

## The Dynamic of Muslim Identity In Multicultural Politic of Australia

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**Abstract:** This research aims to explore the dynamic of Muslim Identities in a multicultural context. Taking Brisbane as a research locus, the research investigates modes of conflict resolution that are enacted in a Muslim minority area by considering the operation of Islam and Islamic modes negotiating identity within the wider society. The prime concern of the research based on the questions of how does the Muslim in Australia expresses their identity by developing the adaptation strategy as social action in a multicultural context?. Based on the questions, this article focused on the issues of the strategy of Muslim that used in responding to view and practices of multiculturalism. This research shows that Muslims in Australia have a wide variety of historical and social backgrounds. Amid Australia's multicultural politics, Australian Muslims have different responses to negotiate Islamic identity on the one hand and as Australian citizens on the other. The adaptation of Muslim in Australia then ranges from a moderate pattern, accepting a secular culture, to being reactionary as the impact of the feeling of being marginalized people as a "stepchild" in Australian citizenship.

**Keyword:** Multicultural Politic, Identity, Muslim, Minority, negotiation

### A. Introduction

The question about Muslim identities emerges in line with the discussion on Islam and Muslims which is dominated by terrorism and counter-terrorism discourse. The discussions are done by internal Muslims or non-Muslims, either in Islamic countries or in non-Islamic countries. The discussion sparks heated debate on the nature of Islam and Muslim and the relationship between Islam and democracy or the Muslim community and other religious communities. For Muslims or other communities, the situation put them in complex and major challenges. One of the challenges Muslims face, especially in non-Muslim majority countries is how to express their identity in a secular and multicultural context and to cope with the changing political and cultural issues.

Contemporary studies on Muslim heavily emphasize the concern of Islamic radicalism and its impact.<sup>1</sup> There rises the interest to dig factors leading individual Muslim or group of Muslim to behave and act radically. Many factors are supposed to be sources of radicalism, such as belief, educational background, and societal as well as economic background. Radical action by Muslims is also be seen as a rational and deliberate choice involving the mobilization of all possible resources and using the religious frame.<sup>2</sup>

The other trend of studies of radicalism has emphasised the relationship between religion and radical actions. Within these studies, radical action in the religious community has been perceived as rooted in the religious dimension. As an example, radicalism in Muslim communities mostly correlated with jihadist ideology.<sup>3</sup> The heavy of this study is its capability to discover the constitutive dimension of radicalism rooted in the sublime aspect of the life of human life that is a religious belief. For this reason so far radicalism is difficult to resolve because religious belief is a human life dimension that hard to be intervene.

In the context of contemporary studies above, studies on conflict resolution in Muslim societies has been neglected. Muslim communities have capabilities in adapting cultural and social changes and adopting modern features. Through these capabilities, Muslim communities negotiating and reconstructing their identities. A study of the dynamic of Muslim identities in the multicultural politic of Australia explored the dialectical processes of the reference identity and difference identity among Muslim in Australia multicultural policy context.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistic census in 2011, there are 476,291 Muslim in Australia. Although this number marked the increase of 69 per cent since the 2001 census show that Muslim mark up only, 2,2 per cent of the population, that defining Muslims as the fourth-largest religious group in Australia. They live in Several cities such as Darwin, Brisbane, Melbourne and Sydney etc. This research will be carried out in Brisbane in which is the sites that Muslims take place, life and grew.

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<sup>1</sup> For more discussion see Bruinessen, Martin Van (2013), *Contemporary Developments in Indonesian Islam, Explaining the "Conservative Turn"*, Pasir Panjang, Singapore, 2013.

<sup>2</sup> Wiktorowicz, Quintan, *Islamic Activism a Social Movement Theory Approach*, Indiana University Press, 2012

<sup>3</sup> Salenda, Kasjim (2009), *Terorisme Dan Jihad dalam Perspektif Hukum Islam*, Jakarta, Badan Litbang dan Diklat, Departemen Agama RI, 2009

Based on the information above, Muslim in Australia is a relatively small population. They are spread in many areas such as, education, worker and involved in Muslim Civil Society Organization which is dedicated to so many fields such as charity works, interfaith dialogue and understanding etc.

This research has used Phenomenology as epistemology and descriptive phenomenology inquiry as an approach. This research is field research with a primary focus on the dynamic of Muslims in Australia multicultural context. Using the method this research aims to gain a detailed and holistic understanding of the experience of Muslim in expressing their identity and responding to the reality of multiculturalism in the field.

I approached this from an intermediate position. Consistent with this principle, no specific hypotheses or theories were developed before or during the engagement with the participants. However, by academic inquiry and for the specific purposes of this paper, it was necessary to initially explore the literature specifically relevant to the impact of 9/11 on Muslims in the West. This enabled the current investigation to be 'grounded' in a field (or fields) of knowledge, allowing for broad and specific research questions to be generated. It is imperative to 'read enough to be thoughtful and intelligent about the context and history of the topic'.<sup>4</sup>

The phenomenological, semi-structured in-depth interviews have been conducted at the place of the participants' from September until October 2014 in Brisbane, Australia. Interviews will be conducted with each participant over a series of two weeks to account for idiosyncratic days and internal consistency. This also allowed for a more in-depth follow-up.

## **B. Result and Discussion**

### **1. Australia and Social Diversity Problem**

Australia is such a multicultural country, with citizens from indigenous people and migrants and with citizens using various languages. Australia was firstly inhabited by Aboriginal, now considered as a nation. However, the relationship between the outside world also happened as a sailor or Bugis fisherman from Indonesia visited Australia to search for teripang.

