control of space' (16). Spain (1992) argued that this control is a strategy of the dominant group to control access to knowledge and resources in order to retain and enhance their domination. One of the most effective tactics of this strategy

applied across different cultures and institutions is gender spatial segregation. Introducing her ethnographic work, *Gendered Spaces*, (1992) Spain summarised that:

Spatial segregation is one of the mechanisms by which a group with greater power can maintain its advantage over a group with less power. By controlling access to knowledge and resources through the control of space, the dominant group's ability to retain and reinforce its position is enhanced (15-16)

Spatial segregation by gender was the most striking feature in the religious gatherings I studied (described in Part 1 of this chapter). It represents a typical feature of congregations performing Islamic rituals, and serves as an embodiment of the dominant gender order. This, in turn, impacts certain meanings to masculinity and femininity in accordance with religion-associated narrative, as I discuss below.

This segregated space significantly affected the social engagement among the congregants: as men formed conversation groups or other non-ritual interaction among themselves, so did the women. Outside the rituals, there was no conversation group that involved mixed-gender participants. However this did not mean there was no communication at all between the sexes during religious gatherings. Such activities did take place, but only for organisational needs. In the gathering organised by Baitul Melayu on Saturday evening and by Insan Indonesia on Sunday morning, the imams gave women the opportunity to raise questions in the religious sermon and they did so freely. Communication between genders also took place during food preparation and before and after the rituals. I discuss the gender dimension further below.

At Huda Mosque, many men like Suyanto (42), Fahreni (47), Farid (50s), and Danny (60) typically stayed at the mosque one to two hours longer than their wives. A woman might stay from 30 minutes to an hour after the rituals were completed (mainly because they were waiting for their husband or children to finish socialising). In that situation, there was rarely a women's conversation group in the religious space. Some men in Insan Indonesia and Sumatra Bersatu had a habit of returning to the mosque for the men's group after driving their wives home following the completion of the main rituals. Other men allowed their wives to go home earlier and asked other men for a lift home later on. These were among the men's 'strategies' to stay in the religious space for as long as they wanted.

Gender segregation does not operate on its own, but must be considered together with another crucial aspect of the spatial politic. This aspect has to do with the association of sacredness with maleness instilled in men's occupation of ritual space. I use the work of Corroto (2001) to demonstrate this link between masculinity and space. In her discussion of a case surrounding the first female cadet enrolled in the Citadel Military Academy in the U.S., Corroto (2001) examined a strategy deployed by the male group (including male students, school administrators and officials, and graduates) in hindering the newly-enrolled female student from participating in the academy. Corroto (2001) suggested that this strategy was centred in the creation of what was presumed to be a male-only space (that is, the academy) as sacred space (116). My observation on the religious gatherings, especially in the Huda Mosque, was a fairly similar association between sacredness and maleness. However, what the Muslim men employed in the ritual setting, I would argue, was the opposite of what Corroto (2001) suggested; that is, by making what is considered to be religiously sacred space as male-only space.

The mosque is a highly sacred place for Muslims. In the Islamic narrative, the mosque is illustrated as '*baitullah*', or the house of God. While Islamic theology allows Muslim believers to access, interact with or worship their God in form of prayers, *dzikr* or *du'a* (supplication) technically in any place, corresponding to the idea that God is 'close to you' yet everywhere, a mosque is the best place to access God. In her phenomenological approach to Islam, Schimmel (1994) explored the sacred spaces in the Muslim world and suggested:

The sacred space par excellence in Islam seems to be the mosque, and many visitors – Rudolf Otto, S.H. Nasr, Martin Lings, Frithjof Schuon and others – have emphasized the 'feeling of the Numinous,' the experience of otherworldliness when standing in one of the great mosques in North Africa or Turkey (51-52).

Huda Mosque is a good example of how the control of space by men worked in sustaining men's privilege, which in turn enabled the Muslim brotherhood. The first and foremost deployment of the control of space in the mosque is in its architecture: it is designed to primarily serve male congregants in the first place. Gender segregation is a fundamental principle of mosque design based on Islamic teaching that strongly recommend men to pray at the mosque (Glasse 2002; Fadl 2001). This entails that the main space (the hall), which is

the centre of the mosque, is unquestionably a space provided for men. While the mosque hall is sacred, there is another space that is particularly sacred in the mosque: the *mighrab*, a special site for the imam. Mainstream Islamic doctrine asserts that in the presence of a male congregant in a prayer congregation the imam of the prayer must be a man.⁶⁹ This doctrine is a different way to say that the imam in the mosque essentially is a man and the *mighrab* is necessarily men's space. In performing the ritual, men are entitled for their voices to be heard in *salat*, *dizkr* or reading the Qur'an. They are also obligated to call for praying time or *adzan* (call for prayer) and *iqamah* (call to begin prayer). It is a typical sight in a mosque for the main room to be filled with men and only their voices heard during prayer. The control of the space further allowed the men to use more time being present in the religious territory and allowed them to consolidate group solidarity through a religiously inspired practice of homosociality. The control of the space transformed the mosque into a maleness space: a masculine institution.

The spatial politics in the mosque tend to exclude women. The association between sacredness and maleness drives the gender segregation as a tactic to serve a specific objective: the safeguarding of male territory in the sacred space. That is to say, gender segregation does not simply mean providing separate spaces for men and women congregants, but to actually keep women away from the sacred space. In the context of mosques' architecture in Melbourne, Huda Mosque had a moderate and casual application of gender segregation. There was no separate room for female congregants with a separate entrance; women could actually enter the mosque from the main entrance when rituals were not being observed. Women shared the same space with male congregants, which was the main hall. However, their space was significantly smaller and located at the rear of the room in the right corner, separated by rolling curtains (see my field notes, page 186-187). These curtains were only closed when *salat* was performed. When the mosque hosted non-regular sermons such as religious lectures attended by large numbers of female congregants, these curtains were fully opened to create a larger space for women. In such circumstances there was no instrument that separated the congregation at all, only a narrow empty gap. Male congregants could clearly see the women, but still occupied the centre space of the

⁶⁹ This rule and other rules of performing *salat* in congregation is discussed in most books of Islamic law. Mattson (2008) provided useful textual analysis about women; position as imam.

hall close to the *mighrab*. When *salat* was performed the curtains could completely separate the two groups of congregants and create an impression of male-only occupation in the mosque hall.

Such gender segregation is not common in Melbourne mosques, nor perhaps in Australia as a whole. Mosques in Melbourne commonly apply much stricter gender segregation than Huda Mosque, completely excluding female congregants from the main hall by providing a different space for them, either a smaller, separate room or a space on the second floor of the mosque that can only be accessed through a separate entrance. Major mosques in Melbourne, such as Iqbal Mosque, UMMA Mosque, Jeffcott Mosque, Al Taqwa Mosque, and Dandenong Mosque (all real names), apply this type of separate design. That way, the spatial politics allow the mosque to accommodate female congregants, while –more importantly – keeping them away from the main hall and the *mighrab*, and thus making these two spaces completely men's. At Iqbal Mosque, the women's space on the second floor is fully covered with tinted glass, creating the impression that women do not exist in that mosque, even while the imam consistently uses remarks such as 'my dear brothers and sisters in Islam'. Carland's (2005) study showed how poorly maintained these women's spaces were in the mosques and how difficult the access to them was (a messy and stuffy prayer room; women had to walk through the toilet; a further walk to reach the entrance; the entrance next to dirty rubbish bins; or the door was locked while no Muslim brother was there to help). Such negligence combined with unfriendly attitudes occasionally showed by male mosque committees (*takmir*) towards female attendees has a discouraging effect on women's presence in the mosque and generates a sense among the women that they do not belong to the mosque (Woodlock 2010).

