



Research Article

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Social Distance and Cultural Solidarity: Muslim Mothers and Nurturing Indonesian-Northern Irish Children

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Abstract

Living in a non-Muslim community can be highly challenging for those who follow Islam. The loneliness, daily challenges, psychological issues, and acculturation distress can be stumbling blocks to completing their religious practices while also teaching Islamic values to their children. Employing qualitative study with a focused ethnography approach, this study explores Indonesian Muslim mothers' lived experiences while educating their children about Islam in the midst of a non-Muslim community. We analyzed interview data using thematic analysis. Our results provide information for Muslims on the associated social distance and cultural solidarity of living in a non-Muslim community.

Keywords: *Islamic parenting, Migration, Mixed-Marriage, Ethnic minority*

1. Introduction

Islam has a controversial history in Western European civilization. The settlement of Muslim communities in the heart of Christendom's countries partly began as a by-product of the earlier alliance formed as a result of European empires colonizing portions of the Muslim world during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (O'Mahony, 2009). At the forefront of these Muslim immigrants were soldiers who fought under the flags of European nations, such as South Asians and Africans for Britain; North Africans and Senegalese for France; Tartars and Bosnians for Germany; and Indonesians and Surinamese for the Netherlands. Later, many Muslims immigrated to seek work and political asylum in the 1970s (Nielsen, 1987; Haddad & Esposito, 2000). In the twenty-first century, approximately 10 to 12 million Muslims live in Western Europe. Their presence has elicited fear and suspicion in some

regions, arousing inter-cultural and inter-religious exchange. Fear and suspicion of Muslims skyrocketed in the Western world following terrorist attacks across the globe that were often characterized by media as being Islamic (Hopkins, 2007). Because of this, to be considered Muslim is to be marked and signified as a 'stranger' or 'other' in Western societies. Thus, many Muslims have been victims of discrimination, harassment, racial and religious profiling, and even verbal and physical assault (Stubbs & Sallee, 2013).

Another possible cause of tension was the two contradictory outlooks of Islamic faith and European ideas. In Islam, the Quran and Hadeeth compose a framework for individual, familial and social relationships, thereby forming the rhythm and the structure of daily life, as well as moral and value systems for Muslims. In contrast, in late twentieth and early twenty-first century European cultures, people are somewhat pluralist and secularist, meaning only a small component of daily life is religiously adherent (O'Mahony, 2009). These have become tangible and deep tensions for most parents with second- or third-generation children, who face a twofold challenge where they must at once experience a desegregated social environment and embrace the religious values of their parents or elders in their communities. On the other hand, the other contexts encountered as a consequence of Muslim migration are inter-racial or inter-cultural. These terms portray marriages in which the partners are from different nationalities, religions, or cultural or linguistic backgrounds (Skerrett, 2006). While many studies have focused on mixed-marriage in Muslim communities in Western countries, researchers have overlooked one European region in particular: Northern Ireland.

Carroll (2016) noted that intermarriage for the migrant evokes the attitudes of social distance and cultural solidarity. Social distance signifies the attitude of the migrant towards people who exist outside of their own ethnic group with whom they accept contact, and this attitude is common during the first years of migration. It is sometimes replaced later by cultural solidarity, which Gordon (1964) defined as an attitude that allows migrants to be incorporated into a society across generations, eventually reaching a stage where all in-group traits (including religion) diminish.

On the other hand, Skerrett (2006) summarized that both attitudes – social distance and cultural solidarity – commonly arise according to specific attitudinal context. Attitudinal context is, in other words, the attitudes and reactions of the individuals and families directly involved; the effects on family structures; and the implications for children's upbringing. Geographically, some older preliminary studies have found that intermarriage across cultural, religious, or racial boundaries is not exclusive to Northern Ireland (McFarlane, 1979; Donnan, 1990; Wigfall-Williams & Robinson, 2001). In our view, most study in Northern Ireland so far has focused on in-group Muslim religious or social interaction, such as that among Pakistanis or Africans, while few have inquired about other minority communities (Hopkins, 2016). In addition, investigations into Muslim-Christian intermarriage have been little discussed in Northern Ireland compared to other countries such as England, Germany, France, and Belgium. With this in mind, this current study attempted to broaden knowledge about the social distance and cultural solidarity in inter-faith and inter-cultural marriages between Muslim migrant women and Northern Irish (former) Christian men. As a means to develop a new perspective, we therefore focused our investigation on Indonesian women migrants. We centered on Indonesian mothers – with their status as a migrant minority in Northern Ireland – and their nurturing of Muslim religious values in their Northern-Irish, Indonesian children.