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<sup>4</sup> Seidman, *Interviewing as Qualitative Research*, Teacher College Press, 2006

The major encounter with Aboriginal Australians with other communities started with the influx of migrants from Britain in 1788. The migrant came to settle Australia who later acts as the backbone of modern Australia. The wave of migrant continues to run especially when Australia rise to be promised land for exiles and those who want to find a better life because of Australian success in economic and political development. The migrant comes from various countries in the world, i.e European countries, Asian countries, Middle Eastern countries, and America's countries. All bring with them their local culture and language that create the cosmopolitan character of Australia. From 1788 till 1997, there is about 9 million migrant from many countries.<sup>5</sup>

The geography aspect of Australia may add to the uniqueness of Australia on the world map. It is considered to be a continent that places Australia as a solely continent-state in the world. Geopolitically, Australia is closer to South East Asia and Pacific countries. However, the strong relationship with commonwealth countries drives it to act more globally, moreover with its involvement with the US-led alliance. There are dynamic of Australia to define itself in geopolitical context: Asian or Euro-North American.

The geographic aspect poses Australia with the challenge to negotiate between history and geography, between the more regional engagement and alliance to US and European powers. Alexander E. David depicts Australia as "occupying ambivalent space in the world: a predominantly White Western Nation geographically located on the periphery of Asia."<sup>6</sup> The bipolar position is negotiating in the Australian scene of the political as well as multicultural policy. Gareth Evans and Paul Keating tended to bring Australia to get closer to Asia with Asian only Policy,<sup>7</sup> but John Howard prefers more US orientation, although quite successful to maintain a relationship with Indonesia and China.

The geographical problem also contributes to the issue of the national identity of Australia, in which migration and diversity of identities are seen as an important part of the richness of Australian society and the dynamic process of

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<sup>5</sup>Kevin Dunn, Susan Thompson, Bronwyn Hanna, Peter Murphy and Ian Burnley. "Multicultural Policy within Local Government in Australia". *Urban Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 13, 2477–2494, 2001. P. 2479

<sup>6</sup>Alexander E. David. "Rethinking Australia's International Past: Identity, Foreign Policy and India in the Australian Colonial History." *Flinders Journal of History and Politics*. Vol. 29, 2013. h. 71

<sup>7</sup>Michalis s. Michael. "Australis' Handling Tension between Islam and the West under Howard Government". *Asian Journal of Political Sciences* Vol 17. No. 1. April 2009. P. 52

integration and the management of diversities. Planned migration in 1947 transform Australia from a small, insular society mainly Britain to be larger and diverse society. From 1945-2007, approximately 7 million migrant, with 700.000 of them are refugees, landed on the Australian border. Initially, migration was dominated by a migrant from European countries, especially from Britain. However, in the 1960s situation changed with the coming of migrant from non-European countries. The diversity of migrant is not only from the nationality background but also from religious one with growing minorities from Hindu, Budha, Moslem, and other Christian Denomination.<sup>8</sup>

The situation marked the orientation shift of the Australian Government from protectionism to the neoliberal model of an open border.<sup>9</sup> Up to the 1970s, assimilation and White Australian Policy act as a mode in maintaining a homogenous society. However, With the demographic changing, there emerges the need for recognition of the diversities that give birth to the multicultural policies in the 1970s. Australian policy on governing diversity sometimes overlaps with the migration policy and migrant settlers. Diversity and migration diversity of identities are twofold issues that should be tackled by the Australian government, either together or separately, either putting both in one bracket or separating them as two different cases.

Some problems are faced by Australia to deal with the issues. The dynamic of diversity and migration also relates to national identity building, while preserving the right of the ethnic group to maintain their culture, and to citizenship. Stephen Castle, Graeme Hugo, and Ellie Vasta highlight some problems that the Australian government are addressing, namely 1) difficulty to control borders due to transportation and communication technology, 2) difficulty of government to decide who enters Australia due to family network, 3) problem to attract skilled workers due to openness of North America to skilled labour and the rise of the need of skilled labour in developing Asian Countries, 4) the growth of temporary migrant and the diaspora of Australian who study and work overseas and the low fertility of Australian, and 5) migrants who are citizen,

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<sup>8</sup>Gary D. Bouma. "Minority Religious Identity and Religious Distance in Australia." In Juliet Pietsch and Hayd Aarons. *Australian, Identity, Fear, and Governance in 21 st Century*. Canberra: the Australian National University. Epress. 2012. P. 47

<sup>9</sup>Stephen Castle, Graeme Hugo, and Ellie Vasta. "Rethinking Migration and Diversity in Australia: Introduction" *Journal of Intercultural Studies*. Vol. 34 no.2 2013. P. 115

but are not permanent, have transnational identities and attachment to their homeland.<sup>10</sup>

The problems comprise migrant matters about the difficulty to control the influx of migrant and the issue of permanent or temporary settlement as well as the connection or attachment of them to their homeland. Both matters reflect the national issue that the Australian government should deal with. The dynamic of multiculturalism is based on the ethnic diversity of migrants as well as native inhabitants, but then it also includes religious issue when religious identity serves as a marking point to refer to a specific group.

Migration and then religion overlap each other along with the growth of international and regional discourse on terrorism. The boundary between ethnic and religious identity somewhat dissolves as the security concern lead to put both in some bracket. Religious identity is treated as a basis for social mapping and in turn, contribute to social segregation. The concern of social segregation recently draws public attention and debate in media related to the involvement of Australia in the second Iraq war led by the US to combat IS. Some politicians show their concern that the decision to involve in such a war will create a worse domestic situation in term of the relationship between Australian society, splitting citizens into a more bipolar and more antagonistic relationship, although some of them insist on taking harder measure to "IS threat."<sup>11</sup>

The attitude toward international issues give an impact on the dynamic of multiculturalism and nationalism in Australia and raise the question of how Australian identity should be built. There are contesting perspectives on how to integrate diversity into one Australian. Some take an assimilation path demanding minority to share and adapt the popular symbol of Australian identities, such as drinking beer and alcohol and eating pork. Some take a more open stance which allows a diversity of cultures alive as far as in line with Australian principle. They seek to build togetherness and Australianness based on agreed common ground.