The fact that Huda Mosque did not provide a separate room for women can be attributed to the committee's limited ability to provide that. However, it may also be due to the moderate characteristics of mainstream Islam in Indonesia, which was shared by their Singaporean counterparts. My first experience of mosque attendance during my childhood in East Java was characterised by women's presence in the mosque's hall, not in the rear section behind the men, but equally in the same space as men. However, the women's space was narrower, separated by a removable curtain from the men's, sometimes on the right side, sometimes on the left. This type of spatial arrangement in the main hall is commonplace even now

especially among Muslims communities that associate themselves with *Nahdatul Ulama*, a moderate Islamic organisation in Indonesia, and the biggest of such organisations. The same moderate application of gender segregation was also shown in Baitul Melayu, Jami Melayu, and Sumatra Bersatu. Many mosques I attended in Indonesia used a set of wooden mobile barriers as high as an adult knee to mark the women's section in the mosque hall. The men could clearly see the women's presence, sharing the same sacred space while praying together. However, in all of these moderations, the *mighrab* remains unquestionably men's space. While women possess their space in the main hall, men remain the primary congregation of the mosque.

The spatial politics of the mosque has powerful support from the mainstream Islamic doctrine, which does not recommend women praying at the mosque, while strongly encouraging men's attendance (Fadl 2001). This doctrine involves the citation of a disputable hadith of the Prophet Muhammad that implies that the best *shaf* (praying lines) for male congregants are at the front behind the imam, while the best *shaf* for female congregants is the rearmost line (Fadl 2001). A version of this doctrine declares that the best place for women to pray is the darkest place inside their house (Fadl 2001). Fadl's (2001) sharp analysis offers strong criticism against such patriarchal discourse about women's place in the mosque.⁷⁰

In her research I quoted earlier, Spain (1992) also emphasised how space occupation reflects the status of a social group. In my examination of the Muslim brotherhood, space occupation constitutes privilege and power. Space arrangements between genders mirror the expected structure of their relationship. As Hiller and Hanson (1984) suggested, 'The spatial structure of buildings embodies knowledge of social relations, or the taken-for-granted rules that govern relations of individuals to each other and to society' (184). As in the mosque, space segregation symbolises the ideal relationship that not only involves men and women, but more fundamentally the discourse of men's position in relationship to God and women, with men standing between God and women, closer to God and controlling the sacred space to access God. This symbolic association between maleness and sacredness,

⁷⁰ Reda's (no date) historical study of women's access to the mosque suggests that gender segregation and women's exclusion in the mosque did not exist in the time of the Prophet Muhammad, appearing only in the time of the second *Caliph*, Umar.

which is religiously justified to keep control of the access to God, reinforces men's identity and status as the normative Muslim, while, at the same time, positioning women as the 'other' Muslim. As the control of space guarantees men's place in the mosque, it leads to maleness as the expression of Islamic piety in the form of ritual and spiritual work that becomes an asset of masculinity. That is to say, being a man enables an individual to perform sacred actions (rituals) in the sacred space (the mosque hall), which allows him to gain the benchmark relationship with God. This association between the self, being a man, and being closer to God, is what makes a Muslim man what he is. Men's privilege is an important constituting force of Muslim brotherhood in that it becomes a masculine asset, a form of patriarchal dividend, for the men to share, and eventually reinforces male bonding among them. Spatial arrangements are therefore deployed as a mechanism of masculinity.

Conclusion

This chapter contributes to the understanding about how masculinities are constructed within spatial boundaries (Howen and Horschelmann 2005; Massey 1994; Woodward 2000; Hopkins and Noble 2009). The chapter further contributes to an understanding of how male bonding among Muslims living as minority is produced and reproduced through ritual activities and social interaction surrounding religious activities. In this context, ritual spaces such as a mosque become the spatial context where men's gender identities are constructed (Phua and Yeoh 1998) and sites for social actions (Shields 1991, 6-7) that generate dominant values of masculinity. The study extends the discussion about production of Muslim masculinities by proposing that basic ritual in Islam is an important practice and performance that shapes Muslim men's gendered identity, particularly when it is conducted in congregation in sacred space.

This chapter suggests that the Muslim brotherhood appears to be the most important context of relationship for Muslim masculinities in the Australian context. In contrast to their experience as a minority in their workplaces, where they must negotiate their social place (as discussed in Chapter 4), and their families, where their status as imam is challenged (as discussed in Chapter 5), the Muslim brotherhood provides participants with a safe environment to deal with their vulnerability as minority group. While the men had different

strategies to respond to their experiences in the workplace and in family life, all of the men in this study demonstrated the same attitude about the importance of Muslim brotherhood for the survival of their identity. The religious gatherings organised by the Muslim groups afforded the men with a cultural enclave to reclaim and regain the privilege the men traditionally enjoyed in the Muslim communities of their home countries. Religious discourse supported by the accepted gender order in the home culture serves as a powerful cultural resource for this purpose. Brotherhood and religious gathering serves as a site and strategy for the men to refresh and consolidate the privilege traditionally associated with their manhood. In the Australian context this privilege is combined with the sense of being different to the rest of the society.

This study's analysis of Muslim brotherhood confirms Hartmann's (1981) argument about the link between all-male groups and the consolidation of men's power. Muslim brotherhood implies a particular way of being a man that is contained within a collective ethos shared with other men within the boundaries of masculinity. However, it further involves the exercise of men's power in a religious setting. The Muslim brotherhood in this study exemplifies a case of an all-male network linked to a spiritual practice that serves as a powerful mechanism to defend men's power and sustain patriarchy. In this regard, Muslim men share with other practices of all-male religious networks as enacted by Catholic and Evangelical men (Gelfer 2009). In all these cases, men control religious discourse and practise in the religiously sacred space by institutionalising homosocial bonding.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

This is the concluding chapter of the thesis that summarises the project's main findings and highlights the main contribution of the study to the literature of Muslim masculinities in Australia and to the broader field of Muslim masculinities. The chapter ends with recommendations for future research on Muslim masculinities arising out from the findings of the project as well as its limitations.

1. Summary of the Thesis

This study examined how Muslim men's status as a religious minority in Australia impacted on their masculinities. It addressed the need for study of Muslim masculinities in an Australian context amidst the re-emergence of moral panic among the Australian public in response to national and overseas controversies involving Australian Muslim men. The project offered an analysis of the life experience of Muslim men as a minority in Australia through a gender lens. The study formulated an analytical framework based on the premise that masculinity is constructed through relationships (Connell 2000). This framework specified three contexts of relationships where Muslim masculinities are constructed and negotiated: Muslim men's relationship as a minority within the non-Muslim majority in Australian society; their relationship with Muslim women; and the maintenance of a Muslim brotherhood. The framework was applied through a qualitative study exploring the life experience of 25 Australian Muslim men and the religious activities of five Muslim organisations, all with a Southeast Asian background. Employing in-depth interviews and group discussions, combined with participant observation, the project identified key aspects

of the negotiation of masculinity observed in the Muslim men's experience at work, in the family and in their religious communities. The main findings of the study are summarised as follows.

