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ABSTRACT

Cities within Western democratic societies have long been regarded as sites where secular visions of modernity and citizenship are enacted. Today, however, ethno-religious diversity has emerged as a deep and vibrant part of urban social life and public culture, shaping place-making practices that nourish 'post-secular' belonging and practices of citizenship. Place-making and citizenship practices that are shaped by ethno-religious diversity have the potential to transform public spaces highlighting common humanity and 'shared vulnerability' (J. Butler, *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (London and New York: Verso, 2004)). The visibility and embodiment of Islamic religious beliefs, ritual observances, and cultural expressions often circulate feelings of suspicion and unease for non-Muslim co-citizens. In this paper we deviate from this dominant narrative to argue that 'everyday' forms of religiosity that underpin and shape social and political actions performed in public space make an important contribution to the multicultural milieu of the nominally 'Western' city, shaping public spaces that resonate with hope and shared responsibility. The paper draws on participant observation, photo-ethnography and interviews with Melbourne residents, of Muslim faith, and predominantly of Egyptian, Turkish and Afghani (Hazara) cultural heritage.

Introduction

Ethno-religious diversity is emerging as a deep and vibrant part of urban social life and public culture, shaping place-making practices that nourish 'post-secular' belonging and citizenship (Stevenson et al. 2010; Beaumont and Baker 2011). The 'post-secular paradigm' in particular attempts to document these effects at varying spatial scales, highlighting contested identities and intercultural negotiations. Since September 11, contestations around Islam and embodied performances of Islamic religious practices have become a major factor in these negotiations (Forrest and Dunn 2010; Phillips 2009). In particular, terror-related events overseas have circulated anxieties about a potential rift between Muslim faith-based practices and identities and 'secular' liberal democratic traditions, resulting in public expressions of Islamophobia and racism (Lobo and Mansouri 2012; Dunn, Klocker, and Salabay 2007; Dunn 2005; Forrest and Dunn 2010; Stevenson et al.

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2010). And yet, despite the importance of studies which empirically examine Islamophobia and its effects in curtailing the agency and freedom of Muslim citizens in public space, this has the effect at times of shifting attention away from 'everyday' practices of faith which shape more positive intercultural encounters in the city, and 'trigger new ways of imagining a collective self and common space' (Gole 2002, 174).

Empirical studies conducted in Europe, the UK, North America and Australia have addressed these gaps by examining processes where Islamic religiosity and Muslim cultural and political identity—as these are grounded in everyday social and spatial negotiations—facilitate rather than impede individual and collective forms of responsibility, connection to local place and community. Indeed, these may be understood as 'rescaled' expressions of citizenship (Nagel and Staheli 2008, 4; see also Ehrkamp 2006; Gale and Hopkins 2009; Lobo and Mansouri 2012; Phillips 2009). Building on this work, the current article examines two case studies where 'everyday' Islamic religious practices connect to grounded forms of place-making and 'acts of citizenship'.

The two case studies incorporate different spatial and emotional registers of publicness, citizenship and belonging. The first focuses on two micro-spaces in Dandenong, Melbourne (Dandenong market and Dandenong Park) where the everyday act of selling and buying *halal* food products and participating in Eid celebrations in public space encourages the intermingling of secular and sacred beliefs, objects, and affects through performative place-making practices that encourage an ethic of cosmopolitanism, hospitality and intercultural conviviality (Phillips 2009). Moreover, we argue that these performances entail 'acts of citizenship' (Isin and Nielsen 2008) that are grounded in and nourished by intra- and intercultural encounters, promoting actions which offset micro-acts of racist aggression and intolerance.

The second case study extends this discussion to include the city square (State Library and Federation Square, Melbourne) where Muslim political activism exhibits a different level of visibility, as individuals organise to demand public recognition of grievances that transcend nation-state boundaries but which are nonetheless addressed to co-citizens (McGinty 2012; Pickerill 2009). Through this case study, the paper provides ethnographic insights into the 'Free Egypt' protest organised by Egyptian community activists in Melbourne, August 2013. This was a political event not specific to religious identity and practice. Yet, as the interviews and participant observation revealed, religious rituals (prayer), spiritual connections and obligations to the broader religious community were interwoven with claims to national belonging, liberal democratic rights and responsibilities, as well as to global human rights discourses. This showed the ease with which obligations and loyalties to faith community, ethics and practices can be mobilised to inform active citizen practices associated with liberal democratic norms.

