Employment Experiences of Tertiary Educated Australian Muslim Women in Sydney's Multicultural Society and Their Religious Identity

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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Declaration of Authorship and Originality

I, Gwendolyn Gai Scott, declare that this PhD thesis is my own original work and that to the best of my knowledge, it contains no material previously written or published by any other person, nor material that has been accepted for the award of another degree at a university or higher education institution, except where due acknowledgement is made in the text.

Ethics Approval

The research documented in this thesis received ethics approval from the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee (Reference Number HE28AUG2009-D00094). See attached Appendix C.

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To tackle a major undertaking, such as writing a PhD thesis, is comparable to embarking on an extensive trekking venture. For me, sometimes the trail appeared straightforward and easy, while on other occasions, it twisted and turned and appeared to go nowhere. In every respect, my particular journey has been an intellectually challenging and stimulating venture and I have many people who have assisted me over the finishing line and to whom I would like to pay tribute.

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Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to contribute to the anthropological understanding of the impact a religious identity may have on the expectations and experiences of tertiary educated Muslim women who are in paid employment in a Western nation. Its broader aim is to further, and deepen, our understanding of the negotiation of religious and cultural differences in the realm of paid employment. A critical investigation is conducted into forty first and second generation Australian Muslim women (the participants) in the age group 25 - 50 years who have been employed in the professional or corporate workplace for a minimum of four years in Sydney, New South Wales, Australia. The majority of these women has transcended their socio-economic origins by attaining tertiary qualifications and it is because of these credentials that they now enter their workplace environments on an equal footing with staff who hold similar professional qualifications - in particular, their Anglo Australian female counterparts.

Australian Muslims are largely misunderstood by the majority population and stereotypical notions about Muslims abound, largely based on assumptions regarding their religion, culture, lifestyles and aspirations. A major aim of this thesis encompasses encounters of exclusion experienced by the participants. The research analyses how the participants' understanding of social norms are marginalised in the context of paid employment and identifies some of the negative consequences social exclusion has for the participants' positive sense of self, as well as for the Muslim community's sense of solidarity.

There is much intercultural enquiry into the integration of ethnically and culturally diverse societies that, in turn, provides a wide range of conceptual frameworks to examine the tensions and complexities associated with the inclusion and exclusion of minority groups and individuals. There is limited enquiry concerned with tertiary educated Australian

Muslim women and the effects of social exclusion on the formation of the identity that they bring to their workplace environments. This thesis aims to address this gap using ethnographic research that involved 18 months' fieldwork in Sydney.

In terms of this theme of identity in the workplace, three aspects are chosen to understand the experiences that have influenced the participants' identity formation, both as first and second generation Australian Muslim women and daughters of first generation immigrants: the identity that has been influenced by experiences of stereotyping and exclusion in everyday living; the role that appearance plays in negotiating an identity in the workplace environment; the identity that has been impacted by an in-group and out-group mentality and the barriers that are formed as a consequence.

It is through this lens of understanding that the research explores the challenges faced by tertiary educated Muslim women in the domain of paid employment. It finds that barriers form between Muslims and Anglo Australians because of misunderstandings and misinformation regarding Muslim identities. The thesis determines that it is possible to maintain a positive Muslim identity within the challenges of this environment and identifies what that identity may be.

Research supports the fact that the higher the educational attainment, the higher the likelihood of engagement in paid employment. The 2011 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) figures show that Muslims now represent 2.2 per cent of the Australian population. The ABS (2001) also indicates that, in comparison to their Anglo Australian female counterparts, Muslim women attend universities in greater proportions than their numbers in the population. As these figures demonstrate, in the near future, employers will encounter more young Muslim women graduates applying for employment. It is, therefore, important that these employers understand the experiences, expectations and

identities of these Muslim women to preempt the loss of this valuable and emerging employment resource.

Chapter 1

Introduction

> If we are to understand Muslim identities in Australia,
> it is essential to enquire if Muslims feel excluded
> from the wider Australian society.
> (Yasmeen, 2008:3).

The aim of this thesis is to provide an anthropological understanding of the impact a religious identity may have on the experiences and expectations of tertiary educated Muslim women who are in paid employment in Sydney, Australia. The particular approach I take is to focus on forty tertiary educated, first and second generation, Australian Muslim women (the participants). The majority of the participants has transcended their class origins by attaining tertiary qualifications and now enter their workplace environments as professional women who possess the same workplace status as other professional staff, especially their Anglo Australian[1] female counterparts with similar qualifications (Samani, 2014:167; Nilan, 2010:11). Social exclusion is a major theme of this thesis as indeed, many of the participants experience social exclusion during the course of their daily living. I study the negotiated identity the participants bring to their workplace environments, the effect that encounters of exclusion have on this identity and how they manage the challenges these experiences bring to their working day. Finally, I determine if it is possible to maintain a Muslim identity within the challenges of this environment, and, if so, what might that 'identity' be.

[1] The term "Anglo Australian" (or, more usually, "Anglos") is the generic term used by the participants to describe Australians in general, and is taken up in this research.

I have focused on three aspects that have influenced the participants' identity formation: the identity that has been influenced by experiences of exclusion in everyday living; the role that personal appearance, in its many forms, plays in negotiating an 'identity' in the workplace environment; the impact of stereotyping and a 'group' mentality in the workplace. These aspects are certainly not exclusive, they are chosen to assist in developing a framework to understand the challenges facing the participants and how accepted, or unaccepted, they feel.

In every society, it is not only important for each individual to be treated equally and provided with similar opportunities to succeed, but that each individual enjoys a sense of inclusion and feelings of self-worth (Verkuyten & Thijs, 2006:107-116). Acts of exclusion, experienced in a variety of ways, are defined as the process of 'excluding' or the state of 'being excluded' (Oxford Dictionaries); having a sense of alienation from mainstream society (Duffy, 1995:27); being socially excluded for reasons beyond his or her control (Burchardt et al., 1999:229) and the process of being shut out from any social integration (Walker & Walker, 1997:8). In her paper to the Asia2015 Promoting Growth, Ending Poverty conference, Kabeer (2006) identifies aspects of identity that reflect the cultural devaluation of people based on who they are, or rather, "who or what they are perceived to be". Although Kabeer is referring to disadvantaged sections of various Asian populations, her statement can also be used to define the situation many Australian Muslim women face in their workplace environments, where they are identified by preconceived, and often inaccurate sentiments.

The following chapters pursue the proposal that exclusion commences when individuals, or communities, define their identity and, in the process, create barriers between those not identified as part of "me" or "us" (Yasmeen, 2014:16). When acts of exclusion are coupled with a sense of superiority or power and a disregard for others, it becomes a matter of concern for those individuals who are excluded (Yasmeen, 2014:16 citing Baumeister & Leary). It will be seen how acts of exclusion, in some cases, unwittingly

carried out by fellow employees, can affect my participants' experiences in the workplace. Indeed, in some instances, acts of exclusion can go so far as to influence the choice of a workplace location or the choice of a profession in the first place. At the same time, whilst some participants identify as being excluded from membership of an 'in-group' in their workplace, each participant identifies with her own society, or in-group, outside that environment - as members of an extended family grouping, close associations with other Muslim women friends and their own Muslim community.

A plethora of books and articles on theories about the complexity of exclusion and social connectedness has been published to identify the root causes of exclusion, to understand the reactions to the rise of "hostility towards those who exclude" (Yasmeen, 2014:19) and to develop policies to eradicate such causes. In the following small sample of scholarly literature from Australia and overseas countries, I illustrate how social exclusion is a multi-dimensional phenomenon:

In their study of measuring social exclusion and its relationship with deprivation, Bossert et al. (2007:777-803) remind us that while social exclusion manifests itself when individuals and groups are wholly or partly prevented from participating in their society, social exclusion is a relative concept, and that "an individual can be socially excluded only in comparison with other members of a society". In their research on social exclusion in Britain, Burchardt et al. (1999:229), citing Barry, continue this theme by proposing that if a group faced with continuous hostility from the wider society, voluntarily withdraws into itself and develops its own independent or counter-culture, it is still a case for social exclusion. This subject is referred to again in the chapters that make reference to the Muslim community, understood as 'umma'.[2]

Studies of racial discrimination experienced by minorities, particularly Pakistani women living in Hong Kong, find that Pakistani women's dress codes are a form of social exclusion

[2] See Chapters 3, 6.

that provide an “important window” to judge the level of tolerance to the “outsider” (Ku Hok Bun, 2006:285-302) and Phillips’s research (2006:29) examines the charge that by withdrawing from interactions with the wider British society, British Muslims are failing to be active citizens. Her conclusion is that the depiction of “clustering” by British Muslims rests solely on the racialised construction of both “whiteness” and “Otherness”.

Car and Chen’s Working Paper (2004) takes a slightly different tack by focusing on globalisation and its effect on patterns of social exclusion in the realm of work from the perspective of all working poor in developing countries, with special focus on unskilled women in Pakistan. They observe that while export-led industrialisation has created new jobs for women in many countries, their situation is sub-optimal due to gender based wage gaps with benefits such as maternity, sick and annual leave being generally non-existent. In these situations, should pregnancies occur, jobs are usually terminated.

Closer to home, Colic-Peisker (2005:632) writes that Australia remains an “imagined” community of white people and that “whiteness” and Anglo culture predominate, with the result that non-Europeans are often perceived as the “Other”. She illustrates the way in which Bosnians were the preferred humanitarian immigrants during the 1990s because of their European background and professional qualifications. However, this initial claim to a white “insider status” was consistently undermined due to the Australian negative attitude to employing people from non-English speaking countries that consequently reduced the possibility of obtaining work. As a result, highly-skilled Bosnians experienced exclusion through non-recognition of their formal qualifications and the consequent occupational ‘down-adjustment’. Of particular interest to this research is Colic-Peisker’s study of the employment experiences of Bosnian immigrants and their encounters of difference and exclusion as a result of “white” Anglo Australian culture. In many instances their encounters mirror the participants’ experiences, as detailed in the following chapters.

There is some interest in researching Muslim women's experiences and exclusion in Australia's workplace. For example, the emphases of Ouazzif's (2009:1-65) and Syed and Pio's (2010:115-137) studies are directed towards the workplace experiences of all veiled Muslim women. Nilan, Samarayi and Lovat (2012:682-692) write of the challenges facing female Muslim jobseekers and in her doctoral thesis, Imtoual (2006) discusses, inter-alia, religious racism and employment possibilities in South Australia. Samani's exploratory study of forty tertiary educated Muslim women's participation in the Western Australian workplace (2014:157-177) sheds light on some aspects of the challenges and disadvantages these women face. Similar to this thesis, her study also embraces experiences of immigration, culture, minority status and the social identifier of religious belief. Another Western Australian researcher, Yasmeen (2008) conducted a comprehensive study of 221 male and female Muslims to understand their perceptions of social inclusion. Her study also included 108 non-Muslims to access their views of Muslims in Australia.

Women in general, and minority women in particular, encounter many obstacles in achieving their preferred professional image and, as Nilan correctly points out, Australia does not have a high rate of female labour force participation compared to other OECD[3] countries. Despite gains over time, Australian women's earnings remain persistently lower than those of men (Nilan, 2010:3). Compared to Australia, other OECD countries have better child care provisions and a greater proportion of women who, as a matter of course, earn more and are engaged in paid work throughout their lives (Ibid).

Following on from these indicators, women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in Australia face added distinct barriers in a workplace that is not generally known for being well-remunerated or family friendly for its female workers.[4] As Yasmeen's research has found, "a mixed picture exists with respect to non-Muslim views on Muslims" (2008:v). Australian Muslims are largely misunderstood by the majority

[3] Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development.
[4] These concerns are referred to in detail in Chapter 2.

population and stereotypical notions about Muslims abound, largely based on assumptions about their religion, culture, lifestyles and aspirations.[5] The causes can be assigned to many sources, based, primarily, on the general public's largely limited knowledge about Islam that is then reflected in nationalistic views, and, in particular, the general stereotype of the Muslim woman being oppressed and uneducated (Haddad et al., 2006:9). It surely follows that this "mixed picture" then exists in the workplace and this is especially so for those Muslim women who choose to be identified as members of the Islamic faith, either by their appearance, or what they say. As the following chapters demonstrate, there is no other religious symbol more controversial today and more overtly visible than a woman who affirms her Islamic identity by wearing Islamic dress. Not only is she the focal point of any Western effort to understand the Islamic faith, she appears to be in "stark contrast to the freedoms of Western democracy" (Haddad et al., 2006:22).

Undoubtedly terrorist attacks such as 9/11, political unrest in various parts of the world and wars that seem to have no definite ending, have drawn unfavourable attention to the general Muslim population. Closer to home, the Bali bombings, the 2014 Martin Place siege and discussions surrounding the removal of Australian citizenship from those individuals who have chosen to join forces with IS[6], have turned the spotlight onto Islamic religious beliefs.[7] In the secular workplace, unfavourable comparisons are made between the Muslim woman who veils and the Anglo Australian female because of perceived alliances with the forces of patriarchy and conservatism, the veil itself representing an identification marker of a group of people unable, or unwilling to adapt to 'Oz' values. Indeed, more and more, the test applied by western societies and communities to evaluate if a Muslim woman is 'liberated' or 'westernised' lies in whether or not she veils (see Bullock, 2002).

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[5] Chapter 4 refers to acts of stereotyping in detail.
[6] Currently understood as "Islamic State" or "Islamic State in Iraq and Syria".
[7] Marcus's study finds that negative attitudes in Australia towards Muslims were close to 25 per cent compared with other major groups (cited in Samani, 2014:163).

As Nilan concludes, the major obstacle for the Muslim female jobseeker is that she is assessed for her suitability for work by an initial, *prima facie* judgment about being Muslim. She may choose to minimise her Muslim identity, or even emphasise it, but it is always there "as a factor to be dealt with" (Nilan, 2010:11 italics original, see also Nilan et al., 2012). The ultimate consequence is that "Muslims are increasingly feeling relatively excluded, and this sense of exclusion needs to be addressed" (Yasmeen, 2008:5).

Research supports the fact that the higher the educational attainment, the higher the likelihood of engaging in paid employment. Increases in female education are also associated with increases in women's labour force participation. Not only is it associated with contributing to household incomes but, on the broader scale, to the overall national income (Goldin, 2006 cited in Samani, 2014:165). My personal interest in tertiary educated Muslim women and their experiences in Sydney's workplace was first motivated by data provided by the 2001 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).[8] The data documented that there were a significant number of young Muslim women attending university in Australia: 4.41 per cent of all Muslim women attended university, compared to 3.78 per cent of all Australia women. In other words, Muslim women attend universities in greater proportions than their numbers in the population would suggest[9] (Asmar, 2002; Samani, 2014:167). This data poses many unanswered questions for tertiary educated Muslim women who work in a secular environment, an environment that is markedly different from the employment experiences of their parents, and, in particular, their mothers.

According to the latest ABS statistics, Muslims now represent 2.2 per cent of the total Australian population[10] with 50 per cent of the Muslim population being under the age of

[8] http://www.abs.gov.au accessed 21.6.10.
[9] The ABS (2001) advised that, at that stage, the Muslim population in Australia was 1.5 per cent of Australia's population.
[10] The ABS (2011) "Cultural Diversity in Australia: Reflecting a Nation: Stories from the 2011 Census" also advises that there are 476,300 Muslims living in Australia.

25 years.[11] Comparing the 2001 Census with the 2011 Census, the number of Muslims in the age group 0 - 34 years increased by 68.03%.[12] It is, therefore, evident that, in the near future, employers will be faced with the prospect of more young, tertiary educated Muslim women applying for employment. Not only do they represent a valuable and emerging resource for the employment 'pool' but, as Samani (2014:176) points out, all "female minority workforce participation is important for maintaining economic inclusion and gender equity".

Diversities in practising 'Being Muslim'

There is much diversity in how 'being' an Australian Muslim is enacted. Akbarzadeh and Roose (2011:320) describe a category of Muslims for whom Islam is not the primary source of identity, it does not interfere or interrupt the daily routine of life, and is "not *mobilised* under the banner of their faith" (Ibid, italics added). These Muslims, "whose public life is not guided by their religion, but more by their culture and ethnicity" (Ibid:309), simply feel that they belong to a cultural and ethnic common Muslim identity (see also Jeldtoft, 2011:1134-1151). However, the analysis of my fieldwork interviews concludes that Akbarzadeh and Roose's category does not fit with the participants of this research because each has an emotional commitment to Islam. Accordingly, my research endorses Marranci's argument that emotions and feelings, the product of the relationship between emotions and environment (2008:146) are central to the development of a Muslim's *personal* identity (2006:7,10; 2007:88; 2008:11,97,99):

> It is *what I feel I am* that determines my identity for me,
> regardless of how others might perceive me.
>
> Marranci, 2006:6,10 (italics original).

[11] Australia Human Rights Commission, http://www.hreoc.gov.au/racial discrimination/isma/consultations/facts/fact_muslim.html, accessed 21.6.10.
[12] Australia's Religious Profile from the 2011 Census, http://religionsforpeaceaustralia.org.au/news/349-australias-religious-profile-from-the-2011-census.html, accessed 7.10.15.

It is this commitment to Islam that is the decisive factor that identifies each of my participants and it is through this lens of understanding that the research project is constructed.

Indeed, some participants do conceal any religious affiliation during workplace hours and may go to great lengths to hide any connection with Islam. For example, Suzanne, a first generation participant of Iranian origin, aged 45 years, has Anglicised her name and verbally denies a 'Muslim' identity, especially in her workplace environment. However, we can see that Suzanne is actually demonstrating an emotional commitment to Islam by continuing to observe Islamic practices such as dietary restrictions and expressing apprehension at shaking an unrelated male's hand:

> When someone asks, I always say I am not really Muslim, I say I just believe in God, I don't pray, I don't practise Ramadan, if you treat people with respect, that is enough. I respect Islam but that's it. Islam says you shouldn't drink alcohol, you shouldn't eat pork products and we don't. As for shaking hands, I shouldn't really touch a male.

Suzanne's statement affirms a Muslim identity which does not depend upon religious practice (see Dwyer, 1999:61) and her comment may be explained away as a component of her 'cultural' Iranian background and her defiance at being forced to wear a veil growing up in Iran. As she confirms, "it was compulsory to wear the hijab, no option, all ladies when they went out had to wear the hijab and cover their bodies". Suzanne is also confirming an Islamic belief that is more directly articulated and interpreted around a highly personal relationship with one's deity and which is then crafted to complement culture and life style. Suzanne follows the basic rules of Islam, such as non-consumption of pork products and alcohol, and is wary of shaking hands with an unrelated male. She further expresses the "contentment" from observing these Islamic practices, "it just

wouldn't be right not to" and her comments correspond to Marranci's theory of "feeling to be Muslim" (2006:7). For Suzanne, Islam is often seen less as a religion and more as a moral code embedded within her Iranian identity, and one that is deeply embedded in Islamic values. Her experiences, as related to me, were a valuable source for comparison purposes.

The thesis is built upon the experiences of my participants and their 'feeling to be Muslim'. They could be described as a 'minority within a minority' in their workplace because of their tertiary qualifications and their membership in a minority religious group. Primarily, it is this latter difference that sets this minority group apart from the workplace majority, a majority who, it will be seen, also places weight on employment status.

In their workplace environments, these participants practise 'being Muslim' in many different ways, as a result of the flexibility of diverse religious understandings and practices. For some participants, subscribing to the orthodox understandings of Islam is the central core of their being, a way of life that is directed by a sense of a Godly connection and being identified as a Muslim woman is paramount, by appearance and/or verbal affirmation. Other participants, who are equally observant of their religious belief and who are quite comfortable in acknowledging they are Muslim, believe that dressing modestly is sufficient and that veiling is not necessary. Several participants do not verbally declare their religious belief, or display their belief by appearance, and prefer to keep their faith a private matter in their workplace environment. For these participants, refusing to eat pork products, shaking the hand of an unrelated male and attending functions where alcohol is present may then be a cause for personal unease and provoke misunderstandings with other staff members. Other participants acknowledge their belief in their workplace, by veiling or by what they say, but understand that refusing to shake the hand of a non-related male may cause offence and that attending staff functions where alcohol is present helps their own personal staff 'bonding' processes. How these

flexibilities of interpretations are played out in the workplace and how they are accepted by the White majority is discussed in the following chapters.

As referred to above, some participants are members of groups who subscribe to more orthodox understandings of Islam (Yasmeen, 2008:31). These participants try to dress, speak and live in as close adherence as possible to what they understand to be the dictates of the Qur'an and many look to the wives of the Prophet as role models who provide images of piety worthy of emulation (Haddad et al., 2006:8).[13] For example, Daar Aisha Shariah College, with a campus in Lakemba[14] provides religious instruction to Muslim women. Each participant who attends the college chooses to veil, and some expressed that they may, at some future date, wear the niqab,[15] as does the head teacher, to further emulate how, in their opinion, the Prophet's wives lived. This particular expression of belief would, necessarily, cancel out any possibility of being employed in Sydney's secular workplace. Thus, the tendency to learn and socialise along traditional orthodox lines has an influence on the participants' choice of employment and affects the social spaces in which the participants operate. Most choose employment in a Muslim environment or in 'caring' professions such as Legal Aid, community legal centres and the medical profession. As pupils of Daar Aisha College, participants also meet socially outside the college and, as a group, have attended Hajj together. Each refers to the importance of 'closeness' to their group and to favour a "clearly demarcated and exclusive Muslim identity" (Yasmeen, 2008:72) that withdraws from anything that may be perceived as a representation of the 'Western' image of an Anglo Australian woman. In all respects, they are representatives of the "voluntarily excluded" who choose to disconnect themselves from a Western society (Burchardt et al., 1999:229) that, they consider, consistently

[13] Haddad et al. (2006:8) advise that in the USA conservative Sunnis increasingly look to the wives of the Prophet as role models to provide "images of strength, learning and professionalism" and many Shi'ite women look to the Prophet's daughter Fatima as a model for spiritual guidance.
[14] A western suburb of Sydney with a large Muslim population.
[15] "Niqab" is the term used to refer to the piece of cloth which covers the face and it is usual for Muslim women who wear it to cover their hands. www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/islam/beliefs/niqab_1.shtml accessed 16.11.15.

"debases its women" (Haddad, 2007:254). Yana, a veiled second generation participant of Lebanese origin, aged 32 years, explains the happiness she experiences after attending Daar Aisha College on a weekly basis:

> I have to interact with the world, but I don't want to be part of it, it's that kind of retreating from the world, a feeling about wanting to be not part of the distraction of the world. Just being in an environment where we are all on the same path, all together, you feel true happiness there, happiness that I haven't felt elsewhere and the only place where I do feel at peace.

Other participants join with their husbands to combine the ritual of their belief with the mystical and spiritual aspects of Sufi Islam whilst some practise Islam in private with their families and choose not to show publicly, even to neighbours, that they are Muslim. Generally, the convert participants changed their Christian names to ones usually of Arabic origin, whilst the Iranian participants who changed their first names chose popular Anglo Australian Christian names. The majority of the Iranian participants suggested that their name change did not indicate a 'de-Muslimising' of their identities, rather, that their new names were easier to pronounce and recall and helped them to "fit in". In contrast, it was obvious that the convert participants' name change showed a determination to embrace their new religion in the fullest possible way. This determination invariably meant a gain of supportive Muslim women friends but, in many instances, a loss of close family ties (Moosavi, 2015:43).

Surprisingly, the participants' expressions of belief are not generationally linked, as both first and second generation participants subscribe to an orthodox understanding of Islam whilst other participants practise a more moderate approach. As referred to above, the approach the participants choose to practise their belief affects every aspect of their lives,

the group of friends with whom they associate, the venues for employment, and, in many instances, their choice of professions in the first place.

Islam does not require women to participate in the life of the mosque and only a few participants attend unless celebrating the major festivals (Woodlock, 2010:265; 2010:51). Family religious instruction, usually traditionally and orally conducted by their mothers, is the participants' first introduction to Islam, as Hassan confirms, "religiosity, like social class, is inherited largely from the family" (see also Dunn, 2004:338). Some participants consider that what they were taught in the family home was greatly influenced by their family cultural practices rather than religious belief. Nevertheless, these basic instructions, taught in the family home, have laid the foundation upon which the participants' religious belief is based and, which, for the majority, is reflected in their religious 'self'.

Generally markedly different from their parents' religious knowledge, the majority of the participants' pool of knowledge is attained through a variety of national and international sources, both formal and informal. The participants' religious instruction is provided by a variety of sources - available instructive literature, the Internet, specific web sites, DVDs, television, educational institutions associated with their local mosque, women only organisations, informal study groups, on-line Muslim magazines, secondary schooling in Islamic schools, Muslim Student Associations (MSAs), time spent in overseas countries, (such as Jordan) to attend religious classes and to learn Arabic, as well as the influence of husbands' instructions and religious guidance and support from friends. Asmar's (2001) research on MSAs, as representatives of Muslim students on campus, illustrates how MSAs may influence some students:

> Many students find social and spiritual support from like-minded peers and very often have their faith invigorated. It is not unusual for a Muslim woman, brought up in a family where women have not habitually covered themselves, to adopt the hijab only after her

arrival at university.

The 40 participants were interviewed over a period of 18 months and represent thirteen countries of origin: Egypt, Lebanon, Turkey, Iran, Iraq, India, Fiji, South Africa, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, England and Australia. Each participant possessed an undergraduate degree as a minimum tertiary qualification and, as previously discussed, each acknowledged a commitment to Islam. The following table illustrates the professions of the participants and specifies if they are first or second generation Australians:

Table 1: Details of the Participants' Professions

	1st Generation	2nd Generation	Converts
Company Director	1		
Banker/Economist	1		
Research Scientist	1	1	
Accountant		4	
Registered Nurse	2		
Social Worker	2	1	
Architect/Interior Designer	1		
Clinical Psychologist	1	2	1
Public Servant	1	1	1
Lawyer	1	3	
Councillor, local Municipal council			1
Teacher, Muslim School	1	1	2
Small Business Owner		1	1
Customs Officer	1		
Interpreter	1		
General Medical Practitioner	1		
Food Technologist		1	
Teacher, Gov. School		1	
Muslim organisation employee	2		
Specialist Medical Practitioner	1		

The participants were either first or second generation Australians. First generation included participants who were born overseas and who came to Australia as children or teenagers with their families and who arrived in Australia during the national programme of mass immigration initiated in the mid-20th century (see Humphrey, 2001:35).These participants have experienced some (or all) of the Australian secondary education system and the Australian tertiary system. This category also included seven participants who, as young adults, had come to Australia, usually accompanied by their husbands and young families, having already attained their university education. These professional qualifications were either recognised in Australia immediately, or required a bridging course that each had successfully accomplished. These seven participants were proficient in English before they arrived in Australia.The following professions are represented in this category - general practitioner (1), specialist medical practitioner (1), clinical psychologist (1), banker/economist (1), registered nurse (2), research scientist (1). One participant who arrived as a young adult enhanced her professional qualifications by completing a PhD at a Sydney university.

The second generation participants were born in Australia, and were the children of parents who were born in an overseas country and had subsequently settled as first generation Australians. As these participants were educated in both the Australian secondary and tertiary system, each was familiar with the Australian 'scene' and spoke with Australian accents. Finally, as previously outlined, the interviews included six participants who were converts to Islam from various Christian religious backgrounds, not only for the comparison purposes they offered, but to identify the issues they face as 'new' Muslims, not born into the faith.

The age group of 25 - 50 years was selected as the research required participants who had experience of paid employment for a minimum of four years. This age grouping was also chosen to enable research on the way the participants manage their work-life experiences and balance family matters on their own terms, in both the secular and non-secular

workplace environment. All participants had acquired their employment experiences in Sydney and their average age at the time of the interview was 33.2 years.

Table 2: Details of the Participants' Marital Status

	1st Generation	2nd Generation	Converts	Total
Participants	18	16	6	40
Veiled	11	10	4	25
Non Veiled	7	6	2	15
Divorced	5	-	2	7
Single	2	3	-	5
Married	9	11	1	21
Div/Remarried	2	2	2	6
Widowed			1	1

Twenty-five participants had 58 children between them, or an average of 2.32 children per participant; five participants were single with an average age of 31 years; seven were married without children and three divorced participants were also without children but expressed hope that they would remarry and have children.

Family size was regularly included as a topic of discussion at the participants' interviews, especially if the participant, herself, was a member of a large family. Fifteen participants were members of a family with more than ten siblings. Thus an average of 2.32 children is in sharp contrast to the experiences of the participants' mothers and suggests two influences: firstly, being Australian women and secondly, that family size today is strongly

influenced by today's socio-economic trends (Lee & Gramotnev, 2006:7). By way of contrast, The Australian Bureau of Statistics estimates that in 2015, the total Australian fertility rate was 1.81 babies per woman, which is below the replacement level, considered to be around 2.1 babies per woman.[16]

Similarly, the age at which their mothers married was also an interesting topic of discussion. Most of the first generation mothers were married in their mid to late teens, and one mother-in-law was nine years of age when she entered her husband's household to produce the first of sixteen children. Again, by way of contrast, the medium age at marriage for Australian females is 29.8 years, an increase of 0.02 years since 2014.[17]

On more than one occasion, I was thanked for my interest in the participant's religious beliefs, and more than one participant commented that they considered it was their duty to assist research on all facets of Islamic practice as the education of the non-Islamic community was an important step towards understanding and acceptance (see Blumer, 1969:51). One unpleasant occasion did occur, fortunately, at the end of my interviewing period. The meeting was held in the interviewee's home and was the only interview where the use of a recording device was refused. The interviewee had contacted me after receiving my contact details from other participants who also attended the weekly meetings of the Lakemba based Muslim centre, to which I have previously referred. I was anxious to speak with a Muslim woman who wore the niqab and to explore the reasons behind this decision. During our discussion on swimming, the interviewee mistakenly thought that I suggested that she wore a bikini whilst swimming, rather than the word I used, 'burquini' (an all-in-one covered swimming costume that is favoured by Muslim women). Her only comment was "I don't wish to go down that path", which I, incorrectly, assumed meant that she did not want to elaborate on her swimming experiences. I believed the interview proceeded in a friendly manner, I was served a cake made by the interviewee's mother-in-law and we discussed her Eastern floor carpets and the fact that

[16]) http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@nsf/Latestproducts accessed 7.2.17.
[17])

there was no furniture in the room, just an array of large cushions around the walls. As I was leaving, the interviewee said she looked forward to meeting with me again.

Unfortunately, the next day, my university received her email complaining of the incident and requesting that no data from the interview be used in my research. Both my principal and second supervisors immediately wrote and apologised, and I wrote explaining the misunderstanding of words. The incident was, indeed, disturbing and, for some time, caused me to question the whole project. The unpleasant outcome was that all contact with the participants who were connected with this Lakemba organisation, was terminated. Pre-arranged meetings were cancelled, my emails went unanswered, I received two very dismissive SMSs and my cheque, in payment of a prearranged lunch, was returned in the post, without explanation. It was as if a barrier had been built overnight between those participants and myself, which distressed me on a personal level for a time, as I believed that a cordial relationship had been built, especially with three of the participants with whom I had met on more than one occasion. On the positive side, the incident was very thought provoking and gave me a personal insight on how barriers can be built when misunderstandings occur. It is also interesting to note that Amy Pollard's study (2009) proposes that this fieldwork experience is not uncommon and other anthropologists have also experienced similar misunderstandings (see also Marranci, 2008:83-85).

Methodology

The research focused on forty tertiary educated Muslim who live and work in Sydney. Ethnography presented itself as the most suitable design for undertaking this qualitative study because of the need for an interactionary process between the researcher and the participants (Hammersley, 2013:9-14 cited in Anna, 2014:112). Ethnography relies on participants' words as the primary source of data (Marshall & Rossman, 2010) and the capture of participants' perceptions and responses in a natural, evolving context of their everyday lives (Brewer, 2000:6). Giving primacy to the voices of the participants enabled

me to study the complexity of their experiences and to observe the issues that confronted them, especially those who were daughters of first generation immigrants whose first language is not English. Ethnographers pursue a relationship between practice and theory (Nolan & Anyon, 2004), one that allows open-ended questions to permit exploration in greater depth, change focus if required and illustrate the way in which participants describe their worlds and in their own words (Strauss & Corbin, 1998:25; Anna, 2014:112). As Goodrick (2009) and Gribich (2013:56) both propose, ethnography not only represents an established approach to gathering valid data about the social and cultural worlds, it facilitates a critical reflection on it. This dialectical process, linking the empirical and the conceptual, then provides insights into the focus of this research, that is, what it is like to be a tertiary educated, first or second generation Muslim woman working in Sydney's secular workplace.

This emphasis then introduces the part phenomenology plays, the human subjectivity and lived experiences that are influenced by how experiences are "perceived and enacted upon" (Cavallaro, 2001:99). As Anna (2014:117), citing Wacquant (2003:5-14), emphasises, "to focus phenomenologically is to appreciate that each of the participants is endowed with a lifestyle that has been influenced by past experiences", or a "repository of a generative, creative capacity to understand" (Merleau-Ponty, 2012). It includes historical knowledge of one's collective group experiences in that one does not necessarily need to experience an incident and may acquire knowledge gained through the experiences of other people who share the same background (Anna, 2014:116). This endowment in turn influences opinions, modes of behaviour and ways of relating in a way that is deeply embodied in the body and sense of memory (Lamont & Molnár, 2002:172) and is an outcome of our subjective involvement in the world (Ochs & Capps:1996:21). By establishing the strength and validity of ethnographic methodology and qualitative research, the end result is a "reflection of who we are and how we want to be seen" (Anna, 2014:117).

Ethnographic research sets out to represent the perceptions, responses and the meanings ascribed to participants in the natural evolving contexts of everyday living (Brewer, 2000:6). Its fieldwork involves qualitative methods which are flexible and open ended so as to accommodate the role of subjectivity in the research process (Brewer, 2000:18). These methods stand in contrast to the mathematical process of a quantitative interpretation and its reliance on pre-fixed categories or statistical procedures for quantification (Strauss & Corbin, 1998:11). As part of this larger set of qualitative approaches, my ethnographic design included other methodological matters, that of participant observation and semi-structured, in-depth interactional interviews. All data was collected over a period of some 18 months during 2012 and 2013. My participant observation continued during 2014 and 2015.

Fieldwork sourced data was analysed through a process that developed in a cumulative fashion and each piece of material was assessed and reassessed against any previous understandings. This in turn, contributed to a re-evaluation and modification of the directions that had been developed up to that point. As the interviews progressed, the participants' workplace experiences became increasingly clearer, particularly in relation to the way in which their identity was perceived and the way that they wished to portray that particular identity in that arena.

The primary task was locating participants who fitted the criteria. It is a 'big ask' to request an hour of anyone's time. This is especially so for women who manage employment duties whilst balancing family and extended family commitments and when the request comes from someone who is unknown, non-Muslim, and who was likely to be asking a mixture of questions concerning their personal and private lives. Indeed, in the course of locating participants, a few responses were "yes, but not at the present time". Members of Muslim women's associations (Affinity, Women's Interfaith Network, The Mission of Hope, The Muslim Women's National Network Australia, Mahbouba's Promise and the Muslim Women's Association Lakemba) helped to locate some participants by

providing my contact details to prospective participants and giving them the option to contact me. A law lecturer also passed on my contact details to three of her former graduates who subsequently contacted me and provided excellent data. However, my greatest source came from tapping into established social networks with one participant recommending a number of women and providing them with my contact details. Whilst the new participants knew the first contact, on most occasions they did not know the other contacts personally.

Semi-structured, interactive interviews were undertaken to gather the participants' feelings and perceptions of their workplace experiences, as well as their reflections on the social conditions surrounding those perceptions (Crouch & McKenzie, 2006:485). The interview was either conducted in the participant's home, or in a location chosen by the participant, usually a local cafe, either near the participant's home or her place of employment. On each occasion, the interview was recorded digitally. On some occasions, preschool children were present and, this, too, was a good ice breaker as it brought up the subject of the difficulties of managing employment responsibilities whilst the children were young, a situation with which I was also familiar.

An information letter (Appendix A) was handed to each participant before commencing the interview. Its contents communicated the purposes of the research project and outlined its academic authentication and supervisory endorsement. The information letter also advised participants that counselling services were offered by Macquarie University, the Mission of Hope, a Muslim organisation, and the Western Mission Lifeline Face to Face Counselling Team, should any question cause distress or concern. Prior to the information letter being finalised, permission was sought from both organisations to allow their telephone and email addresses to be included. Each individual participant and I also signed a research participant consent form (Appendix B) which guaranteed the participant's informed consent, voluntary participation and the right to withdraw at any time during the interview. As a further confirmation of the confidential nature of the

project, verbal assurances were given at the commencement of each interview that identities were disguised and pseudonyms employed at all times.

An interview guide, authorised by Macquarie University Ethics Committee, was designed to elicit trustworthy data regarding participants' knowledge, experiences, opinions, beliefs, feelings and actions with particular focus on experiences in the workplace. It was crafted, at first, as a 'broad brush' questionnaire, but, as is usually the case with qualitative enquiry, reflection and practice led to its gradual modification and reformulation (Goodrick, 2009: Grbich, 2013). On occasions, the participant requested that the interview guide was forwarded in advance and before each interview commenced, a verbal preamble explained the reasons behind the research questions. The guide was loosely divided into four sections and used mainly as an aide memoire for myself. As each interview progressed, some topics were of more interest to the participant and needed more discussion, whilst, on other occasions, the subject matter appeared less relevant. The first tranche of questions were of a personal and demographic nature and provided a background of the participant, her family life, where she lived, if her home was a suburb known for its Muslim presence and the relevance of this fact, should it be the case. Details of her secondary and tertiary education were discussed, including any experiences she may have had during those times, and if applicable the age of veiling and the reasons behind this choice, the age of marriage and details of any children.

The second and third tranches of questions concentrated on the experiences of applying for employment and of being employed either in a secular or a Muslim environment, views on participation in staff social occasions, such as the well-known 'Friday night drinks' or celebrations such as Christmas festivities, and if anything could be changed to make their working environment more inclusive.

The fourth and final tranche of questions concentrated on the participant's identity, how she is perceived in the workplace, how she would like to be perceived, how she would describe the identity of fellow employees, and, in particular the female Anglo Australian staff members. A general discussion on the importance of presenting what was perceived as the 'correct' identity in a workplace environment and the responsibility of being a representative or 'ambassador' for Islam always provided interesting commentaries. As each new participant added original material, so the initial format of the interview guide was both reassessed and refined (Strauss & Corbin, 1998:11) aided, too, by the valuable tool of personally transcribing the interviews, each taking more than ten hours to complete.

Not only were the participants' own personal employment experiences discussed, there was often an interesting employment 'connection' because employment opportunities were, generally, the motivating force behind their parents' decision to immigrate to Australia in the first place. This connection often opened up more revealing data of family life and their parents' own experiences of paid work, both in Australia and their homeland. Similarly, facets of my own work life experiences were often talked about that opened up new areas of discussion.

On the same day as the interview, a reflective journal entry was made of any detail that would assist me in its transcription, to 'picture' its setting, as part of the study of everyday life, "particularly performance in everyday life and the culture of everyday talk" (Langellier, 1989:252). Should the interview be in the participant's home, a description of the room and where we sat was noted, together with any small piece of aide-memoire that was considered useful. For example, on one occasion, the room of the interview had a broom in the corner used to sweep the floors. Its bristles were woven together with an intricate cording that encouraged an upward curving of its bristles and which made a contrast to the plastic brooms usually bought in Sydney. Each time I think of that quaint broom, I recall the participant and the time we spent together.

It was considered important for each participant to receive a small, thank you gift as an acknowledgement of their time, confidence and support for the project. A monetary reward in the form of a gift voucher was considered but then discounted because of ethical concerns that providing participants with a monetary reward could be seen as offering an incentive for participation (see Goodrick, 2009:29). The next preference was to bring a cake with preserved fruit which was relatively easy to make and always baked on the day of the meeting. However, on occasions, I detected hesitancy in its acceptance and questions about the ingredients made me realise that there was caution in accepting a gift that may be, unwittingly, not halal.[18] A change of direction to either potted cyclamen plants, or Swiss chocolates always received a welcome.

Opportunities for participant observation and interaction added other components to the quest for an in-depth understanding of the participants and to appreciate the life they lived outside their workplace environment (see also Miles & Crush, 1993:84). As well as attendance at conferences arranged by Muslim based organisations in Melbourne and Sydney and dinners to celebrate Eid al-Fitr, held in private homes, and at more formal occasions held at the NSW Parliament, I attended functions that were exclusive to women. These occasions were particularly enjoyable as they enabled me to see, not only how much they enjoyed themselves, but how decoratively Muslim women dress at all-women's evening events, especially their elaborate accessories of sparkly clasps and embroidered brooches which adorned their veils, gloves and, occasionally, shoes. On one occasion, a number of the women removed their veils entirely, but needed to replace them each time an announcement was made over the loud speaker of the imminent arrival of a male called to repair the on-stage microphones. It was also interesting for me to see the entertainment, usually passages of the Qur'an recited in Arabic by a series of

[18] "Halal" is an Arabic word meaning lawful or permitted. In reference to food, it is the dietary standard as prescribed in the Qur'an. The opposite of "halal" is "haram", which means unlawful or prohibited. Each term is commonly used in relation to food products, meat products, cosmetics, personal care products, pharmaceuticals and food ingredients. Islamic Council of Victoria, http:/www.icv.org.au accessed 16.11.15.

women and accompanied by another woman, who tapped a lone Middle Eastern style drum in rhythm to the recitations.

Other events included dinners and lunches, book launchings, either written by Muslim women, or written about Muslim women and the launching of a Muslim women's venture of making beautiful, ethnic influenced, handbags. Some participants were recruited at these meetings and events, either through contacts or through the snowballing effects of social networks (Small, 2009:14). This technique proved invaluable as a "rapport with the prospective respondents" (Yasmeen, 1998:15) had been built before any subsequent interview commenced.

Because the Muslim population in Sydney is relatively small, on more than one occasion, I met with the participants after our interview because we were both attending the same social function. This facilitated numerous conversational opportunities which added substantially to the cross fertilisation and depth of understanding plus the added advantage of procuring triangulation of data. In a more informal setting, it was possible to clarify with the participant concerned, any gaps from our interview that needed clarification or to reinforce what I understood the situation to be. At these more informal meetings, an enriching bonus occurred when I met a participant's mother. These encounters enabled me to observe comparisons of visual representations such as gestures, facial expressions, appearances and mannerisms, even although, on occasions, language, or shyness presented as obstacles (see Ochs & Capps, 1996:19-43). Each encounter was a wonderful opportunity to provide depth to, and enlarge on, previous understandings of the participants (see also Anna, 2014:117).

Opportunities for observation also occurred during my own working experiences in a secular environment, primarily with a publicly listed corporation in Sydney. My non-line management, company secretarial, role had the advantage of enabling me to view situations in a work place environment without the encumbrances of inter-office group

‘labelling’ or ‘belonging’ to one group or another. These opportunities allowed me to witness personally how office groups formed, the membership of groups, and, more importantly, those who were not included in the formation of a group and to observe the reasons for this.

Related Methodological Issues

Although an analysis of what is understood by ‘race’ and ‘racism’ is addressed in Chapter 4, “Identity and the Dynamics of Exclusion”, wherever possible throughout the thesis, I have chosen to employ the words ‘different’ and the ‘Other’ as more appropriate words to describe ‘race’ and ‘racism’. This is because a definition of ‘racism’, based on beliefs of inferiority of certain races, is now considered socially unacceptable (Maddox, 2011) and the veracity of this supposition is denied by most people. The decision not to use this term does not wipe out acts of discrimination and prejudice against those who are different, it has simply compelled people to find other ways of expressing their prejudice that do not rely on references to inferior characteristics. On occasions, ‘racism’ has been used in the thesis because of its familiarity to, and its usage by, the participants, even though, in many ways, to use the term is to reinforce it as real. At the same time, to discredit it is to act as if ‘race’ is no longer a significant differentiating variable in the social life-world (Anna, 2014:116, citing Keith, 2005:249). This has led to the emergence of a ‘cultural difference’ that is related to value systems with new qualifiers to distinguish it from the original biologically-based definition and referred to as “new racism” (Dunn et al., 2007:564-589) or ‘different’ or the ‘Other’. Writing from a Canadian multicultural perspective, Augie Fleras asserts the existence of “racism without race” that “transcends biological dominance or different physical endowment … instead is a belief in superiority and normalcy of the dominant culture discreetly encoded around the language of citizenship, patriotism and heritage” (Fleras, 2004:430 cited in Akbarzadeh & Roose, 2011:312-313). Each component of these definitions is reflected in the experiences of the participants.

In the thesis, one of the principal claims about 'racism', in all its forms, embraces the use of the word 'Other'. My understanding is principally drawn from the usage and interpretations of Essed (1991, 2002); Said (1995) and Hage (1998). Each of the scholars' interpretation is analogous but with subtle differences in interpretation. From Essed's viewpoint (1991) the 'Other' is the marginalised 'Other' who experiences subtle micro-encounters of disrespect, bias and prejudice, embedded in everyday habits and integrated into daily situations (see also Hällgren 2005:321; Bhavnani, 2001). Said likens the 'Other' to the Orient and the 'Self' to the Occident where 'Self' is privileged and has the upper hand to reconstruct a passive 'Other'. As Said illustrates, this upper hand results in a Western perception of the Orient that enables it to make statements about it, authorises views of it, teaches it and rules over it (Said, 1978:7). In the process, the 'Other' is created. Hage (1998), in contrast, studies white Australian multiculturalism and interprets the 'Other' as the victim of "white racists" who are "masters of the national space" and the "tolerated others" must be positioned within specific limits or boundaries (Hage,1998:89). Finally, Levinas's conceptualisation, that the 'Other' is "what I myself am not" (cited in Ben-Ari & Strier, 2010) aptly encapsulates the above scholars' views. The 'Other', by all descriptions, thus represents not only difference, but inferiority, remoteness and incompatibility with the 'accepted', someone we look down on.

After much deliberation, I chose to refer to the piece of fabric that identifies a woman as Muslim, as the 'veil' and to use 'veiling' throughout the thesis to include all forms of head covering, including the hijab, that covers the hair, usually the neck and ears and leaves the face open. No participant wore the niqab or the burqa, a long loose body-covering garment that covers the face. Thus the word 'veiling' is used in the thesis with the hope that it is a sufficiently general enough description to embrace the many forms and styles of hair covering that are as diverse as the participants themselves. For example, some participants wear a scarf that ties under the chin, others wrap it around their head and fasten it at the nape of the neck, some participants wear a triangular shaped scarf also clasped at the nape of the neck whilst others select a head covering not unlike a turban. It

should also be noted that veiling also refers to a whole complex of normative principles, such as modesty and restriction of the participants' interactions with males (Rozario: 1998:651). These principles are outlined in detail in the forthcoming chapters.

Using Sydney as the locale for the research was the logical choice to formulate themes and conclusions. The participants were located within the Sydney area and I am personally familiar with the city, having been born and raised in Sydney and employed in its secular workforce. Another reason for selecting Sydney is that the majority of Muslims living in New South Wales live within the Sydney metropolitan area which equates to much rich, informative data being relatively easily sourced. Muslim males total 4.14 per cent of all males domiciled in Sydney (totalling 83,948 out of a male population of 2,028,730) and Muslim females total 3.69 per cent of females domiciled in Sydney (totalling 77,219 out of a female population of 2,090,460).[19]

An important consideration for the preparation for this thesis was whether or not selected employers should be interviewed to discover their views on employing Muslim women. The final decision was that, for this research project, they should not, because of my personal observances that any institutional claims to objectivity could fail the test of verification. My previous experiences with Human Resources was that they were quick to give the usual assurances that management was 'well aware' of the correct way of managing different ethnic employees and then finding myself steered in the direction of cupboards full of tomes of Government's rules (Federal and State) regarding discrimination law, race relations and equal opportunity, to provide proof that this was so.

Interviewing Muslim women on the staff, at the behest of management, also presented problems. Not only would it raise Macquarie University Ethnics Committee concerns and would need a further application for Ethics approval, but the results could well be perceived as biased because of the fear that any employee's views may filter back to the

[19] A.B.S. (2006). Religious Affiliation(a) by Age by Sex, New South Wales.

employer. Similarly, to interview a random sample, outside a workplace environment, of non-Muslim men and women for their views on Muslim women in general appeared counter-productive to the research focus of this project, that of the experiences of a select group of Muslim women employed in Sydney's workplace. Finally, as Yasmeen's research on non-Muslim perceptions of Muslims (2008:62) confirms, the main source of knowledge for non-Muslims about Muslims is acquired via the media and this topic is pursued in detail in Chapter 4.

