

**Negotiating Masculinities: The  
Experience of Male Teachers in  
Indonesian Early Childhood  
Education**

Hani Yulindrasari

ORCID ID 0000-0002-6448-6041

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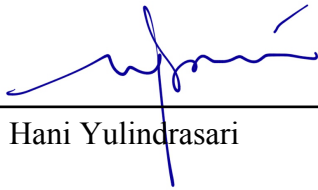
## **Abstract**

Since the fall of President Suharto, the New Order's hegemonic masculinity has been increasingly contested and reconfigured. This thesis expands understandings of historical and contemporary formations of Indonesian masculinities. It focuses particularly on 'nurturing masculinities' by examining the gender narratives and practices of men who teach kindergarten age children. Specifically, this research demonstrates how male teachers navigate social expectations about their work and gender identity in a female-dominated and feminised profession. It adopts a focused ethnography research design that combines in-depth interviews with classroom observations. Interviews were undertaken with eight male teachers from five schools and their female colleagues, student's parents, and the school's principals and managers. Observations took place in classrooms and the broader school environment in order to record male teacher's interactions with students and teachers and the alignment with their personal narratives. This thesis shows the dynamics through which hegemonic masculinity is constantly being both defended and challenged by male teachers. The discourse of nurture, which is pervasive in the early childhood profession, is the modality through which the negotiations of masculinity take place. The thesis shows how male teachers reorient both gendered discourses of nurture and understandings of hegemonic masculinity in their self-narratives about their work and in their workplace interactions.

## **Declaration of Originality**

I declare that this thesis

- (i) is an original work and is an account of research carried out by myself while enrolled as a PhD candidate at The University of Melbourne,
- (ii) does not contain material that has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any University, nor material published or written by another person, except where due reference is made,
- (iii) is fewer than 100,000 words in length, exclusive of tables, bibliographies and appendices.



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## **List of Abbreviations**

AIPEG	Australia Indonesian Partnership for Economic Governance
ALB	Aliansi Laki-Laki Baru, the New Men Alliance. It is a network of male activists from various non-government organisations across Indonesia. They promote feminist men who oppose gender-based violence and work with feminists in promoting gender equality.
BAPPENAS	Badan Perencanaan Pembangunan Negara, the Indonesian Ministry of National Development Planning.
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BCEC	Bankwest Curtin Economic Centre
BPS	Badan Pusat Statistic, the Indonesian National Board of Statistics.
CDES	Centre for Development Economics and Sustainability
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DoECE	Directorate of Early Childhood Education
ECE	Early Childhood Education
EFA	Education for All
FC	Family's Charity
FPI	Front Pembela Islam (Islamic Defenders Front), a thug based organisation that uses the name of Islam to attack perceived societal vices and minority religious.

GER	Gross enrolment rate
HIMPAUDI	Himpunan Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini Indonesia, the Indonesian Association of Early Childhood Education
HTI	Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia, Indonesian branch of Hizbut Tahrir, a transnational Islamic political organisation aiming at the implementation of <i>Khilafah</i> (Islamic system of governance) in the world.
IGTKI	Ikatan Guru Taman Kanak-Kanak Indonesia, the Indonesian Kindergarten Teacher Association.
IMF	International Monetary Fund
JIS	Jakarta International School. Note, the school changed its name to Jakarta Intercultural School after the incident of child sexual abuse in 2014.
KEMDIKBUD	Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture.
KEMDIKNAS	Kementerian Pendidikan Nasional, the Indonesian Ministry of National Education. It was the name of Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture from 1999-2012.
KEMKOMINFO	Kementerian Komunikasi dan Informatika, the Indonesian Ministry of Communications and Informatics.
Komnas PA	Komisi Nasional Perlindungan Anak, the National Commission of Child Protection, a non-government organisation established in 1998.
KPAI	Komisi Perlindungan Anak Indonesia, the Indonesian commission of child protection, an independent commission established and funded by the government since 2002.