Overall, the findings situate and contextualise a diverse range of everyday, embodied and grounded acts and performances that blur the boundaries between the secular and the sacred in urban spaces of intercultural encounter and political engagement. The case studies have been selected specifically to examine whether and how dominant narrative frames that exclude Muslims from full citizenship and belonging to the multicultural city are challenged through these grounded negotiations of public space. By incorporating and comparing very different acts and spaces, we draw attention to the ways in which performative modes of place-making dissolve and unsettle boundaries (i.e. between secular and religious practices, and dominant and minority cultures), creating scenes in which

obligations to acculturate to dominant cultural norms are disrupted and alternatives imagined.

Method

The paper is based on findings from an Australian Research Council (ARC) Discovery project (2013–15) which examined the relationship between Islamic religious belief and practices and experiences of citizenship and belonging across three culturally diverse cities. The mixed-method study included 243 surveys, five focus groups and 105 interviews conducted in four cities in Australia, France and the USA.[1] While the results of the exploratory surveys and interviews inform our understandings of grounded religiosity, this analysis is not the central focus of this paper. Instead, we draw on data from in-depth interviews, focus groups, and participant observation/photo-documentation carried out in two specific sites: Dandenong, a southern suburb of Melbourne, and the Melbourne Central Business District (CBD).

Participant observations were followed up by interviews (of 45- to 60-minute duration) with participants who took part in the 'Free Egypt' protest and other protests in the Melbourne CBD ($n = 6$). The Dandenong-based informants were stallholders or shoppers at Dandenong market ($n = 4$), and this was supplemented with insights from a focus group with the Hazara Women's Network ($n = 16$). These provided the evidence used in this case study-based analysis. Participants were recruited as part of the larger study, with Case Study One participants being recruited through researcher engagement with Dandenong mosques and community organisations, plus through *iftaar* dinners (a part of the research was conducted during Ramadan 2013). Case Study Two participants were recruited through Deakin University networks (i.e. Deakin University Islamic Society) and snowballing recruitment. The researcher who participated in the 'Free Egypt' protest was notified of the event via an interview participant we have called Ali (through Deakin University networks). The researcher attended the rally and conducted two interviews with protest participants, one whilst at the rally, and the other as a follow-up interview.

Grounded acts of religiosity and political engagement

Grounded religiosity

Yorgason and dell Dora (2009, 631) argue that religion is 'the last terra incognita' in human geography, which continues to be subjected to a 'one-way colonising process' rather than allowing the interaction between religion and public space to be considered as a 'complex two-way dialogue'. Tse (2014) argues that geographical studies too often presume that the secular and the sacred are clearly defined, bounded and opposing spatial categories that order forms of social and political life, activity and identity. Even post-secular studies continue to presume a neat separation and categorisation of religious/political identity, for example. Asad (2003) argues that this historical division has led to a 'splitting' of the Western political subject into two subjectivities, the public citizen of the state (regulated by secular concerns) and the private religious citizen. Such a division reinforces understandings of citizenship as a social contract where

'rational' secular principles provide the greatest hope for binding a society of diverse cultures. Contesting this normative notion of citizenship, Tse (2014) argues that 'performative practices of place-making' undermine the presumed separation of secular/sacred and transcendent/immanent categories.

Acts of citizenship

Contemporary citizenship studies have experienced a shift away from studying citizenship as a formal legal status or set of practices embedded in the nation-state towards a greater consideration of the rights embedded within citizenship and how people, particularly minoritised ethnic and religious groups, claim and express those rights. This has brought the focus squarely onto city spaces where claims are expressed in public spaces marked increasingly by ethno-religious diversity, recognition and belonging experienced through formal and everyday encounters. In light of this shift, 'multicultural citizenship' (Kymlicka 1995; Miller 2007) has emerged as a useful analytical frame which links the freedom to pursue one's cultural and religious specificity with the ability to claim one's rights as a citizen and member of the polity. Isin and Nielsen (2008) emphasise the performative characteristics of claiming such rights and entitlements through 'disruptive acts' that transform normative understandings of citizenship (located in a secular ideal of public appearance and participation) and create new political subjectivities.