The international issue so far goes around mostly on the terrorist issue. The terrorist issue has rises to be a commodity for political and public debate since the war involved Australia, such as the Gulf war and the war on terror. The

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<sup>10</sup>Stephen Castle, Graeme Hugo, and Ellie Vasta. "Rethinking.." h. 115

<sup>11</sup>See Paula Matthewson analysis on "How we are exploiting Terrorist Threat" In <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-09-29/matthewson-how-were-exploiting-the-terrorism-threat/5775340>

terrorist issue coincidence with the will of Australian politician to strengthen and upgrade the alliance with the US. The events that shift the attitude of the Australian Government to put more emphasis on the security aspect and thus take terrorist issue as priority was the 9/11 2001 case in the US, at which John Howard was visiting the US to upgrade US-Australia ties, and the Bali bombing 12 October 2002 with 88 of 200 casualties are Australian, and Australia Embassy Bombing in Jakarta 9 September 2004. Since 9/11 Australian policy turns to be more assertive.<sup>12</sup>

The media echo the political concern and the fear of the threat of terror that was not only can be seen as imaginary but a real one. Because the terror actions were done by Muslims or by the Islamic movement, it was be easily reckoned that Islam is linked with terrorism and thus Muslims pose threat to the homeland. The image of Muslim and terrorist sometimes is blurring in the perspective of public discourse. The fear and concern of political actors resonate with the media, which spread unrest among Australian society. This process leads to suspicion and mistrust toward the Muslim community.<sup>13</sup>

The survey on youth crime, identity, and belonging in Western Sydney 2007 concluded the evidence of migrant youth criminality is weak and their isolation issue or enclave disproportionate to the reality. The survey highlighted the role of media discourse and political opportunism to help to build a negative and stereotypical image of young people from a minority background. The events leading to Cronulla Riot 2005<sup>14</sup>, for instance, hinted that the cause of the riot was many years of international, national, and local anti Arab, anti-Muslim media discourse and political opportunism and persistent racial attitude.<sup>15</sup>

It does not mean that media solely contribute to a negative attitude toward a minority, but the discourse endorsed by media about international and national issues and the way media frame them is often complained by a minority, especially Muslim communities, as an important factor in generating racial and

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<sup>12</sup>Michalis S. Michael. "Australia's Handling..." h. 52 and 54

<sup>13</sup>The analyses of negative portrait of moslem in Australian media and the response of moslem can be read on Anne Aly. "Australian Moslem Response to the Discourse on Terrorism in the Australian Popular Media". *Australian Journal of Social Issue*. Vol. 41 Number 1. 2007.

<sup>14</sup>For further explanation on Cronulla Riot. See Scott Poynting. "What Caused the Cronulla Riot?" *Race and Class*. 2006. 48. P. 85 etc.

<sup>15</sup>Jock Collin Carol Reid. "Minority Youth, Crime, Conflict, and Belonging in Australia. International Migration and Segregation." *International Migration and Integration Journal*. 2009. 10. p. 388

prejudice toward the minority. The media preference in selling negative news as part of business strategy lead to widespread panic and worry among the public on exaggerated security problems such as terrorism and migrant group. The twofold fronts: media and political appeal of security issue raise the concern of minority, of their safety and the relationship with wider Australian society. The issue give an impact on the exclusion of a specific minority in societal perception among Australians.

In the process of a more inclusive definition of Australian identity, media seem still to embrace the assimilation-based perspective. The *Living Diversity Report 2002*, funded by Special Broadcasting Service pointed that National view on media express their concern that media do not represent their life. Media is also deemed to be holding a non-inclusive view toward and not recognizing cultural diversity.<sup>16</sup>

Mainstream Media as social control and pressure group seems do not to play more in social changing in line with multicultural trend and more diverse Australian society. The role of media in representing diversity is still a problem in Australia. Mainstream media have been complained by the minority as not representing them, which in turn driving some minority to provide themselves with ethnic or minority media. In South Australia, for instance, there is seven print publication operated by the minority in serving their need, such as print media owned by Cantonese, Jewish, Vietnamese, and Italiano in Adelaide.

## 2. Identity and Belonging Issue

The issue of identity plays a crucial role in the polemic of minority-majority in Australia. If the state position as a neutral party before its citizen is taken into account, identity issue may not be a serious problem. Australia, more or less, has a firm and clear stance over its citizens in terms of civil right as well as socio-economical rights in general. However, when the dynamic of the relationship between citizens and the political sphere is put into consideration, the issue of identity get momentum to be a factor in shaping Australia attitude toward diversity. The minority-majority relationship occurs in the social dimension of national life, instead of state position toward diversity. Even though, minority

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<sup>16</sup>Virginia Nightingale and Tim Dawyer. "Community Attitude and Changing Audience: Integrating Multicultural Diversity into Media Policy." *Australian Journal of Communication*. Vol 23. (3). 2003. P. 109-110



discourse inevitably will also affect the political decision made by politicians and hence will affect the legislation of law related to multicultural affairs.

The diversity of identity will always play role in Australia social and cultural life, for the following reasons: firstly, the characteristic of migrants with communal culture – or even with an individual - background undoubtedly is a factor to create a primary group (or intra-ethnic group) inside wider Australian group to meet the need of safety-feeling and togetherness inherent to the primary group. Secondly, national symbols representing Australia are in the process of creation or are produced by referring to specific cultural symbol, either native ethnic's symbol or dominant ethnic's symbols. It will require time for all communities to be attached to the symbols and to feel belonged to them, while they are looking for a symbol to represent their existence and contribution to Australianness. Thirdly, with multiple identities that many Australians belong to, there will be a dynamic in defining salient identity in every situation. The voluntary belonging to a common identity, i.e. Australia, as salient one will be influenced by the way Australianness is defined.

