

# Revisiting '*Merantau*': A Study on Gender Dynamics among Indonesian Diasporas

---

Master of Social Research Methods (Advanced)

The Australian National University

Annisa Shabrina Zatalini

October 2024

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master Advanced in Social Research Methods in the College of Arts and Social  
Sciences, and the Centre for Social Policy Research.

I hereby declare that, except where it is otherwise acknowledged in the text, this thesis represents my own original work. All versions of the submitted thesis (regardless of submission type) are identical. This thesis identifies the Research Proposal assessment from SOCR8202 from which material is being partially recycled.

Signed,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Annisa Shabrina Zatalini', written in a cursive style.

**Annisa Shabrina Zatalini**

Canberra, October 2024

The ethical aspects of this research have been approved by the ANU Human Research Ethics Committee.

Protocol Number: H/2024/0696

Signed,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Annisa Shabrina Zatalini', written in a cursive style.

**Annisa Shabrina Zatalini**

Canberra, October 2024

# Table of Contents

<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....</b>	<b>V</b>
<b>ABSTRACT.....</b>	<b>VI</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
A. BACKGROUND .....	1
B. THEORETICAL OVERVIEW .....	6
<i>Hegemonic Masculinity</i> .....	6
<i>Enculturation</i> .....	8
C. AIM AND KEY QUESTIONS .....	9
C. METHODOLOGY .....	12
E. LITERATURE REVIEWS.....	14
<i>Gender Differences in Diasporic Experience</i> .....	15
<i>The Role of Culture in Gender Roles Negotiation</i> .....	17
F. THESIS OUTLINE .....	19
<b>CHAPTER 2: PERCEPTIONS IN GENDER ROLES .....</b>	<b>21</b>
A. DEVELOPMENT OF GENDER ROLES .....	21
B. <i>BAPAK</i> AND <i>IBU</i> : DISCUSSING THE INDONESIAN CONTEXT OF GENDER ROLES .....	25
<i>Shaping Factors of Gender Roles in Indonesia</i> .....	25
<i>Gender Roles in Modern Indonesia</i> .....	29
C. GENDER ROLES AND MULTICULTURALISM IN AUSTRALIA .....	30
<i>Gender Roles in Australia and its Development</i> .....	30
<i>Multiculturalism in Australia</i> .....	34
<i>Conclusion</i> .....	37
<b>C CHAPTER 3. BEING AN INDONESIAN IN <i>PERANTAUAN</i>: CULTURAL NEGOTIATION .....</b>	<b>38</b>
A. THE HYBRID IDENTITIES OF INDONESIAN IN <i>PERANTAUAN</i> .....	38
<i>Components of Hybrid identities</i> .....	40
B. MANIFESTATION OF HYBRID IDENTITIES: INDONESIAN DIASPORAS IN AUSTRALIA.....	43
<i>Religious Practices</i> .....	43
<i>Language Practices</i> .....	46
<i>Political and Cultural Participation</i> .....	49
C. THE INFLUENCE OF HYBRID IDENTITIES ON GENDER ROLES .....	53
<i>Kodrat and Traditional Gender Roles</i> .....	54
<i>Conclusion</i> .....	58
<b>CHAPTER 4. THE NEGOTIATION OF GENDER ROLES IN <i>MERANTAU</i> .....</b>	<b>60</b>
A. GENDER ROLES AMONG SINGLE INDONESIAN DIASPORAS .....	60
<i>Gender Roles Negotiation Among Unmarried Indonesian in Perantauan</i> .....	60
<i>Women's Personal Autonomy</i> .....	65

<i>Juggling Multiple Roles: Gender Roles and Family Dynamics of Married Indonesian     Diaspora</i> .....	68
B. HEGEMONIC MASCULINITY .....	73
<i>Authoritative Role and Control</i> .....	74
<i>Gender Role Reversals</i> .....	75
C. ENCULTURATION .....	77
<i>Family and the Transmission of Gender Roles</i> .....	77
<i>Conclusion</i> .....	78
<b>CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSION</b> .....	<b>79</b>
A. WOMEN’S INCREASING AUTONOMY IN DECISION-MAKING.....	79
B. UNSHAKEN ROOTS: HOLDING TO THEIR INDONESIAN IDENTITY ABROAD .....	82
<b>REFERENCES</b> .....	<b>84</b>
<b>APPENDICES</b> .....	<b>97</b>
APPENDIX A. INDONESIAN DIASPORIC COMMUNITIES IN CANBERRA .....	97

# Acknowledgements

This thesis honours those who had the courage to redefine the meaning of home, even if it lies across oceans and continents. It is also a tribute to my late father, Vitra Wiradharma Ramli, whose own journey as a *perantau* in Australia set the path for mine, 25 years later.

Firstly, and most importantly, I extend my deepest gratitude to the Indonesians in *perantauan* whose stories are at the heart of this thesis. Without their generosity in sharing their lived experiences, this research would not exist, and I sincerely hope that I have done justice to their narratives.

I am profoundly thankful to my thesis supervisor, Dr Eva Nisa, whose invaluable guidance pushed me to grow beyond my expectations. Her dedication has been instrumental not only in shaping the direction of my research but also in fostering my personal growth.

My sincere thanks also go to the citizens of the Republic of Indonesia and the Ministry of Finance, whose support through tax contributions enabled my studies at the Australian National University.

To the friends I gained during my time in Canberra, thank you for making this melancholy city feel like home. Your companionship has been a source of strength throughout this journey.

I am also immensely grateful to my closest friends—especially 8 of them, in Indonesia and across the globe, for going above and beyond to share their perspectives. Your contributions were invaluable.

Finally, to my family—especially Mami—and my partner, Dzikrie, thank you for your boundless love and patience during my most challenging times. Without your care, I might have overlooked the necessity of eating and getting enough sleep.

## Abstract

*Merantau*, traditionally a practice for the Minangkabau men to seek opportunities beyond their matrilineal society, represents a deeply gendered migration experience. Rooted in the enculturation process of Minangkabau males, *merantau* embodies hegemonic masculinity, where men are expected to assert independence, ambition, and economic success. While historically focused on male mobility, modern interpretations of *merantau* encompass a broader range of migration experiences, including those of women, challenging traditional gender roles within diaspora communities. This study adopts a qualitative approach, drawing on semi-structured interviews with Indonesian diasporas in Canberra and analysis of diaspora-produced literature. Fieldwork conducted in October 2024 highlights how Indonesian men and women in Australia negotiate and renegotiate their gender roles within both professional and domestic spheres. The findings reveal that Indonesian women are increasingly embracing leadership and decision-making roles, reflecting shifts in gender dynamics. However, the persistence of hegemonic masculinity is evident, as men's domestic contributions are continuously perceived as sacrifices, and they strive to maintain their identity as primary breadwinners. Enculturation within the Indonesian diaspora ensures the preservation of traditional values, yet it also fosters an environment where gender roles are continuously negotiated. This study underscores the complexity of gender negotiations within the Indonesian diaspora, as women assert greater agency and men adapt to evolving domestic expectations. The research amplifies the voices of Indonesian migrants in Australia, contributing to a nuanced understanding of migration, identity, and gender in a transnational context, while highlighting the ongoing influence of cultural heritage in shaping gendered experiences of migration.

# Chapter 1: Introduction

## A. Background

Mobility is a significant aspect of Indonesia's social history. Noel Salazar (2016, p. 22) highlights the widespread presence of both short- and long-distance travel, driven by sociocultural and economic motivations. This mobility extends beyond national borders, including destinations such as Australia. In every corner of Australia, it is not uncommon to encounter individuals of Indonesian descent, each with their unique stories and aspirations. These diasporas have arrived in Australia for a myriad reasons, ranging from temporary stays as students to permanent relocations for work and family. Among the most significant pull factor of their migration to Australia is the geographical proximity of Indonesia and Australia, separated only by the Pacific Ocean (Beine & Parsons, 2015). Australia's appeal has also been bolstered by its world-class higher education system, superior job prospects, and high living standards, making it a desirable location for many Indonesians (Ananta & Arifin, 2014). Furthermore, the scholarship initiatives like the Australian Awards Scholarship (AAS) serve as a testament to the strong relationship between Indonesia and Australia, reflecting their soft-power diplomacy (Medica, 2016). Therefore, the combination of historical ties, educational and economic opportunities, and geographical proximity has contributed to the steady growth of the Indonesian diaspora in Australia.

While migration is common throughout Indonesia, the Minangkabau tribe from the province of West Sumatra is particularly notable for their unique cultural practice of migration known as *merantau*. *Merantau* combines two words: *me* (meaning the act of doing something) and *rantau* (meaning migrating, going outside of one's hometown). This culturally inscribed term for migration stems from their societal structure. According to Metje (1995, p. 23), the Minangkabau society is the largest matrilineal society in the world. In this system, lineage and inheritance are passed down through the female line, with property and family names being inherited by women, giving women a central role in both the family and community structure. Due to this custom, young men in the Minangkabau community are encouraged by their society to undertake *merantau*.

*Merantau* is traditionally viewed as a means for young Minangkabau men to seek opportunities and power beyond the confines of their matrilineal society (Salazar, 2016). This practice has given the Minangkabau a reputation for high mobility, significantly contributing to Indonesia's rich history of migration (Salazar, 2016; Kato, 2008; Pardede & Vanhorst, 2024). Originally rooted in cultural practices, the concept of *merantau* has evolved and is now commonly used to describe various forms of migration across the Indonesian-Malay region. For people outside the Minangkabau community, *merantau* has come to symbolize ambition and resilience, reflecting the courage to face uncertainties in unfamiliar environments (Hooker, 2018, p. 2). This expanded understanding of *merantau* encompasses migration for diverse purposes, including the pursuit of new experiences, education, or financial

opportunities (Adams, 2022). Salazar (2016) suggests that *merantau* is closely linked with broader socio-economic patterns of migration, particularly the rural-to-urban migration that has been prevalent across Indonesia for decades. Moreover, the concept extends to Indonesians and their descendants living abroad, known as *orang Indonesia perantauan* (Indonesians living abroad or Indonesian in *perantauan*), or are also considered to be engaging in *merantau* as they navigate life in foreign lands while maintaining ties to their cultural roots (Setiadji, 2017). In this thesis, *merantau* is also used more broadly to refer to migration by all Indonesians, not exclusively the Minangkabau. Drawing from Clifford (1994)'s argument that diasporas are shaped by complex transnational connections and adaptive identities – rather than just ties to a homeland or the desire for return, this study will define the Indonesian diaspora as an evolving community in *perantauan* that continuously balancing their cultural heritage with the diverse social, economic, and political realities of their host countries.

The broader diasporic experience and *merantau* share a common thread: both are considered gendered experiences. *Merantau*, as mentioned above, originating from a migration tradition enforced by a matrilineal society, primarily involves young men (Kato, 2008). Similarly, diasporas often normalize “male experiences” of travel and displacement (Clifford, 1997, p. 258). This connection emphasizes the prominence of male experiences and raises questions about the overlooked experiences of women in *merantau*.

As the Indonesian diaspora continues to grow, particularly in countries like Australia where there are significant Indonesian communities, it becomes increasingly important to study these diverse experiences. As of 2022, the Indonesian diaspora ranked 18th among migrant communities in Australia (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2022). This growing global presence is also reflected in the consistent rise of Indonesian migrants worldwide from 2015 to 2020 (UNDESA, 2020). Understanding the gender dynamics within this vibrant community is essential due to the gendered nature of *merantau*, and the presence of both first-generation and second- or third-generation individuals in Australia, which influenced identity formation and cultural integration (Muhidin & Utomo, 2015).

Despite their decision to move to Australia, Indonesian in *perantauan*, like many other diaspora groups, often engaging primarily with other Indonesians rather than embracing the multicultural environment of their new country. These communities tend to form tight-knit networks that emphasize their Indonesian origins through shared ethnicity, religion, or interests (Oktafiani, 2019; Jati, 2021). While this cultural preservation fosters a strong sense of belonging, it also perpetuates traditional gender roles deeply embedded in Indonesian culture—a pattern observed in various cultures worldwide (Boehnke, 2011). Traditionally, Indonesian culture views women through the concept of *kodrat*, commonly understood by people in Indonesia as a God-given nature (see Nisa 2019, p. 445), which assigns them a role primarily centered in the domestic sphere (see Chapter 2 for further discussion of *kodrat*). This situation raises questions about how these Indonesian gender roles

interact with Australian norms, especially given that gender equality is more pronounced in Western developed countries compared to non-Western, developing countries. Non-Western, developing countries like Indonesia often struggle to overcome deeply rooted traditional norms and may lack the institutional support necessary to achieve similar levels of gender equality, unlike Western developed countries, which have progressed further in this regard (Kolpashnikova & Kan, 2021). Australia, for example, has seen significant development in gender roles, challenging the traditional notion of men as sole breadwinners (Broomhill & Sharp, 2005). Although this development has not been entirely smooth, with some tendencies toward more conservative views still present (Van Egmond et al., 2010), the dynamics and interactions between the Indonesian diaspora and Australia's multicultural environment raise concerns about how gender roles are being negotiated within these communities.

This thesis examines the negotiation of gender roles among Indonesian diasporas in Australia, focusing on the interplay between Australian multiculturalism and Indonesian cultural traditions. While numerous studies have explored the influence of culture and migration on Indonesian diasporas (Wardhani, 2023; Jati, 2021; Oktafiani, 2019; Ananta & Arifin, 2014), there has been limited attention from a gender studies perspective, particularly regarding how cultural factors shape the migration experience. This research addresses this gap by analyzing how gender roles are negotiated within Indonesian diasporas in Australia. Furthermore, it identifies forms of cultural preservation that emerge from these interactions.

Importantly, this thesis aims to highlight the experiences of Indonesian women, emphasizing their hybrid identity in accordance with Hall's (1994) concept of identity as inherently diverse and multifaceted. Alexander (2010) suggests hybridity among diaspora is not merely cultural blending but a site of tension, contradiction, and transformation, where it allows resistance against rigid cultural or national identities, creating new forms of knowledge and representation. This thesis also seeks to challenge the stereotypical portrayals that often reduce these women to passive subjects, by instead recognizing their autonomy (Marchand & Parpart, 1995).

## B. Theoretical Overview

This study analyses the negotiation of gender roles among the Indonesian diaspora through the lens of key theoretical frameworks that address the complexities of gender and cultural adaptation in diasporic contexts.

### *Hegemonic Masculinity*

Raewyn Connell's (1995) concept of hegemonic masculinity provides a foundational framework for understanding how dominant gender norms are maintained and challenged within the Indonesian diaspora. Connell defines hegemonic masculinity as "the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women" (1995, p. 77). This concept encompasses three key characteristics: cultural dominance, the

subordination of other masculinities, and its dynamic, context-specific nature. Cultural dominance refers to the idealized form of masculinity in a given culture, often associated with traits like strength, assertiveness, economic power, and heterosexuality, which explains why men are frequently expected to be the primary breadwinners in the family. The subordination of other masculinities involves marginalizing forms of masculinity that do not conform to the hegemonic ideal, such as those associated with homosexuality, emotional expressiveness, or non-conformity, and ensuring the continued subordination of women. Finally, the concept is dynamic and context-specific, meaning that hegemonic masculinity is not static but fluid, adapting to different cultural contexts.

In the context of the Indonesian diaspora, this theory is crucial for analyzing how traditional gender roles—rooted in Indonesia's patriarchal structures—are either reinforced or negotiated as individuals and communities navigate the gender expectations of their host countries. The theory allows for an investigation into how power relations are maintained within families and communities, despite the challenges posed by new cultural environments. For instance, Indonesian men in the diaspora may strive to preserve their dominant roles even as they adapt to the cultural norms of their host country. By applying this framework, the study examines how Indonesian men and women within the diaspora either uphold or resist these gender norms in their new social and cultural contexts, providing insight into the complex dynamics of gender role negotiation.

### *Enculturation*

Enculturation as defined by Peter Weinreich (2009), is the process by which individuals learn and internalize the cultural norms, values, and behaviors of their own group, starting from childhood and continuing throughout life. Unlike acculturation, which involves adopting the culture of a different group, typically the dominant culture in a host society, enculturation focuses on the retention and reinforcement of one's heritage culture. Enculturation is defined as the agentic individual's process of identification with whatever cultural elements of influential others are available to the person (Weinreich, 2009, p. 126). He argued that individuals actively engage in selecting and integrating aspects of their culture based on personal experiences and social contexts, blending heritage traditions with elements of the new cultural environment (Weinreich, 2009, p. 135). This ongoing and agentic process allows people to maintain a cultural identity that evolves with their experiences but remains deeply rooted in their origins.