An understanding of what Miles & Crush (1993:84) describe as the "myth of detachment" in an objective, value-free researcher and the accessible, passive, value-laden researcher subject has been discredited at length (Anna, 2014:116, citing Grbich, 2013:17). It is impossible to be objective in *any* research as all research will necessarily be coloured by the researcher's world-view (Roald, 2001:78, italics added). My early concerns were firstly, that research is always an intervention of some kind, being conducted in this instance, by a non-Muslim woman. Roald (2001:70) helped to ameliorate this concern by pointing out that there would be weaknesses in the approaches of both a non-Muslim woman and a Muslim woman researcher. Whilst the outsider has "different approaches due to differences in cultural language", the insider might take for granted ideas which an outsider might investigate further in a way which could, on occasions, elicit different answers. Thus each approach has its values and limitations. Secondly, I was concerned that, as a white Anglo Australian woman of European heritage, I may be perceived as being a member of the workplace majority (Willis & Trondman, 2000:7; Swanton, 2010:2337; Anna, 2014:117).

There was no evidence of either concern, as previously mentioned, with more than one participant stating that it was her duty to assist research on all facets of Islamic practice. I was also thanked for my interest in the participants' experiences, as one participant emailed, "Again thanks for your company on Wednesday, it felt like a catch up with a friend, rather than an interview".

Anna (2014:117) has observed that "an ethnographic project researching a *select* group of participants, such as the participants of this research, also introduces other issues, such as the potential to skew fieldwork towards a single minded focus on negative experiences" (see also Noble, 2013a:181). This may result in the ethnography becoming a search for examples of exclusion whilst discounting pleasant experiences of inclusion which did occur. For example, participants described fellow employees who were anxious that they had the correct halal food and access to non-alcoholic beverages at staff gatherings, and, on another occasion, an employer providing, without question, a private space for praying. Nevertheless, in some instances, the failure to focus on the negative experiences of some participants would have avoided the heightening awareness that stereotyping and exclusion not only exist in the workplace, but "manifest itself in very subtle ways" (Essed:1992).

Another possible concern with such an ethnographic project, with it emphasis on workplace experiences,was that it may only uncover results that the participants thought the researcher might wish to hear, that is, that the whole of their work-life experiences to date were congenial. As Miles and Crush (1993:91) point out:

> [I]n a social setting where information is power,
> and the consequences of volunteering information
> may go well beyond the particular conversation,reticence and
> fabrication may be more likely.

Some scholars also note that the ethnographer's preoccupation with 'difference' or the 'Other' may produce a disproportionate highlighting of exclusion (Anna, 2014:116, citing Radano & Bohlman, 2000:1; Thomas, 1991:205). As the focus of this research is the participants' experiences in the workplace and related cultural differences, the preoccupation, in this case, was unavoidable (Anna, 2014:117). Certainly, a participant's

claim of exclusion in her workplace may be at variance with the reality of exclusion, reflecting a grievance with no real basis, with the result that the same issue that causes distress in some, may be dismissed as trivial by others (Yasmeen, 2008:3). Similarly, "the dominant community may not be excluding a minority as much as the view entertained by those perceiving such exclusion" (Ibid). Nevertheless, no feeling of exclusion, perceived or otherwise, can be ignored because, to the participant, these experiences are real and meaningful. Yasmeen, (2008:iv) enlarges on this:

> The perceptions of exclusion could be at variance with the reality of exclusion. Such a variance does not render the perception of being excluded meaningless, the feeling of being excluded remains significant as it contributes to how an individual and a community may relate to the wider society.

Whilst the need for such knowledge is relevant to understanding the participants and their experiences in the workplace, there is also no way to fully confirm these issues. In both instances, the interview guide and the style of field interviews did assist in the valuation of authenticity. Triangulation was also made possible by meeting the participants at various social meetings, by cross referencing and accessing different interpretations of the same situation (Yin, 2011:11-13).

Yasmeen's study (2008:12) on understandings of exclusion experienced by Australian Muslims proposes a yard stick of acceptance or a "spectrum of feeling acceptance" where a "sense of belonging to Australia" is at one end of the spectrum and, at the other end, "feelings of exclusion in Australia due to religious beliefs". The middle of the spectrum is allocated to those who may not feel absolutely excluded but may feel a lack of acceptance towards Muslims in general and, specifically, towards their ethnic group. As this thesis progresses, it will become evident that the forty research participants share differing views that can likewise be positioned along a similar yardstick, one that is open to

modifications whilst adding to the understanding of their identity formation. This hypothetical yardstick has been useful in reflecting on the experiences of the participants.

To conclude this section of the chapter, each individual participant contributed new material that accumulated in a set of themes to this ethnographic case study. Each interview also revealed complexities, contradictions and distinctions within the themes, until, as Grbich (2013:17,61) proposes, a point of thematic saturation was achieved. It is the participants' voices, or "narrative fragments" (Swanton, 2010:2347), extracted from the interviews, together with observational and empirical data, that have contributed to the framework of this thesis, and are woven throughout the following chapters (Anna, 2014).

Literature, as existing theoretical knowledge, is purposefully woven into the weft of this thesis to contribute to a depth of authentic understanding and to enable interpretations of, and critical reflection on, emerging themes. This was considered a more appropriate means of maintaining a sense of direction rather than an independent literature review chapter.

Chapter Summaries

The thesis is divided into two parts, the combined aim of Chapters 1 and 2 is to provide an introductory framework for the second part of the thesis, Chapters 3 - 6. Chapter 7 provides a summary of the findings of the thesis, it addresses a gap in anthropology, specifically a lack of research on the experiences of tertiary educated Muslim women in the realm of Australian paid employment and how they negotiate religious and cultural diversities.

Chapter 2

Continuing the informative nature of the first part of this thesis, Chapter 2, entitled "Australian Multiculturalism, Muslim Women and Work", provides a detailed background

and overview of multiculturalism in the Australian context and how the various policies and reactions to these policies has affected Muslim immigrants and their position in Australia's paid workforce. Australia has one of the world's most religiously and culturally diverse populations (Bouma & Brace-Govan, 2000:159) and the final section brings into focus the situation of Muslim women from a range of ethnic, cultural and class backgrounds and their participation in this paid workforce. The experiences of participation cannot be understood without considering the outcomes of the former.

Chapter 3

This chapter is the first of the analytical chapters that form the second part of this thesis. Chapter 3, entitled "Aspects of Identity Formation" explores how Muslim identities, like those of others, are not fixed in nature but, rather, are continuously evolving. They "exist in a dynamic relationship to the structures and sources of information about religion and the world at large" (Yasmeen, 2008:2). The chapter provides a literature overview on the understanding of identity formation and a background to the concerns associated with locating a 'Muslim identity'. It locates three features of identity formation that are relevant to the participants' experiences in the workplace, firstly, an identity that is shaped by family values and extended family influences (internal influences), secondly, an identity that is shaped by the cultural views of the family's community (external influences) and thirdly, an identity that is influenced by being first or second generation Australian women, even though they may contest, or even withdraw from, certain aspects of its influence (internal and external influences). Whilst the participants are employed in a professional capacity in their workplace environments, they are also members of families who are anxious to preserve their own cultural and ethnic values. The concluding section of this chapter discusses the way that participants are demonstrating a new form of identity, one that has at its base Marranci's interpretation of identity, how "*I feel I am* that determines my identity for me" (2006:6,10).

Chapter 4

This chapter, entitled "Identity and Dynamics of Exclusion in the Secular Workplace" maintains the informative nature of the thesis by providing an overview of the dynamics of exclusion as experienced by the participants. The chapter is guided by the fact that any understanding of a Muslim identity requires an integrated approach. As a result, the chapter addresses how the structures of exclusion are internalised by participants and how they manage these lived, everyday experiences. It is assisted by a literature review on the subject, and deals with the concept of race and racist thought, the development of the term 'racism' and the movement towards a cultural discrimination to deflect accusations of racism which, in turn, are more difficult to prove. The chapter observes the part that exclusion plays in the formation of the participant's identity. Three power based strategies are examined, each of which plays a part in creating barriers in the secular workplace: the power base that is an automatic feature of a white Anglo Australian majority; the power of the media and the power role of 'nationalism'. The final section of the chapter observes how gender boundaries form between Anglo Australian and Australian Muslim women employees.

Chapter 5

The focus of this chapter, entitled "Appearance as an Identity", is dress styles, the importance that is placed on appearance in the workplace and how the participants, especially those who veil, manage an identity that signals a religious belief that may be not only misunderstood, but misjudged. The chapter presents the participants' voices, why some veil and others do not, their experiences as veiled Muslim women and the issues they face because of their appearance, both inside and outside of their workplace environments. Some participants, who favour a more traditional Islamic dress code, consider it does not limit their ability to operate in the public area, "a view that not all at the orthodox end of the spectrum may accept" (Yasmeen, 2008:23). It illustrates how barriers are formed in the workplace, historically between female and male staff, by a

division between the Anglo Australian female staff and the Australian Muslim woman whose appearance identifies her as a member of the Other.

Chapter 6

The chapter, the final of the four analytical chapters, entitled "Dynamics and Boundaries of Group 'Belonging'", focuses on group identity, how individuals, in general, belong to a particular membership and the significance of group membership in the secular workplace. The research is influenced by Tajfel's social identity theory (2010) and a literary review of his theory, together with views of other scholars, is presented. The chapter researches how the existence of 'in group' and 'out group' belonging influences the participants' identity formation and observes how they manage the existence of this 'belonging' in their workplace environments. The chapter provides details of participants' experiences, of being members of either an 'in group' or 'out group', the evidence of male domination in an environment that could be described as an 'Old Boys Club' and which may extend beyond the office environment. By making a comparison between the experiences of participants who are converts and their encounters with the 'imagined' community of umma, the chapter illustrates how the excluded minority is also not immune to the phenomenon of excluding others.

Chapter 7

The thesis's aim has been to contribute to the understanding of the impact a religious identity has on the experience of tertiary educated Muslim women who are in paid employment in a Western nation. As previously outlined, there is limited enquiry concerned with tertiary educated Australian Muslim women and the challenges they face in the domain of paid employment. This concluding chapter addresses this gap and provides a summary of the findings of the thesis. It determines that Australian Muslims are misunderstood by the majority population and that barriers are formed in the secular workplace because of misinformation regarding Muslim identities which are based on assumptions regarding their religion, culture, lifestyles and aspirations. The chapter

demonstrates how the participants bring a new form of identity to their workplace environments and how, as first and second generation Australian Muslim women, they are a generation in cultural transition. As such, they represent an important link between their first generation immigrant parents and the wider community.

Conclusion

This introductory chapter, Chapter 1, has presented the thesis's rationale and outlined its intentions, its aims and research content. It has provided a theoretical outline of the methodology the thesis utilises and summarises the reasons for this choice by identifying its usefulness and, at the same time, acknowledging its limitations. The focus of the research is a select group of forty tertiary educated Australian Muslim women bringing together an understanding of their identity formation and their encounters in Sydney's paid workforce. Because of their tertiary education, they come to their workplace environment with negotiable qualifications and skills to equip them for employment in a professional capacity and in line with their similarly qualified Anglo Australian female counterparts (see also Samani, 2014:167). As a result of these credentials, they are unlikely to experience workplace disadvantages that less qualified Muslim women may encounter. In many instances, this situation is in contrast to their mothers' experiences of employment outside the family home.

Yasmeen (2008:v) advises that "a mixed picture exists with respect to non-Muslim views on Muslims". The forthcoming chapters pursue the concept that this "mixed picture" is maintained in the secular workplace. To understand how the participants manage situations in this environment, the study researches the participants' identity formation and the outstanding issues that influence the identity they present to the workplace. It is an identity shaped by being first and second generation Australian Muslim women whilst, at the same time, being daughters of first generation immigrant parents whose first language is not English and who brought with them their own ideas of how Muslim daughters should behave. What makes this research different from other studies of

Australian Muslim women and their workplace experiences is that most of the participants have risen out of class inequality by attaining tertiary qualifications. The participants could be described as a 'minority within a minority' in their workplace because of their tertiary qualification and their membership in a minority religious group.

As outlined in detail in this chapter, the participants illustrate diversity in how 'being' an Australian Muslim is enacted and how their religious belief is practised. The common denominator is the acknowledgement of the unity of God and the role of the Prophet. Akbarzadeh and Roose (2011:320) describe a category of Muslims for whom Islam does not interfere with the daily routine of life. The participants do not fall into this category because of their emotional commitment to Islam, a criteria that is demonstrated by each participant of this research. Any research conducted solely on the category described by Akbarzadeh and Roose would produce a completely different set of conclusions to the ones of this thesis. Marranci describes this commitment as "It is what *I feel I am* that determines my identity for me" (2006:6,10, italics original). It is through this lens of understanding of the participants' emotional commitment to Islam that the research project is constructed.

Finally, the chapter presents the question "Is it possible to maintain a Muslim identity within the challenges of this environment, and what might that 'identity' be". This question is of significance to this research because it fleshes out how misunderstandings and misinterpretations create boundaries between those not identified as part of 'me' or 'us' and on both sides of the 'barrier'. My own experience of misunderstanding is a case in point. I refer here to the meeting described above with the interviewee who wore the niqab and how misunderstandings occurred on both sides and which resulted in barriers being raised. I have often contemplated what would have happened had she asked me to explain what I meant by "bikini" and what would have happened had I explored what I meant by "burquini". I will never know, and the opportunity has been lost, both with her and the friends I had made who attended Daar Aisha College.

Chapter 2

Australian Multiculturalism, Muslim Women and Work

This second chapter of the thesis presents an overview of Muslims, and in particular Muslim women, and paid employment in multicultural Australia. Specifically, the chapter discusses the discourse of multiculturalism in Australia, with its multiplicity of understandings, policies and practices, as the context within which Muslim women, particularly tertiary educated Muslim women who are employed in Australia's professional and corporate workplaces, negotiate the complexities of their identities at, and through, work.

The chapter begins with a brief introduction to the concept of multiculturalism, arguing that it emerged in the West as a means of accommodating increasing ethno-cultural diversity in post-colonial societies. The following section describes the development of Australian multiculturalism from its animated inauguration by the Whitlam government during the 1970s, its consolidation during the 1980s, its decline under Howard's government during the 1990s and early 2000s, through to the somewhat ambiguous re-emergence of multiculturalism today. Specifically, it argues that multiculturalism began as, and remains, a "confused and contested discourse set of political issues and institutional practices that has never truly taken root as a national norm in Australia" (Anna, 2014). The section continues by outlining some of the main criticisms of multiculturalism that have weakened its hold on the Australian social and political imagination. For example, its tendency towards idealism and simplistic responses in the face of the real tensions that emerge in ethnically and culturally diverse societies, the reification of ethno-cultural identity, the lending of tacit support to illiberal practices and privileged elites in diaspora communities, the obscuring of White 'settler' hegemony and conversely a sense of decline in some sections of the Anglo Australian population.

The next section of this chapter identifies the centrality of Muslims in the re-emergence of the debate regarding multiculturalism in Australia during the later 2000s. It argues that Islamic religious affiliation has become a meaningful predictor of discrimination that is embedded at the structural level and enacted at the everyday level. Amongst the popular prejudice, the identifying veil that covers the hair makes Muslim women especially visible and therefore highly likely to become objects of random acts of abuse. The section describes the homogenisation of Muslim identities that is inherent in the everyday practice of Islamophobia and discusses the reality of the heterogeneity of the Muslim diaspora. It continues by arguing that the generalised suspicion of Muslims has revealed the essential nature of the reserve surrounding federal multiculturalism in Australia, centred as it is on the fear of the loss of cultural influence and power that may result for the Anglo Australian groups who have historically dominated this largely 'mono-cultural' society. A renewed emphasis on 'multicultural integration' has thus tended to translate into the expectation that immigrants from non-Western nations, and especially Muslim immigrants, become 'culturally Australian'. The section ends by describing the situation of Muslims at work in modern multicultural Australia, in the context of what is essentially an assimilationist narrative, as a mixed and complex one. It is a situation, however, that is characterised by pervasive cultural alienation, limited participation and structural socio-economic disadvantage in comparison with the wider Australian population.

The chapter then moves on to discuss some of the complex interrelated elements that come into play when considering all Muslim women's participation in Australia's paid work force. It argues that the participation of first and second generation Muslim women, mostly from developing countries, is more limited, as well as significantly under-researched in comparison with the largely marginalised male Muslim workforce and in comparison with all women workers. This section describes some of the challenges that arise for Muslim women in relation to multidimensional social, religious and cultural differences and transformations. It specifically focuses on ways in which Muslim women

negotiate their identities and behaviours to balance significant tensions between family, religious and cultural expectations, personal ambitions, lifestyles and future prospects, and the demands of work organisations. Some of these tensions include negotiating the lack of differentiation between refugee and second generation Australian Muslim women and indeed the lack of recognition of the nuanced heterogeneity of the female Muslim population, the recognition of overseas qualifications, the traditional Muslim woman's domestic roles versus Western career aspirations, the significant barriers that overt modes of Islamic expression raise for Muslim women employees, and the influence of Islamic revivalism. Regarding this later element, it is argued that religious involvement provides many Muslim women with significant physical and psychological resources, and that despite a widely held public image of subservience, the participation of Muslim women in Australian public, political, educational and employment spheres is gradually increasing. This is especially so regarding their growing aspirations towards higher education and work careers in the secular workplace and is reflected in the experiences of the tertiary educated participants of this research as detailed in the following chapters.

Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism emerged as a social movement in liberal Western democracies after the end of World War Two, as these societies experienced increasing ethno-cultural diversity brought about by significant migration from former colonies. The discourse has enshrined ethnic and cultural diversity as 'a social good' and promoted its incorporation in state policy and social practice, although as the following section will highlight in the Australian context, the multiculturalist approach has always attracted significant disquiet or open contestation. Modood (2007:5) emphasises the underlying Western hegemony of multiculturalism, arguing that it was established as a means for Western countries to 'politically accommodate' their minority immigrant groups who had originated from poorer non-Western nations. As Anna (2014:16, citing Amin, 2012:1; Goldberg, 1994:3-6; Kivisto, 2002:1-9; Mishra, 2012:23 and Reitz, 2009a:3) notes, many such Western countries were originally established on the assumption of a 'territorially defined

monoculturalism', that is, in the space of a European national culture into which it was anticipated immigrants of non-Western ancestry and culture would assimilate. Over the post-war years, multiculturalism has developed under various hues across Western nations. The next section provides an overview of its development in Australia, thus providing the context for the analysis of Muslim Australians in paid work, specifically as far as this thesis is concerned, the situation of tertiary educated Muslim women who are employed in Sydney's secular workplaces.

Multiculturalism in Australia

Colic-Peisker and Farquharson (2011:580) propose that the term 'multiculturalism', as generally understood in Australia, designates four different but closely linked phenomena: multiculturalism refers to a demographic reality that reflects Australia's ethnically diverse society; multiculturalism is an ideology that recognises and normalises ethnic diversity, thus countering the view that diversity is inherently problematic; multiculturalism refers to policies for managing cultural diversity; multiculturalism is understood as the everyday practice of interacting with people from different ethno-cultural backgrounds. This conceptual delineation is useful for making sense of the complex field that is multiculturalism, as aspects of all four inter-connected strands are detectable in the following overview of Australian multiculturalism.

Multiculturalism developed in Australia in the 1970s as the Whitlam Labor government's answer to emerging anti-assimilation and anti-racism critiques associated with former migration approaches (Colic-Peisker & Farquharson, 2011:580; Jupp, 2002:101). Further impetus was provided by settlement issues related to the significantly increased numbers of migrants from non-Western countries, as well as a developing sense of an independent Australian identity (Hage, 2002:424-427; Mishra, 2012:143-157). The Immigration Minister Al Grassby's 1973 report "A Multi-cultural Society for the Future" and the following Galbally Report in 1978 embedded a 'visual multiculturalism', centered on distinctive ethnic communities, as a key concept in commonwealth migration and

settlement policy and practice (Boese & Phillips, 2011:190; Dunn, 2005:34; Koleth, 2010:5-7). Under various political leaderships since, particularly that of Malcolm Fraser after the downfall of the Whitlam administration, multicultural policy has attempted to systematically address immigrant difference and disadvantage, and promote social cohesion, through the maintenance of immigrants' cultural and linguistic heritages within the dominant Anglo Australian tradition (Berman & Paradies, 2008:11; Castles, 1992:555; Lopez, 2000:446-448). While beginning as the government response to immigrant settlement during the 1970s, the Australian multicultural project was incorporated more widely within a nation building narrative during the following years (Anna, 2014:93, citing Koleth, 2010:1 and Jupp, 2002:93, 121).

While the idea of a multicultural national identity had always been contested, debate has intensified in the last two decades in Australia and other liberal Western democracies. One of the main factors contributing to this intensification is the rise of radical Islam and an associated 'Islamophobia'. This is a crucial issue as far as Muslim women's participation in the Australian paid workforce is concerned, and will be discussed in detail in a later section. Under consideration in this section are the other related concerns that have shaped the amplification of the multiculturalism debate in Australia. Multiculturalism as a policy of minority group inclusion has inevitably encouraged an approach focused on distinctive ethnic communities, which has led to some largely unintended consequences. One of these unintended consequences is that such groups are then conceived of as 'ethno-cultural entities', a conception established on a belief in the existence of a pre-determined fixed identity. Under that premise, ethno-cultural identity and culture are reified rather than understood as historically contingent and socially constructed, while the phenomena of individual agency, cultural mixing and cultural change are largely ignored (Anna, 2014:18-19). In the field of multiculturalism, there is broad academic agreement regarding this critique of ethnic and cultural 'essentialism'.[20] In relation to Islam and Muslims, in particular, Marranci (2008:60-68,144) critiques the phenomenon of

[20] See Basch et al. (1994:32); Colic-Peisker & Farquharson (2011:581); Fraser (2010:215); Mishra (2012:7,101); Patton (2009:1); Werbner (1997:6) and Yuval-Davis (2010:266).

essentialism that has characterised much scholarly work in this field and promotes instead an anti-essentialist and anti-monolithic position, especially as it relates to the settlement of Muslim people in Western countries. In this regard, some of the specific issues associated with the settlement of Muslim ethnic communities in Sydney are discussed in Chapter 3.

Furthermore, scholars[21] have long pointed out that the arrangement of multiculturalism around distinctive ethno-cultural groups can inadvertently uphold the conservatism and elitism characteristic of many immigrant communities, including Muslim collectives (Okin, 1999:17-24; Shachar, 2000:79-81). For example, Ghobadzadeh (2010:302-303) claims that Okin (1998, 1999 & 2005) was one of the first political theorists to question the compatibility between multiculturalism and feminism, pointing to the pre-eminence of male elites and the subjugation of marginalised subgroups, such as women, within traditional cultural collectives. Okin (1999) argues that treating an ethno-cultural group as a monolith, and ignoring its internal diversity and unequal power dynamics, allows the more powerful sub-groups to dominate with regard to the articulation of the group's ethos, rights and needs. Poynting and Mason (2008:234) point out that this was the case in Australia where, initially at least, 'conservative patriarchs' would engage in political patronage with major political parties and within their ethnic collectives to secure, in competition with other diaspora groups and other claims on public resources, funding for their own communities according to their own priorities. How is a balance to be developed between a 'liberal culturally neutral defence of equal treatment' for all social groups, and 'an identity politics that leads to the defence of special treatment' for minority ethno-cultural groups, including an acceptance of their different social practices? (Anna, 2014:19; Okin et al., 1999). This pertinent issue will be taken up again in a following section in relation to Muslim women's participation in Australia's multicultural workforce.

[21] See Colic-Peisker (2011:638); Dunn (2005:39-41); Krayem (2010:107); Mishra (2012:100); Murphy (2012:96-111); Okin et al. (1999); Patton (2009:1); Phillips (2007:2-8); Phillips & Saharso (2008); Poata-Smith (1996:113) and Shachar (2000).

Relatedly, multiculturalism discourse tends to be shot through with a streak of idealism. Through a well-intentioned but narrow focus on the cuisine, festivals, national dress and folklore of minority cultures, plus the institutionalisation of 'ethnicised' social services, multiculturalism has come to be perceived by some scholars as a somewhat superficial and uncritical response to the tensions that can arise in ethnically and culturally diverse societies (Castles, 1992:560; Hage, 2010:242; Wise, 2005:171-172). The promotion of an optimistic ethos of diversity and tolerance can, and has, obscured very real issues, such as structural inequality and systemic discrimination experienced by many diaspora communities (Berman & Paradies, 2010:214-232; Dunn, 2005:34; Hage, 2002:426-429), as well as providing an implicit nod to the growth of 'immigrant ghettos' (Phillips, 2006). Moreover, a simplistic and idealistic approach to multiculturalism lends tacit support to an ethno-cultural group's unequal power dynamics and the ascendance of male elites, as discussed above. It also seems to bypass, even ignore, the problem of social cohesion, that is, the building of the social bonds that are essential for some sense of unity within a polity.

The emphasis on targeted communities also sends the message that multiculturalism is 'about the dominant Anglo Australian group accommodating immigrants', while taking for granted their own 'non-ethnic status' and their right to embody the normative national identity (Forrest & Dunn, 2006:208; Hage, 1998). Berman and Paradies (2010) argue that there is significant rejection of ethno-cultural diversity amongst the Australian population and that this, in their opinion, constitutes an indirect form of racism. Moreover, the institutionalisation of multicultural ideals is not necessarily reflected in everyday cross-cultural interaction. In fact, the social expectation to act in accordance with the directives of the multicultural ethos may result in the suppression, but not the eradication, of prejudicial practices and leave the current arrangements of power intact (Anna, 2014:19, citing Hage, 1998:15-26; Mishra, 2012:ix and Sloan, 2009:35-41). Ethno-cultural displays and pro-diversity initiatives may have exacerbated a sense of exclusion and resentment on the part of members of the ascendant Anglo Australian group, especially the marginalised

members of this group, 'who have no distinctive culture to contribute to multicultural Australia'. Furthermore, although Anglo Australians continue to dominate the elite strata, the migration of educated professionals from non-English-speaking countries over the past two decades has hastened the growth of a "multicultural middle class" (Birrell & Healy, 2008:1; Colic-Peisker 2011:650; Jupp, 2011:578). Thus there is a perception, if not a reality, of the diminishment of White settler hegemony and an accompanying sense of loss (Colic-Peisker & Farquharson, 2011:582; Dunn, 2005:34; Schech & Haggis, 2001:158). This sense of decline may be unsettling, to some degree, those who have always supported multiculturalism, at least in principle.

Due to these central concerns, the multicultural ethos that had been institutionalised in Australian federal policy in the late 1970s reached its peak in the early 1990s and had fallen out of favour by the early 2000s (Colic-Peisker & Farquharson, 2011:579; Hopkins, 2011:113). John Howard's government heavily influenced the federal retreat from multiculturalism between 1996 and 2007. Howard himself "moved against the multicultural concept of nation" to assert a constitutive understanding of Australian nationhood premised on the ideal of assimilation that had dominated in the pre-multiculturalism era (Tate, 2009:97). The renaming of the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs as the Department of Immigration and Citizenship symbolises this shift away from multiculturalism towards a commitment to the 'Australian way of life'. Hage (2002:427-429) describes these developments in terms of a descriptive multiculturalism, perceived primarily as a form of welfare and cultural government, that was transformed into a more prescriptive multiculturalism perceived to be primarily about national identity. In more recent political times, academics and non-government organisations began calling for a federal re-endorsement of the "rather rusty machinery" (Jupp, 2011:578) of secular multiculturalism in the hope of countering further movement towards an assimilationist and Christian oriented nation building script.[22] They argue that public policy engagement is necessary to manage diversity, provide a protective net for

[22] See, for example, Boese & Phillips (2011); Colic-Peisker & Farquharson (2011); Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA) (2010); Fozdar (2011) and Jupp (2011).

diaspora groups and guarantee minority rights (Colic-Peisker & Farquharson, 2011:580-584).

While the Labor administration that followed the Howard government in 2007 was more disposed to responding to this call, federal Labor's ambivalence towards multiculturalism remained. For example, Kevin Rudd, as Prime Minister, "rehabilitated" the term after Howard's abandonment of it, but in her following prime ministership, Julia Gillard declined to employ the term when naming her cabinet (Maley & Aikman, 2011). In 2011, Labor Immigration Minister Chris Bowen lauded Australia's multicultural experience compared to Europe's, and announced what can be understood as a revival of the federal multiculturalism strategy. This initiative included the instigation of a national anti-racism and partnership strategy, an upgrade of the existing Australian Multicultural Advisory Committee to a council tasked with publicly advising the government on the direction of services for immigrants, and a change of title for the position of Parliamentary Secretary for Immigration and Citizenship to Parliamentary Secretary for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (Maley & Aikman, 2011). However, these were not changes on a grand scale, but more an attempt to return the state of play to something akin to its position before Howard's rejection of 'a multicultural Australia'. As Boese and Phillips (2011:191-194) point out, in the social inclusion initiatives of the Labor government, there was little recognition of multiculturalism, in practical terms, and the significant levels of discrimination and disadvantage faced by many immigrant communities. In their view, multiculturalism remains in its "watered down" state, due in part to the explicit avoidance of the term during the Howard era, as well as the difficulties and dilemmas of balancing cultural pluralism with social cohesion under Rudd and Gillard. At an operational level, core funding for immigrant resource centres was reduced and competitive tendering for key services was introduced (Boese & Phillips, 2011:190-191).

The current state of play could be described as confused and contentious. This is demonstrated by the fact that, despite ambivalent leadership at the federal level, all the

states and territories of Australia continue to implement multicultural programmes, invariably involving their minority ethnic communities, to address the practicalities of immigrant settlement and facilitate some sense of equity and social integration (Anna, 2014:93-94, citing Galligan & Roberts, 2004:95, Jupp, 2002:103/201 and Koleth, 2010:1; Berman & Paradies, 2010). And while federal inertia has lessened since the Howard era, it is important to analyse the political motivations contributing to the current revival of multiculturalism by both Labor and Liberal governments. For example, the Bowen initiatives and lauding of multiculturalism under Labor, identified above, can be understood, in part at least, as a response to the public and political turmoil following the 2011 Christmas Island boat disaster, in which asylum seekers and illegal immigrants drowned in view of locals who were attempting to save them (Maley & Aikman, 2011). Meanwhile Malcolm Turnbull, who replaced Tony Abbott as Australia's Liberal Party prime minister in September 2015, proclaimed Australia as "one of the most successful multicultural societies in the world" in response to reports of anti-Semitic racism and again after the murder of police employee Curtis Cheng by a jihadist gunman in Sydney's West (ABC News, 27 August & 10 October, 2015). In both cases, the term 'multicultural' was employed to manage political crises, calm public fears and avert social unrest by focusing on the multiculturalist concepts of social inclusion and unity in diversity. But this is still assimilation rhetoric dressed up as integration, whereby multicultural Australia respects culturally diverse values and lifestyles but affords ultimate primacy to 'Australian values'. "If there is any inconsistency between these (different) cultural values and the values of individual freedom and the rule of law, then these traditional Australian values win out, Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, Mr. Chris Bowen told an audience at the conservative think tank, The Sydney Institute last night" (Maley & Aikman, 2011).

In summary, as Dunn (2005:35) argues, "Multiculturalism is by no means sedimented as a national norm in Australia". Research shows that while most sections of Australian society are ambivalent about Anglo privilege, they are equally so about multiculturalism (Forrest & Dunn, 2006:226-227). In 2011, Gaita (2011a:16) maintained that the multiculturalism

debate in Australia was in hibernation but remained unresolved, and that it would return with a vengeance particularly in the form of "heated discussion of Muslims and multiculturalism".

Muslims and Australian Multiculturalism

Gaita's (2011a:16) prediction that the re-emergence of the debate about multiculturalism would be characterised by a particular focus on Muslims appears to have been justified. The focus of ethno-racial discrimination in multicultural Australia has shifted to some extent from Asians, who tend to migrate to Australia under the business or skilled categories, to immigrants from the Middle East and Africa who are more likely to be Muslims and refugees (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2007:61). While they are marked by "visible difference" in comparison with the Anglo norm, people who are identified as Muslim have come increasingly subject for more intense forms of 'the prejudicial gaze' in the last few years. Indeed, Muslims have become one of the prime targets for those who disdain multiculturalism, more generally, and argue for its demise in Western nations. This impetus has developed particularly in the aftermath of the compelling Islamist terrorist attacks of the 2000s, the origins of which are multi-dimensional and complex. Analysts point to the "orientalist legacy of Western colonialism" (Hage, 2002:435), the historical legacy of cold war politics and the Russian and American imperialist policy in the Middle East during the 1980s and 1990s (Poynting & Mason, 2007:61-62), as just some of the underlying influences shaping the rise of extremist Islamist organisations. In this climate, government, media and popular concern has mushroomed regarding the perceived threat of ethnic minorities associated with Islam, and to security and social cohesion in Western liberal democracies such as Australia. The term "Islamophobia" is used by commentators in the academic and media sectors, where predictably there is wide engagement, to name this generalised and escalating fear of Islam (Sheridan, 2006:317).[23] However, some

[23] See, for example, Akbarzadeh (2010b); Gaita (2011a:1-6); Halliday (1999); Humphrey (2010); Isin & Turner (2007:10-11); Jupp (2002:120-121,193,202); Kabir (2004:332-338, 2006, 2007:1285-1290 & 2011:244-245); Levey (2011:21-22,39-40); Marranci (2004, 2008); Mishra (2012:148,189-194); Poynting & Mason (2006:383-384 & 2008:230); Roose (2013:479), Sav et al. (2010:411-412), Sheridan (2006) and Tate (2009:113-117).

analysts maintain that 'anti-Muslimism' is the more accurate label because Islamophobia reproduces "the distortion that there is one Islam, that there is something out there against which the phobia can be directed" (Halliday, 1999:898).

Islamophobia or anti-Muslim sentiment, based on fear of Islamism and perceptions of irreconcilable differences between Muslim people and Western societies, has a complex political history across the globe. In Australia, its origins are largely to be found in historic Anglo-Australian intolerance towards ethno-cultural difference in general and non-Western immigrants in particular (Murphy, 2012:1-2). Hage, 1998 cited in Dunn, 2005:32, argues that normative national identity construction, the "Anglo us", has been sedimented by a century of White Australia policy and assimilationist ideology. Such construction is, therefore, characterised by "considerable ground-level comprehension, support and disciplinary power". The boundaries between the 'us' and the 'Other', that is, the intertwined 'Asian/Indian/Arab other', were symbolised early on in the stark divide between European townships and cameleer Ghan towns or Chinese gold mining settlements in the White Australia era and is referred to in more detail in Chapter 3. This antipodean version of Western orientalism continues and has recently intensified in the media and popular discourse, particularly related to Muslims (Hage, 2002:434-435; Manning, 2003:50; Patil, 2014:57). As Gaita (2011a:15-16) emphasises, the ethno-racial aspects of such vilification, understood as "old racism" (Omi & Winant, 2002:139) is where a lack of affinity is particularly centred on different physical characteristics, such as facial features and skin colour. In this regard, Gaita maintains that the post 9/11 Australian response to Muslim people would have been different "if most Muslims were white".[24]

In the current climate of distrust of Muslims and Islamic communities, religious affiliation has become as much, if not more, a meaningful predictor of prejudice towards minorities and immigrants than race, ethnicity or culture (Sheridan, 2006:317). Indeed, Maddox (2011) maintains that in the post 9/11 environment "religion is the new race", while

[24] "Old racism" is referred to in more detail in Chapter 4.

Imtoual (2010:57) names the phenomenon "religious racism".[25] In other words, we seem to have moved from "Arab/Asian/Indian/African other" to "Muslim other" (Kabir, 2004:313; Noble & Poynting, 2010:490; Poynting & Mason, 2006:366), and thus to Islamophobia. Perpetrators of Islamophobic violence in Australia now tend to conflate a range of ethnicities, Arab, South-East Asian, African, into one category, "Muslim" (Poynting & Mason, 2007:72). In this vein, Marranci (2004:107) argues that Islamophobia has spread, and indeed has become institutionalised, not through the stereotyping of physical characteristics but through the stereotyping of religious features, the misuse of Islamic texts, the misrepresentation of the Muslim world as uniformly patriarchal and barbaric, and the representation of Muslim lifestyles as "alien from Western society". This has led to a felt need amongst many Westerners to "protect their civilisation" from what Ho (2007:296) calls "the pre-eminent alien within".

Negative assessments of Muslim identity made by Anglo-Australian and Christian groups have been embedded at the structural level and enacted at the everyday level for many years in 'multicultural Australia'. Poynting and Mason (2007:72), citing a 1991 Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission Report, note the "many incidents of people in traditional Muslim clothes or of 'Middle Eastern appearance' being spat at or more violently assaulted in the street, of menacing, harassment, vandalism – even arson – and other racist attacks directed by everyday vigilantes of the cultural 'mainstream'". They also note that some Muslims have been required to move residences, that Sikh men have been the victims of abuse presumably because they have been mistaken for Arabs or Muslims due to their traditional turbans, and there has been at least one death. At the time of the 1990's Gulf wars and again after 9/11, the increased sense of threat translated into significant rises in the rate of such indiscriminate hate crimes enacted towards people presumed to be Muslim.[26] The Australian Arabic Council recorded a twentyfold increase

[25] For further reference to this phenomenon, see Fozdar (2011:622); Hopkins (2011:127); Kabir (2007:1278); Marranci (2004:106-107); Mishra (2012:195); Poynting & Mason (2007) and Sheridan (2006:318).
[26] See, for example, Busbridge (2013:462); Dunn (2005:30); Kabir (2004:330-338 & 2007:1285); Poynting & Noble (2004); Poynting & Perry (2007:155) and Saeed (2003:182).

in reports of vilification following 9/11 (Berman & Paradies, 2010), while anti-Muslim sentiment was a compelling aspect of the 2005 Cronulla Beach riots in Sydney (Booth et al., 2010:2).[27] As discussed above, the sentiment of blame and discrimination was, and is, attributed to Muslims as a people rather than Islam as a faith, and tends to homogenise all, especially immigrants, as if simply, "most Muslims are terrorists or most terrorists are Muslims" (Halliday, 1999:892).

Moreover, research suggests that the perpetrators of Muslim vilification, aware of the target's religious affiliation, glean their knowledge from media and film sources rather than personal knowledge of individual Muslims (Sheridan, 2006:320-332).[28] In regard to this phenomenon, Noble and Poynting (2010) conceptualise a pedagogical process, operating at institutional and everyday levels, that shapes the affective and spatial regulation of national belonging. In this process, dominants, compelled by a sense of border threat and group preservation, "teach" and immigrants "learn" who belongs in the national space. As "owners of the nation", citizens of Anglo-Australian heritage embody the entitlement to grant or withhold recognition to non-white "Muslim others". The "pedagogic functions of social incivility" (Noble & Poynting, 2010:501) are to teach the foreigners to perceive themselves as incompetent and illegitimate citizens who do not belong in Australia. As "non-belongers", Muslim immigrants are thus constructed as deserving recipients of disrespect.[29] Social incivility and hate crimes, along with relative social-economic disadvantage, may, in turn, contribute to a sense of alienation and thus radicalisation of segments of Muslim communities (Hassan, 2010:575; Murphy, 2012:118). During the 2014 Sydney siege in Martin Place, where a lone Islamist gunman held café staff and patrons hostage, it was observed that authorities carefully avoided using the word 'Muslim' in their media announcements in what seems to be an official attempt to curb a resurgence of random acts of Muslim demonisation in Australia.

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[27] Referred to in detail in Chapters 4 and 5.
[28] Referred to in detail in Chapter 4.
[29] See also Brah (1996:165); Castles (2002:561); Cleland (2001); Dandy & Pe-Pua (2010:34); Hage (1998); Poynting & Mason (2007:61-62/81) and Schech & Haggis (2001:144).

In terms of vilification attacks on Muslim women, Sheridan (2006:319) notes that the Muslim veil that covers the hair, is the primary signal of their religious affiliation as far as perpetrators are concerned. Indeed, European research found that women were more likely to experience Islamophobic abuse after 9/11 than men, presumably because of the easily identified veil (Allen & Nielsen, 2002). In Australia, well before 9/11, research discovered that "numerous Muslim women wearing their hijab were abused and assaulted in public spaces, with strangers, often but not always men, trying to tear their headscarf away" (Poynting & Mason, 2007:72, citing a 1991 HREOC Report). Many of the Muslim women participants in this research reflected on similar experiences. To provide some brief illustration in this background chapter, two short excerpts drawn from longer interview scripts are reproduced below. These excerpts will be elaborated and analysed in depth in Chapter 4, together with many more of the participants' narratives:

> When you're at school, or if you're at uni, when you're a young person and you wear a veil, you might have had someone who is rude to you on a train or a bus or in a street and because you haven't got your own self-esteem developed and those kind of things, sometimes you can carry that with you for a very long time.
>
> (Nawal, aged 45 years, a veiled, first generation participant of Turkish origin).

> I guess Muslim women are wearing the brunt of any anti-Islamic sentiments because of the fact that we are visible [through veiling]. But I think what doesn't kill you, makes you stronger.
>
> (Numa, aged 35 years, a veiled first generation participant of Indian origin).

It is impossible to overstate the compelling lack of regard that the everyday perpetrators of Muslim vilification hold for the heterogeneity of Muslim identities and communities (Halliday, 1999; Poynting & Perry, 2007:152). An international unified religious identity and globalised Islamic culture have been created in the minds of many which subsume, to some extent at least, the complex and deeply held national, ethno-racial, cultural, class and religious divisions amongst Muslim communities, including the compelling differences between Shiite, Sunni, Ismaili and Sufi Muslims.[30] Indeed, Mishra (2012:148) argues that Islam is now projected "as a supra-category above ethnicity or nation". A "pan-Islamic agency" that transcends ethnic and national agency has thus emerged from the perspectives of the majority social groups in Western nations as well as, in varying degrees of attachment, from the perspectives of different Muslim people themselves (Mishra, 2012:190-191). Research demonstrates the heterogeneous nature of Muslim communities and identities, the diversity of responses and political struggles amongst Muslims regarding their presence and influence in the West and more specifically in multicultural Australia.[31] Although levels of support vary, many Australian Muslims indicate a disinclination to be affiliated with militant groups. Indeed, as Kabir (2007) suggests, the majority of Australia's Muslim population perceives radical Islamists as misinterpreting the religion's precepts so as to target Western interests. From their viewpoint, they have been placed "between a rock and a hard place" (Kabir, 2007:1294).

Relatedly, Islamic principles and practices are often conflated with the ways in which they have been, or are currently being, expressed in particular cultures. For example, forms of veiling, which have become an iconic symbol of female Muslim identity in contemporary times, is a tradition that has existed for thousands of years, both in and beyond the Middle East and practised well before Islam came into being in the early seventh century

[30] See Brown (2006:419); Hilsdon & Rozario (2006:332); Ghobadzadeh (2010:304); Poynting & Mason (2007:62) and Spierings, Smits & Verloo (2009:503).
[31] See, for example, Dunn (2005:30);Hopkins (2011:111); Marranci (2008); Roose (2013:495-496) and Sav et al. (2010:411-412).

(Amer, 2014:14). Veiling is not specifically prescribed by the Qur'an or Hadith (Bedar & El Matrah, 2005:41; Evans, 2007). Over time, the cultural practice of veiling has been interwoven into the fabric of Islam, through its historical adoption by traditionalist communities upholding the Muslim faith. I will return briefly to the theme of veiling and Muslim women workers in a later section of this chapter, while Chapter 5 offers more detailed coverage of veiling and Muslim women's dress codes.

In terms of migration to liberal Western nations, in the minds of many Muslims, being faithful to Islamic teachings means doing what was customary in their countries of origin (Ramadan, 2004:139). This phenomenon is particularly pertinent in relation to customary restrictions on women in the realms of divorce, education, paid work, financial independence, access to mosques, broader social involvement, political participation, dress, public speaking and gender mixing, which have been transported to the nation by emigration from patriarchal cultures (Bedar & El Matrah, 2005:29-42). These limitations are then upheld, indeed often reaffirmed, by traditionalist and literalist interpretations of Islam (Mernissi, 1991 cited in Jones, 1993b:122; Ramadan, 2004:140).

However, Saeed (2003:164) argues that other Muslim women take a "neo-modernist view". For them, the Qur'an represented an emancipatory discourse regarding women when it appeared in the seventh century, but under "the weight of local cultural norms, values and practices", this liberation ethos has been modified out of all recognition. It is therefore important to tease out some sense of distinction between culturally based beliefs and customs and Islamic principles themselves. As well as the heterogeneous nature of the Australian Muslim population, Islam is interpreted and lived in diverse ways by Muslims. As this thesis illustrates, for some, being Muslim means demonstrating commitment to daily rituals and practices while for others, it is more of a cultural identity than a religious identity (Sav et al., 2010:412). Furthermore, the diversity amongst Muslim diaspora groups reinforces the fact that culture and identity are fluid, that they are continually negotiated, re-negotiated and transformed through internal contestation,

transnational processes and cross-cultural contact (Shachar, 2000:72). Thus Islam, as it is developing in Western democracies such as Australia today, needs to be studied through the observation of the everyday life of Muslim people rather than becoming diverted by the "global turmoil", stereotypes and simplistic rhetoric that has emerged in the wake of 9/11 (Marranci, 2008:67-68). Such investigations should set out to capture the everyday feelings and understandings of Muslim identity from the perspective of a diverse range of Muslims (Marranci, 2008:102,143-146). This thesis represents such an approach because it allows the voices of the Muslim women of this thesis to tell their own stories.

The generalised suspicion of Muslims has exacerbated the tensions surrounding multiculturalism in Australia. Some scholars claim that, since 9/11, opponents of multicultural policy have legitimised their criticisms of Islamic cultures and Muslim groups by employing a morally simplistic "I told you so" rhetoric (Noble & Poynting, 2003:109; Poynting & Noble, 2003). A number of commentators has also noted that Islamic cultures and groups are subtly or overtly represented as uncivilised and incompatible with, indeed hostile to, Western Judeo-Christian society and Australia's mainstream national identity.[32] Indeed, in the post 9/11 environment Muslim cultures are perceived not so much as desirable expressions of diversity in a multicultural nation, but as representative of cultural resistance on the part of a community unwilling to integrate and aiming instead to attack and transform Australian society. Under the intense public scrutiny of Islam, we therefore see a retreat from multiculturalism as such and a corresponding renewed emphasis on the fostering of 'multicultural integration', as discussed above. The new 'integrationism', an updated version of assimilation from the viewpoint of critics, underlines patriotic loyalty to a core identity and key set of national values.[33] Multicultural exclusion then "arises less through explicit othering" than through making

[32] See, for example, Colic-Peisker & Farquharson (2011:582); Fozdar (2011:621,630-631); Hage (2002:435); Jupp (2002:22,202,215); Marranci (2004, 2008) and Poynting & Mason (2007:81).
[33] See, for example, Colic-Peisker & Farquharson (2011:582); Hage (2002:426,432-434); Ho (2007:296); Poynting & Mason (2008:244) and Poynting & Perry (2007:151-154).

inclusion conditional on agreement regarding this core identity and set of national values (Humphrey, 2010:241 cited in Busbridge, 2013:463.

Positioned thus in a juxtaposed space of multicultural inclusion and exclusion, Muslims have become the objects of discipline and political management. Such political discipline and management is observable in the words of Christopher Bowen, Labor Minister of Immigration, who was quoted earlier. Asserting in 2011 that multiculturalism had "strengthened Australian society", he went on to state that "people who share respect for our democratic beliefs, laws and rights are welcome to join us as full partners with equal rights". Specifically in regard to Muslim integration, the subject of major debates in Europe, Bowen claimed that it was "counter-intuitive to assume Muslim migrants sought to change Australian society. The vast majority of the current group of migrants to Australia, many being Muslim, come here not to change our values but because of them" (paraphrased from the original in Maley & Aikman, 2011). In similar tone, prime minister Malcolm Turnbull responded to the shooting of the police employee in Sydney's West by a 15 year old Muslim boy with these words: "It is not compulsory to live in Australia, if you find Australian values are, you know, unpalatable, then there's a big wide world out there and people have got freedom of movement … Those who seek to gnaw away at that social fabric are not part of the Australian dream, they are not advancing the interests of our great country" (Henderson, 2015).