Moreover, performances of religious selves in sites of everyday encounter, as discussed in this paper, highlight the capacity of embodied and visible forms of Muslim religiosity to transform everyday city spaces through affective practices, even when they are racialised in formal political spaces. Affective forms and modes of citizenship, though difficult to quantify, constitute important ways of being political because such enactments of 'being and acting together' (Isin and Nielsen 2008, 37–38) do not focus on pre-given identities and taken-for-granted assumptions.

Shared vulnerability

Judith Butler's theory of performativity (2005, 2006), and particularly what some have described as a more 'ethical turn' in her later work (Mills 2007; see Butler 2004, 2006, 2009), informs our understanding of a politics of shared vulnerability and responsibility. Butler (2006) used the concept of performativity to explore how the dominance and power of heterosexual norms regulate the way gendered subjects become recognisable in the public sphere. She argued that through these performative acts subjects come into being through the address of the other, an address that we cannot control, avert or avoid—we are interdependent and vulnerable. However, only through acknowledging such interdependence and our shared corporeal vulnerability is it possible for an ethics of responsibility to emerge and be communicated.

In her later work, and in particular response to the post-secular turn in social theory more broadly and feminist theory in particular, Butler (2004, 2006, 2009) contextualises the importance of this call of responsibility towards the other in relation to September 11 and the 'war on terror'. Thus she makes a contribution towards theorising political and civic agency beyond Eurocentric thinking. Butler acknowledges that in the conditions of vulnerability and mourning that followed September 11 there was an opportunity to

acknowledge 'corporeal vulnerability'—not as a rationale for self-protective mechanisms of normative violence in defence of a bounded, sovereign subject but as the foundation for an ethics of responsibility based on a shared vulnerability of the flesh. For Butler (2006) recognition of our shared vulnerability to pain and loss entails a 'relational bind' from which political claims and ethics emerge.

Theorising new forms of political subjectivity and agency that might emerge from this moment, Butler highlights the importance of recognising our community not as a bounded individuality but as a form of sociality that reveals our common vulnerability and shapes openness and responsibility for others (Watson 2012). Butler claims that the 'task' of grieving for loss, then, is a political act—particularly as events in the Middle East initiate not only an outpouring of collective grief but also emotional decisions about what types of life are more or less valuable, and 'grievable'. The performing bodies of Muslims participating in the 'Free Egypt' protest or in other protests relating to foreign occupations and so on are understood in this paper as a response to this call, provoking questions about the limits or limitlessness of multiculturalism as a ground for shaping public places and modes of citizenship that reflect and nourish this diversity. The following case studies offer an opportunity, albeit in a limited empirical sense, for pursuing such an examination.

Case Study One: Dandenong

The City of Greater Dandenong (pop. 147005[2]) situated approximately 40 km south east of Melbourne is one of the most culturally diverse and socio-economically disadvantaged areas of Melbourne, and Australia. The diversity of the suburb is reflected in the religious affiliation of residents, with around 50 per cent self-identifying as Christian, 18 per cent as Buddhist, followed by Muslim (11 per cent), and Hindu (4 per cent).[3] Historically, Dandenong became a centre for the post-war industrial boom of the 1950s, instigating waves of European migration to fill manufacturing jobs. Presently, it has one of the highest levels of migrant settlement and cultural diversity in Melbourne, with 60 per cent of residents being born overseas.

Dandenong features more unfavourable educational outcomes than other suburbs in Melbourne, with double the proportion of the metropolitan average (13 per cent) having left school before completing Year 12.[4] In this context of relative disadvantage, but high cultural and religious diversity, the research findings provide insights into the everyday lives of Muslim residents that are informed by faith-based practices and ethics of 'living together'. Such instances of living together unfold in public spaces of central Dandenong such as Dandenong Plaza (shopping mall), ethnic precincts (Afghan Bazaar, India Village), Dandenong Park and Dandenong market.

In response to questions regarding feelings of belonging to the local Dandenong community, which were posed to Dandenong-based participants, a range of themes emerged. These themes ranged from migration and settlement experiences, experiences of racism and social exclusion to feelings of belonging, connection and integration. Nonetheless, and unsurprisingly, feelings and experiences of community participation, engagement and belonging were differentially shaped by diverse migration statuses and experiences of everyday sociality. Many of these feelings centred on places and spatial interactions

which facilitated strong feelings of either inclusion and participation or exclusion and alienation.

