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Indonesian Muslim Masculinities in Australia

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Abstract

This article serves as an inquiry into evolving forms of masculinity in the Asian region. It refers to data collected during a pilot project on the construction of Indonesian Muslim masculinities in Australia when Indonesian men arrive and encounter anglo-Australian men. Using the technique of asking the Indonesian interviewees to comment on 'Australian' men allowed analysis of what the Indonesian men thought about their own cultural tropes of masculinity. It emerged that their gender construction coalesced around two important cultural nodes of discourse about how to be a 'man': firstly, the Indonesian urban interpretation of global 'hypermasculinity'; and secondly, the moral role of men in Islamic discourse.

Keywords

Regional masculinities, Indonesian men, Australia, Islam, self-regulation, sexuality.

Indonesian Muslim Masculinities in Australia

Introduction

This paper explores Indonesian Muslim masculinities in Australia. In that respect it addresses some identifiable gaps in the sociological literature on masculinity. Firstly, research that explores the relationship between masculinities and religion is rather lacking (Engebretson 2006; Kimmel, Connell and Hearn 2005; Kimmel and Messner 2004; Brod 1987). Secondly, current social science that explores the relationship between religion, ethnicities and masculinities remains undeveloped even though there has been an increasing general interest in Islam and masculinity (see for example the edited collection by Ouzgane 2006). Finally, there has not been much mention of masculinity in the literature on gender relations in Indonesia, although some anthropological studies are significant because they explain how masculinity operates in specific cultures and traditions in the archipelago.

Important studies of Indonesia in this vein include: Hildred Geertz's (1961) ethnography of family life in Modjokuto; Brenner's (1995) critical study of traditional representations of masculinity and femininity in Java; Aquino Siapino's (2002) study of 'female agency' in the recent reconstruction of Islam and gender relations in Aceh; and Smith-Hefner's (2005) study of 'Muslim romance' and marriage in Yogyakarta. Also of note are recent studies of Indonesian masculinity by Oetomo (2000), Boellstorff (2005) and Clark (2004a, 2004b). Kimmel (2000) finds that ethnographic research on non-Western gender relations indicates definitions of masculinity and

femininity that differ from the Western norm. Therefore new work must develop beyond stereotypical fixed Western notions of masculinity towards understanding of non-Western men not only as culturally-specific locals but from the position of a 'global society' (Connell 2000, 33) in which not only people but transnational tropes of masculinity circulate (Pringle and Pease 2001).

The field of research on masculinities in Australia stands at something of a crossroads. While the research paradigm building on Connell's work on hegemonic Australian masculinities has developed strongly (see most recently Donaldson and Poynting 2006 among many others), the white 'ocker' male remains identified as the hegemonic ideal. Yet while there is no evidence of him disappearing, in demographic terms Australia is changing rapidly towards becoming an 'Asian' nation, creating the need for new interpretive paradigms for masculinity in Australia that include transnational and regional influences (Pringle and Pease 2001, 245-51; Hibbins 2003a, 2003b; Pease 2001).

Australia and Indonesia – Setting the Scene

In 2006, neighbouring countries Australia and Indonesia co-signed yet another defence and security pact. Given their close (but often troubled) trade and strategic relationship, large numbers of skilled and semi-skilled Indonesians have already, and will continue to, migrate to Australia. Yet negative public discourse about Asian Muslims in Australia focuses on the incompatibility of 'Muslims' with 'Australians', centred primarily on men and only secondarily on their often veiled wives. Poynting, Noble and Tabar describe the Muslim (male) 'other' as the pre-eminent 'folk demon'

in contemporary Australia (2004, 2). Graham claims that in Australia 'Islamophobia has replaced the Yellow Peril (…) Indonesia has been included in the demonisation because it's largely Islamic' (2004, 8).

On the other side, Australia does not get positive press in Indonesia. For example, Graham notes that 'sections of the Indonesian press and politicians (…) get extensive mileage from Aussie bashing' (2004, 4). And, after the first Bali bombing, Indonesian newspaper polls showed 'a large proportion (more than 40 per cent in one survey) of Indonesians clinging to the "CIA plot" scenario and standing behind their "brother Muslims"' (Graham 2004, 7-8), implying that the reaction in Australia to the bombing was just typical 'Muslim-blaming' by ignorant Australians. A key facet of the anti-Australian discourse in Indonesia centres on cultural incompatibility between Indonesians and westerners, particularly with regard to gender and sexuality norms. So that brings us to the key question addressed in this paper - how might Indonesian Muslim men construct their sense of masculinity when they come to Australia?