We conducted a qualitative systematic review using a focused ethnography approach to describe the views and experiences of Indonesian migrant women in nurturing Muslim religious values in their children in Northern Ireland. Our study explored our shift from a point of view that focused on narratives of representative experiences as retelling other people's stories of what happened and what was lived (Norricks, 2013; Merminod, 2018). This study explores the experiences of Indonesian migrant women in nurturing Muslim religious values in their children in Northern Ireland.

2. Literature Review

2.1 *Ethnography, Society and Culture*

Understanding ethnography is inseparable from the social context, which is the object of study. Ethnography regards cultural assessment of society. The results of ethnographic study also provide new directions in the cultural paradigm. Culture is a variety of patterns of behavior associated with certain groups of people (Spradley, 1979). According to Adrian et al. (2012), cultures are systems of knowledge, beliefs, and values that exist in the minds of individuals in a given society.

Geertz (1973) argues that cultures are systems of symbolic meaning. Furthermore, cultures retain semiotic systems with symbols that function to communicate and signify the meanings of thoughts between individuals, so that culture is also an object, action, or event in society that is phenomenal and observable, felt, and understood. This view focuses on the symbolic aspects and cultural meanings between individual minds which are collectively owned as public realities, so that they can be seen as part of the holistic nature of the culture of a given society.

An ethnography describes a culture (Spradley, 1979) in a focused way. Ethnography in describing culture, both implicitly and explicitly, is expressed through words, both in simple comments and long interviews (Murchison and Coats, 2015; Crowe and Hoskins, 2019). Words in this context belong to the universal elements of a culture, namely those related to language and religion.

On the other hand, culture includes its own achievements that have social appeal, and ethnography produces narratives from a long study process to allow many anthropologists to read and know it (Merminod and Burger, 2020; Gu et al., 2020). Basically, culture as a social achievement needs to be published to other societies as a form of cultural education allowing inter-cultural knowledge to accumulate between and about cultures (Jewish, 2016). Furthermore, there can be interactions between cultures in diverse societies, and one interesting element to study is what happens to Indonesian migrant women in nurturing Muslim religious values in their children in Northern Ireland.

2.2 *Children's Social Behavior*

Social behavior can initiate interactions with other people. Behavior and development is observable and can be studied directly through the environment (Jean-Claude, 2006). Social behavior can accordingly be influenced by the environment. The process of observing and imitating the behavior of others as a model is an act of learning (Meng et al., 2020). Humans form their behavior through continuous reciprocal interactions between cognitive, behavioral and environmental influences (Jean-Claude, 2006). Behavior forms from what is instilled in early childhood through the environment, leading to the development of social behavior (Liu et al., 2020; Korlimarla et al., 2020). Behavior includes not only things that are overt but covert. Examples of unobservable behavior or activities are thinking and remembering while what is observed is walking, running, writing, laughing, and crying (Liu et al., 2020).

Social behavior is something done in establishing relationships with other people verbally or nonverbally. This is influenced by cognition and supported by a stimulated environment that determines acceptance or rejection. According to Gebru et al. (2021), children rate the characteristics of friendship through doing something together, liking and caring for each other, and sharing and helping each other. This shows that children's social behavior can be seen when someone creates and establishes communication with others. Therefore, it is necessary to achieve optimal social development stages for children. Children must be given the opportunity and freedom to explore in the environment, which also leads to them looking for and finding other friends.