When applied to the analysis of gender roles negotiation among the Indonesian diaspora in Australia, the enculturation framework highlights how traditional gender norms persist within these communities while being influenced by more egalitarian Australian values. For instance, Indonesian diaspora members may continue to adhere to the culturally embedded gender roles, reinforced through interactions with community that uphold the tradition. At the same time, interactions with Australian society may lead to the incorporation of progressive gender norms, creating a hybrid identity. This framework also emphasizes generational differences, where younger

members of the diaspora may challenge traditional norms and adopt more egalitarian views influenced by their experiences in Australian schools, workplaces, and social settings, leading to an ongoing negotiation of gender roles within the communities.

In this context of enculturation, socialization theory plays a central role in understanding how gender roles are learned and internalized within the family (Cano & Hofmeister, 2023; Syrda, 2023). The socialization theory explains that individuals acquire societal norms and roles through their interactions with their immediate environment, particularly within the family. Regarding gender, socialization theory highlights how children observe and absorb gender roles by watching their parents and other family members, learning the behaviors expected of their gender (Syrda, 2023, p. 804).

Together, these theoretical frameworks offer a comprehensive approach to understanding the complex dynamics of gender role negotiation among the Indonesian in *perantauan*.

### C. Aim and Key Questions

This study focuses on Indonesian diasporas in Canberra, exploring their negotiation of gender roles and the preservation of Indonesian culture. The connection between the Indonesian diaspora and the negotiation of gender roles is particularly compelling for two reasons. First, the diasporic experience for Indonesians is inherently gendered, largely due to the cultural practice of *merantau*, which traditionally encourages young men to migrate. Second, Indonesians have a strong

tendency to preserve their embedded culture, including traditional gender roles, as highlighted by Havlin's (2015) study. For Indonesian diasporas, maintaining these roles and cultural practices is crucial for retaining a sense of identity and continuity amidst the dislocation and uncertainties of migration (Havlin, 2015). Additionally, the interaction with Australian multiculturalism further complicates this renegotiation among Indonesian diasporas, yet perspectives from gender studies on this topic have remained largely overlooked.

The growing trend of women participating in *merantau*, indicating that the primary actors in the diasporic phenomenon are no longer predominantly male. However, this shift presents a paradox: although more women are encouraged to engage actively in diasporic experiences, the broader societal system still offers limited support for fostering egalitarian gender roles (Fahmi, 2020). Women who participate in *merantau* often experience a loss of social recognition due to their migration, as moving away from their hometowns disconnects them from the cultural and geographical contexts that traditionally safeguard their status (Fahmi, 2020). This loss occurs regardless of their economic or professional achievements, as their social recognition are linked to their physical presence within their hometown community. Once removed from this context, this recognition often diminish, leading to increased vulnerability despite their personal successes or financial independence (Fahmi, 2020).

In addition to facing diminished social recognition, these women must also renegotiate their identities as migrants in the host nation. They are tasked with

carefully balancing the preservation of their cultural heritage with the need to adapt to new cultural norms (Dahir, 2024). This process on balancing underscores the significant role that social and cultural factors play in shaping the negotiation of gender roles within diasporic communities, a critical aspect that this study aims to explore in depth (Blackstone, 2003). As Andaya (2006) emphasizes, it is crucial for scholars to focus on how these factors collectively influence the experiences of migrant women, particularly in how their roles, status, and identities are reshaped in the diaspora. By adopting this approach, we can not only amplify the voices of women as they navigate their adaptations but also shed light on the broader socio-cultural dynamics at play within the Indonesian diaspora experience.

By integrating perspectives on hegemonic masculinity and enculturation, this study aims to shed light on the ways in which gender identities are negotiated in the context of migration and cultural adaptation. These theories will guide the analysis of data, providing a lens through which to explain the processes of gender role negotiation and cultural preservation. Moreover, they will help illuminate the voices of Indonesian women in diaspora, allowing them agency in telling their stories.

This study also aims to address the gap in understanding the negotiation of gender roles among Indonesian diasporas by giving voices to the lived experiences of Indonesian diasporas in Australia. It will also identify forms of cultural preservation among Indonesian diasporas. Therefore, this study will seek to answer the following research questions:

- RQ 1: How do the lived experiences of Indonesian diasporas in Canberra influence their articulation of gender roles?
- RQ 2: What forms of cultural preservation related to gender dynamics are manifested by Indonesian diasporas?

## C. Methodology

This research is grounded in the social constructivist paradigm, which highlights how meaning is shaped through social interactions and cultural contexts (Lee, 2012). Social constructivism views knowledge and reality as socially constructed, rather than objectively discovered (Lee, 2012). This aligns with the objectives of this thesis, which examines how cultural contexts influence Indonesian diasporas' understanding of "truth" or "reality" based on their lived experiences. Additionally, this paradigm supports the exploration of how individuals actively shape and perceive gender roles through shifts in familial dynamics (Cano & Hofmeister, 2023; Syrda, 2023) and societal expectations (Blackstone, 2003; Broomhill & Sharp, 2005). Semi-structured interviews serve as the primary data collection method in this study, supplemented by secondary sources, including narratives from the published literary works of Indonesian diasporas in Australia.

A total of 15 narratives are collected as qualitative data of the study. I interviewed nine Indonesian diasporas who resides in Canberra. Secondary sources, including *Suka Duka Hidup di Australia* (Joys and Sorrows of Living in Australia) by Aziz et al. (2011) and *Hidup Damai di Negeri Multikultur: Kumpulan Kisah Warga*

*Indonesia di Australia* (Living in Peace in a Multicultural Country: A Collection of Stories from Indonesians in Australia) by Forum Alumni MEP (2017), are utilized as supplementary narratives. By incorporating these diasporas-produced literatures, I attempted to bridge the gap between the real and the imaginary, as the literatures serves as the site of authenticity, providing insights into the migrant experience (Williams, 2018, p. 193).

Analyses of the narratives will be divided into two groups based on participants' life course (single and married). This approach is chosen to take in the influencing factors of the life course approach (Kley, 2011) and the dynamics of marriage or presence of children as observed in previous study (Choi, 2019). Therefore, it is expected the data analysis will be more focused in attending to the research questions of the study.

Utilizing a gender studies approach and to make comparative analysis possible, the groups are also split according to their gender resulting in a scheme as detailed in the table below:

<b>Female</b>		<b>Male</b>	
Married and has children in Australia	Single	Married and has children in Australia	Single
Group MF (n = 8)	Group SF (n = 3)	Group MM (n = 2)	Group MM (n = 2)

To ensure a representative sample of Indonesian diasporas in Canberra, participants who are interviewed were purposively selected from the Indonesian community list (Appendix A), enabling a more targeted recruitment process based on predefined criteria. Additionally, to further enhance the data collection, this study employed a snowball sampling technique. This combination of methods helped to capture a broader range of perspectives and experiences within the diaspora.

## E. Literature Reviews

Research on the Indonesian diaspora often focuses on legal aspects, such as immigration laws, citizenship status, and legal rights, overlooking the profound influence of culture on their experiences (Charity, 2016; Shinta, 2019; Kambo & Yani, 2024). Culture is dynamic, and Indonesians in *perantauan* experience a unique negotiation of gender roles due to the interaction between their cultural origins and the host nation's culture (Vatsa, 2016). This cultural dynamic is evident in the development of Indonesia's dual citizenship laws, significantly influenced by *Komunitas Perkawinan Campuran* (KPC) Melati, an organization of Indonesian women advocating for legal reform (Winarnita, 2008). Indonesia's *jus sanguinis* (citizenship by parentage) policy posed challenges for Indonesian diasporas in *jus soli* (citizenship by birthplace) countries, particularly regarding their children's citizenship rights. KPC Melati successfully lobbied for a revision allowing children born in *jus soli* countries to hold dual citizenship until the age of 18, preserving their Indonesian ties while adapting to their host culture (Winarnita, 2008).

The efforts of KPC Melati underscore the complexity of the Indonesian diaspora and highlight the significant role of Indonesian women who undertake *merantau* in driving legal change and adopting new forms of cultural preservation, such as maintaining Indonesian citizenship while fostering family connections. These women challenged traditional notions of cultural preservation, embracing new liberties shaped by their host cultures (Vatsa, 2016). Furthermore, the cultural domain plays a crucial role for diasporas in Australia, serving to maintain ties to their homeland while also integrating aspects of Australian culture (Ben-Moshe et al., 2012). Understanding this cultural influence requires a broader perspective beyond legal considerations, emphasizing the need to explore how culture shapes gender roles among diasporas.

### *Gender Differences in Diasporic Experience*

To comprehend how culture influences gender roles among diasporas, it is essential to consider the impact of gender on their experiences. Diasporas encounter unique challenges shaped by gender differences, as evidenced in Choi's (2019) study. Choi examines how men in the diaspora adapt their household roles, revealing a phenomenon called "masculine compromise," where men in diaspora are required to redefine their masculinity to maintain family dynamics. This redefinition is influenced by factors such as marital status, perceptions of migration, and partners' aspirations. Men who view migration as temporary tend to adhere to traditional masculine roles, while those who see it as permanent are more likely to adopt new

roles to support family cohesion. Conversely, women in the diaspora often seek greater independence, striving to redefine their roles within the family and society as they navigate the changing dynamics post-migration (Dahir, 2024). This contrast highlights how men may struggle to redefine their roles to maintain family stability, while women face the challenge of balancing traditional expectations with their aspirations for independence.

Considering the concept of masculine compromise from Choi (2019), migration impacts individuals differently based on gender and fundamentally alters gender roles. Havlin (2015) found that the *merantau* experience reinforces the negotiation of gender roles, supporting Choi's (2019) finding that male diasporas are challenged to adapt to the restructuring of family dynamics, such as the shift in caregiving responsibilities. This shift can be attributed to the increased participation of female diasporas in the workforce, leading to a partial redistribution of caregiving responsibilities to men (Yeoh, 2020). These changes challenge traditional gender roles and posited to promote a more balanced division of labor within the household, fostering a tendency toward egalitarianism partnership in the post-migration period (Havlin, 2015).

While there is evidence that prove women's participation and mobility throughout Indonesian societies, there are chances that their roles have historically been shaped by both local cultural practices and the economic needs of their communities (Andaya, 2006). Moreover, the alteration in gender roles, particularly in caregiving responsibilities, signifies a broader social change resulting from migration. As men

become more involved in caregiving, it not only changes the dynamics within individual families but also reflects broader societal shifts toward gender equality (Yeoh, 2020). These changes are posited to lead to a more significant changes regarding gender roles within the diaspora community, as traditional notions of masculinity and femininity are negotiated.

### *The Role of Culture in Gender Roles Negotiation*

The negotiation in gender roles among diasporas is not vacuum; it is deeply influenced by the interplay between their home culture and their active engagement with the host culture (Bhatia & Ram, 2009). This influence challenges traditional norms, allowing diasporas to redefine their gender roles (Vatsa, 2016). Engagement with the host culture can introduce new perspectives and opportunities, particularly for women, empowering them to challenge and expand their traditional roles (Jati, 2021). On the other hand, the desire to maintain cultural heritage often reinforces traditional norms within diaspora communities (Havlin, 2015). This dual influence creates a unique environment where gender roles are constantly negotiated, underscoring the influential role of culture in shaping gender role development.

Cultural preservation by diasporas can impact gender roles in multiple ways. While it fosters a sense of belonging among Indonesian diasporas (Jati, 2021), it can also perpetuate traditional gender norms, potentially hindering progress toward gender equality (Havlin, 2015). As an Indonesian in *perantauan*, they are tasked as the bearer, or representative, of Indonesian cultural and moral value, viewing it as a

means of retaining identity and staying connected to their roots. (Winarnita, 2016, p. 133). However, active engagement with the host culture, as noted by Bhatia and Ram (2009), offers opportunities for the home culture to interact with the host culture—such as in Australia. In Australia, Indonesian women may encounter new models of female empowerment and leadership, inspiring them to pursue education and careers that were previously considered less significant within their traditional context. This interaction is posited to result in a shift toward more egalitarian gender roles within the diaspora community.

To understand how Australian culture can either enforce or challenge the preservation of traditional Indonesian gender roles, we need to examine the elements of Indonesian culture. Stark (2013) distinguished these elements into core and peripheral categories, with the latter being adaptable as long as the former remains unchanged. Individuals act as agents in deciding which elements of the host culture to accept or adapt. This agency means that diasporas can selectively integrate aspects of Australian culture that align with or challenge their core cultural values. For instance, the emphasis on gender equality and individual rights in Australian society may encourage Indonesian women to pursue greater autonomy, challenging traditional Indonesian norms that confine women to domestic roles. However, as noted above, despite its development, Australia still exhibits certain conservative views on gender roles, such as questioning whether working women can be good mothers (Van Egmond et al., 2010, p. 164). The interaction between these conservative views and the traditional gender roles of Indonesian culture illustrates

how culture creates a complex dynamic for gender role development among Indonesian diasporas.

## F. Thesis Outline

The next chapter describes the distinction of perceptions regarding gender roles between Indonesia and Australia, highlighting the differences between the two cultures. I also demonstrate the contrasting background, narrating its historical context and development. In Indonesia, gender roles are predominantly defined by *kodrat*, where cultural and religious beliefs, often depicting women as homemakers and men as breadwinners. These roles are reinforced by societal expectations that prioritize familial harmony over individual aspirations, particularly for women. In contrast, while Australia is generally perceived as more egalitarian in its approach to gender roles, it also displays tendencies toward conservative views on the subject. This chapter will set the stage for a deeper understanding of the cultural influences that shape the shift in gender roles for Indonesian diasporas living in Australia.

Chapter three analyses how culture interplays with migration in the Indonesian diasporic community. It shows that the *merantau* enforce a hybrid identity where Indonesian cultural values are negotiated in the context of Australian multiculturalism. This chapter explores how Indonesian in *perantauan* develop their hybrid identity, balancing the preservation of their Indonesian heritage with the adoption of new values in Australia. Key areas of focus include religious practices, language practices, and political and cultural participation. The chapter also

examines how these hybrid identity influence the enculturation of gender roles among Indonesian in *perantauan*, demonstrating that cultural adaptation and preservation coexist in complex ways.

Finally, chapter four illustrates the changing dynamics of gender roles among Indonesian in *perantauan*, highlighting the differences between those who are single and those who are married. It also discusses the findings through theoretical lens discussed above, drawing on concepts such as hegemonic masculinity and enculturation, to understand the shifts occurring within the diaspora. Additionally, the chapter compares these findings with broader discussion of the literatures on gender, migration, and cultural preservation.

## **Chapter 2: Perceptions in Gender Roles**

Understanding the dynamics of gender roles within the Indonesian community requires exploring how these roles are shared by a range of factors, including historical and cultural influences. This chapter will analyse how gender roles are understood in Indonesia, with a focus on key influences such as history, tradition, and societal expectations. It will begin by outlining the factors that have shaped gender roles in Indonesia. The discussion will then shift to the Indonesian diaspora in Australia, exploring how these established gender roles interact with or are influenced by Australian culture. This analysis will provide insights into how cultural adaptation influences the negotiation of gender roles within diaspora communities.

### **A. Development of Gender Roles**

The roles assigned to each gender are shaped primarily by social and cultural influences, rather than biological factors (Ortner & Whitehead, 1981). These socially constructed roles, known as gender roles, further differentiate men and women across various attributes, including personality traits, physical characteristics, role behaviors (e.g., caregiving or leadership), and occupational statuses (Ashmore & Del Boca, 1981; Deaux & Lewis, 1984). All the aforementioned attributes collectively shape the expectations and norms surrounding gender. In this study, the focus on gender roles will be narrowed to specific role behavioral attributes, as defined by Deaux and Lewis (1984, p. 992),

which include caregiving responsibilities, occupational roles, and the division of household labor. These behaviors will highlight the contrast between traditional roles, where men are viewed as breadwinners and women as homemakers, and more egalitarian roles that challenge these conventional expectations (Larsen & Long, 1988; Boehnke, 2011). In the specific context of Indonesian culture, these traditional roles are deeply rooted in the concept of *kodrat wanita*, which defines women's primary responsibilities as being tied to their domestic and reproductive roles. This concept continues to influence societal expectations, as highlighted by Nisa (2019), who discusses how *kodrat wanita* is often invoked to justify conservative gender norms, even as progressive movements advocate for greater gender equality.