This study has demonstrated that Muslim men's status as a minority has affected different aspects of their religious gendered identity, which has shaped their masculinities in Australia. These impacts were identified in the reinforcement of certain components contributing to their masculinity and the weakening of others.

In the context of Muslim men's relationship with non-Muslim workplaces in Australia, the findings show a reinforcement of religious commitment among the Muslim men as a crucial aspect of their masculinity. Awareness of being a minority and different, in addition to concern over Islamophobia in the society, led the Muslim men to seek acceptance and approval of their social environment, and further sought to engage and contribute to the wider community. In workplaces they perceived as generally secular and religiously agnostic, the participants preferred to employ Islamic piety as a marker of their masculine identity difference while seeking to be part of the community and adapting Australian social and cultural practices. This strategy was in agreement with the Muslim men's positive attitudes toward Australia as a country and its society which they saw as embodying Islamic values. This strategy was also influenced by responses expressed by non-Muslim colleagues in the workplace toward the men's performance of masculinity in which positive and supportive responses in forms of respect, support, and acknowledgement were more apparent.

In the context Muslim men's relationship with Muslim women, the findings demonstrate that Australian experience weakens the core component of Muslim masculinity that is the Muslim men's religiously justified status as the leader or *imam* of the family. Nonetheless, the narrative of men's status as the head of family was firmly maintained, the Muslim men encountered a crisis of authority in the family for not being fully able to exercise their traditional power in family life. Some men responded to this crisis by giving men's leadership status different meanings and practices in accordance to their marital relationship in Australia. The discourse of womanhood engaged in by the Muslim men insisted on the narrative of the good wife as being an obedient homemaker. Some Muslim men, however,

used religious considerations to support the practice of independent and influential wives in defining the way family life is organised.

In the field of Muslim brotherhood, the research findings suggest that the participants' status as a minority reinforced religiously inspired male bonding among the Muslim men. The regular religious gatherings organised by the Muslim groups provide the space for the establishment of an informal Muslim brotherhood through the practice of male-only social engagement outside the rituals and formally through the practice of rituals of worship. The religious gathering and the Muslim brotherhood it produces served as a strategy to consolidate the men's privilege associated with their manhood as a form of patriarchal dividend. As an all-male network, Muslim brotherhood provides a sense of belonging for the men and identification of shared religious minority identity but also superior gender identity as men. Muslim brotherhood further enables the Muslim men to appropriate Islamic piety as a masculine asset. As a form of homosocial connection, the establishment of Muslim brotherhood deploys a spatial politics that has an impact on the restriction of women's position in the religious space.

Response to the research questions

The study proposed three research questions. First, how do Muslim men perceive and respond to the majority non-Muslim social environment, especially to perceived Westernised, White-Anglo and secular features of Australian society, in their daily life and how do these perceptions and responses reflect their masculinity? Second, how do Muslim men adapt and negotiate their privileged position as leaders of the family, and how does this affect their masculinity? Third, using what strategy or through what social-cultural practices do Muslim men maintain and preserve religion-associated values and practices that contribute to their masculinity?

In terms of the first research question, the Muslim men in this study generally expressed very positive opinions toward Australia as a country, its people and the non-Muslim majority in their workplaces. They saw Australia as a very good – even the best – country for Muslims living as minority, especially for its guaranteed freedom of religion, and for its social and health system, which they considered to embody Islamic values. The men also

appreciated a number of positive characteristics shown by Australian individuals they associated with the White-Anglo Australian majority, men and women alike. These positive evaluations were often expressed simultaneously with criticisms of their own cultures and circumstances, particularly against Indonesia as a Muslim country, Muslim elites and Muslim communities. While a number of participants had one or more experiences of becoming targets of racism and Islamophobia, they did not consider such experiences as characterising the Australian community writ large. However, the research also revealed concerns among the Muslim men with regard to several negative values and practices in Australian society, including individual freedom, a predominantly secular ethos, and a tendency toward hedonistic lifestyles. Some participants had come to the point where they adopted these widespread values and abandoned their religion in the past. For the Muslim, these cultural aspects of the Australian community appeared to be the main challenge for their religious identity.

The research also reveals that Muslim men's status and awareness of being a minority and being different does not necessarily infer that they experience discrimination or feel like marginal members of Australian society. Social encounters in the workplace led to the reinforcement of religious consciousness and commitment among Muslim men as a response to a non-Muslim majority social environment that is typically regarded as suspicious and critical toward religion, secular or agnostic. Religion became central and more visible in defining the Muslim men's identity, values and practice. Islamic piety was also an important expression and ethos of masculinity in producing identity that is fundamentally different to the majority. The execution of religious practice mainly in performance of *salat*, not consuming alcohol, commitment to certain dietary observances (*halal* foods), and demonstrating a religiously inspired work ethic became crucial markers of that difference. Voas and Fleischmann (2012) suggested that the social environment of the West forces individual Muslims to put more effort to be religious, be more conscious with what previously was given belief, and take more initiative while having weaker religious organisations and authority (167).

The weakening power of religious organisations in controlling religious interpretation and practices marks the process of individuation of religious identity and practices (Hassan 2008; Roy 2004), or non-organised Muslims practice (Jeldtoft 2011) in which negotiation of

religious identities takes place at the individual level, and entails active individual agents in the interpretation and execution of religious values responding to cultural encounters in the workplace. In this process, the negotiation of masculinity is taken together with the negotiation of religious practice and interpretation appropriate to the men's specific social experiences. The same active agents of the religious-self have to overcome the crisis of masculinity spreading in Muslim communities as a result of the absence of religious masculine role models. This situation is exacerbated by the global crisis in the Islamic world depicting antagonistic Muslim men as the villains of the world order. The performative feature of masculinity, with aims to advance Islamic values in an attempt to seek social position, is the preferable strategy among the Muslim men. Respect, support, acknowledgement, or disapproval expressed by non-Muslim colleagues toward the men's performance of masculinity were an important marker in defining the men's negotiation strategy. In this regard, this study found different responses shown by non-Muslim colleagues toward the men's practice, in which positive and supportive responses were more apparent.

With regard to the second research question, this study identifies the weakening of Muslim men's powerful, religiously justified status as the leader or *imam* of the family. According to mainstream Islamic discourse, men's status as the head of the family is not negotiable, and is the core component of Muslim masculinities. Challenges and threats to this status therefore can be seen as the greatest impact of Australian encounters on Muslim masculinity. This study indicates changes in the power relations of Muslim families and a crisis of men's gendered privilege; these changes are seen in men's relationships with their wives and children. This crisis has led to different expressions and discourses of masculinity among Muslim men. Many men insisted on their authority as the head of family without being fully able to exercise such authority in actual family life in Australia. Other men integrated their leadership status with different meanings and practices appropriate to their marital relationship in Australia. However, the narrative of men's religiously justified status as the head of family was firmly maintained.