Thus while the term assimilation has faded, the idea of 'acculturation' in the sense of becoming 'culturally Australian' remains in federal multiculturalism discourse (Levey, 2011:21; McKinney & Ryan, 2007:18; Tate, 2009:113-119). Australian society remains largely hierarchal, with preference in most strata remaining with Anglo Australians (Jupp, 2011:578). For many Anglo groups, the rejection of Muslims and the fear of Islamic terrorism have been "juxtaposed with the fear of profound cultural and political change once Muslim minorities reach a critical size" (Colic-Peisker & Farquharson, 2011:583). As Marranci (2004:105) points out, anti-Muslim sentiment, or Islamophobia, is not an

unfounded prejudice against Islam as such. It is a hostility originating in the fear of the real consequences of multiculturalism for a previously largely mono-cultural society, especially the loss of power and cultural influence that may ensue for the social groups who have historically dominated it. Muslim immigrants are therefore expected to blend in, embrace the core culture's values including Western law and gender equality, learn English and use it in their mainstream dealings and at work (Dunn, 2005:34; Poynting & Mason, 2008:238 citing John Howard, 2006; Jupp, 2002:22). It is in the context of this assimilationist 'Australian multiculturalism', shot through with an imagined sense of threat posed by Muslims and their cultures to the culture of Anglo Christian Australia, that Muslim people live, work and raise their families.

With Muslims receiving the brunt of religious and cultural critique in this country, the promotion of what is effectively an assimilationist discourse threatens their right to freedom from religious and cultural intolerance, indeed their right to religious and cultural inclusion. For this reason, and as this chapter demonstrates in terms of the literature it employs, academics and others are working hard to challenge what they see as assimilationist rhetoric, founded in overstated fears regarding the widespread threat of Islamic terrorism, as well as the misrepresentation of the majority of Muslim communities aiming to destabilise the Australian nation.[34] Australian research (Al-Momani et al., 2010; Wise & Ali, 2008) has shown that, since settlement, many Muslims continue to experience barriers to social, political and employment participation based on ethnicity, the acquisition of English and lower socio-economic status. Research has also demonstrated that specific programmes, designed to enhance the political participation of Muslims, can unintentionally contribute to a sense of alienation because they give the impression that Muslim communities are especially "prone to deficits and in need of surveillance" (Al-Momani et al., 2010:4).

[34] See, for example, Busbridge (2013:459); Fozdar (2011:630); Kabir (2011:256); Mueller & Stewart (2012) and Poynting & Mason (2008:244).

Regarding the socio-economic wellbeing and social mobility of Muslims in multi-ethnic Australia, scholars note, with concern, the relatively marginal position of a significant proportion of Muslims, and the implications of this for social cohesion (Sav et al., 2010:411). In Sydney, where at least half of the Muslim population resides, the tendency is to cluster in low socio-economic and industrial areas (Dunn, 2005:30). In 2001, 43 per cent of Australian Muslims had a weekly income under $200 compared with 27 per cent for all Australians (Ho, 2007:291). By 2006, only 25 per cent of Muslim households had an above-average income, 40 per cent of Muslim children were living in poverty, the Muslim rate of home ownership was half the national average and Muslims recorded a 25 per cent unemployment rate compared to the national rate of 9 per cent (Hassan, 2010:575; Leeman & Reid, 2006:60). Focusing specifically on Lebanese Muslim households in Sydney, Betts and Healy (2006:28) found these to be much more likely to be large and poor compared to Lebanese Christian households and all households. While the second generation is achieving more than the first, it is still not doing very well compared to age related cohorts (Betts & Healy, 2006:39). As noted earlier, a sense of socio-economic alienation and the intergenerational transfer of relative disadvantage may contribute to the vulnerability of young Muslims to radicalisation. With the 2006 census recording almost 40 per cent of Muslims living in Australia to be younger than 20 years of age, this is a significant concern (Hassan, 2010:575). The issue is very much alive in the public domain, drawing the attention of the media, politicians and Muslim community leaders.

Paid employment is a crucially important aspect of the social and economic health of individuals and collectives. This is especially so for people who migrate to traditionally white Western countries from developing nations 'to build a better life' and thus become members, or are perceived to have become members, of a "visibly different" diaspora in those Western nations (Bouma & Brace-Govan, 2000:163; Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2007:59). Muslim immigrants from non-Western countries are part of this cohort, and Chapter 3, "Aspects of Identity Formation" presents a background picture of their historical and current participation in Australia's ethnically and culturally diverse

workforce. The discussion highlights the significant employment and socio-economic disparities that emerged between Muslims and other sections of the population, especially the dominant Anglo Australian group, from the early days of colonial settlement. These differences were, and continue to be, due to structural relations of domination and subordination between social groups with unequal access to power and occupational capital. They include popular prejudice and ethno-cultural stereotyping, economic recessions, objective human capital, including poor English language proficiency, low socio-economic status in terms of educational levels and employable skills, rigorous restrictions on the recognition of the overseas qualifications of immigrants, especially those from non-Western countries, and 'restrictive lives' in terms of Muslim women.

The picture of Muslims at work in multicultural Australia, in the context of what is essentially an assimilationist narrative, is a mixed one, but one that is marked by limited participation, significant disadvantage and widespread cultural alienation. The following section develops the discussion of all Muslim women's participation in the Australian labour force, and, again, the identification of complex obstacles will be part of the discussion.

Muslim Women and Employment in Australia

As part of the wider Islamic population, Muslim women have participated in Australia's paid workforce for many years. While some research has been conducted into the experiences of Muslim men in paid employment, which includes incidental reference to Muslim women workers (Dhami & Sheik, 2000; Sav et al., 2010, 2012, 2013; Sav & Harris, 2013), there is a shortage of specific research into Muslim women's participation in the Australian workforce. The small literature that does exist presents mixed results, but the overall picture leans towards limitation rather than flourishing (Akbarzadeh et al., 2009; HREOC, 2003; Imtoual, 2010; Nilan et al., 2012; Ouazzif, 2009). At 31 per cent, the paid workforce participation rate of Muslim women was almost half the 58 per cent recorded for non-Muslim women in the 2006 census (Sav & Harris, 2013:487). In the same census,

the unemployment rate for Muslim women was over 15 per cent compared to the mainstream rate of 5.3 per cent (Nilan et al., 2012:684). The following section presents a discussion of some of the complex interrelated elements that come into play when considering Muslim women's participation in Australia's paid work force. It will begin with a more general picture and later narrow the discussion to focus on tertiary educated Muslim women who work, or aspire to work, in the professional and corporate sectors of the paid workforce.

It is important to gain some sense of differentiation between immigrants and refugees when investigating the profile of Muslim women and paid work in multicultural Australia. In recent years, immigrants from Asia are more likely to come to Australia under the Department of Immigration and Citizenship's skilled or business migration categories, while immigrants from the Middle East and Africa tend to be refugees (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2007:61). Amongst the Muslims in these two groups, the 2006 census shows that immigrants are doing better, with 35 per cent of female Muslim skilled immigrants in employment (63 per cent for males), compared to only 6 per cent of female Muslim refugees (25 per cent for males) (Nilan et al., 2012:685). In terms of Muslim refugee women, there is research to suggest that they tend to merge into a common level from the point of view of the resident Anglo Australian population, with complex differences regarding their backgrounds (rural/urban, poor/affluent, uneducated/educated) ignored. This perception is exacerbated by the fact that most Muslim refugee women are 'confined to the domestic sphere' once settled in Australia (Kamalkhani, 2001:111). A scarcity of social and cultural capital amongst refugee Muslim women, especially the finer points of modes of communication and rules of conduct, as well as weak ties with people outside the ethnic community which could facilitate connection between job seekers and employment opportunities, affects the refugee job seeker's ability to overcome institutional obstacles (Granovetter:1974 cited in Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2007:78). Employment opportunities that do exist, especially for the non-English speaking and poorly educated, are often restricted to casual 'female work' such as home sewing,

unskilled factory work or voluntary assistance in ethnic communities. As discussed in Chapter 3, this was frequently the employment situation for the mothers of the participants of this research project.

Not all immigrant and refugee Muslim women who hold tertiary qualifications obtained overseas, are able to aspire to professional or corporate employment, and instead remain at home to take on the full responsibility for domestic life once settled in Australia. The explanation for this situation indicates a lack of choice on the part of these women. As noted above in relation to male and female Muslims, the professional qualifications of immigrants from non-Western countries especially, are not readily recognised in Australia. Jupp (2002:147) argues that Australia's demanding process for the accreditation of qualifications, as well as the requirement for immigrants to have some form of experience in Australian work contexts, sets up a type of institutional discrimination. This situation is compounded by the fact that refugees and immigrants do not always arrive with adequate documentation and references in relation to professional qualifications (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2007:78). First generation Muslim women especially are obliged to upgrade their qualifications through study, which comes at a cost. By the time they do qualify they will be competing in a job market generally geared, as they understand it, towards younger employees (Kamalkhani, 2001:111). Thus, those women who have experienced high status as members of the educated workforce in their home nations may find that comparable levels of social standing in Australia are difficult, even impossible, to secure. Moreover, as noted above, complex ethnic and class differences within and between Muslim diaspora groups are somewhat obscured from the perspective of the Anglo Australian population. This situation may engender a sense of social 'come down', decreased occupational recognition, loss of workforce agency and heightened domestic isolation for Muslim immigrant and refugee women, especially of the first generation.

Traditional Islamic preference tends to be oriented towards a 'protected environment', interpreted by critics as a 'restricted environment', for working Muslim women. As with

the Christian and Hindu religions, Islam is structured by powerful patriarchal cultures (Dhami & Sheikh, 2000; Rozario, 2006:369,378). From the patriarchal Muslim perspective, education and employment may be permissible for women but should not compromise the customary primacy of their roles as wife and mother.[35] The picture of the Muslim woman who is required to put family duties ahead of personal aspirations feeds into the widely held belief in the West that Muslim women face oppressive conditions (Hilsdon & Rozario, 2006:332; Saeed, 2003:157-159). However, Saeed (2003:176) argues that many neo-modernist Muslim women do not subscribe to this view. They point to the positive statistics for Muslim female education and post-school qualifications, and the high percentage of Muslim women who participate in a wide range of professional and technical careers. The participants in this research fall into this category, however, there is a consensus amongst researchers that most Australian Muslim communities in the West continue to place the primary responsibility of paid work to provide for the family on men, such that employment constitutes a primary basis of male Muslim identity.[36] While many Muslim women do participate in paid work, they are usually expected to give priority to their home-making responsibilities. Chapter 3 outlines how the participants of this research manage the tensions between family commitment and employment responsibilities with the obvious support of their husbands. An analysis of my field work data indicates that whilst many families, in particular, participants' mothers, opposed their daughters' involvement in tertiary education and employment in the paid workforce, once they married and children arrived, the same mothers took on the responsibility of their daughters' child caring. Another important factor in favour of the married participant with children being employed in the paid workforce, is the high priority placed on home ownership and the necessity of meeting monthly mortgage payments.

[35] See Al-Mannai (2010:89); Basit (1996:7); Jones (1993b:119); Omar & Allen (1996:38) and Ouazzif (2009:17-18).

[36] See, for example, (Dhami & Sheikh (2000); Sav et al. (2010:419-421); Sav & Harris (2013:487); Syed (2008); Syed et al. (2005) and Saeed (2003:173).

Similar to the concerns of Anglo Australian majority women who are employed, many Muslim women workers are likely to negotiate significant tensions arising through the competing demands of domestic life and work life. In this regard, research into work-life balance among Australian Muslims conducted by Sav et al. (2010; 2012 and 2013) and Sav & Harris (2013) has found work-to-life conflict, that is, conflict arising from the intrusion of work demands into family life, to be more prevalent than life-to-work conflict, and that it was these job demands, rather than work hours, which contribute most to the work-to-life tensions. For the Australian Muslim male participants of their research, the balancing of work, family and religious obligations is "the defining aspect" of their experience in the workplace and achieving this balance significantly influences the type of occupations they choose (Sav et al., 2010:409). Nevertheless, work-to-life tensions are a weaker negative predictor of job satisfaction in Muslim men compared to Muslim women. Predictably, factors such as being married, number of dependents, employment status of spouse and time taken to fulfil family-related roles, were found to have more impact on work-to-life conflict among Muslim women than Muslim men (Sav & Harris, 2013:490-491).

As with other social groups, religious involvement provides many Muslims with a range of physical and psychological resources that make a positive contribution to achieving an effective balance between the conflicting demands of employment and domestic life (Sav et al., 2013:683-684). One such resource is the sense of meaningfulness, purpose and commitment that can arise from contributing to the social division of labour (Sav et al., 2010:409,421; Sav & Harris, 2013:488). Other research has located a sense of pride and satisfaction among a significant proportion of Muslim workers who arrived in Australia as refugees, that originates partly in the ability to send financial remittances to relatives in need in the home country and elsewhere (Fozdar & Torezani, 2008:53). Some of this impetus may be related to the Islamic requirement to 'give alms' to the less well off. Relatedly, it seems many Muslim women do experience their religion more as a benefit than a burden that interferes with their ability to complete workplace and home based tasks. Part of this may be attributable to Muslim women workers perceiving work as a

form of worship that contributes positively to a sense of religious purpose, as well as to job satisfaction (Sav & Harris, 2013:486; Syed, 2008). Religious and cultural approaches to 'accepting one's lot in life' can also be drawn upon to mitigate discrimination and dampen the effects of disadvantage on wellbeing (Fozdar & Torezani, 2008:53).

The situation of working Muslim women in multicultural Australia is made more complex by the emergence of Islamic revivalism. The rise of Islamist movements in formerly colonised societies can be broadly understood as a critical assertion of a self-determined cultural identity (Othman, 2006:339-340; Rozario, 2006:369) while in the West, 're-Islamisation' can be conceived of as an individualist rather than collectivist oriented response to the transition between the first and second diaspora generations (Humphrey, 2010:205). It is possible that the need to reformulate what it means to be Muslim in the West "is a logical consequence of the end of the social authority of religion due to westernisation and globalisation" (Roy, 2004:21-22). The revivalist movement is seeing increasing numbers of young urban well-educated Muslim women (re)asserting a traditional Islamic identity at work and elsewhere. Rozario (2006:368-369) argues that Muslim women's (re)conversion to Islam combines modernising elements with a strong rejection of the Western model of modernity, what Hilsdon and Rozario (2006:331-332) call "the Western siege of Muslims and Islam", including the widely held view that all Muslim women are oppressed compared to their Western sisters.

Further explanations for Islamic revivalism among women lie in the maintenance of traditional class boundaries in Muslim communities, women's subjection within new modes of male-dominated identity politics and conversely, the opportunity for Muslim women to exercise agency (Rozario, 2006:369,377). The public declaration of Islamic identity, as opposed to a particular ethnic identity, on the part of Muslim women in Western nations may also constitute a strategy for the realisation of certain rights to do with marital choice, poverty alleviation, freedom from domestic violence and, importantly, education and employment (Brown, 2006:417-428). Moreover, Islam plays an important

role in facilitating the development of social networks for immigrant Muslim women to replace family and friendship support lost through emigration from the country of their birth. A "coherent meaning system" provided by religious belief can potentially act as a resilience factor to mitigate the negative effects of prejudice on wellbeing (Fozdar & Torezani, 2008:53). In addition, a 'shared Islamic rhetoric' can help to address potential conflicting viewpoints by accentuating the Muslim perspective that is held in common, including collective understandings of dress codes for Muslim women in the diaspora (Marranci, 2008:126). Overall, (re)conversion to Islam by young second and third generation women in Australia is a fluid ongoing experience rather than 'a decided thing', a complex process deeply embedded in "personal biographies and cultural frameworks" (Turner, 2010:51-52).

It may seem somewhat paradoxical to claim that the assertion or reassertion of traditional Islamic identity is one way for Muslim women to further their civic rights, political engagement and educational and employment options. Indeed, in promoting their anti-multiculturalism pro-nationalism agenda, as discussed in an earlier section, conservative politicians in Australia have appropriated the Western belief in the oppression of Muslim women. They have engaged in what Ho (2007:290) calls a "paternalistic nationalism" by condemning traditional Islamic cultures as "inherently misogynist" and therefore a threat to the 'national belief' in women's equality.[37] But a dominant and submissive model, partly resulting from an era of essentialist approaches to the study of Muslims, over-simplifies the dynamics of gender in Muslim societies (Marranci, 2008:122). The portrayal of Muslim and other minority ethnic women as passive victims of patriarchal oppression tends to negate the power of Muslim women's voices and restrict the spaces within which they might be heard. Paradoxically, an Australian multiculturalism that tolerates some of the more supposed illiberal features of Muslim diaspora cultures is one that potentially supports Muslim women's engagement in emancipatory activities and debates on their own behalf.

[37] See also Dwyer (1998:53), Ghobadzadeh (2010:30), Hussein (2010:159-160) and Poynting & Mason (2008:230).

Ghobadzadeh's (2010) investigation into the Canadian and Australian Sharia law controversies represents an illuminating example of this phenomenon. In the discourse regarding the adoption of Sharia law, Canada's multiculturalist approach encouraged significant participation by Muslim women compared to the Australian approach, which tended to shut down debate all together. The point is that, although the request to adopt Sharia law in both nations was eventually denied, the increased participation of Muslim women in Canada resulted in the opening up of new political and employment space for them, than happened in Australia. And ironically, it was Canadian Muslim women themselves who played a large part in defeating the instigation of Sharia in their adopted countries by activating strong political movements and offering effective rationales through the media. Ghobadzadeh (2010:309) proposes that this kind of "multiculturalism serves Muslim women's interests through facilitating their long-term civic and political incorporation" and, it might be added, their increased participation in a variety of workplace contexts, including those requiring tertiary educational qualifications. The growing agency of Muslim women is likely to reveal more of the heterogeneity of their communities, the nuances and complexities involved in the differences between them, and thus help to ensure that these nuances are taken into account in researching and evaluating multicultural policy in Australia (Krayem, 2010:123-125).

Indeed, despite a widely held public image of subservience and restriction, there is no reason to suggest that Muslim women are not participating in Australian public, educational, sporting and paid work spheres.[38] Regarding the workplace, Ouazzif's 2009 empirical research into the experiences of veiled Muslim women identified a wide range of occupational choices amongst her participants, including corporate administration management, construction management, banking, library work, teaching, biochemistry and pharmacy. The subjects professed largely to feelings of success and pride through their participation in the professional workforce and public sphere. Furthermore,

[38] See recent research reported by Akbarzadeh et al. (2009), Al-Momani et al. (2010), Hussein (2010), Imtoual (2010), McCue (2008), McCue & Kourouche (2010), Ouazzif (2009) and Wise & Ali (2008).

although it comes with the possibility that non-Muslim colleagues and clients might hold misconceptions, both voiced and unvoiced, together with the media's project of an image of subservient Muslim women, Ouazzif's study concludes that the wearing of the Islam-identifying veil was a mostly empowering aspect of the female Muslim workers' identities and that the veil did not hinder the ability to carry out professional roles (Ouazzif, 2009:28-29).[39] Indeed, a 2003 report published by the Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission in the wake of the 9/11 terrorism event found identifiably Muslim women, employed by both Muslim and non-Muslim employers, reporting positive experiences of inclusion at work. Some employers were reported to have made extra efforts to accommodate the special work and social requirements of their Muslim employees so that they could participate fully (HREOC, 2003:63-64). As will be seen in the following chapters, in some instances, the HREOC report compares favourably to the experiences provided by the participants of this research project, on other occasions, it does not.

Within this overview of Muslim women's participation in the Australian workforce, it is the participation of those who hold tertiary level educational qualifications that is of special interest as far as this research is concerned. Overall, British research (Afshar,1989:261; Ahmad, 2001:137; Basit, 1996:1); Tyrer & Ahmad, 2006) shows that diaspora communities and families are increasingly viewing higher education as a necessary asset in gaining and maintaining prestigious employment and thus higher social status in their adopted Western countries. Indeed, in terms of the cultural capital and associated social mobility potentially facilitated through educational achievement and career success, Basit (1996:12) highlights the "phenomenal aspirations" held by Muslim girls and women. Similarly, 2001 Australian research conducted by Yasmeen in Perth found that, while Muslim women viewed the settlement needs of their communities in a holistic manner, they consistently prioritised education and employment along with English language training, availability of halal food and recognition by Australians. Furthermore, it was the under-45 years

[39] See Chapter 5 for a detailed account of the participants who identify with their religious belief by veiling.

demographic of Muslim women who, compared with older Muslim women, were most likely to rank education as "very important" (Yasmeen, 2001:77,88).

This kind of ambition is likely to be driving increases in Muslim women's educational and professional achievement in Australia. As referred to in the introductory chapter, official figures do show that Australian Muslims, including women, are more likely to be attending a university relative to non-Muslim peers (Asmar, 2001:157). Furthermore, the 2006 Australian census revealed that 17.5 per cent of Muslim women aged 18 years and above held a bachelor's degree or higher, a figure almost equivalent to the 18 per cent of the total 18-plus female population who hold such qualifications (McCue & Kourouche, 2010:136). With the support of their families, the participants have successfully entered the jobs marketplace and, as the analytical chapters of the thesis reveal in detail, many participants understood that adding further tertiary qualifications to those already attained, is an effective way of better positioning themselves to compete with Anglo Australian women for professional jobs. Overall, through their acquisition of higher educational qualifications and thus their increasing presence in Australian professional and public realms, Muslim women are dispelling dominant prejudices regarding their lack of intelligence, assertion and ability to 'fit in' (Asmar, 2001:157). As well as challenging stereotyped preconceptions, such women could potentially act as role models for other Muslim women seeking a professional or corporate career (Tyrer & Ahmad, 2006:6).[40]

Nevertheless, the educational and employment aspirations of Muslim women in the West are not without significant tensions. The juxtaposition between familial and work responsibilities, discussed earlier, highlights the vexed issue of 'culturally appropriate education' (Clyne, 2001). The desire to produce 'good Muslim daughters and wives' who at the same time achieve 'good Western educational qualifications' and hold down 'good professional and corporate jobs' is a significant tension, identified early on by British research (Afshar, 1989; Ahmad, 2001). This current research project has uncovered many

[40] The significance of 'role models' is referred to in Chapters 6 and 7.

such dilemmas, including maternal fears that Australian Muslim men might not want to marry 'over-educated' daughters, thus necessitating an overseas search for a husband. Furthermore, while the notion of feminine modesty appears as a norm in many cultures, it is a particularly powerful and explicit value in Islamic religious doctrine and many Muslim cultural systems. In this regard, research in the field of emotional labour suggests that there are significant emotional dilemmas for working Muslim women between two sets of competing expectations. These are the emotional requirements of personal female modesty such as inhibition, restraint, shame and fear, and the emotional claims of modern transnational corporations that may require "bruising, bold, assertive or seductive" behaviour (Syed et al., 2005:150,163-164). This thesis identifies, and discusses, the multiple facets of concern the participants face and the need to balance these complex effects of educational and employment choices. It highlights the notion that tertiary educated Muslim women in work or seeking work are continually negotiating and renegotiating their personal, cultural and religious identities and behaviours. These findings are established over the ensuing chapters and the conclusions presented in Chapter 7.

As will be discussed in the forthcoming chapters, overt modes of Islamic expression can, and do, have restrictive effects on Australian Muslim women's 'employability' and workforce participation, particularly their participation in the corporate and professional sectors. Of these modes, the veil is probably *the* key symbol of visible Islamic adherence and thus one of the most pressing issues for Muslim women workers in the West. As noted earlier, veiling is in fact a historical cultural and religious practice involving wide variations of attachment to Islamic identity along agrarian/urban, ethnic, cultural and class lines, made more complex by a diversity of migrant and transnational processes. For example, many immigrant Muslim women originate from developing countries, such as Iran and Malaysia, where veiling traditionally improves access to employment, or conversely from Bangladesh, where veiling can prove to be an obstacle (Hilsdon & Rozario, 2006:332; Othman, 2006:339-342; Rozario, 2006:378). The diversity of veiling practices in

modern day Australia is captured in the modes of veiling to be seen amongst its Muslim women, including the participants in this research. Chapter 5 undertakes a comprehensive investigation of veiling practices at work through the eyes of the participants.

As well as the obligation or desire to wear traditional forms of veiling at work, scholars and researchers[41] highlight other issues for Muslim women in employment such as locating suitable venues for salat (prayers), which should be undertaken at set times, including standard business hours, and which may also require movement and the recitation of verses. There are also concerns related to feeling obliged to attend religiously inappropriate functions such as staff Christmas parties and Friday night drinks where alcohol and non-halal food is likely to be served, and the need to minimise close contact with male colleagues. Indeed, in Australia there is research to suggest that, particularly after events such as 9/11, the Bali bombings and the Cronulla riots, Muslim women, while demonstrating resilience and dedication, experience substantial barriers as jobseekers (Imtoual, 2010; Nilan et al., 2012).[42] Some female Muslim workers have faced prejudice or prohibition regarding forms of veiling and observing salat at work (Imtoual, 2010:61-65; McCue, 2008:6; Sav & Harris, 2013:487 drawing on HREOC, 2003), while others worry that they will become the subjects of bias or subtle discrimination if they do wear the veil and thus become 'identifiably Muslim' (Imtoual, 2010:61-65; Ouazzif, 2009:28; Saeed, 2003:182).

It would appear that employer pressure on Muslim women to desist from dressing in the veil while at work is especially acute in the kinds of Australian service industries where contact with clients is an indispensable aspect of the work (Imtoual, 2010:63, drawing on

[41] See Al-Mannai (2010:89), Colic-Peisker & Tilbury (2007), Fozdar & Torezani (2008:39), Hilsdon & Rozario (2006:332), HREOC (2003:60-64), Imtoual (2010:64), McCue (2008:6), McKinney & Ryan (2007:27), Nilan et al. (2012:690), Ouazzif (2009:36-37,61), Poynting & Perry (2007:152), Rozario (2006:368-369), Sav & Harris (2013:7) and Saeed (2003:182).

[42] In the American context, researchers Ghumman and Ryan (2013) have produced compelling evidence of job seeking related discrimination against what they call Hijabis, that is, Muslim women who wear the headscarf.

HREOC, 2003:62). In the professional and corporate spheres of law, medicine, and the media, employers and colleagues tended to see Muslim women as less intellectually capable or professionally committed compared with other staff, if they were identifiably Muslim, that is, if they wore traditional Islamic dress (Imtoual, 2010:62-63). Imtoual (2010:63) uncovered evidence that some young Muslim women felt unable to wear a veil and, at the same time, freely pursue their chosen career paths. She also found that all the veil-wearing women interviewed in her research worked for Muslim employers. In contrast to the findings of this thesis, Imtoual claimed to have discovered a common trend, that is, that women who are identifiably Muslim mostly work in Muslim owned businesses. Imtoual goes so far as to suggest that when employed in non-Muslim owned workplaces, Muslim women who normally wear a veil are more likely to remove it while at work (Imtoual, 2010:64). Chapter 5 is specifically devoted to an in depth analysis of the importance that is placed on appearance in the workplace as voiced by the Muslim women participants in this research.

One factor is certain in summarising the picture of Muslim women workers, especially tertiary educated Muslim women who work, or aspire to work, in the professional and corporate sectors in Australia. This is that Australian Muslim women's religious practices and attachment to Islamic identity are variable, influenced by multilayered national, transnational, ethnic, cultural, class and personal factors. Furthermore, the ways in which their Muslim identities influence their employment situations is equally diverse. Little empirical research has been undertaken into tertiary educated Muslim women in the labour force. This thesis sets out to fill this gap. In giving voice to the participants themselves, it is able to offer new insights into the experiences and quality of intercultural relationships from the perspective of tertiary educated Muslim women workers from a range of ethnic, cultural and class backgrounds.

The Importance of Work in a Multicultural Context

Before closing the chapter, the question must be asked as to why this research specifically focuses on Muslim women's experiences in the realm of professional and corporate work in multicultural contexts. The answer lies in the fact that, as Wise et al. (2010:2) argue, "the workplace is a key site for multiculturalism". It is within the context of paid work that intercultural encounter and mixing is an enforced everyday reality. To complete the tasks of work, employees are required to engage with one another on an ongoing basis. These routine interactions during work hours, and also in the staff lunchroom and at social functions, invariably involve the negotiation of difference, including the perception of difference based on race, ethnicity, culture and religion (Lindén & Nyberg, 2009:42). As Wise et al. (2010:1-2) also point out, the negotiation of inter-ethnic and transcultural engagement at work is complex. Collegial and hierarchical relationships interplay with 'the rules at work', which in turn impact on intercultural relations. Furthermore, perceptions of the 'Other' at work are shaped by the interplay between micro level everyday workplace factors *and* wider macro level social structures and national identity, identified in the earlier sections of this chapter.

At the micro level, the prosaic interaction between work colleagues from different ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds may deepen over time. It may evolve from superficial mingling to the building of meaningful conversations and 'multicultural friendships'. Indeed, the workplace as a context for the development of community, camaraderie and friendship is well established.[43] While people tend to form friendship bonds with those similar to themselves, Wise et al. (2010:4) suggest that difference may also be an important "starting point for the establishment of closer relationships" in multicultural work contexts. Moreover, colleagues come together in common tasks and specific projects, as well as facing common issues such as neo-liberal agendas aimed at the intensification of work (Vogl, 2009). This sense of shared situation may also engender the

[43] See, for example, Cavendish (1982), Deyo (1980), Fine (1986), Hochschild (1997), Linden & Nyberg (2009) and Vogl (2004 & 2009).

strengthening of cross-cultural relationships (Wise et al., 2010:3).[44] Paid work thus provides an important context for the development of intercultural contact and, if things go well, stronger two way social bonds and a sense of community. The experience of workers in the multicultural workforce therefore matters in terms of developing a socially inclusive multicultural nation to which all residents feel some sense of attachment.

The realm of paid employment is significant for human life in terms of both collective and individual integration. In terms of collective integration, paid work is the basis of Western producer nations in which the requirements of citizenship, economic contribution and social utility are inextricably interwined (Anna, 2014:80, citing Lamont, 2000:26). At the individual level, 'one's job' is a core characteristic of social identity, contributing to a sense of independence and wellbeing in the ordinary world.[45] Colic-Peisker (2011:650) maintains that both Anglo Australians and those of non-English-speaking gackgrounds "see their occupation as a considerably more important source of identity than nationality". This finding highlights the significance of civic, achieved and inclusive aspects of identifications rather than those acquired through birthplace and circumstance. Especially for the well-educated immigrant, the ability to attain "employment commensurate to one's qualifications and expectations" engenders the formation of social networks, a quality of life and the maintenance of the social status enjoyed before emigration (Colic-Peisker, 2011:639).

Conclusion

The chapter, as the second of the introductory chapters, has provided an informative overview of Muslims, and in particular Muslim women, and paid work in multicultural Australia. As an outline of the concept of multiculturalism, and noting its emergence as a way of addressing increasing migration from the post-colonial developing world to Western countries such as Australia, it has provided a background to understanding the

[44] Wise et al. (2010) study is referred to again in Chapter 7.
[45] See Honneth (2010:224); Nilan et al (2010:682; Svendsen (2008:2); Vallas (2012:6); Zurn (2010:16).

experiences of the participants in the realm of paid work. The chapter has illustrated how Australian multiculturalism is a disputed, and muddled discourse, set of political issues and institutional practices that was initiated by the 1970s Whitlam government, strengthened during the 1980s and virtually dismissed as federal policy by the Howard government of the 1990s and early 2000s amidst calls for a return to nationalism. At the same time, concerns were raised by various political voices regarding multiculturalism's tendencies towards simplistic responses to the antipathies that can emerge in culturally diverse communities, the essentialisation of ethno-cultural identities, the lending of tacit support to inequality in immigrant groups, the obscuring of White 'settler' dominance and conversely, a sense of decline in certain segments of the Anglo Australian populace. In summary it is argued that multiculturalism, re-emerging as a significant national debate in the later 2000s following increased global Islamic terrorism, is not, and has never been, fully established as a national norm in Australia.

Muslim communities have been caught up in this re-emergence of the controversy over multiculturalism in this country. The chapter has argued that Muslim identity is now a meaningful predictor of prejudice, at both structural and everyday levels. And it is Muslim women, in particular, who have become frequent objects of abuse through the visibility of their veiling and dressing practices. Islamophobia, that is, a fear of Muslims, is largely based on the homogenisation of Muslim identities, a practice that ignores the heterogeneity inherent in the Muslim diaspora in Australia. In the larger picture, the controversy about Muslim groups and their cultural influence can be understood as revealing the implicit nature of the reservations regarding multiculturalism. These reservations centre on the gradual decline of power and cultural authority that multiculturalism implies for the considered 'original' Anglo Australians who have historically taken a pre-eminent position in Australian society. Thus, a revised federal focus on 'multicultural integration' means, in effect, that immigrants from non-Western nations, especially Muslim immigrants, are expected to become 'culturally Australian'.

In terms of Muslims and employment within the context of this essentially assimilationist national norm, the situation, while nuanced and complex, is characterised by pervasive cultural estrangement, limited participation and structural disadvantage in comparison with the wider Australian population. This matters because enduring socio-economic disadvantage and alienation experienced by particular ethno-cultural communities, in this case Muslim minority communities, threatens their right to 'a good life' as well as the cohesion of the society. The future effectiveness of Australian multiculturalism partly hinges on supporting minority groups, such as Muslims, to secure a job commensurate to abilities and to participate in the workforce free of the prejudicial gaze. The thesis's broader aim is to further and deepen our understanding of the negotiation of religious and cultural difference at work, and the broader impacts of this phenomena on the civic and political incorporation of Muslims, in particular Muslim women, and thus on multicultural relations in Australia.

In its later section, this chapter has brought a lens to the multidimensional elements that come into play when considering Muslim women's integration in Australia's paid labour force, especially those who are tertiary educated. It has argued that the participation of first and second generation Muslim females is more limited in comparison with the male Muslim workforce and with all Australian women workers. Furthermore, Muslim women workers are required to continuously negotiate their identities and behaviours to address significant social, religious and cultural tensions. Some of these tensions include a deficiency of differentiation between refugee and immigrant Muslim women and indeed a lack of recognition of the heterogeneity of the female Muslim population. Muslim women workers also negotiate significant differences between familial, community and cultural expectations regarding the traditional Muslim woman's domestic roles versus Western career ambitions, personal aspirations, and the requirements of employment organisations in relation to overt modes of Islamic expression such as veiling. Regarding the influence of the Islamic revivalism movement, it is established that religious involvement provides many Muslim women workers with significant physical and

psychological resources. Despite a widely held public image of subservience, the participation of Muslim women in public, political, educational and employment spheres is on the increase. This indicates that Muslim women are attempting to pursue tertiary education and work careers in the professional and corporate arenas, as necessary routes to inclusion, vocational fulfillment, high status occupational recognition and increased social prestige.

In investigating these questions, this research turns to the everyday world of paid employment. It invites and presents the voices of the participants themselves working in Sydney's workplace environments and researches their experiences and expectations as tertiary educated Australian Muslim women. The following chapter researches aspects of the participants' identity formation, how the participants interpret their identity and how they present their identity to their workplace environments, as both first and second generation tertiary educated Australian Muslim women and daughters of first generation Muslim immigrant parents. The chapter observes that, for many parents, an understanding of being faithful to their Islamic beliefs means doing what was customary in their countries of origin. This situation, in many instances, is a cause for concern, especially for participants whose parents believe that educating daughters is a waste of time.

Chapter 3

Aspects of Identity Formation

> We do have our own identity. We are still true to our religion and God, we have our limits as to what we can do, but we are not out of reach.
>
> (Fara, aged 27 years, first generation veiled participant of Fijian-Indian origin).

This chapter discusses 'identity', with its multiplicity of practices and interpretations - how the participants interpret the considered "identity of difference" (De Monteflores, 1986:2) they present to their workplace and the experiences they encounter as a result of their Muslim identity. It introduces three important aspects that help shape their identity and demonstrates how these aspects influence their identity formation, both as daughters of first generation Muslim immigrant parents and first and second generation tertiary educated Australian Muslim women.

The first aspect chosen is the internal influences of being the daughters of immigrant parents. This aspect refers to the identity that is shaped by cultural family values and extended family influences as many participants have grandparents living with their family and it is not unusual for married siblings and their children to also reside in the family home, or live close by. This internal aspect discusses the dynamics of family relationships and the importance placed on family membership and family attachments, because, in the minds of many Muslims, being faithful to Islamic teachings means doing what was customary in their countries of origin (Ramadan, 2004:139). It explores how the role of family values helps shape the identity of participants and, as a result, their experiences

and future aspirations. Finally, this aspect demonstrates how family understanding of how a Muslim daughter should behave, influences the formation of the participants' identity.

The second aspect of identity formation is the role the external community plays. This aspect encompasses the influences of the Muslim community, or community of believers, and understood as 'umma'. This aspect studies the impact of the community on the participants' families, and as a consequence, the participants and their identity formation. In this instance, the community's focus is the expectations of female behavior, appearance and attitudes.

I have chosen the external influences of growing up as Australians as the third aspect of identity formation. This aspect illustrates how some participants and their families are in accord with family understandings of female behavior, whilst for other participants, these understandings cause family conflicts. The situation is addressed where some participants find it necessary to negotiate with their parents to allow them to proceed with tertiary education which clashes with the traditional family belief, maintained by some participants' parents, that education is wasted on daughters. This 'conflict' would be unheard of in previous generations of female family membership and, as first and second generation Australians, the influences on the formation of the participants' identities are in sharp contrast to those experienced by their mothers. Correspondingly, growing up as members of immigrant families, the experiences of the participants are vastly different to those of their white Australian female contemporaries.

Each chosen aspect has a phenomenological focus that acknowledges that each participant is endowed with a lifestyle that has been influenced by past experiences (see Cavallaro, 2001:99) and that their identity is multi-faceted and continually forming and changing. Each aspect illustrates how the formation of the participants' identity is influenced by their experiences of being Australian, being knowledgeable of Australian culture whilst, at the same time, being daughters of extended immigrant families with a

culture, language and religious belief that labels them as the Other, the minority 'different' as stipulated by the white majority population. As a result, this chapter introduces the argument that, because of the multiple facets of this amalgamation, the participants are demonstrating a new form of Australian female Muslim identity.

The result of a mass immigration that occurred in the mid-20th century led to an unprecedented diversification of Australia's population (Humphrey, 2001:35) because the new arrivals were racially, ethnically, linguistically and religiously heterogeneous. The participants of this research represent this diversity of social and geographical backgrounds. They are now tertiary educated first and second generation Australian Muslim women who are employed for monetary reward. The majority are negotiating their "identity of difference" (De Monteflores, 1986:2) in the secular workplace, in an environment where, in many cases, evidence of "socially acceptable" forms of old-fashioned racism is the practice (Saroglou et al, 2009:419) and where the pluralities of Islamic culture in Australia are often misunderstood or misinterpreted by Australians, in many instances, to the disadvantage of Australian Muslims.

Whilst some participants believe that their religious belief dominates their identity, others describe their religious belief as a private matter and other strands of identity play a part. On some occasions, religious belief influences how identity is portrayed, and, on other occasions, other facets dominate. As highlighted previously, all the participants maintain, in one way or another, that whilst their identity is multifaceted and influenced by past and present experiences, an emotional commitment to their belief is evident, even for those participants who do not outwardly demonstrate their belief. As Marranci rightly points out, emotions and feelings are central to the development of a personal identity and that "feelings", or as Marranci, quoting Damasio, describes them, "the delicately shaped machinery of our imagination" then moves freely to a coherence between the individual and his or her environment (2008:11,97,99).

Identity

As disciplines over the ages have found, the task of providing an understanding of 'identity' is far from simple (Marranci, 2008:89; Jenkins 2014:28), not only is 'identity' fluid, it is continually being formulated and influenced by life course trajectories and individual life experiences (Bhatti, 2011:82; Brah, 1996:243; Hall, 1990:1997)[46]. Noble (2009:875) citing Noble & Tabar, 2000 informs us that forms of identity amongst all peoples can be "fluid, hybrid, shifting from place to place and varying in degrees of intensity and attachment". Thus, providing an understanding of an Australian Muslim identity, and locating an 'identity' the participants of this research bring to their place of employment, is equally problematic. Each may lay claim to a mosaic of identities of belonging that are prioritised as the occasion demands - for example, a female of a certain age, a wife, a mother, a daughter, a sister, a daughter of immigrants, a friend, a member of the general public, a representative of a minority entity in Australia and a member of the Other. They are also first or second generation tertiary educated Australian Muslim women who are in paid employment in Sydney's workplace environments.

The further complicating factor in locating an Australian Muslim identity is that Australian Muslims are culturally and theologically pluralistic (Humphrey, 2001:35; Dunn, 2004:346), primarily because of the immigration policies that brought them together from diverse cultural, linguistic and national backgrounds (Rozario, 1998:654). Life experiences, often involving the upheaval of leaving their homeland, have also shaped turning points in Australian Muslims' everyday lives and the formation of their identities (see Atchison et al., 2007:7; Jenkins, 2014:3). As a result, Australian Islam has a flexibility of interpretations and related practices that span across geographical and cultural spaces (Humphrey, 2001:3). Because of these diversities, Australian Muslims today comprise a population

[46] See also Marranci, 2008:92,94; Sökefeld, 1999:422).

who speak with a variety of languages and represent a range of cultural, economic, educational, sectarian and ideological positions (Yasmeen, 2008:22).

Differences in social backgrounds, degrees of piety, affiliations with Shi'a or the Sunni branches of Islam with their respective national and traditional needs, all add further complicating factors. For example, a Shi'a Muslim of Iranian origin living in Sydney might have absolutely nothing in common with a Sunni Muslim from Turkey living in Melbourne. As Modood illustrates, the category "Muslim" in Australia is as diverse as the category of "Christian" (2003:100 cited in Aitchison et al., 2007:2), or indeed, any other religious category. Not only do they form a religious minority group in Australia, but Muslims represent a complicated intersection between religion, ethnicity and nationality. Waleed Aly has remarked "the entity called the 'Australian Muslim community', that so regularly makes an appearance in the Australian public conversation, is in fact a horrible political fiction" (Aly, 2007:199 cited in Akbarzadeh & Roose, 2011:319). Thus, Muslims are not simply adherents of a religious belief, they constitute a group of people who represent a mosaic of religious interpretations, ethnicity and cultures. Given this highly diverse nature of Muslim communities in Western contexts and as Akbarzadeh and Roose (2001: 320) argue, "it is well nigh impossible for one Muslim voice to represent the hopes and aspirations of all Muslims as a collective entity".[47] To not recognise these mosaics of interpretations detracts from the other influences that make up identity.

Adding another interesting aspect to the mosaic of an Australian Muslim's identity is that Islam has long been associated with Australia and that rather than being considered relatively recent arrivals, Muslims have lived and worked in Australia since the time of the first European fleet in 1788. Originally, the number of those who identified as Muslim was small and included seasonal Macassar fishermen in Arnhem Land, Malay pearl divers in Western Australia and the Northern Territory who later took jobs as labourers, cooks, pump-hands, boat builders and wharf workers, as well as sailors, servants and convicts

[47] This concern is referred to again in Chapter 3, Subheading "Umma".

associated with early British colonial settlement (Cleland, 1993:105; Cleland, 2001:12-15; Jones, 1993a:31-48).

Beginning in a small way as early as 1840, European settlers began importing camels and recruiting Muslim camel drivers from various regions which are now included in present day Afghanistan, Pakistan and India (Dunn, 2004:336). From 1860 onwards, hundreds of such cameleers arrived in Australia, representing four main ethnic groups, Pashtun, Baluchi, Punjabi and Sindhi (Cigler, 1986:5-14; Stevens, 1989:1-27). The White colonialists viewed them, not so much as legitimate settlers, but 'as part and parcel of camel shipments' or as Cleland (2001:12) describes it, "as necessary adjuncts to their beasts". The camel drivers worked to provide the transport of goods and services for the exploration, development and demarcation of state boundaries in the interior. It was these cameleers who established the first distinctive Muslim communities, known as Ghan towns, mostly beside freight depots or on the outskirts of rural towns (Cigler, 1986:15-33; Kabir, 2005b:230-231; Stevens, 1993:49-52; Yusaf, 1990:79).

By 1911 the official census recorded 3,908 Muslims living in Australia. These, mostly men of diverse heritage, Afghans, Indians, Malays, Syrians and Arabs amongst them, worked as cartage contractors, stock breeders, farm labourers, market gardeners, merchants and hawkers (Jones, 1993a:48,131; Omar & Allen, 1996:9; Yusaf, 1990:79). By now viewed by most Whites as 'coloured aliens' and 'part of the racial contamination problem', Australian Muslims lived as unofficial colonists, segregated outsiders existing in tight communities of their own making (Jones, 1993a:48; Kabir, 2004:41-46; Kabir, 2007:1279). Australia's settlement pattern made hawking a viable occupation for Muslims from rural India and Pakistan. The hawker, who sold a variety of goods ranging from clothing to jam and chocolates, was a familiar figure in outback Australia between the 1880s and 1920s (Deen, 1995:5-6 cited in Dunn, 2004:336). Intermarriage with non-Muslim women, usually Aboriginal or marginalised women of European descent, and the enforcement of the 1901 Immigration Restriction Act which banned further entry to non-Europeans, saw the

number of their descendants and others professing a Muslim identity decline after 1911 (Cleland,2001:12-30; Jones, 1993c:63-86; Kabir, 2005a:64).[48]

It was during the increased migration of the post-war era that the number of Muslims living and working in Australia began to increase again and distinct Muslim communities began to emerge in significant numbers, particularly in urban areas during the late 1960s and early 1970s as multiculturalism officially replaced the white-only and assimilationist policies of the past (Jupp, 2002:84-103; Mishra, 2012:141-157; Saeed & Akbarzadeh, 2001:1). The Muslim population grew steadily from the 1970s onwards, reaching 1.12 per cent of the total Australian population by 1996 (Kabir, 2004:6; Omar & Allen, 1996:22-28) and 1.5 per cent by 2001 (Poynting & Perry, 2007:153). The last census in 2011 indicated that there were approximately 476,290 Muslims in Australia, representing a 40% increase on the 2006 census (Sav & Harris, 2013:486-487), or 2.2 per cent of the population.[49] Muslims are thus now well established, having constituted the biggest non-Christian religious group in Australia since 1981 (Ho, 2007:291; Poynting & Mason, 2007:62; Yusuf, 1990:77). Writing in 2007, Kabir (2007:1294) recorded the existence of 21 Islamic or combined Islamic schools, 100 mosques mainly in New South Wales, over 100 community associations representing Muslim interests, and the establishment of Islamic councils representing the wider Muslim community in all states and territories. As outlined further in this chapter, each entity reflects the cultural background of its members.

During the course of my fieldwork interviews, the subject of 'identity', and in particular the participants' considered 'Muslim identity', was always a focal point. As expected, the participants expressed differing views on how they saw their identity and how they would like their identity to be perceived, especially in their workplace environments. For those participants who identified with their religious belief by how they dressed or by verbal affirmation, the principal understanding was that Islam encompassed all domains of their lives.

[48] See also Rajkowski (1987:168-178); Stevens (1993:53); Visconti (2000:18) and Yusaf (1990:79).
[49] See also population figures referred to in the Introduction.

Pavi, a second generation participant of Bangladeshi origin, aged 28 years, who veils, describes how being Muslim is her only identity:

> Islam is your identity, you are Muslim. It doesn't matter where you live, if you live in Bangladesh, it could be Australia, if you live in America, if you live in Senegal, in South Africa, in the Sahara desert, it doesn't matter where you live, you are a Muslim. That is your identity.

Aini, a second generation participant of Lebanese origin, aged 30 years, who veils, suggests that her cultural identity is indistinguishable from her Islamic identity:

> I don't know if it is possible to make a distinction, a lot of people think you can make a distinction between your Islamic identity and your identity as a person, but it is all part and parcel of what I am, and that formulates my identity, so it's not to say that the driven aspect of me is separate from my religious identity, it is the complete opposite to that.