KPI	Komisi Penyiaran Indonesia, the Indonesian Broadcasting Commission, an independent commission established and funded by the government since 2002.
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Biseksual, dan Transgender
MUI	Majelis Ulama Indonesia (Indonesia Ulama Council). MUI is an organisation consisting of ulamas and Muslim scholars established on the 26th July 1975 to bridge ulamas, diverse Muslim groups, and the government. In the post-New Order era, MUI has been criticised by some Muslim scholars for bringing the Indonesian community closer to Islamic orthodoxy and failing to accommodate various Islamic groups (see Ichwan, 2005).
NGO	Non-government organisations
NU	Nahdlatul Ulama (Revival of the Religious Scholar), the largest Islamic organisation in Indonesia established in 1926 by KH Hasyim Asyari.
PAUD	Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini, Indonesian term for early childhood education.
PDI-P	Partai Demokrasi Indonesia – Perjuangan. It was established in 1999, was the winning political party in the 2014 election and the party of Joko Widodo the current president of Indonesia (2014–2019). It is currently led by Megawati Sukarnoputri, a daughter of Sukarno, the first president of Indonesia. Megawati was also the president of Indonesia from 2001 to 2004.
PE	Physical education
PKBI	Perkumpulan Keluarga Berencana Indonesia, Indonesia

Association of Planned Parenthood.

- PKI Partai Komunis Indonesia, the Indonesian Communist Party. It was a political party which was banned in 1965.
- PKK Pemberdayaan dan Kesejahteraan Keluarga (Family Empowerment and Welfare). The abbreviation stayed the same across time, but what it stands for has changed three times from Pendidikan Kesejahteraan Keluarga (Education for Family Welfare) (1957-72) to Pembinaan Kesejahteraan Keluarga (Coaching for Family Welfare) (1972-2000) and to Pemberdayaan dan Kesejahteraan Keluarga (Family Empowerment and Welfare) (since 2000). It is a women's grassroots organisation established by the government in 1957 to assist in the implementation of family-related government's programs.
- PKS Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (Prosperous Justice Party), an Islamic conservative political party. It was initially established as Partai Keadilan (Justice Party) in 1998 and changed its name to Partai Keadilan Sejahtera in 2002. In the 2014 election, this party won 17 seats (6.789% share of votes) in the parliament.
- SGRC(-UI) Support Group and Resource Centre on Gender and Sexuality Studies, an off campus based of Universitas Indonesia's student and alumni who are concerned about gender and sexuality issues.
- SPG TK Sekolah Pendidikan Guru Taman Kanak-Kanak, a school that produces kindergarten teachers.
- TK Taman Kanak-Kanak, kindergarten.

TPQ	Taman Pembelajaran Quran, a place where children learn to read Quran.
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States of America

## Glossary

*AILA*: Aliansi Cinta Keluarga (Family Love Alliance), an alliance of conservative groups promoting family resilience against feminism, homosexuality, and transgenderism. The alliance uses the legal system to criminalise consensual sex outside marriage, homosexuals and transgenders.

*Among*: A word that signals nurturing, education and parenting. It literally means to educate and to maintain (Javanese word).

*Asah, asih, asuh*: The three components that make up *among*. *Asah* means to educate and teach skills and knowledge to children; *asih* means to love, to fulfil children's emotional needs; *asuh* means to care, to fulfil children's physical needs.

*Banci/waria*: Indonesian terms for men who act and dress like women (crossdressers). *Banci* and *waria* are terms used for transvestite, transsexual and transgender persons. *Banci* is also commonly used to insult a person, mostly a man but also a woman, who is considered to act cowardly or irresponsibly.

*Bapak*: Father, referring first to a biological father/parental relationship. It is also commonly used to address adult men, men in high-status positions, and in formal settings, as it conveys respect.

Bernstein's invisible pedagogy: It refers to a model of pedagogy that provides flexibility and opportunities for the student to determine and negotiate what they want to learn and how to learn it. In this model, the teacher has less control over the student in the learning process.

Bernstein's visible pedagogy: It refers to a model of pedagogy that provides less opportunity for the student to determine what they want to learn and how to learn it. In visible pedagogy, the teacher has explicit control over the student in the learning process.

Child-centred discourse: It is an approach commonly used in ECE, which is influenced by theories in developmental psychology. The discourse views children as following universal developmental milestones and is applied to any child regardless of the child's socioeconomic and cultural background. The discourse places teachers and other adults as facilitators who assist but do not interfere in the children's development (Piaget 1971; Marsh 2003; Adriany 2013).