Indonesian Masculinities at Home

Traditional Indonesian masculinities are changing. Recent social, cultural and political trends and shifts have been influential: - later age of marriage; fertility control; rise in women's activism; upward credentialling of the labour market combined with economic downturn since the late 1990s; the end of the New Order[1]; and the extraordinary expansion of access to global media and information/communication technologies. As the pre-1998 strict social contract of New Order patriarchal roles and

[1] The term 'New Order' refers to the long years under the authoritarian rule of President Suharto that ended in 1998.

relations loosened, taken-for-granted tenets of normative Indonesian masculinity were challenged and thrown into doubt, especially as the formal public/private gender division unravelled. In one direction the globally-mediated, western, sexualised 'playboy' ideals of masculinity now play strongly in Indonesian urban male culture, as both advertising and the massive growth in locally-produced pornography demonstrate – 'semi-pornographic websites have appeared which specifically promote men's interests while vociferously denigrating women, feminism and *cowok pussy* (girly men)' (Clark 2004b, 118-19). Equally strong though, is the publicly-promoted Muslim ideal of *kodrat pria*, which idealises husbands and fathers and encourages male modesty and sexual chastity – 'for many urbanites Islam continuously competes with other significant ideologies in shaping their daily routines' (Bennett 2005, 13). Clark argues that discursive tensions around what the 'new' Indonesian man should be produce; 'the alienation of Jakarta's bourgeois urban youth and the vulnerability of the Indonesian male subject' (Clark 2004b, 122), so often represented in locally-made socially critical films such as *Kuldesak* and *Arisan.* In short,

> Just as the Indonesian nation has found itself in a deep crisis in the years following the fall of Suharto, as a constructed category the Indonesian 'man' is also undergoing a period of fluidity. Cultural icons such as the landmark film *Kuldesak* suggest that the contemporary image of the Indonesian male is torn between outdated and archetypal images and 'alternative' or non-traditional masculinities (Clark 2004b, 131).

Cultural Islamisation in Indonesia has had mixed effects (Bennett 2005). The theological emphasis on education for both sexes and the complementary partnership

of marriage as the basis of social life, translates into the presence of more married women than ever in the labour force, while men find their moral roles as dedicated husbands and fathers considerably emphasised. On the other hand, government censorship and the emphasis on public piety and formal marriage limits the expression of certain kinds of masculinity.

In male class, age and marriage relations one finds some sources for the apparent bifurcation in contemporary Indonesian masculinities identified by Clark and Bennett. In class terms there is now a vast distance between the highest and lowest strata of male incomes. This tends to exacerbate cultural differentiation between *halus* (refined, upper to middle class) masculinities, and *kasar* (unrefined, lower class) masculinities. Nevertheless, in age relations young unmarried men of all social strata are more or less expected to behave towards the *kasar* (coarse, flamboyant) end of the masculine continuum, and older married men are expected to behave in a more *halus* (refined, controlled) fashion. When Indonesians speak of the proper role of men - *kodrat pria* (usually in the same breath as *kodrat wanita* – women's proper role), it is the idea of man as father - mature and responsible masculinity - that is referred to. Once men marry, no matter how wild their youth, they are encouraged by strong public discourse and family pressure to reinvent themselves as respectable and refined providers – towards the *halus* (refined and self-controlled) end of the spectrum. To put this another way, the Indonesian husband and father is expected to demonstrate the triumph of reason and control (*akal*) over *nafsu* (unrefined and even animal-like passions).

The Indonesian men interviewed in the pilot study were by definition positioned towards the *halus* end of the continuum of masculine subject positions. They were either middle class men by birth, or men of more humble origins who had excelled in education and were now engaged in upward social mobility through marriage and a career as *pegawai negeri* (civil servant) in the Indonesian Public Service. As a small purposive sample they were not representative of the range of normative Indonesian masculinities. Yet their interview comments reveal some intriguing aspects of how some (perhaps many) Indonesian Muslim men construct their sense of masculinity in Australia in two different directions.