Pavi proposes that all Muslim women have one identity that relates only to their belief, without acknowledging that some Muslim women live in countries where the practice of belief can be forcibly imposed on them. Nor does she acknowledge that belief can be part and parcel of the cultural norm and an integral part of the way of life (King, 1987:282). For example, in contrast to the participants, the Muslim Bangladeshi woman has no need to physically demonstrate a Muslim identity or to defend her assigned identity. Her way of life is inherited, coterminous with the social life, practiced by generations of people as a

common way of life and influenced by the prevailing practices of her country and her village life (Asad, 1993:257). For Pavi, the citizens of Bangladesh, Australia, America, Senegal or South Africa are just different entities of the same worldwide umma, a considered uniting of a group of people (see also Olson, 2011:641). She has ignored the reality of different cultural and institutional arrangements of the various Muslim societies[50] and the fact that identity, itself, is fluid and continually being formulated (Brah, 1996:243, see also Marranci, 2008:92,94; Sökefeld,1999:422). In contrast to Pavi, Aini recognises that identity is multi-faceted but finds it difficult to distinguish between her Islamic identity and other facets that make up her identity as a person including "the driven aspect of me". Whilst Aini is emphasising the importance of her Muslim identity, she is also acknowledging the other facets of her identity because they are all "part and parcel of what I am".

The Dynamics of Muslim Family Life

The importance placed on respect for the parents and their family introduces this section of the chapter. It observes how the participants' identity formation is influenced by being daughters of immigrant parents and members of an extended Muslim family:

> One of the highest values of every single family, taught by every family member, is respect for their parents and their family. Indeed, the Prophet (PBUH) has a saying that paradise lies under the feet of the mother, we respect and follow her guidance.
>
> (Esther, aged 42 years, first generation participant of Indian origin who does not veil).

[50] This subject is referred to again later in this chapter

Traditionally, the Islamic family is a close-knit entity, highly valued by its members. It stresses the value of extended family loyalties and obligations, a respect for elders and obedience to parents (Marranci, 2008:27; Rozario, 2011:285). Islamic teachings oblige all Muslims to show a courteous regard to their parents throughout their lives (Basit, 1997:425) and the Qur'an emphasises the rights of parents, for example, Surat 46:15 outlines the importance of showing kindness to parents; Surat 2.215 dictates that whatever is given to charity must also be given to parents and Surat 47:21 illustrates the importance placed on Islam and family membership.[51] Without referring to any specific Sura, each participant acknowledged, one way or another, the importance they placed on respecting their parents.

The majority of the participants' mothers had limited education on arrival in Australia, often not completing primary school. Other mothers are illiterate, in both the language of their homeland and English. Not all mothers fall into this category, however it was particularly noticeable for participants' parents whose origins were Lebanese (see Hage, 2011:161). Their mothers' limited education resulted from wars, civil wars, family members' illnesses, the traditional custom of not educating daughters or the mothers, themselves, not wishing, or not being encouraged, to attend school. Their fathers also had incomplete school education and limited English usually acquired during the course of their day to day employment activities. As Humphrey (2001:37) advises, most Lebanese Muslim immigrants post-1970 era were from poor rural and urban areas and Hage informs us that Lebanese Muslims have the highest rate of unemployment in Australia (2011:162).

Other fathers did possess qualifications acquired in their homeland, for instance, elementary teaching or book keeping, but their qualifications were either not recognised in Australia or their lack of English prevented retraining. As a result, most fathers found employment in unskilled or semiskilled, often manual work, in factories, in the security

[51] The Surats are taken from *The Koran Translated with Notes* by N.J. Dawood, Penguin Classics, Penguin Group, London, UK, first published in 1956.

industry, taxi driving, and, in some instances, had no employment and relied on Australia's social services.

Majedah, a second generation participant of Lebanese origin, aged 39 years, who veils, describes the employment opportunities available to her father and brother, as unskilled migrants:

> My brother who was the eldest and only son, got work straight away at the railways doing manual work.There were a lot of migrants who went into different places, for instances, Dad went into the Tip Top bakery where a lot of Lebanese men were working.

Some mothers worked outside the home, in factories, for example, Peters Ice cream factory (until its closure) employed many female immigrants for assembly line work who did not speak English and who relied on other immigrant English speaking female employees to assist with necessary paperwork and other employment requirements. The factory became a social environment for these women and its closure was greatly regretted by those participants' mothers who were employees. For the majority of participants, their parents continued their traditional roles - mothers were the home makers and fathers were the principal bread winners, which, according to the Qur'an, men have the obligation to be (Marranci, 2008:54).

Mothers had limited contact, if any at all, with women outside their community and only attended Muslim female functions, usually held at the local mosque (Bouma & Brace-Govan, 2000:165), which offered many non-religious social benefits, such as support from other Muslim women. In many cases, a religious belief assumed greater importance than was the case in their homelands where religion may have been taken for granted, or at least been of lesser importance. This is particularly true when immigrants came to

Australia from a society where they were part of the religious majority, in contrast to their new host country where they are now a religious minority (Peek, 2005:218).

Participants recall how their mothers were homesick for the lives they had left behind, feelings of being alienated and isolated, and dealing with the "strange language and strange ways of Australia" (Bouma & Brace-Govan, 2000:163). As Hage describes it, the pain of not being recognised or being recognised negatively is, predominantly, a first-generation experience (2011:167) and for the majority of the participants' parents exclusion was a new experience which they were not socialised at home to understand (see also Essed, 2002:90).

As young children, many participants and their siblings were their mothers' only form of communication with the outside world, translating documents, accompanying them to doctors' appointments and being the spokesperson when shopping or attending appointments at Government bodies such as Centrelink.[52] As the youngest of seven children and the only one born in Australia, Sera, a participant of Lebanese origin, 33 years, who veils, recalls how, at an early age, she had the responsibility of being the spokesperson for her parents, especially her mother, a responsibility that would not be the experience of the majority of Anglo Australian girls at a similar stage of their lives. For Sera, and other like participants, from an early age she was learning to be a representative of the 'different' and a member of the Other to the majority white population:

> They couldn't speak English when they arrived, they were speaking Arabic and they didn't know French. Being born in Australia and being the youngest, I learnt English from scratch, basically, it was my first language and Arabic was

[52] Centrelink is delivered by the Australian Department of Human Services and supports people with payments and services at times of major change, www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/dhs/centrelink accessed 13/01/15.

> my second. I was the one that translated everything, from the air conditioning manual to going to the bank and opening a banking account. I went with my mum each time she went to the doctors and this pleased my dad. Even though the doctor was a female, she was still considered foreign and not one of us. So, I was sort of chaperone at the same time. Even today Mum doesn't go out much, her English isn't good and she still relies on us to take her to the doctors.

Sera is describing a typical Lebanese immigrant family from a rural background and with limited education who arrived in Australia to avoid the Lebanese civil war during the period 1975 to 1990 (Haugbolle, 2005:191; Krayem, 1997:411). Because of their lack of English, parents, especially mothers, relied on the support of their English-speaking children who, at an early age, took on the responsibility of the role of chaperone, especially during their mothers' visits to the doctor who always had to be female. These encounters were not the experience of all participants' parents, especially those from English speaking countries who often arrived with credentials that were accepted immediately or required periods of retraining that were executed over time, for example, teaching, accounting or medical qualifications. Neither were all the Lebanese parents uneducated due to the fact that they were born to middle class or affluent families from Beirut rather than those immigrants from poor, rural Lebanese villages. These more educated, or perhaps, more enterprising, parents generally opened small sole trading businesses, such as ethnic restaurants, providing food to ethnic outlets or importing Middle Eastern food ingredients or ethnic clothing.

Interestingly, my research finds evidence of barriers existing between immigrants from Lebanese villages and immigrants from the capital, Beirut, even though neither group could claim to be educated or affluent, either in Lebanon or in Sydney. For example, the women from villages who wore their veil covering their shoulders were considered

'peasants' because the correct wearing, as dictated by those from Beirut, was to fold the veil inside the collar. The participant who advised me of this commented that her father, thirty years after leaving Beirut, still readjusts her veil should it appear over her collar, rather than tucked in. This incident also provides an illustration of how Australian Muslims can be characterised as having substantial divisions along lines of class, which may also have as its base, families' urban or rural origins (see Rosario, 1998:653).

Maintaining Family Traditions

This section of the chapter focuses on the family tradition of Muslim marriage that is both approved by parents and maintained by cultural communities where notions of honour, shame and female sexual modesty dominate. A common concern shared by Muslims relates to their discomfort with the social and sexual permissiveness of mainstream Australian society (Saeed & Akbarzadeh, 2001:9) and their attempts to preserve their cultural identity in the face of a perceived alien culture. This concern, together with the family's focus on maintaining family honour, causes the majority of the participants to comply with family tradition and to marry early, the majority, in their early twenties.[53] As Rozario (2011:287) advises, unmarried adult Muslim women are considered a risk to the maintenance of family honour.

The family's focus of maintaining the honour of the male members of the family (Hasan, 2002:3) is sacrosanct and involves the control of female members' behavior, particularly their interaction with men, by their self-appointed guardians, the male members of the family (Rozario, 1998:649, 2011:287). Family honour is deeply embedded in Islamic teachings and Muslim women are taught from an early age not to jeopardise it. Muslim women are seen to be guardians of Islam (Kandiyoti, 1991:7) and a man's honour lies in the sexual virtue of the women of his family and his extended family and the maintenance of that honour is the perpetuation of male control (Hasan, 2002:3). This focus takes

[53] Bouma & Brrace-Govan (2000:162) advise us that Muslim women marry at an earlier age, with 19.7% married before they are 30 compared with 6.1% for 'All Australian' women.

precedence over individual members and daughters are accountable to the family because, should their reputation be besmirched, the stigma of their actions impinges on the entire family (Basit, 1997:425; Hasan, 2002:3). This family understanding of how daughters should behave then engenders rules that include early and parentally supervised marriage and the relative seclusion of adolescent girls before that event.

The right to control the sexuality and reproductive powers of young people, particularly younger women's bodies is embedded in this family influence (Werbner, 2007:165). Although all but three participants were allowed to choose their marriage partners, family influence was a dominant factor and parents actively intervened in the choices. Two participants experienced family rejection and one participant allowed her parents to select her husband, although she was given permission to reject the proposal should she not be comfortable with their choice. Fara, a first generation participant of Fijian-Indian origin, aged 27 years, who veils, explains:

> My marriage was arranged by my parents, and I agreed to it because your parents always know best, you put your trust in your parents, what they decide, you go with.

The trend of family and family connections influencing the choice of a marriage partner continues the tradition the participants' parents experienced. Madia, a veiled, second generation participant of Turkish origin, aged 37 years, illustrates how the family influenced the marriage of her parents:

> My father came to Sydney as a young man and worked as a painter with a painting company then he returned to Turkey to find a wife. He did not know my Mum, but had a contact, I think my paternal grandmother knew her family. They are from different regions, my paternal

> grandmother comes from a village in Turkey that is close to my mum's village and they also had a mutual friend. We call it the referral network, someone who knows someone who knows someone.

Aaila, a second generation participant of Bangladeshi origin, aged 39 years, who veils, demonstrates how her mother's family chose her marriage partner:

> My mother was only seventeen when she arrived by boat to Sydney. She met our father for the first time on the wharf as the marriage had been conducted on the telephone, she in a village near Dhaka and he, in Sydney. It was arranged by her parents because they knew the family and she agreed to it because your parents know best. Yes, the marriage was relatively happy, even though it was arranged by her parents, Mum left everything up to them and in God's hands.

Each quotation provides illustrations of the importance of believing that "parents know best" and on bonding families by cultural and family ties. In Madia's case, her paternal grandmother knew her mother's family and Aaila's mother's choice of a prospective husband for her was also a distant cousin.

Aydan, a first generation participant of Turkish origin, aged 30 years, who veils, explains how she bowed to family pressure and the limitations placed on her and married early:

> All Muslim parents insist that their daughters marry young, they really worry about their daughters, it's that family honour thing. Muslim girls definitely gain a bit of freedom

> in getting married. You know how the Westerners' thinking
> of getting married, ball and chain, that kind of thing.
> We think of freedom because our parents aren't on top of us,
> don't do this, don't do that. I can run my own life now.
> Sometimes the girl wants to get married because
> there are no boyfriends, no going out, you can go out with
> girlfriends, but it is not quite as free.

Aydan is illustrating how she negotiated more freedom for herself by marrying. The accountability of her sexual virtue, previously the responsibility of her entire family, is now on the shoulders of her husband to uphold the family's honour. At the same time, she is seen to be continuing to uphold family values and behaving in accordance with the family ethos of daughters marrying at an early age.

Afet, a second generation participant of Pakistan origin, aged 32 years, who does not veil, illustrates the family influence, not only for their daughters to marry early, but that no casual 'relationships' with a member of the opposite sex are permitted:

> I think we marry young because we don't have
> boyfriends so if you want to have a relationship
> with someone you have to be engaged to them.
> Even then, we can't be alone until we are married.

Farheen, a first generation participant of South African Indian origin, aged 38 years, who veils, describes how she was unable to meet privately with her prospective husband until she married:

> He phoned me to say this is who I am, so I knew of
> him but not him directly. He said my intentions are

> sincere, I would like to get to know you better.
> I had a couple of conversations on the telephone with him and I said to my Mum, I'm speaking to this fellow. Mum knows his sister very well, she said, it looks like it's going to work out, we know his family, you have to get married at some stage. I got to know him fairly well over the telephone but socially it was inappropriate to meet at this stage. But it got to the point when I said, if I see you in the street, I wouldn't know who you are and I could walk by you without knowing. Then Mum arranged a family gathering. I met him, his Mum and his sister at the one time, his sister is married to my cousin. We all had a visit together, we agreed to get married and received the families' blessings.

Each of the above interview excerpts demonstrates how the participants' families control their daughters' behavior and the importance placed on daughters' early marriage to maintain the family honour. Whilst they are permitted to choose their marriage partners, they are still emulating their mothers' experiences of marrying young and not being alone with their partners until they marry. Farheen had concerns that, even though she was "speaking to this fellow" on the telephone, she was unaware of his appearance, and could pass him in the street "without knowing". Her mother's comment that "it looks like it's going to work out" provides another example of the importance that families place on inter-family connections with their daughters' future husbands. In Farheen's case, her mother not only knew his sister, but she is married to Farheen's cousin.

At the same time, my research has found that the emphasis placed on early marriage could be outweighed, in some instances, by the participant's insistence that the prospective husband should also be educated and with a similar educational background.

Tale, a second generation participant of Egyptian origin, aged 37 years, who does not veil, describes her situation:

> I was twenty-eight when I married which is very late by Muslim standards. But I was very selective, I wanted a husband who was well educated. My dad and I went to Cairo for a three week holiday and, to answer your question, possibly to find a husband who fitted the bill, that is, an educated Egyptian Muslim man. I met him there through family contacts. He had his own business there. I came back to Sydney engaged although it was about six months before we married. We corresponded during that time and spoke on the telephone each night, just for me to be sure. I call him my most successful import.

Tale provides some interesting data, the first being that, by her own admission, she married "very late by Muslim standards". Maintaining traditional Muslim customs, her father accompanied her to Cairo as a chaperone and to evaluate, and approve, any future husband who was also recommended by "family contacts". Tale is displaying two influences that help make up her identity formation. On the one hand, she was following traditions by choosing a man from her own culture who was approved by her family, even though she is a second generation Australian with a highly successful career in the secular workplace. On the other hand, Tale set the guide lines, any prospective husband had to be educated and she took control of the situation by waiting six months before she finally agreed to the marriage, just to "be sure".

Rozario (1998:652) notes that living in a country whose values contradict those of their own community can be problematic. A Muslim woman who contests the Islamic values of her own family faces rejection of her community and the accompanying slur to the

family's reputation. The personal price can, indeed, be high. Two participants describe the importance that Muslim families, with their respective communities' endorsement, place on the cultural commonalities of family membership. Kismar, a second generation veiled participant of Lebanese origin, aged 34 years, chose a husband who was not of the same cultural background as her family. She acknowledges that her parents would not have agreed to her marriage to a Chinese, even though he may be a practising Muslim. They were reluctant to agree to her choice of a Palestinian husband because he was not Lebanese:

> They would have preferred Lebanese, the same culture. He was still an Arab but Palestinians are a bit different. They would have influenced me if I had said I was going to marry a Chinese Muslim. They would have said no way. Why? He's still a Muslim and in Islam you can marry any culture, it is all about bringing together people. But, as I said, my parents are very cultural so there would be no way, so there was some parental influence as I never would have gone that far out. Nevertheless, I still married out of the Lebanese culture, but I did marry an Arab speaker and they came round eventually, especially when our daughter arrived.

Lubna, a second generation veiled participant of Pakistani origin, aged 37 years, provides another example of how Muslim families, whilst wanting their daughters to marry, and marry early, discourage their daughter's marriage outside their respective cultures:

> Nobody has actually married out of our culture, so it was a very big deal. He's Muslim but not Pakistani, the whole cultural thing is still embedded in a lot of first, second and

> even third generation people. They want what is best for you but they want you to marry into the culture, for the sake of the language, all the cultural norms. So that was very hard, they didn't agree because he was from a different cultural background coming from Singapore. I couldn't persuade them so I actually just went ahead and married him without their permission. I went straight to a JP and signed papers and, Islamically, I went to the mosque as I needed two witnesses, the Imam at the mosque acted as my guardian because in Islam you need a guardian, someone who says you can marry this man. I explained my situation to him and I said my father didn't agree, it's based on cultural grounds, not anything else. There is nothing wrong with this guy. I used to meet up with my siblings at Westfield shopping centre in Bankstown. My parents didn't talk to me for ages, really not until our son arrived three years later and I have never received their blessing. I don't think their blessing will ever turn up because I am the first person to have married out of my culture. Had I not done what I did, I think they would have eventually persuaded me to marry someone from my own culture.

Lubna's younger siblings who lived in the family home, had no concerns that she had married outside their culture. This can be explained in a number of ways, their love for their sister, no great emphasis was placed on their cultural heritage and/or they had lived their lives as second generation Australians. It is also interesting to note that Lubna consulted an Imam who also ignored the requirement for the marriage to have the parents' blessing and who overlooked the couple's cultural differences. Perhaps the Imam was chosen because the participant knew of his interpretation of marriage and that the

Imam believed that the Qur'an presented no contradiction. Lubna, herself, could not provide an explanation. Nevertheless, the Iman's actions provide an illustration of the many ways that Islam is understood and interpreted by its followers.

Even though both prospective husbands were practising Muslims and more educated than the participants' parents, equating to a better standard of living for their daughters, neither was accepted because of their cultural and ethnic differences. Both Kismar and Lubna confirm that they are well loved by their families. But this love was overridden by the traditions embodied in their respective ethnic communities and the customary treatment for recalcitrant children who refuse to marry according to parental choices. Lubna's story illustrates how her family placed these traditions before her own personal happiness. Had she not taken matters into her own hands and married her chosen partner, she was aware that her parents would have eventually worn her down to marry someone who did represent their own culture and traditions.

Kismar was successful and her parents agreed to her marriage possibly influenced by the fact, as Kismar points out, that the prospective spouse was also from a similar Arab heritage. Lubna's negotiations were not successful so she took matters into her own hands, married without her parents' blessing and ignored her community. She agrees that her parents wanted the "best" for her, but, on their terms and acknowledges she may never receive her parents' blessing for her marriage because of the emphasis they place on family cultural compatibility.

How each set of parents reacted to the considered unsuitable husband chosen by their daughters, overlooks the concept of umma, that "in Islam you can marry any culture, it is all about bringing people together" as explained by Kismar (see above). Each participant's experience demonstrates the importance placed on maintaining cultural family heritage as they and their husbands were accepted back into the family fold after their children arrived, with and without family blessings.

Influences of the Muslim Community, understood as Umma

The influence of culture interwoven with religious belief introduces the second chosen aspect that has influenced the participants' identity formation, growing up as children of immigrant parents who are also members of their respective ethnic communities. This section of the chapter studies the part the participants' respective communities plays in their lives, and those of their parents, and how these ethnic communities have formed in particular suburbs of Sydney to support ethic membership. It discusses the concept of 'umma' that can also be qualified with references to 'ethnicity' located within specific cultural groupings of people (Akbarzadeh, 2002:33). This concept imposes standards of identity that are taken up by the Islamic communities and one of its foci is the behavioural expectations of Muslim women. It will be seen how this minority group inclusion approach has led to some largely unintended consequences, one of which falsely identifies groups as ethno-cultural entities with fixed, inherent identities.

Umma

It is important, at this stage of the chapter, to establish an understanding of 'umma', the considered traditional Muslim community, and what the participants refer to when they speak of 'umma'. Mir suggests umma is where "geographical differences are overwritten by an adherence to the universal codes and strictures of Islam, a web of social relations [and] a constant force uniting a group of people" (Mir, 2007:72, see also Dwyer, 1999:54). And indeed, in Sydney, this sharing of emotions and the experiences of being Muslim was visible during the horrors of 9/11 and the Bali bombings, because it drew the mutual Islamic body closer (Kepel, 2004:271). Conversely, Akbarzadeh proposes that the increasing growth in ethnic congregations has caused a de facto fragmentation of Muslim unity (umma) resulting in a distraction from the ideals of unity. As a result, the concept of umma can now be qualified with references to "ethnicity" located within specific ethnic and cultural groupings of people (Akbarzadeh, 2002:33).

Hopkins (2011:114) also identifies a weakness in the rise of an ethnic and religious identity that is encouraged by ethnically oriented Muslim establishments such as mosques. This encouragement results in barriers and boundaries not only being formed between Muslims themselves but a contemptuousness of other Muslims with different nationalities and cultural religious practices. Hopkins goes so far as to propose that "diasporic communities may begin to command primary loyalties among populations which physically dwell within other national boundaries" (2011:114). My research finds similar evidence, especially amongst those participants who prefer to be identified by their parents' nationalities, rather than acknowledge they are Australian born. In many respects they are perpetuating the cultural traditions that are represented by their local communities.

Marranci (2008:111) argues that the concept of Muslim unity, or umma, presents a paradox. On the one hand, the accepted Muslim description of umma is one that binds individual believers together in a communal fashion and represents a sharing of communal passions. On the other hand, Muslims acknowledge that there are divisions and many factions and groups in Islam, or, as Marranci describes them, "theological disputes, racism and political divisions" (2008:111, see also Akbarzadeh, 2002:33). Rather than existing as a natural or pre-given collectivity, Mir (2007:72), following Anderson's work (2004), describes the traditional umma as an "imagined" community (see also Dwyer, 1999:54), however, his proposal is contested by the participants who all acknowledge its presence and its influence. For the participants, it may be imagined, but this does not mean that umma is imaginary, it is experientially real in everyday life. Therefore, umma exists because people think that it exists and that they have membership in it, especially in the context that it be considered a worldwide institution that has the aura of a global membership.

It is also important to note that Muslim "commentators" are aware of the divisions within Australian Muslims and "have called for the cultural differences within Islam to be

suppressed and for the community to reorganise under a single religious umbrella" (Mograby, 1985:33, cited in Dunn, 2004:346). Mograby demonstrates how mosques do not provide for the social integration of the Islamic faith and that different ethnic groups sometimes travel long distances to attend mosques that identify with their ethnicity,[54] rather than the local mosque, should it not conform to that identity. The end result is that any local Islamic community development is hindered (Mograby, 1985:33).

Nevertheless, Dwyer's (1999:56) research on Muslims living in Britain, has also found that an imagined identification linking Muslims throughout the world with a communal membership in a global umma "has emerged as increasingly important for many British Muslims, particularly for young people". A physical place is not a requirement as such, the importance is its members' perception of its vitality (Cohen 1985:124 cited in Marranci, 2008:105). Thus, participants who refer to "umma" are, in point of fact, referring to their local community. This is because the considered concept of umma also imposes standards of identity that are taken up by the respective Islamic communities.

As previously acknowledged, the majority of parents arrived from countries where Islam is the only religion accepted and practised as part of everyday living. Their belief is not labelled or categorised as Australians generally understand 'religion' nor does it conform to the secular nature of Australian society. Their experiences of being Muslim relate more to the embodied practices of a discipline where religion is an integral part of the ongoing way of life and not considered separate from the pattern of life (Bouma, 1994:69).
Farsi, a first generation participant of Afghani origin, aged 27 years, who veils, describes her family's understanding of their belief:

> We were Muslims, always have been, but it was a very inherited religion for so many years. Our parents were just born into the faith, it was a

[54] For example, Lakemba Mosque attracts Lebanese Muslims (Mograby, 1985:33, cited in Dunn, 2004:346).

> cultural thing so our instruction was based on culture.

Examples of preserving common cultural belief ties is demonstrated by communities of Lebanese, for example, settling in suburbs or surrounding areas of Lakemba (Dunn, 2004:343) and Bankstown, and Turkish communities favouring the suburb of Auburn[55] and its surrounding areas. Australia's family reunification migration policy in the 1970s also encouraged like communities to cluster together and aid one another, as family kin joined their family or extended families in Australia (Bouma, 1994:3). As migration increased so did the desire to retain aspects of one's culture and ethnic communities began to take shape (Hage, 2011:159). And, as Halliday (1999:893) points out, because of this situation, in many instances, 'culture' overtook Islam as the primary identity marker:

> [W]ithin Muslim societies, divisions of ethnicity matter
> as much and often more than a shared religious identity.

Majedah, a second generation participant of Lebanese origin, aged 33 years, who veils, explains how other immigrant families from Lebanon were most helpful in helping her family settle in to their new surroundings:

> The Lebanese community would actually help out others
> who had just come, they'd find us a place nearby and
> they were pretty supportive to help us settle in.
> It is interesting for me to look back on it. My parents
> met a few people here through the community who
> had already settled here and when they moved into a house
> next to a Lebanese family, they showed them the ropes.

[55] These suburbs are all located in western Sydney.

In their new country, the new arrivals experienced alienation due to living in a foreign culture where their language, cultural and belief practices were not complementary to those of the majority. As previously outlined, many took on the obligation of protecting their religious beliefs and culture, an obligation not usually a requirement in their homeland. The growth of Muslim ethnic communities gave rise to the growth of ethnically oriented mosques to serve the new arrivals' needs (Akbarzadeh, 2002:33) and many who may not have been active in mosque life in their country of origin, found that their level of participation in mosque activities increased (Bouma et al., 2001:58). Mosques, as the first symbols of permanency in Australia, represented the focal points of bonding (Bouma, 1994:vii), and by aligning with a similar ethnic community, the new arrivals found that mosques assisted in establishing cultural identities and creating a sense of home (see Ehrkamp, 2007:14; Humphrey, 2001:35; Bouma, 1994:71; Bouma & Brace-Govan, 2000:164). Mosques not only represented the attendees' origins, but, importantly, their cultural interpretations of ritualisation (Bouma, 1994:xii,70; Akbarzadeh, 2002:33).

Muslims tend to gather in national frameworks because of the immediacy of that community and the added benefits that the community provides (Akbarzadeh, 2002:33; Omar & Allen, 1996:42) and, generally, women use the mosques' centres for cultural and social activities. They provide a congenial environment for socialisation, a social club where women can "hear the latest news about family and friends and news of bargains in the shops" (Akbarzadeh, 2002:33, see also Bouma & Brace-Govan, 2000:165).

Thus, the local mosque not only represents the cultural backgrounds of its members, it provides social affiliations to celebrate important occasions such as Ramadan, Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha, which involve mosque attendance. Its locality also served to reaffirm the identity of its members and cement and rejuvenate the respective communities (Saeed & Akbarzadeh, 2001:2). As a result of this process, "an ethnic and religious identity" was learnt and re-learnt as the immigrant negotiated a new life (Ibid, 2001:59), encouraged by

the existence of suburbs known for their Muslim and national occupancy and represented by ethnic mosques (Bouma, 1994:xii,70; Akbarzadeh, 2002:33).

Aaina, a first generation participant of English origin, aged 40 years, who veils, describes her women's group at the mosque as a 'support centre' managed by women who are first, second and third generation Shi'as:

> The women's group at my local mosque covers many different things. It covers how to help new arrivals, teaches them how to catch the bus, teaches them how to get an education and learn English. It covers information for the seniors, over 65, takes them out for lunch, provides access services. It also does things for the youth, they run classes, everything, so even though it is for Muslim women, it's very inclusive, it's about learning about Australian society. They also have craft and sewing classes and cooking classes because it's those cultural bits that bring people together because it transcends language. People love to share their cooking and sewing or even painting and those kinds of skills, if you want to do something you can and if you don't you don't have to.

Aaina, a social worker, is employed one day a week at the women's centre which is part funded by the local council. She illustrates the possibilities of the centre moving on from a social meeting place, or one that provides individual support, to an entity that supports employment opportunities for the Muslim women members who are predominantly Afghani:

> I work there in the office, I do case management, and

> we've set up a little enterprise project where women are learning how to make handbags. At some point we are going to bring in a business planner and she will help us develop a whole range of social enterprise opportunities so that will include possibly a market stall, possibly supplying a retailer, trying to sell the bags and generate some alternative forms of income for the women so they are just not coming to me for case work.

Muslim men are also aware of the additional benefits their communities provide, secular as well as religious support, as Salwa, a veiled, second generation participant of Turkish origin, aged 25 years, illustrates:

> My husband goes to Friday prayers in the city and there are many professionals in the city who are Muslim, each week they take turns to write a speech and discuss things that are relevant, to motivate and alert people to social aspects of dealing with situations at work, it's very relevant and very supportive.

Pascale, aged 31 years, a veiled, second generation participant of Lebanese origin, provides an illustration of the importance she places on her local Muslim community. At the same time, we can see how Pascale's identity has been influenced by living in that environment. First, let us study Pascale's life growing up as a daughter of a first generation immigrant family, one which reflects many similarities with other participants:

> I consider myself Australian, but my Muslim identity would always take precedence.

.

This was Pascale's answer to my question on how she would describe her 'identity'. Pascale acknowledges her 'Australianness', she speaks with an Australian accent and, it is obvious, that she understands what 'being Australian' means because she was educated in Sydney. The first part of her response could be a comment that any Australian woman might make to preface the description of how she sees her identity. The second part explains how her Muslim belief is intertwined with her Australian identity. Whilst it can be seen that her Muslim identity appears to dominate, at the same time, she and her husband successfully work in the secular workplace, they will encourage their two daughters to attend university when the time comes and will not insist on them marrying at an early age nor to veil when they reach puberty.

As a child, Pascale's experiences of growing up are immeasurably different to those experienced by the Anglo Australian female employees whom she encounters in her workplace environment. Pascale grew up in a social network in Sydney with a higher than average concentration of Muslims than other identity types. As Pascale confirms, for her parents who continue to live in this predominantly Muslim area of Lakemba with their network of Muslim friends, there is very little exposure to a world that is not Muslim. Pascale agrees that neither parent has a good command of English, even though they have lived in Sydney for over 30 years.

As a daughter of first generation immigrant parents who were unable to speak English on arrival, Pascale was subject to the cultural practices of her parent's homeland, including the family's understanding of how a Muslim daughter must behave. How that 'difference' is enacted out in Pascale's life is illustrated by her view that, even though she and her husband work in secular environments away from Lakemba, she is more comfortable living in a "safe and secure, a nice sort of compact place". Colic-Peisker's study reveals that where residential concentrations do exist, they usually comprise lower-income immigrants who lack English fluency and therefore stay close to their ethnic community for support (2011:580). Colic-Peisker's study certainly describes Pascale's parents, but it

would not be true for Pascale and her husband, both second generation Australians and tertiary educated. Pascale describes how she and her husband continue to live in Lakemba, considered a 'working class' suburb, regardless of their new financial situation that is much more secure than that of her parents. Pascale is acknowledging a framework that she finds comfortable, within a community she knows and that provides a sense of security:

> There are mosques, you can find dress shops, halal butchers, halal restaurants, with menus in Arabic, that serve normal everyday foods that we need, that we eat and that Australian society doesn't cater for us. Even Mackers only serves halal meat, they wouldn't get any business unless they did. There's a Muslim radio station that provides us with news of what's going on locally and because of the influx of Muslims into the area, a community has been formed which makes it easier to be yourself, it is safe and secure, a nice sort of compact place, not a place where there's a lot of racism and things like that. I went to the local high school and there were only two girls wearing the hijab, they were sisters. In the whole school, we were the minority. Now I'm sure if you went back to that school you'd find a quadruple amount of girls wearing it, they're in the streets, everywhere.

Pascale also finds it comfortable that she is not alone wearing the veil as she sees other veiled women in the local streets of the community and compares the uncomfortable experiences she encounters when she leaves this safe environment, "a nice sort of compact place". My interviews with other veiled participants also confirm that they, too, feel highly visible and different when they leave their comfortable community

environment. As one participant comments, “I just feel out of place” and another describes her workplace situation as feeling like “the elephant in the room”.

Pascale compares her community with the “outside” mainstream community that does not cater for Muslims and that McDonalds[56] (Mackers) only provides halal meat because it would be out of business if it did not. Pascale is illustrating how marginalisation and isolation are perpetuated and boundaries and barriers built against the ‘white’ population of the neighbouring suburbs and, indeed, those ‘white’ residents who still reside in Lakemba and other like suburbs.

Akbarzadeh (2002:33) confirms that Muslims tend to gather in concentrated residential, national clusters, because of the immediacy of that community and the flow-on benefits such as cultural Sunday language schools and celebrations of festive days on the national calendar. It is the other amenities that Lakemba, and similar suburbs, provide that draw Pascale, and other like participants. For example, the presence of mosques that were built to re-establish familiar social cultural activities in the new host society and as a reaction to the alienation and confusion that resulted from arrival in a new country (Peek, 2005:218). It is also significant that these religious facilities then play a part in the “consolidation and reproduction of communities” (Dwyer,1999:55).

Not only do the participants live close to their parents for easy access for weekend family get togethers, living nearby has the added advantage of built-in baby sitters and carers during school term and school recess and children are encouraged to speak to their grandparents in the language of their heritage. Many of the participants follow the traditions of their parents, for instance, practising the eating habits of the family and providing separate rooms for unrelated male and female guests to enable them to eat apart.

[56] A prominent fast food outlet, www.mcdonalds.com.au accessed 13.01.15.

Pascale demonstrates the importance she places on maintaining affiliations with her parent's former country.[57] She showed me the room that she had allocated for her male guests to be separate from her female guests. Not only is she continuing on her parents' ethnic tradition of providing separate eating venues for her male and female guests, she is encouraging these traditions to be maintained, that male guests take precedence by requiring a separate room whilst the female guests remain in the kitchen. The room was carpeted, large cushions replaced furniture and Arabic inscriptions of the Qur'an hung on the walls:

> I make sure my male guests are comfortable, if they prefer not to mingle, I'm pretty OK with that. They do leave the door open, but I provide a curtain that they can pull across if they want to, for more privacy or if they need to pray. The food is left on a separate table just outside the door.

Mir (2007:61) provides us with the motivation for emulating cultural family traditions, in Pascale's case, the Lebanese culture:

> Class, gender and the geographical origins of one's family all impose themselves on identity and these correlations are sometimes juxtaposed with tenacious attempts to retain an identity that involves emphasis on cultural activities such as cooking ethnic meals that identify with the home country.

My research finds that whilst some participants have moved from these suburbs with their Islamic influence, most participants continue to live in the areas where they

[57] See also Australian Burean of Statistics, "A Picture of the Nation", 2070.0:2006, p.44.

attended high school and where their friends also live.[58] The reason, that houses in these areas are perhaps less expensive than other areas, is not the only motivation to remain. Ethnically based Muslim schools have been established and many of the participants' children attend Saturday morning tuition classes to learn the Arabic language in order to read and understand the Qur'an (Douglass & Shaikh, 2004:8) and, for those children who have grandparents who speak Arabic, to converse more comfortably with them. The establishment of Muslim schools has made it possible to run a parallel alternative to the mainstream education system, for example, there are five Muslim schools in the Lakemba area, Rissalah College, Alnoori Muslim School, Malek Fahd Islamic School, Al Sadiq College and Al Hikma College.

Following on Dwyer's research (1999:55), Muslim schools' emphasis is that the pupils learn more about their Muslim identity and feel part of a Muslim culture (Saeed & Akbarzadeh, 2001:9) and Muslims have been active in ensuring the incorporation of religious beliefs and practices within such institutions (see also Dwyer, 1999:56). The formation of the Lebanese Muslim Association, established in 1962, has resulted in the construction of the Imam Ali bin Abi Taleb Mosque, one of the largest mosques in Australia, and located in Lakemba.[59] The Association, which controls the mosque, continues to perpetuate its ethnic persuasion, limiting membership only to men of Lebanese background (Dreher & Ho, 2009:65) and designating "Lebanese" in the Association's title.

The influence of the community was brought home to me at my interview with one of the participants. As it was a quiet Sunday morning, the participant walked to her front gate without her veil, to farewell me, but rushed inside as we were talking, because a car had

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[58] Contrasting this statement is the experiences of third generation Muslims of Pakistani origin who choose to live in relatively prosperous suburban areas on the outskirts of Glasgow, Scotland rather than Pakistani majority settlement areas of inner-Glasgow (Mir,2007:58).
[59] https://www.facebook.com/pages/Lakemba-Mosque accessed 13.1.15.

turned into her street, leaving us both to call out our goodbyes behind a closed front door. As discussed with her later, the participant was concerned, not only that the occupants would see her uncovered hair, but that they may also be members of her community. Her retreat and called 'goodbyes' from behind her closed door also reinforces the discourse that Muslim women remain the guardians of the family and the community's cultural and religious expectations.

Javeria, a second generation participant of Pakistani origin, aged 36 years, who veils, describes her experiences of growing up with a father and his observance of the ethnic and cultural community's rules. Her experience illustrates her father's understanding that to be faithful to Islamic teachings means doing what was customary in his country of origin (Ramadan, 2004:139):

> Growing up in Australia and going to public schools we wanted to do what our friends were doing, go to the movies and listen to bands, but my Dad said no way, we couldn't ever stay over at a friend's place, or even visit a friend's home. And our clothing, he was very strict, you can't wear that, you can't wear a short skirt. In Pakistani culture, you never see a woman showing her legs, never ever, she will always have her legs covered. He tried to put us in a bubble because he was so conscious of what other people in our community might think. You have to do it, you have to cover up.

Aabirah, also a second generation participant of Pakistani origin, aged 38 years, who veils, describes how her father not only placed great importance on displaying his family's origins to the 'outside' world and his acknowledgement of the 'inside' community, but

demonstrated his patriarchal authority within the family by making his daughters wear traditional Pakistani female attire:

> The traditional clothing, the loose clothing, that's the clothing my dad used to make us wear when we got home, change out of our uniforms and into that clothing, he'd get it shipped from overseas. We'd say we don't want to wear this, we want jeans and t-shirts and he'd take us shopping like that and our school friends would see us and they would laugh and say we were wearing our pyjamas. We'd be mortified. Looking back, growing up was really the worst time of my life.

Both accounts illustrate the patriarchal, ethnic and cultural influences that were not necessarily committed to high levels of Islamic observances. On both occasions, each father demonstrated his authority on how his children should appear to his ethnic community, a community strongly tied to their country of origin and not just to Islam (Bouma & Brace-Govan, 2000:164). At the same time, both fathers demonstrated their strong Pakistani identity by enacting out their own cultural expectations and denying their daughters' wishes to be seen as Australian teenagers. As a result, both participants were forced to represent the symbolic cultural and ethnic elements of their fathers' religious belief.

Each participant was influenced by the fact that they were brought up in Australia, they both expressed the desire to "do what our friends were doing" and wear "jeans and t-shirts", which, according to the fathers, would be contrary not only to their understanding, but their communities' understanding, of how their daughters should appear to the outside world.

Each of the quotations also demonstrates the construction of boundaries of belonging by both fathers, inclusive and exclusive. They are articulated because of being threatened in some way, in this case, the concern of both fathers that a Western influence might be creeping into the lives of their daughters that would influence the form of identity they wished for their daughters (see Aitchison et al, 2007:21). As a result, the families' patriarchal authority insisted that the appearance of their daughters was in contrast to their Australian teenage contemporaries by assuming a shift from self-expression to a more subdued form of behavior (see Dwyer, 1999:7). These quotations are inclusive because of the perceived threat to the family's way of life and exclusive because they refer to the perceived lifestyles of the Australian mainstream majority (Aitchison et al., 2007:3, see also Humphrey, 2001:39).

Principally, it is the preservation of the family honour that serves as the community's consciousness and demands that a Muslim woman should be above all suspicion in the eyes of the community. The fathers' interpretation of being 'above suspicion' is that their daughters dress in an appropriate way. This apparatus of control over proper female behavior and appearance is exercised by the public opinion of the relevant social groups, represented by the community, who decide if the rules are breached (Hasan, 2002:3,4).

The result is that membership of the community, or perceived concept of umma, offers both advantages and disadvantages to the participants. It has the advantage of being a source of security and safety by obeying its rules, it provides a sense of belonging, ethnic pride (Jasperse et al., 2012:251) and self-identification (Kunst et al., 2012:519). The downside is the community's constraining influence and accompanying surveillances. As Dwyer's research (1999:55) has found, the different concepts of communities can be both empowering and constraining.

It is also interesting to note that even though both of the above participants of Pakistani origin, are now married and, as a consequence, not dominated by their respective fathers'

rulings any more, neither has pursued their youthful wish to copy Anglo Australian dress or, indeed, to be identified as Pakistani women by wearing the traditional shalwar kameez chosen by their mothers and which included a light scarf, or *dupatta*, loosely draped around the head and which still allowed their hair to be seen. Each participant provided similar explanations, they preferred to wear the veil and Islamic clothing because of their desire to be identified as Muslim women. Their chosen identity now goes further than conforming to the traditional dress codes encouraged by their fathers and which displayed ethnic identities rather than religious ones. The identity that they have each chosen is one of a Muslim woman who veils, neither is influenced by former ethnic traditions nor are they under any patriarchal control as each confirmed that their husbands played no part in their choice of dress.

Being Tertiary Educated Australian Muslim Women

As previously outlined, the majority of my participants speaks with an 'Aussie' accent and understands the Australian way of life, even if they contest, and withdraw from, certain aspects of it. At the same time, the participants are members of a minority, often misunderstood, religious group with its associated allegiances that feeds on a perception of Muslims as a problematic minority refusing to integrate (Werbner, 2007:163). They are also members of immigrant families who are anxious to preserve their own cultural and ethnic values and are members of communities who uphold these same cultural and ethnic values.

As already outlined, some participants are in complete accord with the cultural practices of their families and live their lives accordingly. Some parents are comfortable when their daughters do not follow all the families' traditional cultural practices. Other participants found it necessary to challenge their families' cultural traditions, especially the cultural views of educating daughters. The following quotations illustrate how participants challenged traditional cultural practices to pursue tertiary education. Each example emphasises that these challenges to families' cultural traditions would have been unheard

of in previous generations of female family membership and demonstrates a marked contrast between the formation of the participants' identity and that of their mothers.

Many participants were encouraged by their parents to attend university as they recognised the value of education. However, not all participants' parents believed in education for their daughters, especially those parents who had no formal education or who were concerned that tertiary education could delay, or hinder, their daughters' marriage prospects. This was particularly noticeable within first generation Lebanese families.

Maya, a second generation participant of Lebanese origin aged 40 years, who veils, describes her family's resistance to educating female members of her family:

> My parents weren't supportive when I went to university
> because it was so foreign, a daughter who was a
> book worm, and they did have those cultural old wives' tales,
> girls are going to be mothers so they don't need educating,
> I had to battle that a lot. I argued, especially with my mother,
> not so much Dad, he was just concerned that I didn't
> do anything wrong and let the family down. There is
> a sense of handing over the way they cook, folding their
> linen which I didn't share. My sisters conformed,
> they didn't go beyond Year 10 and married when
> they were 17, two are now grandmothers in
> their thirties and really are unemployable. Mum
> would always complain to her friends, 'she's a book worm,
> she is always in her room, she is going to university and
> she will never find a husband'.

Unlike the other female members of her family, Maya chose to pursue a university education. By her account, her female siblings conformed to the wishes of the family, especially their mother, by not pursuing an education and marrying early. Maya describes her mother's only concern was that she would miss out on a husband because of her pursuit of an education and her wish to attend university.

Maya managed the situation, that was contrary to her mother's wishes, by making sure that, in her father's eyes, she "didn't do anything wrong". Maya was aware of her family's cultural traditions, of the patriarchal situation in her family and the importance placed on daughters not to tarnish the family honour. Maya went against the cultural traditions of the family but, at the same time, by being aware of these cultural traditions, she kept her father onside because he believed she was maintaining the family honour by not doing "anything wrong" at the same time as she was pursuing her tertiary education.

Daneen, a first generation participant of Lebanese origin, aged 47 years, who veils, opposed her mother's wish for her not to continue her education and marry early. She avoided family confrontation by keeping her studies a private matter:

> My mother didn't even know what I was doing, I was in my room for three years doing my BA and she didn't even know, no-one knew actually, then when I invited her to my graduation she was angry and said no, I'm not coming, its Ramadan, then on the day of the graduation she got angry with me because I didn't take her.

Although Daneen's mother was ignorant of the practice of her religion and the reasons behind any religious celebration (as retold by Daneen), her refusal to attend the

graduation was blamed on a religious occasion, that of the practice of fasting during Ramadan, one of the most important occasions of the Muslim calendar.

Aaila, a second generation participant of Bangladeshi origin, aged 36 years, who veils, secured her parents' permission to attend university by proposing that there may be possibilities of future marriage prospects:

> I felt a bit neglected with regardes education. Not that they didn't want me to get educated, but it was not encouraged and that was neglectful. My brothers were always told you could be a doctor, you could do this and that, you have to go to university. I was always saying 'what about me', but there was no comment, nothing basically. I really had to force the issue and it helped my case when I suggested I could meet a Muslim husband who would be financially secure because of his university education, just like my brothers with their university education.

Aaila's bargaining tools were that not only would this prospective husband be educated, but would offer her the same financially secure future that her parents hoped for their sons (see also Rozario, 2006:370) with their perceived financially lucrative professions. Aaila is also demonstrating that even if Muslim women relate to the patriarchal features of their religion, it can be possible to find various avenues for demonstrating agency and to obtain power to challenge gender inequality as defined by the traditionally sanctioned norms (Mahmood, 2005:16 cited in Bilge, 2010:14).

Not all participants had parents who disproved of their daughters pursuing an education. As previously outlined, some parents recognised the monetary value that came with tertiary education, others hoped that by attending university, their daughters may meet

an educated Muslim husband whilst other participants' parents, recognising their own lack of education, usually as a result of circumstances beyond their control, insisted their daughters be educated. Madar, a second generation participant of Lebanese origin, aged 27 years, who veils, describes her family situation:

> My father was very set on us getting an education, probably because he felt he had missed out. He had five girls, no boys, and he pressured us beyond what we wanted to do, he forced us to go to university and any time a suitor knocked on the door, he would say, I'm sorry, I haven't any girls that are marriageable, he'd never let anyone in.

Before concluding this section of the chapter, it is important to make reference to the other two groups of participants, the convert participants and the participants who arrived in Australia as tertiary educated young adults, to compare the directions their identity formation has taken. As was to be expected, the six convert participants faced no barriers from their parents concerning tertiary education, indeed it was expected that they attend university. Growing up, each had experienced a religious education from the private non-secular secondary school they attended and each followed their parent's example of only attending church on the formal occasions of Easter and Christmas. This too is a contrast as they now attend Islamic classes, and are very well informed about their religious belief.

Because the convert participants showed a determination to embrace their new religious belief to the fullest, with one exception, each had chosen to veil. One convert participant influenced her husband, a Muslim, to be more diligent in his belief:

> The more I researched, the more I learnt and I

> ended up saying, OK, I'm quite happy to live this life, but not half and half, you can't have it both ways. He actually had to pull his socks up and the more I learnt the more I taught him.

Becoming Muslim has altered the path of the converts' identity formation immeasurably, not only because of the change of their Christian names to ones of Arabic origin, all but one has chosen to work in a Muslim environment, such as a Muslim school, and another has an accountancy practice with Muslim clients. As previously indicated, the majority has found it difficult to be accepted by their families in their new role as Muslim women.

The participants who arrived in Australia as young adults are Iranian who had their tertiary education either delayed or interrupted because the Ayatollah Khomeni, who replaced the Shah on his departure, closed all universities for a number of years. Each participant completed her tertiary education when the universities reopened, wearing a veil and the Islamic clothing stipulated by the ruling government. Their identity formation has been formed by past experiences of living in Iran and the new experience of now being Australian. Not only did they choose to Anglicise their Iranian first names, but each has removed her veil, not to remove herself from her belief, nor to hide from her Islamic background, but to be considered "Australian".

