

# Maintaining Indonesian Muslim Identity through Islamic Study Groups

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Moch Fakhruroji<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Islamic State University of Sunan Gunung Djati, Bandung

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## Abstract

As a minority group in Australia, Indonesian Muslims are potentially experiencing identity crisis as they categorized as outsiders. This article describe how pengajian (Islamic study groups) and other socio-religious events among Indonesian Muslims as a constructive effort to change the perception of insiders over their social status in order to strengthen their identity as a member in a multicultural societies as theoretically, religion is believed to provide not only the meaning for life but also as social system which provides social control, cohesion, and purposes. Using the IMCV (Indonesian Muslim Community of Victoria) as a case, it could be identified that religious events can be a potential means to maintain their identity as Indonesian Muslims in the context of Australia.

## Keywords

Identity; pengajian; IMCV; diaspora; Indonesian Muslim

## INTRODUCTION

In 2001 census, total population of Muslims in Australia amounted to around 281,572 people or around 1.5 percent of Australia's total population at that time which reached 13,629,700 people (Commonwealth of Australia, 2002). The majority of Australia's Muslim population comes from several countries such as Lebanon, Turkey, Afghanistan, Bosnia, Pakistan, Indonesia, Iraq, Bangladesh, and Iran. In addition to generation of immigrant Muslims, there is also a new generation of Australian-born Muslims which amounts to around 36.5% of the total Muslim population in Australia.

The distribution of the Muslim population in Australia occupies two major cities, especially Sydney and Melbourne. In Sydney, Muslim communities located in

Auburn, Greenacre, Bankstown, Lakemba, and Punchbowl. As for the Melbourne area, Muslim communities occupy suburb areas such as Meadow Heights, Reservoir, Dallas, Noble Park and Coburg. Several smaller communities can be found in areas outside the city such as Shepparton located in northern Victoria.

In the early twentieth century, a number of Muslim immigrants from more than sixty countries had settled in Australia. A very large number of them came from Turkey, Bosnia, Lebanon, Indonesia, Iran, Fiji, Albania, Sudan, Egypt, Palestine, Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India. The next

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### Corresponding author

Jl. A.H. Nasution No.105, Cipadung, Cibiru, Bandung,  
West Java 40614

### Email

[moch.fakhruroji@uinsgd.ac.id](mailto:moch.fakhruroji@uinsgd.ac.id)

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wave of Muslim arrivals is through education. There are now thousands of Muslim students from all over the world who study in Australia, many of them coming from countries such as Malaysia, Indonesia, India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan.

Abdullah Saeed (2003) describes that Indonesian Muslim has a significant historical relationship with Australia. Indonesian Muslims first entered the Australian continent through sailors from Makassar, an eastern region of the archipelago who was then under the reign of the Islamic sultanate. According to Saeed, they have arrived in this land since the 1750s. The sailors from Makassar then traveled to northern Australia where they interacted with indigenous Australians.

In addition to the Makassar sailors, Indonesian contact with Australia land was marked by the arrival of Kupangnese and Javanese who were brought as workers in the pearl processing industry and the planting of raw materials for sugar which has been existed since the end of 19th century (Saeed, 2003). Nevertheless, restrictions on immigrants in 1901 caused most Indonesian immigrants to return and only a small percentage settled in Australia. The next wave of Indonesian arrivals in Australia occurred in the 1950s through an Australian government education scholarship scheme in a number of universities in Australia. During this period, several Indonesians also came to Australia to teach Bahasa Indonesia in schools and universities.

One of the first Indonesian migrants at Monash University was Rabin Hardjadibrata who arrived in 1964. He was a researcher at Monash University and completed his master's studies at the University of Melbourne. After Rabin, the arrival of Indonesian Muslims in Australia was through the Colombo Plan scheme. Through this scheme, gradually Indonesian students came to take various studies of universities in Australia. Nowadays, most Indonesian Muslims live in Sydney, Melbourne, Perth, and Brisbane. Although Indonesia is close to Australia and also as the country with the largest Muslim population in the world, only about 17 per-

cent of all Indonesians in Australia are identified as Muslims.