National identity served as master narratives and quality to be real citizens. To understand how Australia build its national identity, there are identity symbols that popular Australians refer to when they talk about it. Australian government maps several symbols considered to be national symbols, such as 1) ANZAC day, commemorating the landing of Australian and New Zealand troops at Gallipoli on 25 April 1915. The date, 25 April, was officially named ANZAC Day in 1916; 2) Geography, such as great barrier reef, Kakadu National Park, Willandra Lakes Region, Lord Howe Island Group, Tasmanian Wilderness, Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park, Gondwana Rainforests of Australia, etc; and 3) Flora and Fauna, in which Australia is well-known for Kanguru, Koala, Tasmanian Devil.<sup>17</sup>

The events and symbols, according to Harris and Williams<sup>18</sup>, mark the second stages of the development of National Identities that Australia has. The second stage occurred in the 1950s due to shifting the race to style as the core of Australianness. The shift can be understood by taking the social change happening in that time. The influx of migrants from various countries made race identification no longer compatible with the inclusion of these new diverse people. In that case, there is a shift of emphasis of Australianness to the lifestyle

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<sup>17</sup><http://australia.gov.au/about-australia/australian-stories/australian-identity>

<sup>18</sup>Patrick Harris and Vicki William. "Social Inclusion, National Identity, and Moral Imagination. Australian Review of Public Affair. Vol. 3, Number 3. 2003. p. 212-213

expression, such as sport, food, and art. The shift marked the reorientation of Australia identity from a race-based one to a shared experience of Australias. The phenomenon is called by Harris and William the second stage of identity development of Australia.<sup>19</sup>

In the first stage, Australians define their identity based on their self-attribution, i.e. the whiteness (as the most salient identity of the dominant social group). The whiteness identity comes to be the most powerful identity because of the British background that Australians in power have and of the need to differentiate between Australian migrants and indigenous Aborigin or between them and neighbouring Australian countries. The whiteness identity plays a crucial role as a social image that drives white-dominant migrant to create and build political and social system. This process has a great influence on the dynamic of the relationship between dominant white rulers and minority or minoritized people. This white Australian identity marked the euro-centrism prevailing among Australians and influenced the policy taken by Australia in the early 20th.

Ian M. Dun and Ian Barley consider this identity as old racism, to differentiate it from new racism of cultural racism. Old racism prevailed from 1901 to the early 1970s, with the end of White Australian Policy. Old racism embraced the understanding that one race is superior to other races naturally and that race group should be separated socially. The idea of old racism then lies in the superiority of one race and separation in societal life. The idea then is replaced by new and more cultural racism. The new racism is based on the following idea:

1. In-out group perspective, in which specific cultural identities are put as not belong to in a group. Asia Australians, Muslims, and Aborigin have long be treated as key Others of Australian identity.
2. Cultural diversity and nation, in which there is an ongoing debate on what Australia nation and how they should treat cultural diversity. The question is related to migrant culture in which some Australians prefer the migrant abandoning their culture, while some – and also used as a perspective in multicultural policy – accept the maintenance of migrant culture by migrant communities.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>Patrick Harris and Vicki William. "Social Inclusion, National Identity, and Moral Imagination. Australian Review of Public Affair. Vol. 3, Number 3. 2003. p. 212-213

<sup>20</sup>Kevin M. Dun etc. "Constructing Racism in Australia." *Australian Journal of Social Issue*. Nov. 2004. 39. 4. P.410-411

This stage may now gain less support from is Australian public, due to the more multicultural reality and policy endorsed by the government. However, the attitude still drives the response of the media and society of Australia to the specific situation. The issue of the human boat and terrorism, for instance, sparks debate and response some of which reflects the cultural racism attitude toward the others. The others are seen as a threat to Australian identity and society. The attitude lies beneath the consciousness because the cultural values embedded in the subconscious of a social group and transmitted or socialized indeliberately in the social and cultural process.

The third stage is based on the Australia Way notion. What breaks the second and the third stage is a different orientation to see what Australia is and how it should be. The second stage put what is more than the third stage does. The Australian identity develops from tangible aspects marks in the second stage, such as food and drinks, to intangible ones, the values that unite Australians and Australians hold. The values are universal ones, such as toleration, hard work, and justice.<sup>21</sup> The values lay the foundation for the wider social acceptance of diversity and enable Australians to cope with nation and identity problems. The third stage of Australian identity definition is by the multicultural policy. Although the third stage is born in the discourse of security, human boat migrants and terrorism, it provides the diverse Australian community with a common basis to recognize each other.

The third stage is can be seen as a product of the Australian struggle to cope with diversity, national identity, and inclusion of every social group in Australia. The problem of inclusion constitutes the core of Australian struggle to accept various group now existing in the reality of Australia's social life. The three stages, although depicted as three distinct processes, overlap and compete with each other in Australian life. Part of Australia's society may still embrace the first stage attitude, some prefer the second stage attitude, while the rest hold the third stage attitude.

Although their ongoing process to define national identity, the Australian government seems to take more concrete-based measure to build inclusivity of its citizen. The inclusion policy endorsed by the Australian Government is embodied in the process of building resources, capabilities, and opportunities of citizens in the order they can learn, work, participate, engage, and have a voice in

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<sup>21</sup>Patrick Harris and Vicki William. "Social Inclusion..." p. 215

the arena of societal, cultural, civic, and recreational activities. The policy stems from the idea that the disadvantage of resources, capabilities, and opportunities hinder a person to fully participate in social engagements. Social exclusion is regarded as the operational definition of multiple disadvantages that a person have.<sup>22</sup>

Thus, the diversity of identities is tackled by the Australian Government using the humanities parameter, by fulfilling human needs, enhancing human resources, building capabilities to participate in social life, and provision of opportunities for self-actualization. The discourse on the ideal image of a nation is taken to be more relaxed due to the reality of diversity that Australian society has. Although to some extent Australia accepts cultural diversity, it does not grant any ethnicity with social privilege, rather it chooses to try to treat all ethnic identities fairly.