Fatherhood Forum: It is an organisation of men and fathers who are concerned about lack of men's leadership in the family and aiming to restore men position as the leader in the family. The Fatherhood Forum promotes fathers' involvement in child-rearing but also sustains child-care as mothers' first and foremost responsibility.

Froebel School: Froebel school was another name for a kindergarten. Frederick Froebel was the founder of institutionalised early childhood education, which was named kindergarten (garden of children). He established the first kindergarten in Germany in the 1830s. Froebel's early childhood education model then spread all over the world; the schools were named kindergarten or Froebel school. The Dutch colonial government introduced Froebel school/kindergarten to Indonesia, but it was only for children from Dutch families.

*Gemulai*: Literally means graceful feminine gesture. The respondents in this study used it to refer to a man who acts in a feminine manner and is perceived as a sign of *banci/waria* and gayness.

Gender practice(s): In this thesis, gender practice(s) refers to narrative and performance or activities of respondents related to their gender. This thesis uses the term to refer to masculinities and femininities as configurations of practices which are influenced by gender structures, including gender structures that arrange gender division of labour in an organisation (Connell 1987, 62).

*Guru*: Teacher.

*Hati*: Literally means liver. Most respondents in this study use this word (*hati*) when referring to feelings and emotions, similar to ‘heart’ in English, which is often used in reference to emotions and feelings.

Hegemonic masculinity: This thesis uses the concept of hegemonic masculinity developed by Raewyn Connell. It is a type of masculinity that is idealised by a society, supported by most men in the society, and sustains practices that institutionalised men’s dominance over women (Connell 1987, 185). Hegemonic masculinity in this thesis is not singular; there are versions of hegemonic masculinity idealised by different social groups.

Heteronormativity: refers to a system whereby heterosexuality is positioned as natural and the norm, and gender roles are premised on heterosexual relations (Wieringa 2012, 516).

*Ibu*: Mother, it refers first to a biological mother/parental relationship. It is also commonly used to address adult women, women in high-status positions, and in formal settings, as it conveys respect.

Ki Hajar Dewantara: Ki Hajar Dewantara was the first Indonesian Minister of Education, Teaching and Culture. He was known as “the Indonesian father of education/Bapak Pendidikan Indonesia”. He wrote a number of books about education, children, and culture. He was the founder of Taman Siswa (Garden of Pupils), the first education institution with a commitment to nationalism, established in 1922 (Kartodirdjo, Poesponegoro, and Notosusanto 1977). Ki Hajar Dewantoro’s ideas about education and culture are considered to be ideal for Indonesian education.

*Kodrat*: God given (predestined) characteristics of humans and non-humans. Used in this thesis to emphasise predestined masculine and feminine roles

Kohlberg’s theory of gender identity development: This is a theory in psychology that explains how children acquire gender, which influences behaviours

related to their gender. The influence of children's understanding of gender becomes more prominent once children reach a stage where they understand that a person's sex is stable and unchanging. See Kohlberg (1966) for further information about this theory.

*Lebay*: A slang word for unnatural and intentional overactive, weird and exaggerated behaviours. Similar to *gemulai* and *melambai*, *lebay* was often used by respondents to refer to unmanly behaviour.

*Melambai*: Literally means a swaying movement like leaves on a tree blown by the wind. Like *gemulai*, *melambai* was also used by the respondents when discussing behaviour that was not consistent with being 'a real man'.

*Pangkal Turunan*: The person through whom family lineage passes. Men are associated with the role of *pangkal turunan*.

*Pemangku Turunan*: The maintainer of offspring. The children's educator and carer. Women are associated with the role of *pemangku turunan*.

Social Learning: a concept in psychology stating that an individual learns from other people through observations, imitations, and modelling. This concept was first introduced by Albert Bandura and Richard H Walters in 1963 and further developed by Albert Bandura in 1977.