These feelings are articulated forcefully by Saba—a 22-year-old Hazara refugee who arrived in Australia from Afghanistan 8 years ago. Despite winning a 'young achiever' award for volunteer work in the Dandenong community she still felt a sense of unsettledness and non-belonging in her local community, a feeling she attributed to the failure of federal and local governments to understand the plight of Hazara community members, especially those who suffered prolonged detention:

> Saba (Hazara refugee, female, aged 22): I started my life and my family started their life from scratch, from zero, we had nothing here. And just to get to the stage I am at, you know it took us eight years or maybe even more, we're still not settled. So imagine all those people coming in spending years in detention centres and then waiting for their … visas to be over … You know by the time they set up everything they will be too old to live.

Despite these difficult experiences, Saba also expressed 'love' for her community because of the safety and opportunity it provided her. These two expressions—of love and gratitude, but also hardship and burden—were also expressed by other members of the Hazara Women's Network. Of the group, six members had arrived in Australia by boat as refugee claimants in the last 2 years, and were living in the community on bridging visas. For these participants, settlement was precarious. They lived and participated in the community but did not feel themselves to belong.

For longer term residents of Dandenong, however, feelings of hardship were replaced with feelings of belonging and social connection, particularly as members participated in the building of mosques, and setting up of local businesses (i.e. *halal* butchers, food and clothing stores) to accommodate the needs of the local Muslim community:

> Muska (Lebanese-Australian migrant, aged 40): I'm a local Dandy girl. I love Dandy. I'll never move out of it. Love it. I have good interactions through work, and through non-work. I shop in the area. I talk to people in the area … You've got *halal* products at Coles and Safeway. That *never* used to be the case … There's a *halal* Hungry Jacks, yeah.

Many participants also highlighted that the multicultural and multi-religious feel of the Dandenong area encouraged feelings of local belonging. This was expressed through appreciation of having that diversity recognised at Dandenong market and through the Dandenong Eid festival, held annually in a local park:

> Masjid (Greek-Albanian, Australian born, aged 28): Eid is something special. There's something on—'hey, let's go to this Eid festival'. You meet with people, you engage with people you haven't seen in the community. It brings people together to engage with the Muslim community, as well as other sheikhs and imams, other cultural organisations. And also in society itself, in Dandenong it's open to neighbours and open to locals … I am very proud to live in Dandenong to be honest. I like living in Dandenong, the cultural diversity of it and the mix of people living here.

Dandenong market was highlighted by participants as a particularly vital and vibrant part of the multicultural life of Dandenong. Contemporary research suggests that the sub-urban marketplace is an often neglected but vital site of prosaic negotiations that nourishes grounded social connections, feelings of belonging and civic engagement (Lobo 2010; Warner, Talbot, and Bennison 2013). For participants, Dandenong market functioned as a significant site of Muslim sociality with many of the interactions and transactions

framed by Islamic beliefs and rituals. The presence of *halal* butchers and other visible signs of Muslim food and goods in the market, for example, were regarded by participants as important to their sense of identity, social connection and belonging to the area:

> Thana (Afghani/Uzbek migrant, restaurateur, female, aged 30–35): Dandenong has lots of the *halal* shops, uh, I mean the butcher, all the bakeries and everything … I mean, whatever we want we have out there.
> Muska: Fifteen years ago, we never had food, *halal* butchers here. We had to drive to Sydney Rd to get *halal*. We had to drive to Sydney Rd to get the Lebanese pizzas that we were used to. The sweets, the same thing. But food is, is the most important thing. Because it makes you feel good. Simple as that.

These comments foreground the routine, everyday but also affective and embodied aspects of Islamic religiosity and Muslim faith-based traditions, as they are attached to ritual objects such as *halal* food and clothing, with the presence of these necessities promoting 'good feelings' and feelings of 'home'. Feelings of pride were also expressed in relation to the visibility of Afghan shops and traders in the Thomas Street area of Dandenong, which has been renamed by Dandenong City Council as the 'Afghan Bazaar' owing to the strong presence of Afghan carpet sellers, restaurants and other traders. Saba, described a sense of pride that her community is being embraced by other communities in the Dandenong area:

> Saba: It feels like home because when you walk down the street you see so many Hazaras [Afghan tribe]. If you see someone from another community background then you feel pride, like oh it's such a good place that people from other communities feel safe and feel good to be in this area and to shop around in Dandenong.