Culture plays a crucial role in shaping gender roles, deeply influencing not only individual behaviors but also collective ways of thinking. Cultural norms dictate expectations for genders, defining what is considered appropriate behavior for men and women (Neculaesei, 2015). Many cultures, including Western ones, share the stereotypical belief that “women are more emotional than men” (Fischer & Manstead, 2000, p. 71). This cultural belief has significantly shaped gender roles: women are expected to express their emotions and be warmer, while men are expected to appear in control of their emotions, reinforcing the idea that emotional restraint is a key aspect of masculinity (Connell, 1995). Furthermore, it links women with traits considered “natural” such as warmth and caregiving, and associating men with traits deemed “cultural” such as leadership and control (Ortner, 1981). Thus, Ortner (1981) argued that the association with such traits led to the universal

devaluation of women – as “natural” is supposed to be controlled by “cultural”. These associations are learned and passed down through generations, eventually, it become enculturated and deeply ingrained in people’s lives and societal expectations, continuously shaping gender roles over time (Weinrich, 2009).

As mentioned in the previous Chapter, children learn about gender roles, including those related to *kodrat*, through enculturation and socialization by observing how household labor is divided within their families (Cano & Hofmeister, 2023). When fathers participate in housework, it challenges traditional gender norms, shaping children's understanding of gender roles. While the division of labor within the family plays a critical role, this explanation risks oversimplifying the complexity of how children internalize gender norms. Thus, while paternal involvement in housework is important in challenging gender norms, it is one of many factors that shape children’s attitudes toward gender roles. Additionally, parents with traditional views may resist shifts in gender roles, particularly in scenarios where wives are more active in the workforce, often leading to increased pressure on women to take on more household chores (Okimoto & Heilman, 2012; Steiner et al., 2019). Conversely, parents with egalitarian views create supportive environments for working wives, promoting a more equal division of household labor and fostering egalitarian gender roles in children (Steiner et al., 2019, p. 252).

Another significant influence on gender role development is larger institutions, which reinforce cultural and familial influences more deeply within societal structures. These institutions, particularly those related to the meso-and macro-level

of social influence – such as work, religion, education, and government policies – can either challenge or conserve traditional gender norms (Breda et al., 2020). For example, the way companies value women in the workplace often mirrors and reinforces societal expectations. Women who achieve significant success in their careers are more likely than their male counterparts to be questioned about their parenting responsibilities, especially when their decision to work is seen as a personal choice rather than a necessity (Okimoto & Heilman, 2012). Okimoto and Heilman’s study (2012, p. 720) on working mothers underscore how company practices as a larger institution can preserve traditional gender role attitudes. However, the relationship between larger institutions and gender role attitudes is complex. Breda et al. (2020) coined the concept of the “gender-equality paradox” which reveals an unexpected trend: gender segregation in occupations tends to be more pronounced in developed countries with egalitarian gender role attitudes. The “gender-equality paradox” suggests that even in societies where men and women have equal freedom to choose their careers, gender differences in personal preferences may still result in men and women gravitating towards fields traditionally dominated by their gender. (Breda et al., 2020). This paradox may be attributed to certain biological roots of gender differences, with men and women historically developed distinct roles shaped by their own physical survival and reproductive strategies (Breda et al., 2020). For example, men might gravitate towards careers involving risk-taking or physical strength, while women might prefer nurturing or caregiving roles. Thus, despite increased equality, occupational

choices often reinforce traditional gender divisions, highlighting the complex interplay between individual freedom and societal norms (Breda et al., 2020, p. 2).

Gender roles are shaped by multiple influences as illustrated above. The following sections will explore how these roles are developed and perceived in Indonesia and how they interact with the multicultural environment in Australia. This analysis will examine the familial, cultural, and institutional influences in both countries to better understand these differences. By doing so, it sets the foundation for understanding the dynamics of gender roles within the lives of Indonesian diaspora, contributing to the broader objectives of this study.

## B. *Bapak* and *Ibu*: Discussing the Indonesian Context of Gender Roles

### *Shaping Factors of Gender Roles in Indonesia*

With over 200 ethnicities spread across the archipelago, Indonesia is one of the most culturally diverse countries in the world. As a result of these diverse ethnicities, Indonesian family structures are deeply influenced with cultural upbringing, resulting in utilizing parenting as a key medium for the socialization of the respective cultural values (Bornstein, 2012). Nonetheless, children do not solely learn gender norms through family upbringing but are also influenced by a multitude of other factors. Enculturation, therefore, is a multifaceted process, shaped not only by family but by the larger sociocultural environment that surrounds children.

The roles of *bapak* (father) and *ibu* (mother) in Indonesian society collectively reflect characteristics of the broader Asian parenting lifestyle, where fathers are often more authoritarian and punitive compared to mothers (Riany et al., 2017, p. 212). Therefore, gender roles in Indonesia manifest not only in the distribution of household labor as suggested by previous literatures (Ashmore & Del Boca, 1981; Deaux & Lewis, 1984) but also in the differences for parenting styles—*Bapak* is expected to be more authoritarian, while *Ibu* is seen as more permissive. According to Riany et al. (2017), these contrasting parenting styles posited by Indonesian parents are considered as essential for controlling children's behavior and instilling socially acceptable conduct. Additionally, *Ibu* is often viewed as the primary source of warmth and affection for their children, reflecting cultural expectations that women are more adept at communicating and empathizing with others' emotions (Riany et al., 2017). This division aligns with the broader gender role expectations from Fischer and Manstead (2000) that expect men to be emotionally restrained and women to be more expressive and empathetic. These contrasting gender roles from *bapak* and *ibu* highlight the complex ways in which gender roles are maintained and reinforced through family dynamics in Indonesia.

In several major Indonesian subcultures, including Balinese, Batak, Javanese, and Sundanese, mothers are expected to maintain close and continuous contact with their children during early childhood (Kestenberg-Amighi, 2004, p. 38). These subcultures play a significant role in shaping broader Indonesian cultural expectations, particularly regarding traditional gender roles. Furthermore, in Indonesia, the concepts of work and gender roles are shaped by a combination of

influences, including Western industrialized contexts, as well as state policies, cultural norms, and religious discourses (Ford & Parker, 2008). These influences have shaped the definition of work in a way that excludes reproductive labor—such as child-rearing and household duties—as well as many of the economic contributions made by women (Ford & Parker, 2008). Therefore, it reflects societal norms that prioritize women's roles at home over their participation in the formal workforce, reinforcing the traditional gender roles. This norm is closely linked to the concept of *kodrat wanita*, which frames women's domestic and reproductive responsibilities as their natural and divinely ordained roles, further reinforcing the societal expectation that women prioritize household duties over formal economic participation (Nisa, 2019). As a result, married women in Indonesia often face the challenge in managing their caregiving responsibilities while also pursuing their career aspirations. This challenge is exemplified by Roshita et al. (2012) in the words of a stay-at-home mother:

I do want to go back to work. It seems if I stay at home, I don't develop myself, I become forgetful and many more (things). If I work, I'll get something, I get to know things happen outside home compared to when I only stay home with the kids. (p. 303)

The evidence suggests that, socially and culturally, women in Indonesia have been expected to prioritize family responsibilities over professional roles, while men are expected to focus on work – reflecting the traditional gender roles. These traditional gender roles are deeply ingrained in the cultural identity of Indonesian women, often

leading to the expectation that they should always prioritize family matters (Kuntari et al., 2017). This cultural expectation has contributed to gender disparity, which was further reinforced by institutional influences, particularly during Soeharto's New Order era, when societal norms were heavily regulated by the state.

During Soeharto's New Order era, societal norms were heavily contested, particularly regarding who was allowed to participate in public life and who was relegated to the private sphere (Hegarty, 2021). This contestation was not merely a reflection of cultural tensions but a deliberate product of the regime's effort to legitimize its political power by reinforcing a patriarchal order. One striking example of this was the creation of state-sponsored women's organizations, such as *Dharma Wanita* (Women's Duty), which were designed not to empower but to re-subordinate women, maintaining traditional gender hierarchies (Wieringa, 2023; Hegarty, 2021). These studies (Hegarty, 2021; Wieringa, 2023) highlight the state's macro-institutional practices during the New Order era that perpetuated patriarchal control, reinforcing the kind of hegemonic masculinity Connell (1995) discusses, where institutional power is used to maintain male dominance. Even after the fall of the regime, these practices have persisted, continuing to shape and influence gender dynamics in post-Soeharto parliamentary politics.

Soeharto's New Order regime fell in 1998, marking the beginning of the *Reformasi* movement, which emphasized a transition to democracy and sought to dismantle the authoritarian structures of the past. During the *Reformasi* era, public debates around gender and women's representation gained prominence, leading to discussions on

equality and women's rights (Robinson, 2008). However, despite these democratic advancements, Indonesia remains largely a patriarchal society, where religion-based ideologies such as *ibuism* (motherhood), and *keluarga sakinah* (peaceful family) continue to enforce traditional roles on women, particularly concerning their freedoms, bodies, and sexuality (Chin, 2018).

### *Gender Roles in Modern Indonesia*

Indonesia today has observed prominent roles of women within its society, whether through activism and participation in economic development (Blackburn, 2001). The study from Samarakoon and Panduri (2015) for example, found that increased participation in education promotes women's autonomy over their body, ultimately boosting life expectancy. Currently, many women in Indonesia are challenging the embedded traditional gender roles, particularly in areas such as women participation in the workforce, education, and politics. The drive for gender equality has opened more opportunities for women to build careers, leading many to delay or even deprioritize marriage (Himawan, 2020). Educational institutions have been pivotal in this drive by promoting more egalitarian views on gender roles. They have increasingly supported women's participation in higher education, resulting in positive economic outcomes and progress toward gender equality (Manshur et al., 2020). There is a significant increase in women's participation in the Indonesian workforce, which reached 53% in 2023, with further growth expected as this trend continues (World Bank, 2023). These developments highlight a significant

transformation in gender roles in Indonesia, yet they also open up complex discussions about the balance between cultural traditions and modern gender dynamics.

As Indonesian women gain empowerment and independence in the workforce, many express contrasting concerns about societal expectations, particularly regarding marriage. Marriage remains a deeply rooted cultural norm, even when modernization is reshaping their views on gender roles. Despite progress toward gender equality in professional life, these changes are not always reflected in private life, leading to a reevaluation of marital expectations and highlighting the gender-equality paradox (Breda et al., 2020). In Indonesian culture, men are typically expected to take the lead in relationships, and women's concerns about marriage still revolves around financially dependent partners reflecting a traditional expectation that men are still expected to be the primary breadwinner in the family (Breda et al., 2020). This dynamic reveals the complexity in perceiving gender roles among Indonesian, where progress in one area does not always translate into corresponding changes in another.

## C. Gender Roles and Multiculturalism in Australia

### *Gender Roles in Australia and its Development*

Before discussing gender roles in Australia, it is essential to recognize that the concept of being Australian is complex and extends beyond mere citizenship. Being Australian is often defined by shared experiences, primarily among non-Indigenous

Australians, shaped by their economic and geographical context and historical ties to the British Empire (Moreton-Robinson, 1988). This collective identity deeply influences various aspects of life, including perceptions of gender and associated roles (Elder, 2020). In non-Indigenous Australia, the dominant knowledge system operates on a binary logic, where concepts are understood in relation to their opposites. This means that masculinity is defined in contrast to femininity, with men's actions often framed as protective responses to perceived vulnerabilities in women (Elder, 2020). This binary thinking has historically shaped gender roles, positioning men as active providers and protectors, while women are seen as passive caretakers, often confined to the domestic sphere. Although contemporary Australia has increasingly embraced more egalitarian views, remnants of these traditional roles persist in certain aspects of society (Van Egmond et al., 2010, p. 165).

As part of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Australia has a significant number of employees in part-time positions, with the proportion of 24.1%, compared to OECD average of 15.3% (OECD, 2024). This number reflects broader structural shifts in gender equality in the labor market, particularly since the 1960s following the second wave of feminism in Australia, which focused on equal pay for equal work (Wright, 2024). This shift is mirroring trends in other Western countries, has led to a diversification of career arrangements for women and the emergence of the new traditional family model. In this model, women are more likely to work part-time while men work full-time (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2008). However, gender disparities remain pronounced, with

38.5% of women working part-time compared to 12.4% of men (OECD, 2022). The new traditional family model still implies that women who work part-time are more likely to adhere to traditional gender roles within their households, showing limited changes in the division of labor at home (Van Egmond et al., 2010). This persistence suggests that traditional gender roles of ‘who works and who cares’ are deeply entrenched and somehow resistant to change, with men often perceiving greater risks from altering these gender arrangements (Choi, 2019; Van Egmond et al., 2010).

Despite significant advancements in women’s access to paid employment in Australia, traditional gender roles in the division of household labor persists. Parenthood exacerbates these roles, as research shows that when couples have dependent children, the domestic workload increases disproportionately for mothers, while fathers' contributions remain largely unchanged (Ervin et al., 2023; Chesters et al., 2009). This disparity underscores the persistence of traditional gender roles in Australian households, where women continue to bear caregiving and household responsibilities. This entrenched division of labor contrasts sharply with broader institutional efforts to promote gender equality. Although Australia has been perceived as a land of women, reflecting a matriarchal social structure that recognizes women's influence and power within society (Hyndman-Rizik, 2009), the private sphere of the home remains resistant to this broader societal perspective. Australia's regulatory framework for promoting workplace gender equality is robust

and multifaceted, drawing on a range of legal prescriptions to combat discrimination and advance gender equality in the workplace (Orifici, 2019).

The recent analysis of Australia's national gender equality strategy underscores that despite progressive institutional and legal frameworks, challenges remain in achieving true gender equity, particularly in domestic responsibilities. As highlighted by Stewart (2024), the strategy's effectiveness is questioned, particularly in how well it addresses the ongoing disparities between men and women in the private sphere. This critique aligns with the persistent gap between workplace policies and their implementation, suggesting that while structural support exists, societal norms continue to hinder true gender equality in Australian homes.

Furthermore, while institutional and legal frameworks in Australia acknowledge women's roles and contributions, they do not necessarily ensure an equitable distribution of domestic responsibilities. The persistence of traditional gender roles at home highlights a disconnect between Australia's progressive regulatory environment and the lived experiences of many women. Although the National Employment Standards grant a 'right to request' flexible working arrangements to help reconcile work and family duties, this provision can be a double-edged sword (Xiang et al., 2022). While flexible working arrangements offer genuine working-time flexibility, they can also increase visibility and potentially reinforce flexibility stigma, leading to reduced pay, missed training opportunities, or an increased workload to compensate for reduced workplace presence (Xiang et al., 2022). These

studies suggest that while workplace support exists for both genders to share household labor, there are intangible consequences that uphold traditional expectations in the private sphere. Therefore, understanding the development of gender roles in Australia requires acknowledging the complexities of both cultural identity and historical context. While there have been significant strides toward gender equality, particularly in the workplace, the persistence of traditional gender roles within the home reveals a deep-seated resistance to change. This ongoing struggle between institutional progress and domestic norms suggests that gender roles in Australia are evolving, but not uniformly across all aspects of life.

### *Multiculturalism in Australia*

The diasporic experience is complex and deeply shaped by the cultural environment of the host nation, particularly in how diasporic communities maintain and preserve their culture and identity (Ben-Moshe et al., 2012). To fully grasp how Indonesian diasporas interact with Australian culture, it is crucial to understand Australia's self-definition. Contemporary Australia identifies as a multicultural nation, with values that extend beyond mere citizenship (Elder, 2020). Multiculturalism in Australia was embraced as a strategy to improve social and economic outcomes for migrants, especially those from non-English speaking backgrounds (NESB), by supporting their right to maintain cultural identities while integrating into broader society (Pietsch, 2024).