## Chapter 1: Introduction

The idea to conduct research on male teachers did not cross my mind until I overheard an exchange between a male colleague and the only male student in the early childhood education (ECE) program at my university in 2012. I was sitting in the staff room having a break from my work. Three members of staff were present, including me, when the male student came in to collect a projector for his class. I clearly remember one of my male colleagues saying to the student (with a teasing smile on his face), ‘Hey how are you Matt (pseudonym)? Are you still a man? Just take care! Don’t be *melambai*’. *Melambai* means swaying, or a sweeping motion of the hands. It is used currently to refer to the hand gestures of *waria* (male transgenders) or effeminate men. Calling a man *melambai* raises doubts about a man’s heterosexuality and therefore his ‘manliness’. The implication here was that ECE teaching had the potential to emasculate. The student did not respond; he just smiled uncomfortably.

My colleague’s comments troubled and perplexed me, particularly because he was a male who had both taught young children and was teaching students in ECE. He was firmly heterosexual, married with three children, but found it amusing to ‘joke’ about the sexuality of a male he was teaching and who was following the same career path as him. In Indonesian society, it is somewhat common to see men teaching young children. It is very common to see men teaching children in mosques, and many ECE institutions hire men to teach certain subjects, such as music and sport. However, these men are not called ‘*guru Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini* (PAUD)<sup>1</sup> [ECE teacher]’; instead, they are called ‘*guru agama* (religion teacher)’, ‘*guru musik* (music teacher)’ or ‘*guru olah-raga* (physical education [PE] teacher)’. It is common to see men teaching children as young as four years old how to read Quran or how to play music and sport, yet they are not stigmatised and their heterosexuality is never questioned. Their professional

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<sup>1</sup> Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini (PAUD) is the Indonesian term for Early Childhood Education (ECE)

identity as *bukan guru PAUD* (not an ECE teacher) may have saved them from this stigma.

My colleague's comments, which linked the student teacher's career choice and sexuality, were shocking but not unusual. As another example of the stigma attached to men in ECE, an officer at a national ECE policy institution stated she would not recommend any school hire a man as a full-time teacher in ECE. She said that employing men in ECE was 'too risky' in terms of child sexual abuse. However, she was comfortable employing male teachers to teach religion, music or sport (Retno, 21 November 2014, Jakarta). ECE is a female-dominated profession that relies on the stereotypically feminine qualities of care and nurturance. Men who display these characteristics are considered to destabilise hegemonic masculinity by acting in female ways; in doing this, they raise suspicions about their sexual motives.

Why was being an ECE teacher considered incompatible with being a man? Why was it so disconcerting for a male teacher to see a man studying to be an ECE teacher? The questions that this one joke raised compelled me to understand the construction of Indonesian masculinity in general, and more particularly in traditionally female-dominated professions. In contemporary times, such professions are a key site in which hegemonic Indonesian masculinity appears under debate, increasingly surveilled and precarious.

This thesis aims to understand how masculinities are defended, challenged, reshaped and negotiated by men in relation to their profession as teachers in an Indonesian ECE setting. It explores the connections between subjective masculine identity, hegemonic gender culture, professional subjectivity, gender and the pedagogical practices of early childhood male teachers. It does this by investigating how male teachers in ECE position themselves in a female-dominated field; how they assign meaning to their experiences as male teachers; how others (colleagues, students and students' parents) position them in the ECE field, and ultimately, how they define their masculinity.

The following research questions guide this thesis. How does society (parents, female teachers, school managers, ECE policymakers and authorities) perceive men who teach young children in early childhood settings? How do male teachers experience working in a female-dominated workforce? How do they perceive their gender identity? How do they understand social perceptions regarding their masculinity? How do they negotiate masculinities in the context of their pedagogical performance? In what way do male teacher performances construct masculinities in ECE contexts actively and dynamically?

In order to establish the social context in which my research was conducted I outline below what I describe as a moral panic around masculinity. I explain how this is connected to my research on men working in a female-dominated field. My thesis introduction explains some key concepts used throughout the thesis such as hegemonic masculinity. It locates my research in several fields of study on Indonesia including research on gender and labour, on masculinity and on gender and education. This chapter situates my research alongside global studies of men in ECE. It also explains my methodological approach and introduces the key case study used throughout the thesis.