Participants also portrayed the market as a significant site of intercultural encounter and learning, with a range of ethnicities and faith communities interacting.

Aida, a stallholder who sells hijabs and modesty garments, spoke of how Islamic beliefs and rituals informed her everyday practices of care towards customers. When Aida first arrived in Australia and was encouraged by her brother to open the store, she felt a sense of shame at her language skills, and often tried to avoid customers. But her confidence grew as local Muslims and non-Muslims started to notice and appreciate her 'colourful' shop, and make her feel a part of the diverse market community:

> Aida (Afghani/Pashtun migrant, aged 40–45): I get help from inside the market, from management as well … I was saying—no I can't do it, like I wanted to stop the business last year or year before, he [the manager] came in and said … your shop is look like the best for me … small shop and colourful I want you to stay here and don't go. I said okay maybe it's nice, I can't see it, maybe it's nice … Before I was thinking, if I'm going outside … people understand I'm Muslim, their reactions not the same like now, they maybe don't like Muslim people, but slowly I found now they love me.

This acceptance and warmth led Aida, over time, to feel that she belonged to the multicultural community of Dandenong. In particular, this was reflected in her interactions with a wide range of customers, including customers of other faiths:

> I'm not feeling I'm Afghani, just I'm feeling I'm from this area, and from this people, and belong from this people, not only Muslim, not only Afghani, not only like … I'm not feeling this, because I love everyone, I love everyone and I have a lot of Christian customer, they love me, they send me present.

The market encourages an atmosphere of conviviality between people of all cultural and religious backgrounds and forges a new sense of identity and belonging for Aida. Her feeling of belonging to the community also incorporated a sense of civic and religious responsibility. In particular, Aida's visibility as a Muslim stallholder meant that newly arrived refugees from Afghanistan would approach her and ask for help. She recalled numerous stories where she extended material and emotional support to recently arrived immigrants, and encouraged other stallholders to extend care to those who had called on her for help.

Aida described what happened when a migrant newcomer from Afghanistan wanted to borrow money to buy a carpet to welcome his wife and children, who were being reunited with him. Aida went to the stall where carpets were sold and offered to vouch for him and pay the money if he did not return. This gesture of generosity was framed with reference to the ethical principles of Islam. She said:

> The money in my purse was his right, was part of his income. So we believe that it's destined for him, like if I lost something, I should be sad that I lost it, but maybe someone that didn't have money picked it up … So we believe that it's destined for that person, that's why they get it.

Through these grounded acts of religiosity the space of the market, as described by Aida, was transformed from a space of commerce to an 'affective community space' of care, generosity and inclusiveness. These acts demonstrate the hollowness of narratives that place Muslims 'outside of the circle of trustworthy citizenship' in the Western public sphere (Jakubowicz 2007, 270).

Case Study Two: the 'Free Egypt' protest

Our second case study—the 'Free Egypt' protest—illustrates the tensions that are tied up with the politics of citizenship, whilst demonstrating that the intermingling of expressions of Islam and citizenship enacted by Muslim activists across different interconnected scales (virtual, global and local) do have the potential to produce new citizenship claims, sensibilities and expressions. On the 25 August 2013, a protest against the military coup in Egypt, and the civil war in Syria, brought a 400-strong crowd (Butt 2013) of Muslim and Egyptian activists together in the city. They gathered on the lawn in front of the State Library to be addressed by a range of speakers, including the Grand Mufti of Australia, before marching down Swanston Street to Federation Square.

The crowd presented a visually arresting scene, with the diversity of participants being expressed in terms of age, gender (families, young men and women) and through the display of national flags, including Egyptian (see Plate 1, centre background), Syrian, Turkish (Plate 1, right, background) Palestinian and Australian (Plate 1, centre background) flags. These signs of national and transnational affiliations were shaped by an emerging and evolving political context in Egypt and the Middle East, where divisions between 'Islamists' and 'secularists' had deepened after the 'Arab Spring' (Isakhan, Mansouri, and Azbarzadeh 2012). Forms of religious embodiment and performances were made visible through bodies praying, wearing the hijab (see Plate 2, right foreground and middle distance) or sporting beards and skull caps, and through the presence of Islamic flags bearing the *shahada* (see Plate 1, centre left background) which is often