However, the Australian national identities as the social image do not cease to be an important inquiry and contestation among Australians. Australia is still trying to figure out what elements should be their basis for national identity. At least, there are three major preferences of Australians to define their national identity. The first preference is to lay on the Anglo-Celtic or European core of culture. The second preference is to put Judeo-Christianity value as a common platform for Nation. The third preference is to accept a multicultural society with humanist values as the core.<sup>23</sup> The three preferences are existing in Australian society and have not yet finished coming to be a common platform for all.

### 3. Multicultural Policy

Multicultural policy in several countries shows different concern and goal. The multicultural policy is aimed to endorse and strengthen tolerant attitude among citizen. The orientation of multicultural policy is shaped by the domestic threat to national unity. The threat of unity come from three directions; religious extremism, ethnic conflict, and separatism. Multiculturalism is considered a cultural way to tackle the problem, especially related to the religious interpretation and ethnic diversity. However, multicultural policy in Australia, as

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<sup>22</sup>Australian Government. *Social Inclusion in Australia, How Australia is Faring*. Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet. 2012. P. 12

<sup>23</sup>Gaven W. Jones. White Australian, National Identity, and Population Change. In *Legacies of White Australia*. Edited By Laksiri Jayasuriya, David Walker and Jan Gothard. Crawley: The University of Western Australia. 2003. H. 110-111

we noted earlier, is based on different problems. The main problems of Australia are the relationship between migrant and indigenous and the diversity of ethnic and language of Australian Citizens. The diverse culture and language are of great concern to the Australian Government. The policy was aimed to embrace all Australians with their diverse background and culture and to support the right of Australians to celebrate, practise, and maintain their cultural heritage.

Although policy toward a multicultural society of Australia has been done for a long time, the awareness of diversity as part of Australian life gains momentum in 2011. Multicultural policy: "The People of Australia" was launched in Sydney on 16 February 2011. The policy comes with idea that multicultural composition is at the heart of Australia's national identity. The policy acknowledges that Government's services and program must be responsive to the need for the cultural diversity of Australia.<sup>24</sup>

Four principles are underpinning the multicultural policy of Australia:

1. The Australian Government celebrates and values the benefits of cultural diversity for all Australians, within the broader aims of national unity, community harmony and maintenance of our democratic values.
2. The Australian Government is committed to a just, inclusive and socially cohesive society where everyone can participate in the opportunities that Australia offers and where government services are responsive to the needs of Australians from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
3. The Australian Government welcomes the economic, trade and investment benefits, which arise from our successful multicultural nation.
4. The Australian Government will act to promote understanding and acceptance while responding to expressions of intolerance and discrimination with strength, and where necessary, with the force of the law.<sup>25</sup>

In Queensland state, the multicultural policy is handled by Cultural Diversity Queensland (CDQ). The CDQ is part of the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strair Islander and Multicultural Affair. The body set up the vision: " to provide equality of opportunity for all Queenslanders so that every person can

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<sup>24</sup>"Australia Policy and Principal Multiculturalism" in <http://swww.mia.org.audocumentsitem232>

<sup>25</sup>Australian Government. *The People of Australia: Australia's Multicultural Policy (Booklet)*. P.5

participate in our strong economy and enjoy our vibrant society.”<sup>26</sup> The vision is translated into four main goals of QCD Action Plans:

1. Language Independence
2. Education Participation
3. Economic Independence and Participation
4. Community Participation

The goals reveal the approaches that Queensland Government apply in implementing multicultural policy. The approaches emphasize on welfare and social engagement notion and show that the orientation of multicultural policy that the Queensland Government adopt is based on fulfilling human needs (minority) so that they develop the capacity to participate in social life. The approach addresses the needs of citizens and reflects the peacebuilding parameters in guaranteeing peaceful coexistence.

The aims of multicultural policy that the Queensland Government tries to achieve are framed in the four action plans. The detailed elaboration of the action plans are as follow:

1. Language Independence, every Queenslanders can independently communicate English
2. Education Participation and Attainment to maximise employment opportunity for Queenslanders
3. Economic independence and participation, by utilising cultural knowledge to understand the overseas market, encouraging and supporting small business development and assisting economic independence and participation of culturally diverse Queensland communities
4. Community participation, to ensure that each Queenslander feel welcome and a part of the community.<sup>27</sup>

The action plans have been preceded by Queensland Community Relations Plan which was launched in 1999. The Community relations plan was formulated to foster a positive community relations environment in Queensland where diversity is accepted and valued. The plan shows the interest of the

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<sup>26</sup>Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strair Islander and Multicultural Affair. *Queensland Cultural Diversity Policy*. Brisbane: Queensland Government. 2013.

<sup>27</sup>Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strair Islander and Multicultural Affair. *Queensland...*h. 5, 7, 9, 11

Australian Government, including in The State of Queensland, in the multicultural program to deal with the problem coming up from diversity issue.

The plan reveals the strategy that Queensland government employ to deal with diversity issue. Firstly, to make broader acceptance and understanding of diversity in the community. Secondly, to reduce the levels of prejudice and discrimination. Thirdly, to increase appreciation of the value of positive community relations. Fourthly, to encourage broader participation from the community in planning and promoting positive community relations. Fifthly, to increase community capacity to address community relation issue. Sixthly, to increase awareness of right, responsibilities and opportunities of citizenship in an inclusive, harmonious, and cohesive society.<sup>28</sup>

Therefore, there is a continuity of multicultural policy that the Australian Government, including The State of Queensland, promote. The policy finally comes to the notion that diversity of culture and language is part of Australian identity. The multicultural policy then is aimed to recognize and embrace diversity as part of national identity and character. While doing so, Australian Government try to enhance the access to public service for all citizens, to encourage the participation of all citizen in economic and social activities, and to create cohesion in Australian society.