3. Methodology

As specified in the introduction, the current study set out on a more detailed exploration of the social distance and cultural solidarity of Indonesian Muslim women confronting intermarried life in a minority situation, specifically focusing on how they nurture Islamic values in their children. Accordingly, we carried out ethnographic fieldwork – a qualitative approach to grasp social accomplishments in the participants' terms (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). Alternatively, ethnographic fieldwork concerns how people make sense of their daily lives: anthropologists direct it towards the mechanisms by which people achieve and sustain interaction in social encounters, such as making assumptions, utilizing conventions, and adopting practices (Cohen et al., 2007). This study used focused ethnography to explore certain problems in sub-cultures among small groups of people (Roper and Shapira, 2000). Focused ethnography is especially effective for technologically complex modern subcultures (Blomberg and Burrell, 2012). Focused ethnography is particularly suitable for small-scale study that is conducted to explore cultures, and where the researcher may not have familiarity with the sub-culture under study. Focused ethnography centers on specific problems and contexts (Muecke, 1994).

In this current study, such mechanisms were composed of attempts to uncover the dilemma and challenges confronting mothers regarding how they are instilling Islamic values in their children while concomitantly contending with the perception of their own Islamic faith, exposure to a dissimilar social environment, and the inter-relationship of the couple and their extended families. As Rawls (2011) cautions that this type of study usually takes the most commonplace activities of participants' routine for granted, we carried it out during the monthly meeting of the Quran recitation of the Indonesian Muslim Community in Northern Ireland (IMCNI). Four Indonesian Muslim mothers participated in this project. They were (pseudonym) Nabeela, Aleyah, Eliana, and Isyana. Even though the number of participants in the sample was small, it adequately represents a variety of different backgrounds and experiences, effectively uncovering the topic of parenting Islam in a minority situation. Table 1 summarizes their biographical explanations:

Table 1. Brief biographical explanation of interview participants

No.	Name	Short Description
1	Nabeela	The interviewee has lived in Northern Ireland for 19 years. She is registered in IMCNI. She has three children: two girls and one boy. The eldest just became a student at Queen's University Belfast. She does not wear a headscarf or hijab, and she considers herself to be a devout Muslim. She never misses the five-times-daily prayers or any other obligated worship. She is now a teacher in daily childcare close to her house. She met her husband, Stuart (pseudonym), in Indonesia where they worked together. Her husband is employed as an aviation engineer. Her husband was formerly Christian and became Muslim before they married, though he is non-practicing.
2	Aleyah	She has lived in Northern Ireland for 12 years. She is a full-time housewife. She is also a member of IMCNI. She does not wear a <i>hijab</i> , but she conveyed that she never skips the obligated worship every day. She met her husband while they were both pursuing post-secondary degrees in Germany. They decided to marry in Indonesia. Her husband, Nathan (pseudonym), was a former Catholic, then converted to Islam before marrying. She lived in Germany for a few years before moving to Northern Ireland, because her husband obtained a job as a lecturer at a university in Northern Ireland. Aleyah's husband is a practicing Muslim. They have two children. The eldest is a second-year student at Harvard University. The youngest is studying at an inclusive school in Northern Ireland.
3	Eliana	The interviewee has lived in Northern Ireland for 15 years. She is a full-time housewife. She is also a member of IMCNI. She does not wear a <i>hijab</i> , and she considers herself to be a moderate Muslim. She sometimes fulfils the obligated five-times-daily prayer. Her husband Brady (pseudonym), a former Catholic, is similar in this respect. She met him in the US when they were co-workers. Before her husband converted to Islam, he studied Islam in Australia for a year. He is now a lecturer at a university in Northern Ireland. They have two children: a girl and a boy. Their daughter is in P5 in elementary school, while the son is in P1.