Plate 1. Turkish, Egyptian and Australian flags, 'Free Egypt' protest, 2013. Source: Amelia Johns.

read in the West as a sign of Islamic identity politics, provoking Western fears of a radical Islam.[5]

Intersecting with these signifiers of Islamic, national and regional identities, large swathes of the crowd were adorned with symbols of the R4bia movement (i.e. yellow gloves, four fingered salute, see Plate 2, middle distance and background.). R4bia is a transnational protest movement mobilised in response to the massacre of pro-Morsi supporters in Egypt's Rabaa al-Adawiya square. On the website, the movement calls for an awakening

Plate 2. Protesters adorned in the signs and symbols of the R4bia movement. Source: Amelia Johns.

of 'Islamic conceptions of solidarity, justice and freedom' and the 'return of Muslims to the world stage' in language that is often provocative and critical of the West.[6] As such it has been the source of publicly expressed anxieties in Europe and the USA, where it has been referred to as a front for a more extreme Islamic politics of difference.

However, in the staging of the Melbourne 'Free Egypt' rally the messages were selectively conveyed to connect with non-Muslim co-citizens through the use of democratic and nationalist idioms. This brought to mind the criticisms made by Pickerill (2009) and McGinty (2012), for whom performances of Muslim activism and political voice in the Western public sphere can lead to the sidelining of religious content and expression (Pickerill 2009). For Pickerell and McGinty, Muslim activists thereby participate in coercive citizenship and nation-building projects. However, in our own analysis, the framing of the voices as Australian voices for democracy opened the rally and its message up to non-Muslims and non-co-religionists. This emphasised the shared responsibility of Australians bearing witness to violence and injustice as global citizens capable of mobilising their voice to defend human rights anywhere in the world. This was performed in a manner that did not exclude Islamic theological and ethical content and performance, but framed these within more inclusive categories and frames of recognition. Ahmad, an organiser of the event, argued that besides claiming rights to the city as Australian citizens, the protest was about mobilising an inclusive politics of citizenship grounded in a shared conception of justice:

> Ahmad (Egyptian heritage, Australian born, aged 40–45): We wanted to emphasise the fact that we're Australians, and so that's why you saw a lot of Australian flags … because we wanted to show that this is not just an Egyptian issue, this is not just a Turkish or Syrian issue … We believe that our concerns should be concerns of broader society as well because we're members of this society.

This desire to enact forms of solidarity and citizenship that transcend Muslim-Australian identity is significant and provides an example of what Butler (2004) might refer to as an embodied performance of non-normative citizenship which is inclusive of a range of claims to identity, rights and justice, but which primarily makes appeals to the common bond of shared vulnerability.

The song of the movement, written by Egyptian scholar and former leading figure in the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood Sayyid Qutb (1906–66), was also played through speakers at the front of the crowd, creating an emotionally charged atmosphere which stirred a sense of religious obligation and claims. In between, speakers led the crowd in chanting: 'Free, free Egypt free … Yes, yes democracy', demonstrating that the passions mobilised were also in defence of an inclusive democracy, where religious values and ethics would contribute to a multi-voiced criticism of injustice. Whilst the crowd chanted, a street performance took place in which men carried three mock coffins (Plate 3) bearing the words 'Peace', 'Freedom' and 'Justice', adopting the visual idioms and practices of numerous other protests in the city, thus cutting across boundaries of identity to provoke feelings of care and concern for common humanity and injustice.

Taking place in the centre of the city on a busy weekend day, the protest caught the attention of passers-by, some of whom asked questions of the moving crowd or filmed the protest as they marched towards Federation Square, an occurrence which Ahmad claimed was the reason for the central location chosen:

Plate 3. Street performance for justice in Egypt, 'Free Egypt' protest, 2013. Source: Amelia Johns.

> Ahmad: One of the great things about the rally is that because we walked from State Parliament to Federation Square, we picked up a lot of people along the way … There were lots of people asking questions and you know … And that was really the point. That was the whole point.

Reflecting on the structural limits on the ability of Muslims to gain public visibility, engage with public issues and shape the public discourse, Ahmad stressed that social media activity was significant to this protest, as it was to other protests and social movements, shaping alternative public spheres and spaces where citizenship could be expressed beyond state-centric thinking. Ahmad felt this was actually leading to deeper political engagement of the Muslim community with the rights and responsibilities of being Australian citizens as well as global citizens.