The multicultural policy of Australia is not related to religion or faith, rather it emphasizes more to fulfil human needs while cultivating the feeling of togetherness. The policy starts from the problem of diversity, but it tackles not only diversity issue, but also economic, education, and social participation issue. It seems that the Australian government try to overcome the root or pivotal factor of the problem, rather than its manifestation and superficial actions.

#### **4. Being Muslim: History and Identity**

The existence of the Muslim community in Brisbane has a long history, variated. As a part of Australia, they estimated have already come before coming of Europe. Early Muslim in Australia was Muslim that comes from East Indonesia that connected with Australi mainland since 16-17 century. Makasar fisherman and merchant arrived in West Australia coastal, North Australia and Queensland. These people are traded with the original people and seeking to see cucumbers,

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<sup>28</sup> Departmen of Premier and Cabinet of Multicultural Affairs Queensland. *Queensland Community Relations Plan*. September 1999. P. 7

sell as profitable Chinese food. Historical evident of these early entrants can be und on the similarity of certain words of Makassar and languages of coast Indigenous Australian. Aboriginal cave paintings depict the traditional boat Makassar Makasar, and several relics have been found in Aboriginal settlements on the west and north coasts of Australia. Marriage between Indigenous and Makassar people are believed to have occurred, and the location of the burial Makassar have been found along the shoreline.

The history of the Muslim community increased by Muslim migrants from the African coast and island territories under the British Empire who came to Australia as sailors and convicts in the first fleet of European settlers in the late 1700s. The first semi-permanent Muslim population in significant numbers formed with the arrival of camel drivers in the 1800s. Coming from the Indian subcontinent, the Muslim is very vital for the early exploration of inland Australia and the establishment of communications services.

One of the major projects involving Afghan camel drivers is the construction of the rail link between Port Augusta and Alice Springs, which became known as the Ghan. The railway line to Darwin continued until 2004. Cameleers also played an important role in building the overland telegraphy between Adelaide and Darwin in 1870 - 1872, which eventually linked Australia to London via India.

Through this early work, several 'Ghan' towns were established along the railway line. Many of these towns have at least one mosque, usually constructed of corrugated iron with a small tower.

However, the presence of motor vehicles and lorry transportation signalled the end of the era of camel riders. While some of them returned to their homelands, others settled in areas near Alice Springs and other areas in Northern Australia. Many are married to the local Indigenous population. Since that time descendants of Afghan camel drivers roled and active in various Muslim communities in Australia. A small number of Muslims were also recruited from the Dutch and British colonies in Southeast Asia to work in the Australian pearl industry in the late 19th century and early 20th century.

The first mosque in Australia has established in Marree in northern South Australia in 1861 the first large mosque built in Adelaide in 1890, and another was set up in Broken Hill (New South Wales) in 1891.



The number of modern Australian Muslims is increasing rapidly after the Second World War. In 1947 - 1971, the Muslim population increased from 2704 to 22 331. This happens mainly because of the post-war economic boom, which creates new jobs. Many European Muslims, mainly Turks, seize this opportunity to look for life and a new home in Australia. At the 2006 Census, there were 23,126 Turkish-born Muslims in Australia.

Bosnian and Kosovar Muslim migrants who arrived in Australia in the 1960s made important contributions to modern Australia through their role in the construction of the Snowy Mountains Hydroelectric Scheme in New South Wales. Lebanese migrants, many of whom were Muslims, also began arriving in larger quantities after the outbreak of civil war in Lebanon in 1975. According to the 2006 Census, there were 7542 Australian-born Muslims of Bosnia and Herzegovina and 30 287 born in Lebanon.

Australian Muslims are extremely diverse. At the 2016 Census, there were more than 604.235 Muslims in Australia, whereas many as 128 904 of this amount was born in Australia and the rest were born overseas. In addition to migrants from Lebanon and Turkey, other Muslim countries of origin as bellow:

**Tabel 1**  
**Number of Nationality Muslim Background in Australia**  
**The year 2016**

No	Muslim Nationality	Percentage
1.	Australia	36
2.	Lebanon	10
3.	Turkey	8
4.	Afghanistan	3,5
5.	Bosnia Herzegovina	3,5
6.	Pakistan	3,2
7.	Indonesia	2,9
8.	Irak	2,8
9.	Bangladesh	2,7
10.	Iran	2,3
11.	Fiji	2
12.	Others	23,1

### Source Australian Census 2016

In the last three decades, many Muslims migrated to Australia through refugee or humanitarian programs, and from African countries such as Somalia and Sudan. The Australian Muslim community is now largely concentrated in Sydney and Melbourne. Since the 1970s, the Muslim community has built many mosques and Islamic schools and contribute to a dynamic multi-cultural knit community of Australia.

### **5. Muslim Multicultural Experience**

Implementing creative and subversive strategies giving Muslim group of multicultural experience. As an example, Indonesian Muslim Community of Queensland (IMCQ's) members feels comfort in Australia. They feel that they can do religious obligation easier even more comfortable than in Indonesia. Social security in every aspect of life makes them easier to plan activities. The best thing that they think is freedom of speech. By this experience, Australia is quite supportive.

Iman Partodirejo was a man who has long experienced contextualizing identity as an Indonesian Australian Muslim.<sup>29</sup> "A major concern for us (as parents) is how our children will learn how to pray, know what Islam is and duties of Muslims" Mr Partoredjo said. The now Australian Citizen, a Muslim couple, then congregated with parents who shared similar apprehension of passing on Islamic values to their sons and daughters in a non-Muslim environment. Partoredjo is West Java origins. He has been who are like two sides of one coin. To this day, IISB consists of hundreds of Muslim members ranging from a different socio-cultural, educational, national and political background. Some of them also form the IISB Committee Governance, dedicated to the many activities of this alliance.