No.	Name	Short Description
4	Isyana	She has lived in Northern Ireland since 1999. After ten years, she moved to Indonesia and lived there for six years, then came back in 2014; currently, she and her family are in their third year residing in Northern Ireland. She has three children: two boys and a girl who were all born in Northern Ireland. She described herself as a moderate Muslim, and she does not wear the hijab. Her husband, Kieran (pseudonym), is a former Catholic who converted to Islam before marrying her. They met in Australia while she was pursuing her degree and her husband was working there. Her husband is a non-practicing Muslim; together, they run a family business as their financial income.
The Early life of marriage's story		Before deciding to marry foreigners, the four participants had a similar issue making that crucial life decision. They all confronted a family issue, which at that time raised doubts as to how they lived lives as individuals belonging to a minority and had to pass on Islam in their new families. This spurred some fear for a new mother. Nabeela – who has lived longer in Northern Ireland compared to others – conveyed that in the first two years living in the UK, she encounter significant trouble. The situation became worse when her husband rarely came home, and she was pregnant after seven months, living far away from her family. At that time, she presumed that she was the only one Indonesian who lived in Northern Ireland: <i>"I was really stressed and almost killed myself because I had no one who understands my feeling, my sorrow, and my loneliness, neither my husband"</i> (Nabeela) As alluded to implicitly in the description above, Nabeela was the only participant who had no experience living overseas. Migration caused by marriage constituted her first experience when she left Indonesia. Years after, her first child was born; this became powerful energy for surviving her new life. In comparison, the other three moms claimed that they had no problems adapting after marriage to lifelong distance from their relatives in Indonesia, since they had experiences being foreigners overseas. Thus, living abroad for them was not a big deal. However, the issue still arose among them regarding the faith that they had to transfer to their children.

The data was collected using a semi-structured interview conducted at the monthly IMCNI event after the event had finished. Using a smartphone as a recorder, the interview was administered naturally, like a conversation, and lasted for approximately 20 to 30 minutes for each participant. After conducting the semi-structured interview, researchers transcribed the recording using the online application oTranscribe, and then analyzed the transcripts using thematic analysis. The current study employed the analysis to identify, investigate, and report the patterns or themes within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Additionally, the researchers used member checking to ensure the trustworthiness of the study and verify interview data. All participants received copies of the transcriptions for a chance to submit feedback and comments, allowing the study to avoid misinterpretation in the final report.

4. Results

Previous studies of parenting in a minority situation used three themes: ethnocultural (being from a different cultural heritage from the majority, with distinct customs of parenting and childrearing), economic, and social (the influence of being the 'other') (Bornstein, 2005). However, in this study, we identified only two aspects pertinent to the core issues of Islamic parenting: the ethnocultural and social. We exclude the economic factor due to the fact that the four participants are from high socioeconomic status families. Further analysis showed that the dilemmas and challenges of Indonesian Muslim mothers in terms of social distance and cultural solidarity covered five central themes: self-concept of the mothers; spousal contribution; the children's characteristics; cultural issues; and the attitude and support of the social environment.

4.1 Self-Concept

The four participants have different degrees of Islamic faith, and none wear the hijab. Nabeela and Aleyah consider themselves devout Muslims, Eliana somewhat devoted, while Isyana considers herself

a moderate Muslim.

Despite their differences in personality, they all expressed great concern about the Islamic faith of their children. For instance, Isyana, although she revealed that she had not abandoned her habit of drinking wine every night, stated that she always strives for her children to be better Muslims than her. This belief is the product of what Isyana believes resulted from what her own mother said:

"I always remember what my mother was saying that I had to educate all my children to become good Muslims. Because she reminded me that besides good deeds that we have done in our entire life, the shaleh/shale hah (pious) children would become a reward that counts to enter heaven. Thus, I want my children to always send me prayers after I die and I want them to know how to bury me in the Islamic way" (Isyana).

Isyana noted that this statement underpins all her thinking: to always be a good mother in front of her children, even if her own practice in Islam is imperfect. For her part, Eliana felt that she was not confident in teaching Islam properly to her kids because of her inconsistency. However, she has been striving to become better. In contrast, the other two mothers, Aleyah and Nabeela, conveyed that they have done their best to transfer Islamic values to their children as normally as possible, although they are in the situation of belonging to a cultural minority. Aleyah, in particular, presumes that the situation could be an excellent opportunity to show the world that Islam is a universal religion; in her words, a rahmatan lil'alam - a blessing for the whole universe. She also frequently mentioned that she always keeps the two main principles of Islam -Habluminallah (relationship with God), and Habluminannas (relationship with humans) - and wants her children to do the same. On the other hand, Nabeela presents the uttermost faith in Islam. She accounted that whatever happened, her generations must be Muslim and all will die in the condition of being Muslim (khusnul khatimah).