These protest performances are striking in the way they mobilise a plurality of Muslim and non-Muslim religious, political and activist voices and bodies in a show of solidarity against the injustice in Egypt, and to a lesser extent Syria. This also demonstrates the diversity of Muslims living in Western societies, their beliefs, practices and values, and the cosmopolitan social fabric and ethical orientations of urban publics in the global city. Significantly, the performances enacted on the day drew upon a range of intersecting claims to identity, justice, rights and citizenship (with protesters making claims as Muslims, as Australian citizens, as dual citizens, as humans). Despite our focus on these performances as 'grounded' and performative acts of citizenship that centre Islamic values in the public spaces of the city, it is significant that these claims opened up a fluid 'civic' space which united global and local concerns, and secular, democratic claims to citizen rights and social justice with Islamic religious and political beliefs and ethical claims. Indeed, these aspects of the protest bring to mind the work of Tariq

Ramadan (2004) and others (e.g. Esposito 2005; Hassan 2012) who regard the theological concept of the *ummah* (referring in a politico-theological sense to the global community of Muslim believers), as well as nation-state-centric concepts of citizenship and belonging, to be transformed by global processes of migration and the expansion of digital technologies and information technologies.

But whilst *ummah* refers to membership of a global Muslim community, associated feelings of belonging to Islam and its faith traditions require that members 'bear witness to the faith before all humankind by defending and spreading justice, solidarity and the values connected with honesty, generosity, brotherhood and love' (Ramadan 2004, 90). This grounds the responsibilities and duties of the *ummah* in the particular social contexts in which Muslims find themselves, anywhere in the world, whilst expanding the boundaries of the community to which justice and social responsibility must be conveyed.

Arguing from a different perspective, Mandaville (2001) suggests that globally networked communication has led to a reimagining of the *ummah* in a different sense by mediating and drawing together a global congregation of believers into a shared public sphere. This highlights the boundlessness of the faith community. But Mandaville also suggests that the boundlessness of communication engendered by digital networks opens up the 'community of believers' to intercultural, inter- and intra-faith dialogue, leading to new debates about Islam and the political community, and allowing new ideas to be incorporated into and nourish the central testimony and ethical imperatives of Islam, which is the 'brotherhood' of humankind and the imperative to defend humanity and bear witness to injustice. These twin themes were powerfully conveyed through the 'Free Egypt' protest.

Emotional and performative dimensions of Islamic religiosity were also central to the scene, reshaping the public space around images of woundedness and martyrdom, with a 'fleshy politics' of religious victimhood intersecting with claims to shared responsibility. This was expressed by members of the crowd carrying images of the faces of victims of police and army brutality in Egypt. These performances were of great significance to Ahmad and Tahwid—both Muslims of Egyptian cultural heritage. For them the vulnerable and suffering bodies of Egyptians stimulated spiritual connections and raw emotions which were mobilised towards new moral and emotional geographies and claims of solidarity. Although Ahmad and Tahwid identified with the young revolutionaries in Egypt's Tahrir Square who were calling for a leadership that moved beyond the Islamist/secular binary, they also claimed brotherhood and solidarity with those calling for justice for pro-Morsi supporters:

> Tahwid (Egyptian heritage, aged 20–25): I'm seeing injustice, I'm seeing people dying, I'm seeing people getting killed in a massacre just for protesting or resisting. I mean I wish every citizen, every Egyptian, in every city in the world where they have some civil rights and freedom of speech, to get up there and speak against tyrants—I'm here for the Islamist or the Muslim as well, or generally a wide range of people.
> Ahmad: The emotion was quite raw … I mean it was a political protest, but there was a very strong spiritual aspect to it as well. And I don't know if you picked that up being amongst the crowd, but for me personally it was very emotional, and there was a lot of reference to God, and a lot of reference to the injustice committed and the obligation of Muslims to really support their fellow Muslims around the world.