Other Muslim groups that exist in Brisbane in Bosnian Australian Muslim. Bosnian Australians or Australian Bosnians are people of Australia who are of Bosnian ancestry or come from Bosnia and Herzegovina. According to the 2006 Australian census 26,630 Australians were born in Bosnia and Herzegovina. According to Embassy estimates there are some 50,000 people of Bosnian origin living in Australia.

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<sup>29</sup> Interview with Imam Partodirejo conducted 13, 18 and 25 September 2014 including informal conversation during led al-Qurban celebration in Queensland Australia

Most of the Bosnians in Australia migrated to the country throughout the 20th century and more recently as a result of the Bosnian War which took place between April 1992 and December 1995. The earliest signs of Bosnian community life have been evident since the 1960s with the establishments of "Bosnian Islamic Societies" in Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide, and Brisbane.

Sabrina is an example of a Bosnian Australian Muslim. She was Muslim which is accepting secularization.<sup>30</sup> Sabrina was originally Bosnian but Australian born. Her work and activities is community engagement relating to resolving the problem within the Muslim community. Police Lason Officer was established 20 years ago. In the early, the establishment aims to reason Aborigin issues. As well known in Australia, demand for respecting indigenous people appeared since the 90's era. The demand was included the minority right to express their cultural right and identity, access to public policies and economic resource and prosperity. Underline the issues are the condition of aboriginal community marked by high criminal and jobless.

As a Muslim, Bosnian and Australian Sabrina has a multi-layer identity. As a Muslim, she has to be a good Muslim that obeys Islamic duty. As Bosnian, she has an ethnic identity that perceived and maintain in her family. At the same time, she is a police officer in Brisbane PLO. In negotiating identity she has a self-management strategy that in personal life Muslim take shari'ah and public life Muslim follow Australian public law. In this regard, strategy reflecting acceptance of secular Australian policy. According to Sabrina Muslim in Australia -such as other community- is divers caused by different nationality background. In this context, Islam becomes common ground between the Muslim community, at the same time the part of Australian society, Australia is common ground between the communities. Overall Sabrina feels that Bosnian Muslims quite integrated into Australia because they have a long time live in Australia. Until now there were more than 7 generations of Bosnian Muslim living in Australia.

The effort to build a better understanding continually has been done. Conflict still exists and tension between Muslim People and Australians happen. Muslim radicalisation and the response of many Australian people to it reflect the problem. In this case, Sabrina argues that radicalisation doesn't drive by religious

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<sup>30</sup> Interview conducted in PLO office 21 September 2014 and continued by informal correspondence

motive, rather by the feeling of marginalisation, inspiring by conflict in the middle east and the mental health problem of the actor.

Another Muslim migrant group in Brisbane is Pakistani Australian Muslim. Pakistani Australians refers to someone born in Australia of Pakistani descent or to someone who has immigrated to Australia from Pakistan or has Pakistani ancestry. Most Pakistani Australians are Muslim by religion though there is also a sizeable Christian minority.

In 2012 7,400 Pakistani International students were studying in Australia, which increased from close to 5,000 in 2007. Under the Australia-Pakistan Scholarship Program, 500 scholarships were available to Pakistani students from 2005-2010 to facilitate postgraduate studies in Australia. Australia has become one of the largest markets for Pakistani students outside the United States and the United Kingdom.

Imam Uzair is the most popular Islamic Pakistani Australian speaker in Brisbane and is in great demand to give talks about Islam not only locally, but both nationally and internationally.<sup>31</sup> He is called upon by the State and Federal Police, Australian Army and other organised establishments to give an insight into Islam and liaises with Schools, Churches, Universities and other such groups. He is a founding board member of the Majlis Ulema Australia (Queensland), whose main responsibility is to give the religious directives, guidance and advice in Queensland.

The Imam has travelled extensively throughout the world for the sake of Deen and Islam and has travelled to America, England, Malaysia, South Africa, New Zealand, Dubai, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Fiji, Vanuatu, Pakistan and India. Imam Uzair is constantly striving for knowledge, especially from the greatest living Islam scholars in the world today. Some of the great Islamic scholars he has met are also some of the greatest living Muslim identities in today's world, which include Mufti Taqi Usmani, Sheik Ul Hadith Fida Ur Rahman Dar Khasti, Sheik Safraaz Saftar, Sheik Ahmed Laat and Sheik Tariq Jameel.

The Imam says his greatest achievements include converting people to Islam, becoming a Hafiz and Alim, performing Haj, meeting with the noble Mufti Taqi Usmani, becoming the Imam of Holland Park Mosque and meeting with some of the greatest Islamic scholars in the world. According to Imam, a Muslim

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<sup>31</sup> Interview and informal conversation With Imam Uzair conducted at 23 and 29 September 2014.

minority in Brisbane reflected the complexity of the relationship. As described above, originally Muslim are migrant. They have a different identity because of different nationality background. In this sense relation and assimilation between the Muslim community and others is the negotiation process. In the context of Australian Citizenship, he described minority people relationship with state likened alike son and stepfather. It meant that minority group and state must have a good relationship. On one side Muslim have to have a good attitude and behaviour, on the other side state have to do justice with the son and stepson. It is why Australia as a stepfather will think twice to treat minority. Because If they act injustice it will damage their reputation.

As a minority, Moslem are challenged by wider society because they are traditional people. They hold tradition for 500 years ago. People are threatened by their commitment to religion. Their stance is not accepted by changing world so that Islam is always be challenged. Islam is old but it is current.