4.2 Spousal Contribution

Interestingly, this inquiry highlighted that the husband's occupation seems to affect the mothers' practice in Islam and attitude towards fostering Islam in their children. For instance, Aleyah's husband (Nathan) and Eliana's (Brady) are university lecturers. Nathan has been a practicing Muslim since he converted to Islam before marriage, and he fulfills all the pillars of Islam, including abstaining from drinking alcohol. Moreover, he has expanded his knowledge of Islam through engaging with the Quran and Hadeeth. Therefore, unsurprisingly, Aleyah was noticeably confident when it came to encouraging Islamic values in her family. On the other side, Brady - who had experience in learning Islam for a year before marrying Eliana in Australia - has the same interest in engaging with the Quran, Hadeeth, and the other Islamic books, despite not fully observing the pillars of Islam as a practicing Muslim. Eliana revealed that her husband had stopped drinking alcohol in 2015, and he also sometimes brings his son to the mosque for Friday prayer. More than this, she conveyed that her husband practiced more diligently than her.

In comparison, Nabeela's husband Stuart, who is an engineer, has remained a non-practicing Muslim since his initial conversion. He does not pray or fast, and still drinks alcohol, although he does not eat pork. Nabeela stated that she had not persuaded her husband to practice Islam, and she felt guilty that she has been unable to guide him. She felt liable for this, yet she stated that she would not give up. Despite this, in parenting Islam to their children, Nabeela said that Stuart fully supports her handling of the matter though he takes no practical hand in the process. However, in the case of fasting, Nabeela and Stuart sometimes have a twofold argumentation: whether their children were able to keep fasting until dawn or if this would leave them too hungry in the middle of the day; ultimately, they gave the decision to their children. In the case of Nabeela, she stated that she did not mind doing everything by herself in terms of instilling the Islamic faith in her children, including accompanying her son for Friday prayers at the mosque - a task that fathers customarily complete.

Among all the participants' husbands, Isyana's husband, Kieran - a businessman - practiced Islam

the least. Since the beginning of their marriage, Isyana has urged Kieran to give her full control to instill Islamic values in their children, whether he would become a practicing Muslim or not. Similar to the other husbands, Kieran became a Muslim because of a marriage proposal, but he was the only spouse to hold the status of a Muslim without making changes to his daily habits after marrying. He has continued to eat pork and drink alcohol. In terms of drinking alcohol, Isyana herself admitted that she struggled to get away from that habit. However, she and her husband agreed to not drink alcohol in front of their children.

4.3 Children's Characteristics

All the mothers confirmed that more of the values and attitudes of their children were obtained by imitating them, rather than their husbands. These values and attitudes covered religious practices of Islam. For instance, Eliana believed that her children would only pray if she or her husband also prayed. Due to her children being still relatively young, she and her husband had not insisted that they diligently practice prayers. Nabeela, on the other hand, with her struggle to never miss her five-times-daily prayer, brings the prayer kits everywhere and makes her children aware of this practice. As a result of this habit, her children are willing to perform prayers, and they have never rejected the invitation to pray. Her children have also told her that they never skip prayers, even when they are away from home. This made Nabeela relieved. Her children also fasted during Ramadan, although they barely finished the full fasting period. Furthermore, Nabeela emphasized to her children the importance of not drinking, and she will not allow them to have sex before marriage. She places trust in them to explore their world, and even if she sometimes worries about her children's company, so far, she has not encountered any major issues in nurturing her children in the way of Islam. The five-times-daily prayers have also become a habit for Aleyah's children. Her first child, Carrick (pseudonym), has fulfilled fasting in Ramadan full time since he was seven years old. Similar to Nabeela, Aleyah also strived, with her best effort, to promote her children's Islamic faith, giving up her time to stay close to her children without making her children feel intimidated or monitored. Carrick is now studying at Harvard University, and he communicated to Aleyah that he attended some Islamic courses to fulfill his curiosity about Islam, and he also joined the on-campus Islamic Student Association. Although far from his parents' influence, Carrick has retained his faith, making Aleyah happy.