This study found that the religiously associated discourse of womanhood engaged in by the Muslim men was also an important aspect that determined Muslim masculinities. This research found a tendency among the men to insist on the narrative of the good wife being

an obedient homemaker as a strategy to sustain the traditional discourse of womanhood believed to be part of religious teaching. The Muslim men's strategies reflect their resistance toward the Australian mainstream practice of being an independent, often career-oriented woman. In this context, Muslim women are posited as a battleground for Muslim men contesting what they saw as the dominant Western-White ideology, with women as the bearers of culture, religious values and symbol of community (Moghadam 1994). Women's position is crucial in defining Muslim men's identities. To maintain and defend the accepted discourse on women is therefore to defend men's identity as well. However, such defensiveness does not tell the whole story about Muslim men's attitudes toward the increasing independence of their wives. Some Muslim men expressed support for their wives being more independent and influential in defining the way family life is organised. In this latter strategy the men also used religious considerations to support this practice.

With reference to the last research question, the study has discovered that Muslim men's status as a religious minority reinforces the bonding of brotherhood, where the religious community, particularly its male-only brotherhood network, became the main social context men engage in beyond the workplace and family. Brotherhood served as a social site where men reinforced masculine values, sought support from other Muslim men and religious grounding to cope with difficult encounters in work and family life. This research further revealed that the Muslim brotherhood became the most culturally and religiously comfortable space for Muslim men to reclaim and regain their traditional privileged status, as a form of patriarchal dividend. Brotherhood provided a sense of belonging and identification of shared religious minority identity but superior gender identity. The organisation of regular weekend religious activities established the Muslim brotherhood through the practice of male-only interaction groups. The experience of being a religious minority in an increasingly secular society expanded the importance of a simple activity of male-only interaction to the point that it enables them to consolidate their masculinity. The same effect occurred for the performance of rituals in congregation, which served as a method of male bonding among Muslim men. The Muslim brotherhood afforded the men a cultural enclave, allowing them to strengthen and preserve their privileged gendered status as the normative Muslims, supported by ritual arrangements and spiritual discourse. These processes occurred through the exercise of spatial politics in ritual space, through which

male identity is associated with sacredness. This means that Muslim brotherhood enabled the men to control the expression of piety in the sacred space and to appropriate Islamic piety as a central masculine asset. The spatial politics deployed in the establishment of Muslim brotherhood had an impact on the restriction of women's position in the religious area.

2. Main Contributions of the Thesis

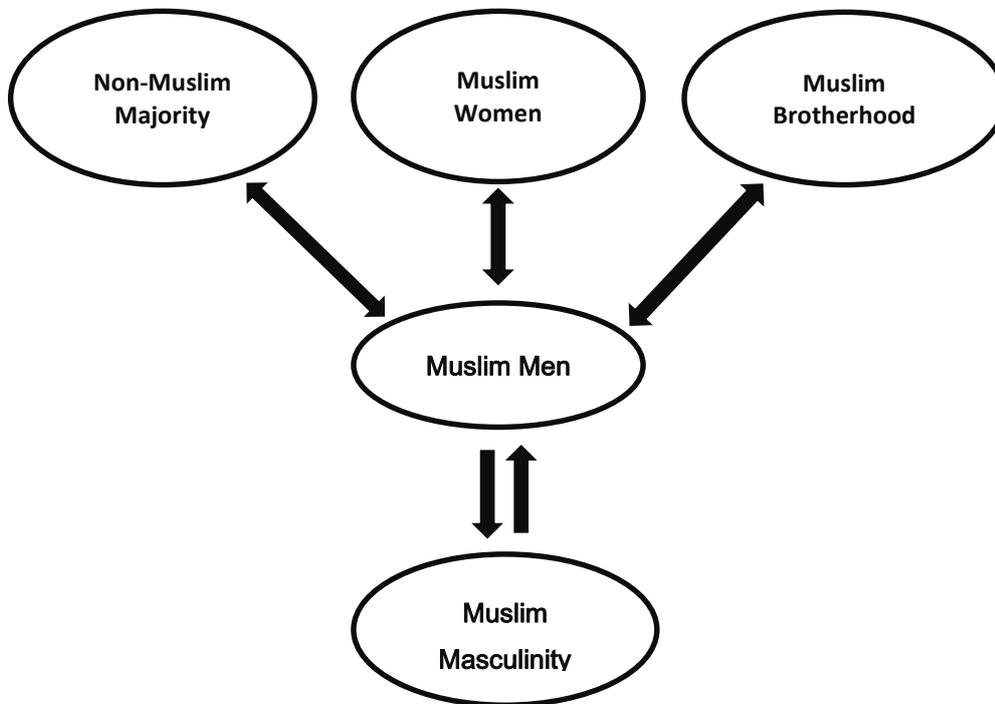
While there is reliable literature on Muslims in Australia and Muslim masculinities in the Western context, little is known about Muslim men and Muslim masculinities in Australia. This project has addressed this gap by contributing new findings resulting from an examination of Muslim men of Southeast Asian background, a group rarely studied in the field, and by proposing new insight about Muslim men's negotiation of masculinity as a minority in the West. This was done by expanding the analysis on Islamic piety as an important component of Muslim masculinities, by extending the discussion on Muslim men's relationship with Muslim women which focusing on change in power relation in that relationship, by suggesting new findings about the social reproduction of Muslim brotherhood, by proposing Islamic rituals and ritual space as a new area of inquiry in the field of Muslim masculinities, and by introducing gender into the discussion of multiculturalism in Australia. Moreover, the project has contributed to the broader field of study of Muslim masculinities by proposing a new analytical framework in approaching the subject.

Muslim masculinities

The study proposes a new analytical framework for Muslim masculinities that focuses on the relationships where Muslim men enact gender and religious components of their identity. In this study, the framework enables the identification of some important elements contributing to Muslim masculinities, including religious piety; men's religious privilege, particularly status as the head of family; narratives of womanhood; and values of brotherhood and its homosocial network. From this framework and the research findings I

suggest a model of understanding the construction of Muslim masculinities, particularly for Muslims in the context of living as a religious minority, as shown in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Relational model of Muslim masculinity construction



The relational feature of this framework is in contrast to that of the construction of Islamic masculinity suggested by De Sondy (2014), which he saw as resulting from three binary oppositions between man-God, man-woman, and Islam-West, and which he called ‘polydualistic’ (12). De Sondy argued that Islamic masculinities in the Muslim world today are largely constructed through Muslim men’s opposition to the stereotypes of Western men and Western masculinities on the one side, and femininity, represented by Muslim women, on the other. This view highlights the centrality of the narrative of Muslim men’s different but moral superiority to these ‘others’. As I demonstrate below, such an oppositional approach overlooks the interchangeable nature of different – even contradictory – elements contributing to Muslim masculinities.

In their relationships with the non-Muslim majority, Muslim men in this study negotiated their position by taking advantage of Australian standards of individual freedom, and at some point secularity, together with Islamic piety, seeking an equal position in non-Muslim

social settings while maintaining their religious identity. Here the structure of relationships in Australian workplaces allowed the men to claim an equal position while being a minority. At the same time, the men expressed their commitment to identify their religion and culture differently to the majority. Here, religious discourse became a cultural resource together with Australian values. Being a Muslim man in Australia meant being different in terms of life orientation and construction of the self, while occupying an equal position with the non-Muslim majority. An important contribution of this study was the finding that the response given by those in the men's non-Muslim social setting is an important aspect that influenced the men's strategy and performance of masculinity. The study found stronger positive responses experienced by the Muslim men coming from their colleagues that allowed them to embrace sense of acceptance and belonging. This finding is in contrast to previous studies in the UK (Hopkins 2004; Archer 2001; 2003) where social marginality, experiences of racism, and social disadvantage characterised Muslim men's contact with other non-Muslims in a Western context and which eventually led to a 'resisting mode' of Muslim masculinities. Islamophobia is another important aspect that defined the men's negotiation strategy. In this study, concern over Islamophobia further encouraged the men to employ a performative strategy in producing positive images of Muslim men who are therefore deserving of equal treatment, as most of them were. At this point, the binary opposition between Islam and the West did not seem relevant in determining Muslim masculinities.