Although with a relatively growing number, living in a country with a different milieu from their homelands remains one of the fundamental issues in the discussion about identity. Difficulties that they experienced are not only in terms of expressing their identity as Indonesian but also as a Muslim so at some point, it can socially threaten their identity. Basically, they can merge into majority life with secular values, but this can cause to experience an identity crisis. Their identities as Indonesian citizen as well as a Muslim is two identities that appear interchangeably in the context of everyday relationships with people who come from different communities.

This has caused Indonesian Muslims as minority groups should negotiate their identity to keep and able to preserve their identity as Muslims and at the same time become part of a multicultural Australian society. The insider-outsider issue in the context of social interaction is a certain obstacle that must be overcome so that they do not experience an identity crisis. The feeling of being part of a community is a fundamental need in social life so each of them can express their identity normally and sociologically, religion and a range of practices can accommodate this expression of identity.

As Malefijt (1968) pointed out, one of the functions of religion is social function, but this function can only be understood when religion itself placed in a relationship with its adherents. These functions can be seen in the relationships built with family institutions, political, economic, or values contained in other social structures. Even Durkheim (1965) emphasized that religion is a significant integrator in a society where religion can bind people by uniting them through a common set of beliefs, values, and rituals.

Hence, as an integrator in social life, religion is seen as something which is able of preserving the identity of a community, including minority communities both religiously and culturally. Religious events both ritual and social are seen as a forum

for social interaction and communication among fellow community members. In other words, these events are able to function as a social bond between them so they can maintain their identity as part of a particular community through some homogeneous characteristics they have.

This homogeneous characteristic is sought by everyone in the context of a plural society, namely the tendency to find and join people with the same characteristics and characteristics with themselves. This phenomenon is often referred to as the need for inclusion, namely the desire to join with others who will deliver individuals to feel fully appreciated and recognized as themselves, not because of the status inherent in them. When they are in a homogeneous group, they will find easier to get the expected appreciation.

In line with this view, Klopff (1989) sees that one reason for individuals to join a community is to find an image of their status. Every person is deemed necessary to find his own image as part of the community so that it can be calculated in the midst of other communities. Another reason why a person joins a community for reasons that expected values can be obtained from mutual service among fellow community members.

It is not surprising if the concept of the community closely related to the concept of solidarity. Furthermore, a number of theories reveal the relationship between these concepts and some basic motives about the relationship between them, one of which is the similarity of belief or religion. Both in the context of solidarity and community, religious values often emerge as elementary elements that affect these two things. If religion is often seen as a moral and ethical basis in a community, then in the context of solidarity, religion is seen as a binder of the solidarity of its adherents. The stronger one's religiosity, the stronger social solidarity with fellow followers, especially in the same community. This is where we can see the social function of religion especially in its ability to bind each member so that it can further be a place to strengthen the identity

of the community.

In this context, *pengajian* (Islamic study) are not merely religious activities, but also social activities and manifestations in order to maintain the integrity of the identity of each member. Identity issues and communication barriers experienced in wider social interaction in multicultural relationships are no longer individual problems but communal issues so that each member of the community has the same concern to support each other. In a broader context, recitation and other religious activities are manifestations of concern to strengthen the identity of each member of the community.

This article aims to describe the *pengajian* activities organized by the Indonesian Muslim community in Australia by focusing on Indonesian Muslim Community of Victoria (IMCV) based in Melbourne. Therefore, this article is focused on the discussion of *pengajian* as a means of social interaction and manifestations of concern for fellow Indonesian Muslims and as an effort to maintain their identity as Indonesian Muslims in Australia.

Western societies that is multicultural is a new area where Muslim minorities have to struggle with conditions that are different from their homelands. Western countries also provide a broad space for various identity groups to carry out autonomous life and creating a cultural system and established a social order in a society that will become a pillar of peace of a nation (Hasyim, 2016). However, it is inevitable that different identities in a society remain a serious issue between academia.