Conclusion

By addressing the three considered aspects that have shaped the participants' identities, the chapter has demonstrated how each participant is a product of a richly diverse social and cultural background. It has further demonstrated that Muslim identity is not essentialist, static or unchanging but multi-layered and continually being reformulated. It has studied the internal influences of being daughters of immigrant parents who hold to their ethnic and cultural traditions and the importance of the family as an entity, the external influence of the ethnic Muslim community with which they and their families are

associated and, finally, the influences of being tertiary educated Australian Muslim women.

The chapter identifies how the majority of participants has followed their families' cultural traditions. Prior to their marriage, the participants lived in the family home and observed their parental traditions, to dress conservatively, even if a veil was not a requirement. Not one participant lived with a male partner before marriage, in contrast to studies conducted on Anglo Australian women and Essed's similar research on African-American women in California and Surinamese women in Holland (1991:217). The majority of participants chose a marriage partner who would be compatible with their families' cultural heritages and each was conscious of the importance placed on the parental blessing of their marriage. With one exception, each married participant emphasised that it was they who chose their marriage partner, a situation that, for the majority of participants, was in contrast to their mothers' situation. Two participants went against family cultural traditions and married spouses who were not acceptable because they were not of the same cultural traditions. One family finally agreed to the marriage and one participant married without the family blessing and, even though she and her husband have now been accepted back into her extended family, she acknowledges her marriage will probably never receive the family blessing. Her experience demonstrates the importance immigrant families place on their cultural and ethnic heritage and the concept of family.

Marrying a man from another Muslim ethnic group is describing resistance towards parental authority. Choosing one's own marriage partner is also describing a move away from the tradition that parents choose their daughters' marriage partners. These instances continue to demonstrate a formation of identity that opposes the one encouraged by the traditional culture of the family.

The chapter details how large ethnic Muslim communities, understood as umma, have developed and are represented by large organisations and mosques that symbolise their members' ethnic origins. As well as facilitating the religious needs of their members, these organisations provide congenial environments for socialising, especially for the female members. Akbarzadeh (2002:33) and Hopkins (2011:114) also identify a fragmentation of Muslim unity (umma) in Australia resulting from these organisations' ethnic affiliations. Nevertheless, for the participants, the concept of 'umma' continues to exist and they and their families are influenced by its views, especially those understandings of how a Muslim woman should behave and the dress codes they should maintain. The chapter establishes how the participants' ethnic communities influence their identity.

For the majority of participants, their life experiences are immeasurably different from that of their mothers. Each is employed for monetary reward and the majority is employed in Sydney's secular workplace which is in contrast to the traditional Islamic gender role identity, that of the Muslim woman as a 'stay-at-home' mother and homemaker. The participants' partners are obviously supportive of this situation. Each has acquired a tertiary education, generally unheard of in previous generations, especially for the female members of family. The final section of the chapter describes how some participants go against family traditions that tertiary education is not necessary for their daughters. The chapter discusses how these participants practise their negotiating skills to procure permission to attend university, especially from those parents who were reluctant to expose their daughters to a perceived, undesirable Australian lifestyle.

The following chapters research how the participants present this new form of female Muslim identity to their workplace and the challenges they face in that environment. On the one hand, they are daughters of first generation immigrant Muslim parents with cultural traditions and family expectations that place great importance on the behaviour and conduct of the female family members. On the other hand, they are now tertiary educated first and second generation Australian Muslim women. In varying degrees,

these contrasting influences are in evidence, that is, being daughters of immigrant families, with their own sets of cultural ties, influenced by their respective communities' authority, and being Australian Muslim women. Their religious belief still maintains constrained structural parameters but it is now the choice of the participants. As Fara, whose comments introduce this chapter, acknowledges:

> We are still true to our religion and God, we have our limits as to what we can do, but we are not out of reach.

The following chapter, Chapter 4, continues to research the participants' experiences in the realm of paid work. It illustrates the concerns experienced by those participants who assign themselves the role of upholding Muslim female traditions in a secular workplace environment. The chapter introduces the experiences of 'inclusion' and 'exclusion' and the role each plays in Australian Muslim women's identities in general, and the participants of this study, in particular. It traces the concept of 'racism' in its many forms in Australia and discloses how the participants, who have all experienced exclusion in some form or another outside the workplace environment, now face exclusion of a different sort which, in many respects, is the experience of all female members of staff. In this regard, they could be described as being 'on the same side' as all female staff, but here the similarity ends should they choose to identify as Muslims and members of a religious minority.

Chapter 4

The Dynamics of Exclusion in the Secular Workplace

> Back home you always used to think no-body is nice in Australia because it's a very racist country, people are just not nice.
>
> (Panya, 32 years, first generation participant of Bangladeshi origin, who veils).

In this chapter, I focus on how the participants' "belief" commitment is practised and how they manage their religious "feelings" (Marranci, 2006:6,10) in the realm of the secular workplace. I discuss how acts of exclusion are experienced by the participants, particularly those who identify as Muslim women. The chapter commences with an examination of the practices of 'racism', how it has evolved and put into practice in Australia today. It studies the many complex understandings and interpretations of 'racism' and 'exclusion' and, by drawing on the analysis of my fieldwork data, I demonstrate how the participants have all encountered routine acts of exclusion in some form or another. They also face added issues of exclusion *within* their workplace environments that are based on "the visible or subtle influences of patriarchy and sexist traditions" (see Syed, 2007:1955). In many respects, this tradition brings them to the same 'side' as all female employees but, at the same time, it can be seen how the participants part company with their Anglo Australian women colleagues because of cultural differences. Finally, the chapter introduces three issues, chosen by the participants, as having an influence on exclusion. The first issue identified is the power base that is an automatic feature of a white Anglo Australian majority, the second is the stereotyping of Muslim women and its

accompanying "burden of representation" (Hall:1992). The third issue is the power of nationalism that is promoted by the Australian media. By studying these issues, identified by the participants as relevant to their participation in the workplace, we are better able to define, and appreciate, the concerns faced by the participants, as representatives of all tertiary educated Muslim women in paid employment in the secular workplace.

'Racism' in its many forms

Racism, and its associated acts of exclusion, is acknowledged as a concern in Australia and antiracism projects, for example anti-discrimination legislation, affirmative action and political platforms such as the Human Rights Commission are driven by views that racism, in all its forms, needs to be combatted. My own university, Macquarie, has acknowledged its presence, and on 6th August, 2014, representatives of the university joined sporting and corporate organisations to sign the Australian Human Rights Commission supporter agreement "Racism, It Stops with Me" in an effort to combat racism. The theme of Dr. Charlie Teo's 2012 Australia Day address also serves to remind us of the existence of racism in Australian culture.[60] Dr. Teo, a renowned Chinese-Australian neurosurgeon, illustrated how racism, whilst not as explicit as it was fifty years ago, is alive in Australia, continues to distress its victims and to matter in people's everyday lives (see also Dreher, 2006 and her report outlining racist acts experienced by Muslims and Arab Australians in NSW after September 11, 2001).

Hage (1998:33) following Said (1978:7) identifies "power" as a distinctive dimension of racism. Said (1978:7) illustrates how Orientalism was created within the framework of Western hegemony to promote the idea of a European identity being a superior one in comparison with all non-European peoples (see also Said, 1995:54; Goldberg, 1993:6). As Hall (1997:260) argues, this form of racialised knowledge of the "Other" is deeply implicated in the operations of power.

[60] http:www.canberratimes.com.au/news/opinion/editorial/general/Australia-day-2012-address-full-speech/2430273.aspx accessed 30.1.13.

Essed's theory of "everyday racism" contributes to this chapter because it illustrates how power roles can be played out in subtle and indirect actions of exclusion and domination, "made ordinary" and carried out in routine, mundane situations. Essed (1994:236) identifies how acts of racism continue to infiltrate all sections of society and are carried out in daily customs as if they were "normal features of the dominant culture":

> Racism can be defined as a system of ideas and a structure of practices in which notions of race are related to hierarchies of 'human stock' and 'culture', while using these ideas to legitimize the unequal distribution of power to groups differentiated in racial and/or ethnic terms. Racism is embedded in the political, economic, legal and social structures. The reproduction of racism is a systemic process based on everyday life. As a result, racism becomes part of common sense and of daily customs, tolerated as if it were a 'normal' feature of the dominant culture.

Essed's theory of "everyday racism", or "racism made ordinary"(1992:3) is practised and internalised by individuals in their everyday habits, it is infused into familiar practices by involving socialised attitudes and behavior that also include cumulative instantiation but practised in evasive and everyday language. It is based on expectations and conditions that are taken for granted in the "immediate environment of a person in which she [sic.] is located physically and socially" (Essed, 1991:47, 48). Essed's framework of everyday racism enlightens us on how practices of exclusion are carried out and is invaluable in understanding how the concept of exclusion continues to be a process which sustains unequal relations of power and its practices are not rare in today's society.

Essed's theory argues that everyday racism has two structures, "macro" and "micro". From a macro point of view, racism is both an historical process, created through routine practices, and a social process that is reinforced and reproduced through a complex of attitudes (prejudice) and actions (discrimination and marginalisation). Thus, from a macro point of view, racism exists as a specific variant of group power because it is "created and is maintained through individuals" (Essed, 1991:41). How racism is enacted out in a micro, everyday fashion is not 'in your face' blatant experiences of exclusion, but by mundane, micro encounters of disrespect which are embedded in everyday habits, sometimes subtle, and constantly experienced. This chapter illustrates how macro experiences of exclusion are carried out by individuals and groups who have complex attitudes of prejudice and how micro encounters of disrespect are experienced by the participants in their workplace environments. The chapter researches how the participants manage these macro and micro incidents of disrespect in their "everyday life" and explores how the practice of racism by the majority remains the same even though the structure has changed over time, it is accepted as if it were the norm in everyday life, adapted in lived everyday contexts and ingrained in every day mundane routines. It is intricately woven into the fabric of everyday living and, because of this subtlety, can be difficult to substantiate (Dunn & Nelson, 2011).

'Racism' and its Practice in Australia

This section of the chapter commences by recounting a conversation I had with a mature, Australian born, Muslim woman of Indian origin, who was attending the same all-day conference concerning Muslim women and their employment experiences. Our conversation introduces the chapter's dialogue on concepts of racism and its practices in Australia and describes how the gauge for rejection of an individual in Australia, at the time my acquaintance was employed (late 1940s to the early 1970s) was skin colour. For her, throughout her professional working life as a tertiary educated and qualified accountant, the only barrier to feeling comfortable and accepted during her various employment experiences, was her colour. She considered she was always identified as

being ethnically and historically different and, as a result, and in her words, "inferior". Over morning tea, we discussed her situation and how her colour, her physical human difference of "the matter through which race is signalled" (Alexander & Knowles, 2005:2) was the singular root cause of domination and exclusion and deeply implicated in the operations of power in her workplace environment. For this Muslim woman, the idea of race as a biological entity, an inferiority based on genetic or inherited characteristics, was sufficient enough to be identified as 'different'. Interestingly, at that time, her colour, and what it signified, was deemed of greater significance than the Islamic veil she wore, as it was never referred to by her fellow employees and, she believed, never contributed to her experiences of acts of exclusion.

Since white settlement, racism in Australian society has been historically linked with acts of prejudice and exclusion (Collins, 1999:387; Alcoff, 2001:268; Banton, 2005:51-52)[61] with the distinguishing criterion for belonging to a designated "ethnic minority" group being the colour of one's skin (Mason, 2000:15). An horizontal colour line cut across every society in such a way as to leave coloured individuals in the lower stratum and the whites in the upper (Kabir, 2004:21). It was "a formal doctrine and a tool for managing and containing difference" (Turner, 2006:4) and represented "repression and domination" (Anderson, 1983:136). Colour and ethnicity were seen as a threat to the majority identity and economic security of the country (Kabir, 2004:15) and these ethno-racial structures continued to hold resonance because of the ingrained habit of "reading human difference and worth in racial terms" (Amin, 2010:13; Essed, 2002; Goldberg & Solomos, 2002; Nayak, 2005:141-142).

Colour was very relevant to racism because of its ability to dictate in which stratum of society individuals were positioned. Skin colour emphasised the hierarchies of "superior" and "inferior" races that, in turn, formed the basis of traditional racism, and "whiteness"

[61] See also Bonilla-Silva (1997:469-473); Fanon (1967); Henry & Sears (2002:254); Mills (1998:53); Lamont (2000:49); Nayak (2005:158); Omi & Winant (2002:125-131); Hage (2002:417).

was used as the benchmark against which all others should be defined. Hopkins (2004:263) highlights how skin colour encouraged both exclusion and harassment:

> The experiences of exclusion and harassment are regularly due to phenotypical features such as skin colour, and therefore, perceived membership of a particular racial group.

The White Australia Policy was put in place to placate concerns that the superiority of the Australian Anglo-Saxon society was being undermined (Stratton & Ang:1994). As previously documented, the Policy, formed in the early twentieth century and existing until the mid-1970s, was principally aimed at deterring Asian migration and to avoid the "tainting" of the superior British race (Stratton & Ang, 1994). The, so called, "Anglo-Saxon" race was not only superior to all other races but had the obligation to civilise the rest of society (Stratton & Ang, 1994) with the desired outcome being the creation of a "New Britannia" in the South Seas (Jupp, 2002:5). As a result, beliefs about relative status and power became embedded in social roles and standards, helping to maintain the social advantages that whites had over other non-Europeans (Kabir, 2004:19).

Hage (1998:20,58.59) illustrates how "white and whiteness" have become the ideal of being the bearer of 'Western' civilisation and a cultural dominance born out of the history of European expansion. Hage (1998:232) further illustrates the Western understanding of "whiteness" by arguing that it appears in many forms to promote superiority, including the considered superior Western religious belief, Christianity:

> Whiteness operates as a symbolic field of accumulation where many attributes such as looks, accent, 'cosmopolitanism' or 'Christianity' can be accumulated and converted into Whiteness.

The concept of 'whiteness', referred to in this research, is not related to colour, instead it identifies as a set of power relations (Mills cited in Gozdecka et al., 2014:57), a taken-for-granted hegemonic category and a metaphor for Western supremacy. This thesis continues the use of white privilege and power because, simply put, 'whiteness' is the production and reproduction of dominance. It is a personification of a privilege that provides psychological entitlements to white people (Frankenberg, 1993:236 and Brodkin, 1999 each cited in Green & Sonn, 2006:381; Modood, 2008). Indications of "white privilege" are referred to by the participants, especially on occasions such as the Cronulla riots, discussed later in this chapter.

Theories of whiteness remain disputed by some scholars who prefer an emphasis on other forms of majority hegemony. In particular, Kaufmann (2006:250) prefers the concept of "dominant ethnicity" to describe majority practice because the "over emphasis [of] the ideological character of whiteness deifies whites". Nayak's research (2003:139) has found that Western society's interpretation of a white "norm", unmarked by racial categories in everyday contexts, then tends, in Western eyes, to represent humanity as a whole. This, in Nayak's view (Ibid), has led to an over-racialisation of minorities, at the expense of a de-racialisation of the majorities. And, as Hall reminds us (1997:236-238), the binding or bonding together of us who are 'normal' into one imagined community, sends into symbolic exile the Other, who are in some way different (see also Devine, 1989:5-18) and barriers are constructed.

Acts of racism, in all forms, have not remained static, they have evolved and adapted to circumstances and situations (Essed, 1991). The physical characteristics that were used as a vehicle to express disdain for groups of people (referred to as "old racism") have been replaced by a stigmatising of groups who exhibit the non-physical characteristics of

'difference', a contrast to white people (Barker, 1982:10; Hall, 1997:238; Modood, 2008)[62] As a result, the current understanding of racism (termed 'new racism') presumes a meaningful departure from immutable biological racism and is constructed on, and coded in, a language of Otherness or a stigmatising and expelling of anything which is defined as different (Barker, 1982:10; Hall, 1997:238).

Debates around 'racism', what it is, if it exists now, or if it ever existed in the first place, continue to permeate everyday living and thinking (see Collins et al., 2000:247; Hage, 1998:29). The demeaning of 'racism' has not erased acts of discrimination and prejudice against those who are 'different', instead, it has simply induced people to seek other ways of expressing their biases that do not rely on biological data. As Collins et al. (2000:247) argue "whilst there is no 'race' of people as such, individuals and institutions operate as if they were in common usage". As a result, understandings of race and racism maintain their legacy as an indicator of an existing racially defined social problem of inequity. Domination and acts of exclusion, or a socially constructed manner of differentiation, continue to shape people's routine actions (Hage, 1998:34, see also Poynting & Perry, 2007:151).

At the same time, Barker (1982:17-18) identifies a perceived "advantage" of shifting focus from the traditional markers of an overt "old racism", with its focus on biological make-up, to the redefinition of "new racism" based on cultural differences. He argues that, because the latter circumvents any taboo of being considered superior to other races with regards to colour and ethnicity and its denigration of people on account of their race, expressions of intolerance have become more sophisticated. This so called "advantage", referred to by Barker, is that it is very difficult to highlight racist attitudes and practices in order to contest them in the domain of the secular workplace.

[62] See also Forrest & Dunn (2007:703); Lamont (2000:49); Nayak (2005:158); Omi & Winant (2002:125-131); Jayasuriya (2002:42).

The majority, or the dominant Anglo Australian host society, has selected individuals and groups considered unable to 'fit in' (Dunn et al., 2004:409,411; 2007:566-567; Forrest & Dunn, 2007:705; Omi & Winant, 2002:139; Hall, 1997:230,236). Thus, those who do not 'fit in' present as an incompatibility with the majority viewpoint, an unacceptability with the norms of society (the considered 'Us'). They are members of the Other in a white-Anglo-Christian nation (Colic-Peisker, 2011:580; Dunn, Klocker & Salabay, 2004:411; Kabir, 2004:26; Pedersen & Walker, 1997:565 cited in Forrest & Dunn, 2007:705).

The construction of Otherness is flexible and can be manipulated to suit the situation, it is very easy to narrow and redefine culture and values so that the designated Others remain outsiders (Essed:1991). In the idealism of Otherness, rather than emphasising the importance of "whiteness" associated with "old racism", ethnic minorities are now the considered threat to the social cohesion, national unity, cultural values and integrity of the dominant (Anglo-Australian) "host society" (Jayasuriya, 2002:42; Dunn et al., 2007; Kaufmann, 2006:232).

Yalda, aged 25 years, a second generation participant of Pakistani who veils, describes how being treated as a member of the Other is experienced in the course of everyday living. On this occasion, Yalda was shopping with a friend:

> I went to a shopping centre and a man bumped into me with a trolley, he did it on purpose. My friend said leave it alone, we don't want any problems and I said OK and we kept walking and he walked past again and whispered, 'Scum murderers', just like that. It has made a lasting impression on me.

Yalda's encounter also demonstrates how elements of 'old' and 'new' racism meld together. She experienced prejudice because of her colour and ethnicity ('old' racism),

she was labelled a member of the Other ('new' racism) as she appeared different and her veiled appearance equated to her being "not one of us" (Dunn & Nelson, 2011).

Nawal, aged 45 years, a first generation participant of Turkish origin, who veils, also relates how Muslims, especially Muslim women, feel when treated as a member of the Other:

> When you're at school, or if you're at uni, when you're a young person and you wear a veil, you might have had someone who is rude to you on a train or a bus or in a street and because you haven't got your own self-esteem developed and those kind of things, sometimes you can carry that with you for a very long time, so if you've seen your mother or your sister or friends being abused by adults, called names, just because they wear a veil on their head, you may grow up thinking that the whole community, the whole community in the world is like that and if you have someone not serve you in a shop, or someone yell at you or someone swear at you, or throw something at you, you may also think that everyone is like that, then, therefore, you grow up believing that that's reality rather than accepting that that's not reality, well, not all the time, at least.

Nawal's comments, related to me as we enjoyed morning coffee together, were made without emotion and in a dispassionate and matter-of-fact fashion, "it's something that we've all suffered in varying degrees". By describing the memory of her experiences being with her "for a very long time", Nawal is also demonstrating how specific instances acquire meaning only in relation to the sum total, one event triggers memories of other

similar incidents, of the beliefs surrounding the event, of behavioural coping and cognitive responses, all experiences that are multidimensional. Nawal's comments endorse the understanding that each participant is endowed with a lifestyle that has been influenced by past experiences and as Merleau-Ponty (2012) argues, it can also include an historical knowledge of one's collective group experiences, that one does not necessarily need to experience an incident, it can be the experiences of other people who share the same background (see also Anna, 2014:116).

For Muslims, identified as the Other, this "new racism", couched in terms of non-acceptance and expressed in phrases such as "not like us", can even cast doubt on their integrity and loyalty as citizens (Humphrey, 2005:135). As this chapter further illuminates, the impact of being considered different, or the Other, denies mobility, regulates one's movements, causes feelings of embarrassment and can discredit self-worth and the relevance of the consequences is deeply significant to the participants. Dunn (2009) goes so far as to suggest that Muslims are the "great Other of the white-Anglo-Christian nation" and, Dunn et al. (2007:569) argue that culture has now replaced biology to signal inferiority and incompatibility with non-Muslim "Australian" culture (see also Wren, 2010:141):

> Muslim identities in Australia are corralled by racialisation. The accumulating Western stereotypes of Islam – a mix of the now well-known stereotypes of fanaticism, violence, misogyny and general incivility (animality) - swirl within local debates about mosques and the racialisation of certain suburbs, and in the security and asylum seeker discourses. Muslims are constructed as culturally inferior or incompatible with non-Muslim 'Australian' culture – as culturally Other.

When asked how she would describe how it feels to be “excluded”, Reem, a first generation participant of Lebanese origin, aged 45 years who veils, thought for a moment before encapsulating the emotions behind being considered “different” and a member of the Other:

> One of my first experiences [as a young girl growing up
> in Lakemba, a suburb located in western Sydney]
> was when my friend, she was Christian, would come to my
> house all the time, she loved my Mum’s biscuits that she
> used to bake in Lebanon. I was never invited to her place.
> Then I said, I want to come to your house and she was reluctant
> to have me and then she told me that her mother would not
> allow it because I’m a Muslim and we talk a ‘funny lingo’.

Farah, a first generation participant of Turkish origin, aged 42 years who veils, confirms Reem’s feeling:

> We go to the shops and people look at you, it’s almost that
> you are always pin pointed and you have to be very, extra
> careful not to do anything, the same thing that for other people
> is not a problem. For example, I had a little child and if
> the child was crying, everybody is looking at you strangely,
> why is it your child is crying and the same lady next to me,
> her child is crying and nobody is looking at her, that is strange.

Reem and Farah both provide examples of being excluded because of their considered difference and illustrate how complex acts of exclusion are based on processes created through routine practices (Essed, 2002). Reem’s school friend was endorsing her parent’s beliefs that anyone who spoke a language that was foreign, a non-English ‘funny lingo’,

was not welcome in her family home, because of 'difference'. Even as a young child, Reem was experiencing the formation of a barrier. Farah feels that although she was in the predicament that all mothers have found themselves in, having to cope with a crying baby, only she was critically noticed by other people. Both Reem and Farah are caught up in the collective and inherited characteristics of incompatibility and a non-acceptance of Western values that are imposed on Muslims and which form barriers that act as catalysts for "incompatibility with" and "inferiority to" those of Western values (Dunn et al., 2007, see also Louis, 2002:652). These characteristics are then presumed to influence behavior and attitudes (Barker, 1982:10; Hall, 1997:238; Jayasuriya, 2002:42; Dunn et al., 2007, Kaufmann, 2006:232). Both Reem and Farah have become members of the Other.

It is also worthy of note that Reem refers to her friend's parents as "Christian". It may well be that they were a family whose religious practice was Christian, however, the analysis of my fieldwork data reveals that the participants frequently referred to their Anglo Australian fellow employees as 'Christians', especially when describing fellow female employees. This is an interesting finding because, as Maddox argues, while Australia is described as culturally and historically Christian, "it could hardly be said to be actively or obviously Christian today". Maddox argues that for white Australians, "Christian values now stand for a general and nostalgic sense of 'tradition' which is related to nationalism, civic order and public values" (Maddox, 2011:75), or, as Hage suggests, Christian values have converted into "whiteness" (Hage, 1998:232). Thus, in this instance, the meaning of "Christian" has taken on two interpretations, for white Australians, it is related to "a sense of tradition" but for the participants who used the word "Christian", it is interpreted as meaning a 'barrier of difference'. This situation is referred to again in Chapter 6.

With its focus on difference, the Other is proof that a white hierarchy continues to persist in Australia long after the demise of the White Australia Policy. The results of each are exactly the same, both 'new' and 'old' versions of racism equate to marginalisation and

exclusion (Kabir, 2004:22,26; Barker, 1982:10; Hall, 1997:238). Omi and Winant (2002:139) refer to it as the "monolithic racism of yore reflected in the messy racial hegemony of contemporary times". 'Old' racism with its power to practice racial hierarchy and 'new' racism with its power to define 'difference' each demonstrate similar power bases, it is but a continuity of the same ideology but guised in different forms (Anna, 2014:115). Both take up the practice of exclusion and occupy a privileged position within national space, "perceiving themselves to be the enactors of the national will within the nation" (Ho & Dreher, 2009:47). Any dialogue about Muslims makes reference to culture, religious beliefs, values and ways of life that are essentialised and portrayed to be incompatible with, and inferior to, those of Western liberal democracies (Dunn et al., 2007; Maddox, 2011:69; Syed, 2007:1959).

For recipients of racist insult there is usually some form of social fragmentation, emotionally and psychologically injurious that affects well-being (Miller & Schamess, 2000:52-60). My first quotation to illustrate is provided by Ghadah, aged 38 years, a second generation participant of Lebanese origin who veils. As she recounted her dreadful experience, which had occurred some years before, tears filled her eyes:

> I had a woman who spat at me too, in Birkenhead Point, she just made a scene, she said Jesus is God and all of you should go to hell. People were just looking and some were laughing, I thought, isn't there anyone here who is going to defend me. My niece, who was with me, and I were so frightened. Just think of what it is like, thinking that you are going to cop some kind of discrimination or abuse every time you walk down the street, you always fear for your safety. We ran to my car in the parking area and drove home.

Ghadah brings into reality what it is like to be treated as the Other on occasions where there is no one around to help her. She describes what it is like to be fearful each time she walks down the street in case she is confronted by acts of discrimination or abuse and challenges me to consider what it is like to "think you are going to cop some kind of discrimination" each time I leave the safety of my own home.

Not all participants react the same way, Jadwa, aged 23 years, a second generation participant of Turkish origin who veils, describes her encounter. In contrast to Ghadah, who expresses fear that her experience may be repeated again, Jadwa's reaction is one of frustration:

> I was standing here by myself waiting for my friend, it is always by yourself, and he turned around with his mate in the car and he said 'take that f…. towel off your head'. At first I just pretended that I didn't hear him and I thought I'm not going to get into a confrontation with him, and then I thought if he says another thing, I am going to go over to the car and say 'Are you a big man, shouting at me, a woman standing by herself and you're with your friends, you are so courageous. Good on you'. I ask you - why should I take this, it's not right. What can I do in those situations, but my friend said to me, the best thing is not to approach them because you don't know how they are going to react, maybe they'll be even more abusive.

Visibility of the veil marks Muslim women as particularly vulnerable to anti-Muslim hostility and renders them "ideal subjects" in public places (Chakraborti & Zempi, 2012:269,271,28).[63] Each of the participants, above, provides examples of being non-

[63] Similar experiences of other veiled participants are detailed in Chapter 5.

confrontationist because of safety concerns, Ghadah and her niece ran from the scene and Jadwa and Yalda (see above) were both advised by friends not to approach the perpetrators for fear of what they may do next. Each quotation demonstrates a potentially huge emotional burden on each victim, solely as a result of their 'visible' membership in the Muslim community.

Jadwa, by contemplating that she would confront her antagonist if he continues his rant, endorses the Black feminist theory that describes indignant rage, "Why should I take this, it's not right", as healthy responses to racism, it inspires courageous behavior and achieves a determination of a 'self'. On the other hand, black feminist theorists Lengermann and Niebrugge (2007: 189-214) argue that internalised subjugation progressively embedded in the body can powerfully influence the way that coloured women perceive themselves and can lead to an ambivalent acceptance of exclusion and a sense of limited autonomy. This uneasy sense of exclusion and her concern that past experiences may be repeated again (Merleau-Ponty, 2012) is detected as Ghadah continues her story:

> I received a promotion at work but it was in the city which meant I had to catch a bus each day. Then I thought, what's going to happen on the bus, how will I be treated on the bus to work. I excuse people because there is a lot of ignorance out there. They don't realise that you are still a person. You can feel that people don't want to sit next to you on the bus and there are people standing and no-one will sit next to you, and you think OK, so I'd actually pick a single seat so that I won't upset or offend anyone. I'm thinking, you don't really know me. What kind of a person do you think I am?

As a result, Ghadah refused the promotion, preferring to stay at her current place of employment because she felt protected by driving to its location. Ghadah is identifying a significant barrier that prohibited her working to her full potential, a potential that her employers obviously recognised by wishing to reward her with promotion. Ghadah's decision also avoided any feelings that she may upset or "offend" someone, merely by her presence on the bus, which illustrates Nayak's comment (2003) that these experiences are deeply significant and have the potential to devalue other identities and capacities. Her decision also confirms the observations of Chakraboti and Zempi (2012:273):

> A decision to reduce travel by foot and by public transport and a decision to avoid visiting certain public places are all ways of trying to reduce the risk.

Ghadah is not the only participant who avoids travel by public transport. Zaina, a second generation participant of Lebanese origin, aged 32 years, who veils, describes the reason she drives to her place of employment, rather than take public transport:

> I need to drive to work, it insulates me and a lot of Muslim women I know do that. They won't venture out because they know how hard it is to have that fear in the back of your mind – how will I be treated out there.

A recent Beyond Blue television advertisement entitled "The Invisible Discrimination - Stop. Think. Respect" features an identical story to Ghadah's, that of a neatly dressed Australian aboriginal man sitting in a bus with an empty seat beside him and a young woman preferring to stand rather than occupy the seat next to him. Beyond Blue is an organisation focusing on Australian males' high rates of depression and how acts of exclusion may trigger suicidal thoughts. Both instances illustrate acts of exclusion, Ghadah and the aboriginal man are both labelled as 'different' and members of the Other.

At the same time, other participants, whilst understanding Ghadah and Zaina and their belief that it is better to avoid being in the public domain in order to reduce risk, disagree strongly with their decision:

> No matter what you do, there are people that oppose you.
> As long as you are doing the right thing, just go for it.
>
> You need your own self-esteem and belief in yourself,
> regardless of how anyone treats you. Believe in yourself,
> know you are Australian and Muslim and you have every right
> in this society to achieve what you need, nothing should
> stop you regardless of how you are treated.
>
> That does happen to me, if the train is full, my seat is the last
> seat for people to sit next to me. But I just think if people
> don't want to sit with me, that means more room for me
> – I actually turn the negative experience into a positive one.

This small sample of quotations illustrates how some participants have moved on from the Lengermann and Niebrugge (2007:189-214) description of black women, and that internalised subjugation can lead to an "ambivalent acceptance of exclusion and a sense of limited autonomy". One participant acknowledges that there will always be people who oppose Muslims and they should be ignored, the second participant emphasises the importance of having "self-esteem and belief in yourself" and that "you have every right to be in this society". The final participant turns the negative experiences of fellow travellers who avoid sitting next to her in the train into a positive one by declaring "that means more room for me".

The following section of the chapter demonstrates how the participants also encounter exclusion from a different source. It highlights facets of symbolic boundary making based on "the subtle influences of patriarchy and sexist traditions" (Syed, 2007:1955), that is, the barriers that exist for all female employees in their workplace environments. In many respects, this tradition brings them to the same 'side' as all female employees but at the same time, the participants part company with their Anglo Australian women colleagues because of 'difference', perceived or otherwise and by both parties.

Gender Divides and Barriers in the Workplace

A notable shift in the increased presence of all women into spaces in the public realm, traditionally occupied by white men, has meant that now formally all women can enter positions from which they were previously excluded (Puwar, 2004:8). The 'glass ceiling' has been cracked quite significantly in recent years, although overall, progress towards gender equity remains extremely slow. This is despite equal employment policies being in place that were introduced in Australia in the early 1980s as a response to female imbalance in the workplace. Nevertheless, despite the policies, there remains a gender divide for all women employees as a consequence of the constitutive boundaries of who are the considered ideal figures of leadership, that is, the masculine 'norm' as the force in the workplace (Puwar, 2004:7,8,9).

Nawal, whom we have met previously in this chapter, describes the barriers that remain for *all* female employees as "assuredly, an all-women's thing". She emphasises how all women are significantly under-represented both at senior levels and on executive boards, "even in the best-practice organisations" (Syed, 2007:1957), a concern for all women employees:

> If you look at the stats for women in the workplace, in general,
> only 3% of women hold CEO jobs in Australia, there's
> only 14% of senior women on boards on the ASX 200

> listed companies, there's only a small percentage of women in senior positions and Liz Broderick[64] always says that if we continue on the way we are, it will take another 168 years to catch up with men. It's assuredly, an all-women's thing.

These statistics detail the collective concerns of all female employees in the workplace and which, theoretically, bring them to the same side in workplace situations. However, included in the concerns of the participants, that of experiences of exclusion, of stereotyping and its "burden", my research locates an intersection of cultural-religious differences between female employees, that is, between employees named as 'Anglo Australian' women and Muslim women in their secular workplace environments. Puwar (2004:7) goes so far as to propose that for Muslim women employees, the cracked glass ceiling is transformed into one of "concrete that has just been chipped ever so slightly" because of differences. Similarities of employment experiences that bind all women employees together can thus part company because of a culture-religious divide.

The participants propose three issues that identify cultural differences between them and Anglo Australian women employees: shaking hands with an unrelated male; an assumed presumption that it is in order for males to invade personal space at functions outside the office environment; the attendance at staff social functions, or 'bonding' occasions, at which alcohol is served. Each difference is based on the participants' individual practice of their religious belief. This cultural-religious divide does not then elevate Anglo Australian women to the same side as those described as the 'force' in the workplace, the masculine 'norm'. It serves to highlight the contrast between the two sets of women: Anglo Australian women do shake hands with unrelated males, they do attend staff social events that include alcohol and they are familiar with, what the participants refer to, as "invasion

[64] Ms. Broderick is the Sex Discrimination Commissioner for Australia.

of personal space" that may occur at staff social functions held outside the office environment.

Touching an Unrelated Male is Cause for Concern

> The Prophet said, 'The one who touches the hand of a woman without having a lawful relationship with her will have an ember placed on his palm on the Day of Judgement'.
>
> (Takmalah, Fath al-Qadir).

In Australia, the shaking of hands has many commonly understood cultural and emotional associations. It is conducted when greeting another person and on leave-taking and is more common in a formal setting and for introductions than it is for informal settings, regular meetings or repeated interactions. Formerly, it was mainly considered as a male-to-male encounter, but today, it is common practice between both men and women. There are rules which do have a universal significance, in formal encounters it is taken as an indication of co-operative good faith and to refuse to shake hands with someone who has extended a hand is a strong sign of rejection, an offer of goodwill is turned down (Robinson, 2003:151).

Naairah, a first generation participant of Lebanese origin, aged 48 years, who veils, relates the comment made by an Anglo Australian male with whom she had refused to shake hands. Naairah illustrates the significance that is placed on shaking hands, especially by Anglo Australian men, and that she refused to shake hands because she wished to please her new husband by acknowledging that Muslim women do not touch unrelated males:

> When we met, he reached across his general manager's desk and extended his hand. My husband was with me and we had just been married and I knew he would

> be angry if I shook hands, so I said, 'I'm sorry,
> I don't shake hands'. That man never forgot that and when
> we met about ten years later, at another business meeting,
> he said 'I'll never forget that woman because she refused to
> shake my hand'.

For all the participants, and in contrast to their Anglo Australian female counterparts working in the secular workplace, there is agreement that shaking the hand of an unrelated male causes unease. The quotation, referring to an ember being placed in the palm, that introduces this section of the chapter, was often referred to by the participants. Alima, a second generation participant of Egyptian origin, aged 25 years, who veils, recounts the concern she feels about seeking employment in the secular workplace and of being faced with the possibility of shaking hands with an unrelated man:

> I still worry about entering the workforce, and being known
> as a Muslim. First of all shaking hands with a man, if you want
> to make a good impression with people, you have to shake hands.

Islamic rules governing social interaction among males and females are "problematic to maintain" because they conflict with the conventional norms of the dominant culture (Zine, 2001:399). Some participants hide their hands, or place their right hand over their heart should an introduction appear imminent whilst other participants avoid the situation by making a special effort not to be in close proximity when introductions are being conducted, and acknowledge the introduction by a hand wave. Other participants make an effort to accommodate dominant sensitivities should a formal introduction be unavoidable, as these two comments attest:

> I feel if you are going to cause offense, and it's something
> that I've heard from scholars as well, if someone puts

> their hand out first, then you should accept it, if you refuse, you're more likely to cause offense and that's a greater misdemeanor than touching.
>
> I believe very strongly that there are verses in the Qur'an that Islam is about moderation, it's about making things easier, not harder, and it's about common sense as well and so for me shaking hands isn't a problem in the workplace.

Alima, a second generation participant of Bangladeshi origin, aged 26 years, who veils, made prior arrangements before she graduated:

> When I graduated from Macquarie, I let the guy on the stage know beforehand that I wouldn't shake his hand, so it wasn't awkward because he knew.
> In high school, our principal, who was male, also knew that, so when a Muslim girl accepted an award on stage, he didn't try to shake her hand. It's the whole male thing, don't touch issue.

Whilst many participants do not shake an unrelated male's hand, Wafa, a second generation participant of Afghani origin, aged 32 who veils, is the only participant who goes to an extreme effort not to touch a non-related male. Wafa has chosen not to work in the secular workplace, but prefers employment in a Muslim environment and has retrained to accommodate this preference:

> Sometimes you're put in a very difficult position where you don't have the opportunity to explain. Sometimes if you

> are afraid that there's going to be a man and you might have to shake hands, you can wear your gloves to avoid contact. Some people might take it the wrong way but, religiously, we shouldn't.

Wafa believes that by not shaking hands, it sets other limits:

> Each person is sacred and for me to touch that other person, is wrong. If a man can't take my hand, then he can't touch me, he can't kiss me, he can't touch me in any other way.

Wafa brings up another important point of concern, that of invading personal space, the second issue referred by the participants that identifies cultural differences between Anglo Australian women and Muslim women in the secular workplace:

Invasion of Personal Space

Sommer (1959:247) describes personal space as the "space of the organism", that is, the personal distance that the organism customarily places between itself and other organisms. This distance may vary from individual to individual, it has no fixed geographic reference points, it moves about with the individual and expands and contracts under varying conditions. Little (1965:238) identifies "personal space" as the area immediately surrounding the individual in which the majority of his/her interactions with others take place. Little proposes that when a stranger stands too close, it arouses resentment and dislike, and manipulation of personal space, as a form of nonverbal communication can markedly influence behavior. Measurements of personal space, or the area immediately surrounding an individual, demonstrate its reality and function as a body-buffer zone in interpersonal transactions (Horowitz et al, 1964:651).

Ahmes, a first generation participant of Turkish origin, aged 47 years, who does not veil, also refers to the concern of touching and in doing so, makes a comparison between Muslim and Anglo Australian women, that of interpreting what is understood by an invasion of 'personal space'. She demonstrates how the reality of invasion of personal space may vary from individual to individual and is tolerated by some more so than others:

> I don't have a problem with shaking hands. What I really struggle with, is kissing 'hello', it's huge, even now I struggle with it because I find it an intrusion on my personal space. I find also, it is a very strange situation when I'm at work, the partner, with whom I have a very formal relationship, and I've always maintained those barriers, if you are together in a party or a work lunch, it is suddenly OK to kiss 'hello', whereas that space would never be intruded on in an office situation. I guess it's an Australian thing. My friends and I talk about it all the time, you end up in a situation where a man has approached you and you reciprocate straight away instead of backing off because it's as though you're saying don't do it, then suddenly you end up doing it. I really struggle with it because for me, it's inappropriate, I don't want to be touched, it's my personal space.

Ahmes is not alone in referring to invasion of personal space by a male in a situation outside the workplace environment. Numah, a veiled second generation participant of Lebanese origin, aged 45 years, comments on one of her experiences:

> Perhaps it's the persona of all Australians, a lot of people do have a lot of problems with it, but, it's just what happens.

> What to do with it? It's just that they don't understand the etiquette of the religion so they're not doing it to offend you. I was a guest speaker one night and I took my mum along, at the end of it we were standing around chatting to some people and this man just came up to me and said, 'That was wonderful' and he gave me this hug, my mother just couldn't believe it, she said, 'Who is this man?' and I said, 'I have no idea'.

The reaction of her mother to Numah's encounter, is worthy of comment. Numah's mother came to Australia as a young married woman. On this occasion, she witnessed her daughter's personal space being encroached on, and, more importantly, being embraced by an unidentified man. When asked what her mother's reaction was, Numah advised me, with some amusement, that her veiled mother just shook her head in disbelief.

Numah and Karida both provide different versions of the same situation, the invasion of personal space. Karida describes how formal relationships, established within the workplace environment, can break down when colleagues step outside workplace barriers and attend a staff party or work lunch. She is describing a situation which is offensive to her, and also to her Muslim female friends who find themselves in the same situation. In contrast to her mother, Numah's interpretation of the incident, of an unknown man giving her a hug, appears conciliatory. She is giving all Australians the benefit of the doubt, not only do they not understand the etiquette of her religion, but their actions are not intended to be offensive:

> My interpretation is, it is up to you, you can still be who you are and fulfil your values, but if you want things to change around you to meet your needs, you are going to be disappointed.

This research did not pursue how Anglo Australian female employees manage the same situations of invasion of personal space, however, in discussions with the participants, it was concluded that they understand, and the majority accept, that formalities do break down at informal staff gatherings outside the office environment.

The concerns of preserving personal space also bring in the matter of obtaining a private space for prayer during the office day. It is no problem for those participants who have their own office, or the participants who have been allocated a private area, usually a vacant office during the lunch break. Some participants, who have not yet requested a space, or feel uncomfortable about asking management, either compromise by adding the daytime prayers to those of the evening when they are in the privacy of their own homes. The participants also consider alternative venues of employment. These venues could include the public service, where a prayer room is provided, legal aid or other multicultural establishments and Muslim-run institutions such as secondary schools, where they may also be required to retrain or acquire teaching qualifications.

The Traditional Friday Night Drinks

A recent study of organisational identity and alcohol use among young employees (Walker and Bridgman, 2013:597-604) provides insights into work-alcohol relationships. The study confirms that alcohol provides a means for bonding with work colleagues, it is considered a medium to engage in a variety of organisational identification processes and a way for employees to maintain a particular image and identity. Management, too, fosters synergy of their identification badge by encouraging staff 'bonding' functions such as the traditional Friday night drinks where alcohol and food are traditionally provided. These occasions have many functions, not only for staff to be identified with their in-group but to keep abreast of (and aid) office 'chatter'. Wilson, (cited in Walker and Bridgeman, 2013:599) confirms that alcohol use is a part of work life rather than a by-product that occurs outside of working hours:

> Drinking practices are active elements in individual and group identifications … where meanings are made, shared, disputed and reproduced, where identities shape, flourish and change.

Participants acknowledge the importance of the occasional attendance at these functions, even if it is to dispel an 'anti-social' label. The participant, who rejects the invitation to attend social functions, voices the opinion that by refusing, she is endorsing the collective stereotype of a Muslim woman who is 'different', or the Other, a member of an anti-social out-group who is resistent to becoming part of the organisational bonding. The participants' reasons for non-attendance may be perfectly legitimate such as observing evening curfews stipulated by their families, or the need to leave early to collect and care for their children.

Primarily, it is the concern of being in the presence of alcohol. Each participant who is employed in the secular workplace has her own view on being in the presence of alcohol. As the following quotations testify, it is a concern for all Muslim women working in that environment:

> I just find it hard, being in this country where drinking is a way of life. I have Muslim friends who would not go into an environment that serves alcohol. They have very, very strong ideas. I believe it's a personal call. I can attend [office functions], I can socialise, I just won't pick up a drink. You are in a Western country, you can't expect things to fit around you. So, it's up to you, you can still be who you are and fulfil your values.

Friday night drinks, I wouldn't go because it is not my thing, I can network over a cup of coffee if I want to. If it was someone's farewell and it was one of my colleagues, of course I would turn up, because it is about saying goodbye.

Christmas functions? I do go because it is expected of me. In the end I think it is a function of your own self-esteem, how you feel about things. I know a lot of Muslim women who feel very uncomfortable at a function that serves alcohol and I always say, this is Australia and that's what it is, so either deal with it or don't go. It is a personal decision.

I attend all Friday night drinks, I don't drink alcohol, but I do attend, not all my Muslim girlfriends do because alcohol is present, it doesn't worry me and I enjoy catching up with my work friends. I shouldn't be in the presence of alcohol. I think it is quite hard. Again I go to a lot of dinners, a lot of functions where alcohol is present, a lot of client functions. I think it would be quite hard to say that I don't attend functions where there is alcohol. I attend the functions and I don't drink, I feel that's sufficient for me.

I try to avoid occasions where alcohol is present. It's a challenge for me, as a lawyer, the legal profession is all about networking which generally includes alcohol. I don't go to places like that and time after time they miss my presence and I have to explain that I am not being a

> social outcast, I just can't be in the presence of alcohol,
> I am uncomfortable.

Only one participant, Zaina who we have met before[65], indicated that attending staff celebrations at Christmas were a cause for concern for her, not because of the presence of alcohol as she sometimes attended "work drinks", but because she considered these events to be "religious".

> I try to avoid Christmas lunches, because it is a religious
> event, and after work drinks but sometimes I go as I
> don't want them to think bad of me.

When it was suggested that these events may be held at Christmas time, but they were not usually considered a "religious" event, the participant maintained that she considered all events held at Christmas time were of a "religious" nature. In this instance, it can be seen how a barrier has been built, this time of the participant's own making.

The final section of the chapter examines the three chosen power based strategies of workplace exclusion selected by the participants – the power base that is an automatic feature of a white Anglo Australia majority and its associated ramifications; the stereotyping of Muslim women and the accompanying "burden of representation" and the power of "nationalism" that is fostered by the Australian media:

Power Base of the White Majority

Karida, aged 33 years, a second generation participant of Egyptian origin, who does not veil, sets the scene by providing an example of how acts of exclusion are embedded in social structures and constructed as a category of power. Karida recalls the experience of a friend, also of Egyptian origin, who is studying at university and who was concerned that

[65] Page 143.

she had missed some important on-line lectures which, she felt, could result in her not doing well in her exams:

> My friend approached the lecturer and explained the situation and he said 'Why don't you take that thing off your head and you might do better'. At that point she was in a state of shock, and thought that maybe she hadn't hear him correctly, a lecturer saying that to her! So she said 'Pardon me', and he repeated his comment and she said 'Do you think when I put this thing on my head, I take my brain out?' And he said, 'Well, I think it might have something to do with your performance' and he just kept just walking. She was so flustered and said, 'No, no, no, you can't walk away, come back I want to talk to you', but he just kept walking. She was shattered by that experience.

The encounter of Karida's friend could not be described as subtle, nor is it positioned in a workplace situation, it is recounted here to demonstrate the power base of the white majority, a position her lecturer occupies. Karida's friend asked the lecturer to stop and discuss what he had said, but "he just kept walking". His attitude illustrates an unequal distribution of power (Essed, 2002), between the lecturer, aided by his own perceived power position and his student, as a member of the Other. Both Karida and I agreed that this situation would not have been the experience of a white Anglo-Australian student who would be considered a fellow member of the lecturer's power base and her veil could not have been used as a tool to criticise her performance.

By his comments, the lecturer is not only demonstrating his power base, but he is epitomising, as we will see, the white majority's belief that Muslim women, especially

those who identify as Muslim, are "just not up to it". Karida's friend was treated as if all Muslim women are in some way ignorant and with little ability. A barrier was formed because of what her appearance represented in the eyes of the lecturer, Karida's friend was veiled and, as a result, was a representative of the Other. At the same time, the verbal exchange would be very hard to prove and easy to deny.