On the contrary, to engage Islamic practice in her family, Isyana only asked her children to pray twice a day for Ashar (the afternoon prayer) and Maghrib (the sunset prayer). She assumed that these two prayers were at the most convenient times of day, since her children were free from school life. To replace the shortcomings of the compulsory prayers, she urged her children to make other prayers, called sunnah. This supplementary prayer has many varieties, but Isyana has emphasized to her children the two prayers of istiqarah (the prayer of seeking guidance) and tawbah (the prayer of repentance). As a result of this habit, Isyana's children engage with their God (Allah) even for small concerns, such as choosing their extracurricular activities.

Among Isyana's three children, she claimed that her first son Reinhard (pseudonym) was most pious. She asserted that he is a benevolent child, always remembers his five daily prayers, and is keen on learning the Quran. Perhaps unexpectedly, Isyana felt worried about his Islamic practices. She thought that Reinhard's practices had deviated from what she taught. As a result, she asked her husband to help her lead him into being a moderate Muslim like her.

According to her statement, Isyana considered fanaticism in Islam to be associated with terrorism. It is interesting to note that the fallacious premise linking extremism and terrorism in Islam not only arises among non-Muslims but also within the Muslim community itself. In fact, if fanaticism in Islam led every Muslim to be a terrorist, no place in the world would be safe for any non-Muslim, because there are a vast number of Muslims residing around the world.

The current study also disclosed the disparate teachings in Eliana and Isyana's families. Delgado-Gaitan (1991) and Moll & Gonzalez (1994) both found that parents in minority situations observe strong discontinuities between home and day-to-day interactions occurring in their children's schools. In the

case of Eliana, the disconnect is noticeable in the case of her son Jason (pseudonym), who studies in a Catholic school. As such, he sometimes practices a Trinitarian ritual unconsciously in his bed before sleeping. When Eliana spotted this happening, she quickly reprimanded him.

In comparison, the discontinuity in Isyana's family happened when she found her child referring to her as "you", which she considers disrespectful. She noted that a child should always call their mother "Mommy", even though in school they are free to address teachers or other adults by their name or by "you." Besides school, Coll & Pachter (2002) also conveyed that discontinuity could be influenced by house ownership, disposable income, access to quality daycare, commerce, the quality of health care, and parents' employment. The following section elaborates on other cultural issues.

4.4 Cultural Issues

Migration provokes inter-racial and inter-cultural issues in the families studied. The most striking result to emerge from this study was that the four participants responded differently to adapting to Christmas and school issues. The current study classified these responses into three conceptions: assimilation, integration, and resistance. Firstly, assimilation is a response that shows an increasing acceptance of difference (Distiller & Steyn, 2004). In other words, this is a process describing the situation where a mother seeks contact with receiving society members – e.g., her husband's family – and adopts their customs, values, and social attributes. Moreover, those in the family become active members of the receiving society to the extent that they become indistinguishable from the majority. In accordance with this study, Eliana and Isyana's attitude to approaching Christmas represents the process of assimilation. They similarly presumed that the main features of Christmas culture were primarily the Christmas tree and gifts, which were not an issue for them. They also suggested that these traditions were not only synonymous with Christianity, but with Western culture. They were fascinated to provide a Christmas tree and gifts every year in their house. Additionally, Eliana and Isyana felt that they wanted their husbands to continue to celebrate their cultural traditions.

On the other hand, in regard to school activities, Aleyah and Eliana had the same views. Some practical reasons – such as distance or qualification – led to them sending their children to Catholic schools rather than integrated ones. However, both admitted that they revealed their identity as Muslims to teachers and school staff, and they felt welcomed.

Secondly, the concept of integration is construed as a process of adaption in which the mother does not have to give up her own ethnic identity (Berry, 1997). This process underpinned Aleyah's views in terms of celebrating Christmas with a Christmas tree. She conveyed that the tree is a Western tradition that existed long before Jesus Christ. In comparison to the others, her family has a unique way of celebrating Christmas. She chooses animals and other accessories that are unrelated to Christianity to decorate the Christmas tree.