As "others", Muslims people in non-Muslim countries also face other problems such as discrimination, racism, even criminalization. In the realm of education, for example, Zulfikar (2016) noted several studies that racialization and discrimination are still felt by minority students in public schools in Australia. He quoted Ata (2009) who found that non-Muslim students still viewed their Muslim friends as "others." Likewise, Mansouri & Trembath (2005) showed the fact that Muslim students still

experience racism, discrimination, and criminalization. This is certainly contradictory to the multiculturalism policy adopted by the Australian government which gives the migrant community equal rights to interact with the Australian community as a whole.

According to Ramadan, Muslims are experiencing a dilemma when they have to be in a non-Muslim majority country. Their identity is constantly being questioned by others as well as by themselves, for example in the question of whether they are “Muslim who is French citizen” or “French Citizen who are Muslim?” This choice is not easy, if they choose “Muslim” as their main identity, they will make the whole of Islamic law as the guide of his life while ignoring the law of the State where they lives; on the contrary if they claimed to be a French citizen it would have consequences on “abandonment” of some provisions of Islamic law (Ramadan, 1999).

Regarding this, Schmidt (2004) explores aspects of transnational identity formation among young Muslims in three Western countries, Denmark, Sweden and the United States. The process of transnational identity formation is described according to four overall conditions and themes, which are (1) visibility and aesthetics; (2) choice; (3) transnationalism; and (4) social ethics. These indicate that transnational identity formations are indeed taking place, and, on the other, they are effected by aspects of the local and the contextual, and in particular by the conditions and legislation of the host nation-state. Almost in the same fashion, Ramadan (2004) also proposes the idea that Muslims could “re-appropriate” the universal values of Islamic teachings on the present-day horizon of thought.

Elsewhere, Schmidt (2005) explained that in the context of transnational Islam, the relationship between setting migrants and homelands is indeed commonplace. Not only that, as individuals and organizations, they also raise funds to donate in mosques, schools and other charities in their home countries, which in overall transnational activities can be explained as part of the diasporic; religious activities to main-

tain networks between migrants and their home countries and also as a symbol of their loyalty. One of the transnational practices of Muslims in Western countries in the context of religion is when Turkish mosques in Germany, Switzerland, and France help Turks in Italy to buy apartments to serve as their place of worship (Schmidt, 2005).

In addition, some studies that reveal Muslims live in Western countries have at least proved that especially in the context of the Western world, Islam has increasingly deterritorialized (Roy, 2004). In describing the implications of the deterritorialization of Islam, organizations and their socio-legal implications have been the empirical focus of many studies on Muslims and Islam in the West (Silvestri, 2005). Meanwhile, other studies point out on how Muslims respond to minority situations by being active in various organizations such as youth groups and various religious movements (Mandaville, 2001; Roy, 2004) which have generally revealed that Muslim minorities are vocal, activist and visible concerning their religion and that revives their religion in the public space.

Meanwhile, studies on Indonesian Muslims in Western countries, one of which was written by (Wardana, 2014) who examined the pattern of social relations between Indonesian Muslim immigrants and multicultural Muslim communities in London by testing the suitability of the concept of *ummah* in the diaspora context. He finds that despite having the same faith, Indonesian Muslim diaspora always arises internal differences. Traditional Indonesian Muslims consider the concept of *ummah* as common in everyday encounters with other Muslim communities so that they keep distance based on ethnic differences and the affiliation of their religious traditions while Indonesian revivalist Muslims understand the unity as the ideal concept that needs to be realized in social life, culture and politics.

Discussions and debates on identity do appear in the context of Muslim diaspora in non-Muslim countries. However theoretically it is believed that the identity of a multicultural society is something dynamic

(Kellner, 2010) but at a practical level, identity seems to be traditionally understood as something that is permanent, strong and stable because it is considered to be related to the concept of belonging, which is about the equation someone with someone else or what distinguishes someone from another (Weedon, 2004). Identity is nothing but a social construct that has never been culturally stable and has always been the subject of change and innovation (Fakhruroji & Rojiati, 2017). In other words, the public view of the identity of a group is largely determined by the knowledge or discourse that develops in social life.