In the context of relationships with Muslim women, Muslim men negotiated their position by maintaining their privilege as the head of the family, with its associated attribute of superiority. In this relationship the Muslim men employed the dominant interpretation of religious texts and the cultural narratives to maintain their superiority. Religion became a reliable cultural resource of masculinity and privileged the position of men as *imam* and values from their home culture supported this. This includes the discourse of womanhood and what defines a good wife in an Islamic family.

One of the contributions of this study, however, is the finding that the men in this study were not fully able to exercise their traditional power, which led to some modifications of the practice and meaning of being the *imam* of the family. This situation implies that other factors prevented the men from insisting on their traditional position; specifically, the dominant values and practice of individual freedom and equality in Australia. That is to say,

the structure of gender relationships in Australian society weakened the traditional position the men could have occupied in Indonesia or Singapore. A few participants did exploit the contestation of Islam and Western culture to resist this Australian practice. However, the adaptive strategies presented by Suyanto (42) and Usep (65) suggest that such opposition affected the men's strategies for negotiating their masculinity. Both men's stories show that the Islamic concept of male dominance can be modified into an Australian context of gender equality. This case also suggests that the binary man-woman opposition did not actually work for Muslim men in practicing their masculinity.

The Muslim brotherhood is perhaps the most powerful relational context for Muslim men to regain and reclaim their privileged masculine position. In the Muslim brotherhood mediated by Muslim communities, the men created cultural enclaves where every relational aspect affords the maintenance of their privilege, including their religious discourse in the mosque, the practice of ritual and spiritual work, gender-segregated space and roles and men's justified control over religious discourse. Muslim brotherhood serves as homosocial institution that provides a Muslim man with exclusive, intensified all-male interactions where he can obtain feedback, approval and support for self-conceptualization (Bird 1996), build bonding with fellow men (Kimmel 1994, 128; Flood 2008, 344) and receive instruction about expected manhood (Evans 2005; Corroto 2001). Here the Australian gender order had little effect, as the men employed their religious authority in creating a cultural setting comfortable for their masculine domination. What is present in this setting was their home-culture gender ideology and the structure of their relationships. This is the context where Muslim men gained patriarchal dividends in the form of religious privilege and status as normative Muslims, because women's exclusion was possible and also justified. In this setting, the binary man-woman opposition did operate, but not the binary man-God opposition, since God was a point of reference associated with maleness and holiness.

Gender and multiculturalism

This research has also contributed to discussions about multiculturalism by demonstrating that gender is crucial in understanding Muslims' experience in the multicultural context of Australia. Cultural and religious expression and practice in the workplace, maintaining the traditional status as the head of the family, and continuing commitment to religious

community all contribute to certain meanings for men's gendered identity, and certain ways of becoming men. Moodod (2012) argued that the presence of Muslims combined with contemporary Western values and the politics of multiculturalism has resulted in Muslims taking religion as the basis of identity, organisation, or normative justification of their practices. The response given by participants of the study to interview questions asking their opinion about Australian men and Australian society reflect their position as insiders of the society; that is, being part of it, but also different. Muslim men embraced some of the core mainstream values like individual freedom, and engaged in community life through the workplace, and their views reflect this. This led them to much more positive opinions about and support for the current practice of community life. At the same time the men also maintained inherited cultural values such as communality, group bonding and strong attachment to the family and to the mosque, which made them different. This strategy suggests that the main foundation by which Muslim men can contribute to and engage in Australian communities in positive and meaningful ways is through their beliefs, which at the same time give them space to interpret and practice religious teachings appropriate to their specific situation.

The study further suggests that multiculturalism has different impacts on power relations between Muslim men and their wives and children, posing a challenge to *imam* of the family as a dominant element of Muslim masculinities. This is apparent in the weakening of the Muslim men's traditional authority as *imam* or leader of the family and the seemingly strengthened position of women and children in family relationships. Some men adopted more grounded practice of what they believed as a Muslim man's religious responsibility in the family. In such effort, an important religious discourse widely accepted in their home culture which shape men's and women's identities was modified in response to multicultural context in Australia.

Study limitations

I have detailed my efforts to address issues arising during the fieldwork, and to minimise the limitations associated with the research method employed. Beyond these issues, the research design, the sampling design and the conduct of the research implies certain aspects that mark the limits of this study. The first and foremost is related to the purpose of the

study, which is not intended to generate quantification about the Muslim male population; neither does it seek the representation of all Muslim men in Australia. Rather, it explored and provided insights about the importance of gender and religion in shaping Muslim men's life experiences and their identities. The findings resulting from this study cannot therefore be taken to represent Muslim men in Australia, while suggesting some crucial understanding about this population as an Australian minority. Considering the complexity and variety of the Muslim population and their religious discourse and practice in Australia (as anywhere in the world), one 'true' representation of this group will never exist. The fact that I chose Muslim men from Southeast Asian backgrounds—a small cluster within the Australian Muslim population—speaks about this limitation. Instead, this selection is expected to provide a different feature of Muslim men, compared to those from Middle Eastern backgrounds, who are presumed to represent Australian Muslims, due to their dominance in the Australian media and previous studies on Australian Muslims.

Another limitation also stemmed from some technical issues during the interviews and participant observation, especially the length and timing of the activities. Most of the research activities started in the late afternoon, around 5 pm or earlier, and finished at night (up to midnight), to make an overall duration of about five to six hours. Such a lengthy process produced tiredness and sometimes fatigue on the participants' part, and especially on my own. In two of the interviews, the participants decided to conclude the activity, although apparently wanting to give more information, knowing that the time was close to midnight, and I had to travel back to my home. Similarly, two of the group discussions in Huda mosque had to be ended suddenly when they went past midnight and one of the participants was so tired that he fell asleep.

3. Future Research

This study suggests some of the key components of Muslim masculinities, including religious piety that entails the idea of monotheist faith; men's religious privilege, particularly their status as the head of the family; religious discourse of womanhood; religiously inspired male-bonding or Muslim brotherhood; and control over ritual space. The research also highlights how these components are embedded in the construction of men's masculine religious identity within the three contexts of relationship through strategies of negotiation.

These results open other related areas to be explored in further research on Muslim masculinities or other related fields.