Although all interviewees were relatively young they were already living out the discourse of *Bapak* to some extent. The *Bapak* concept is important for understanding how hegemonic masculinity operates in the Indonesian context. *Bapak* can be translated simply as father, but is closer in meaning to the Latin term *pater familias*, the father who literally rules the 'family' - the business, the town, the nation - through his God-given wisdom, self-control, mastery of emotions, and authority over women, children and male underlings through the control of resources and ideology. *Bapak* may be harsh at times, but he always has the interests of his constituency at heart. His loyal and obedient subordinates both trust and fear him. This trope is still a hegemonic masculinity in Indonesia, co-existing uneasily with another form of hegemonic masculinity: - the aggressive, misogynist thug of *preman* civil militia; the sexual urban playboy of cigarette advertising. The data from Indonesian Muslim men studying in Australia discussed below implies these two discursive directions for the contemporary construction of masculinities.

Studying Indonesian Masculinity in Australia

The pilot project on Indonesian masculinities developed from a conversation between the authors about differences and similarities in contemporary Indonesian and 'anglo' Australian masculinities at a conference in 2004. Looking around the region, we found that in Asian studies overall, let alone Indonesian studies, masculinity remained 'an important lacuna' in gender research (Louie and Edwards 1994, 135). Even in the many anthropological studies of gender in Southeast Asia, masculinity and its constructions had 'been taken for granted' (Peletz 1995, 79). Certainly, studies of gender in Indonesia, whether by local or foreign researchers, almost always focused on women (Oetomo 2000, 46; Clark 2004a, 16; 2004b, 113). In the pilot project, we sought to redress that lack by undertaking a sociological interrogation of Indonesian masculinities in Australia, using invited commentary on Australian masculinities as a point of departure.

Identifying five Indonesian men residing on postgraduate student visas in Australia we began long interviews by asking them what they thought about Australian men. In their comments about Australian men and their behaviour, the Indonesian men (all Muslim) implicitly referred to their own cultural assumptions on how men should properly behave. Later in the interviews we asked them specific questions about Indonesian masculinity. Our initial data analysis indicated that while the social construction of Indonesian masculinity shared some characteristics with Australian hegemonic masculinity, some distinct differences were observable.

This broad finding supports the claim of Connell (2000, 10) that researchers need to talk about masculinities rather than masculinity, since among and even within cultures there is no one exclusive gender pattern. Yet because of the restricted sample of informants in this pilot study, the two discursive directions of Indonesian masculinities will inevitably be painted in rather broad brushstrokes below. In acknowledging this limitation we ask readers to keep in mind the relative dearth of prior studies on 'lived' rather than media-represented Indonesian masculinities, which tends to restrict our interpretations, and also to keep in mind that this paper reports on a study designed to set broad parameters for future research on Indonesian masculinities.

The pilot project aim was to identify some key parameters of 'hegemonic' masculinity (Connell 1987; 2000; Connell and Messerschmidt 2005) constructed by Indonesian Muslim men in Australia. This was envisaged as the first stage in a region-wide comparative study of current masculinities. From the very first we found 'masculinity' to be a term not well understood in the interviews, unlike 'manliness' and even 'virility' – which were readily grasped. Settling upon a set of appropriate synonyms and translations for the very concept of 'masculinity' is clearly a priority in conducting culturally sensitive research on regional masculinities.

We were aware of limited early work on Indonesian migration to Australia (for example Burnley 1998). However, for our pilot research purposes it was gauged more productive to interview Indonesian men studying in Australia for a few years with no intention of migration, since they would presumably be more detached observers of Australian men. Long, semi-structured interviews with five Indonesian men

undertaking postgraduate study at Australian east coast universities were conducted in 2005 and 2006 in English. Interviews began by asking about Australian men[2]. Quotes below from interview transcripts have been left as they were to convey the original sense of commentary. Our informants had been quite startled by the behaviour and demeanour of anglo Australian men when they first arrived. They had applied not only the lens of their own cultural understandings of masculinity to comprehend what they encountered, but some learned ideas about Western men. Because most Indonesians do not often have contact with Westerners and obtain ideas from the media and public discourse, selfish, arrogant and even violent dispositions are frequently attributed to Westerners (Peletz 1995, 90; Brenner 1995, 34; Pew Research Centre 2005)[3]. Thematic analysis of the interview data delivered the following contested themes of masculinity as performed practice: self-regulation, collectivism/family and sexuality. These are discussed below.

Self-regulation

> Not only [do] we have to control ourself, but we have to control our wife (Wali, 13/05/05, Newcastle).