Historically, Australian multiculturalism originated from European-assisted migration schemes initially rooted in an assimilationist ideology, which sought to

affirm the identity of the native majority and justify the dominance of the existing culture (Pietsch, 2024). Early migration was predominantly from European and British origins, with an emphasis on assimilation into Australian society. However, in 1973, Australia redefined its approach to multiculturalism, moving away from assimilation and embracing a more inclusive and diverse understanding of national identity (Pietsch, 2024). This shift marked a significant transformation in how Australia viewed cultural diversity, laying the foundation for a multicultural society that values and supports the coexistence of multiple cultural identities.

The journey toward embracing multiculturalism in Australia, however, has encountered challenges. Progressive critics argue that multiculturalism in Australia is often defined on white terms, commodifying non-white cultures and identities to enrich the broader society while masking the power dynamics that underlie this process (Virgona & Kashima, 2024). They contend that this version of multiculturalism perpetuates the dominance of white institutions and individuals. On the other hand, conservative critics view multiculturalism as a radical agenda driven by minority groups, which they fear could lead to an erosion of traditional Australian values and the feared 'invasion' (Liu et al., 2024). Australian multiculturalism, therefore, exists in a delicate balance, with its ideals of inclusion becoming ambiguous amid the complexities of everyday life (Liu et al., 2024). Despite these challenges, public support for multiculturalism remains relatively strong, particularly among those with higher education and Labor voters (Pierstch, 2024). This enduring support as observed by Pietsch (2024) suggests that, despite

efforts and multiple perspectives aimed to undermine it, the principles of inclusivity and egalitarianism continue to resonate with the Australian population.

Due to multiculturalism, societal assumptions about cultural diversity have become intertwined with cultural identity. Contemporary Australia constructs its cultural identities through a complex interplay of multiple cultural influences, shaped by individuals' personal experiences and societal contexts (Virgona & Kashima, 2024). Consequently, there is an expectation that certain cultural traditions and practices will be preserved, making cultural preservation an important aspect of maintaining a diverse yet cohesive society where different cultural identities can coexist.

For Indonesian diasporas in Australia, the multicultural environment forces a negotiation of gender roles, which are traditionally rooted in strong cultural and religious norms as illustrated in the previous section. However, in their *merantau* context, these roles are posited to weaken (Kestenberg-Amighi, 2004; Virgona & Kashima, 2024). Some diasporas maintain strong connections and pride in their cultural heritage, while others feel detached or are caught between cultures (Virgona & Kashima, 2024). This range of responses highlights the complex process of identity formation among Indonesian diasporas as they navigate life in Australia. Many describe their identities as a blend of multiple influences rather than strict adherence to a single culture. One participant shared how she described her identity, "Back then, I (feel like) an in-between diaspora. I am technically not a Canberran, and not a Jakartan as well." (Married woman, Indonesian diaspora, October 2024). However, some emphasize their Indonesian roots through ethnicity, religion, or

shared interests in their social circles (Oktafiani, 2019; Jati, 2021). While some choose to blend into Australian culture, others strongly preserve—and even reinforce—their religious and cultural heritage. For example, in determining food choices, Indonesian diasporas are often more influenced by religious and cultural values than they were in Indonesia, seeking specific information on labels to avoid non-*halal* (permissible according to Islamic law) food (Fischer, 2015), a practice that is enforced when they are in *perantauan*. In contrast, within Indonesia, these varied responses raise important questions about how Indonesian diasporas negotiate their identities in a diverse society.

### *Conclusion*

The development of gender roles reveals the deep-rooted cultural, historical, and societal influence. Traditional gender roles in Indonesia, largely defined by concepts like *kodrat wanita*, continue to influence societal expectations despite growing movements toward gender equality. These roles are further complicated when Indonesian communities interact with the multicultural environment of Australia, leading to both adaptations and reinforcements of traditional norms. The negotiation of gender roles within diaspora communities underscores the fluid nature of cultural identity, where individuals balance between preserving their cultural heritage and integrating into new societal contexts. The next chapter will explore in greater detail how they navigate cultural preservation and identity negotiation in Australia.

## **C Chapter 3. Being an Indonesian in *Perantauan*: Cultural Negotiation**

This chapter will explore the hybrid identities of Indonesian in *perantauan* or referred to Indonesian abroad, focusing on the cultural influences and how they preserve Indonesian culture, addressing the second research question. It will begin by examining the formation of hybrid identities in Indonesian diasporic communities. Then, grounded in the theoretical framework, it will analyse how these identities are expressed and adapted in the Australian context. Lastly, the chapter will assess how cultural negotiation that happened in *merantau* impacts gender roles, setting the stage for a deeper examination of gender role negotiation in the following chapter.

### **A. The Hybrid identities of Indonesian in *Perantauan***

Diasporas often preserve their culture by forming close-knit communities that maintain ties to their homeland and address social challenges in host countries (Constable, 2009). However, the preservation process varies, as individuals navigate between home and host cultures. Bhandari (2021) describes this negotiation happened in a "third space". This "third space" is conceptualized as a shared historical experience and cultural practices and becoming, where present interaction jointly contributes in formation of cultural identity of immigrants (Hall, 1994, p. 222). Rather than choosing one culture, they create hybrid identities that reflect their

unique positions in both environments. Consequently, for Indonesian in *perantauan*, their cultural identity is posited to be more fluid, shaped by the ongoing interaction between these cultural forces and reflecting their unique position in both worlds.

As discussed above, the term "hybrid identities" refers to the blending of cultural influences from both home and host countries, as individuals continuously negotiate their sense of self in a new environment. For Indonesians living abroad, this hybrid identities can lead to both creativity and challenges, such as feeling disconnected from their Indonesian community due to acculturation into Australian culture. This complexity is exemplified in one of my participants' comments:

I can be terribly wrong... But from my experience, Indonesian community here are somehow different... They lack a sense of belonging. That is why I don't have that many Indonesian friends. I no longer experience the same sense of 'friendliness' as I used to experience in Indonesia (Single man Indonesian diaspora, Online interview, 22 October 2024)

On the other hand, hybrid identities foster innovation among Indonesian diasporas. They often integrate aspects of the host country's religious and cultural customs, as observed in Indonesian diasporas in Thailand (Siagian & Tike, 2019). The constant negotiation of cultural identity within the Indonesian diaspora illustrates their engagement in a dynamic process that blends their traditional heritage with elements from the host culture. To understand this negotiation, we need to understand how Indonesian diasporas formed their identity. The next section will explore the influences that shaped Indonesian diasporas hybrid identities, further examining the components at play.

### *Components of Hybrid identities*

There are several components that influence what aspects of a host culture are integrated into the hybrid identities of diasporas and what is not. Georgiou (2014) for example, in her own work on Arab diasporas, suggested cultural proximity as the first component that shapes hybrid identities. In the context of Indonesian diasporas, Georgiou's (2014) concept of cultural proximity can similarly be applied. Cultural proximity in this context refers to the similarity between two cultures in values, norms, and traditions. This creates a space where hybrid identities are formed, blending elements from both the home culture and the experiences in the host country (Georgiou, 2014). For instance, Indonesian diasporas, sharing Southeast Asian values like respect for authority and family orientation, find it easier to adapt to Thailand culture compared to Australian culture, where the cultural proximity is less (Indriani & Mulyana, 2021; Siagian & Tike, 2019). The familiarity with Thailand's cultural elements allows Indonesian diasporas to maintain a sense of comfort while navigating new norms, while the limited cultural proximity between Indonesia and Australia makes the adaptation process more challenging and leads to a lower degree of cultural integration (Indriyani & Mulyana, 2021). The individualism emphasized in Australian culture, in contrast to Indonesia's collective societal values, are posited to serve as a challenge for some Indonesian in Australia, often leading to a sense of social isolation and more complex adaptation (Noordin, 2009). Despite this lack of proximity with Australian culture, Indonesian diasporas

in Australia continue to refine their hybrid identities through maintaining connection within their families (Indriyani & Mulyana, 2021; Utomo, 2014).

The second component influencing the hybrid identities of Indonesian diasporas as highlighted by Oktafiani (2019), where first-generation Indonesian in *perantauan* often maintain stronger attachment to their Indonesian heritage, remaining deeply connected to their homeland through language, food, and social networks. As one of my informants mentioned:

I don't know why, even though Indonesian (diaspora) already change their citizenship, I believe when they have the opportunity to come to Indonesia, (they would immediately say) 'I want to eat this' 'Oh, I want to eat that'. It's like, there is a form of attachment, an emotional one, that we cannot really explain (nor comprehend) (Married woman Indonesian diaspora, Indonesian Embassy, 17 October 2024)

However, their attachment to Indonesia can be influenced by personal experiences; for instance, those who migrated during the 1965 anti-communist purges or the 1998 anti-Chinese riots may distance themselves from their roots due to painful memories of these events (Oktafiani, 2019). In contrast to the first generation, diasporas who grow up in the host country—particularly second- and third-generation diasporas—tend to develop a closer attachment to the host nation's culture. This change in cultural identity is vividly expressed in the words of one participant from the study, who describes how her children are more adhering to the Australian culture due to the experience of growing up in a different cultural environment:

When asked, they (my children) would say they are Indonesian. But most definitely, they feel more Australian (than me and my husband did). After all, they were born here. (Married woman Indonesian diaspora, Online interview, 7 October 2022)

Given that the Indonesian diaspora in Australia is predominantly made up of second- and third-generation individuals (Muhidin & Utomo, 2014), this emotional attachment translated differently between generations. Second-generation children, in particular, navigate dual identities—while their parents strongly identify with Indonesia and make concerted efforts to pass down their cultural heritage, the children often identify as both Australian and Indonesian. However, their attachment to Indonesian culture is typically less pronounced or perceived as more symbolic; they may embrace certain cultural symbols, like food or festivals, but without deeply engaging with the language or customs as their parents do (Utomo, 2012). Thus, the combination of emotional attachment and generational dynamics is essential for understanding the development of hybrid identities within the Indonesian in *perantauan*. The next section will explore how this hybrid identities is manifested through religious practices, language, and political engagement within Indonesian in *perantauan*.

## B. Manifestation of Hybrid identities: Indonesian Diasporas in Australia

### *Religious Practices*

While Indonesian in *perantauan* develop some form of hybrid identities, how this identity is expressed can vary between different diaspora communities. Indonesian diasporas, like others, often maintain a strong connection to their cultural roots. Due to their diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds, their hybrid identities take on various unique forms. This diversity can be seen, for example, from the way Indonesian diaspora communities abroad tend to organize around ethnic or religious lines rather than a singular national identity.

Indonesia acknowledges six major religions—Islam, Catholicism, Protestantism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucian—which significantly shape the diaspora's connection to their cultural heritage. Religion often serves as a core element of social structure and identity within Indonesian diaspora communities (Muhtadi, 2018), making it a central aspect of identity negotiation as they adapt to life in Australia. Furthermore, as Constable (2010) observes, religion can also offer diasporas new ways to rearticulate their experiences within their new society, sometimes even fostering activism and personal growth. For instance, the formation and growth of religious communities in Canberra, which now encompass five major communities – consisted of Australian Indonesia Muslim Foundation in ACT (AIMFACT), *Khataman* Canberra, *Pengajian Keluarga*, Indonesian Christian

Society Association, and Indonesian Catholic Community (Jati, 2021), reflects how Indonesian in *perantauan* renavigate their identities through these religious ties. These communities help maintain a sense of belonging and continuity, as highlighted by a participant who emphasized the importance of staying connected to their faith as part of their cultural identity:

For me, personally, Indonesian diasporas are lacking in a sense of belonging in a big group. Unless there is a tie with religion or ethnicity. I do not know precisely, but I saw Muslim community or Batak community. They are pretty tight. But (Indonesian) in general, is somehow not as tight. (Single man Indonesia diaspora, Online interview, 6 October 2024)

Australia is officially a secular country, yet Christian values and institutions still play a dominant role in public life. Neilsen et al. (2017) highlights how Christianity, often viewed as a neutral or universal framework, creates an implicit hierarchy in which other religions are considered "foreign" or "exotic." This hierarchy can lead to Indonesian Muslims in Australia—given that Indonesia is the world's largest Muslim majority country—feeling that their religious identities are only partially accommodated, especially within a predominantly “neutral” Christian environment. For instance, while the inclusion of Muslim prayer rooms in schools may symbolize inclusivity, the overall school environment remains largely influenced by Christian or secular values (Neilsen et al., 2017). In response, Indonesian diasporas employ various strategies to navigate their identities within this secular framework while striving to preserve their religious beliefs. This strategy is exemplified by finding

Islamic schools for their children, as illustrated in Wafiroh's story in Aziz et al. (2011). Navigating these schools provides a means for Indonesian parents to ensure their children receive religious education in an environment where public schooling system is largely secular.

I admire and learn that in Melbourne and Sydney there are quite a lot of Islamic schools... The extracurricular activities offered by the schools to both male and female students provide equal opportunities for them to develop according to their respective talents. (Wafiroh in Aziz et al., 2011, p. 395)

Moreover, Indonesian Muslim communities in *perantauan* adapt to aspects of Australian culture that align with the core values of their Islamic identity. Participation in community service initiatives, which emphasize charity and social welfare, resonates with the Islamic principle of *zakat* (charitable giving) (Muhtadi et al., 2018). Within their homes, they reinforce Islamic and Indonesian cultural values through practices such as *salim*, a gesture of respect in which the younger generation takes the extended hand of an elder and touches the back of their hand to their forehead (AIYA, 2015). One participant described the importance of maintaining these cultural practices:

... We tried to stick to Indonesian and Islamic values as well. Doing *salim* for example. How they greet their family. (Keep using) *Assalamualaikum* (A common greeting in Islam, meaning 'Peace be upon you'). (Married woman Indonesian diaspora, Online interview, 7 October 2024)

Through practices like maintaining religious customs, organizing within ethnic and religious lines, and adapting to local values, Indonesian diasporas demonstrate their hybrid identities in preserving their cultural roots while embracing their new contexts.

### *Language Practices*

Aside from religious identity, many Indonesian families in *perantauan* make deliberate efforts to maintain Bahasa Indonesia (Indonesian language) at home, despite adapting to the dominant culture of their host country. These efforts reflect the ongoing process in balancing their dual cultural identities while navigating their place within both Indonesian and Australian social contexts. Indriani and Mulyana (2021) for example, observed that Indonesian diaspora women in Australia tend to communicate using a blend of English and Bahasa Indonesia. This mixed communication pattern is also prevalent among the Indonesian in Canberra, reflecting a broader trend of linguistic adaptation within the community.

Back then, when we were working on our assessment and we got confused, we can't simply Google the meaning. We learn English and grammar and everything from books... Now, I would not say that my English is good, and sometimes I use even mix Indonesian as well to communicate. Now, (as long as) you understand me, I understand you. That's it. (Single woman Indonesian diaspora, Online interview, 7 October 2024)

This bilingual pattern is also evident within the home, influencing how children learn Bahasa Indonesia. Although the parents apply this language practice consistently with all their children, the level of acceptance and fluency varies among the children, as one of my participants said:

Me and my husband keep talking like this (in Indonesian)... The eldest (child) is the most fluent. She can even write in Indonesian. While the second and third (children) understand Indonesian, but can't really speak it well because mostly, they use English here, in Canberra. (Married woman, Indonesian diaspora, Online interview, 7 October 2024)

The blending of languages in Indonesian families in *perantauan* goes beyond linguistic adaptation; it functions as both a cultural marker and a communication tool (Indriani & Mulyana, 2021). This blending of languages can entail a particular challenge as well, as illustrated by one of the participants in this study:

My kids are born in New York, and they grew up with English... One of them got diagnosed with speech delay when they were four years old. We brought him to a specialist, and they said that my child is experiencing confusion of languages. He heard Bahasa Indonesia in his home, he heard English around him. Language is definitely one of the significant factors. (Married woman Indonesian diaspora, Indonesian Embassy, 17 October 2024)

However, children who were born in Indonesian and then undertake *merantau* may already experience earlier familiarity and exposure in Bahasa, facing the challenge of balancing their linguistic identity with the new influences in Australia, as stated from a participant in this study:

Because she (our child) communicates with us (her parents) in Bahasa Indonesia, she became more fluent. Meaning she understands and can reply in Bahasa Indonesia. When it comes to English, she does understand when she listens (to other people)... We always tell her (their first child) that she is in a foreign country. Her homeland is Indonesia. And she knew that she is Indonesian. (Married man Indonesian diaspora, Online interview, 6 October 2024)

This nuanced dynamic adds complexity to the ways in which parents negotiate language use, often tailoring their approach based on the child's age, schooling, and peer influences in their new context. Despite the persistent generational gap in language use, the conscious efforts of the Indonesian in *perantauan* to preserve their native language embodies the balance between maintaining their cultural roots and integrating into the broader Australian society, demonstrating the ongoing negotiation of their dual cultural affiliations. As Canagarajah and Silberstein (2012) argue, language plays a critical role in shaping and maintaining diaspora identities, offering a vital tool for sustaining connections to one's heritage while navigating the complexities of living in a new sociocultural context.