Stereotyping and the 'Burden of Representation' in the Workplace

Muslims are ensnared in the confines of collective stereotyping. Not only do these social and cultural stereotypes dictate how they should 'be', but how they should 'behave'. As Marranci (2008:93) demonstrates, when these typecasts are created, neither differences in Islamic interpretations nor ethnic backgrounds are ever taken into account, or even understood. This collective stereotyping is then the means of defining an individual and as a result, estranging for Muslims (Ibid, 2008:94-95). It results in an identification that is made up of unalterable identities lacking individual agency.

Stereotyping is always directed against an excluded group (Hall, 1997:259; Brah, 1996:242; Yuval-Davis, 1994:179; Fiske, 1993:623) and constructed by marking, assigning and classifying what is considered the norm of that group (Hall, 1997:259). As a result, the options of the stereotyped are limited because a concept of the Other is constructed with an associated lack of power (Fiske, 1993:621). Stereotyping reduces individuals to a few simple, easily grasped and widely recognised characteristics that are then attributed to being representative of a whole alleged group (Hall, 1992:257-258; Meer, 2008:80). Hall (Ibid) describes how this "burden of representation" for the excluded individual completely ignores the other facets of that individual's lived experiences and, as Hyder suggests, (2004:114 cited in Noble, 2009:80) is the result of the "social compulsion" by majority Whites to identify a member of the excluded group as representing a whole racial community (see also Puwar, 2004:62-64).

Hall (1997:16) identifies “representation” to mean “to stand for, to be a specimen of, or to be a substitute for” and which is “carried around in our heads” (see also Nayak, 2003:139; Noble, 2009:884; Puwar, 2004:61-63). Those who do not fit in or match the essentialised Muslim therefore become lesser or illegitimate and, as a result, they too justify their exclusion from societal participation (Allen, 2010:77, see also Hall, 1992:258). The essentialised Muslim therefore becomes the blueprint for all Muslims, the universally idealised standard. In the process, Muslims can become entirely passive actors, without any say in the matter because contemporary anti-Muslim sentiment in Australia can frame and distort everyday perceptions of who this essentialised Muslim may be (Dunn, Klocker & Salabay, 2007:564).

Stereotyping is difficult to address in the secular workplace because it is difficult to prove. Due to the hierarchal nature of a workplace, negative assumptions about an individual can destroy chances of promotion, the enjoyment of being employed or indeed, obtaining employment in the first place. Because stereotyping dictates how certain groups or individuals should think, feel and behave, it allocates where their competence supposedly lies (Noble, 2009:876,882; Marranci, 2008:94-95; Seiter, 1986:14-26; Fiske, 1993:621; Nayak, 2003:139). In essence, its results are the diminishment of a subject’s full transactional worthiness and are a direct outcome of the power base of the white majority (Collins et al., 2000:247; Essed, 1991:158-175; Link & Phelan, 2001:382; First, 1972 cited in Noble, 2009:882; Goffman:1972).

The following quotations demonstrate how stereotyping takes many forms, in this instance that all veiled women are backward and uneducated. Rashida, aged 28 years, a first generation participant of Lebanese origin who veils, describes how she and her friends are treated by the Western majority power base:

> My friends and I find that, for instance, bank tellers perceive us not to speak English, or be actually

> very dumb or backward or you don't know what's going on. They speak slower and higher. It's very insulting. It is not fair to assume that just because I have something on my head, it gives me a lack of education and determines my education levels.

Yalda, a veiled, second generation participant of Lebanese origin, aged 28 years, is a staff advisor for a large corporate organisation. When she speaks at meetings connected with graduate programmes, she is aware, and "somewhat bemused", that the graduates are surprised, not only when she addresses them in English, but that she speaks with an Australian accent. For her audience, Yalda is not the stereotyped image of a Muslim woman they had been conditioned to believe (Allen, 2010:77), an image based on expectations and conditions that are expected and automatically taken for granted by the white majority (Essed, 1991:47,48):

> I can really see shock on people's faces which is really weird because I can probably speak English better than they can.[66]

Alhan, aged 35 years, a first generation participant of Lebanese origin who does not veil provides an example of exclusion because she did not fit or match the essentialised Muslim women's image. She describes her experience as a journalist reporting to a sub-editor of large publishing company:

> There was this kind of continual and unrelenting nuance on her part where she was trying to the best of her ability to claim I was inarticulate, I couldn't speak, I couldn't write, my performance was lousy and so on, which I thought was totally unfounded. My work had been accepted

[66] Yalda is referring to her 1st Class English Honors degree.

> in my other jobs as a senior journalist. I believe it had a lot to do with my identity both as an Arab female and as a Muslim.

Each participant is a victim of stereotyping enacted by the power base of the white majority, but their encounters differ. Yalda is aware that her audience, as representatives of the white majority, is surprised that she is a spokesperson for their corporation, perhaps they expect her to speak, not as an Australian, 'not one of us', but with a strong, foreign accent. More importantly, they do not expect a veiled Muslim woman to hold a positon of authority in the first place. For Rashida, the bank teller sees veiled women approaching and, immediately, stereotypical and easily grasped characteristics of a non-English speaking 'illiterate' Muslim woman come into play (see Hall, 1992:257-258). Alhan's experience reflects not only the stereotyping that Rashida experienced, it includes the negative assumptions relating to both her ethnic origins and her religious belief. This is regardless of the fact that Alhan did not identify as Muslim, she dressed in a Western fashion and made the point of never "referring to my Islamic roots" because of the understanding that "religious beliefs are my private business". In the eyes of her sub-editor, not only was she a member of the Other, she faced the added burden of being excluded from societal participation because she was *not* the stereotyped "essentialised" image of a Muslim woman (Allen, 2010:77; Hall, 1992:258). Her professional qualifications attained from a leading Sydney university were completely overlooked as was her previous work experiences. As Bullock explains, (2005:xvi cited in Haddad, 2007:263) the negative association of the veil with Muslim women affects even those who choose not to wear it:

> [F]irst their identity as a 'non-scarf' wearing woman is effaced by the ubiquitous image of the 'veiled woman', and second they are guilty by association.

At the same time, the sub-editor's disrespect for Alhan would not be considered 'racist' or based on religious belief, because her complaints related entirely to Alhan's work, a considered continual 'review process'. The labelling of Alhan as incompetent, resulting from her considered social illegitimacy (Firth, 1972 cited in Noble, 2009:882; Puwar, 2004:11; Noble & Poynting, 2010:501) caused the barriers and boundaries built by the sub-editor to be too high, and Alhan successfully sought other employment.

As Alhan, Rashida and Yalda illustrate, by holding on to a few simple, easily grasped and widely recognised characteristics, stereotyping reduces everything about that person to one common denominator. Their quotations demonstrate the stereotype that all Muslim women are uneducated and unaccomplished. The fact that they identify as Australians with Australian accents and have experienced Australia's education system did not enter the equation and their experiences serve to illustrate the 'no-win' situation in which Muslim women can find themselves.

This conclusion is also confirmed by A'isha's experience, aged 47 years, a first generation participant of Lebanese origin who veils. A'isha works in a professional capacity in Sydney's law courts and describes her first day of her new job:

> You know the perception, that veiled women are illiterate and uneducated and that's why the lady prosecutor said, 'Please leave, it's not your place here'. When I introduced myself and explained why I was here, she just looked at me. The experience was painful.

A'isha's experience, which she describes as "painful", illustrates what Noble (2009:62) identifies as reducing its recipients to visible racial or ethnic categories and obscures a view of them as fully human working subjects deserving of esteem and recognition. In the eyes of the lady prosecutor, who was quite prepared to send her to a symbolic exile,

A'isha's appearance conflicted with her professional position and interfered with the prosecutor's maintenance of social and symbolic order (Hall, 1992:258). To the prosecutor, A'isha was a mismatch, she could be perceived as an undesirable "space invader" (Puwar, 2004:10) enduring a burden of doubt and a burden of representation. On a similar note, Puwar (2004:40) narrates a comparable experience of a recently elected black woman MP to Westminster's House of Commons and the response of fellow MPs, "She knew what they were thinking, her presence disturbed and interrupted their sense of institutional place, they didn't need to say a word – she's not a cleaner, therefore, what is she doing here?"

Each of the quotations, related above, illustrates how exclusion is experienced and how all four participants were on the receiving end of acts of stereotyping. Gladwell (2002:263-264) provides another example of how biased and preconceived mindsets construct stereotyping of 'difference' or incompatibility with the majority viewpoint that has as its focus, any minority grouping. Gladwell describes his experiences as a teenager who, on a whim, had let his hair grow "wild". Gladwell is a white man, but because his appearance illustrated he was not part of what is considered the accepted majority norm, he was treated as a member of a minority. Not only did his long hair encourage the receipt of speeding tickets but, on one occasion, Gladwell was stopped by police, with their preconceived mindsets, who were looking for a rapist. The only feature that he and the rapist had in common was curly, wild hair. This inaccurate first impression created by his hair derailed every other consideration about him as an individual, and "devalued his other identities" (see also Nayak, 2003). His appearance precluded him from majority membership, the identical situation the above participants experienced.

The next quotation provides us with rich and informative data, Karida, whom we have met before, illustrates how she experienced acts of stereotyping and its "burden of representation" (Hall, 1997) in her workplace environment. Because she identifies as a Muslim woman, Karida is automatically labelled the office 'public property', obliged to

continually answer questions about her religious belief. Her experiences would not be those of her Anglo Australian female staff members, because, for most Anglo Australians, religious belief is a private matter and a topic not referred to in a secular workplace environment (Bouma & Brace-Govan, 2000:168). Her experience becomes even more pertinent as Karida is continually forced to answer intrusive questions about *her* private religious beliefs, as if she was the office representative of the whole of Australia's Muslim female population. Karida admires other Muslims' "patience" to continually parry questions about their private, religious beliefs and that sometimes, because of the continual intrusion into her private beliefs, Karida describes her feelings as sometimes wanting to "snap". She is also providing us with an illustration of the "long line of abuse" she encounters, that are reinforced and reproduced through complex attitudes of prejudice (Essed:2002):

> I understand that in this sort of society, people are curious and I give that to them, but, also, it has to be a recognition that these are very private things and because it's not considered 'normal' so to speak, you are forced to talk about things that otherwise are quite private. I really admire people who have patience all the time, and the thing is that sometimes, you can snap, and I know that it's not fair to that person, it just so happens that they might come after a long line of abuse, or questioning. Being continually identified this way makes you public property for everyone and anyone to ask questions, as if you represent all Muslim women in Australia. I find it so intrusive battling questions and fielding people, it can be quite exhausting. Sometimes people just want to be left alone.

Karida continues by describing a friend's decision to change her appearance and regain her anonymity by removing her veil. Her friend is no longer stereotyped by the majority as a member of the Other and a member of a minority group. By altering her appearance to one accepted by the majority, she is no longer considered the 'representative of all Muslim women'. Nothing else had changed except her appearance, she has returned from the symbolic exile of the Other and joined the ranks of the accepted 'us' and her other qualities are immediately recognised:

> This is what one of my friends said, she removed the veil after ten years because she just missed the anonymity, that was the only reason she took it off, she just wanted to go back to walking into a space and not being labelled 'Muslim', with all that it implies.

Amira, a second generation participant of South African origin, aged 34 years, who does not veil but verbally identifies as Muslim also finds it perplexing to be labelled the 'office authority on Islam' with the responsibility of being the constant representative of the whole Muslim community:

> When Sheik Taj Hillali[67] was making those statements about women and meat, I was sitting at the staff table having morning tea and one lady walked in and said, 'do all Muslims think like this guy Hillali?' She was asking do all Muslim women stand behind Sheik Taj, do we agree with what he said. I was made to feel very uncomfortable and said 'I can only speak for myself'. You have to be so diplomatic with what you say, you can't just talk, you have to think everything through because there

[67] In October, 2006, Taj El-Din Hilaly delivered a controversial Ramadan sermon, in Arabic, in which he made statements concerning, what he considered to be, inappropriate female clothing.

> are a lot of people in the workplace and you realise you are the only Muslim they probably know.

Amira provides us with a description of her "burden of representation", not only is she made to feel uncomfortable but finds that any questions about Islam unwittingly put her in a defensive position because she assumes she is probably "the only Muslim" her fellow staff members know. As a result, her 'burden' extends to feelings of responsibility and that she has to be diplomatic at all times, "you just can't talk, you have to think everything through".

Sera, a second generation participant of Indian origin, aged 28 years, who does not veil but identifies as a Muslim in her workplace environment, finds it a dilemma when she hears criticism of her religion, "say nothing, or not?":

> I choose the situation carefully and I basically decide, does it need to be said and is it going to make a difference. When people start to say things about the religion, especially after Sept 11, it is kind of confronting and dumb founding because I have never had to stand up for my religion ever before. I have lived 28 years of my life as a Muslim and then suddenly I have to account for myself and explain why I am what I am and what I'm doing. If I do say something defensive, everyone looks at me, then everyone changes their way of talking, very careful in what they say, if I hadn't said anything, they would have said a lot more.

The Power of Nationalism

Dunn et al. (2007:569) introduce the final issue, the power of nationalism, chosen by the participants as having an influence on their experiences in their workplace. The scholars

demonstrate how a Muslim identity automatically signals inferiority and incompatibility within the considered non-Muslim 'Australian culture':

> Muslim identities in Australia are corralled by racialisation. The accumulating Western stereotypes of Islam – a mix of the now well-known stereotypes of fanaticism, violence, misogyny and general incivility (animality) - swirl within local debates about mosques and the racialisation of certain suburbs, and in the security and asylum seeker discourses. Muslims are constructed as culturally inferior or incompatible with non-Muslim 'Australian' culture – as culturally Other.

The range of meanings associated with the concept of 'nation' is very broad, encompassing definitions of both citizenship and the traditional cultural and ethnical understanding of the nation (De Cillia et al., 1999:169; Wren, 2010:141). Goldberg, (1993:79) identifies 'nationalism' as the considered difference between those who claim birthrights and those who are unable to:

> Those properly of the nation are native to it, born and bred at its breast; natives, by contrast, are those natural in racial kind to foreign, hostile, dominated lands. The latter are naïve, simple, lacking art, culture and the capacity for rational self-determination. They are, in short, to be kept in their place, politically and geographically.

A 'national' identity describes a majority group who identifies with a community of people who feel they belong together and share deeply significant elements of a common heritage, "they have a common destiny for the future that excludes outsiders and involves

a contrast between a presumed 'us' and the Other" (Kabir, 2004:29). This common identity then commands a loyalty which overrides the claims of the considered 'lesser' communities (Cottam & Cottam cited in Kabir, 2004:8). Continuing on this theme, Hage (1998:32,39) describes the "idealised nation" as a wish to return to a former state of affairs, a return to what the nation "used to be", an Australian utopia. These ideologies of nationalism then strengthen national identity, with its disposition towards solidarity with one's own national group, and encouragement of exclusion of the Other (De Cillia et al., 1999:154). But, as Anderson (1988 cited in De Cillia et al., 1999:154) points out, nations are "imagined communities" and members of even the smallest nations "do not know the majority of their fellow-citizens, do not meet, yet they are convinced that they belong to a unique national 'community'". It is these sentiments that prompt retorts of "go back to where you come from" experienced by many of the participants and which positions them 'outside' the nation, based on their cultural values and their religious belief. These comments are not only insulting but totally misplaced as many of the participants are second generation Australians who only know Australia as home. The comments also confirm Ho's argument that "in countries like Australia, expressions of national identity and nationalism increasingly rely on anti-Muslim sentiment" (2007:296).

The analysis of my fieldwork data has evidence of Australian nationalist practices, and attempts at "building what *they imagine* to be a homely nation" (Hage, 1998:47, italics added) are enacted out in the secular workplace. For example, Haseena, aged 24 years, a first generation Australian of Afghani origin, who veils, describes her experience when working in a summer clerkship position with a major law firm. Haseena was attending a meeting with other summer clerks and the female manager, who was conducting the meeting, referred to an Australian sporting incident that had occurred some years previously. When Haseena asked what she was referring to, the manager replied:

> Where have *you* been? You must have been living under a rock.

Haseena provides us with an example of the nationalist practice of exclusion. Not only did the manager infer, with her exclusionary overtones, that Haseena was not 'one of us', the inference was she was not a 'countryman', and, therefore, could not "feel at home" or "fit in" (Hage, 1998:45). The fact that she did not understand, or know of an important incident in Australia's sporting culture, was the proof. The inference was that all 'true-blue' Australians would know about that important sporting event. The manager's comment was also one that would have been difficult to prove as 'racist', it was considered an amusing, condescending 'tease', everyone just smiled and the manager continued on with the meeting. A still rather bemused Haseena confided in me later:

> When I reflected on the time the incident occurred that she referred to, I remembered that my family and I were living in a camp, actually in a tent, hoping to be accepted into Australia as refugees. No, I didn't say anything, it was best to let it slide, but I was embarrassed.

In their study of the media and victimisation of Muslim groups, Poynting and Perry (2007:162) suggest that silence can effectively render victimised groups impotent by, in some cases, explicitly defining their 'outsider' status. In this instance, Haseena preferred to remain silent and let the incident pass. When I asked why she did not explain her situation, Haseena decided that, in her words, it was "just not worth it" or, as Poynting and Perry (Ibid) suggest, not worth it because she would end up endorsing what, she felt, was her "outsider" status (see also Lengermann & Niebrugge, 2007:189-214).

An Anglo Australian identity, or more specifically, a white identity, remains intricately bound to Australianness and its accompanying image of nationhood.[68] As Fleras ably describes the situation "a belief in superiority and normalcy of the dominant culture discreetly encoded around the language of citizenship, patriotism and heritage" (Fleras,

[68] Similarly, Colic-Peisker (2011:637-654) argues that a noticeable revival of the ANZAC day national-building myth over the past decade is an example of the Anglo-Australian nation proudly emphasising its values.

2004:430 cited in Akbarzadeh & Roose, 2011:313). No better example of a great nationalist drive encapsulating the narrow construction of 'nationhood' and how individuals symbolically construct links to a national rallying cry can be provided than the Cronulla riots of December, 2005.

Anti-Muslim sentiment and fear does not emerge in isolation, it is grounded in a fear of the Other and directed towards those perceived to be undermining the privileges and lifestyle of the host country (see Akbarzadeh & Roose, 2011:312). The riots, which Dunn (2009) defines as a "performance of Anglo-Australian nationalism primarily in opposition to Muslims", demonstrate how symbolically constructed links to the nation, and the nationalist empowering affirmation of the superiority of one group over another, can be formed in the minds of white Australians.

The riots were a conflict between groups, one group, described by the media as "English-speaking background youths" and the opposing group, made up of young men, described disparagingly by the media as of "Middle Eastern appearance" and which group was entitled to claim ownership over Cronulla beach. The riots, estimated at five thousand strong (Hage, 1998:20) occurred on and around Cronulla beach, the only Sydney beach that has convenient train access and a train line directly from Lakemba and Bankstown (Noble, 2009) where a number of the participants live. The beach is located in Sydney's Sutherland Shire, a southern region of Sydney, New South Wales and for Australians, the "beach" maintains a persistent status as a backdrop for "teenage rites of passage"(Moreton-Robinson & Nicoll, 2006:150).

The 'Aussie! Aussie! Aussie!' chants, accompanied by mass wearing of the Australian flag as apparel, demonstrated nationalistic xenophobia (Poynting & Perry, 2007:155). Waving of the Australian flag symbolised a hatred of Muslims, rather than a symbol meant to represent all Australians. People, wholly unknown to each other, joined forces to sing the national anthem and to promote the realisation of an imagined community. The scrawling

of “we grew here, they flew here” on bare chests and “100% Aussie Pride”, traced on the sands of Cronulla Beach (Moreton-Robinson & Nicoll, 2006:153), was aimed at nationally challenging those perceived to reject the characteristic life style of the country in which they have chosen to live (Barker, 1982:23). By the end of the day, a complete loss of social order had occurred and in retaliation, over the next few nights groups of young men of ‘Middle Eastern appearance’, mainly from south-western suburbs of Sydney, conducted revenge attacks in convoys of cars.

The riots provide an example of how, in response to perceived threats, societies frequently promote unity and national pride by defining as Other, people who are different (Miller & Schamess, 2000:46). In this instance, the ‘Other’ was the perpetrator of a crime who challenged those who occupy the privileged position of “enacting the national will”, that is, the “traditional Aussie battler” as a victim of change to the very nature of the country (Hage, 1998:20,47). The incidents demonstrated how a backlash of resurgent national pride and concerns about ethnic and cultural minorities verifies the power of being Anglo-Australian that, in turn, triggers a range of marginalising encounters. As Akbarzadeh and Smith (cited in Hopkins, 2011:123) state:

> The essentialist depiction of Muslims and Islam constructs them as the Other; as immature, even backward ethnic or foreign groups who need to be managed or tolerated in “our” country.

Nevertheless, the Prime Minister of the day, John Howard, denied that there was a racial dimension to the riots and that he “did not accept that there is underlying racism in this country” (Moreton-Robinson & Nicoll, 2006:155). As these scholars suggest, this was another example of white people exercising their white race privilege conferred on them by “patriarchal white sovereignty”.

The riots were regularly raised as a seminal moment in many participants' lives, how uncomfortable they felt in their secular office environment, how frightened they were walking in unfamiliar environments and how concerned their families were for their safety, especially if they wore the veil. Without exception, the participants made references to their fellow employees' reactions to the riots. For some participants, the staff made no mention of the incident for fear of being considered offensive. This, for Yasmin, was "quite absurd because the papers had nothing else on their front pages for weeks". For Yasmin, aged 29 years, a second generation participant of Lebanese origin who veils, this was frustrating:

> I would love the feeling that they feel comfortable enough to ask me.

Not all fellow employees were so constrained. Karida, who we have met before in this chapter, describes a different reaction. Karida experienced the power of nationalism that, in turn, influenced her office colleagues to then label her as the Other, not 'one of us':

> I felt they [fellow staff members] were angry at what had happened, the next day when I walked into the staff room and there on the table was a newspaper with those blazing headlines and I knew that they were discussing yesterday's riots. One girl, my friend, actually, said, 'What do Muslims think of this?' Everyone looked at me, suddenly it was all down to me, she was asking what side am I on, it was very difficult to be diplomatic. I said 'it's a very difficult situation' and left it at that. Whatever I said would be misconstrued, I felt very uncomfortable.

In Karida's eyes, her friend's question "what do Muslims think of this?" was confronting and accusatory, not only was she labelled as the office authority on Islam, but she was immediately thought of as the Other, a member of the backward ethnic or foreign groups who need to be managed or tolerated in "our" country (Akbarzadeh and Smith, cited above). As Karida commented, whatever she said would be misconstrued, so she considered it best if she made no comment at all.

Lamiah, aged 31 years, a second generation participant of Turkish origin who veils, recounts how she preferred to work out of the city during an international conference of APEC[69] held in Sydney, to avoid any confrontation that may occur in the aftermath of the riots:

> It was just after the Cronulla riots, I was still petrified so when the APEC summit was here I was so scared to be on the street. I was working in the city, I thought maybe I would be singled out because I was wearing my veil and not very many girls wore veils. I was very unique walking down the street. I thought maybe if there are any problems they will point to me, so I decided to work in my Parramatta office which I did because I was scared to go into the city.

The Media and Its Influences

The influence of the media is profound because what we know of society, who and what gets represented and what routinely gets left out, depends on how things are represented to us by the media (Miller, 2002:246 cited in Saeed, 2007:443). When these frameworks are applied to audiences who have little social contact with minority groups,

[69] Asia Pacific Economic Co-Operation

the role of the media as the sole provider becomes crucial (Van Dijk:1991 cited in Saeed, 2007:444).

The news media in Australia usually portrays Islam very negatively and Australians hear and see a great deal about Islam in news stories about overseas political conflicts (Dunn, 2004:335). In Australia, the media holds a powerful position in conveying, explaining and articulating specific discourses that either represent or misrepresent minority groups (Cottle, 2002, 2006 cited in Saeed, 2007:444; Yasmeen, 2008:v). At the same time, Marranci points out (2008:93) this does not mean that the mass media is intentionally creating stereotypes that indicate what a Muslim should "be", rather, it is the process of global information which forces them to relay these depictions of a Muslim identity. Nevertheless, it is able to foster and encourage negative public sentiment and is in a position to reinforce the idea that diversity is not conducive to social harmony (Klocker & Dunn (2003). Hopkins (2011:123) proposes that:

> [The mass media promotes an] increasing sense that Muslims are somehow un-Australian and that Islam itself is seen as a threat to the Australian way of life. This is reflected in the choice of language used to represent Islam, as well as the preponderance of stories relating to negative portrayals of Muslims. These portrayals conflate "Muslim" identity with terrorism, violence, extremism, political instability, denigration of women and general backwardness.

As previously proposed, undoubtedly, incidents such as 9/11 and, closer to home, the Bali bombings, the Cronulla riots, and the Martin Place siege (December, 2014) have drawn attention to the general Muslim population and their religious beliefs (Sav & Harris, 2013:487). Islamic religious values, beliefs and practices are viewed as being in conflict with "the organisation and rhythms of public life in the cities of the West" (Humphrey,

2001:33, see also Modood, 2008:193-209). Similarly, since the 1990s, the mass media has progressively identified Muslims as perpetrators of crime. This is illustrated by the fact that rarely, if ever, would a religious categorisation be used in the case of offenders who were of a white, Christian origin (see Noble & Poynting, 2003:110-123). Maddox (2011:69-82) confirms, that in Australia from July 2001 "Muslims" topped the list of considered "menaces" considered by the Howard[70] Government:

> Muslims were portrayed as outsiders-within-the-nation, conduits of anti-Western views and potential terrorists (especially when wearing distinctive, religiously-marked dress). That conversation gained volume from the stereotypes of asylum seekers (and, later, terrorists) purveyed, and intensified, by public policy moves such as Australia's increasingly aggressive border protection against would-be refugees and later by increasingly draconian anti-terror legislation.

As a result, Muslims are assigned, or "inflicted" with, the "prototypical characteristics" of the allotted category selected for them by the majority (see Ashford & Mael, 1989:20-21; Wilder & Shapiro, 1984:342; Celemajer, 2007:103-122; Noble & Poynting, 2003:110-123).

How the media represents or misrepresents Muslims can be taken up in attitudes in the workplace. The participants agreed that after each global event such as 9/11, the Bali bombing and the current representation of asylum seekers as Muslim 'trouble makers' and 'queue jumpers', the media, fuelled by 'shock-jock' personalities (see also Hage, 1998:45; Moreton-Robinson & Nicoll, 2006:153) encourages attitudes of negative or slanted views on Islam and which are then reflected in incidents in their workplace. These "spatial managers" as Hage (1998:35-46) terms them, are "those who feel

[70] John Howard led the Liberal Party in Australia from 1996 to 2007.

sufficiently empowered, and possessive of such citizenship and belonging that they voice opinions [on talk-back radio, in public spaces and at social gatherings] on future cultural directions of the national space".

Scare mongering and distorted reportage, promoted by some radio and newspaper commentators resulted in the scale of the Cronulla riots (Noble, 2009). The reportage not only amplified the theme that the incident was a "threat to the Australian way of life" (Ibid) but fed on years of media and political rhetoric about Middle Eastern crime and youth gangs (Collins, 2006). No emphasis was placed on the fact that the perpetrators of the crimes of 9/11 and the Bali bombings were not representative of the whole of Sydney's Muslim community. The media endorsed the negative characteristics of a "Middle Eastern, or Arab, appearance" with its associated mindsets of either being an infiltrator and subversive or owning characteristics of conflict, controversy and deviance.

Yelda, a second generation participant of South African Indian origin, aged 35 years who veils explains:

> Muslims are always in the spot light, I think because of the recent global events, the media knows what people like, just to sell papers. Unfortunately people get to know Muslims from the TV and the media likes to portray all Muslims in a bad light. To tell you the truth, if there is something in the media or on TV that portrays Muslims badly, I just dread going to work the next day. Here we go again, I have to start all over again to prove that not all Muslims are terrorists. Why don't they [the media] speak to me, allow me to have a voice, all these really lofty goals of 'freedom' and 'liberty' make me feel so frustrated.

Yelda refers to the media and that it knows "what people like", that is, the media is drawn to reporting controversial incidents of Muslims because it encourages newspaper sales and by portraying Muslims in a certain way, the media has the power to heighten sentiments of a Muslim 'threat' or 'danger'. Yelda is acknowledging the power of the media that fuels the preconceived beliefs that all Muslims are somehow terrorists and how distressing it is to see her Muslim community repeatedly attacked by the media. All the good work she has done in her workplace, to prove that the majority of Australian Muslims are peace loving, has been undone by how the media has portrayed the incident.

Zaina, a veiled second generation participant of Indian origin, aged 33 years went through a stage where she avoided reading newspapers and seeing herself and her community routinely attacked:

> There was a time in my life when I stopped listening to news, stopped reading newspapers because I got fed up with thinking what next, why is it that people always want to speak for us, rather than take the time to ask us about our views.

Dunn et al. (2007:564; Dunn, 2004:333) provide an example of well-rehearsed "danger" sentiments that were taken up by the media. The media favourably described the actions of a Baulkham Hills[71] mayor who opposed the construction of a mosque in that area because he was "concerned about the safety of the girls and ladies in this community". One of the participants referred to the incident because she lived in the same area. Aala, aged 32 years, a second generation participant of Egyptian origin, who veils, recalls how the mayor was concerned about the safety of the white Anglo Australian "girls and ladies" in his community. At the same time, no concerns were expressed about the safety of the

[71] A suburb located north west of Sydney.

female pupils of the local Baulkham Hills Muslim school. The mayor's act of discrimination was purely on the basis of Muslim religious practices:

> I remember it well, Muslims were under such a lot of pressure, they received so much abuse and vilification and so much bad press. Most of the [Muslim] school I worked at was burnt down and a pig's head was thrown into the school office. It was a really ugly time. No-one seemed to be concerned about the safety of the female pupils who attended.

In this instance, Muslims were twice discriminated against, they were refused permission to build a mosque and they were linked to acts of violence and held responsible for the acts of all Muslims in Australia.

Conclusion

Beginning with an overview on how the practice of exclusion has evolved in Australia, I have illustrated how acts of exclusion do not remain static, they evolve and adapt to circumstances and situations. This has resulted in the 'tool' for managing and containing difference, formerly the colour of one's skin, is now constructed in a language of Otherness, or a stigmatising and expelling of anything which is defined as different. This method of constructing a group as the Other is undertaken through the circulation and reproduction of stereotypes (Dunn, 2004:334). The redefinition of racist attitudes and practices, as Barker (1982:17-18) points out, is now more "sophisticated", not only does it circumvent any taboo of denigrating people on account of their race, but it avoids any accusation of "racist attitudes". This is especially so in the domain of the secular workplace. The chapter has illustrated how encounters of exclusion are created and maintained through individuals, and whilst the structure has changed over time, its

practice remains the same, and is accepted by the majority as if it were the norm in everyday life, ingrained in every day mundane routines (Essed, 1991:41).

Hage (1998:35) describes the secular workplace as a "stage" where all employees, both the white mainstream majority and members of the considered Other, can enact out 'difference' and prejudices can be expressed. Approaches to acts of exclusion are not, generally, "in your face" blatant encounters which can be controlled by Equal Opportunity Acts enforcement, but "micro encounters of disrespect" (Essed, 1991:41) that can be difficult to prove. It is these "sophisticated" (Barker, 1982:17-18) approaches to acts of exclusion that the participants face when they enter their secular workplace environments. My field work data finds that blatant and unacceptable behaviour that emphasises genetic inferiority is not in evidence in Sydney's secular workplace. This can be due to a number of factors, primarily, and as previously referred to, the social unacceptability of people being denigrated on account of their race (Maddox, 2011:69) and to staff awareness of anti-discrimination legislation in place (see Dunn, Klocker & Salabay, 2007).

The participants have demonstrated how encounters of exclusion during the course of everyday living are deliberate and, in many instances frightening. For some participants, it was considered wiser to leave the unpleasant scene to avoid any conflict that may subsequently arise. For other participants it was considered better if they chose to drive to work rather than use public transport and on one occasion, a participant refused a promotion because it entailed travelling by public transport to the workplace destination. These participants believed they became 'targets' just by being present in the public domain and voiced concerns for their personal safety. When the situation was discussed with other participants who had all encountered similar experiences, there was sympathy for how these participants felt. However, there was also general agreement that by their acceptance of a "limited autonomy" (Lengermann & Niebrugge, 2007:189-214), the participants were not making "self-esteem" or a "belief in yourself" a priority, and were not demonstrating that they, too, as Australian women had a "right to be in this society".

The dominance of white Anglo-Australians' considered values and norms became glaringly apparent during the Cronulla riots and provided examples of how remnants of the strong history of white British dominance remain together with its legacy of white supremacy. These 'considered values' established how nationalism was used as the barrier of 'them' against 'us', goaded on by the media of the day, to create an environment in which exclusionary processes emerged and were sustained (see Yasmeen, 2014:18). The riots not only attacked people of Middle Eastern/Muslim background, they illustrated how complex discrimination can be by casting suspicion on and stereotyping all Muslims who then appear 'un Australian', against Australian values and representatives of terrorism and danger. On a positive note, when discussing the power of the Australian media and its endorsement of the negative characteristics of people of "Middle Eastern" or "Arab appearance", one participant put an interesting slant on how she felt. She agreed that she dreaded going to work after another negative reporting in the press. Nonetheless, this participant was prepared to start again and try to dismantle the barriers she considered had been built in her workplace environment due to the latest unfavourable reporting by the media.

As outlined in previous chapters, the participants enter their workplace environments on an equal footing with Anglo Australian females with similar tertiary qualifications. This chapter has outlined how they face the same concerns as all women employed in the secular workplace, in other words, the masculine norm as *the* force in the workplace, or, the presence of "visible or subtle influences of patriarchy and sexist traditions" (Syed, 2007:1955). These concerns, as outlined in Chapter 1, include gender inequality - for example, income levels between men and women, the participation of women in the workforce, and, outside the office environment, the distribution of household tasks and childcare between men and women. In this regard, the participants can be seen to join forces with all females employed in the workplace. How they choose to practise 'being Muslim' and identify with this commitment is the cause for division between their female

colleagues. They are now considered ‘different’ and, as members of the Other, barriers of ‘difference’ are formed. The chapter has, therefore, highlighted two facets of symbolic boundary making in the secular workplace - the first relates to the gender divide that all women employees are up against. The second relates to the barriers formed as a result of the dissimilarities between female employees, in this instance, one group represents the white majority and the other group represents ‘difference’.

The participants identify three main concerns that are a cause of difference in the workplace between Anglo Australian women and Australian Muslim women: shaking hands with an unrelated male, the male invasion of their considered personal space and the attendance at staff functions at which alcohol is served. In contrast, Anglo Australian women do shake hands, they do attend staff social functions and they would be acquainted with the customs of a familiar Australian greeting, especially those that occur outside the office environment. The chapter illustrates how the participants manage these concerns, some do shake hands with a male and some do attend staff social functions, but do not drink alcohol. Each participant finds it difficult when their personal space is invaded, especially at functions outside the boundaries of the workplace, as one participant advises “my friends and I talk about it all the time”.

This chapter has highlighted the impact of stereotyping in the lives of the participants, that is, reducing their identity formation to a few simple, easily grasped and widely recognised characteristics without acknowledging other facets. The following chapter researches the experiences of those participants who elect to be identified as Muslim women through their appearance and what this identification represents to the white majority. The chapter demonstrates how ‘appearance’, and what that appearance represents, is important in the environment of the secular workplace.

Chapter 5

Appearance as an Identity

> This external bodily expression of an internally held religious faith runs counter to Australian social expectations that religiosity is a private affair and should be kept out of the public arena. Furthermore, the modest dress runs against Western culture's bodily expressions of attractiveness and displays of muscularity and thinness. It also works to challenge consumer culture and the unspoken communications that we make through the presentation of self.
>
> (Bouma & Brace-Govan, 2000:168).

The focus of this chapter is to study the experiences of those participants who choose to be identified as Muslim women by their appearance and what their appearance means to them personally. I demonstrate how the modest dress of these participants runs contrary to the concept of a "Western culture's bodily expression of attractiveness" (see reference above). Chakraborti and Zempi (2012:78) argue that the Muslim veil has a strong symbolic "load" which may affect employment opportunities. The chapter pursues this concept and examines the effects this "external bodily expression" of a religious belief has on employment prospects, including job applications and interviews.

Goffman (1991:1) introduces this section of the chapter by illustrating how 'appearance', created by dress, is a form of recognition and a transmitter of values and beliefs. In this instance, I employ the words 'values' and 'beliefs' to emphasise the considered importance placed on projecting a certain image of identity through dress, not only for the

religious inferences that some dress styles dictate, but that an intended identity is being portrayed by the wearer. At the same time, an observer is able to make conclusions about the wearer which may be inaccurate and unintended by the person who is observed:

> When a stranger comes into our presence, first appearances are likely to enable us to anticipate his [sic] category and attributes, his [sic] social identity.

Thus, an 'appearance' deemed socially acceptable by the majority, adversely impacts on individuals who fall short of these standards. Arvanitidou and Gasouka (2011:1) go further by arguing that appearance has added responsibilities and that how a woman dresses not only reveals aspects of a woman's personality, but who she is, where she comes from, her social position and what she has achieved in the past. They propose that appearance has its own visual language, complete with its own "vocabulary" that may also include gender identity, race, sexual orientation, occupation, family role, age, nationality and religious beliefs (Ibid, 2011:17). Dress codes, not considered the norm Western 'gear', that is a veil, a sari or a salwar kermeez, or accessories, for instance a more than obvious Christian cross or a Jewish kippah, a style or colour of hair, a tattoo or a piercing, indeed, any bodily marker, communicate information about the wearer to the observer. This has resulted in 'appearance' being widely accepted as a legitimate consideration in employment matters (Adamitis. 2000:197) and that a decisive factor in selecting potential employees is the requirement to be 'one of us', even though, for all employment positions, appearance has no bearing on an individual's ability to perform.

Applying for employment

In the workplace, one of managements' employment objectives is to create the appearance of a unified and cohesive identity, one that is constituted within implicit behavioural norms and customs that all employees understand and comfortably fit within

its defined boundaries. As a result, there are explicit rules and procedures that "influence the criteria for recruitment, hierarchies of control and authority, shared objectives and a creation of a corporate culture that continues to exist, despite staff turnover" (Jenkins, 2014:10).

Whilst it is acknowledged that most professional workplaces are not as inherently conservative as the law profession, reference is made to the Auckland District Law Society's "The Young Practitioner's Handbook" as cited in Harwood (2007:586):

> As a general rule, bear in mind that you are a professional, and how you appear to the client will subconsciously affect their perception of your abilty and your firm's integrity.

In its Handbook, the Society, not only suggests that "appearance" influences a client's subconscious perception of the employee's ability, but infers that the employee has the additional responsibility of preserving the firm's integrity by appropriate appearance. It is interesting to note a change in the Society's second edition[72] that removes the inference to this responsibility but again endorses the importance of a dress code that models the mental image of how a lawyer ought to appear to his or her clients. The Handbook does not go into detail about the appearance of a lawyer, it is understood that the clone-like appearance would be conservative, professional, and, more importantly, with no suggestion of a religious belief.

The advice for individuals applying for employment provided by a recruitment consultancy's handbook[73] is similar to the proposals of the Law Society. The handbook

[72] Auckland District Law Society Inc. "Recently Admitted Practitioners Handbook, 2nd Edition (August 2011) http:www.adls.org.nz accessed 23 April, 2014.
[73] CRS Recruiting "Guidelines for Interviewees" www.crsrecuit.co.nz cited in Harwood (2007:586).

confirms that the presentation of "who you are" can significantly affect job applications and future career prospects:

> The way you present yourself will make a statement about who you are … our advice to you would be to remember that whilst presentation seems insignificant, it can positively or adversely affect your career.

When I discussed the consultancy's advice to Abal, a veiled second generation participant of Egyptian origin, aged 29 years, she proposed that a veiled Muslim woman, applying for employment with the appropriate professional qualifications, had a more difficult task than the Anglo Australian woman, as a member of the white majority and whose dress code and appearance was considered the conventional 'one of us':

> This is exactly what I mean, Muslim women face this problem all the time, it's our appearance that we are always up against and really, what prevents us getting the job in the first place. My appearance as a Muslim woman doesn't in any way shape or form reduce my capability of performing as a professional woman, but employers just see Muslim women as not being up to doing the job. I want you to see me as I am, there is more to me than just following fashion trends.

Abal is acknowledging that there is no other religious symbol more overtly visible than a Muslim woman's veil because of the "unspoken communications" that are made through her "presentation of self" as referred to by Bouma and Grace-Goven (2000:168). Abal is referring to the generally held belief, voiced by all the veiled participants that any

application for employment is made more difficult because of appearance and what it represents. The implication here is that the Muslim veil has a strong symbolic "load" because of the perceptions it communicates and as a transmitter of its own values and beliefs (Chakraborti & Zempi, 2012:78). Ho (2007:292) suggests that within the confined environment of the secular workplace, the veiled woman employee can be confronted by the Western view that a Muslim woman is a "virtual slave to a brutal religious code" and "forced" into the oppressive practice of wearing the veil. These views are then encapsulated as a "refusal" to assimilate into the mainstream Australian culture and incompatible with any corporate culture.

Abal's comment that she wants to be seen "as I am" is remarkably similar to the statement Marise Payne made to the media[74] on her new appointment as Australia's Defence Minister, requesting that it details her policies rather than her outfits and hairstyles:

> All I ask is that I am judged on my performance,
> not on my gender.

It was always interesting for me to discuss the participants' thoughts on just what they considered the white majority calls to mind when they see an easily identifiable Muslim woman, those "unspoken communications" that are made through her "presentation of self" (Bouma & Brace-Govan, 2000:168). Overall, the consensus was that, should there be an incident featured in the press that involved violence, then the Muslim woman was identified as an associate of 'aggression' or 'violence'. As one participant described it "I am always perceived as being associated with the guy carrying a bomb in his backpack". When the incident disappeared from the press, they resumed their usual identifying markers, 'oppressed', 'unintelligent', 'unable to fit in' and 'not up to the job'. As later

[74] www.smh.com.au (News Review, Sydney Morning Herald, 26-27 September, 2015, p.34).

sections of this chapter illustrate, these mindsets can then affect the participants' working life and, indeed, their applications for employment in the first place.

On one occasion as I was interviewing a first generation participant of Pakistani origin who veils, her daughter, a recent graduate who also veils arrived home and joined in the conversation about applying for employment in the secular workplace:

> Mainly I'm concerned about how people will accept me as a Muslim because of the way I dress. Friends have told me that I have to accept that if I want to work in that area, I am going to be considered "different".

A Muslim woman lecturer in law at a leading Sydney university also confirms that her female Muslim students are aware that their veiled appearance may affect their job opportunities:

> I often have girls who are about to graduate come to me and say "What am I going to do, I'll not be able to get a job because I'm wearing the hijab". Usually my advice is to look at the Legal Aid organisations or Government areas where there are official policies of non-discrimination, and I guess you tend to get Muslim women who wear the hijab clustered in those areas, even though it's not well paid by comparison with some of the corporate areas. And, of course, these students talk to each other and word gets around, which companies and corporations to avoid when applying for a job. The ones that want to go into the commercial world listen to other Muslim women who are already

> employed there. Sometimes, they are somewhat deterred by the stories they tell.

The above quotations verify that Muslim women, especially those who veil are aware of the difficulties they face when applying for employment in the secular workplace. Circulation of information through their social networks illustrates the difficulties that may occur and being accepted by fellow employees because of prejudices associated with what their appearance represents. As the law lecturer suggests, sometimes they may be deterred by the stories they hear. The law lecturer offers a way out by suggesting that her students look at employment opportunities in the public service or Legal Aid organisations that have "official policies of non-discrimination" (see also McCue, 2008:58).

The lecturer is also acknowledging that although organisations employing staff concede to the importance of managing diversity in the workplace, many only pay lip service to diversity issues (Deitch et al., 2003:1300). Further, any official policies of non-discrimination in place are often hard to prove should they not be followed, and this can prove a deterrent for all women considering making an official complaint. As Syed and Pio (2010:116) argue, the policies seem to be "focused on business benefits and legal compliance aspects of diversity while paying relatively less attention to issues related to social group differences". The law lecturer also notes that Muslim women are aware of the secular corporations that are not receptive to veiled Muslim women applying for employment, which brings in another point, that those corporations are also missing out on a growing segment of young tertiary educated Muslim women for their future employment pool. The advice to veiled Muslim law graduates to apply for employment in the public service or similar organisation also presents other issues that may result in a disproportionate representation in certain sectors, even though they have the skills to participate more broadly (see Samani, 2014:177).

Not all participants agree with the law lecturer's advice, as Kanta and Arzu, both second generation veiled participants of Turkish origin and both aged 29 years, advise:

> When I decided to put the veil on, one of the key issues I had, that was stopping me from doing it was, would I get a job, would I throw my degree down the drain by choosing to wear the veil because I'm immediately going to be discriminated against. And it took me a long time to overcome that fear and just say, this is me, take it or leave it and having that level of confidence I need, to be identified as Muslim.
>
> I am aware of glass ceilings, it's bad enough that women face glass ceilings, but the double whammy of discrimination, it could be difficult. But, my attitude has always been, OK it's a challenge but I'm up for it and that's the attitude that I have always had. I feel I can add more value to the Muslim community by my getting out there and interacting with non-Muslims. I find that it is a cheat's way out if I just hang around with people that I know, there would be no challenges.

Some participants do take an 'easier' path, as proposed by the law lecturer, and seek other venues of employment, for example, caring organisations such as child care work, Legal Aid or similar organisations such as DOCS[75] and teaching in Muslim schools. This final option sometimes requires retraining to become a teacher, as explained by a participant:

[75] Department of Community Services

> I have a lot of friends who have turned to teaching, even though they weren't convinced at the beginning. One friend who is an accountant felt that the doors were closed to her so she decided to retrain and is now teaching at a Muslim school.

Yasmine, a first generation participant of Turkish origin, aged 39 years who veils, prefers teaching in a Muslim school because of the environment:

> It helps me to be who I am, to be spiritual and to practise my religion more comfortably. Not that I think that the public school would not allow me to do that, but I think it's more comfortable when I'm interacting with students to say words like 'May God Bless You'.

Yasmine specifies what she means by "practising her religion more comfortably":

> A bell rings to alert us for prayer times, I don't have to explain what I'm wearing and why, everyone knows about Ramadan and the Eid festivals, and they understand *me*, life is just that more comfortable.

For Yalda, a veiled second generation participant of Lebanese origin aged 43 years, her decision to retrain as a secondary school teacher was the result of not being able to find employment because of her veil:

> Being veiled limits the occupations, I was trained in Medical Science and I was interested in pharmaceutical marketing. I was informed by

> every H.R. consultant that even though I was more than qualified, my veil would not be suitable for clients and I would not succeed. I went back and did a Dip.Ed and I found a permanent opportunity in a Muslim school. So, it's had its positives, at least I found out what I wanted to do.

Mita, who we have met before, tries to encourage her female Muslim friends to apply for employment in secular companies or partnerships, usually located in the Sydney CBD:

> I try so hard to encourage Muslim women to come, to apply for work here or to apply for jobs in other firms. For instance, a lot of girls that I know who are studying law at the moment, I'm always encouraging them, if they want help with their applications or whatever it is, I can help them because I really do think that if they got the application form and just filled it out to the best of their ability, I think they would have as much chance as anybody else, especially as the first round of applications is on-line anyway. But they don't believe it and they don't end up applying and that's the thing, it's very new to them. I guess being a lone Muslim woman is a massive factor, I guess that it's something so different to what they know, and they're afraid that they'll be rejected because of their Muslim identity. The problem is that there are not a lot of Muslim women working in the profession, I might be the only

> Muslim person so it is very confronting. There are no role models in general.

Mita, a respected lawyer in her legal practice provides us with a wealth of rich, informative data. She describes how she encourages recently graduated Muslim female lawyers to apply for legal positions either in her practice or other legal firms. At the same time, Mita is acknowledging that employer bias does exist because her applicants would have as "much chance as anybody else" as the first round applications were "on line", implying that they would jump through the first hoop of interviews because the selectors would not be aware of their appearance as veiled Muslim women. Her comments also confirm the findings of a large scale study, measuring labour market discrimination across different minority groups, that there is prejudice in Australia against particular ethnic groups, which include "Middle Easterners". [76] Applicants identified by appearance or name, need to submit at least 50 per cent more job applications in order to receive the same number of callbacks as Anglo Australian candidates (Booth et al., 2010:1-34). Mita is also endorsing the findings of Syed and Pio (2009) and their example of a tertiary trained veiled Muslim woman of Pakistani origin who was always short listed for interviews because of her Australian tertiary qualifications, but when she attended the interview, she was met with "shock". Finally, to stop wasting time, she included her photograph wearing the veil with any application form and from then on, received no acknowledgment of her job applications.