One important context in the construction and performance of Muslim masculinities was men's relationship with God as implied in the doctrine of Islamic monotheist belief and expressed in religious piety. The discussion in section 2 of Chapter 4 in this thesis explores this context. Roy (2004) argued that the idea of faith among Muslims implies an encounter between individuals and themselves (185). To support his argument, Roy (2004) selectively cited some European writers who highlighted the position of self in the understanding of faith. However, Muslim men in this study repeatedly employed a spiritual framework that emphasised the involvement of God in their experience of relationship with the non-Muslim majority, with their wife, and with their Muslim brothers. The men used phrases such as: 'this is the answer from Allah', 'Allah has made me a better husband', 'this is a test from Allah', 'these people [Australians] are a reminder from God', 'Allah has given me this injury to stop me doing bad things', 'God has given me a lot of blessing through you [the male manager]', and 'Allah has sent me to this mosque'. These are in addition to the commonly used Arabic words including '*Alhamdulillah*', '*Subhanallah*' or '*Masya Allah*'. While these expressions generate spiritual meanings for the men's social experience, they imply a form of relationship between the men and the object of their faith. They also imply an enactment of Islamic piety on an individual level beyond the formal structure of Islam as a religion. How the interpretation of such relationships contributes to masculinity, particularly to men's privilege, requires further study.

Very closely related to the above area of future study is the study of Islamic rituals and spirituality in relation to Muslim masculinity. Few studies addressing rituals performed by Muslim communities chose non-canonical ritual, such as the *karbala* rite among the *Shi'i* (Torab 2007). However, study focusing on canonical rituals (such as *salat* or *hajj* by mass Muslim congregations) in understanding masculinity has not emerged yet. This research has shown how spatial arrangements in the mosque enable the production of male bonding, which in turn reinforces men's privilege in the ritual space.

Further studies involving a larger sample of mosques in different parts of the Muslim community, would perhaps provide an extended understanding of the relationship between

Muslim masculinity and Islamic ritual. Similar studies could also address the discourse of Islamic spirituality. Gelfer (2009) argued that some major movements of masculine spirituality have associated themselves with religion, specifically within Catholic and Anglican contexts, implying their reaffirmation of patriarchy. A survey by Castellini et al. (2005) about male spirituality movements revealed that male bonding and male awareness are the two most recorded motivations for men to become involved in such movements. Similar research addressing mainstream discourses of spirituality among Muslims, linking them with men's privilege, patriarchy and the construction of the masculine self, would make an important contribution to further understanding Muslim masculinities.

The participants involved in this study were recruited in the course of regular religious activities and exhibited significant discipline in practicing Islamic rituals. They showed a high degree of religious devotion in its traditional form, which suggests a high level of importance of Islamic practice and doctrine in their lives. A different strategy of recruitment that covers Muslim men who do not participate in these religious activities or who are non-practicing, I believe, would reveal a different way of understanding religion and its contribution in the construction of masculine identity. Such a strategy will contribute to an examination of the complexity of gender-identity construction among Muslim men.

Finally, adequate scholarship on Muslim masculinities cannot emerge without taking into consideration voices coming out of the experiences, situation and interests of Muslim women. Addressing Muslim women's perspectives and experiences will allow a direct examination of how the construction of Muslim men's religious-selves and their practice affect women's lives and experiences; women's position in the production of Muslim masculinities; and how power relations between genders are taking place in the performance of Muslim masculinities. Samuel (2013) and Ramji (2007) are two of the very few examples of studies in this field involving women participants, a circumstance that marks the limitation of my study.

In contrast to the narrative about stereotypical Australian Muslim men conspiring with fundamentalist organisations and the subsequent moral panic about this in Australia, the Muslim men studied showed a strong sense of belonging, support and loyalty towards Australia as a nation and its people and gave these values religious meaning. However, their

collective strategies in preserving their masculine privilege employing religious discourse and practice perpetuate women's exclusion and the 'otherisation' of women's religious identity. This contrast suggests that Muslim masculinities can adopt aspects that are not traditionally associated with the religious discourse, while still taking benefit from the patriarchal structure embodied in religious institutions.

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<http://www.smh.com.au/comment/smh-letters/siege-headlines-generate-fears-20140919-10izzf.html>. Viewed on 10 April 2015

Sydney Morning Herald, September 18, 2014, 'Terrorism raids carried out across Sydney, Brisbane'
<http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/terrorism-raids-carried-out-across-sydney-brisbane-20140917-10igft.html>,. Viewed on 10 April 2015.

Sydney Morning Herald, October 1, 2014, 'Islamophobia feeds on our fear of an evil within'
<http://www.smh.com.au/comment/islamophobia-feeds-on-our-fear-of-an-evil-within-20140930-10o073.html>. Viewed 10 April 2015.

APPENDICES:

1. Ethics approval



MONASH University

Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC)
Research Office

Human Ethics Certificate of Approval

Date: 4 June 2012

Project Number: CF12/1066 – 2012000508

Project Title: Muslim Masculinities in Australia: Negotiating manhood and Muslimness in Contemporary Australia

Chief Investigator: Dr Kirsten McLean

Approved: From: 4 June 2012 To: 4 June 2017

Terms of approval

1. The Chief investigator is responsible for ensuring that permission letters are obtained, if relevant, and a copy forwarded to MUHREC before any data collection can occur at the specified organisation. **Failure to provide permission letters to MUHREC before data collection commences is in breach of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research and the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research.**
2. Approval is only valid whilst you hold a position at Monash University.
3. It is the responsibility of the Chief Investigator to ensure that all investigators are aware of the terms of approval and to ensure the project is conducted as approved by MUHREC.
4. You should notify MUHREC immediately of any serious or unexpected adverse effects on participants or unforeseen events affecting the ethical acceptability of the project.
5. The Explanatory Statement must be on Monash University letterhead and the Monash University complaints clause must contain your project number.
6. **Amendments to the approved project (including changes in personnel):** Requires the submission of a Request for Amendment form to MUHREC and must not begin without written approval from MUHREC. Substantial variations may require a new application.
7. **Future correspondence:** Please quote the project number and project title above in any further correspondence.
8. **Annual reports:** Continued approval of this project is dependent on the submission of an Annual Report. This is determined by the date of your letter of approval.
9. **Final report:** A Final Report should be provided at the conclusion of the project. MUHREC should be notified if the project is discontinued before the expected date of completion.
10. **Monitoring:** Projects may be subject to an audit or any other form of monitoring by MUHREC at any time.
11. **Retention and storage of data:** The Chief Investigator is responsible for the storage and retention of original data pertaining to a project for a minimum period of five years.



Professor Ben Canny
Chair, MUHREC

cc: Mr Rachmad Hidayat

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Telephone +61 3 9905 5490 Facsimile +61 3 9905 3831
Email muhrec@monash.edu www.monash.edu/research/ethics/human/index/html
ABN 12 377 614 012 CRICOS Provider #00008C

2. Research flyer



What is the hardest challenge for a Muslim man living in non-Muslim Australia?
What is the biggest issue for a Muslim father to raise their children in increasingly secular society?
Is it important to show your identity as a Muslim in a multicultural public?
Is it important for a Muslim man to be 'Aussie'?

If you are a Muslim man with Indonesian, Malaysian or Singaporean background;

If you are over 20 and have lived in Australia more than 5 years;

Share your story about

Being a Muslim man in Australia

A research project on Muslim men in Australia is seeking participants for an individual interview. The interview is for you to share experience and opinion as a Muslim man living in Australia. The activity will take about 60 minutes and explore different experiences of Muslim men in family life, work life, and broader social life. The interview will be conducted confidentially at your convenient time and place.

Please call **Rachmad Hidayat** on:

[Redacted contact information]

This project is being conducted as part of a PhD in Sociology at Monash University.

