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MUSLIM SPACES AND PIETY POLITICS:

Muslim Mothers Embroidering Multiple Interpretations
of Islam in the Contemporary Context of Transnational
Urban Landscape of Auckland

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts
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Hanny Savitri Hartono

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New Zealand has been home to many migrants including Muslims for the past many decades. Muslims from diverse ethnic backgrounds have travelled and chosen this country as their new place of residence. Based on participant-observation fieldwork in Mt Roskill, a suburb in Auckland that is known for its highest Muslim population in New Zealand, this study seeks to map how devout Muslim mothers from different ethnicities strive to live their lives as pious Muslims. This ethnographic research aims to examine two primary issues: Muslim women's engagement with their role as pious Muslims who endeavour to improve themselves in terms of understanding and practicing Islamic tenets in the midst of multiple discourses and practices available to them; and their engagement with their role as mothers who try to bring up their children as good Muslims in a diverse and increasingly global Muslim community within a larger scale of non-Muslim urban landscape. In particular, this study addresses how these women imbue piety in their children and improve themselves to be better Muslims in different Muslim spaces; home, *tafsīr* and *tajwīd* classes, communal prayer, their children's *madrassa* and public school. Themes of music, clothing, gender-segregated spaces, greetings and *ṣalāt* (prayer) among others, emerged throughout the text in which piety politics is the core. For these Muslim women their lives are marked by negotiations to social mores, religious belief and practice vis-à-vis the diverse Muslim community and the larger non-Muslim context.

I have been fortunate to have the opportunity to study a topic that is close to my heart. A number of people have been very supportive of me academically and personally. This research would not have been realised without the generosity of the Muslim women and mothers who live in Mt Roskill, and my Muslim friends and acquaintances. You have opened your homes to me and shared your stories. I thank each and every one of you from the bottom of my heart. *Jazakallahu khayrn. Terima kasih banyak.*

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Notes: All photographs except for figure 1 were taken by the researcher.

Note on transcription

In general, I used English Transliteration System outlined in the *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies (IJMES)* for transliterating words in Arabic. Diacritical marks are included to indicate different sounds of Arabic letters.