### *Political and Cultural Participation*

In recent years, the Indonesian government has intensified its efforts to engage with its diaspora, particularly through the establishment of the Indonesian Diaspora Network (IDN or also known as *Forum Orang Indonesia Di Perantauan*) in 2012. The Indonesian government specifically through Ministry of Foreign Affairs, encouraged Indonesian in *perantauan* to connect through IDN, positioning itself as a collective voice of a unified Indonesian diaspora committed to fostering development. However, as Rosser (2022) suggests, IDN operates as a dynamic platform where its initiatives represent compromises among various interest groups, including political elites, professional workers, migrant workers, and marriage migrants. These differing groups influence the IDN's agenda, which includes advocacy efforts such as lobbying for dual citizenship, increased political representation in the Indonesian parliament, and policy reforms (Rosser, 2022).

In addition to representing different groups of Indonesian in *perantauan*, the IDN has also extended its role to become a critical organization that facilitates the political mobilization of diaspora youth (Safitri et al., 2020). This youth demographic includes Indonesian students, young professionals, and second-generation Indonesians who, despite being born or raised abroad, maintain a strong connection to their Indonesian roots. The participation of these diaspora youth, particularly through platforms such as the Conference of Indonesian Diaspora Youth, highlights their active engagement in shaping Indonesia's political and social future.

By contributing fresh perspectives, leveraging global experiences, and building transnational networks, these young Indonesians promote progressive social changes that impact both the diaspora and Indonesia itself (Safitri et al., 2020). This ongoing political engagement showcases the diaspora's ability to influence national policy and highlights the vital role of their hybrid identities in Indonesia's broader political landscape.

Other than their political engagement, the Indonesian in *perantauan* plays a crucial role in soft diplomacy. They frequently organize events and interactive forums where community members, including children and youth, can learn about their cultural and historical roots (Rengganis et al., 2023). For instance, having communal events for children and youth that exemplifies in De Puspita's story in Aziz et al. (2011).

We would host a weekly communal event, from children's Quran session, cooking and grocery shopping together, until planning a vacation with the children, this event made us feel like we are not in a foreign land. (De Puspita in Aziz et al., 2011, pp.68-69)

Such communal events as illustrated above are aspects of cultural diplomacy, where the Indonesian community presents its rich traditions to the host society, fostering understanding and appreciation of Indonesia's diverse heritage (Rengganis et al., 2023; Mitchell & Teychenné, 2018). They continuously integrate their Indonesian cultural knowledge with the realities of life in a diverse, globalized Australia, where

their efforts must resonate not only with fellow Indonesians but also with a broader audience from various cultural backgrounds (Boonstra & Rae, 2022). These efforts are exemplified in the *Pasar Senggol* event in Canberra for example – literally translated into bumpy market, *Pasar Senggol* is a weekend market brought together by Indonesian community in Canberra with a unique yet adapted origin.

I went to the Pasar Senggol. It was fun, I bought my non-Indonesian friends with me as well... It's a form of adapted event I suppose. They (non-Indonesian) may see it as a normal Sunday Market or Fair. Whereas in Indonesian culture, Pasar Senggol was created due to the limited space of the market, forcing people to bump into each other. (Single man Indonesian diaspora, Online interview, 6 October 2024)

Furthermore, the Indonesian Embassy strengthens these community-based initiatives by offering guidance, resources, and support to diaspora groups, ensuring they have the tools needed to share their culture (Mitchell & Teychenné, 2018). The Embassy provides spaces for gathering and events if needed and helps to foster connection between Indonesian in *perantauan*.

For social events, we are not necessarily the initiator. But (for example) yesterday, when one of the religion-based community wanted to host a collective health seminar and they needs space, we'd be happy to provide it. (They can invite) whoever wants to come, who will organize. (Married woman Indonesian diaspora, Indonesian Embassy, 17 October 2024)

This partnership between the Embassy and the diaspora exemplifies how formal institutions and grassroots initiatives can work hand in hand to promote cross-cultural exchange. A participant shared his view on this:

There are plenty of helps from the Embassy such as facilitating and all, but most of the time the efforts came from the Indonesian diaspora themselves... I once helped to set up a satay stand in the Multicultural Festival (an ACT Government initiative) ... If I'm not mistaken, the booth was not directly assigned to the embassy, but it was directed to the local communities who want to open the booth there. It was initiated by the Indonesian diasporas with the support from the Embassy. (Single man Indonesian diaspora, Online interview, 10 October 2024)

The active involvement of the Indonesian diaspora in cultural preservation not only strengthens their sense of national identity but also highlights their evolving, hybrid identities as they take on the role of cultural diplomats. By participating in state-led events like the Multicultural Festival, members of the diaspora bridge the gap between Indonesian and Australian cultures. Their efforts, supported but not entirely dependent on the Embassy, show the resilience and adaptability of those undertaking *merantau*, as they find ways to express their cultural heritage while also integrating into their host country.

## C. The Influence of Hybrid identities on Gender Roles

As discussed in the Introduction, gender roles can be explained through Connell's (1995) concept of hegemonic masculinity, which emphasizes dominant masculine traits like authority and emotional restraint, reinforcing men's leadership roles in the society and women's subordination. Weinrich's (2009) enculturation theory complements this by showing how cultural norms are internalized through socialization, especially within families. Together, these theories helped to understand how gender roles are reinforced.

The hybrid identities of Indonesian in *perantau* are formed through a complex interaction of cultural, social, and economic factors. As Indonesian in Australia strive to preserve their heritage, they simultaneously engage with their host society's norms, creating a unique formation process of identities. This process, as highlighted by Hall (1994) is shaped in the metaphorical "third space," where home and host cultures intersect. The continuous negotiation between preserving their Indonesian culture and adapting to the host country's is evident in their behavior, as exemplified by a story of an Indonesian diaspora in Canberra.

Never. I never asked for help from my family. When I got better and more successful, that's when I started to tell the story. Everybody cries (when they hear my stories). 'Why don't you tell us? We could have helped you'. I told them 'Are you going to give me money? Your whole bag only worth one person's wallet here in Australia'... The appreciation (in Australia) is

different than Indonesia... Even the elderly are active, not like in Indonesia.

Once you retired, that's it... Once I'm old, I don't want to be like that.

(Single woman Indonesian diaspora, Online interview, 7 October 2024)

Her story shows a conscious decision not to burden her family with her struggles while living abroad. In Indonesian culture, family bonds are often strong, and it is common for family members to provide financial and emotional support during difficult times. However, the woman – despite being alone in Australia – chose not to rely on her family during her struggles, indicating a shift towards the value of independence and self-reliance. Another participant recounted her story, “My only place to turn is God. That we must do. Have some faith. Our strength is granted by God” (Single woman Indonesian diaspora, October 2024).

### *Kodrat and Traditional Gender Roles*

While they adopt a more self-reliance approach, Indonesian in *perantauan* also express their hybrid identities in relations to their religious beliefs, showing a constant negotiation alongside a strong association with their Indonesian roots. This can be seen from their understanding of *kodrat*. The concept of *kodrat* as explored by Nisa (2019), often translates into a God-given nature and used by conservative groups to justify women's traditional position, primarily in the domestic sphere. As modernity progresses, this concept has evolved into a more progressive understanding of *kodrat*, countering the limitations traditionally imposed on women (Nisa, 2022). However, *kodrat* remains deeply ingrained in Indonesian society and continues to play a significant role in shaping how women perceive their roles within

the family and society. In the context of this study, the persistence of *kodrat perempuan* is evident in how women perceive their roles in relation to their husbands, especially when *merantau* requires a role reversal, such as when a husband follows his wife abroad. In Indonesian society, men are typically expected to be the primary breadwinners, and when a husband gives up his career to follow his wife, this is often seen as a significant sacrifice. One participant noted how her peers warned her not to leave her husband just to pursue her ambition of studying abroad (Adhariani in Aziz et al., 2011).

This persistent belief highlights the broader enculturation of women into traditional gender roles where the family is prioritized over personal ambition. Indonesian women are often enculturated to view their primary responsibility as caretakers and nurturers, a view that aligns with the conservative understanding of *kodrat*. However, for Indonesian women in *perantauan*, the concept of *kodrat* becomes a site of negotiation. Pranawati's story evidently shows the negotiation of her *kodrat* as a Muslim woman while acting as an agent in changing the common misperception. By affirming that she and her peers had completed their master's degrees, Pranawati effectively counters the misconception that Islamic education is limiting for women and instead presents it as an empowering system that offers equal opportunities for both genders.

We had the opportunity to meet Governor General Quentin Bryce, which is the representative of Queen Elizabeth II in Australia. We were having a long discussion when Quentin Bryce asked if we are alumni of *pesantren*

(Islamic boarding school). Four of us are indeed alumni, and all of us have finished our master's degree. Bryce continued to ask questions to convince himself, 'How can an Islamic boarding school alumnus, a woman, can speak English very well? What are the things that you learn in the Islamic boarding school? Do you learn math, science, and English? (Pranawati in Forum Alumni MEP, 2017, p.351)

Aside from upholding their Muslim identity, Indonesian diasporas also learned to embrace their interfaith interactions – where interfaith interactions are often considered as sensitive in Indonesia. Meanwhile in Australia, mosques frequently serve not only as places of worship but also as educational centers, offering opportunities for individuals from different faiths to learn about Islam and fostering a greater sense of community and inclusivity, as illustrated in Sunesti's story (2017).

I also learned that sitting together with communities of other religions does not always have to discuss the teachings of each religion. We (Muslim women) can share daily stories, funny stories, and various small tips, all of which can be the key to building trust and interfaith solidarity. (Sunesti in Forum Alumni MEP, 2017, p.380)

The negotiation of identities directly influences the understanding of gender roles within Indonesian in *perantauan*, where traditional expectations and new cultural influences intersect, it enforces the negotiation of these roles. Indriani and Mulyana (2021) noted that Indonesian diaspora women actively renegotiate their gender roles

as they adjust to the prevalent expectations of equality in Australia. The negotiation is evident in how Indonesian women engage in the political sphere of the diaspora, for example, in their active participation in Indonesia's single citizenship law, which poses challenges for mixed-nationality families (Rosser, 2022; Winarnita, 2008). Indonesian women who undertake *merantau* are advocating for changes to these laws to secure their family's financial and legal rights. While the professional Indonesian diasporas tend to push for dual citizenship to facilitate career mobility, these Indonesian women focus on the family-centered implications of citizenship, highlighting the intersection of personal and political interests (Rosser, 2022).

Indonesian women in *perantauan* have emerged as active political advocates through their active roles in organization such as IDN (Muhidin & Utomo, 2015). For example, the advocacy efforts of KPC Melati, as discussed by Winarnita (2008), highlight how these women in *perantauan* navigate both legal and cultural challenges to retain Indonesian citizenship while strengthening family ties abroad. KPC Melati work reflects a shift from traditional roles of cultural preservation to embracing their freedom and increasing agency, as they integrate their hybrid identities (Vatsa, 2016). This shift signifies how Indonesian women move beyond merely preserving their cultural heritage to becoming active agents in reshaping their roles, reflecting a growing confidence in balancing cultural values with autonomy in their host societies.

The increasing agency is further exemplified in the story of Suharti, a single mother Indonesian in *perantauan*, whose experiences underscore the uncertainties these

women face, and the courage required to take significant leaps of faith. Rather than being driven by fear, these women are motivated by the opportunities that Australia presents. Suharti's journey illustrates how gender roles are redefined through the decision to move abroad.

Reckless. People say I sacrificed my career. There is no guarantee that when I return to my homeland, I will still occupy the position that I used to have...(but) I want to pursue my doctoral degree. By actually studying abroad while giving my child the experience of getting an education abroad. That is an unmatched bonus. (Suharti in Aziz et al., 2011, p.36)

This dynamic is also exemplified by another Indonesian woman in Canberra who brought her husband to Australia as part of their migration journey. Revealing a pattern of Indonesian women taking bold steps to secure not just a better future for themselves, but also for their families. She said, "...I move back to Australia and he (her husband) waited in Batam. I lodged his spouse visa while at the same time I was pregnant!" (Married woman Indonesian diaspora, Online interview, 7 October 2024).

### *Conclusion*

While Indonesian in *perantauan* are enculturated with traditional expectations, they face egalitarian gender norms in the Australian society, and these narratives show that Indonesian women in the diaspora are challenging traditional gender roles within their families. Traditionally, hegemonic masculinity places men in dominant roles, with women expected to focus on caregiving and household duties (Connell,

1995). Meanwhile, many of these Indonesian women in *perantauan*, particularly mothers, actively participate in family decision-making. Utomo's (2014) study highlights how these mothers depart from conventional gender expectations by assertively shaping their family's identity. They navigate the complexities of migration while raising children in Australia's multicultural environment. In the following chapter, I will explore how these hybrid identities influence the negotiation of gender roles within the Indonesian who undertake *merantau*, particularly focusing on how traditional expectations evolve as diasporas adapt to new multicultural environments of Australia. This negotiation of gender roles is crucial to understanding the broader influence of hybrid identities and addressing the key questions posed in this study.

## Chapter 4. The Negotiation of Gender Roles in

### *Merantau*

This chapter examines the negotiation and renegotiation of gender roles within Indonesian abroad or those in *perantauan*. It begins by discussing how gender roles are negotiated between single and married Indonesian in Canberra. The chapter then moves into an analysis that draws on two key theoretical frameworks: hegemonic masculinity, as developed by Connell (1995) and enculturation as defined by Weinrich (2009). These theories together provide insight into how gender roles are negotiated within the Indonesians who undertake *merantau* in Australia.

#### A. Gender Roles Among Single Indonesian Diasporas

This section features multiple narratives from the participants of this research divided by their life course approach; single vs. married, referring to Kley (2011). This division allows for a comparison to examine how the presence of partner or children contributes to the gender roles negotiation.

##### *Gender Roles Negotiation Among Unmarried Indonesian in Perantauan*

For unmarried, single Indonesian diasporas, moving abroad often involves navigating cultural expectations surrounding gender roles. As mentioned in the previous chapters, traditional gender roles in Indonesia are deeply rooted in religious and cultural values such as *kodrat* (Nisa, 2019; Ford & Parker, 2008). Men are typically seen as primary providers, while women are expected to prioritize

domestic responsibilities and family life. One participant recounted her experience before she got married:

When I decided to pursue my Master, my mother's first response was 'What's going on with you? You haven't even gotten married, and you're already pursuing a master's degree?' and when I wanted to buy my own house, she would say 'What are you doing? If you bought that house, the more people won't marry you. Just get married first, then you can go after your degree and stability.'... My Mother is a very traditional women, and in my case, I was a reversal of what she expected me to be (Married woman Indonesian diaspora, Online interview, 18 October 2024)

These traditional expectations are not only pervasive but also difficult to escape, as they are part of the enculturation ingrained in the societal fabric (Breda et al., 2020). One participant emphasized how these norms go unquestioned in Indonesia, particularly regarding masculinity.

In Indonesia, men are expected to embody toxic masculinity. (For example) men aren't supposed to cry or show emotions. Here, men are more expressive and are allowed to express their feelings... In Indonesia, men are expected to always be the leader, no matter what. But men also have moments when they are weak. (Single man Indonesia diaspora, Online interview, 6 October 2024)

For Indonesian men, the transition to Canberra offers an opportunity to redefine their sense of masculinity, breaking away from the traditional ideals they were raised with. In a more emotionally open Australian environment, they can begin to challenge the rigid gender expectations they grew up with. The Australian environment, as the participant described, is more emotionally open. This contrasts with the cultural norm of the Western dichotomy, as outlined by Fischer and Manstead (2000). In Western cultures, women are culturally expected to express their emotions and be warmer, while men are expected to remain in control of their emotions. However, in the case of Indonesian men in Canberra, the Australian setting offers a more emotional open atmosphere, allowing them to break from the traditional notions of toxic masculinity in *perantauan*.