Mita recognises that being the "lone" Muslim woman in her office is a "massive factor". Identifying as a Muslim woman raises another set of issues, that of travelling alone to Sydney's central business district:

[76] Muslim TV personality and columnist, Waleed Aly made reference to this situation during his acceptance speech of the 2016 Golden Logie Award in Sydney on 9.5.2016. Aly demonstrated how all minorities face discrimination. He described a man who has the Muslim name of 'Mustafa', but confided to him that he always chose an Anglo Australian name when applying for employment because he knew that 'Mustafa' would bar him from even obtaining an interview.

> Not only are they targets for discrimination, but the fact of travelling from the outer western suburbs,[77] coming to the city to work is a massive thing for most of them because they are out of their comfort zone, it's something so different to what they know.

Finally, Mita makes an important observation, because a "lot" of Muslim women do not apply for employment in her profession, there is, in turn, a limited number of role models for young Muslim women law graduates to use as mentors.

Professions that stipulate dress requirements

There are employment issues that raise concerns for some veiled Muslim women, for example, organisations which stipulate certain dress requirements, such as the safety rule that all staff members who are employed in some laboratories, must wear short sleeves that expose the arms. Tafida, a second generation veiled participant of Egyptian origin, aged 27 years was one participant who made me aware of this situation:

> As a food technologist, one of my first job offers was with [a leading Australian company involved in food preparation], but they wouldn't let me go into the factory because I wore a hijab.
> They asked me to take it off and put on a safety cover like a hair net. I said my veil is better than a hair net, but they said no, because our insurance policy wouldn't cover you so we can't let you go in there.
> I said I want to go in there, and the HR officer

[77] In this instance, Mita is referring to the suburbs of Auburn, Lakemba and Bankstown with large Muslim populations.

> said there are covered ladies that work in the company who take off their veils and put on a hair net. I said not everybody is the same. I was very upset because I couldn't accept the job. They should change their policies to suit everyone in Australia. I took it up with my girlfriends, they said you are going to experience a lot of this. I asked them, is this like a teaser of what's to come?

Tafida is referring to issues that some veiled Muslim women may face should they seek employment in professional areas that enforce certain safety rules and stipulate certain dress styles. Indeed, any prospective employee who refused to comply with company safety rulings would face the same problem. Tafida was requested to remove her veil and replace it with a hair cover that satisfied the requirements of the employer's insurance company and she refused the request, even though other veiled Muslim women, employed in the company, complied with the ruling. In doing so, Tafida was unable to accept the employment offer. Tafida also questions why the insurance company could not "change their policies to suit everyone in Australia" without considering that the insurance company's concerns include safety issues and could also involve other matters, such as hygiene. Her decision to refuse employment highlights the fact that it is important for anyone contemplating certain professions to also research associated employment issues, such as uniform requirements, to avoid the situation that Tafida has found herself.

Veiling

Each participant expressed a view on veiling and its accompanying modest clothing that covers the arms, legs and, in most instances, the feet. And there are many explanations why the participants who veil choose to do so, primarily, it being the conviction that they are obeying God's will, as it is written in the Qur'an:

> It is an order by God, we have to do it because it is written in the Qur'an.
>
> I veil for the sake of God and as a sign of respect in front of God.
>
> I believe in my faith, I believe in God. He sent us rules for us to follow, so, basically I'm just following the command of God.

Head covering is not only a symbol within Islam and many Jewish women, as well as Christian women in the Middle East, wear different types of head dress (Furseth 2011:365). As previously discussed in Chapter 2, forms of face veiling and head covering, that have become an iconic symbol of (female) Muslim identity in contemporary global times, began in pre-Islamic Christian Persia and are not specifically prescribed by the Qur'an or Hadiths (Bedar & El Matrah, 2005:41; Evans, 2007). Over time, veiling as a cultural practice was interwoven into the fabric of Islam through its historical adoption by traditionalist communities upholding the Muslim faith.

The Qur'an[78] makes references to female dress codes, for example:

> Suras 24:30-31: Enjoin believing women to turn their eyes away from temptation and to preserve their chastity; not to display their adornments (except such as normally revealed); to draw their veils over their bosoms and not to display their finery …

[78] The Suras are taken from Dawood, N.J. (1956) *The Koran, Translated with Notes by N.J. Dawood*, Penguin Group, London, UK.

> Sura 33:57: Prophet, enjoin your wives, your daughters, and the wives of true believers to draw their veils close around them. This is more proper, so that they may be recognised and not molested.
>
> Sura 33:53: If you ask His wives for anything, speak to them from behind a curtain. This is more chaste for your hearts and their hearts.

The Qur'an is not alone in having many interpretations as every religious text is open to variant readings and can be read in multiple modes. Throughout history, different interest groups have taken advantage of the ambiguous nature of scriptures and have "used them to their advantage" (Ahmed, 1992 cited in Rozario, 1998:651). There is also an assumption that Islamic scriptures and hadiths (a collection of the reports of teachings, deeds and saying of the Prophet Mohammad) are unambiguous and precise. Feminist writers argue that this assumption is far from accurate and many differences of opinion and personal interpretations about veiling have resulted from the ambiguities of interpretations. This diversity of opinions has circled around the distinction made between the wives of the Prophet, for whom both physical covering and physical seclusion reflected their special status and that whatever has been ordained for the Prophet's wives is to be applied to all believing women. The opposing view is that because the Prophet's wives were seen as a "privileged group of women" (El Guindi, 1999:206) they, alone assumed a greater level of seclusion for their own protection and the ruling does not apply to anyone other than the Prophet's wives (see also Stowasser, 1984:23).

Mernissi (1991:91), a Muslim feminist, reiterates what most feminist writers believe, that the veil is a symbol of unjust male authority over women. Her interpretation of Sura 33:53 is that it refers to the appropriate conduct for believers when they entered the Prophet's

houses and how the Prophet lowered a barrier to separate himself from his wedding guest, Anas Ibn Malik, who had overstayed his welcome. This barrier can then be interpreted in many ways, for example, as a "screen" between the wives and any male visitors (Sayyid-Marsot, (1995:11); El Guindi, (1999:135)[79]; or a "hijab" or a "covering" to protect the Prophet's wives' privacy and any intrusion by male visitors (El Guindi, 1999:206). In contrast, Hannan (2001:50) agrees that the Prophet's wives were "privileged", but concludes that, whilst the wives of the Prophet are role models for all females and worthy of respect, there is only one example for both males and females and that is the example of the Prophet, not His wives. Nevertheless, regardless of the multitude of interpretations, Sura 33:53, together with the other related Suras, has had a profound influence on the role played by the veiled Muslim woman, the interaction of the sexes in an Islamic society and a Muslim woman's appearance.

A number of Muslims scholars have changed their views from previously claiming that the veil is mandatory to now seeing it as a matter of individual choice (Roald 2001:254-62 cited in Furseth, 2011:368). Abagull, a first generation participant of Iranian origin who veils, aged 28 years, introduces this section of the chapter by describing what 'choice' means to her:

> When I was in Iran and wearing the veil, I was constantly asked, 'What on earth are you doing wearing the veil, you don't have to wear it where you live'. I always said, 'that's precisely it, I have a choice and you don't'.

Abagull is stressing, as many participants did, that 'personal choice' was always the prime factor when deciding to veil. My fieldwork data found that of greater significance was the emphasis placed on the 'deeper meaning' that related to wearing the veil. As a participant

[79] See also Barlas (2002:8); Nayebzadah (2010:39); Tarlo, (2010:2); Macdonald, (2006:8).

explained, it was not just covering her hair with an identifying piece of cloth, it involved a private religious conviction and a deeply personal understanding between her God and herself:

> It's more than a matter of 'choice' and not really pinned down to a piece of cloth, it's something we carry, we develop, hopefully, it is nurturing of the heart and only God knows that.

We can also see how family culture plays an important part in influencing the participants' decision to veil or not to veil. For those veiled participants who followed the family tradition of female members veiling on reaching puberty, it was a taken for granted and a normal progression of growing up. As one participant explained, "that's what Muslim women in my family do":

> My mother gave me great encouragement, it wasn't so much said that this is the age that I have to wear it but it was encouraged once you reached puberty, you do veil, all my sisters put on the veil at the same age. Veiling was just part of growing up in my family. My family, especially my mother, taught me, I didn't actively go to classes but it is just the way we have been brought up and what we've been taught while we were growing up, mostly family taught. The prayers are in Arabic, we were taught the core things, we quite probably wouldn't know everything, the specifics about everything, because that would involve a lot of gaining knowledge. My veil, and what it represents is now the most important thing in my life.

The above quotation illustrates how Islamic texts tend to be understood according to the cultural context of the interpreter (see Roald, 2001:68). Kopp (2002:59) proposes one reason for Australian Muslims' decision to veil, "a lot of foreign-born Muslims place a greater emphasis on ethnic traditions than they do Islamic traditions". In this case the family was first generation of Lebanese origin who brought with them their religious beliefs and practices which included how a Muslim woman should behave. It was traditional for the female members to wear the veil once they reached puberty. Of interest was the fact that the participant did not believe it was necessary to attend religious classes but relied on her family's tuition for her religious knowledge and its practices. It was of no consequence that her family "wouldn't know everything" about Islam and that she was only taught the "core things". For this participant, her veil was "the most important thing in my life" because of what it meant to her.

Other participants chose to veil after they acquired a greater knowledge of their religion than that provided by their families, especially the religious instructions they received from their mothers. Amal, a second generation participant of Lebanese origin understands that veiling is not culturally based:

> It is definitely not a cultural thing, it is definitely, definitely part of the religion. We grew up in my family thinking it's not that important because they had no knowledge. I started to learn about the religion and I wanted to be a better Muslim. It was then that I started to wear the veil.

A first generation participant of Afghani origin, informs us that the religious instruction she has received in Australia has confirmed that wearing her veil, formerly just something that "you do", is now part of "loving" her religion:

> Because my country is predominantly Muslim, veiling is something that you do, you just don't question it. So, I would say I used to practise my religion there, but now I know my religion after I came here and I know that veiling is the correct thing to do. I have learnt to love my religion in Australia. That's because I have been going to lessons and as a result, I have learnt to see life in a different light and that has really helped.

Another participant chose to veil because of her husband's influence:

> My husband didn't force me but I'd say he indirectly influenced me because his knowledge and the love of Islam made me feel attached to the religion more and to want to learn more, so a lot of it is owed to him.

Other participants were influenced by the peer pressure of girlfriends and another participant used veiling as a 'bargaining tool' to obtain permission from her father to attend university evening lectures. Sadia, a second generation participant of Turkish origin, aged 34 years explains:

> My Dad would say, OK, go to university if you must, but you have to be home by 3.00pm. And I'd say, Dad I have a tutorial at 6.00pm. He would say, you shouldn't be out alone at night and what will the neighbours think, which wasn't true as I always travelled with a lot of girlfriends. It was so stressful. So in my second year at uni, I decided to

> put on the veil because he always insisted that one of the reasons women wear it is because they are protected by God. You said the veil will protect me, therefore, I am protected. He didn't force me to cover, but once I complied with his wishes, he had to agree to mine.

Further discussion with Sadia confirmed that, by drawing on the mantle of Islam to support her, she was able to challenge her father's view of a Muslim woman being alone after dark in an unfamiliar and considered potentially threatening environment. Her father had progressed from the idea of education being wasted on Muslim women, "go to university if you must", but had remained concerned that his unveiled daughter would not be accompanied by a male after sun down and his local community would be critical of the situation.

For those participants who veiled, being a "better" Muslim always meant veiling. Because of their access to DVDs, internet sites, television documentaries (Rozario, 2011:286) and classes conducted by their local mosque or Islamic education centres, they had acquired much more knowledge of the scriptures, which, in turn, they believed confirms that Muslim women should veil. On more than one occasion, the daughter of a family whose tradition was not to veil, not only commenced veiling herself, but then encouraged her mother to do so. These participants also acknowledged that, as a result of their tertiary education received at Australian universities, their acquired research capabilities stimulated their quest for religious knowledge.

Numa, a first generation veiled participant of South African origin, aged 35 years, rejected her father's proposal to remove her veil during the period of the Cronulla riots because the wearing of her veil made her "stronger". In contrast to feminist theorists of colour, for example Lorde and hooks, who provide a framework for addressing how *expressed* rage can serve as a "tool of empowerment", feminist writer, Dalia Rodriguey (2011:589-598)

identifies a rage that "remains unspoken" and which, in turn, grants feelings of "empowerment". Numa provides us with an example of her "silent rage" that veiled Muslim women bear the "brunt of any anti-Islamic sentiments", in this instance after the Cronulla riots:

> Actually my father sat us [other female members of Numa's family] down and said you know, it might come that you should take off the veil for your own safety, just galvanise yourselves. And I said, No, Dad, definitely not. I guess women are wearing the brunt of any anti-Islamic sentiments because of the fact that we are visible. But I think what doesn't kill you, makes you stronger.

Numa is not verbally expressing her rage to the White majority, but, by continuing to wear her veil, she is illustrating what Rodriguey (2011:589-598) is referring to, a "silent rage" that enables the minority to "refuse to concede to White dominance" and which serves as a "path to empowerment". At the same time, Haddad's (2007:68) study of American Muslim communities finds that after 9/11, an increasing number of daughters of immigrant Muslims assumed a public Islamic identity by wearing the veil. Not only has it become a symbol of an "American Islamic identity", but it is seen as a "symbol of resistance to efforts to eradicate Islam in an American environment that is increasingly seen as anti-Islamic". Haddad's study is also relevant to Numa's decision not to remove her veil.

Said (1995:44) posits a relationship between the East and West in which the latter situates itself as "positionally superior" to the former (see also Nader, 1989; Hill, 2000:177; Varisco, 2007). In contrast, Numa has made a personal decision not to appear "superior" to the White majority, but to be "a token of Islam's public face" (Marcotte, 2010:365). The

participants agree that by wearing the veil they are taking on the responsibility of assuming a public Islamic identity (Haddad, 2007:253) in an environment that is increasingly seen as anti-Islamic. At the same time, they describe their veils as "empowering" and that its wearing enables them to "determine their own agenda" and a "sense of personal control" (Rappaport, 1987:121,174). The veil is witness that they are proud Muslims and are "not afraid to say so" (Haddad, 2007:263).

Yasmin, a veiled second generation participant of Lebanese origin, aged 28 years, places such importance on what her appearance signifies that she would leave her employ should she be asked to remove her veil:

> There's no questions at all about it, that would be totally offensive to me. I'm not the most religious person in terms of levels of people who are religious or not but I have the core central beliefs and practices. If someone said to me that I couldn't wear the veil while I work, I wouldn't do it. Heaven forbid that it happens, but if the choice came down to it, the answer would be 'no'.

Yasmin's statement that she would refuse any suggestion by management to remove her veil during working hours, is in contrast to the participants, also lawyers, who agreed to remove their veils at the behest of their employers. Their experiences are referred to in detail in the following chapter.

At the same time, the participants, who do not veil, were equally adamant that veiling does not indicate more devotion to Islam and that dressing modestly and behaving correctly, "being a good person" and observing core Islamic practices, is sufficient requirement for being a respectable Muslim woman:

> It's about behavior, fidelity, observance, a whole range of things. The Qur'an doesn't say a woman must veil, it says that she has to appear modestly dressed and has to cover up.
>
> My mum doesn't wear one, my sisters don't, my aunts don't either. I looked into it when I was younger, but I've never got to the point where I needed to. I've never grown up with it and I've never seen it as obligatory.
>
> I feel I dress modestly, but I have never seen the need to actually wear it.

All the participants are influenced by the notion of modesty and each group, the veiled participants and the participants who do not veil, has its own understanding of the relevant Suras of the Qur'an, one group believing that it includes veiling, and the other that it does not. This is not to contest that the uncovered participants lack religious commitment as each participant who did not veil, voiced her pride in being Muslim. However, some veiled participants, who consider they are 'obedient' Muslim women, commented that Muslim women who do not veil are not completely fulfilling their religious obligations. Their opinions contest the proposal that veiling is a matter of choice and can present as a symbolic boundary that draws a line of division.

Not one of the forty participants could name the relevant Suras of the Qur'an that refer to a women's covering, even those participants who believed that being a Muslim woman equates to wearing the veil. This observation confirms that early religious education is verbally taught in the Muslim family home, influenced by the family traditions and culture and passed down from generation to generation with little or no formal tuition that

references Islamic literature (Kopp, 2002:159). More importantly, it also confirms my understanding that the Islamic belief is more directly articulated and interpreted around a highly personal relationship with one's deity and one's faith and this highly personal and independent relationship is then crafted to "complement the believer's culture and life style" (Marranci, 2006:6,10). As Fadwa illustrates, a second generation participant of South African/Indian origin, aged 31 years and who does not veil:

> One of the things I like about my religion is that you do have rules, but then there is such a breadth of interpretation to suit your culture and suit your life style.

Many veiled participants described advantages of wearing the veil, not only being associated with religious beliefs, but the convenience of veiling because it eliminates any female concerns about appearance. In many ways, veiling can be described as a "paradox", its wearing can subject the wearer to harassment and discrimination, whilst, at the same time, wearing the veil provides feelings of "freedom" (Bouma et al., 2000:168).

Ceyda, a veiled first generation participant of South African/Indian origin, aged 38 years, demonstrates how her identification as a Muslim woman gives her freedom:

> My Muslim identity is freedom to be who I am, and to acknowledge who I am inside. I can now breathe, I don't have to tell anyone, I'm free to be who I am, who I truly am, from the core of my being, from the bottom of my soul, that is the freedom.

Ceyda is acknowledging that her veil provides her with the freedom "to be who I am, and to acknowledge who I am inside". Her description is similar to the emotional commitment Marranci is expressing, "it I what *I feel I am* that determines my identity for me"

(2006:6,10). By veiling, Ceyda is not only providing an outward acknowledgement that she is a Muslim woman, she is also acknowledging her deepest feelings and her "Muslim identity".

On the other hand, Orman, a second generation participant of Indian origin, aged 29 years, who veils, provides a similar interpretation of why her appearance as a Muslim woman gives her "freedom", but with different emphasis. Orman is referring to the Western women's slavish following of fashion styles that do not involve her:

> It's freedom because I don't have to get up at 6.00
> in the morning and do my hair. I don't have to
> wear any make-up, I'm not following a line that
> dictates to me, because this is the latest fashion,
> that's what you should be wearing or here's what
> you should be looking like. The only challenge
> is for me to rise up and to be the Muslim that
> I ought to be to deserve to wear this, that's what it is
> for me, so my appearance is absolutely freedom for me.

Ceyda and Orman are referring to what they perceive as the unacceptable focus on women's appearance in the secular workplace and the 'image anxiety' it can create. Devoid of the need to look like Anglo Australian women, Ceyda and Orman have chosen an appearance which is an outward acknowledgement of their religious belief and each dresses in a purposeful manner that identifies with that belief, a veil and loose clothing which covers their arms, legs and feet. For these participants, their appearance, rather than being seen as constrictive or oppressive, is actually the opposite, it equates to "freedom" regardless that their modest dress runs against Western culture's "considered bodily expressions of attractiveness" (Bouma & Brace-Govan, 2000:168).

Responsibilities of Veiling

Some of the veiled participants who acknowledge their Muslim identity by veiling, add a further commitment by being a Muslim 'ambassador' in their respective workplace environments, either by inviting people to understand Islam through a dialogical process, or behaving in the exemplary way that they believe to be 'correct' behaviour for a Muslim woman. These participants acknowledge that their appearance always dictates how they perform in the workplace:

> I want to lift the profile of Muslims. Hopefully if that one person thinks, through their observation of how I act with them, well, not all Muslim people are like that because I met so and so and she's fine, then I've done my job.
>
> I am always conscious of the fact the people will see me as a Muslim and I need to be conscious of behavior because, unfortunately, whether you like it or not, you are carrying the banner of Islam and your behavior is always, always under scrutiny.
>
> The place that I work now, I am the only girl who wears it, I feel like in some way, I have a responsibility, even if you don't want to, even if you don't want people to know who are you, you can't help it, by wearing the veil, everyone knows what religion you are so it's a responsibility.
>
> My religion is my sense of strength because everything

> I do I have to do a lot better because people don't perceive me as an individual, I am seen as a representative of Islam.

Yazbeck, a veiled, second generation participant of Lebanese origin, aged 35 years, and an accountant with a respected accountancy firm provides an illustration of the importance she places on being a true representative of a Muslim woman. Yazbeck chose a city venue for her toastmaster course because the people she would be meeting would not have "met Muslims before":

> I remember doing a toastmaster's course, a public speaking course, about two years back and I specifically chose to do it in the city because I knew the people I would be encountering would not have met Muslims before. I would prepare a speech each week and I always did it on a theme that showed me as an individual. I wanted the other women to go back and say "I know this Muslim woman, I have met this Muslim and she's not like this". I wanted to change perceptions through my interaction, that's how I see it, a want to be a true representative of a Muslim woman.

Continuing our discussion, Yazbek revealed to me that she considered she was never viewed as an Australian, or a professional woman, or even a "normal" individual, the label she carried was always the stereotype of a "Muslim woman". By delivering a speech each week with a special theme, Yazbek's aim was to be a true representative of a "Muslim woman". Her concern was not that she was perceived as unAustralian or unprofessional,

her focus was to correct what she perceived were her audience's incorrect perceptions of a "Muslim woman".

Views on how a Muslim woman should behave varied between the participants, Sera, a veiled second generation participant of Turkish origin, aged 25 years, describes how she believes a Muslim woman should behave:

> It's about us sitting here today and I'm not laughing at the top of my voice, for example, so perhaps no-one else knows that I'm here. I'm very polite, I say thank you.

When I interjected to suggest that perhaps she is behaving like most people should behave, Sera qualified her comments:

> No, it's more than that, I am always conscious that I need to be polite in my office, even though this person is totally ripping me off.

Sera is demonstrating how she manages her identity in her secular workplace by combining a passive, female persona with her Muslim identity, a predisposition to behave in a certain way which appears self-effacing and selfless. Sera suggests that her veil is a concealment of her presence in the public domain, "no-one else knows that I'm here", however, the exact opposite occurs, veiling in a non-Muslim country actually increases a woman's visibility to the public gaze (Chakraborti & Zempi, 2012:278). Sera is making her veil both a symbol of modesty and a physical marker of Islamic social identity. In many respects, she is also conforming to the considered ideal of a white femininity, one that cannot afford to appear threatening and whose feminine ways reassure others that they accept traditional gender norms (Adkins & Lury, 2006:604).

Sera's attitude is in contrast to Daniya, a second generation participant of Iraqi origin, aged 28 years who veils and is determined to affirm her religious beliefs to any audience. Daniya describes an incident at a large work related conference she attended:

> I didn't have a watch on and there were no clocks so
> I stood up and said excuse me Mr. Speaker
> but would someone let me know at certain times
> because I need to pray, even my friends could
> not believe that I said that.

Daniya agreed that people sitting around her would have assisted with her timing requirements and acting, as she did, suggests to outsiders that she was rejecting social norms and the general secular workplace's understanding that religious belief is a private matter that is non-demonstrable. Daniya is demonstrating that she wants to assert this difference in public, or as Modood proposes, some representatives of minority communities feel the need to assert their difference in public and demand that they be respected, just as they are (1997:165 cited in Chakraborti & Zempi, 2012:271):

> I don't have an issue with that and I don't have a
> problem with people knowing I am Muslim, I
> want to be identified as Muslim, there is nothing
> wrong with it.

Finally, the participants agreed that having other veiled women working in the same organisation would be a comfort to them. Samani, (2014:175) in her study of Muslim women and employment also found that her participants were more easily accepted and felt included in workplaces that service Muslim clients, or had other Muslim employees on the staff. This returns us to the observation of the law lecturer who recommended that

her graduate students seek employment in areas such as the Public Service where Muslim women are already employed.

One participant made the comment that in her organisation, three Muslim men were working in the packing department and by the time she left, the whole department, made up of ten males was Muslim and some wore Islamic head coverings:

> It was great because when it was time for prayer,
> they all had the azan[80] on their phones and the boys
> used to draw the blinds and pray together.

As I was transcribing the interview, it occurred to me that perhaps other Anglo Australian staff members could conceive this was a barrier, not because the packers stopped work for short periods during the day to pray, no more than seven minutes each time, but that the blinds were drawn and they were non-contactable during that period and some chose to wear the Kufi cap. It could be seen that they were reminding staff of their Islamic affiliation and emphasising their difference. I also found it interesting that the participant also identified another barrier, she was not permitted to join the packers during prayer time because she was female, even though she was also Muslim.

Because the participants do not wear the considered fashionable dress styles of Anglo Australian women, they are also demonstrating 'difference' and barriers are formed. The barrier division in this case is that their identity is linked to a Muslim dress code that signifies a religious practice, one that "runs counter to Australian social expectations that religiosity is a private affair and should be kept out of the public arena" and, most importantly it does not measure up to the Western idea of the "bodily expressions of attractiveness" (Bouma & Brace-Govan, 2000:168).

[80] The Muslim call to prayer

This barrier division is illustrated by Adalet, a first generation participant of Egyptian origin, aged 35 years, who is employed in a senior capacity in a large Sydney multinational organisation which she describes as "fairly blokey". Adalet has worked with her organisation for over ten years and considered she dressed to suit the organisation's dress code profile, "I was always dressed in my suits, I had a great hair style and great makeup". She also considered many of the staff to be her friends. When Adalet decided to veil during office hours, her general manager's comment illustrates a typical preconceived and stereotypical view, "I can't believe you of all people want to become a second class subservient citizen" and when Adalet arrived to work on her first day with her veil, "he made out that he was collapsing of a heart attack". Adalet also recalls one of the comments from a male staff member who suggested that as she intended to "cover her face" she was no longer attractive or "sexy":

> But you are going to cover your face, we really like seeing your face. You used to wear that red skirt and we used to look at your legs. Now you don't dress sexy, don't you miss being sexy? Before you had the scarf, you used to look nice and now look at you. Yesterday you didn't have the scarf, today you do, so why do you have to wear it here?

Adalet was not going to "cover her face", she had chosen to cover her hair, but to the male staff member her face *was* covered because her previous identity, one that he knew had disappeared. How she conducted herself professionally, had not changed, but immediately, barriers were built that made communication less easy than before. The only difference was that yesterday Adalet was not reminding her fellow employees of her Muslim identity by her appearance, whereas the next day, because of her veil, she was, and as a result she was considered no longer "one of them".

In the minds of her fellow employees, the conclusion was that Adalet is not conforming to the norm, endorsed by the "now look at you" statement. The general manager's comment illustrates another preconceived stereotype that yesterday she was a respected financial accountant today she has transformed into a "second class subservient citizen". In other words, as far as her fellow staff employees are concerned, Adalet is now considered a member of the Other, with all the implications that Muslim women are 'not like us'. As Adalet suggests, "I was now considered being under patriarchal influence and dominated by the Islamic customs of early marriage, multiple children and low education standards".

When I expressed surprise at the tone of these blatantly sexist comments, Adalet reminded me that the day she veiled in her "blokey" workplace, she caused "identity confusion". By changing from someone with whom the staff knew well and identified as 'one of us' to someone who was considered the opposite, or, as Adalet expressed it, she had turned into an "unknown mystery package". Even though she never concealed her Muslim belief to her fellow staff members, her new appearance was now a constant, visual reminder, "whenever they look at me or converse with me". She is treated respectfully, but at a distance, and that she now has to "prove her worth each day". Finally, Adalet suggests that "because there are no Muslims working in [workplace identified], had I been veiled initially, I don't think I would have got the job in the first place".

Adalet's experience also serves to illustrate how women's dress codes that endorse traditional gender norms, are set down by males. Rangoonwala et al. (2011:233), in their study of veiled Muslim women in American colleges, contend that "it has become normal for females to be objectified and viewed in sexual terms, as objects of desire for others". As Adkins and Lury (2006:604) advise, it can be a concern for female employees who feel pressure to dress in feminine ways to reassure others that they, themselves, accept traditional gender norms:

> In this sense, they [female employees] are not individuals at work, but rather they are gendered workers.

By way of comparison, Shada, a first generation participant of Iranian origin, aged 42 years provides another example of "identity confusion". When Shada decided to remove her veil after a period of three years, her fellow employees considered she, too, had also changed. Before she removed her veil, no employee had made a reference to it, once she removed it, Shada reflects, "I had now joined them", she was now a member of the in-group or 'one of them', as the following comments, made by her fellow employees, illustrate:

> We don't believe that you've done it.
> Oh, you look so much better.
> You look nicer.
> You look younger.

Shada's response is that the staff intruded on what was an "agreement between herself and God" and that nothing had changed except her appearance:

> I was thinking you don't need to give me any comments, either positive or negative, it is none of your business, it is a personal thing. Nothing has changed, I'm still 'me', the veil was nothing but an outward acknowledgement of who I am inside.

Shada's fellow employees removed her from an identity that signaled 'difference', she now looked like them - "we don't believe you've done it", proposing that a barrier had

been successfully knocked down. Shada is now included in 'girly' conversations and invited to all-girl occasions because of her new appearance. In contrast, Adalet's fellow employees have removed her from the 'one of us' identity to one labelled 'different' merely because she changed her appearance. Their respective fellow employees had reached that conclusion without contemplating that neither identity had changed, the veil had "become a short cut to characterisation" (Beaman, 2013:148). For Shada and Adalet, how each felt yesterday is how they feel today and that the veil is, as Shada illustrates, an "outward acknowledgement of who I am inside". For Adalet, a barrier had been built by her fellow employees as her new appearance now indicates she had removed herself away from the other females on the staff. For Shada, the barrier built by her fellow employees had been removed, but in point of fact, the barrier remained in place because her fellow employees now considered her as "one of them".

The observation of 'difference' brings in one other experience of Adalet, who, even though she acknowledges she should not be in the presence of alcohol, attended the staff Christmas party. At the event, a male staff member touched her in a way which she considered inappropriate, especially so, given that she is a veiled Muslim woman:

> There was an incident that happened with one of the guys, he did something extremely inappropriate because he was drunk. He couldn't see it was a problem, but I actually took action and management terminated him. My husband said, what did you expect, you went to a Christmas party, you know they're all going to be drunk. The guy came round and apologised but to make matters worse, he said 'I think of you as one of us, not one of them'. I said 'I beg your pardon, I *am* Middle Eastern, I *am* Muslim, I *am* one of them'. I said, 'Don't speak

to me anymore, please'.

Adalet's story demonstrates the concern a Muslim woman may face as an employee in the secular workplace, that of attending staff functions which include the serving of alcohol. Had she not attended the staff Christmas party, the staff may have considered she was creating a barrier, her husband recognised the problem of attending the Christmas party where everyone gets "drunk" and questions why she went in the first place. The male staff member behaved provocatively, he ignored the barrier created by Adalet's appearance and in doing so, challenged what her appearance represented. Because he perceived Adalet before she commenced veiling, as being "one of us", an 'Aussie' woman who understands situations that may occur at a staff Christmas party and who tolerates and/or understands touching. At the same time, even though she arrived as an infant in Australia with her Egyptian parents, and all her education was conducted in Sydney, Adalet is also making her own barrier by declaring she is not Anglo-Australian, she is Middle Eastern and a Muslim, "I am one of them".

Adalet is also illustrating how barriers can form between groups as they perceive each other as 'not one of us'. In this instance, the barrier is between a male and a female staff member. Continuing the theme of the previous chapter, she is also illustrating how barriers form between female staff members. On one side is the Muslim female representative who is different because of her religious practices, her appearance and what her appearance represents, and on the other side is a female representative of the perceived majority, who not only dresses differently but is presumed to understand the situations that may occur in the secular workplace and especially at staff social functions. The end result is that the Muslim female employee is faced with barriers, being a female employee in a secular workplace environment and being a member of the Other and, as a result, different from other female employees.

Conclusion

The focus of this chapter is on appearance and the identity that is portrayed by appearance. It reinforces the introductory statement of Bouma and Brace-Govan to this chapter, that anyone demonstrating an "external bodily expression" opposing the Western view of what is considered "attractive", challenges the "unspoken communications that we make through the presentation of self". Furthermore, anyone who demonstrates a religious belief by their appearance runs counter to Australian social expectations that religious belief is a private matter to be kept out of the public arena. It illustrates the importance placed on 'appearance' in the workplace and has outlined the personal experiences of the veiled participants, in particular, and the concerns they experience when applying for employment.

Chakraborti and Zempi (2012:78) identify a Muslim woman's appearance as having a "strong symbolic load" because of the perceptions it communicates and the chapter illustrates how the participants who identify as Muslim, face additional challenges compared to those participants who prefer to keep their religious belief a private matter. The chapter documents the workplace experiences of two participants, one who decided to change her appearance by veiling after years of dressing to accommodate the organisation's dress code profile, the other who removed her veil after a few years of dressing as a veiled Muslim woman and adopted the Western recognisable code of dressing, one that was acceptable to the male gaze. In each case, in the minds of their fellow employees, the participants had caused 'identity confusion'. The former now dressed to signal her Muslim identity and the staff removed her from the 'one of us' category, whilst, in the minds of her fellow employees, the latter had signaled to them that she had now 'joined' their ranks because she removed her veil. Nothing else had changed but their perceived identities, they were still professional women doing the same job, but their roles had been reversed, one, now a member of the Other with its 'strong symbolic load' and the other, now 'one of them'.

The chapter has sought to understand why a veiled Muslim woman seeks employment in a secular workplace environment where discrimination may occur because of her appearance. Why choose employment in a workplace with an organisational culture characterised by a 'mono-cultural' dominance, and which, as Syed and Pio (2010:127) propose, tends to keep all minority ethnic employees at a lower level of the power hierarchy with little opportunity for them to excel in the structures of power? My participants have provided the answer - the discipline of veiling provides a sense of identity, self-mastery and purpose (Brenner, 1996), a purpose that involves being a true 'representative' and 'ambassador' for Islam.

The following chapter continues the theme that the first impression of a person is provided by his or her appearance (Arvanitidou & Gasouka, 2011:17; Aslam, 2011; Harwood, 2007:586). It researches the challenges of a group identity that is encouraged and, at times, enforced, by management to reflect its corporate image and examines how the situation affects the participants' identity formation that is then reflected in their employment experiences. It continues to illustrate how the principal facilitator of exclusion in the secular workplace is the misunderstanding and misinterpretation of anything that is defined as 'different' and demonstrates how barriers are built when polarised relationships between in-groups and out-groups are the direct result of incompatibilities of views regarding each other's values which are formed because of the requirement of a benchmark of 'sameness', not only by the mainstream majority, but by all actors in Sydney's secular workplace environment.

Chapter 6

Dynamics and Boundaries of Group 'Belonging' in the Workplace

> Determining and defining our relationship with groups is a life-long journey of balancing the desire for group membership, that is, to be accepted and valued by others, and the need to be recognised as an individual.
>
> (Worchel et al., 1998:5).

The previous chapter, Chapter 5, has enlightened us to the importance that employers, and employees, place on the 'correct' appearance that complements the corporate image of their secular workplace. I continue to develop these findings by studying group membership, how we classify individuals into groups and its effects on the participants. My focus is on in-groups and out-groups in the workplace and how membership of a group is perceived - by individuals who 'belong' to a particular grouping, by those who wish to be identified as 'belonging' and by those who are rejected from having 'membership' in a particular group in the first place. By addressing how barriers and boundaries are formed because of the established order of an individual's group membership in a workplace situation, I demonstrate how a criterion for a particular group identity, sometimes a stated requirement of employment, or as in most cases simply 'understood' by employees, can in turn create divisions by enhancing a group mentality, either 'one of us, or not'.

The chapter is divided into two interconnected sections. The first section provides an analytical framework for the understanding of group belonging and how identity relating to group belonging is mirrored in the secular workplace. The second section addresses how groups form and develop in the secular workplace and describes the positive and

negative consequences of strong identification with a group. It studies how "differences" enhance the sense of "us" for some groups whilst at the same time, position the "Other" (Ben-Ari & Strier, 2010:2158). This section takes us to the perception of another in-group, not connected with the secular workplace, the collective umma, a salient perceived group prototype. Umma, an entity considered to be made up of Sydney's diverse Muslim communities, is chosen for comparative purposes because of its motivations for and, notably, that some participants have personal experiences of not being accepted by umma and, as a result, are seen to be positioned in an out-group situation.[81] This section of the chapter illustrates how a considered 'excluded' minority is not immune to the phenomenon of excluding others. Both sections are interspersed by details of the participants' own experiences of in-group, out-group participation, both outside and within the workplace.

Understanding Group Belonging

Group 'identification' refers to an individual's awareness of belonging to a certain group and having attachment to that group based on a perception of shared beliefs, feelings and ideas with other group members (McClain et al, 2009:472). Pressure to evaluate one's own group, and to differentiate that group from others, arises in the endeavour to maintain and achieve superiority (Tajfel & Turner, 1985:16-17). Indeed, in any walk of life, an individual's identity is primarily derived from group membership and it is this awareness of being in one group as opposed to another that is sufficient to trigger processes of discrimination (Abrams & Hogg, 1988; Deschamps & Devos, 1998:3).

Common discriminatory treatments or prejudicial attitudes by an in-group, create a minority group identity (Schmitt et al., 2003:2; Jenkins, 2014:12) with the result that barriers, separating the minority from the majority are perceived as impermeable and the "the assignment by others to a certain group" then has certain social consequences (Tajfel,

[81] Umma is referred to in other chapters, as a result of its relevance in the lives of Muslim women who are represented by the participants of this research.

1978:5). It is also important to note that group power exists only as long as the group acts in concert, or, as Essed (1992:40) advises, "power is never the property of an individual". In the simplest terms, any polarised relationships between an in-group and an out-group is caused by an incompatibility of views regarding each other's values.

The chapter is based on Social Identity Theory (SIT), originally framed by Henri Tajfel (1978) and continually being developed. Tajfel's macro[82] theory illustrates how group membership can provide members not only with a positive social identity to distinguish them from other groups, but enhances self-esteem by defining a member's place in society, "the perception of oneness with, or belongingness to, some human aggregate" (Ashforth and Mael (1989:21). Tajfel's theory (1981) demonstrates how "grouping" or "labelling" can also provide inaccuracies of classification. These inaccuracies, in turn, are powerful ingredients in the development of in-group bias and intergroup conflict in the secular workplace environment. Tajfel (1978) also demonstrates how a minority group identity can be imposed by the majority (or mainstream) which can be both misleading and inaccurate. Clair et al. (2005:80-81) illustrate how presumptions can be problematic, "in general, people take each other's social identities at *face value* based on cultural norms of expected behavior and assumed membership in particular identities" (italics added). Continuing to develop Tajfel's theory, Schmitt et al. (2003:3) argue that discrimination by the mainstream implies that not only is one's social identity excluded from what is considered 'normal' but discrimination makes it difficult to create meaningful social connections which results in the creation of barriers.

Hogg (1996:74) too, expands on Tajfel's theory, and proposes that group membership provides a complex function of "certainty". People feel good when they are certain about their attitudes, beliefs, perceptions and behavior and uncomfortable when they are uncertain. This certainty, Rozario proposes, comes through associating with the crowd, "rather than seeking to rise above it" (1998:650), in other words it suits people to follow

[82] See also reference to Essed's use of "macro/micro" in Chapter 4 "The Dynamics of Exclusion in the Secular Workplace"

the majority view rather than stand out with an alternative viewpoint. Hogg enlarges on 'certainties' by suggesting they are imbued with power and "uncertainty reduction" and through self-categorisation identify with self-esteem, social attraction, positive social identity and ethnocentrism (see also Negy et al., 2003). Ashford and Mael (1989:20) also expand on this proposal by suggesting that membership of a group can bring with it a desired sense of "oneness" with an identifiable group of persons and can aid in providing perceived identities of "distinction and prestige" (see also Peteraf & Shanley, 1997:166; Marmarosh & Corazzini, 1997:65,70). Thus, those who are recognised as belonging,"make judgements about the status of other people" (Skey, 2010:719).

Whilst there are positives in having a sense of "oneness", McClain et al. (2009:473) point out that, should an individual's identity be *primarily* derived from his/her group membership, intergroup biases can foster. This provides the basis for comparison of one's own in-group with members of another group that forms the base for discrimination and assists in the creation of an in-group/out-group mentality. This statement also provides an example of Hogg and Hains's understanding (1996:295) that no in-group exists without the presence of an out-group and that in-group members assume greater homogeneity in the in-group when an out-group is present (see also Ashford & Mael, 1989:25).

Dasgupta's research (2004:143), which is also reflected in the forthcoming sections of this chapter, has found that members of high status or advantaged groups typically exhibit more implicit favouritism toward their in-group and bias against salient out-groups. His data suggests that people's implicit attitudes about in-groups relative to out-groups are influenced by two different forces - the tendency to prefer groups associated with the self as a confirmation of positive self-esteem; the tendency to prefer groups valued by the mainstream culture as a confirmation of the sociopolitical order in society. Thus, membership of an in-group retains attachments to a medium uniquely important for a shared history (Edwards, 2013:1). This so called 'legitimate' culture is then used to

monopolise privileges and exclude (and recruit) new occupants to high statue positions (Lamont & Molnár, 2002:172).

Each individual derives meaning from comparison with, and differentiation from, the Other. An individual's identification with an out-group, inflicted by and bypassed by the dominant group, can create feelings of exclusion. Employees, too, classify themselves and others into categories and a person can be assigned prototypical characteristics of the category to which he or she is classified which are not necessarily accurate (Tajfel & Turner, 1985:7-24). An awareness of 'difference' is produced, not only enhancing the sense of 'us' but creating out-groups and reinforcing an awareness of one's in-group (Ashforth & Mael, 1989:21,25). As McClain et al. (2009:473) propose, "any successes of an individual could be 'trumped' by one's allotted membership in the excluded group". Illustrations of how group 'prototypical characteristics' are allocated are taken up more fully in the following section.

Tajfel's theory somewhat discredits explanations based on individual differences, (Abrams, 1996:144, Tajfel & Turner, 1985:7-24; Hogg, 1996:67). Huddy (2001:130,131) for example picks up on the absence of the 'individual' in Tajfel's work by proposing that it fails to acknowledge that individual formation "cannot be simply explained by the salience of a group designation". That is, one must also take into account the presence of an identity that is subjective, complex and relational and that each individual carries his or her own life experiences and diverse and singular stories (see also Worchel, 1998:55). As previous chapters have illuminated, each participant's identity is complex and reflects her own life stories. It is this subjective identity that each participant brings to her workplace to face the reality of in-groups and out-groups that are a feature of the secular workplace environment.

In a corporate sense, the integration of the values and goals of employees and their organisation creates the notion of a single, blended organisational identification of shared

characteristics, loyalty and solidarity (Hall et al., 1970:176-177, see also Ashforth & Mael, 1989:27; Schein, 1984:3). This identification 'badge' is based on a pattern of basic assumptions that a given group has developed and worked well enough to be taught to new members (Schien, 1984:3-16). An undisputed aim of all corporate management teams is to encourage and promote their notion of a positive and distinctive organisational identification badge or an organisational culture. This is in order, not only to enhance the organisation's professional reputation and effectiveness, but to attract recognition from other key constituents such as prospective, desirable employees and other institutions perceived as potential clients (Tajfel & Turner, 1985:7-24).

Helm (2011:657) points out that studies, conducted by the World Economic Forum report a steady decline in public trust of large companies. This has resulted in great effort and time being exercised to safeguard favourable corporation reputations and to preserve the probity of an organisation's external identification badge. The situation can be demonstrated in many ways, for instance, major corporations' cultural sponsorships and naming rights for sporting events and smaller entities' part sponsorship. As a result, employees' social identity is bolstered by their organisation's identification badge and this identification enhances employees' support for a mutual commitment (Helm, 2011:658,661). Adkins and Lury (1999:601) argue that individuals and organisational expectations "mutually influence one another" and Helm's study (2011:658,661) proposes that the greatest leverage to a corporate's reputation is through its employees contributing to an ideal corporate reputation by "reputation management". She suggests that employees adopt certain attitudes and behavior in order to become "corporate ambassadors who safeguard the corporate reputation and spread goodwill in support of the firm".

When an organisation's policies and logistics, its general role expectations, behavioural norms, power and status structures also incorporate the values, goals, support and loyalty of its employees, then a ready-made organisational "group identity" comes into play

(Helm, 2011:657,658). As Schein (1984:3) illustrates, a "group identity" can even play out in the constructed environment of the organisation, for instance, the architecture and office layout, displays of the organisation's mission statement, large floral displays in the foyer, paintings of past presidents and photographs of employees who have been identified as upholding their organisation's badge - a structure that reinforces a capitalistic, gendered and Western lifestyle (Mosse, 1993:99 cited in Syed, 2007:1955).

Acknowledging an organisation's identification badge and relational expectations can then be stated as a prerequisite of employment, or, as in most cases, simply understood by future employees. The advice to me, from the (female) Human Relations Manager, that the wearing of patterned hose in the office by professional women staff members was not encouraged by the partnership, is a case in point and illustrates the lengths some organisations go to implement their perception of an organisation's 'badge'. In this illustration, the partnership classified "conservatism" with "professionalism" as part and parcel of their perception of their identification 'badge'. At the same time, advice was being provided on the critical norms and barriers of my perceived 'in-group' identification.

In the secular workplace environment, group bondings are an identifiable entity. The notion of an organisation's identification 'badge' in itself promotes office groupings. Management encourages grouping by forming prestige groups considered representatives of the organisational 'badge' identity. Separate to the selected groups, informal employee groups inadvertently develop due to common interests such as like-employment ambitions or form because of shared outside-office interests such as sport or entertainment, or even similar shared history such as educational backgrounds, for example, a private school education (see also Rogers & Lea, 2005:151-158; Postmes et al., 2005:749; Farr, 1988). As a result, sub-groups, which have a predominant male membership, are formed with cultural activities that do not relate to the identification 'badge', but nevertheless identify with the overall organisational culture. A feature of all these common interest groups is the shared consensus of group boundaries, that is, a

criteria for inclusion and exclusion, of who is in, who is out, and by what criteria one determines membership.

Some groups acquire prestige by being selected to carry out a particular task which then dissipates once the task is achieved and the members move to another select group. Members of a prestige group, considered representative of the organisational 'badge' identity, are automatically provided with a high, subjective status or prestige and a positive identity motivated by the distinctiveness for one's own group. They are promoted to reify characteristics perceived to be prototypical of those employees who epitomise that badge.

In accounting and legal practices, male and female employees are selected for office tutoring programmes for entry into the acknowledged professional body or management training programmes that are organised in-house, or externally by a tertiary institution. The programmes encourage bonding of an in-group because it motivates a positive distinctiveness for one's own group in comparison with other groups. My own experiences of being employed in both domains confirm that the common links of the tutor programmes also foster external activities outside office hours within these selected groups, such, as sporting activities, for instance, golf, football or tennis events, or pub crawling and eating activities (see Farr, 1988:259-277). As Marranci (2006:38) confirms "it is evident that people include social and non-social stimuli in order to self-identify with others and to form in-groups".

Mona, a second generation participant of Lebanese origin, aged 30 years, who does not veil, but identifies as a Muslim in her workplace, describes how she was labelled a member of an out-group, even though she had been chosen by management to join the select in-group for the office tutoring programme. Mona identifies herself with an in-group in some instances and with the out-group minority in other instances. She conflicts with the in-group's prescriptive stereotype that addresses how certain members of an

out-group should think, feel and behave (Fiske, 1993:621). From a Social Identity Theory perspective (Tajfel, 1978:5), Mona's experience also illustrates how a minority group identity can be imposed "from the outside" where none existed before:

> I never hid the fact that I was Muslim, I guess I was never shy about saying it, it particularly came up whenever there was alcohol involved. Why aren't you drinking? When I said I was Muslim and don't drink, the reaction was 'we'll knock that out of you very soon'. It was considered that you won't last too long without starting to drink. I don't know if it was just in a bad year, but it was very sexist and macho, a very male dominated group who also liked golfing and partying together after office hours. The Christian girls would drink so they were OK, some started having boyfriends, sleeping around with the guys that were there. I was the oddity in the group because I wasn't one of the girls, I wasn't promiscuous, obviously that impacted on my prospects for being part of the group.