The term 'identity crisis' in this context is seen as part of a broader process of change to break away from the central structure and processes of modern society and undermine the framework that was previously built by the social world. According to (Bell, 2005), this kind of view caused two consequences. First, it offers a critical view of identity, demonstrates its historicity and arbitrary nature. He deneutralized and revealed the influence of the power that surrounded him. Second, it makes human agents very important. Therefore, identity is shaped by history, related to power, and they can also be reshaped. In other words, identity can be seen as an arena for an ongoing struggle.

Burke and Stets (1999) describe two basic categories of identity; namely role and social identity. Role identity is the meaning that internalizes one's role on him/herself. Therefore, a person may need more than one characteristic to explain the meaning of their role. So, maybe someone else has a different meaning about the same role identity. Therefore, when the meaning of this role identity is not the same, one must negotiate the meaning with another who has a different understanding.

In addition to role identity, there is also a social identity that is based on the identification of someone with a particular social group. Social groups are a group of individuals who share the same views and in the same social category. Through a process of comparison and social categorization, someone who is similar to him/herself will

be categorized as him/herself and considered as in-group. Similarly, someone who is different from him/herself is categorized as an out-group (Burke and Stets, 1999). In other words, being a person or part of a group of people is an active action, as stated by Weedon (2004) that, "...identity relies on an active process of explicit identification, for example, membership of a religious group, and as a consequence may involve some kind consciously counter-identification to clarify its identity through the meanings and values they represent."

Dengan demikian, identitas berkaitan erat dengan sistem kebudayaan kelompok tertentu. As stated by Žegarag (cited in Nugroho, Purnanto, & Tarjana, 2018), culture is representation which are relatively stable and which form systems shared by the members of a social group are cultural. Therefore, culture distinguishes one social group from another. Having inspired by Žegarag's opinion, a culture concerns the adhering values brought by societies and each society have their own specific characteristics.

The expression above explains that the process of identification coincides with the process of counter-identification, which is a conscious effort to distinguish itself from the others. More broadly it can be said that being part of a particular social identity means also being like other people in the group. Therefore it can be assumed that someone as a member of a particular group will have similar thoughts and actions. Thus, the similarity in thought and action in a group could differentiate them from other groups at the same time.

In this context, a community has an important role in shaping and strengthening individual identities, especially in a plural and multicultural society. In the sociology discipline, the concept of community is often explained by organizations that live traditionally so that it assumes that "gemeinschaft" lies in the awareness of mutual ownership and affirmation of the conditions of mutual dependence. Traditional terms actually refer to patterns of interaction that are based mostly on the same values and norms.

Therefore, the community prioritizes consensus from the will of each member. Likewise in terms of ethics and norms, a community, in general, makes values as the basis of ethics and cultural norms, while society usually produces ethics and norms through conventions or agreements between each member because generally it is more heterogeneous. Homogeneous and heterogeneous then become the fundamental characteristics of both concepts to differentiate between one another. Therefore, in a multicultural society, the emergence of a number of communities is usually bound by certain similarities.

According to Tischler (1990) this is a form of collective consciousness which is a fundamental characteristic of a community which in the next stage can bring social solidarity. In practical terms, social solidarity in the community is characterized by the strengthening of inter-individual relations which naturally raises the need for togetherness. But it should be noted that according to Durkheim, social solidarity can also be permanent or tentative, determined by mutual awareness to need each other.

Religion or belief system is a factor in social solidarity. In accordance with its characteristics, religion is the binding force of the solidarity of its adherents. This is where we can see the function of religion especially in seeing the social solidarity and cohesiveness of a group. This is caused by, among other things, the nature of religion both theologically and sociologically. Theologically, especially in Islam, it is caused by the omnipresent character which is through the symbols or values that it carries out influences and even shapes social, cultural, economic and political structures and public policies (Effendy, 2001). Not surprisingly, religion is expected to provide a guide to values for all discourses of human activities both socio-cultural, economic and political. Meanwhile sociologically, religion is a determinant factor in the process of transformation and modernization.