The last cultural issue raised was resistance. Previous studies have highlighted that in intergroup marriages, the migrant spouse (in this case, the mother) frequently has more restricted participation and tends to exclude themselves from receiving values, thereby preserving their cultural orientation (Hirschman, 2004; Portes & Rumbaut, 2006; Huijnk, 2011). Such resistance was clearly found in Nabeela's attitude towards the Christmas tree. Because of this contradiction, Nabeela argued with her husband on many occasions. Even though her husband had explained that the Christmas tree was not originally a Christian tradition, she remained firm in her faith and convinced that it was inappropriate as a custom for a Muslim family.

4.5 Social Environment's Attitudes and Support

Following the mothers' perspectives on the attitude and social support present in their social environment, we found the responses distinct from one another. In this study, attitude and support from society included the husband's family, school staff, and neighborhood residents. In terms of the husband's family, all respondents declared that there were no essential problems. The mothers

communicated that, when they visited their parents-in-law, they somewhat disagreed if their grandchildren were practicing fasting full time. Grandparents worried that this would cause their grandchildren to become sick. To avoid arguing, two of the mothers (Aleyah and Nabeela) relented. For the others, their parents-in-law fully supported them in educating their grandchildren in the Islamic way. For these two, practical support was as follows: always providing halal food; preparing space for praying, and congratulating the celebration of important Islamic days. Eliana, in particular, had notably supportive parents-in-law. She revealed that they are very open-minded and keen on learning about other religions, including Islam. Eliana indicated that she feels that her husband's family home feels like her own.

The mothers found that their children's schools offered supportive environments with notable tolerant teachers. Even though the teachers noticed that their children were Muslims, they were actively concerned about their Muslim needs, such as looking after them when they were fasting and preparing *halal* food for specific occasions. Moreover, the mothers disclosed that their children never faced discrimination in school. Academically, everything had gone well.

Compared to the homogeneity of experiences regarding school, their perspectives on their neighborhoods varied. As noted previously, three mothers – Nabeela, Eliana, and Isyana – do not disclose their family identity as Muslim to society. They assume that the vast majority of people around them would judge them negatively if they openly conveyed that they were Muslim. Additionally, they thought that because of their differences, they would quickly become victims of racism. This assumption was made worse by the common fallacy of associating Islam with terrorism or ISIS. This made them worried about sending their children to the Sunday school run by Belfast Islamic Center (BIC) or other mosques.

By contrast, only Aleyah saw the neighborhood differently. In her opinion, being a minority in Northern Ireland was a blessing for both her and her family. She felt accepted in a society dominated by two Christian communities – Protestants and Catholics – who in the past had a terrible history. She added that her husband is also amicably welcomed by his non-Muslim friends, regardless of Christian denomination. He is regularly invited to join his friends socializing in bars, in part because he would be the only one not drinking and thereby be able to escort his friends home. On the other side, geographically, she revealed that the region where she and her family reside was a favorite residential area for mixed-marriage couples, including Protestant-Catholic marriages. This different atmosphere motivates her and her neighbors to work toward and retain a safe and peaceful community.

Aleyah imparted that she was unafraid when it came to sending her children to Sunday school. This is because she had scrutinized the background of the teachers and parents who had also sent their children to study in the school. She also believed that there would not be a problem as long as she actively controlled the progress of her children in mastering Islam both inside and outside their home.

5. Discussion

Learning from the interviewees, the key findings, which linked the four themes of the mothers' dilemmas and challenges, closely converged around the issue of racial socialization. Racial socialization includes the messages and practices relevant to indicate any information related to the nature of racial status (Arai & Kivel, 2009; Feagin & Elias, 2013; Pinckney et al., 2019). Hughes & Chen (1999) divided the content areas of racial socialization into four categories: cultural socialization, preparation for bias, socialization of mistrust, and egalitarian socialization. Among the many forms of racial socialization, the most frequent ones associated with positive outcomes are those that stress racial pride, acceptance of racial background, positive self-image, and the presence of racial restrictions, blocked opportunities, and fundamental equality (Coll & Patcher, 2002).