Similarly, living independently for the first time forces many unmarried, single men Indonesian diasporas to take on tasks traditionally viewed as feminine, such as cooking and household chores. In Indonesia, these household chores are usually taken care by their mothers or female housemaids. For some, this fosters a sense of independence, challenging traditional gender norms. However, participants with prior experience living alone had a smoother transition to managing these domestic responsibilities. Two participants in this study reflected on their earlier internal *merantau* experience from other parts in Indonesia to Jakarta, which shaped his expectations when they later undertake *merantau* to Canberra.

Living on my own is something I'm used to... I cook, wash clothes, and I don't have any problems doing these things here. (Single man Indonesian diaspora, Online interview, 6 October 2024)

When I went to Jakarta, I also live on my own... I would do the cleaning, the laundry, everything except cooking. It was relatively cheap to eat out in Jakarta (compared to Canberra). I would say that I already have previous basic knowledge from when I do *merantau* to Jakarta. (Single man Indonesian diaspora, Online interview, 10 October 2024)

This prior experience of internal *merantau* meant that when they moved to Canberra, they are already familiar with taking care of household chores. This contrasts with traditional gender expectations in Indonesia, where men are less likely to engage in household chore. Thus, their experience of living independently before moving to Canberra made the transition smoother, enabling them to manage their schedule regarding personal household chores without difficulty.

The prior experience of *merantau* was further supported by family upbringing, which was a key part of enculturation process. Enculturation shapes a person's understanding of gender through practices as they grew up. In the case of one participant, his upbringing expected him to handle both tasks without dividing them into "masculine" or "feminine" categories. This aspect of his enculturation was crucial in preparing him for life in *perantauan*, as it equipped him with the skills and mindset to be adaptable in negotiating gender roles. He explained, "In my family, we were taught to be independent in almost everything, except for cooking. I had to

clean, sweep, mop, even fix things around the house. I was expected to set an example for my younger sister” (Single man Indonesian diaspora, Online interview, 6 October 2024).

For single Indonesian in *perantauan* – particularly male, there seems to be a more relaxed attitude when it comes to the quality of household chores, especially cooking. Many single men express that their standards are driven more by practicality than any desire for culinary excellence. The focus is often on fulfilling a basic need, rather than striving for taste or presentation. This approach is reflected in their personal preferences, as long as the food is edible and serves its purpose. For instance, one male participant shared, “Maybe there is no demand (from me) to cook something more delicious or better. It’s just a personal preference and yeah at least I could eat that (or it does not taste bad)” (Single man Indonesian diaspora, Online interview, 10 October 2024).

This more practical approach contrasts with the experiences of single woman Indonesian in *perantauan* involved in this study, they often set higher expectations for themselves when it comes to household chores like cooking. Even when they are cooking only for themselves, many women feel a greater responsibility to prepare meals that reflect their fondness in cooking. This self-imposed standard reflects not only a personal passion for cooking but also a sense of pride in their ability to manage domestic tasks, even in a foreign environment. A participant shared her view, “You know I love to cook, right? But I can’t. I was in school and I made my own lunchbox. It was only rice and Maggi. Everyday. Everyday” (Single woman

Indonesian diaspora, Online interview, 7 October 2024). This response contrasts with single Indonesian men in *perantauan*, who are generally more content with their cooking skills, facing fewer self-imposed expectations.

These expectations she places on herself, even in challenging circumstances, highlight the differences in how single men and women in the Indonesian diaspora navigate their household roles. The higher standards from Indonesian women reflect broader cultural expectations surrounding gender and domesticity, even when those expectations are self-imposed. This standard can be traced back to early portrayals of gender roles in children's textbooks, an issue of sexism that has emerged globally. As Dawar and Anand (2017) discuss, textbooks around the world have reinforced gender biases by depicting males and females in stereotypical roles, which can influence children's self-images and expectations, limiting their perceptions of gender roles (Dawar & Anand, 2017, p. 235). In the Indonesian context, this bias is reflected in the "*Ini Budi*" series. For early readers, the "*Ini Budi*" textbooks – literally translated into 'This Is Budi', depict Budi's mother as a female character that only engages in domestic tasks like cooking or going to the market (Apandi, 2016). This early exposure instills a broad cultural expectation that influence how Indonesian women perceive their household responsibilities later in life, even when they undertake *merantau*.

### *Women's Personal Autonomy*

In *merantau*, many Indonesian women enforced their personal autonomy, particularly through financial independence. One participant described how her

divorce and subsequent financial independence empowered her: “I wanted to stay (in Australia), I didn’t want to go back to Indonesia” (Single woman Indonesian diaspora, Online interview, 7 October 2024). By gaining financial independence, these women challenge the traditional expectation that they must depend on men for economic security. However, this independence often got reduced by Indonesian society, especially when they are not married yet. One participant illustrated this experience of hers:

Most, but not all people in Indonesia, would say that ‘Oh she succeeded because she can speak English’. They attributed my success on how well I can speak English instead of my intelligence... They would think that I was acting as a translator, they don’t really grasp the nuance of my job. They would think that you succeeded just because you can speak English, not because of your accomplishments... most of the time, this sort of reduction came from (traditional) men, because in my industry, most of the authority is held by men. I was an outlier. (Married woman Indonesian diaspora, Online interview, 18 October 2024)

Financial independence also plays a crucial role in this negotiation of gender roles among the Indonesian diasporas. Many find that economic necessity reshapes their understanding of traditional gender roles, particularly for women who view their careers as a means of empowerment, challenging the traditional expectations of marriage and family. For one participant, financial independence after her divorce provided her with a sense of autonomy and entitlement to support from Australia.

After my divorce, I moved to Canberra. I wanted to stay (in Australia) because I wasn't young anymore. I didn't want to go back to Indonesia. I was already in my 40s.... Australia took something from me (my earlier years, career in Indonesia, and hardships through the divorce), now they must take care of me. (Single woman Indonesian diaspora, Online interview, 7 October 2024)

This sense of entitlement stemmed from her belief that, after investing years in her *merantau* journey to Australia, letting go of her career in Indonesia, and navigating personal upheavals such as divorce, Australia owed her protection. *Merantau*, in this context, not only involved physical relocation but also emotional adjustment as she goes through multitude of experiences, sparking a negotiation of her role in both the family and society.

The experiences of single Indonesian men and women in *perantauan* highlight how gender roles are negotiated in a new cultural context. While Indonesian women gain autonomy, they still impose higher expectations on themselves, particularly in domestic tasks like cooking, these pressures are deeply influenced by early enculturation (Weinrich, 2009), which begins in childhood and reinforced through cultural materials such as textbooks. Meanwhile, men find that the more emotionally open environment in Australia provides a chance to challenge traditional notions of masculinity, offering them the freedom to break away from the expectations of hegemonic masculinity that they grew up with in Indonesia – where they are expected to acquire strength and emotional stability to portray dominance in the

society (Connell, 1995). The process of *merantau* thus becomes not just a physical relocation, but an opportunity for both men and women to redefine their gender roles in the face of evolving cultural and social expectations.

### *Juggling Multiple Roles: Gender Roles and Family Dynamics of Married Indonesian Diaspora*

In the negotiation of gender roles, family dynamics play a crucial role (Cano & Hofmeister, 2023; Syrda, 2023). Even for couples without children, this process begins as each partner assumes the roles of husband and wife, often shaped by cultural expectations and enculturation. The Indonesian cultural norms of *kodrat* generally viewed men as the primary breadwinner, while women are expected to prioritize family – a role that often persist even in modern society (Nisa, 2019). A key aspect of this negotiation among the Indonesian diaspora is how couples navigate the decision to move abroad—whether to maintain a long-distance marriage or for the husband to leave his job to accompany his wife. These decisions illustrate the continuous redefinition of family roles, as traditional expectations are both challenged and reshaped in their new lives abroad. Adhariani, for example, recounted her experience, mentioning that she had come across various stories about husbands accompanying their wives abroad, ranging from positive to negative. She also spoke of a friend who chose to return home before completing her studies:

It is said that the husband decided to go home early because he could not stand the status of ‘following his wife’ ... To be honest, these sad stories had

discouraged me from going back to pursue my education in Melbourne... My friends warned me not to leave my family, especially my husband, just to pursue knowledge and a degree. They told me that I wouldn't be ready if my husband ever decides to 'open a branch' (to cheat with other women). (Adhariani in Aziz et al., 2011, p.209)

Adhariani's story captures the fears commonly faced by Indonesian women in *perantauan*, particularly when deciding to migrate either temporarily or permanently. Unlike men, women often bear an additional burden of concern, as their choice to move abroad may place their husbands in a difficult position—either to follow them or maintain a long-distance marriage. This difficult position can be attributed to the deeply ingrained assumption that have been culturally embedded among Indonesian. According to this assumption, men are expected to be the leaders of the family—closely tied to hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1995), with the traditional expectation that women should follow men, rather than the other way around. When women migrate and lead this change, it challenges the entrenched belief that men should always maintain control – thus, putting women in a difficult position.

Additionally, as Roshita et al. (2012) point out, women in Indonesia are expected to prioritize family responsibilities over their ambitions due to their traditional understanding of *kodrat*, a societal expectation also reflected in the experiences of Indonesians in Canberra. Many women reflect on their families' responses to living far from home.

As I said (to my family in Indonesia), ‘I can only help (to take care of her mother in Indonesia) financially, the rest should be from all of you (her siblings who reside in Indonesia)’. It is no longer an obligation for me to give money for my mother. But I simply want to. As the fact is I cannot be there with them all the time (Married woman Indonesia diaspora, Online interview, 7 October 2024)

The capability of my (traditional) family to receive particular information (regarding my professional role) is sometimes not as how I would expect. So, I personally think that it’d be much easier for me to simply not share a certain part of my life with them. (Married woman Indonesian diaspora, Online interview, 18 October 2024)

Post-*merantau* adjustments also present challenges for married couples, particularly for men, who may take on manual labor roles that contrast sharply with their professional positions in Indonesia. This shift forces husbands in *perantauan* to negotiate traditional gender roles, requiring sacrifices to support the migration process and adapt to new circumstances. Adhariani recounted her story:

Quitting his job wasn't my husband's only sacrifice. After arriving in Melbourne, he tried to find a *halal* (permissible according to Islamic law) job... Hopefully, my husband doesn't have to experience a job that is too 'manual labor'. What can I say, the only job available was a job as a cleaning service in a factory. But my husband did it without complaining. (Adhariani in Aziz et al., 2011, p.212)

Most women participants in my study, express appreciation for their husband in negotiation of gender roles, especially as they take on new responsibilities and made *sacrifices*. While men in Indonesia traditionally worked outside the home, *merantau* has led to modifications in these roles. One participant shared how both partners became more involved in household chores and childcare, indicating a shift toward greater cooperation and shared responsibility.

We just cooperate with each other. For example, if I have an activity outside and can't bring the children, then my husband will take care of them if he's free. It's the same the other way around. We just cover for each other. For tasks like cooking and cleaning, we do it together because we don't have a housekeeper or a babysitter here in Canberra (like most do in Indonesia). We manage everything ourselves. (Married woman Indonesian diaspora, Indonesian Embassy, 17 October 2024)

For Indonesian women, the negotiation of gender roles becomes more complex as they juggle familial responsibilities with personal and professional identities. This balancing act not only challenges traditional gender norms but also encourages more egalitarian partnerships, with both spouses adapting to the demands of their new cultural environment. However, whether such partnerships will endure for those migrating temporarily, particularly for study purposes, remains uncertain. As Choi (2019) suggests, temporary migration often comes with expectations of returning to more traditional roles once the period of study abroad ends, which may disrupt the more equal dynamics developed during their time in *perantauan*. This uncertainty

suggests that while husbands may assist or help with domestic tasks during *perantauan*, household responsibilities still predominantly fall on women, as reflected in Titis's account in Aziz et al. (2011).

Faced with the dilemma of being a student versus a housewife, I try to maintain a balance between the two... Luckily, in the midst of that situation, my husband is always ready to help. Even though he is studying for his doctorate and working part-time, he does not hesitate to shop, cook, wash dishes, clean the house, and take care of the children... Marriage is not the end, but the beginning of everything! (Titis in Aziz et al., 2011, p. 228)

While it is unclear whether the degree of husbands' help with household chores in *perantauan* continues beyond *merantau*, there is evidence that living abroad may fosters more egalitarian partnership. This influence can be attributed, in part, to the age of their marriage. Participants in this study explained that, since they got married and moved abroad shortly after, they did not have rigid expectations about their roles as husband and wife. This flexibility allowed for a more equal distribution of responsibilities, often based on practicality, mutual agreement, and necessity rather than traditional gender norms, as one participant shared:

Maybe because our marriage is considered quite young. We didn't have rigid norms. We got married and then moved here right away, so there weren't any rigid or defined norms. We went straight to Australia... Well, if we were to apply Indonesian culture here, we wouldn't be able to survive. (Married man Indonesian diaspora, Online interview, 6 October 2024)

The negotiation of gender roles among married Indonesian diasporas highlights the complex dynamics of *merantau*. *Merantau* offers both men and women opportunities to challenge traditional roles and redefine their contributions to household responsibilities. While this process can involve tension and adjustment, particularly for those taking on non-traditional tasks as they are used to in Indonesia, flexibility in their roles may lead to more egalitarian partnerships. These experiences showcase the adaptability of *merantau*, reflecting broader shifts in gender norms and cultural practices within the Indonesian diaspora.

## B. Hegemonic Masculinity

Hegemonic masculinity refers to the cultural ideal of manhood that legitimizes male dominance and perpetuates gender inequalities (Connell, 1995). In the context of the Indonesian diaspora, particularly as presented in the personal narratives of Indonesian diasporas, the application of hegemonic masculinity theory provides insight into how traditional gender norms are both challenged and maintained as these individuals navigate life in a foreign country. Several stories from Indonesian diasporas highlight the tension between traditional gender expectations and the negotiation of these roles as they adapt to their new circumstances. Below are key examples from the diaspora narratives that can be understood through the lens of hegemonic masculinity.

### *Authoritative Role and Control*

Hegemonic masculinity, as described by Connell (1995, p. 37), emphasizes traditional male dominance in society, where men are expected to exhibit authority, emotional control, and leadership. In the Indonesian diaspora in Canberra, these roles are challenged as men confront different cultural expectations. In Indonesia, men are often expected to be emotionally stoic and adhere to patriarchal values, as highlighted by one participant: “In Indonesia, men are expected to embody toxic masculinity... not supposed to cry or show emotions” (Single man Indonesian diaspora, October 2024). This aligns with hegemonic masculinity, which emphasises emotional restraint to maintain power.

However, the *merantau* experience provides an opportunity for these men to redefine their masculinity. In Australia, men are more open to negotiate their masculinities to promote inclusive cultural change, which contrasts sharply with traditional Indonesian expectations (Sharp et al., 2023). This openness to negotiate their masculinity and becomes more emotionally open represents a departure from the rigid masculine ideals they were raised with, showing how hegemonic masculinity is being reshaped in response to new cultural contexts.

Additionally, many Indonesian men in *perantauan* starting to take on domestic tasks, as mentioned above, such as cooking and cleaning, traditionally viewed as feminine in Indonesia. As one of the participant noted, that he has no trouble in doing domestic tasks when he undertake *merantau* to Australia due to his previous experience in *merantau*. This shift in responsibilities challenges the traditional

hierarchical control men hold over women, further challenging the dominance framework of hegemonic masculinity.

### *Gender Role Reversals*

*Merantau* also leads to reversals in gender roles, particularly for married Indonesian men who accompany their wives abroad, often sacrificing their own professional roles. Gender role reversals refer to a shift from traditional ideals, where men are typically seen as legitimate labor migrants, both domestically and internationally, while women who migrate for work are often considered out of place. However, it is now women who are driving migration, while men take on the role of providing for the family (Khoo et al., 2017). This dynamic directly challenges hegemonic masculinity, where men are expected to establish dominance. One of the participants shared how negotiations unfolded concerning family dynamics in the context of migration.