[Redacted contact information]

3. List of research participants

Interview participants

NO	Participants (not real names)	Background	Age	Occupation	Date of interview	Marital Status
1	Suyanto	Indonesia	42	warehouse Manager	20 July 2012	Married, 2 children
2	Fahroni	Indonesia	44	teacher	23-Jul-12 24 July 2012	Married, 2 children
3	Zainuddin	Indonesia	48	Not employed due to injury, previously	24 July 2012	Married, 1 child
4	Usep	Indonesia	65	pensioner, previously worked in post office	25 July 2012 6 August 2012	Married, 3 children
5	Amin	Indonesia	53	Staff of warehouse	31-Jul-12 4 August 2012	Married, 1 child
6	Firman	Indonesia	24	contractor company	6-Aug-12	single
7	Afdhal	Indonesia	28	Electrical engineer	15 August 2012	Married, 2 children
8	Jundy	Indonesian	43	Research Fellow	29-Aug-12	Married, 2 children
9	Zakky	Indonesian	49	Private contractor Company	16-Jul-12	Married, 1 child
10	Roy	Indonesia	35	Technician at telecommunication Company	4 September 2012 '	Married, 3 children
11	Subagya	Indonesia	60	Pensioner, previously a chef	9 September 2012 '	Married, 2 children
12	Budiman	Indonesia	50	mechanic	27 July 2012'	Married, 3 children
13	Hamzi	Singapore-Malay	55	Security officer, restaurant owner	16 July 2012	Married, 3 children
14	Aslaam	Singapore	61	Automotive Technician	11-Sep-12	Married, 3 children

15	Jamil	Singapore	57	Aircraft engineer	26 August '12	Married, 4 children
16	Hanif	Singapore	50s	Aircraft Engineer	26 August '12	information not available
17	Umsa	Singapore	50	Hotel Technical Maintenance	28 September '12	single
18	Karim	Singapore	56	Running own business	17-Nov-12 24 Nov 2012	Married, 3 children
19	Deny	Indonesian	50s	Not informed	30 July 2012'	Married, 2 children
20	Shaleh	Singaporean	60s	not informed	10 July 2012'	Married, 1 children

Men's group discussions participants:

1. Jaka (30s), Indonesian
2. Farid (50s), Indonesian
3. Fahroni (44), Indonesian
4. Ferry (30s), Indonesian
5. Siswanto (50s), Indonesian
6. Suyanto (42), Indonesian
7. Amin (53), Indonesian
8. Zainuddin (48), Indonesian
9. Koko (50s), Indonesian

4. Interview and group discussion questions

List of questions of interview

Preamble: The interview should take 50-60 minutes, mostly depending on your answers. However, you are free to end the interview at any time. If there are any questions you prefer not to answer just say 'skip that one'. You know from the information letter that the interview will be recorded, because I want to concentrate on talking with you rather than busy making notes. Is that okay?

READ OUT DATE: This is an interview conducted on _____

INTERVIEW NO: this is interview no. MM

A. General

We will start with a few general questions about yourself.

1. What year were you born? What is your country of birth?
2. What is your occupation?
3. What is the highest level of education you have attained?

B. History of settlement and arrival at Australia

Now I am going to ask you some experiences that you had in the first time you arrived in Australia.

Could you please tell your experience the first time you arrived in Australia?

4. (If the respondent born overseas) What year did you for the first time arrived in Australia?
5. I am interested to know why did you choose and decide to move to Australia and not other countries?
6. What was your image about Australia before you arrived? I wonder if you considered Australia as a non-Muslim/Western country?
7. Did you plan to stay temporarily and wishing to return back one day to your home country or did you plan to stay permanently? May I know what was the reason?
8. Did you come just by yourself or with family? If you come with your family (wife), could you please tell me how your wife was involved in the decision?
9. Had you ever think that your life will be much more difficult in this country? Or had you ever think that you will be a minority in terms of culture, ethnicity and religion?
10. What was your plan for staying and living in Australia?
11. Could you please tell me how did you find a place to stay for the first time? Did you consider the closeness location to other Muslims relative/friends in choosing a place/ to live?
12. Could you please tell me how did you obtain a job for the first time? Did you feel the job suit you well in terms of your skill and level education? Did you also feel that the job suit you as a Muslim?
13. (If the participant arrived with wife) Did your wife managed to obtain a job too?

14. Often it is not easy to observe the rituals in Islam every day. What was your main challenge in observing the ritual/*shalah* back to your home country? (becoming more observance or less observance)
15. What was it/the observance/*shalah* like when you first arrived in Australia)?
16. Please tell me the story of how you found mosque? How did you find Muslim community that suit you?
17. Please tell me how you found halal food?
18. Did you bring your children with you? (If respondent brought their children) How do you comment on the process of finding a suitable school for your children?)
19. How did you make friends or find community-neighbourhood for you to involve in? Did you focus yourself on those with those from home country and among Muslims?
20. I am really interested to know what was your first impression about Australian people once you arrived?
21. In your first year in Australian, was there a time when you felt being not well suited with the society or being different to most of the people?

C. Work life and relation to Australian public

Thank you very much. I am interested in knowing your social experience as a Muslim man. I am going to ask you about your working life experiences.

Work Life

22. You have mentioned before about your occupation. How long have been working in this job?
23. Could you please tell me your experience of obtaining this job?
24. I am interested in knowing your general opinion about the job? Are you satisfied with it or enjoy it?
25. While doing the job, do you have an experience that you feel a conflict with your belief as a Muslim? If yes, how do you deal with that?
26. How often and intense do you interact with non-Muslim people in doing the job, could please explain? Is that more often and intense compared to your interaction with Muslims?
27. Do you feel different with those non-Muslim individuals or being a small part of the work place?
28. In that interaction with non-Muslim individuals, is there an experience when you feel you need to restrain in expressing your identity, belief as a Muslim? Or you feel you need to listen them more and try to adopt their standard/opinion in conversation or other settings?
29. Is there any time when you think you have no chance to be accepted in the working environment in the way those non-Muslim accept themselves each other as colleges?
30. Do you think it is not important for them to know your religion or they will not pay attention if you try to express your religious belief?
31. I am interested to know is there any moment when you feel insecure with your belief that might be affected with the working environment? If there is such moment, how do you deal with that?

The society and the men

Thank you. Now I am going to ask your opinion about Australian society especially their men. Is that okay?

32. I wonder if now you still have the same impression about Australian people as the first time you arrived here? Could you please tell me, what is your opinion about Australia as non-Muslim society?
33. I am really interested to know your opinion on Australian men in general. Could you please tell how do you see them?
34. How about their attitude toward religion, what do you think about that?
35. Do you want to be a part of them? How about the position of other Muslim men?
36. I like to know if there are times when you are worry that these dominant attitudes or values of Australian men would affect your Islamic beliefs, your family (children) or other Muslims men overall?

If the participant confirms the concern on question 35, go to 36. If the participant does not confirm the concern, go to 40.

37. Could you please explain in what ways that affect would happen?
38. And in your opinion, how should a Muslim man deal with that?
39. Do you think that Muslim men should resist from these dominant values? Or do you think certain isolation for Muslims community is necessary to protect them?
40. In your opinion, what values of Australian men that Muslim should be avoided/rejected?

If the participant does not confirm question 35;

41. Do you think Australian values are suitable and appropriate for Muslims as well?
42. In your opinion, are the attitudes of those representing Australian men good model for Muslim men as well?
43. What attitudes of Australian men that need/worth adopted?