However, it should be noted that the social function of a religion can only be understood when the religion itself is posited

in a relationship with its adherents (Malefijt, 1968). That way, religion has a significant potential in strengthening the social solidarity of its adherents due to a collective awareness of the same religious teachings, values, and norms. One of the religious practices in the social context is the activity of *pengajian* which theoretically can be drawn in the context of religious communication or *da'wa*. In contrast to religious practices which is ritual, activities of *pengajian* are usually held in a social context so they are more a form of social interaction based on religious activities.

Apart from its historical context, the practice of *da'wah* explains two sides, each of which has different implications, namely *da'wa* as doctrine and as a social movement. As a social movement, *da'wa* is believed to be able to bridge Muslims to meet basic needs not only those that are theological but also sociological. *Pengajian* activity as one of the *da'wa* activities can be seen as a vehicle for religious expression, seeking and strengthening identity, affirming social status, to fulfilling economic needs that can generate the spirit of community empowerment.

## METHOD

This research is a qualitative research described by Velez (2008) tends to be enriched with explorative narratives and descriptions, and more about the process. The method used is a constructive case study which aims to bridge concrete observations and abstract meanings using interpretive techniques. Interpretive techniques are used by adopting a different method from quantitative by using a variety of theories to analyze cases (Given, 2008).

As Yin (1994) argues, case studies are studies that investigate contemporary phenomena in the context of everyday life, especially when the boundary between phenomena and context is not very clear. The case study method is considered effective to understand *pengajian* activities as a form of concern among fellow Indonesian Muslims in Australia to care for their identity. But it is important to note that the *pengajian* ac-

tivities organized by the IMCV are not the main discussion, but only as a medium to understand the phenomenon of *pengajian* and its relationship with efforts to maintain identity and strengthen the social solidarity among Indonesian Muslims in non-Muslim countries.

In addition to observation, this study also involved administrators and members of the Indonesian Muslim Community of Victoria (IMCV) as informants in unstructured interviews. Meanwhile, secondary data in this study were obtained through various sources; Internet sites, literature, reports, documentation of activities, journal articles and other writings.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In Victoria, there are at least six groups of *pengajian*, including; *Pengajian Brunswick*, *Pengajian SAS (Sulit Air Sepakat) Melbourne*, *Pengajian LaTrobe*, *Monash Indonesian Islamic Society (MIIS)*, *Young Indonesian Muslim Students Association (YIMSA)*, and *At-Taqwa* (later known as *Pengajian Westall*). In 1997, all these study groups agreed to establish a forum that could supervise all of these groups which were later called as Indonesian Muslim Community of Victoria (IMCV). One of the goals is that they can have stronger bargaining both with the Australian Government and the Indonesian Government. Therefore it is not surprising that the establishment of the IMCV has the support from the Consulate General of the Republic of Indonesia in Melbourne. After the IMCV was formed, a number of other groups emerged and joined them including *Pengajian Footscray* and *An-Nur*.

Indonesian Muslim Community of Victoria (IMCV) is the only institution that accommodates almost all Islamic organizations in the state of Victoria, Australia. One organization that initiated the establishment of the IMCV is the *Monash Indonesian Islamic Students* or *MIIS* which has a secretariat at the Monash University campus in Clayton, Melbourne. *MIIS*, which was founded in the 1980s, aims to bring together Muslim students from Indonesia who are

studying at Monash University so that they can organize activities so that they can communicate and stay in touch regularly.

The emergence of IMCV was also related to the establishment of the *Westall Mosque* in the Clayton South area as a serious effort to have a more representative place considering that previously there had been *pengajian* activities in this area namely *At Taqwa Mosque*. After getting support from various parties including the Consulate General, they did fundraising until they were able to raise up to 80 thousand Australian dollars. These funds come from the government, Indonesian businessmen and some of the individuals both in Indonesia and in Australia.