In light of the current study's findings, a mothers' success in transmitting Islamic values to their children was associated with their own engagement with Islam. A deployed fallacy about Islam in society (i.e. the link between radical engagement with Islam and the likelihood of being groomed for terrorism) may be reinforced by Muslims themselves who have not profoundly mastered Islam. Her

status as a single agent of Islam in a minority situation may provoke a mother to first fully engage with Islam. This is in line with the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad, which conveyed that a mother is the first madrasah – school of her children. For optimal upbringing of children together in a family, there should be a mutual understanding between husband and wife. In this case, the mother should therefore help her converted Muslim husband to fully comprehend Islam and thereby assist her when it comes to instilling Islamic values in their children. Similar to acculturation, immigration may modify cultural traditions, but not religious beliefs. The mothers learned about a new culture and decided which aspects their families should retain and which they should sacrifice from the culture of origin – in this case, Indonesian Islamic culture. In accordance with Ghosh (2011) and Mohammadi et al. (2018), the multidimensional nature of cultural changes allows the individual the ability to retain a real social, psychological and attitudinal linkage with their original culture, while at the same time living with a sense of ease and competency in the host culture; this description may be the best adjustment to the multicultural context of modern life. When the resulting agreement is underpinned by Islamic ways of living, this will prevent cause for conflict or confusion regarding the appropriateness of caregiving practices. The same Islam-focused perspective between parents will also construct the stability of the psychological attributes of their children, such as self-esteem, response to stress, academic performance, social competence, and attitudes. Furthermore, racial socialization of Islam in children will lead to neutralize some negative effects of living in a racist society (Garcia et al., 2011; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Cabrera, 2018).

Alternatively, choosing social capital, which is a feature of social organization, facilitates cooperation for mutual benefit. The high degree of social capital in the community will foster cultural and ethnic awareness and pride. For example, early childhood development centers, childcare options, houses of worship, neighborhood watch groups, block associations, and other civic associations provide a promoting context for parenting and children's development (Schneider & Coleman, 2018). One of the mothers in this study chose to live in a neighborhood with families of a similar background in the form of mixed-marriage couples. This made her confident to raise her children in her own culture without triggering the negative effects of being the societal 'other', since her neighbors were in a similar position. However, this also raises the issue that being tolerant is essential if one is to face the differences in a multicultural society. Misunderstandings and prejudices about some ethnicities and cultures should also provoke us to investigate their historical roots in greater depth.

Accordingly, the lack of racial socialization pertains to the contradiction between the character of Western and the Eastern attitudes towards facing difference in society. This lack has been identified as the possible main cause of the dilemma and challenges of the Indonesian mothers when it comes to instilling Islamic values in their children. In essence, most South East Asian (ASEAN) countries have the characteristic of being very welcoming to foreigners compared to countries in other parts of Asia, largely because, historically, Western empires colonized most ASEAN countries. Previous studies have conveyed that the perspective of ASEAN people towards Western people was influenced by the culture or habits of these people in the past (Nicassio, 1985; Wolters, 1999; Chen, 2010). In these cases, most ASEAN inhabitants who met Westerners tried to appear proper in front of the foreigners to protect themselves from harm. The concomitant anxiety has lingered into the present generation, when those from an ASEAN country may choose to conceal their identity or sacrifice their own culture and its idea of 'the other' as a means to become accepted in Western societies. Further study is clearly needed to help overcome this anxiety among Muslim women from these areas, particularly the mothers of mixed-heritage children, so as to facilitate them in keeping their traditions or culture as a Muslim and at the same time assimilating the self with the new culture of her husband's society.

6. Conclusion

As specified in the introduction, the current study set out on a more detailed exploration of the social distance and cultural solidarity of Indonesian Muslim women confronting intermarried life in a minority situation, specifically focusing on how they nurture Islamic values in their children.

Accordingly, we carried out focused ethnography fieldwork – a qualitative approach to grasp social accomplishments in the participants' terms. Alternatively, focused ethnography fieldwork concerns how people make sense of their daily lives: anthropologists direct it towards the mechanisms by which people achieve and sustain interaction in social encounters, such as making assumptions, utilizing conventions, and adopting practices.

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