D. Identity as a man

I am now going to ask your point of view on Muslim men identity.

44. First of all, I like to know how do you identify yourself?
45. In your opinion, what a Muslim man should like? What characters or attitudes that define a Muslim man compared to other non-Muslims?
46. What is the pride of being a man in Islam here in Australia?
47. And will that be different for a Muslim woman?
48. How do you compare Muslim men in Indonesia/Malaysia/Singapore and Muslim men here in Australia? I wonder if you have any preference of any of these?
49. Is there a time where you feel insecure that Muslim men will lost their identity in Australia?
50. What is the main challenge for a Muslim man to maintain their position and identity?
51. What do you think about what the Muslim community expects for a Muslim man in Australia?

E. Family life and relation to women

I am now would like to ask your opinion and thought regarding family life. Is that okay?

52. How long have you been married?
53. Did you marry in Indonesia/Malaysia/Singapore or did you marry here?
54. May I know what how important is marriage for you as a Muslim man?
55. In your opinion, what a good Muslim husband should like?
56. Do you agree that a man should be the head of the family? What does it mean in your understanding?
57. Do you agree that a man must be able to act as an imam in *shalahs*?
58. Do you think it is harder to be a Muslim husband here compared to Muslim husband in Indonesia/Malaysia/Singapore?
59. I am interested to know what did you expect from a wife before you were married?
60. I wonder if that expectation has change now, could please explain?
61. Does your wife work as well? *If 'Yes', go to 60; if 'No' go to 62.*
62. Could you please tell me why is that?
63. Is there a moment when you think that this is different to what commonly Muslims expect that a wife should stay at home while the man seeks for income for the family?
64. Is there a time when you feel the demand of the society give women more freedom and to obtain a job equal to men?
65. Do you think women in Australia have higher position and more liberty compared to Indonesia/Malaysia/Singapore? Does that happen to Muslim women as well?
66. Some Muslim men prefer their wives to stay at home, while some others encourage their to work? What do you think about this?
67. Are there times when you feel that the degree of women freedom here in Australia has gone too far according to your beliefs? Do you feel that happens to your family as well?
68. If that is the case, do you think that would diminish men's position and identity?
69. If you have a girl/ a boy, what do you concern most when they grow in this country?
70. Have you ever feel insecure that your children might lost their identity as Muslims or do not behave in the ways you want it according to your beliefs?
71. What is the role of a Muslim father in that situation?
72. Do you wish your descendants would to stay and become Australian or you think is better for them to back to Indonesia/Malaysia/Singapore?

F. Religious life and brotherhood

This will be the last part of the interview. I like to ask you some experience of participating in Muslim organisation particularly in (name of organisation).

73. Do you think you have more interaction with non-Muslim then with Muslim while live here?
74. I like to know your opinion about Muslims communities in Australia/Melbourne as you know?

75. Could you please tell me about activities you have been involved in (name of organisation)?
76. How long have you been participate in this organisation?
77. Do you participate in other similar organisation as well?
78. Could you explain the intensity or regularity of these activities?
79. May I know your personal objectives and expectation on these activities?
80. Are more men participating in this organisation than women? What are their roles?
81. Is there any favourite activities of your in this organisation? Could you tell me why?
82. How often do you interact with other Muslim men from Indonesia/Malaysia/Singapore through the activities?
83. What is the most important benefit of this involvement for you as a Muslim man?
84. I am interested to know how does that affect your religious commitment?
85. Do you think with this organisation and activities, you interact with Muslim men more intents than with non-Muslim men?
86. In your observation, what are the common concerns or interests among Muslim men in this community?
87. Do you agree that Muslim men would be able to maintain their values and identity without involvement in Islamic organisation like this?
88. We are going to end this interview. Is there anything do you want to say in addition to what I have asked?

This is the end of the interview. I thank you very much for your time, patient and willingness in sharing your though and story for this research.

List of themes of focus groups discussion

1. Do you identify yourself as an Australian man?
2. How do you respond to the dominant image of Australian men associated with Western, White, Anglo and secular values?
3. What attitudes and values associated with Muslim men do you think you need to maintain in Australia?
4. What attitudes and values associated with men's identity in Australia do you think you need to adopt into your own standards as a man?
5. How does the Muslim brotherhood in Australia provide support for you in maintaining your identity as a Muslim man in Australia?

5. Nodes for data analysis and interpretation

A. Main data

Relation 1: Work life and relation to Australian public

1.1. Work experience

- History of employment
 - *Type of jobs*
 - *Length of employment*
 - *Finding job, changing job*
 - *Happy or not happy with the job*
 - *Not working*
- Being a Muslim in the job, conflict and other issues
 - *Praying and other practice*
 - *Strategy in negotiating piety*
- Social interaction at work
 - *Form and intensity*
 - *Showing Muslim identity at work*
 - *Feeling different*
 - *Outing, friendship and alcohol*
 - *Marginalised, insecure*
 - *Islamophobia*
 - *Feeling accepted*
 - *Being part of the working environment*
 - *Understanding, support and respect*

1.2. The society and the men

- Opinion about Australia,
 - *The best country*
 - *Very good people*
 - *Islam being practiced here*
 - *They don't believe in God*
 - *Freedom is good, but*
 - *This is a very individualistic society*
- On Australian men
 - *They are kind people*
 - *They only look for physical pleasure*

1.3. Identity as a Muslim man

- Here, religion is your choice
- Australian self-conscious Muslims vs Indonesian religious fakery
- They see us different
- To disengage : Zainuddin case
- To engage and contribute
 - *Muslims cannot live by their own*
 - *Zakky's case*
 - *Jundy's case*
- Islamophobia
 - *Experience of racism and Islamophobia*

- *It is always there but only by few ignorance*
- *Not all Australians are racist*

Relation 2: Family life, relation to women

2.1 Marriage story

- Length of family life
- Story of love and marriage
- Settlement experience with wife and children
- The important of family

2.2. About woman and family in Australia

- Perception of women in Australia
 - *Australian women*
 - *Individualism and freedom*
- Belief about women's status in the family
 - *A good Muslim wife*
 - *Expectation on wife*
 - *Working wives*
- Independence wives
 - *Suyanto's case*
 - *Amin's case*
 - *Fahroni's case*
 - *Roy's case*
 - *Jundy's case*

2.3. Men in the family

- Beliefs about men's position in family
 - *Being imam of the family*
 - *Meaning of imam*
 - *A good husband*
- Strategies in maintaining marital life
 - *Doing religious duty*
 - *Being a husband in Indonesia/Singapore vs in Australia*
 - *Adapting Australia*

2.4. Being a father

- Parenting challenge in Australia
- Teaching religion
- Dealing with children independence
- Role of a father
- Value of Respect

Relation 3: Muslim brotherhood and religious life

3.1. Opinion about Muslim communities

- Benefit of the community

3.2. Activities participated

- Length of participation
- Intensity or regularity

3.3. Benefit or meaning of participation

- Affect on religiosity
- Family in Australia
- Brotherhood
- Educating children

3.4. Women participation in the group

- Women's participation
- Women's role
- Foods

3.5. Family participation

B. Additional data

History of settlement

1. Choosing Australia
2. Came alone
3. Came with family
4. First time impression
5. Settlement challenge
6. First year in Australia
7. Finding jobs
8. Observing Islam
9. Finding mosque and halal food
10. Engage to the society