By this historical background, the early coming of Muslim in Brisbane are diverse. The Muslim community in Brisbane have a background of nationality because they came from different countries such as India, Pakistan, Afganistan, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Indonesia, Bosnia, Afrika, etc. In daily life Muslim community assimilate with the wider other community and spread in many places, they have a special place for conducting activities as they are Muslim. The Muslim main place for doing religious activities is a mosque. There is a couple of mosque and mushalla in Brisbane such as Davar Mosque, Rocki Mosque Holand Park Mosque. In a mosque, Muslim can meet each other, build togetherness through *shalat jama'ah* (praying together), transmitting religious beliefs and practices from generation to generation.

Cultural and personal identity shaped to large extent by our culture and environment in which we live.<sup>32</sup> As we are living and grow up in our milieu tend to mould our sense of self, in ways that make sense within the cultural milieu. Then deferent culture produces the different concept of self and this different concept of the self influence another side of behaviour. The socio-cultural milieu is changed and dynamic than identity also dynamic. For this reason, could be argued that identity is not fixed rather than fluid.

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<sup>32</sup> Juang, Linda, Masumoto, David Ricky, *Culture and Psychology*, Wadsworth, Thomson, 2004. p 301

The fact and observation proved that Moslem in Australia has internal diversity. Besides, -it as has been mentioned above- because of deferent nationality and strengthened by the different religious school (*madhab*) that they hold, and different of the religious way of thinking that they have. The differentiation among Muslim expressed in their religious practices such as ritual, fashion style, and personal appearance.

Overall Islam is being strong and fundamental identity for all Moslem minority group in Australia. It meant that all of Moslem as personal or group is driven by Islam in term of thinking, attitude and behaviour. In this sense, Islam contextualized in nationality background. At the same time, Islam that has been contextualised should be recontextualised in the societal, political and cultural of Australia. Contextualising and recontextualising involved identity negotiation.

Australia has, since 1972, celebrated multiculturalism as an official policy and encouraged it, migrant citizen, to value their diverse cultural and religious heritages. Several studies have nonetheless shown that the level of Australian cultural and religious tolerance is lower than it ought to be in a so-called multicultural society. In particular, this has been found regarding Muslim, who perhaps the victim of the most negative stereotypes. Whereas Saeed (2003) described, the period from 1960 to 1990 as relatively calm and positive for Muslim, there is numerous report of increased hostility has markedly increased after the many tragic incidents involving Muslim in 2001 locally as well as globally.

This research finds that Islamic identity marker is attracting much stronger reaction than skin colour. Muslim today face intolerance due to their cultural and religious identities, rather than because of race or identities.<sup>33</sup> The power of Media in shaping public opinion is well known and many informants believe that the media is responsible for the perpetuation of negative stereotypes of Muslim in Australia. The Media is especially criticised for depicting the Muslim culture as violent. Some also argue that the Australian government has fuelled Australians' fear of Muslim. The study showed that multicultural Politic in Australia is dynamic. These influenced by internal such as, domestic politic, and external factors global issues on migrant, Global war on terrorism.

Normatively, since a labour government abolished all ethnic bias aspects of the immigration Restriction Act in 1973, policies of multiculturalism have

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<sup>33</sup> Kabir N, To B or Not To Be an Australian: Focus on Muslim Youth National Identity, Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission, Sydney, Vol. 10, No. 4, 2008, pp. 399-419

encouraged the tolerance of religious groups in Australia and the establishment of legal sanctions against discrimination. Multicultural policies are designed to accept and respect the right of all Australians to express and share their cultural heritage within an overriding commitment to Australia and the basic structures and values of Australian democracy (Department of immigration, Multiculturalism & indigenous Affairs 2002).

### **C. Conclusion**

However, policies of multiculturalism do not guarantee harmony or prevent discrimination. Lack of knowledge and understanding concerning the Islamic religion and the current political climate has led to some discrimination within the Australian community. In addition, negative and derogatory media coverage of Muslims has portrayed them as aggressive and violent. This research has been conducted when issues concerning Islam and Muslim featured prominently in public and media in discourse. Much of the discourse is stereotypical and offensive to the Muslim community.

The Australian Muslim community comprising of 1,7 % of the total Australian population. Despite being a minority, Muslim in Australia diverse and representing ethnic representation that can be divided into Anglo Celtic Australian, Moslem Indegineous Australian Moslem, Migran Moslem. To meet their need to manage diversity Muslim adopt organisational structure for the cause of Islam. Discourse on multicultural politic very relevant to the Muslim community in Australia because of two reasons; the nature of cultural and ethnic diversity of Australia and Internal diversity in the Muslim community. Such debate in Muslim in multicultural context include minimal dress code for Muslim women and men, secularism, western values, integration, nationalism and identity, varying degrees of religiosity, rationalisation of matter that debate in Muslim community such as wearing burqa and security, Islamic values and law vs Western values and law.

Although Australia celebrates multiculturalism, Australian Muslim still bear the brunt of accusation by the wider community for not integrating and purposefully aim to live in enclaves. The Australian concept and policy of Multiculturalism which affects Australian citizens, residents and visitors to Australia have often misunderstood the nature of religious diversity and its role as an essential belief system that people from many cultures adhere to daily. This daily adherence for any practising Muslim can both determine and generally

affect their work, dress, family life, outlook on social justice issues, ethics and morality etc. Fusing culture and faith has been a basis for the misconception of the Islamic faith often portrayed in the media and politicians to have mainly conservative, often Saudi cultural traits. This does not only lead to a misconception and demonization of Islam on many issues such as gender equality and democracy as well as Shariah (Islamic) law, but it has also been the reason for misunderstanding many Arab cultures. Islam in Australia has always been and still is, formed in interaction with the wider society. Mainstream trends are discussed, and the hypothesis of an emerging Australian Muslim identity that unifies the many diverse groups of Muslims in Australia is raised.

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