Self-regulation here refers to power over the self in the Foucauldian sense - 'technologies of the self' (Foucault 1988). Errington claims that western men tend to associate power with physical/rational action - 'forcefulness, getting things done, instrumentality, and effectiveness brought about through calculation of means to

[2] We use the term *Australian* (men) in this paper to refer to anglo Australian culture, since this is the style of masculinity to which our informants referred.
[3] However, it emerged that for our interviewees their initial distaste had been mitigated by the building of personal relationships over time.

achieve goals'. In contrast, the prevailing view in Southeast Asia is that for men to 'exert force, to make explicit commands, or to engage in direct activity – in other words to exert "power" in the Western sense' – reveals instead an *absence* of effective power (Errington 1990, 5). A cultural contrast between hegemonic masculinity as corporeal self-regulation (in Australia) and moral/personal self-regulation (in Indonesia) was evident in the interviews, for example,

> The first impression about Australian men is that most of them really like to have a good body, so that they do body building. It's the opposite in Indonesia. [Here] it's all about their appearance. So they really work out and then get big muscles, and it's totally different in Indonesia that... And they are also conscious of health or something, and it's...you know the culture is different (Budi, 12/05/05, Newcastle).

Widodo also emphasised the strongly corporeal construction of masculinity in Australia – 'a different projected ..... image of masculinity (...) physically (...) the women, say, oh look at the men with the nice bodies' (Widodo, 11/04/06, Wollongong). Such comments implicitly construct Indonesian men as less concerned with physical self-regulation and more concerned with moral and personal 'technologies of the self'. For example, Budi stated that being a good Muslim Indonesian man was about more than praying five times a day and reciting the Koran:

> Islamic teaching concerns everything. But it's the personal aspect itself (…) we have to put it in our <u>heart</u>. So the problem is that understanding and doing the

way like the teaching is - very difficult (Budi, 12/05/05, Newcastle, emphasis in original).

Budi implied that Australian men are concerned with working on the body while an Indonesian Muslim man works on regulating his behaviour in everyday life[4]. This has deep cultural roots in bourgeois Indonesian behaviour - 'during the New Order the upper-class Javanese *priyayi* model of emotional self-restraint was widely deployed as an "ideal" pattern of masculine behaviour' (Clark 2004b, 118). This 'ideal' pattern of masculine behaviour was an important component of *Bapakism* (Geertz 1961), around which the system of authority in the formidable New Order bureaucracy was organised (Robinson 1998, 67).

Ideally, sustained practice of self-control develops a concentration of inner, mystical power, a divine energy or mystic inner strength which enables certain men to control themselves, others and the environment *without* using the 'crude' physical, political and material force celebrated in Western notions of hegemonic masculinity (Brenner 1995, 28). For example, Widodo claimed that 'in Indonesia, we have this kind of cultural aggression, not physical aggression, cultural embedded aggression but it's very much controlled'. Exercising of refined power constitutes its own spiritual reward to some extent, although wealth and a large number of followers and children (and submissive employees) signal that an individual man has it in abundance (Anderson 1990, 32; Errington 1990, 41-43). This Javanese concept of powerful masculinity, entrenched during the New Order (Machali 2001, 5), underpins the

[4] However, Clark (2004b, 118) notes the 'new phenomenon' of 'Indonesian-language magazines such as *Men's Health'* which do encourage men to work on their bodies. This phenomenon indicates the influence of transnational discourses of hegemonic masculinity.

patriarchal ideology of *Bapak* mentioned above, and has been further reinforced by the Islamist trend with its emphasis on *sunnah* and *hadith* rules enforced by public and personal moral surveillance (Helvacioglu 2006, 50).

In Islam, like the Judeo-Christian tradition, reason is associated with male essence and passion with female essence. In Indonesian thinking this signifies an eternal conflict between reason (*akal*) and passion (*nafsu*) resulting from the fall of Adam and Eve (*Hawah*) in the old testament. 'In many (and perhaps all) Muslim communities one finds an entrenched, highly elaborated belief that "passion" (*nafsu*) is more pronounced among women than men' (Peletz 1995, 88). It is *akal* (reason, intelligence, rationality, judgement) that distinguishes humans from the animal world[5]. Accordingly, those who seem to be lacking in restraint when it comes to eating, drinking, extravagant consumption, gambling or sex, are seen as relatively uncultured, closer to nature - even sub-human.

So Ray was surprised by Australian men 'screaming and 'yelling' while watching sport. Widodo claimed that when watching sport, Australian men were wont to 'grunt like a gorilla'. They displayed 'brute power', were 'aggressive' and 'like to show it rough'. In Widodo's view, Australian men resembled those Indonesian men from 'a very low economy class (...) like a coolie'. This illustrates the class-based distinction between *halus* - refined, upper to middle class - and *kasar* - unrefined, lower class - Indonesian masculinities – '[physical] aggression (...) is looked down on in Indonesia' (Ray). The surprise for them was that Australian men at leisure behaved more or less

[5] And by inference distinguishes men from women.

like lower working class unmarried men, regardless of socio-economic or marital status, or indeed, age. They were 'always joking' (Wali), even at work.