### **Moral Panics and Masculinity**

Since 2014, several paedophilia cases have received considerable attention in the mass media and fired the public imagination in Indonesia. In March 2014, a high-profile child sexual abuse case occurred in the kindergarten program of Jakarta International School (JIS). The children of Indonesian elites, foreign diplomats, and expatriates from over 60 countries attend this school. An Indonesian mother with an expatriate husband reported that five male janitors had raped her five-year-old son with help from a female janitor. The police arrested all six janitors: one died a day after being arrested. The police claimed this was suicide. Later in court, the five remaining janitors claimed that the investigator had forced them violently to plead guilty. This case then attracted further public attention, as the same mother reported two of JIS's male teachers—an Indonesian and a Canadian man—of sexually abusing three boys in the school. In August 2015, the

Indonesian Supreme Court imposed sentences of seven to eight years' imprisonment on the five janitors; in February 2016, the same court found the two male teachers guilty of sexual abuse and sentenced them to 11 years' imprisonment (British Broadcasting Corporation [BBC] Indonesia 2016).

Despite the court verdict, the JIS case was subject to a high level of scrutiny due to controversy about whether or not the incident actually happened. KontraS—a non-government commission for missing persons and victims of violence, and a centre of law and policy studies in Jakarta—suspected legal malpractice and malicious prosecution (Maulana 2016). KontraS and the male teachers' attorneys believed that a laboratory test, stating that a herpes simplex virus had infected the boy mentioned in the initial case, and which was the only physical evidence in the court prosecution, was invalid. The court denied four other tests, including two tests conducted in Europe showing that the boy had never contracted the virus, and a physical test stating that no physical signs of sodomy existed. In addition, a group of parents from JIS supported the male teachers and doubted that the assault had ever happened. Many argued that the janitors and male teachers were victims of a 'trial by the people', due to the resulting media frenzy. KontraS, JIS parents and the defendants' attorneys believed the mother had manufactured this case to obtain compensation of at least USD125 million.

The JIS case tapped into hidden and largely unspoken assumptions about men who fail to conform to the hegemonic ideals of Indonesian masculinity. It is easier to believe these men were guilty than to doubt the mother, let alone accuse the mother of using her son for money. The janitors were from a lower social class, stereotyped as rough and uneducated. The male teachers were an easy target as they were men working in a field not traditional for their gender, and one was a Canadian citizen. This foreignness symbolises 'Western' culture, which is widely assumed as being incompatible with Indonesian culture. I have used quotation marks here to highlight the widespread conservative propaganda associating 'Western' culture with total freedom, hedonism and promiscuity that threatens 'Indonesian' ethics and morality (Nertz 2013). 'Western' culture is often blamed in the popular imagination (and this is further fuelled by the Indonesian media) for

paedophilia, rape, drug abuse and HIV/AIDS, despite these issues also being of public concern in ‘western’ countries.

Regardless of whether the abuse occurred or not, what is concerning here is the moral panic this case generated. Komisi Perlindungan Anak Indonesia (KPAI), the Indonesian commission for child protection and Komisi Nasional Perlindungan Anak (Komnas PA), the National Commission on Child Protection, print and online media, as well as social media broadcasts, have all played a significant role in increasing the fear of paedophilia in Indonesia. In May 2014, the Komnas PA made national headlines by announcing that Indonesia was facing a ‘child sexual abuse emergency’ (Sasongko 2014). Reporting the Komnas PA’s statement, Sriwijaya Post, a local media outlet in Palembang, made a provocative headline linking child sexual abuse to homosexuality: ‘*Gawat! Indonesia Darurat Kejahatan Sexual dan LGBT pada anak*’ (‘Extreme danger! Indonesia is facing an emergency of child sexual abuse and [lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender] LGBT’) (Hafiz 2016). The KPAI, the Ministry of Communication and Information, and the Ministry of Women’s Empowerment and Child Protection adopted the same rhetoric (see Kementerian Komunikasi dan Informatika [KEMKOMINFO] (Indonesian Ministry of Communication and Information) 2015; Tribun Jogja 2015). Fear increased the perception of a threat to children’s safety. To deal with this fear, society needed a ‘folk devil’ to blame (Goode and Ben-Yehuda 2009, 2).