The monetary crisis that hit Indonesia in 1998 had an impact on the fundraising activities so with limited funds, there was a house that will be sold in the *Westall* area. Not only that, based on the information by the sales agent, this house even has a permission as a place for the community center, which can be used for community activities. It is important to note that the regulation in Australia, a resident cannot be used for the public activity unless they have official permission from the City Council. After the house was purchased, the next step was to convince the City Council and the surrounding residents to accept the existence of the Islamic community's activities there and this was not as easy. Even though the house has a permit as a community center, there are still many efforts and strategies taken to convince the government and the surrounding residents that they give permission to establish a mosque as well as a center for community activities and it was succeeded.

*Westall Mosque*, located at 130 *Rosebank Avenue*, Clayton South, Victoria 3169, Australia is what became one of IMCV centers. Nonetheless, the *Westall Mosque* is not the only center of activity for Indonesian Muslims in Victoria. In addition to *Westall*, there is the *Surau Kita Mosque* in the *Coburg North* area and the *Baitul Ma'mur Mosque* in *Laverton* region which both function as IMCV activities centers with areas that are far apart in the State of Victoria. In

addition to these three mosques, several religious activities with a small scope are still held by the study groups mentioned above.

The implementation of pengajian activities in Victoria is generally based on three things, namely based on the location of the campus, the origin of the members, and the location of the mosque. Some pengajian events based on campus locations including; University of Melbourne, Monash University, La Trobe University and other campuses. Consideration of choosing a location adjacent to the campus is caused by resources that can become more resource persons for these studies. The resources in question are Muslim student groups from Indonesia who are studying at each university. There are students who take roles as participants or resource persons.

Aside from being based on where campus located, there is also a pengajian group formed based on the origin of a particular group or ethnic group, such as the Sulit Air Sepakat (SAS) study group. SAS is a community organization with most of its members coming from the Nagari Sulit Air, West Sumatra which has a central headquarter based in Jakarta. In addition, there is also a pengajian group consisting of Sundanese ethnic groups gathered in an organization called Paguyuban Pasundan.

There are also a number of Pengajian groups based where the mosque is located. Unlike the previous two, this group has a greater number, among others; Pengajian Westall, Pengajian Brunswick, Monash Indonesian Islamic Society (MIIS), Young Indonesian Muslim Students' Association (YIMSA), Pengajian Footscray, Pengajian An-Nur, Pengajian Miftahul Jannah, Pengajian Bundoora, Pengajian Al-Islah, and Pengajian Ta'awun. Although some Pengajian were held on different schedules, all of these pengajian groups basically organized various types of religious activities, including regular pengajian every week, Al-Quran education for children and teenagers, providing religious counseling services for Indonesian Muslim families and even mentoring new Indonesian students about Australian culture.

As mentioned earlier, the aim of establishing the IMCV is to accommodate pengajian and other religious activities so IMCV acts more as a facilitator for these groups. The struggle of the predecessors in establishing the Westall Mosque became the most fundamental consideration for the implementation of every Islamic activity there. In fact, among them often remind each other if group claims arise which precisely according to will harm Indonesian Muslims there.

The sense of togetherness among Indonesian Muslims is an important key in understanding social cohesiveness among Indonesian Muslims living in Australia, especially in Melbourne. Whatever the reason, they are united because they share the same beliefs and come from the same country. Furthermore, these keywords also appear to be binding on social solidarity and strengthen their identity.

For Muslims, the discourse of solidarity is not new since Islam taught *ukhuwah* or brotherhood, one of which is based on the same identity as Muslims (*ukhuwah Islamiyah*). This *ukhuwah* spirit is what underlies the people in this community to be able to easily get along with egalitarian, without insulation, and freely and fluidly interact. This kind of social atmosphere is usually seen in the community and in every religious activities. In a social atmosphere like this, it also appears that religious teachings are easily accepted and become part of their lives.