Another masculinity contrast was in care taken with appearance. For Indonesian men, inner refinement was signalled by a highly groomed, white-collar, middle-class appearance:

> Being manly, that's, well, you, doesn't mean that you have to look loud, dirty or, or untidy but you don't really have to groom yourself in such immaculate way like women. We would say, what are you? Men or women? But now it's, more and more people, especially work in the offices - they are allowed to be very tidy. They go, not exactly manicured, but they look after their presentation very well, from the hair part to the shoes and everything (Widodo, 11/04/06, Wollongong).

Widodo is speaking reflexively from within his own middle class masculine 'habitus'. 'Habitus' describes a cultural mindset, a set of collectively-shared 'generative dispositions' which provide tools for decision-making and choice (Bourdieu 1998, 72). Habitus expresses deeply-held, long-lasting values that can be applied to many situations. A contemporary Indonesian middle class masculine habitus assumes the desirability of a man becoming a well-groomed, polite, deferential office worker who rises through the ranks to the authoritative position of *Bapak* – signifying the aspirational hegemonic masculine middle class subject position. Not only is this ideal man a self-controlled, yet powerful and wise husband and father, he is also like a father to those below him in the bureaucratic hierarchy. However, even married,

mature-age Australia men seemed to the interviewees eternally caught in the irreverent, poorly-groomed performance of youthful (immature) masculine habitus.

Collectivism

Despite claims that Indonesia is rapidly becoming more capitalist and individualised (for example, Robison 1986) community remains the major ethos of social organisation (Vickers 2005). Given this strong collective orientation, the Indonesian men unsurprisingly found Australian men to be highly individualistic. 'Individualism' is also a criticism of Western 'values' often aired in the Indonesian media. Widodo said Australian men 'show off'. Budi found them 'selfish':

> Because I spent a lot of time with a group of Australians for my masters degree, I have a lot of experience with them. And the most important thing is sometimes they are very selfish, *ya*. And in the group interaction [assessment tasks] usually they just don't care, they just do what they like. They just do only what they are asked about the assignment, so that's it. They don't care about the rest of the group. 'This is my part' and then finish. And it's very difficult to contact them also, so like there is a distance between East and West in Australia, because when I formed a group with the Chinese we were still closer together (Budi, 12/05/05, Newcastle).

So how is it possible to reconcile this observed cultural difference with the Australian reputation for men valuing mateship (a counter-individualist value) above all things? In the example given by Budi above, the context is work, rather than the social. In the

history of iconic Australian masculinity, avoiding unnecessary work for personal gain and preferring social time with mates over other activities are complementary values:

> Our man is practical rather than theoretical, he values physical prowess rather than intellectual capabilities, and he is good in a crisis but otherwise laid-back. He is common and earthy, so he is intolerant of affectation and cultural pretensions; he is no wowser, uninhibited in the pleasures of drinking, swearing and gambling; he is independent and egalitarian, and is a hater of authority and a 'knocker' of eminent people. This explicit *rejection of individualism* is echoed in his unswerving loyalty to his mates (Murrie 2000, 81, our emphasis).

In the eyes of western men, Indonesian men's relations with each other can appear to be unnaturally stiff and formal (Brenner 1995, 27-30). But not in the eyes of Indonesian men themselves. Ray claimed that Indonesian men as friends are 'more familiar with each other. We are very close to each other and you know, not like in Australia. They are more distant from each other [not] like us in Indonesia, we are like family, you know'. This hints at contrasting cultural forms of male bonding which men in the two different cultures find it difficult to recognise (in the 'other') as masculine sociality. For example, one of the few times heterosexual Australian men ever touch one another is when they play sport, or wrestle and fight, whereas two close heterosexual Indonesian male friends will walk in the street holding hands, or stand with an arm around the shoulders while talking.

In Indonesian, the term *teman* (usually translated as friend) can refer to an actual friend (a mate), or to a more socially distant fellow student or work colleague. It can

also just mean age peers, or people at the same status level one sees every day. The concept of *teman* is therefore tightly woven with the sense of community so highly prized as a cultural value in Indonesia. Describing his masculine sociality in Australia, Budi said,

> We are a very strong community (…) Lucky that I am very strong. I have a relationship with my mosque – we have a big community in Newcastle (Budi, 12/05/05, Newcastle).