As studies about moral panics have shown, blame often falls to a group perceived to have failed in taking normative responsibility or one that deviates from the dominant morality code (Hier 2016, 416). Where heterosexual manhood is the hegemonic norm, homosexuality is easy to blame. A KPAI commissioner mentioned arbitrarily that JIS employed homosexual teachers, implying that somehow a connection existed between homosexuality and paedophilia (Ramadhan 2014). Dwi Estiningsih, a female psychologist (who was also a politician from the Islamic conservative party Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (PKS)) wrote an often shared ‘chirpstory’ (a compilation of tweets) entitled ‘*Propaganda LGBT*’:

The JIS case has proved for us that there is a connection between paedophilia and homosexuality. Paedophiles are also homosexuals! Homosexuality is a western culture, not ours. We can't let our children think that LGBT is normal. It is sinful and forbidden in Islam (Dwi Estiningsih, *Chirpstory post*, 7 August 2014, accessed 4 January 2017, <https://chirpstory.com/li/223140>).

JIS is an international school with an alternative curriculum including a secular education program. It is owned by an American company. As such, JIS symbolised 'the West', the enemy of conservative Islamic groups and the case was easily used for a gender-based and political agenda. The highly conservative Islamic organisation Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI), for example, published an article entitled 'This is why predator paedophiles operate in international standard schools', discrediting JIS's liberal and secular values:

In many schools in Western countries like Poland, the USA, and even the centre of Catholic government, the Vatican, paedophilia cases are common. Often the perpetrators were the Catholic priests ... It is all because of Western values—both from the religion and/or the secular-liberal ideology—that is against *fitrah manusia* (the human's nature) (HTI 2014).

HTI and PKS had used gender issues to pursue their political agenda since 2006 when fierce debate and controversy existed regarding anti-pornography and *pornoaksi*<sup>2</sup> (a public act of sexual exploitation, abuse or erotica) legislation. The Bill restricted women's bodily expression and sexuality in the name of tradition and morality. Both HTI and PKS supported the Bill. For Islamist groups,

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<sup>2</sup> The anti-pornography and pornoaction Bill was prepared by the Department of Religion and the Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI)/Indonesian Muslim Scholar Council in 2001. The Bill was supported by PKS, MUI, Nahdatul Ulama (NU) and HTI. The Bill was rationalised as an attempt to protect women by controlling what they could and should wear and what they could and should not do with their bodies. The Bill threatened the continuance of many Indonesian traditional customs that did not fit Islamic standards. The Bill received resistance from democratic community groups, including Indonesian feminist groups, artists, philosophers and cultural groups who carried the message of *Bhineka Tunggal Ika* (unity in diversity), the official national motto of Indonesia. Due to the controversy, in 2006 the 2004 version of the Bill was finally revised, excluding *pornoaksi*. The revised Bill finally passed in October 2008. For further discussion about the controversy of the Bill, see Robinson (2015) and Allen (2009).

controlling women's bodies and sexuality is crucial to sustaining masculine Islamic power (Robinson 2015, 61).

Compounded by a new political emphasis on morality as promoted by conservative Islamic groups, such as the PKS and HTI, the JIS case triggered further suspicions. The JIS case strengthened heteronormative constructions of gender. Heteronormative constructions refer to a system whereby heterosexuality is positioned as natural and normative, and gender roles and expressions are premised on heterosexual and gender binary relations (Wieringa 2012, 516). Since this case, the call to protect gender heteronormativity, and ultimately Indonesian heteronationalism, has increased. Any deviation from dominant gender norms is considered abnormal and a threat to the nation, as several scholars have argued (Boellstorff 2004a, 480; Wieringa 2012, 519). In the aftermath of the JIS incident, men who displayed any sign of gender deviation, including men working in ECE, became increasingly subject to suspicion. This fear about changing gender ideology is not new. For decades, fears have existed regarding threats to women's destined role as loyal, faithful and obedient wives and mothers and its effects on family structures (see Simorangkir 2015; Dzuhayatin 2002; Blackburn 2004; Bennett 2012). This fear is now extended to encompass so-called feminised masculinity and its link to sexual deviancy.

In ECE, the fear of 'feminised masculinity' and homosexuality affects male teachers in contradictory ways. Similar to trends in western contexts (see Sumsion 2000c, Martino 2008, Murray 1996, Sargent 2005), moral panic concerning child sexual abuse has led to a persistent suspicion of male teachers working with young children. A man who cares for children not his own is vulnerable to social stigmatisation, as he deviates from the socially accepted masculine identity. Drawing on Connell's understanding of masculinity, Sargent (2005, 252) argues that men who teach young children are seen as 'traitors to masculinity'; problematically, they practice a masculinity that exhibits behaviour and a self-presentation that challenges hegemonic masculinity's legitimacy.