This is made possible as religious organizations' have a function to bind the cohesiveness of their followers, as well as to strengthen the faith they believe in. The presence of religious institutions is seen as being able to bind and strengthen the religious beliefs held by its followers so that they can further maintain the identity of each member as Indonesian Muslims. This also clarifies the view that self-identification is nothing but a classification process of ourselves with those who do have the same meaning about something. The process of self-identification or others is a matter of meaning and always involves interaction: agreement and disagreement, conventions and innovation, communication and nego-



tiation (Jenkins, 2004).

## ANSAR AND MUHAJIRIN

There is one thing that is interesting in the narrative of one informant regarding the relations between fellow Indonesian Muslims in the context of the IMCV community. He illustrated it as a relationship between the Muhajirin and Ansar groups, two groups that were referred to the Hijra events of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. The Muhajirin group were those who migrated to Medina and Ansar was the group that welcomed the arrival of the Muhajirin group from Mecca. The use of this illustration is certainly religious because it is an important event in Islamic history.

In this context, the Muhajirin group is those consisting of students who study in Australia, especially Melbourne. The presence of students from the undergraduate to doctoral level also colored the life dynamics of the Indonesian Muslim community in Victoria. They come and go one after another. They are like the Muhajirin who stopped temporarily but brought extraordinary dynamics in the life of the Indonesian Muslim community in Victoria.

Meanwhile, the group referred to as Ansar are Indonesian Muslim community who have been living in Australia and has permanent residence (PR) status. Unlike students or students who return to Indonesia, Indonesian citizens who have become PR are part of a witness to the history of the formation of the IMCV. These Indonesian Muslims with PR status are illustrated as Ansar groups who do not only maintain activities at the IMCV but also who provide assistance to those who have just arrived in Victoria. This relation is one of the social functions of the community where they show mutual concern so that each member of the community feels comfortable in a new environment.

In Giddens' perspective, the Indonesian Muslim community in Victoria through various religious activities such as establishing Westall Mosque and holding recitation activities to the establishment of organiza-

tions such as IMCV is a manifestation of the agency-structure phenomenon. In this context, the agency is not only the IMCV itself, but also the activists, while the context of the structure is the milieu of Australia as a non-Muslim environment, both as a government and as an environment.

The context faced by the Indonesian Muslim community in Australia is secularism both at the state and community level as the structure. These two aspects determine the model of attitude and response given by Indonesian Muslims as manifested in the form of religious activities as part of efforts to strengthen their identity as Muslims and as citizens of Indonesia. As a joint home for Muslims in Australia, IMCV strives to maintain togetherness by emphasizing the same identity as Muslims and as citizens of Indonesia.

## CONCLUSION

Australia provides a different experience for Indonesia Muslims. A multicultural society with different identities has positioned Indonesian Islam in Australia as a minority group that is vulnerable to an identity crisis. The presence of the community is a significant solution for them to maintain their identity as Muslims and as well as Indonesian citizens. Indonesian Muslims Community of Victoria (IMCV) exists and play a significant role as social bond in order to maintain identity so that they can still express their identity.

*Pengajian* activities organized by various study groups under the IMCV have treated the longing of each member of the community in expressing their identity. That way, recitation activities in Australia are not only the transformation and transmission of religious messages as well as in the practice of religious communication but also functioned as a vehicle for social interaction to show mutual concern among their members.

The activities organized by IMCV have become a kind of social activity center, scientific activities, as well as a place for various information, especially for Indonesian

students who have just arrived in Victoria. Newly arrived students, for example, they need information on housing, the extension of scholarships, school places for children who have a family, etc., everything can be found through *pengajian* and other religious activities.

Indonesian Muslims realize that they are a minority group in Australia, both in ethnic and religious contexts. This awareness is formed naturally in the process of establishing their community as a forum to protect fellow Indonesian Muslim citizens in Australia, especially in the state of Victoria. The presence of the Indonesian Muslim community in Victoria has given a positive impression of an inclusive Indonesian Islam and this was demonstrated through the first IMCV conference held in Melbourne in 2016 with the theme "Living in Harmony".

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