Budi draws our attention to the mosque as a place not only for men to pray, but to socialise with other men. Male attendance at the mosque – where all men are equal before God - creates a 'community' that reinforces not only Muslim cultural identity, but lateral bonds of masculine solidarity in which the competitive individual is minimised.

Studying Chinese migrant men in Australia, Cheng found their collectivist orientation was to *act* 'humbly, politely, respectfully, and like a team player, as opposed to acting like a competitive individual' (1998, 191). In contrast, Australian men were seen to *exhibit* 'aggressive competitiveness'. Accordingly, Australian masculine behaviours were judged as 'antisocial, selfish and morally wrong' (Cheng 1998, 193), which echoes Budi's claims above. Similarly, Vietnamese male migrants to Sydney regarded the moral values of Australian men as 'poor'. In attempting to adjust to Australian urban life they found their own sense of self as part of an organic whole undermined by 'monadic individualism more in tune with the requirements of contemporary

capitalism and its emphasis on competition and individual advantage' (Carruthers 1998, 48-50). This echoes our findings here.

Yet it also goes without saying that middle class Indonesian men do compete against each other in both formal and informal life arenas. Vying for positions, favours, status and attention goes on between men just as it does anywhere else in the world. However, in Indonesia the competitive process is far more indirect and subtle, with emphasis on keeping face and not showing one's hand. In other words, individual competitiveness between men as an aspect of masculinity is 'performed' (Butler 1990, 112) differently in the two cultures, rather than being entirely absent in one and ubiquitous in the other.

Family

> We never let our parents go out to live by themselves. We love them, I mean we have to take care of them. This is totally different (Ray, 12/05/05, Newcastle).

A striking contrast in Australian masculinities for Indonesian men was in reference to the family. For them, 'unswerving loyalty' (Murrie 2000, 81) was to the family. This was identified as a major point of difference:

> They are not really good sons in our perspective because they even don't contact their parents for a month (…) They live separately from their parents and its not normal for us (…) They don't see each other, they don't go to the family (…)

> they don't depend on the parents (…) They don't say father or mother for their parents, they just mention maybe John or whatever (Budi, 12/05/05, Newcastle).

He added, 'Australian families, they are very fragile'. In Wali's view the family has a regulating effect on the behaviour of Australian men, but this disappears when they are with their mates – 'They drink and get drunk. When they are with their family it's good but then they get drunk – they lose their good behaviour'. Wali's comment implies that Indonesian men, on the other hand, retain the regulating effect of the family in their expressions of masculine sociality in exclusively male company. Once they become husbands and fathers, *kodrat pria* (the mature responsible *Bapak* role in the family) becomes their normative masculinity.

Indonesian men are not only strongly tied to their parents as sons, but to their children as fathers. In Indonesian advertising fathers are almost always 'portrayed positively' – 'depicted as being sensitive and involved with their wives and young children' (Clark 2004a, 27).This is in contrast to Australian fathers who do not get much direct representation in Australian television commercials compared to mothers. As dedicated fathers, an important task of Indonesian men is to bring their sons up with a strong collective and familial orientation so they will always be - 'surrounded by their friends and family (…) to always be part of this community and society', Indonesian fathers must remind their sons 'from the very, very, very small that you are part of something bigger' (Widodo). He implies that Australian fathers, in contrast, encourage individualism in their sons - 'keep telling the children as soon as they start to look after themselves, like at some point we have to move out, we have to be independent'.

Strong orientation to valuing the family above all else is claimed as a major point of contrast between anglo masculine and Asian masculine cultures in Australia (Hibbins 2003a; 2003b; 2005). Throughout our interviews, the ideal role of men as the kind and wise head of the family was emphasised,

> As a Muslim, we have, as for every other religion we have rules and there are so many rules in my religion, that rule the man. Just like we have to treat our family - wife very good *dengan baik,* and then we have to educate our children in a good way (Uki, 10,05/05, Newcastle).

All interviewees spoke warmly and favourably about their roles as husbands and fathers, appearing to relish the authority and responsibility of this hegemonic masculine subject position.

To some extent, the discursive emphasis on Indonesian men as responsible, wise husbands and fathers with primary orientation to the family, implicitly points to the contrasting way younger Indonesian men behave before they marry and 'settle down'. By implication it is not only the lower-class male, but the *unmarried* middle class Indonesian man who therefore resembles hegemonic Australian masculinity.