The vulnerable and suffering body was a central trigger of spiritual feelings and emotions which both centre and transgress bodily boundaries. These were significant to the emergent forms of political subjectivity and citizenship (mediated, affective, religious) enacted in the rally, and to the envisioning of new moral and emotional geographies and claims of solidarity that traversed boundaries of difference:

> Ahmad: The Prophet in one of his very famous *Hadiths*, referred to Muslims around the world as being one body, and if one part of the body is in pain, then the rest of the body is suffering as well. And if one part of the body is diseased, then the rest of the body is suffering from that as well … I think a lot of non-Muslims find that hard to understand. I don't know if they really understand it, I mean I think some people actually almost fear that. The fact that, oh Muslims, there's a—there's almost like a secret society and they're all getting together, and—but it's actually quite open. And it classically means that we should have care and concern for our fellow Muslims, but not just Muslims, it actually extends to all humanity, and that you have equal obligations to non-Muslims.

On the one hand, then, it is important to focus on the 'Free Egypt' protest as an expression of the substantive goal to have the claims of Muslim minority rights of citizenship publicly expressed, and to achieve a level of visibility and recognition for these claims. This complies with ideas of 'multicultural citizenship' as well as 'rights to the city' discourses, which Amin and Thrift (2002, 141) propose as a substantive goal of democracy which enhances active citizenship. But more than this, and one of the key aims of this paper, has been to highlight the way the protest also provided a public platform for disruptive 'acts of citizenship' in which spatial, bodily, emotional, technological and social forces were brought together to disrupt habitual performances of Islamic faith and citizenship and awaken new cosmopolitan imaginings.

Further, as Butler (2006), Isin and Nielsen (2008), and other theorists argue, emotional forms and modes of being are vital to these performances, interrupting the predictable rhythms of everyday life in the city to shape new social realities and civic imaginations. Following Butler, in this analysis we have highlighted how visual and affective signs of woundedness, vulnerability and injustice combined with the public spaces of the street in the 'Free Egypt' protest and provided the platform for a potentially transformative politics of citizenship.

Conclusion

The claim to shared values with Australian citizens as well as expressions of responsibility towards the Muslim *ummah* provided the possibility to claim rights to citizenship in the city. This responsibility was grounded in local places, and created opportunities for envisioning a new politics of urban living and more inclusive forms of citizenship. In particular, by exploring this 'grounded' dimension that is central to everyday life for Muslims, this paper has considered how such performances open up possibilities for intercultural understanding, social solidarity and overall convivial coexistence. These performative acts had the potential to invigorate new forms of civic participation and responsibility, enacted across interconnected scales (local, global, virtual), perhaps anchored in a shared vulnerability of the flesh.

Overall, the findings situate and contextualise understandings of everyday life for a diverse Muslim population by focusing on the everyday, embodied acts and performances

that blur the boundaries between the secular and the sacred in urban spaces of intercultural encounter and political engagement. The findings of the qualitative analysis contained in this paper, and to a large extent the findings from the broader project, are also significant at the level of reconciling an assumed rift between public manifestations of religiosity on the one hand and formal membership of and affiliations within political communities on the other. The daily performance of religious acts with its spiritual tendency and ritualistic intensity does not shut the avenues for intercultural connections and cross-cultural openness. On the contrary, such performative religiosity creates opportunities for meaningful expressions, cross-cultural exchanges and ultimately new imaginaries of ethical and convivial coexistence that transcend the politics of the nation-state with its exclusionist racist excesses. In the context of Islamic religiosity in the West, the findings reported in this paper highlight the social and political possibilities created through embodied acts or performances that make Muslim Australians visible in public space. Such increased visibility of Muslims living in the West does not erect barriers and segregate communities but it does shatter silos and unite fellow human beings cross-culturally.

Notes

1. The ARC study, titled 'Islamic Religiosity' focused on cities in the USA (Detroit), France (Grenoble/Lyon) and Australia (Melbourne). The project aimed to explore where and how a diverse cross-section of Muslims living in these cities participated in Islamic practices and rituals and whether such participation contributed to a sense of belonging and political engagement.
2. City of Greater Dandenong, Population Current and Forecast, 2014.
3. City of Greater Dandenong, Statistical Summary—Cultural Diversity, 2014.
4. City of Greater Dandenong, Educational Outcomes, 2014.
5. The association of the black flag and militant Islamism has come into sharp relief since the staging of this protest, with the emergence of Islamic State and its slightly modified black flag.
6. For further information on the movement's aims see Jadaliyya's explanation of the symbolic meaning of the movement, and its transnationalism: http://english.alarabiya.net/en/media/2013/08/21/Four-finger-salute-Egypt-rivals-use-Rabaa-symbol-to-turn-Facebook-yellow.html

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