As a diplomat with a non-diplomat husband, there is a possibility for my husband to join the migration and need to take a leave from his work. However, he has a career in Indonesia as well. I should not be forcing my husband. So there is a constant negotiation (regarding our family arrangements) that happened every four to five years... A compromise in income for example, if my husband worked in Indonesia, obviously his income is much lower than mine. When it comes to supporting our child, clearly my contribution can be greater, but my husband remains the primary

provider. (Married woman Indonesian diaspora, Indonesian Embassy, 17 October 2024)

This reversal of roles, where men may give lower contribution in childcare and household, challenges traditional notions of male authority and control (Connell, 1995). Such challenge can create tension for men who are raised with the expectation of providing for their families and maintaining a dominant position within the household. These changes force men to negotiate their sense of masculinity, as their new roles often conflict with the patriarchal ideals of hegemonic masculinity that they were brought up with back in Indonesia.

Furthermore, as discussed above, men are also increasingly involved in household chores and caregiving, roles traditionally seen as feminine in Indonesian culture. One participant shared, “We just cooperate with each other... We manage everything ourselves” (Married woman Indonesian diaspora, Online interview, 6 October 2024). This increased involvement in domestic tasks represents a significant shift from the traditional division of labor, where men are expected to remain distant from such duties.

The experiences of the Indonesian diaspora in Australia demonstrate how *merantau* challenges traditional notions of hegemonic masculinity. In this new cultural context, men face shifts in their authoritative roles, emotional expectations, and domestic responsibilities, leading to the negotiation of their traditional masculine identities.

## C. Enculturation

As explained in the Introduction, enculturation refers to how individuals internalize cultural elements through socialization (Weinrich, 2009), and this process significantly influences how people understand and perform gender roles. In diasporic contexts, such as that of the Indonesian diaspora in *perantauan*, this process becomes more complex as traditional values blend or clash with the norms of the host society. Various factors such as family, religion, and community play key roles in shaping these gender roles, guiding how individuals internalize them.

### *Family and the Transmission of Gender Roles*

From an early age, children are enculturated into specific gender roles based on the expectations set by their families. These roles are often embedded in cultural and social values. In many Indonesian families, boys are typically prepared for public roles, while girls are trained to assume domestic responsibilities – reflecting a traditional gender role (Bhandari 2021; Blackburn, 2001). As illustrated by one of the participants in this study:

My family were a traditional family... (When it comes to instilling gender roles) power relation also exists within the family. Especially in how they dictate what is expected. For example, I want to be a flight attendant. (My family) would tell me ‘You are not skinny enough, your skin is not fair enough, you will never be a flight attendant’. So I need to go beyond that. I

am thankful though. (Married woman Indonesian diaspora, Online interview, 18 October 2024)

However, there are instances where families attempt to teach boys and girls a broader range of tasks, allowing for more fluidity. For instance, one male participant recalled how he was taught to be independent and to be active in domestic tasks (Single man Indonesian diaspora, Online interview, 6 October 2024). His experience demonstrates how, in some Indonesian families, boys are enculturated into roles that include both masculine and feminine tasks. The emphasis on independence and responsibility eventually contributed to a more egalitarian approach to gender roles, particularly as they embark on *merantau* and faces new cultural and social expectations.

### *Conclusion*

Enculturation shapes how gender roles are understood and enacted within the Indonesian diaspora, with family and cultural playing key roles. While *perantauan* offers opportunities for more egalitarian roles, traditional norms like *kodrat perempuan* remain influential. Women balance increased autonomy with expectations of domesticity, while men renegotiate masculinity in taking on traditionally feminine tasks. This ongoing negotiation reflects the blending of Indonesian values with the egalitarian norms of host societies, resulting in a negotiation of gender roles.

## Chapter 5. Conclusion

This study aimed to analyse how the lived experiences of the Indonesian diasporas in Australia influence the negotiation of their gender roles and to identify the forms of cultural preservation that emerge within this community. By focusing on qualitative data, this research has given voices to the lived experiences of Indonesian diasporas in Australia. In this concluding chapter, I am highlighting two key findings from my study and compare them to broader discussions in the literature. These findings underscore the complexity of negotiating gender roles within the Indonesian diaspora in Australia and provide insights into how these individuals navigate cultural adaptation.

### A. Women's Increasing Autonomy in Decision-Making

The first key finding reveals increased level of autonomy among Indonesian women in the diaspora, particularly in decision-making both at home and in their professional lives. Many women reported taking on more active roles in their professional lives, community, and including in their household, which expands the concept of work to include domestic labour (Ford & Parker, 2008). However, after marriage, their experiences are mixed. While these women gain significant influence in family matters and their household, they still recognize the vital role of their husbands, particularly in providing support. The behaviour of their husband to provide support and balance aligns with Choi's (2019) concept of masculine compromise where Indonesian husbands in *perantauan* continually redefine

masculinity to maintain family harmony. Meanwhile, for single Indonesian men in *perantauan*, prior *merantau* or internal migration experience eases the compromise and negotiation of domestic tasks, as they have navigated these adjustments before.

Despite their growing sense of autonomy, many women within the Indonesian diaspora still perceive their husband's willingness to share household responsibilities as a form of sacrifice. This viewpoint reflects the deep-rooted, encultured, Indonesian traditional gender roles, which continue to shape perceptions of gender roles even in a foreign context. According to Weinrich's (2009) enculturation theory, individuals internalize cultural norms and values from an early age, and these norms remain influential throughout their lives, even when they are exposed to new cultural environments. For most Indonesian diaspora women in this study, their husbands' involvement in traditionally women's tasks, like cooking or childcare, is seen not as a natural role change but as a compromise that challenges their *kodrat*. This perception highlights how deeply cultural practices are embedded within their identities, and how these practices continue to shape their understanding of gender roles, even when living abroad.

Furthermore, women who lives in *perantauan* are often received diminishing social recognition associated with their family in Indonesia as suggested by Fahmi (2020). It is exemplified in this study by one of the participants, where despite she is making financial contributions to their families back home, these contributions are often undervalued due to her physical absence. This diminishing social recognition is due to the cultural traditions that taking care of parents in their old age requires physical

presence, and these traditions are not easily discarded (Andaya, 2006). While living abroad may offer opportunities for negotiating these roles and embracing more egalitarian relationships, the influence of traditions remains strong.

Nonetheless, this growing agency reflects a shift among Indonesian men in the diaspora, especially in terms of shared household duties. Men becoming more involved in domestic work points to broader changes in social norms (Yeoh, 2020). Additionally, Okimoto and Heilman (2012) suggest that men often react negatively when women violate traditional gender roles, particularly in leadership or competitive settings. However, in this study, there were no significant cases where husbands resisted their wives' increased engagement in the workforce or community, which contrasts with the role-congruity as suggested in Okimoto and Heilman (2012, p. 721). Wives also felt comfortable sharing household responsibilities equally with their husbands, even stepping in for one another—countering the pressure to take on more chores as noted by Steiner et al. (2019). Many women, particularly mothers, highlighted how they balanced caregiving with their professional goals. Their pursuit of higher education and career advancement marks a negotiation of their roles, demonstrating how Australia's multicultural environment offers women more freedom to embrace these new roles. This negotiation reflects a broader cultural change within the Indonesian in *perantauan*, where women's ambitions are increasingly recognized.

## B. Unshaken Roots: Holding to Their Indonesian Identity Abroad

The second key finding of this thesis directly addresses the second research question, which focuses on the forms of cultural preservation among the Indonesian diaspora in Australia. Despite living in a multicultural environment and sometimes facing challenges in connecting with other Indonesians, participants expressed a deep connection to their heritage. For single members, participating in cultural events and religious communities was key to maintaining cultural belonging, even when their integration into Australian society was limited (Siagian & Tike, 2019). Their strong connection to family ties in Indonesia persisted despite their *merantau* experiences, which provided new perspectives. While these changing attitudes sometimes strained family relationships, participants remained committed to nurturing these bonds. This deep attachment to cultural values also shaped gender roles, as participants balanced traditional expectations from their heritage with more progressive norms in Australia.

In line with Utomo's (2014) findings, participants were committed to passing down Indonesian values, particularly through raising children and celebrating cultural milestones. Mothers played a significant role, often speaking Bahasa Indonesia at home to preserve cultural identity. This commitment acts as a form of identity maintenance, helping participants retain their sense of self while navigating a new environment. Rather than simply assimilating, the Indonesian diaspora engages in a

process of cultural blending, integrating elements of both Indonesian and Australian culture. This blending is also reflected in the renegotiation of gender roles, shaping hybrid identities that embody both cultural preservation and adaptation.

Furthermore, participants engaged in cultural diplomacy, adapting traditional events such as *Pasar Senggol* and participating in transnational activities like Indonesian elections. This engagement coupled with the support from the Embassy of Indonesia, reflects their hybrid identities, as they maintain political, emotional, and cultural ties to Indonesia while integrating into Australian life (Safitri et al., 2020). The ability to balance cultural preservation and adaptation highlights the dynamic nature of diaspora identities, where cultural pride serves as both an anchor and a bridge in navigating a new environment. The prominent role of women in maintaining these identities also emphasizes the significance of gender dynamics in the diaspora.

This research is limited by its focus on gender dynamics within the Indonesian diasporas in Canberra. Future research could expand on this by exploring gender dynamics across the Indonesian in *perantauan* across Australia as a whole, offering a more comprehensive understanding of broader trends. In addition, a comparative analysis of gender dynamics within diasporas from other countries could provide valuable insights into cross-cultural differences and similarities. This will enrich the understanding of gender roles within diverse diasporas communities.

## References

- Adams, K. M. (2022). What western tourism concepts obscure: intersections of migration and tourism in Indonesia. In *Recentering Tourism Geographies in the 'Asian Century'* (pp. 30–55). Routledge, London.
- Alexander, C. (2010). Diaspora and hybridity. In J. Solomos & P. Hill Collins (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of race and ethnic studies* (pp. 491–507). SAGE Publications.
- Amalia, F. A., Sosianika, A., & Suhartanto, D. (2020). Indonesian millennials' halal food purchasing: Merely a habit? *British Food Journal*, 122(4), 1185–1198.
- Ananta, A., & Arifin, E. N. (2014). Emerging patterns of Indonesia's international migration. *Malaysian Journal of Economic Studies*, 51(1), 29–41.
- Ananta, A., Kartowibowo, D., Wiyono, N. H., & Chotib. (1998). The impact of the economic crisis on international migration: The case of Indonesia. *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal*, 7(2–3), 313–338.
- Andaya, B. W. (2006). *The flaming womb: Repositioning women in early modern Southeast Asia*. University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu.
- Apandi, I. (2016, May 12). Selamat jalan Siti Rahmani Rauf, sang ibu budi yang sesungguhnya. *Kompasiana*.  
<https://www.kompasiana.com/idrisapandi/5733e3e0167b6170048b4577/selamat-jalan-siti-rahmani-rauf-sang-ibu-budi-yang-sesungguhnya>
- Ashmore, R. D., & Del Boca, F. K. (2015). Conceptual approaches to stereotypes and stereotyping. In *Cognitive processes in stereotyping and intergroup behavior* (pp. 1–35). Psychology Press, New York.
- Australia-Indonesia Youth Association (AIYA). (2015, January 19). Culture, customs and traditions: Greetings in Indonesia.

<https://aiya.org.au/2015/01/19/culture-customs-and-traditions-greetings-in-indonesia/>

Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2021). *Australia's population by country of birth* [Data set].

Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2022). *Labour force, Australia, detailed*. Retrieved September 3, 2024, from <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia-detailed/latest-release>

Aziz, N. (2011). *Suka duka hidup di Australia*. FLP Australia, Melbourne.

Beine, M., & Parsons, C. (2015). Climatic factors as determinants of international migration. *The Scandinavian Journal of Economics*, 117(2), 723–767.

Ben-Moshe, D., Pyke, J., & Baldassar, L. (2012). *Diasporas in Australia: Current and potential links with the homeland*. Deakin University.

Bhandari, N. B. (2021). Diaspora and cultural identity: A conceptual review. *Journal of Political Science*, 21, 100–108.

Bhatia, S., & Ram, A. (2009). Theorizing identity in transnational and diaspora cultures: A critical approach to acculturation. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 33(2), 140–149.

Blackburn, S. (2001). Gender relations in Indonesia: What women want. In G. Lloyd & S. Smith (Eds.), *Indonesia today: Challenges of history* (1st ed., pp. 270–282). Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

Blackstone, A. M. (2003). Gender roles and society. In *Human ecology: An encyclopedia of children, families, communities, and environments* (pp. 335–338). Santa Barbara.

Boehnke, M. (2011). Gender role attitudes around the globe: Egalitarian vs. traditional views. *Asian Journal of Social Science*, 39(1), 57–74.

- Boonstra, S., & Rae, P. (2022). The aesthetics of intercultural method: From process to procession in new Indonesian and Indo-Australian dance. *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, 23(4), 540–558.
- Bornstein, M. H. (2012). Cultural approaches to parenting. *Parenting*, 12, 212–221. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15295192.2012.683359>
- Breda, T., Jouini, E., Napp, C., & Thebault, G. (2020). Gender stereotypes can explain the gender-equality paradox. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 117(49), 31063–31069.
- Broomhill, R., & Sharp, R. (2005). The changing male breadwinner model in Australia: A new gender order? *Labour and Industry*, 16(1), 103–127.
- Cahyanto, I., Liu-Lastres, B., & Gallagher, W. (2023). Diaspora engagement in tourism crisis recovery: The case of Indonesia. *Tourism Review*.
- Canagarajah, S., & Silberstein, S. (2012). Diaspora identities and language. *Journal of Language, Identity & Education*, 11(2), 81–84.
- Cano, T., & Hofmeister, H. (2023). The intergenerational transmission of gender: Paternal influences on children's gender attitudes. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 85(1), 193–214.
- Charity, M. L. (2016). Urgensi pengaturan kewarganegaraan ganda bagi diaspora Indonesia. *Jurnal Konstitusi*, 13(4), 809–827.
- Chen, M. T. (2023). "There's no way I'm gonna meet their expectations": Gender role attitudes and the lived experiences of Japanese expatriates and diaspora in the United States. *Journal for Undergraduate Ethnography*, 13(2), 54–68.
- Chesters, J., Baxter, J., & Western, M. (2009). Paid and unpaid work in Australian households: Trends in the gender division of labour, 1986–2005. *Australian Journal of Labour Economics*, 12(1), 89–107.

- Chin, G. V. (2018). State ibuism and one happy family: Polygamy and the “good” woman in contemporary Indonesian narratives. In *The Southeast Asian woman writes back: Gender, identity and nation in the literatures of Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia and the Philippines* (pp. 89–106).
- Choi, S. Y. (2019). Migration, masculinity, and family. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 45(1), 78–94.
- Clifford, J. (1997). *Routes: Travel and translation in the late twentieth century*. Harvard University Press.
- Clifford, J. (1994). Diasporas. *Cultural Anthropology*, 9(3), 302–338.
- Connell, R. W. (1995). *Masculinities* (1st ed.). Polity Press, Cambridge.
- Constable, N. (2013). *Migrant workers in Asia: Distant divides, intimate connections*. Routledge, London.
- Dahir, N. (2024). Re-learning to be a woman: Virtual space and post-migration womanhood in the Somali diaspora. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 50(6), 1609–1626.
- Dawar, T., & Anand, S. (2017). Gender bias in textbooks across the world. *International Journal of Applied Home Science*, 4(3&4), 224-235.
- Deaux, K., & Lewis, L. L. (1984). Structure of gender stereotypes: Interrelationships among components and gender label. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 46(5), 991.
- Department of Home Affairs. (2016). *Community information summary: Indonesia-born* [PDF]. Australian Government. <https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/mca/files/2016-cis-indonesia.PDF>
- Elder, C. (2020). *Being Australian: Narratives of national identity*. Routledge.
- Elo, S., & Kyngäs, H. (2008). The qualitative content analysis process. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 62(1), 107–115.