Sexuality

Within Indonesian Islam, interpretations of the rights and obligations of men and women are being debated within a community of significant Islamic thought on a

scale not apparent elsewhere in the Islamic world (Istiadah 1995, 17). This inevitably involves examination of male sexuality - 'heterosexually identified Indonesian men find a long-standing voluminous Islamic discourse addressed to their transgressions and concerns' (Boellstorff 2005, 575). This was evident when the interviewees talked about sex, for example,

> I have seen some very vulgar movies here (…) the man behave to the woman very like, only animals do that. Animals can do that, but man just do that to the woman – sex! But in Islam we cannot do that. We cannot do oral sex, we cannot bring … We just have sex in a very good manner. I mean we have some *hadith* from the prophet, saying how how to do sex with our wife. Even though we are already husband and wife we have to follow the rules (Uki, 10/05/05, Newcastle).

Australian men are seen as much more animalistic (uncontrolled) in their sexuality. Widodo claimed they 'love drinking', display unacceptable sexual behaviour in public, and are more likely to be unfaithful. Uki found Australian male sex gossip distasteful to listen to – 'like Australians – "oh I just have a sex with this girl", that girl and something and use condom and something like that. Ahhhh!'. Wali said – 'Indonesian men are a little bit more controlled because of the culture'. Widodo stated that Indonesian men are 'more [self] controlled'. Budi was quite explicit about his moral duty only to be sexual inside marriage and in keeping with Islamic teachings,

> Like if you want to have intercourse, this is the limit, this is the way, and this is what you gonna do [indicates the missionary position] (Budi, 12/05/05, Newcastle).

Ray was the most adventurous of the Indonesian men interviewed. When asked about Australian male sexuality, he mentioned Adult Shops,

> It's quite good, like I mean, and I'll talk openly to you like – Adult Shop - I mean, Australians, they just go in and out in that shop [but] Indonesians when we come here we are very shy, you know and we're scared oh you know "Anybody see us? Anybody see us?" [mimes shivering in fear and laughs]' (Ray, 12/05/05, Newcastle).

Ray – who has a wife and child in Indonesia - implies that he has visited an 'Adult Shop', which contrasts with the apparently circumspect behaviour of the other Indonesian men interviewed. The main fear Ray refers to is being 'seen' visiting a sex shop by other Indonesian Muslims, who will then know he has committed *zina* – the sin of any sexual activities or thoughts outside marriage. In Islam, public display of adherence to the norms of being a good Muslim signals not only personal faith, but the moral and spiritual strength of the *ummah* – the global collectivity of Muslims. Committing *zina* on the part of men is therefore both a private and public matter. So as Ray says, in Indonesia – 'you do not mention about sexuality in public (…) Not like in Australia [you say] whatever you want to say'.

Uki explained this cultural contrast in masculine sexualities at some length. He began with Islamic doctrine – 'it's prohibited for not married couple to doing sex, even just kissing (…) even we have limitation for look at each other, because we must avoid the free sex. It is forbidden from our religion'. He made a direct contrast with the public sexual behaviour of Australian men – 'Here men just like happy to show that he has like girlfriend and he can just kiss. He can hug even in the public area'. He implied that he knew he had no right to judge this culturally different behaviour, but it made him feel uncomfortable – probably because of the sexual thoughts it prompted, 'Sometimes I feel like embarrassed myself if I get close to them and they just like...like kissing and hugging (…) I feel embarrassed if I look at a couple who are doing sex in front of me. I just get away from that situation'.

However, later in the interview he said that in Australia he wanted to kiss his wife in public – 'kiss the wife in front of people. I can't I can't do that. I can't do that. I want to do that [laughs] but I'm afraid if they feel just like I feel when I saw people here, so it's not comfortable' (Uki). In other words, as a good Muslim, he cannot show physical affection to his wife in public because his behaviour might provoke uncomfortable *zina*-type thoughts in other people. Uki's explanations and statements draw our attention back to the *praxis* (Gramsci 1971) of self-regulation and collectivism in hegemonic Indonesian Muslim masculinities.

Australian Men are not Attractive

The Indonesian interviewees could not really say what might be attractive about Australian men, especially given their 'animal'-like behaviour. Widodo claimed

Indonesian men are attractive to women when they are 'smart, articulate, who have a way, an aura'. This is signalled by a cool, refined demeanour. Being attractive (as an arbiter of hegemonic masculinity) was also signified by the worldly achievements of Indonesian men,

> I think what masculinity, Indonesian masculinity [is] from a man's point of view [is] somebody that: One: (...) has a lot of wealth. Two: the man has wealth and position. (...) Yeah, that he's the man, he got the money, he got the power (...) and also by the brain (Widodo, 11/04/06, Wollongong).