My colleague's comment that instigated this thesis, as well as research by Suyatno (2004, 19–23), reflects the stigma attributed to male teachers. They are viewed as

‘traitors to masculinity’, being ‘*kurang gagah*’ (less manly), and ‘*kemayu*’ (womanly). Because I undertook my fieldwork seven months after the JIS case had flared up, the associated moral panic had resulted in increased suspicion against men teaching in ECE. They were thus viewed by some not only as traitors to masculinity, but also as potential child sexual abuse perpetrators. Fastrack Funschool (FF), where I conducted most of my fieldwork, acted pre-emptively to anticipate parents’ reactions. The school held a special meeting with all its male teachers and established a new rule limiting teacher–child physical interactions.

As this thesis will demonstrate, an important paradox emerges in the way men working in ECE are positioned. Male teachers are seen as potential sexual predators, destroying the younger generation and threatening the nation. Conversely, male teachers are also seen as a cure for feminine masculinity and a guardian of boys’ masculinity. Men can be agents helping boys to be ‘real men’. Ideas about engaging more male teachers in ECE began to emerge in online public discussion forums in 2012. The quotation given below exemplifies people’s perceptions of male teachers as saviours of masculinity:

I have noticed that there are more and more effeminate males. They are younger generations of men who feel comfortable acting like women. They carry face powder, hair combs, and mirrors. It happens because of three things. First, the paucity of male teachers in kindergarten. Can you imagine when a female teacher tells a story about Umar Bin Khattab?<sup>3</sup> Imagine when she explains the characteristic of Umar ... ‘Umar is very strong and firm!’ her expression of strength will still be soft. This image will stick in the children’s minds, and when they get older, the softness will stay with them and enter their character (Fetriskha 2012).<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Umar Bin Khattab is one of the Sahaba (closest confidantes) of the Islamic prophet Muhammad. He was the second caliph of Islam. He was very influential and powerful. He was famous for his wisdom, piety and justice. In his time, the Islamic sphere of influence expanded rapidly. He ruled the Sasanian Empire and most of the Byzantine Empire. He was physically tall, strong and an expert in wrestling. His appearance embodied ‘the idealized Islamic masculinity’.

<sup>4</sup> This article was written by Adrian Fetriskha, a contributor to the conservative Islamic online media outlet, *dakwatuna.com*. It represents the fear of a feminised generation of boys; the page was visited by 191,342 visitors and received 57 positive responses. See

Fetriskha (the author) considers the lack of ECE male teachers has resulted in a feminised generation; thus, he recommends recruiting men to teach in kindergarten and primary school, so that boys will have appropriate masculine role models who can show them how to be ‘real’ men. However, just having men working in ECE is insufficient; these men are expected to represent hegemonic masculine traits such as strength and discipline. This contrasts with caring and nurturing roles that ECE teachers also need to display.

Teachers, either men or women, have always been expected to be role models for their students. The Indonesian term for ‘role model’ is *panutan*, which means people with a positive influence on others. Ki Hajar Dewantoro, known as the father of education, influenced education philosophy in Indonesia. His teaching emphasises three principles: *Ing ngarsa sung tuladha*, *Ing madya mangun karsa*, *Tut wuri handayani* (Suryadi 2009, 57).<sup>5</sup> These three principles mean that teachers should operate as role models, motivators and supporters. The principle of *ing ngarsa sung tuladha* (teacher as a role model) establishes the expectation that teachers, in their performance, attitudes and behaviour, must accord with standard social norms and virtues, including gender norms.

Gender socialisation and conformity is not unique to Indonesia, and the argument for more male role models (for boys) working in ECE has emerged in campaigns globally (Moreau 2011; Winters et al. 2013; Sargent 2000). However, tension exists between academic recommendations and broader social expectations regarding what type of behaviour male teachers should display as role models. Some scholars argue that being a role model in ECE means demonstrating an alternative masculinity that challenges hegemonic masculinity (Sumsion, 1999a; Warin, 2006, 2014; Sargent, 2005). Warin (2006, 535) argues that male teachers can be strategic, delivering a balanced view of masculinity that challenges a hegemonic norm with a caring and supportive style. She calls this a ‘nurturing

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<https://rangtalu.wordpress.com/2012/08/05/cerita-ramadhan-13-generasi-gemulai/>; *Lahirnya Generasi Gemulai* (The Birth of Feminine Generations).