- Fahmi, R. (2020). The conflict of interest about gender paradigm in West Sumatera. *Ar-Raniry: International Journal of Islamic Studies*, 2(1), 49–64.
- Firmansyah, C. A., & Sihaloho, E. D. (2021). The effects of women empowerment on Indonesia's regional economic growth. *Jurnal Ekonomi Pembangunan: Kajian Masalah Ekonomi dan Pembangunan*, 22(1), 12–21.
- Fischer, J. (2015). Halal, diaspora and the secular in London. In *Halal matters* (pp. 143–159). Routledge.
- Ford, M., & Parker, L. (2008). Introduction: Thinking about Indonesian women and work. In *Routledge*.
- Forum MEP Australia. (2017). *Hidup damai di negeri multikultur: Kumpulan kisah warga Indonesia di Australia*. Kementerian Luar Negeri Republik Indonesia, Direktorat Jenderal Informasi dan Diplomasi Publik, Jakarta.
- Georgiou, M. (2014). Watching soap opera in the diaspora: Cultural proximity or critical proximity? In *Gender, migration and the media* (pp. 77–96). Routledge.
- Hall, S. (1994). Cultural identity and diaspora. In P. Williams & L. Chrisman (Eds.), *Colonial discourse and postcolonial theory: A reader* (pp. 222-237). Columbia University Press.
- Havlin, T. (2015). Shift in social order—shift in gender roles? Migration experience and gender roles. *Current Issues in Personality Psychology*, 3(3), 185–191.
- Hegarty, B. (2021). Governing nonconformity: Gender presentation, public space, and the city in New Order Indonesia. *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 80(4), 955–974.
- Himawan, K. K., Bambling, M., & Edirippulige, S. (2018). Singleness, religiosity, and the implications for counselors: The Indonesian case. *Europe's Journal of Psychology*, 14(2), 485–497.

- Himawan, K. K. (2020). The single's struggle: Discovering involuntary singleness in Indonesia through gender and religious perspectives. *The Family Journal*, 28(4), 379–389.
- Hooker, V. M. (2018). Merantau: Imagining and imaging migration in the Malay world. *Asian Studies Review*, 42(2), 252–270.
- Hyndman-Rizik, N. (2009). Balad Niswen–Hukum Niswen: The perception of gender inversions between Lebanon and Australia. *Palma Journal*, 73.
- Ida, R. (2001). The construction of gender identity in Indonesia: Between cultural norms, economic implications, and state formation. *Masyarakat, Kebudayaan dan Politik*, 14(1), 21–34.
- Indriani, S. S., & Mulyana, D. (2021). Communication patterns of Indonesian diaspora women in their mixed-culture families. *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, 22(4), 1431–1448.
- Jati, W. R. (2021). Being away from home in Australia: The Indonesian diaspora in Canberra. *Humaniora*, 33(2), 93.
- Kambo, G. A., & Yani, A. A. (2024). Practices and challenges of dual citizenship at an Indonesian border area. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 10(1), 2287610.
- Kato, T. (2008). *Matriliny and migration: Evolving Minangkabau traditions in Indonesia*. Equinox Publishing.
- Kestenberg-Amighi, J. (2004). Contact and connection: A cross-cultural look at parenting styles in Bali and the United States. *Zero to Three*, 24, 32–39.
- Khoo, C. Y., Platt, M., & Yeoh, B. S. (2017). Who migrates? Tracking gendered access to migration within households “in flux” across time. *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies*, 15(3), 326–343.
- Kley, S. (2011). Explaining the stages of migration within a life-course framework. *European Sociological Review*, 27(4), 469–486.

- Kuntari, I. S., Janssens, J. M. A. M., & Ginting, H. (2017). Gender, life role importance and work-family conflict in Indonesia: A non-Western perspective. *Academic Research International*, 8(1), 139–153.
- Larsen, K. S., & Long, E. (1988). Attitudes toward sex roles: Traditional or egalitarian? *Sex Roles*, 19(1), 1–12.
- Lee, C. J. G. (2012). Reconsidering constructivism in qualitative research. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 44(4), 403–412.
- Liu, H., Yu, K. H., & Wright, C. F. (2024). Precarious multiculturalism: The racialized experience of Asian in/exclusion in Australia. *American Behavioral Scientist*.
- Manshur, F. M., Herlina, N. H., & Atoillah, A. N. (2020). Women and the challenges of the future of Islamic education. *Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan Islam*, 8(2), 97.
- Marchand, M. H., & Parpart, J. L. (Eds.). (1995). *Feminism/postmodernism/development*. Routledge.
- Medica, K. (2016). Australian Awards: Sacred cow in an age of uncertainty? *Development Bulletin*, 77, 99–106.
- Metje, U. M. (1995). *Die starken Frauen. Gespräche über Geschlechterbeziehungen bei den Minangkabau in Indonesien*. Campus Verlag.
- Mitchell, J., & Teychenné, L. (2018). Beyond cultural diplomacy: The artistic nuance in Australia-Indonesia relations. In *Strangers next door? Indonesia and Australia in the Asian century* (pp. 323–344).
- Moore, H. L. (1994). *A passion for difference: Essays in anthropology and gender*. Indiana University Press.
- Moreton-Robinson, A. (1998). Witnessing whiteness in the wake of Wik. *Social Alternatives*, 17(2).

- Muhidin, S., & Utomo, A. (2015). Global Indonesian diaspora: How many are there and where are they? *Journal of ASEAN Studies*, 3(2), 93–101.
- Muhtadi, A. S., Fakhruroji, M., Syarif, D., & Abdillah, A. (2018). Negotiating identity of Indonesian Muslims in Australia. In *Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference on Sociology Education (ICSE 2017)* (Vol. 1, pp. 100–105). SCITEPRESS.
- Nabbs-Keller, G. (2020). Understanding Australia-Indonesia relations in the post-authoritarian era: Resilience and respect. *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 74(5), 532–556.
- Nisa, E. F. (2019). Muslim women in contemporary Indonesia: Online conflicting narratives behind the Women Ulama Congress. *Asian Studies Review*, 43(3), 434-454. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10357823.2019.1632796>
- Nisa, E. F. (2022). Muslims enacting identity: Gender through digital media. In H. A. Campbell & P. H. Cheong (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Digital Religion*. Oxford University Press.
- Neculaesei, A. N. (2015). Culture and gender role differences. *Cross-Cultural Management Journal*, 17(1), 31–35.
- Neilsen, R., Arber, R., & Weinmann, M. (2017). Re-imagining Asian religious identity: Towards a critical pedagogy of religion and race in Australian schools. *Education Sciences*, 7(2), 49.
- Noordin, F. (2009). Individualism-collectivism: A tale of two countries. *Problems and Perspectives in Management*, 7(2), 36-45.
- OECD. (2024). *Society at a glance 2024: OECD social indicators*. OECD Publishing.
- OECD. (2022). *Part-time employment rate*. OECD Data. <https://www.oecd.org/en/data/indicators/part-time-employment-rate.html>

- Okimoto, T. G., & Heilman, M. E. (2012). The “bad parent” assumption: How gender stereotypes affect reactions to working mothers. *Journal of Social Issues*, 68(4), 704–724.
- Oktafiani, I. (2019). The meaning of diasporic identity: A case of Indonesian community overseas. *Journal of Indonesian Social Sciences and Humanities*, 9(2), 147–156.
- Orifici, A. (2019). The promotion of gender equality at work in Australia through law and policy: A work in progress. *Japan Labor Issues*, 3(17), 79–78.
- Ortner, S. B. (1981). Sexual meanings the cultural construction of gender and sexuality. In S. B. Ortner & H. Whitehead (Eds.), *Sexual meanings the cultural construction of gender and sexuality*. Cambridge University Press.
- Pardede, E. L., & Venhorst, V. A. (2024). Does ethnicity affect ever migrating and the number of migrations? The case of Indonesia. *European Journal of Population*, 40(1), 6.
- Pietsch, J. (2024). Multicultural Australia. In *Australian politics and policy*.
- Prihatini, E. (2021). Explaining gender gaps in Indonesian legislative committees. *Parliamentary Affairs*, 74(1), 206–229.
- Rengganis, A. P., Prianto, A. L., Harakan, A., Muchsin, A., Tenorio, C. B., & Amri, A. R. (2023). Strengthening national identity among Indonesian diaspora in General Santos City, Philippines. *Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences Studies*, 23(3), 539–552.
- Riany, Y. E., Meredith, P., & Cuskelly, M. (2017). Understanding the influence of traditional cultural values on Indonesian parenting. *Marriage & Family Review*, 53(3), 207–226.
- Rinaldo, R. (2011). Muslim women, moral visions: Globalization and gender controversies in Indonesia. *Qualitative Sociology*, 34, 539–560.

- Robinson, K. (2008). *Gender, Islam and democracy in Indonesia*. Taylor & Francis Group, London.
- Roshita, A., Schubert, E., & Whittaker, M. (2012). Child-care and feeding practices of urban middle-class working and non-working Indonesian mothers: A qualitative study of the socio-economic and cultural environment. *Maternal & Child Nutrition*, 8(3), 299–314.
- Rosser, A. (2022). Diaspora organizations, political settlements, and the migration-development nexus: The case of the Indonesian Diaspora Network. *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*, 22(3), 411–440.
- Safitri, D., Setiabudhi, W., & Sudirman, A. (2020). Transnationalism of Indonesian diaspora youth: Political movement through the Conference of Indonesian Diaspora. *International Journal of Management, Innovation & Entrepreneurial Research*, 6(1), 44–50.
- Sahoo, A. K., & Shome, A. (2020). Diaspora and transnationalism: The changing contours of ethnonational identity of Indian diaspora. *Perspectives on Global Development and Technology*, 19(3), 383–402.
- Salazar, N. B. (2016). The (im) mobility of merantau as a sociocultural practice in Indonesia. *Moving Places: Relations, Return and Belonging*, 29, 21–42.
- Samarakoon, S., & Parinduri, R. A. (2015). Does education empower women? Evidence from Indonesia. *World Development*, 66, 428–442.
- Setijadi, C. (2017). Harnessing the potential of the Indonesian diaspora. *ISEAS–Yusof Ishak Institute*.
- Sharp, P., Oliffe, J. L., Bottorff, J. L., Rice, S. M., Schulenkorf, N., & Caperchione, C. M. (2023). Connecting Australian masculinities and culture to mental health: Men’s perspectives and experiences. *Men and Masculinities*, 26(1), 112–133.

- Shinta, A. (2019). Meningkatkan pemahaman diaspora tentang wawasan nusantara sebagai upaya untuk menyukseskan pemilihan umum. *Jurnal Lemhannas RI*, 7(1), 4–15.
- Siagian, H. F., & Tike, A. (2019). Cultural adaptation of Indonesian diaspora in Thailand's social contexts. *Jurnal Komunikasi: Malaysian Journal of Communication*, 35(1), 268–285.
- Stark, A. (2013). The matrilineal system of the Minangkabau and its persistence throughout history: A structural perspective. *Southeast Asia: A Multidisciplinary Journal*, 13(1), 1–13.
- Steiner, R. S., Krings, F., & Wiese, B. S. (2019). Remember the children, honey! Spouses' gender-role attitudes and working mothers' work-to-family conflict. *Applied Psychology*, 68(2), 250–275.
- Stewart, M. (2024, September 2). Inequality serves no one: Australia finally has a strategy to achieve gender equality, but is it any good? *The Conversation*. <https://theconversation.com/inequality-serves-no-one-australia-finally-has-a-strategy-to-achieve-gender-equality-but-is-it-any-good-225081>
- Syrda, J. (2023). Gendered housework: Spousal relative income, parenthood, and traditional gender identity norms. *Work, Employment and Society*, 37(3), 794–813.
- Talampas, R. (2015). Indonesian diaspora identity construction in a Southern Mindanao border crossing. *Asian Studies: Journal of Critical Perspectives on Asia*, 51(1).
- United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA). (2020). *International migrant stock dataset: Migrants by destination and origin*. UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs. [Data Set]
- Utomo, A. J. (2012). Women as secondary earners. *Asian Population Studies*, 8(1), 65–85.

- Utomo, A. (2014). Mother tongue, mothering, and (transnational) identity: Indonesian mothers in Canberra, Australia. *Advances in Southeast Asian Studies*, 7(2), 165–182.
- Van Egmond, M., Baxter, J., Buchler, S., & Western, M. (2010). A stalled revolution? Gender role attitudes in Australia, 1986–2005. *Journal of Population Research*, 27, 147–168.
- Vatsa, A. (2016). Women in a multicultural diaspora: Dilemmas of gender and culture. *Diaspora Studies*, 9(1), 64–75.
- Virgona, A., & Kashima, E. S. (2024). Polycultural identity experiences: A qualitative exploration in Australia. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*.
- Wardhani, B. (2023). From Jakarta to Oceania: Indonesia's cultural diplomacy with the South Pacific. *Journal of Asian Security and International Affairs*, 10(1), 47–64.
- Weinreich, P. (2009). 'Enculturation', not 'acculturation': Conceptualising and assessing identity processes in migrant communities. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 33(2), 124–139.
- Wieringa, S. (2003). The birth of the New Order state in Indonesia: Sexual politics and nationalism. *Journal of Women's History*, 15(1), 70–91.
- Williams, K. K. (2018). Between utopia and autobiography: Migrant narratives in Australia. In P. L. Arthur (Ed.), *Migrant nation* (pp. 177–194). Anthem Press.
- Winarnita, M. S. (2016). *Dancing the feminine: Gender and identity performances by Indonesian migrant women*. Sussex Academic Press, Brighton.
- Winarnita, M. S. (2008). Motherhood as cultural citizenship: Indonesian women in transnational families. *The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology*, 9(4), 304–318.

- World Bank. (2023). Labor force participation rate, female (% of female population ages 15+) (modeled ILO estimate) – Indonesia. *The World Bank*. Retrieved September 3, 2024, from <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.TLF.CACT.FE.ZS?locations=ID>
- Wright, C. E. (2024). Bossyboots: Postfeminism and the construction of Australia’s corporate woman. *Gender, Work & Organization*.
- Xiang, N., Whitehouse, G., Tomaszewski, W., & Martin, B. (2022). The benefits and penalties of formal and informal flexible working-time arrangements: Evidence from a cohort study of Australian mothers. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 33(14), 2939–2960.
- Yeoh, B. S., Somaiah, B. C., Lam, T., & Acedera, K. F. (2020). Doing family in “times of migration”: Care temporalities and gender politics in Southeast Asia. *Annals of the American Association of Geographers*, 110(6), 1709–1725.

# Appendices

## Appendix A. Indonesian Diasporic Communities in Canberra

Adapted from: Jati, W. R. (2021). Being Away from Home in Australia: The Indonesian Diaspora in Canberra. *Jurnal Humaniora*, 33(2).

No	Name of Diasporic Groups/Communities
Student Group	
1	Indonesian Students Union in ACT (PPIA ACT)
2	University of Canberra Indonesian Student Society (UCISS)
3	ANU Indonesian Student Association (ANUISA)
Indonesian Campuses Alumni Networking	
1	Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM) Alumni Family (KAGAMA), Canberra Chapter
2	Bandung Institute of Technology Alumni Association, Canberra Chapter
3	Alumni Association of Faculty of Economic and Business, University of Indonesia, Canberra Chapter
Extracurricular Education Services	
1	The Australian Indonesia-Language Schools Association (AILSAs)
2	<i>Perisai Diri Canberra</i> / Indonesian Martial Arts Association
3	Quran Teaching for Muslim Children
Religious Affairs	

1	Australia Indonesia Muslim Foundation in ACT (AIMFACT)
2	<i>Khataman Canberra</i>
3	<i>Pengajian Keluarga</i>
4	Indonesian Christian Society Association
5	Indonesian Catholic Community
Ethnicities	
1	HORAS Canberra (Bataknese Association)
2	Aceh Australian Society (Acehnese Association)
3	Kawanua (Minangkabaunese Association)
Hobbies	
1	<i>Garuda Canberra</i> (Futsal)
2	<i>IndoJepret Canberra</i> (Photography)
3	<i>Genjot SepedACT</i> (Cycling)
4	Canberrunners (Running)
5	<i>Baddies Sabtu Pagi</i> (Badminton)
Student Dormitory	
1	<i>Indo Toadies</i> (Indonesian Students in Toad Hall)
2	<i>Jamaah Ursulawiyah</i> (Indonesian Students in Ursula Hall)