From the reverse perspective of Australian men, the hegemonic masculinity of Indonesian men, signified in self-control, inner power and inner strength, is not outwardly recognisable. 'Graceful and slight of build, [Asian men] sometimes strike Westerners as effeminate' (Errington 1990, 6), and also because they are polite, modest, self-effacing. Widodo explained this as follows - 'seems to me some westerners think that Asian men are sort of a bit more submissive, not because we're submissive but because we honour the other person'. He implies that Australian men distastefully fail to show proper respect to each other or to women. There were many references to the coarse (*kasar)* behaviour of Australian men - animalistic, emotional, irrational and sexual (Peletz 1995, 94-97; Brenner 1995, 31). From the cultural perspective of our interviewees, it is Indonesian men who appear as 'real' men along the continuum of Indonesian masculinities. Because of their uncontrolled physical behaviour and loud, animalist sexual talk, Australian men are implicitly located on that continuum towards stigmatised masculinities, or perhaps even towards the

feminine end of the spectrum of gender identities (Donaldson, Nilan and Howson 2006).

Conclusion

We return to our initial question: how might Indonesian Muslim men construct their sense of masculinity when they come to Australia? By asking for comments about Australian masculinity, we established some important points of contrast. Firstly regarding self-regulation. Given that Australian men seemed eternally caught in the irreverent, poorly-groomed, semi-animalistic performance of youthful (immature) masculinity, the Indonesian Muslim men seemed strengthened in their own sense of successful refinement and self-regulation measured against the hegemonic ideals of *kodrat pria* and *Bapak.* With regard to collective orientations, Australian men seemed highly individualistic (selfish) and competitive, implying that Indonesian Muslim men are successfully located within the hegemonic discourse of men as responsible family and community members/leaders. However, it was pointed out that this does not mean Indonesian men are not competitive with each other, or that they are incapable of selfishness, such as putting their own interests above those of the family. It is more the case that these aspects of masculinity are 'performed' (Butler 1990, 112) differently in the two cultures, so that they are not easy to recognise across cultures.

As for sexuality, this was seen as a major point of contrast, not so much in terms of sexual 'difference' *per se,* but in terms of control and refinement. Oscillation in the interview commentaries between distaste and temptation was common, indicating that the social construction of Indonesian Muslim masculinity in Australia acknowledged

as familiar the 'animalistic' expressive nature of Australian hegemonic masculine sexuality but identified it as something to be repressed by Indonesian Muslim men, not only in public, but in the marital bedchamber. To a certain extent this implies the hegemonic effect on the gender order worldwide of a global *hypermasculinity* that 'sets the standard' (Ling 1999, 278), in relation to which both Indonesian and Australian men arbitrate their behaviour.

Connell and Messerschmidt's (2005) rethinking of hegemonic masculinity is useful here. They point out that local patterns of hegemonic masculinity are located within regional patterns which sit within a global gender order, and thus a masculinity that is hegemonic in one area, social strata, or generation, may be regarded as marginal or even stigmatised in another. So while the globally-mediated, Western, sexualised 'playboy' ideals of masculinity now play strongly in Indonesian urban male culture, Islamist discourse in Indonesia is vociferous on the topic of how Western sexuality poses the major threat to male Muslim piety. Indonesian Muslim masculinities are arranged in various identity configurations around these two major influences.

We propose that this is at least one reason for the two distinct directions in culturally-inflected Indonesian masculine gender construction in the experience of Australian life. The limited data obtained from our pilot study points to some contested terrain within hegemonic middle class Indonesian masculinity. For example, in all commentary themes discussed above, Uki, Wali and Budi remained more loyal in their discourse about Australian masculinity to Indonesian *priyayi, Bapak* and orthodox Islamic ideals than Widodo and Ray. The latter two, who had both spent several years in Australia without their wives, positioned themselves ambiguously in

relation to different discourses of hegemonic masculinity in Indonesia and Australia. They made both accusatory and admiring comments, particularly about the expression of sexuality, indicating some possible new directions in the construction of their masculinity. We believe that this bifurcation echoes the two discursive 'directions' of contemporary middle class Indonesian masculinity back home that we described earlier. This contested frame of contemporary masculinities in Indonesia is complicated further by having to (re)construct one's masculinity around the migrant experience in Australia, even if only temporary.

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