Mona provides us with rich and informative date on group behavior. By her statement, Mona identifies herself as a member of an out-group, an employee who demonstrates traits that are foreign to group norm which, in turn, enhances the group mentality of being viewed as not 'one of us'. She describes the pressure she experienced to socialise by joining in the group's drinking escapades and the male macho's questioning why Mona did not drink, implying that there were pre-conditions to her being accepted. Mona then described how she stands outside the macho male atmosphere which the other females of the group accommodate by joining the males in their drinking sessions, as one of 'them'.

A barrier is created between her and the other female members of the group. Not only does she compare her Muslim beliefs of valuing virginity compared with some of the

"promiscuous" Christian girls, she provides her own sense of an 'in-group/out-group' mentality by comparing her Muslim values with the girls of the group, labelling them, not 'Anglo' which is the usual term, but members of the "Christian" religion.[83] By making the comparison, Mona not only compares Islam's values with those of Christianity, she highlights she is a member of a minority group that is morally different. In this way, Mona is building her own barrier and, in the perceived eyes of the in-group members, she is a member of the 'out-group' because of the barrier they have also built.

Thus, in her own way, Mona is illustrating how an excluded minority is not immune to the phenomenon of excluding others (See Yasmeen, 2008:43). In this regard, Lamont (1999a:127; 2000:4) identifies an empowerment strategy prevalent among black and working class workers in the United States and aimed at reclaiming worth and status by adopting cultural scripts that involve a "moral criteria of evaluation". Such moral assessment enables those negatively affected by racial and other hierarchies at work to position themselves "above 'people above'''. Mona certainly could not be identified in Lamont's grouping of "black and working class workers", but similarities in her actions can be seen. Mona identifies with membership of an 'out group' because of her considered minority status as a Muslim woman but, by bringing in comparisons of the "Christian" values of the Anglo Australian women employees with her Islamic values, Mona is practising a "moral criteria of evaluation" by providing an endorsement of why she is not a member of the in-group. Mona and the members of the tutoring group illustrate an 'in-group' versus 'out-group' mentality, where the in-group assumes greater homogeneity because of the presence of an 'out-group' identity with the result that it promotes the desired sense of 'oneness' (Ashford & Mael, 1989:20,25).

Sexual harassment must also be taken into account when viewing Mona's experience. Sexual harassment is a widespread issue despite the Australian Federal Government legislation almost thirty years ago under the Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Australian

[83] Christianity and its identity in Sydney's secular environment is also referred to in Chapter 4.

Human Rights Commission 2012) (Hunt and Gonsalkorale, 2014:14). A recent study of masculinity and gender harassment conducted at an inner city Australian university suggests that there is a correlation between the masculine desire to conform with other men in 'in-group' bonding and gender harassment (Ibid:24). Kantor, too, (cited in Ashford & Mael, 1989:25) proposes that the presence of females in a male dominated sales force induces the males to exaggerate perceived masculine traits and differences between sexes. Thus, in-group members are respected, not as unique individuals, but as embodiments of the group, "the more prototypical they are perceived to be, the more they are liked" (Hogg & Hains, 1996:295). As Peek (2005:217) proposes, "the higher the identity in the salient hierarchy, the likelihood a commitment to that identity will be enacted out".

Both studies point to Farr's research (1988:259-260) on what she labels the "Good Old Boys Sociability" groups, not only sharing successful class and gender histories, but perpetuating "masculine play learned in boyhood" and enacted out in a playing field riddled with networks and cliques. Farr's study also reflects Dasgupta's research (2004:143) that members of high status or advantaged groups typically exhibit more implicit favoritism toward their in-group and bias against salient out-groups. Farr's "Good Old Boys Sociability" groups also identify with Puwar's (2004:51) "space invaders", a concept that she uses to describe racialised bodies out of place in elite social space. In Puwar's analytical connection between bodies and public space, white bodies represent the undeclared "universal somatic norm" carrying the undisputed right to occupy. When the (symbolic) non-white bodies enter such space, they occupy a tenuous position because "their arrival brings into clear relief what has been able to pass as the invisible, unmarked and undeclared somatic norm", they are "space invaders" (Puwar, 2004:8).

In-groups and Out-groups of Muslim Communities

Taking Lamont's "moral criteria of evaluation" research (1999a:127; 2000:4) a step further, this section illustrates how an in-group and out-group mentality is present in other arenas

and which are experienced by some participants of this research. For comparative purposes, reference is made to the participants who are converts to Islam and who encounter rebuke from the in-group formation of various close-knit Muslim communities.

The Muslim communities' social identity is reflected in Tajfel's Social Identity Theory, or "the perception of oneness with or belongingness to some human aggregate", a central assumption that the collective attributes of the group one belongs to are decisive for one's self-definition (Ashforth & Mael, 1989), a collective self-esteem. The stronger the identification with a group, the more significant the differentiation of that group from other groups will be (Deschamps & Devos, 1998:3). Barth (1969 cited in Edwards, 2013:1) goes further by proposing that the preservation of identity rests more upon the upholding of group boundaries than it does "upon any specific cultural content within them".

As explained in detail in Chapter 3, 'umma' the understood overall collective Muslim community is not only considered a chain of common memory within a group of people, it is a matter of social ties that bind individual believers towards others. Its common features include family ties, families of a similar history and migratory patterns and, as Yuval Davis (2010:21) proposes, its power rests with its elderly founding members. These communities, also made up predominantly of first generation immigrants, hold firm to the cultural, ethnic traditions they brought with them from their home countries (Hussain, 2009:65). How these close-knit communities are structured is well described by Shaw, (1988:5, cited in Marranci, 2007:84), describing the Pakistani community in Oxford, U.K.:

> Some women see their roles in Britain quite explicitly in terms of maintaining and transmitting cultural and religious values and protecting their families from western influences. It is largely women who are responsible for the distinctive structure and social life of the community today; it is in this that their power lies.

Throughout most of the Muslim world, the Muslim community's identity could be considered as being "hinged almost exclusively on the regulation of the family and personal matters" (Shaheed, 1994:1002 cited in Rosario, 1998:652). Thus "belonging" assumes boundaries of belonging according to some specific principles and is exclusive as well as inclusive (Ibid). What is real is a shared sense of considered identity of membership and it is those individuals who constitute the supposed grouping who exhibit the attributes of a group (see Jenkins:2014:10). However, as Dwyer (1999:54) explains in her research on Pakistani organisations in Manchester, U.K., members of umma are not necessarily one harmonious community:

> Ethnic communities cannot be imagined as existing in an organic wholeness with self-evident boundaries, [and] 'authentic' community leadership is struggled over and negotiated.

Nevertheless, the Muslim community engages with the construction of an "imagined" community (Sahgal & Yuval-Davies, 1992 cited in Dwyer, 1999:54).[84]

Each of the six convert participants of this research was raised in families who considered themselves Christian in name only. With one exception, the families were dismayed when they learnt of their daughters' conversion. Two participants converted because they had married Muslim men, the other participants had been made aware of the Islamic religion through friends and were dissatisfied with the religion of their heritage. Each convert participant practises a dress code of modesty, and the majority choose a veil or a scarf that covers the hair and a lengthened skirt accompanied by a long sleeved over-garment. In contrast to the participants of Iranian origin who arrived in Australia as young adults

[84] In her fieldwork research of an Arab mosque community in the Western German Ruhr area, Kröhnert-Otherman identifies a new generation of members who challenge these collective traditions that are continually reproduced by the elderly founding members.

and had Anglicised their names, the majority of the converts are known by their chosen Arabic female names.

All the participant converts are aware of a 'non-acceptance' by umma, or their local Muslim community. The reasons they provide are threefold - it is because of their Anglo Australian background which instantly raises suspicion, they are more knowledgeable about Islam because of the religious tuition they have sought and gained (see Zebiri, 2014) and importantly, they are not born into the faith which, in turn, entitles them to have their own interpretations of Islam and being Muslim.

Dallal, a convert participant, aged 26 years, who veils, provides an example:

> There are so many Muslims out there that just think that's all they need to know, whatever their parents told them, but it's not. I guess a lot of us who are converts are brought up to question and I do particularly question everything and always have. I think the biggest problem with Muslims is a lack of [religious] education, I think it gets handed down from generation to generation, the culture is all mixed into it, people tell me this is part of the religion and I say, no, it's not, that is your culture. Islam should be a life journey of learning, there is always more to learn about it, how to be a better person.

Dallal also provides us with an illustration to describe the importance placed on being *born* into the faith, rather than it being a personal choice. She describes how the daughter of a white British convert, Dallal's friend, was constantly being tutored by her Muslim grandmother with the result that the daughter could recite the whole namaz[85] by the age of four years. The same grandmother was considerably less diligent with her other

[85] Daily prayers

grand daughters because she considered they were already true 'Muslims', because both parents were born into the Muslim faith.

An article in the Sydney Morning Herald, (SMH)[86] entitled "Converts find it hard to fit into Muslim culture" recounts the comments of one of the converts of this research, and illustrates how she finds she is a member of two out-groups:

> Australian women who convert to Islam often find themselves with a foot in two camps and a tent in neither. Suddenly you are not part of mainstream Anglo society, yet you might not feel accepted by local Muslim communities either.

Van Nieuwkerk's study (2004) on Dutch female converts, confirms my convert participant's comments that converts are no longer accepted by the mainstream society. Even though the Dutch converts maintained their white, Western appearance, the fact that they declared their new religious belief placed them into the same considered category as Dutch Muslim women, "oppressed, uneducated and unintelligent".

The experiences of Mariam, an Australian convert, aged 43 years, provide us with another illustration of in-group/out-group Muslim community confrontation. Mariam was advised by her doctor to remove her veil because of her medical condition:

> I find now that I don't wear my scarf, the Anglos are now friendlier to me, the check-out chicks at the supermarket say Hi. Muslim women, with scarves, aren't friendly any more, before they'd say hello, now a blank wall, which I find a bit offensive. Women with scarves stick to their own a little bit, and generally, in Bankstown[87] shops, or just out and about, Muslim

[86] http://www.smh.com.au ("Converts find it hard to fit into Muslim culture", M. Buchanan, 11.01.11, p.5)

people are not friendly to me anymore.

Mariam's comment serves to illustrate in-group/out-group behaviour and how collective practice can take precedence over the individual. The Muslim women Mariam encountered monitored religious 'purity' by what they considered to be the correct attire of a 'typical' Muslim woman and, at the same time, an over-determined signifier of ethnicity. Mariam's action of removing her veil appeared as a confirmation that she was not sincere in her action of converting.

Participants' workplace experiences of Group Identity

This next section of the chapter relates some participants' experiences in the secular workplace and discusses how they manage these experiences. It provides illustrations from participants who removed their veil at the request of their employer, participants who veil, those who do not veil but are vocal in their religious belief and those who prefer to keep their religious belief a private matter.

Two participants who were lawyers revealed that their legal partnership requested that they remove their veils during office hours. Representatives of the partnership explained to them that a veil could send a wrong message to clients who may have "definite" ideas about Muslims and could find that advice from a veiled woman could be "tainted" by religious beliefs. The partnership's perceived identification badge and hegemonic stance, structured, in this case, by male domination, appeared to disregard any previous working experiences of the participants nor did it acknowledge the participants' professionalism. The partnership also demonstrated its own pre-conceived ideas of a 'Muslim woman' and the considered cultural differences her veil represents.

Whilst one refused the employment offer because of the partnerships' prerequisite of non-veiling, two participants complied and removed their veils during office hours.

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[87] A western suburb of Sydney with a large Muslim community.

Interestingly, when asked the reason why, each had similar explanations that had little bearing on the partnership's views of each employee identifying with the partnership 'badge'. Primarily, they placed great emphasis on wanting to be lawyers in a prestigious law partnership and to be lawyers with the same standing as the other female lawyers on the staff. They wished to be acknowledged as professionals who dealt with all issues, not just those that related to Islam or other religious matters. At the same time, the participants demonstrated an identity that is not at the expense of their religious belief, as each insisted that their religious belief is paramount to their lives and that it is their 'primary' identity, even though they removed their veils during office hours. They identified, with Marranci's theory (2008:97) "what we feel to be determines our personal identity" and an identifying piece of clothing was not necessary.

Dominance bonding by "gender-confident" men, as described by Farr (1988:274) is the long-held concern of all women in the secular workplace. As outlined in the previous chapter, Muslim women join with female staff members to encounter their exclusion from male group activities that sustains both a male solidarity and a dominance that produces organisational structures biased toward male employees. Scherbaum & Shepherd (1987:391) argue that some female staff members have adopted, to some extent, traditional male attire, such as tailored suits and conservative shirts as their way to signify their professionalism. Mann (1995:10) suggests that this "power" dressing sends three signals, it confirms male employees' dress codes, it is an endeavour to match the male image which mentally equates to "opportunities" and it is an attempt to create a more level playing field that has the ability to access informal [male] networks. In point of fact, the signal that these women are sending is identical to the message the veiled Muslim woman employee is also relaying. For example, Orman, a second generation participant of Lebanese origin, aged 30 years, who veils, illustrates how she wishes to be treated in her workplace:

> All I want is, look at me as a person, don't treat me as a

> sex object, an object of the Western gaze. I have a brain, please, respect me for it and the contribution I can make.

Orman's quotation identifies an all-female concern, she has joined forces with the female members of staff to be jointly up against the close-knit and exclusive male unit who, as a group, tend to see female staff members, as Farr describes it, as "props at special events" (1988:274, see also Hogg, 1996:74) and who have certainly been the original constructors of the "glass ceiling". Orman is describing the situation in her law partnership workplace where she is also the only Muslim woman in her designated area:

> Definitely, it's male dominated, there are a lot of women employees, but there are not a lot in senior positions, just a lot of women in the junior positions. Then it becomes even worse, because although there are a lot of women, there are not a lot of Muslim women either.

Like Orman, Nour, a veiled second generation participant of Lebanese origin, aged 31 years, works in what she describes as a 'unique' environment in that she is the only women in her office environment who identifies as Muslim:

> I am the first veiled person in my office, so, in a way, it's very confronting, very new for them, it's very obvious, because, actually, I am the only person who wears a veil in the whole building, yet it's not something that's talked about.

Nour expresses her discomfort at the reaction of the staff to her. They are always courteous to her and respectful of her professional ability as a lawyer, but they prefer to keep their distance, even the female staff in her own age group. The staff practises what is considered to be 'correct' behavior towards someone who appears 'different'. The fact

that Nour does not dress the same as other female staff members is never referred to, nor are there any questions about her religious faith, even during Ramadan when it is obvious that she is fasting. An Islamic 'event' that is written up in the press is never referred to for fear of appearing discourteous. Nour feels that her fellow staff members consider they have nothing in common with her outside related work experiences. Nour is also revealing that, whilst she does not consider herself "the most religious person", she possesses a "core central belief" (see Marranci 2006:103) which, she believes, requires her to veil, regardless of her office situation where she describes herself as being "like the elephant in the room":

> They don't treat me the same, they don't give me the opportunity to accept or refuse an invitation because they seem to think it doesn't suit me, rather than asking me. Sometimes I would love to attend. I would love the ability to have a comfortable discussion, an open discussion because you know they are thinking all sorts of things and I would love the feeling that they feel comfortable enough to ask me things that they will always remember. I would go for it, it would be an amazing opportunity and I would want them to. They just don't treat me the same.

Nour confirms she has not experienced disrespect in her environment, her office contemporaries have a high opinion of her professional knowledge and she expects to enjoy promotion in time. In this regard, Nour is a member of the partnership's in-group. At the same time, Nour is the victim of an inaccurate classification, or "labelling" (Tajfel, 1982), her workplace contemporaries have identified her primarily as a Muslim woman and then a professionally respected employee in the same office environment. As a result, the association with the "prototypical characteristics" of a Muslim woman is the ingredient for out-group bias. Nour's fellow staff members' negative treatment, unintentional though it appears to be, provides ingredients for a minority group identity

(see Schmitt et al., 2003:2). She would love to be given the opportunity to accept, or refuse an invitation, to be an ambassador for her faith and to have a comfortable, open discussion because she is aware that her fellow staff members are "thinking all sorts of [inaccurate] things" which she would like to correct and "which they will always remember".

It is also observed that Nour's story raises another concern facing Muslim women in the workplace, that is, if members of the staff keep their distance, they cannot be accused of behaving incorrectly (Essed, 1992:134). The Anti-Discrimination Laws, both State and Federal and put in place to ensure that Nour is not discriminated against in her workplace, are making her fellow employees, both male and female almost appear to tip toe around her because they are concerned that they may offend her in some way, and that any official complaint to the presiding anti-discriminating boards would be bad publicity for their legal firm and their future careers.

Nour draws our attention to another considered concern facing Muslim women, that not only must she be seen to work "twice as hard as the next person" but had she been an Anglo Australian female member of the staff, she would not be faced with the challenges of having "additional hoops to jump through":

> In saying that, everyone who's asked me about my experiences [in her secular legal partnership environment] I have always had to explain to them that the feeling that I have is that, because I veil, I always have to work twice as hard as the next person, to get to where I am. If I looked like them, [Anglo Australian women] my perception is that it would be a little bit easier and I wouldn't have these additional hoops to jump through.

When Nour was asked to enlarge on her statement, she explained that as a veiled Muslim woman who represents a minority religious faith, not only must she execute her professional duties at all times, but any action by her must also reflect her religious belief. In reality, the staff had anointed her an "ambassador" of her faith. Walid, a second generation of Turkish origin, aged 28 years, who veils, endorses Nour's story and describes how being "judged" by the staff makes her "on guard" with feelings of always being on "centre stage":

> You need to be 100%, you need to have a great conduct, you need to be not late, you need to be on time and you need to do your best.

When I asked Walid to clarify her feelings, as all employees should have the same principles she has identified, she, too, described how she is aware that the staff had imposed on her the responsibility of being an "ambassador" for her belief. Walid is not attempting to remove herself from her out-group position (a position she acknowledges) to join an office in-group, her focus is enacting out the responsibilities, as she interprets them, of an ambassadorship the staff has bestowed on her.

Rashida, a second generation participant of Afghani origin, aged 33 years, who veils, expands on Walid's belief that Muslim women in an office environment are always on "centre stage". Rashida expresses the view, echoed by many of the participants, that "I must prove myself daily to avoid being labelled incompetent". One way she believes Muslim women should combat the label "incompetence" is to acquire more tertiary qualifications. Rashida is identifying with the opinions of professionally trained black women in the United States who face similar concerns. Carroll (1982:237) argues that black women need to meet demands higher than any other group. Not only do they consider they should be better qualified and more articulate, they need more stamina to face inevitable setbacks and fewer opportunities for promotion:

> When you are from a minority group, you need to be as qualified as possible to earn the job because so many things do work against you. We need more qualifications and we have to show we are better than other female staff members.

At the same time as I was transcribing the interview with Rashida, my own university was displaying banners throughout the campus, extolling the importance of post-graduate qualifications with its guarantee of larger pay packets. It occurred to me that Rashida had not referred to the added benefit of higher remuneration that post graduate qualifications may bring. Rashida's concern was, not the importance of gaining important workplace experiences at the professional level, but being more tertiary qualified and "better" than the other professional female members of the staff.

Yalda, a second generation participant of Egyptian origin, aged 37 years, who does not veil, provides a contrasting view to those participants who wish to be identified as members of the Islamic faith. Yalda has elected not to disclose her religious beliefs because "it's no-one's business but my own" and, more importantly, she endorses the generally accepted view that any religious persuasion is a "private affair and should be kept out of the public arena" (Bouma & Brace-Govan, 2000:168). Yalda expresses amazement at the extent some of her fellow employees go, usually during staff social functions, to try and confirm their 'suspicions' that she is a Muslim woman:

> I refuse to disclose my religion, I will choose when to disclose it or not. It is a real issue for some people. One guy has made his sentiments quite clear and tries to trick me by continually offering me alcohol or food with pork ingredients, it's quite sad and, actually, extremely annoying.

On questioning Yalda, her reasoning is that her fellow employee's persistence in offering her non-halal food was to position her as different and as a member of the Other. Yalda believes any success of his actions would not remove her from her in-group status as a senior financial accountant but, in her words "I would be treated differently". Yalda's decision to keep her religious beliefs private does not mirror the proposal Clair et al. (2005:82) present, that a decision to keep religious beliefs private could be described as an act of "concealment that is used to hide personal information in order to pass as a dominant group member". Nor could her decision be reflected in the argument of Chakraborti and Zempi (2012:273) that another way of avoiding "victimisation", or avoiding being labelled a member of an out-group is to emphasise other aspects of identity, in other words, to project aspects of identity that are contrary to what the individual actually believes:

> Another way of avoid victimisation might be to stress particular aspects of one's external social identity even though there is little or no internal acceptance of that.

Yalda identifies more with the proposal of Haddad et al. (2006:4):

> Others regret that they are not able to be more public about their affiliation with Islam, or to wear Islamic dress, but know that such a choice may have serious professional and social ratifications that they are not able, or willing, to assume.

Abagull, a second generation participant of South African origin, aged 29 years who does not veil, provides us with another example of religious discrimination. Like Yalda, Abagull prefers to keep her religious beliefs private. One of the results of her non-disclosure is the

exposure to anti-Islamic comments made by her fellow employees. Abagall is then confronted by other issues, should she object to the staff members' comments which would result in her 'outing', or should she remain silent:

> In terms of work, I can escape it [being labelled] because no-one knows I'm Muslim which is quite good in a way because I hear people speaking freely and if I was in a hijab they wouldn't say. I've heard people make horrible comments about Islam, about the Middle East and about what's going on in Palestine not realising I am Muslim and then it makes me think, where am I going to sit, sit on the fence or am I going to confront them.

Finally, some participants illustrate how they respond to perceived prejudice and suppression in their workplace by distancing themselves from the majority of employees and creating their own "comfort zone" out-group. Ezra, a second generation participant of Turkish origin, aged 23 years, who veils explains:

> I sometimes find it more comfortable being with women who are from other non-English speaking backgrounds, not necessarily Muslim. I think this is because we can identify growing up in Australia and having non-Australian cultural influences in our lives. We can often reminisce about high school experiences of being a non-Anglo Australian and some of the difficulties we face. Or we can relate to each other about our parents having more cultural views about different issues. I guess it's because we tend to be second generation Australians who were born here, educated here and are now starting work together and can relate to each other about our families who have different cultures, compared to Anglo families.

This ‘out-group of their own making’ is usually made up of other non-English background employees who have a pre-existing history of non-Australian cultural influences growing up in Australia. As Schmitt et al. (2003:1,3) propose:

> Shared attributes and a common history can themselves be the basis for a sense of group identification, a connection to a group where none could have existed before, [minority group members] are likely to define themselves at the group level when they perceive that they share discriminatory treatment in common.

Schmitt et al. describe the characteristics of a workplace out-group where minorities have common links that bring them together and distinguish them from the majority. This ‘out-group of their own making’ has the characteristics of all group identifications, whether it be Farr’s (1998:259-260) “Good Old Boys Sociability” grouping or a minority out-group. Each has its own shared history, common links and resultant ‘comfort’ zones. The contrast is that one promotes the secular identity badge promoted by management, and the other forms the minority group identity of an out-group.

Conclusion

The chapter has provided an analytical understanding of group belonging and the relationship between ‘identity’ and group belonging. It studied how the formation of groups impacts on the participants’ employment experiences and endorses the understanding that membership of an in-group provides an important basis for self-definition and not only in workplace environments. At the same time, the criterion for a particular group identity is sometimes a stated management requirement of employment, or, as in most cases, simply ‘understood’ by its employees. How each group identifies, on

occasions more strongly with their 'collective selves' is demonstrated by comparing the roles that in-group and out-groups play in the secular workplace.

An individual's group membership can also be designated by other members of staff that is based on the prejudicial attitudes of an in-group. These assumptions, usually taken at 'face value' are based on assumed cultural norms and expected behaviour of particular identities (Clare et al., 2005:80-81; Goldberg & Solomos, 2002). As Rozario illustrates, it suits people to follow the majority view rather than stand out with an alternative viewpoint (1998:650) and 'difference' which results in membership of an out-group enhances membership of an in-group (McClain et al., 2009:473). It is this difference, coupled with a sense of power, that creates a disregard for others and common discriminatory treatments, or prejudicial attitudes by an in-group and which then creates a minority group identity (Schmitt et al., 2003:2).

For comparative purposes with the secular workplace, the chapter also researches another in-group, not connected with the workplace. Umma, made up of Sydney's diverse Muslim communities, has been chosen because of its behavioural similarities and its ability to create in-groups and out-groups. The comparison with the secular workplace environment is invaluable because, by describing the experiences of the convert participants and detailing their explanations of why the situations occur, it illustrates how a considered excluded minority is not immune to the phenomenon of excluding others.

Whilst acknowledging there are distinctions and differences of emphasis placed on understandings of intergroup behavior by different scholars, Tajfel's (1978) Social Identity Theory (SIT) has provided a useful tool for this research, as it addresses intergroup conflict, conformity to group norms, the effects of low group status and that membership in a salient minority creates in-group identity and out-group antipathy. SIT argues that intergroup behavior can be predicted by perceived group status differences and that individuals tend to classify themselves, and others, into social categories, or social

classifications. It is these classifications that enable individuals, who are members of in-groups, to promote a heightening of differences with out-groups. The end result is that in-group/out-group behaviour in the secular workplace presents challenges to all minorities, and as this chapter has identified, to the participants of this research.

These misunderstandings and misinterpretations affect the workplace experiences of the participants in a number of ways. Firstly, the participants agree that there is an automatic tendency for them to be placed in an out-group category and this is especially so should they identify as Muslim, either verbally or by appearance, because it signals "difference" and membership in the Other. Secondly, the chapter demonstrates the tendency for employees to prefer groups valued by the mainstream culture, as a confirmation of their self-esteem which may be associated with shared history, or bestowed on them by management and its identification 'badge'. This finding also reflects the gender factor, confirmed by Farr's research on the "Good Old Boys Sociability" groups which perpetuate male networks and cliques. Thirdly, the considered 'correct' behaviour of staff towards a Muslim woman, albeit unintentional, of keeping a considered appropriate distance creates a minority group identity because it perpetuates the existence of the Other or the different.

In conclusion, this chapter has incorporated many of the findings of the previous chapters. It has drawn together the experiences of the forty participants who come to their workplace environments as tertiary educated Australian Muslim women. They enter their workplace environments shaped by their own diverse experiences, as daughters of first generation immigrant Muslim parents and growing up as Australians. They also enter a workplace with fellow employees who have their own interpretations of who should be members of in-groups and who should not. This chapter has described how the participants, as members of minority groupings, are able to exhibit choice in how they portray their identity, even though this may allot them a place in an out-group and not necessarily of their own choosing. And, as we have seen, on occasions, 'difference' is used

to stress their own separateness from a group (see Huddy, 2001:130,131). Thus, the chapter assists in locating a positive Muslim identity within the challenges of this environment. This identity is outlined in detail in the concluding chapter of this thesis, Chapter 7.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

The aim of this thesis is to contribute to the anthropological understanding of the impact a religious identity may have on the experiences and expectations of tertiary educated Muslim women who are in paid employment in a Western nation. Its broader aim, to further and deepen our understanding of the negotiation of religious and cultural differences in the realm of paid employment has brought the focus closer to home by examining the work-life experiences of forty tertiary educated Australian Muslim women who live and work in Sydney. Marranci (2008:67-68) proposes that Islam, as it is developing in Western democracies such as Australia today, needs to be studied through the observation of the everyday life of Muslim people, rather than being diverted by the "global turmoil" that has emerged in the wake of 9/11 and other worldwide, and local, events. This thesis presents such an approach, with its research specifically focused on these forty tertiary educated Australian Muslim women. We are then able to observe if a new set of issues arises for these participants, the majority of whom are daughters of first generation immigrants whose first language is not English. By giving primacy to their voices, we are able to deepen our understanding of the workplace experiences of tertiary educated first and second generation Australian Muslim women.

In this present day climate of distrust of Muslim and Islamic societies, Marranci (2004:107) argues that any representation of Muslim lifestyles has become "alien from Western society". With the focus on distinctive aspects of the participants' work-life experiences, each chapter of this thesis has demonstrated the consequences of the participants being considered representatives of this different "Muslim lifestyle". In my introductory chapter, Chapter 1, I expressed the concern that highlighting negative incidents experienced by the participants may appear unbalanced, or as a preoccupation with 'difference'. At the same time I emphasised that not to draw attention to the negative encounters experienced by

the participants would circumnavigate my conclusion that exclusion manifests itself in very subtle ways. Thus, illustrations of 'difference', persistently appearing as a continuous thread throughout the chapters, establish how Muslim women, especially those who identify with their belief, become objects of difference in the workplace.

Variations on the subject of what is understood by 'difference' always provoked a lively participant discussion. As we have seen at various points throughout this thesis, each participant, in her own way, knows what it means to be excluded, both without and within the workplace because of 'difference'. First and foremost, the participants agree that 'difference' occurs because the general public has minimum understandings about Muslims, in general, and Muslim women who identify with their belief, in particular. The ramifications of this lack of knowledge then present in many different ways in the workplace. The participants battle the general stereotype of a Muslim woman not being sufficiently qualified, or experienced, to hold a professional job; as the considered 'office representative' of Sydney's Muslim population, they are continually held to account for any current Islamic event; the motivations for wearing the Islamic head covering are unappreciated and misunderstood. This final fact is particularly relevant to the conclusions of the thesis, as twenty-five, or more than half the participants, wear a head covering that signifies their Islamic identity. And, as Roy (2004:21-22) points out, "we are seeing increasing numbers of young urban well educated Muslim women (re)asserting a traditional Islamic identity at work and elsewhere" (see also Rozario, 2006:368-369).

Scholars provide different perceptions of what the 'secular workplace' represents. Hage (1998:35) describes it as a "stage" where employees, as actors, are both the white mainstream majority and members of minority groups, or the "different". It is then a "stage" where all employees enact out differences and prejudices can be expressed (Ibid). In their pilot study which examined everyday intercultural relations in my own university, Macquarie, Wise et al. (2010:2) found that the workplace is a place where intercultural encounters are an enforced everyday reality because employees are required to engage

with one another on an ongoing basis. It is at work where "many have the opportunity to interact with those different from themselves on a regular basis" (Ibid). The scholars found that while universities, as workplaces, are "viewed as largely non-racist" (2010:1), this observation was more factual when their participants worked in sections of the university that were "culturally diverse". They observed that the participants who did experience discrimination and racism, were those who were associated with "largely Anglo dominated departments". These participants "felt" it could be attributed "to their ethnic and cultural backgrounds" and they felt "different". While the conclusion of the scholars was that universities were not racist workplaces compared to other types of workplaces, their study provides weight to the findings of this thesis, that people who are considered 'different' experience 'exclusion'.

To reaffirm my argument that in the secular workplace environment, the participants, as Muslim women, are misunderstood because they represent the Other, I move to the notion that as employees, the participants represent a "mixed picture" (Yasmeen (2008:v), or, as one participant suggests, 'identity confusion'. This "mixed picture" then influences how the majority feel when they see a Muslim woman as a fellow employee. I have chosen to repeat incidents experienced by three of the participants to emphasise how "mixed pictures" are reinforced when misrepresentations of the Other, or the different, occur in an environment that understands, and endorses, a sense of 'sameness'. The first incident was told to us by Haseena[88], a first generation participant of Afghani origin who veils. Haseena was attending a meeting with other summer clerks when the female manager conducting the meeting, referred to an Australian sporting icon and one of his particular sporting successes. When Haseena asked her to explain what she meant, the manager replied:

> Where have you been? You must have been living under a rock.

[88] See Page 168.

The incident can be interpreted in many ways, it can be described as representing 'nationalism' and that any 'true blue' Australian would know about that important incident in Australia's sporting history. It could also be understood as putting Haseena in her place, she was not "one of us" and, therefore could not be considered as "fitting in" (Hage, 1998:45). At the same time, Haseena is 'different', she looks and dresses differently to her Anglo Australian female counterparts. Thus, she could be considered a victim of the white racists who are "masters of the national space", and, as a "tolerated other", must be positioned within specific limits, or boundaries (Hage:89). In point of fact, and as Haseena agreed, it was because she represented what Levinas describes as "what I myself am not" (cited in Ben-Ari & Strier, 2010), she was misunderstood as representing the Other, in an environment that expects a sense of 'sameness'. As Haseena recalls, it was a situation obviously understood by the other employees at the meeting, "everyone just smiled" and the manager continued on with the meeting. This incident would be difficult to prove as a racist incident, it was considered an amusing, and condescending, aside that did not interrupt the manager's lecture. Haseena preferred to remain silent and let the incident pass because, in her words "it was just not worth it", or, not worth it because she would end up endorsing to the audience what, she felt, was her 'outsider' status (Poynting & Perry, 2007:162).

Chakraborti and Zempi (2012:78) identify a Muslim woman's appearance as having a "strong symbolic load" because of the perceptions it communicates and this is illustrated by how the participants, who identify as Muslim, face additional challenges compared to those participants who prefer to keep their religious belief a private matter. The second incident I recount is about Adalet[89], who arrived in Sydney as a child with her Egyptian parents and Shada[90] who arrived as a young married woman from Iran. Adalet, who had never denied she was Muslim, had previously dressed to suit her organisation's dress code profile and considered many of the staff as her friends. When Adalet decided to veil, the staff reacted unfavourably, her actions were described as being those of "a second class

[89] See Page 212
[90] See Page 214

subservient citizen". To the staff, Adalet was no longer 'one of us', she was now a member of the 'different'. Adalet suggests that had she been veiled when she applied for her job, it would not have been offered to her, regardless of having the same qualifications and experience that got her the job in the first place.

In comparison to Adalet, Shada decided to remove her veil after a period of three years' employment and her fellow employees considered that she, too, had changed. Shada was now a member of the 'in-group'. In comparison to the staff views that Adalet was no longer attractive, Shada was showered with "you look nicer" comments. Adalet was now a member of the Other and Shada was now 'one of them'. Their respective fellow employees had reached that conclusion without contemplating that neither identity had changed and how each felt yesterday is how they felt today. The incidents reflect the view that the general public in Australia has minimum understandings about Muslims, in general, and Muslim women who identify with their belief, in particular. Both Adalet and Shada are victims and both identities are blurred because of what the majority understood as 'different' and not 'one of us'. These incidents also draw our attention to the misunderstandings that are associated with the Islamic head covering that stands in contrast to the dress styles of Anglo Australian women. The participants represent 'identity confusion' which then influences how the majority feel when they see a Muslim woman as a fellow employee.

Accordingly, as my research progressed and I turned and returned to my field notes, it became an uncontested argument that the principal facilitator of exclusion in the secular workplace is the misunderstanding and misinterpretation of anything that is defined as 'different'. The participants are misunderstood because they represent the Other, or the 'different' in an environment that expects a sense of 'sameness'. Chapters 4 to 6 introduced us to encounters of workplace exclusion and the issues that influence their occurrence in "everyday" practices (Essed, 1991:47-48). As these chapters have illustrated, "everyday racism" (Ibid:204-8) is not about extreme incidents, it is "about

cumulative mundane practices so embedded in routine and everyday practice, it is difficult to explicitly identify, but is felt and experienced persistently" (Essed, 1991:204-8 cited in Wise et al, 2010:9). We can then understand how this expectation of 'sameness' in the secular workplace can affect feelings of exclusion, self-formation, encourage an intense form of the 'prejudical gaze' and fuel the imagined sense of an Islamic 'resistance' to the Australian way of life.

The prospective tertiary educated Muslim woman employee may wish to take the advice of the law lecturer and avoid the secular workplace and instead apply for employment in Government areas such as the public service, or she may wish to avoid employment in any non-Muslim area.[91] The law lecturer's suggestions do offer a certain level of comfort because the public service, for example, has allocated multi faith prayer areas and pays special attention to how social occasions are conducted. As the thesis has demonstrated, the desire for a secure and comfortable work environment may even involve retraining and may mean being unable to utilise any former tertiary education. Not surprisingly, participants employed in Muslim run organisations, such as Muslim schools, report a level of comfort and security and do not face the same concerns, at least as far as dealing with the logistics of religious observance is concerned. As a participant explains, "I don't have to explain what I'm wearing and why, they understand *me*".[92] However, for those participants who work in Muslim establishments, live in the family home until they marry and live in Muslim-dominated suburbs, there appears very little exposure to a world that is not Muslim.

The advice of the law lecturer is certainly taken up by some veiled participants, but it does have other implications. Firstly, it could result in a disproportionate representation in areas such as the public service or other like organisations (see Samani, 2014:177). Secondly, it could identify with Condor's argument (1996:287) that the individual acts in terms of the collective of the group, locking the individual into the expected 'role' of their

[91] See Page 187.
[92] See Page 190.

particular grouping. More importantly, this 'disproportionate representation' does not provide role models or mentors for those Muslim women who wish to enter the secular workplace. This was illustrated by Mita,[93] a lawyer, who tried to encourage her female Muslim friends to apply for employment with secular companies or partnerships, usually located in the Sydney CBD:

> The problem is that there are not a lot of Muslim women working in the profession, I might be the only Muslim person so it is very confronting. There are no role models in general.

Mita recognises the "massive factor" of being the "lone" Muslim in her office. Her concern will never be resolved if young newly graduated Muslim women do not join the Muslim women who are already employed in the secular workplace and fill the gap as future role models and mentors, so obviously needed. Additionally, and as Asmar (2001:157) argues, it will be through the acquisition of higher educational qualifications and their increasing presence in Australian professional and public realms, that Muslim women will then be able to dispel the "dominant prejudices regarding their lack of intelligence, lack of assertion and inability to 'fit in'".

As this thesis attests, when a Muslim woman enters the secular workplace as an employee who identifies with her religious belief, any engagement involves the negotiation of difference, as collegial and hierarchical relationships interplay with workplace rulings. Certainly, it is impossible to deny the intersection of cultural-religious differences between the Muslim woman and her counterpart, the Anglo Australian woman. But, by their presence in the workplace, Muslim women can join forces with all Anglo Australian women employees to challenge the same obstacles of achieving their preferred professional image and help break down workplace barriers faced by all female participants. In so many ways, the tertiary educated Australian Muslim woman and her

[93] See Page 191.

Anglo Australian woman counterpart face the same obstacles: the male controlled traditions faced by all female employees (personified by the 'Old Boys' Club' atmosphere regardless of male denial); improved maternity leave situations; job sharing; child care provisions; equitable earning capacities and, importantly, an improvement in the overall rate of Australia's female work participation. As one participant has emphasised, "It's assuredly an *all-women's* thing".[94]

Identity

The final objective of this thesis is to determine if it is possible to maintain a Muslim identity within the challenges of the secular workplace, and if so, what might that 'identity' be. To understand the identity the participants bring to the workplace, it is important to reaffirm that the majority of the participants are an amalgam of daughters of first generation Muslim parents and tertiary educated Australian Muslim women and as such, are continually negotiating and renegotiating their personal, cultural and religious identities. Accordingly, they are exercising agency to balance tensions that arise regarding family priorities and personal ambitions, between religious and cultural expectations and the demands of the workplace as well as addressing the complex effects of educational and employment choices on relationships, lifestyles, future prospects and cultural transformation. Their religious attachment to an Islamic identity is also influenced by multilayered national, transnational, ethnic and cultural factors.

Akbarzadeh and Roose (2011:320) describe a grouping of Muslims as "cultural". Islam is not their sole source of identity nor do they actively follow any Islamic principles that interfere and interrupt daily routine. The Islamic Council of Victoria's president[95] in 2011, roughly estimated, that this group could possibly number, at that time, 250,000 persons. The participants are not representatives of this grouping. As we have seen at various points throughout the thesis, they have an emotional commitment to their religious belief.

[94] See Page 146.
[95] Ramzi ElSayyed was President of the Islamic Council of Victoria at the time Akbarzadeh and Roose's article was published.

For those participants who identify with their religious belief by either appearance or verbal affirmation, their religious commitment is the essence of their Muslim identity and encompasses all domains of their life. They are a 'minority within a minority' in their workplace because of their tertiary qualifications and their membership in a minority religious group. It is this latter difference that sets this minority group apart from the workplace majority, a majority who, as it has been seen, also places weight on employment status.

Three important aspects have emerged that influence the identity the participants wish to portray in their workplace environment - the influences of family values, especially the behavior of the female members, the role their respective Muslim communities play and the experiences of growing up in Australia. On the one hand, they are daughters of first generation immigrant Muslim parents with cultural traditions and family expectations that are also endorsed by their local ethnic communities. On the other hand, they are first and second generation tertiary educated Australian Muslim women. As the thesis has found, in varying degrees these contrasting influences are in evidence. The participants have developed a bond with Australia but not at the expense of their religious belief or their ethnic heritage (Saaed & Akbarzadeh, 2001:15). Their religious belief still maintains constrained structural parameters, which may include a wish not to identify with the West, but it is now the choice of the participants. As a result of these multiple facets of concern, plus the need to balance these complex choices, I argue that the participants bring a new form of identity to their workplace environments. As first and second generation Muslim women, they are a generation in cultural transition, subject to the linguistic, cultural influences of their parents, as well as the social environment of Australia. It can, therefore, be seen how they represent an important link between their first generation immigrant parents and the wider community (see also Portes, 1991:632-639).

Perhaps, the value of any thesis lies as much in the questions it raises as in the answers it offers. It opens doors on what may be researched in the future by building on the results

of its findings. Ethnography, in this instance, has been well-suited to increasing the in-depth knowledge of the participants, both as tertiary educated Australian Muslim women and as daughters of first generation immigrant parents. The findings of the thesis highlight the importance of continuing to pursue research on the ways in which tertiary educated Muslim women continually negotiate and renegotiate their personal, cultural and religious identities. Any future research should include the contradictions and tensions that can arise between personal aspiration and familial obligation, religious-cultural expectations and the demands of the secular workplace. It would also include the complicated effects of educational and employment choices on relationships, lifestyles, religious-cultural change and future prospects. Further insights are also needed regarding the multidimensional ways in which overt modes of Islamic expression affect, or restrict, Muslim women's employability and workforce participation, the ways in which they experience stereotyped prejudice in the workplace as professional women and the response strategies they employ in the face of such exclusion. Employers, and employees, alike, need workplace education to recognise that 'difference' should be understood, and respected, as a resource to be nourished and valued in itself and for itself (Bouma & Brace-Govan,2000:160).

Secondly, creating more mentors to advise future Muslim women employees may include the assistance of universities to prepare potential Muslim women graduates for their professional careers and would include discussions about the religious aspects of their lives. The advantage here is that this advice would be more objective, and independent, than that obtained from friends or courses arranged by local ethnic communities.

Finally, research is required on the work/life experiences of third and fourth generation Australian Muslim women, the daughters of tertiary educated mothers who are, themselves, daughters of immigrant parents with their definite ideas on how a Muslim daughter should behave. It would be valuable to know if the requirement to restrict

daughters' movements before marriage is as much a focus as it is in the lives of their mothers.

In conclusion, because the Muslim community in Sydney has a youthful population, employers will encounter more young tertiary educated Muslim women, with growing aspirations towards careers in the secular workplace applying for employment. As any accounting book advises us, staff members are employers' greatest 'asset', thus, responsibility lies with all employers to work towards realistic solutions as a way forward. It is important that they understand the expectations and experiences of these Muslim women to preempt the loss of this valuable and emerging employment resource. Any future study should include employers' views and their thoughts on facing what is this emerging resource to the employment 'pool'. Included in this aspect of research should be that employers consider how religious identity be taken into account when planning what makes a good business environment and which would work towards a more harmonious and inclusive workplace. Finally, beyond tolerance, successful religious diversity requires governance practices and policies that facilitate constructive religious participation in the public sphere that in turn promotes social cohesion and an economically productive society.

Chapter 1, the first of the introductory chapters, commences with an observation by Yasmeen (2008:3), and is restated here:

> If we are to understand Muslim identities in Australia,
> it is essential to enquire if Muslims feel excluded
> from the wider Australian society.

The thesis has accomplished this task, it has asked the participants to relate their experiences as employees in the domain of Sydney's secular workplace and has recorded their responses. By documenting the encounters of the participants who are already

employed in the secular workplace, it is hoped that the thesis provides Muslim women with an awareness of what they may experience as future tertiary educated employees in that same environment. It is also hoped that this research proves a valuable tool of learning for future employers, both in the private and public sector, and for any formulation of future workplace policies in regard to Muslim employment.

The thesis concludes with a participant's reply to my question on maintaining a Muslim identity within the challenges of a secular workplace environment:

> [I]t took me a long to overcome fear and just say, *this is me, take it or leave it* and having that level of confidence I need, to be identified as a Muslim woman.

APPENDIX A

Dear

Employment Experiences of Tertiary Educated

Australian Muslim Women in a Multicultural Society

And Their Religious Identity

You are invited to participate in a study of young Muslim women graduates and their experiences and expectations in the Sydney workforce. The study is being conducted by Gai Scott from the Centre for Research on Social Inclusion at Macquarie University, Sydney. Her contact details are:

Telephone: 02 9 850 1817

Email addresses: gai.scott@mq.edu.au

gaiscott@optusnet.com.au

The research is a research student's project conducted to meet the requirements of PhD under the supervision of two Supervisors: Professor Marion Maddox and Dr. Rochelle Spencer, from Macquarie University, Sydney.

Dr. Maddox's contact details are:

Telephone: 02 9 850 4431

Email address: marion.maddox@mq.edu.au

Dr. Spencer's contact details are:

Telephone: 02 9 850 8835

Email address: rochelle.spencer@mq.edu.au

Should you decide to participate, you will be asked to answer a verbal questionnaire lasting approximately one hour and which will be conducted by Gai Scott. The questionnaire will be about your expectations and experiences in the Sydney workforce. You will also be required to relate a little about your family background, your secondary schooling and university training. The answers to the questions will be recorded, using an audio-recorder.

At no time will you be subject to any risk or discomfort, please refer to the attached Consent Form of Participant. However, should any question cause distress or concern and, as a result, you consider that you require professional guidance, Macquarie University, as all Australian universities do, offers a confidential counselling service for their students. For participants who are not students of a University, counselling services are offered by the Mission of Hope, phone No: 02 9 709 4569 or Email: info@amal.org.au and the Wesley Mission Lifeline Face to Face Counselling Team, an organisation with counsellors who are not necessarily Christian and who work respectfully with people of all faiths and back grounds, phone No: 02 9 951 5560.

Any information or personal details gathered in the course of the study are confidential and no individual will be identified in any publication of the results. Access to the data collected will only be available to Dr. Maddox, Dr. Spencer and Gai Scott. A summary of the results of the data can be made available to you on request to Gai Scott whose contact details appear above.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary: you are not obliged to participate and if you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without having to give a reason and without consequence.

Yours sincerely,

Gai Scott, BA(Hons)

APPENDIX B

Consent Form of Participant

I, …… have read and understand the information above and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this research, knowing that I can withdraw from further participation in the research at any time without consequence. I have been given a copy of this form to keep.

Participant's Name: _____
(Block letters)
Participant's Signature: _____ Date:

Investigator's Name: _____
(Block letters)

Investigator's Signature: _____ Date:

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Macquarie University Ethics Review Committee (Human Research). If you have any complaints or Reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the Ethics Review Committee through the Director, Research Ethics (telephone 9850 7854: email ethics@mq.edu.au). Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated and you will be informed of the outcome.

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MACQUARIE University
SYDNEY·AUSTRALIA

APPENDIX C

30 August 2016

Dear Mrs Scott

This letter is to confirm that the following ethics application cited below received final approval from the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee:

Chief Investigator: Mrs Gwendolyn Gai Scott/Assoc Prof Maddox & Dr Rochelle Spencer
Ref: HE28AUG2009-D00094
Date Approved: 18 September 2009
Title of Ethics Application:
"*Muslim Women Graduates in the Age Group 20-40 Years: Their experiences and expectations in the Sydney and Melbourne workforce*"

We wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Dr Karolyn White
Director, Research Ethics & Integrity,
Chair, Human Research Ethics Committee (Human Sciences and Humanities)

This HREC is constituted and operates in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Council's (NHMRC) *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* (2007) and the *CPMP/ICH Note for Guidance on Good Clinical Practice*.

Chair, Human Research Ethics Committee (Human Sciences and Humanities)

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