<sup>5</sup> Ki Hajar Dewantara was the first Indonesian Minister of Education, Teaching and Culture. He was known as “the Indonesian father of education/*Bapak Pendidikan Indonesia*”. He was born into a highly ranked family in Yogyakarta on 2 May 1889 and named Raden Mas Suwardi Surjaningrat. In 1922, he established Taman Siswa (*The Garden of Pupil*), an education institution with commitment to nationalism (Kartodirdjo, Poesponegoro, and Notosusanto 1977). He was.

version of masculinity' (Warin 2006, 523). However, research shows that it is challenging to display alternative masculinities, as male teachers are expected to display a 'masculinity' that is widely acceptable by society in order to break the feminised culture of the educational setting (Manke 1998; Mills et al. 2008; Murray 1996; Sargent 2005; Warin, 2006). For example, male teachers are expected to extend discipline, be committed to the sport and other physical activities, and maintain an emotional distance from employment and relationships (Mills et al. 2008, 72; Sargent 2005, 255).

Despite these obstacles, Sumsion (2000b, 268) found that male teachers in Australia, even with the high social expectation to display hegemonic masculinity, have the potential to demonstrate diverse masculinities that will challenge dominant gender constructions. To support men as agents of gender reform, Sumsion (adopting McLean [1997]) argues that we need to understand how the intersection of masculine culture and other social factors influence men's worldview. Therefore, it is vital to investigate the masculinities of men who teach young children, and their perspectives on gender. Such an investigation should be based on understandings of gender complexity and an acknowledgement that gender stereotypes are inherently problematic for both men and women (Sumsion 2000b, 269).

Drawing from the insights of these studies, in this thesis I examine the societal expectations for male teachers to be model 'real men'; how both society and the male teachers themselves construct 'real men'; whether tension occurs between what is expected socially and what is perceived by the male teachers. When tension is apparent, I query how the male teachers navigate that tension. As described above, perceptions of male teachers are contradictory: male teachers are both a threat to, and saviours of, masculinity. A clear acceptance exists of men who teach religion, music and sport versus men who are full-time ECE teachers. These contradictions indicate the inherent complexity and ambiguity of hegemonic constructions of gender. Building on Brenner (1995) and Sumsion (2000b), this thesis scrutinises the complexity, ambiguity and contradictions of

masculinity that operate in the ECE to understand the construction of Indonesian masculinity in general.

### **Masculinities: Hegemonic and Plural**

In this thesis, I use Connell and Messerschmidt's (2005, 845–853) theory of masculinity as the main analytical framework. In 1995 (revised in 2005), Connell originally theorised that masculinity is plural and hierarchical, with hegemonic masculinity in the top of the hierarchy. Hegemonic masculinity refers to a type of masculinity that allows and legitimates a single global pattern of dominant power of men over women and other men (Connell 2005, 77). In 2005, however, Connell and Messerschmidt (2005, 847-848) revised this theory to argue that hegemonic masculinity is more complex and that no singular pattern of hegemonic masculinity exists that creates a global dominance of men over women. Instead, the pattern of hegemonic masculinity varies across context and may incorporate elements from other types of masculinity.

Many of Connell's original ideas concerning hegemonic masculinity remain relevant for my analysis. In the context of Indonesia in general a strong cultural ideal exists regarding what it means to be a real man. Connell's theory could explain the relation between culturally idealised masculinity and other types of masculinity not aligned with the ideal version. Connell (2005, 76–80), for example, characterises relationships between masculinities as based on the practices and power relations between masculinities: hegemonic, dominant/subordinate, complicit, and marginalised/authorised. Hegemony, argues Connell, is achieved through collective acknowledgement and interaction between cultural ideals and institutional power. Therefore, hegemonic masculinity is defined as a particular type that is more central and closer to social power and authority than are others. Hegemonic masculinity is normative and ideological. It is an embodiment of what is considered the most honourable way to be a man; other men can then position themselves against this. It assumes social dominance and the subordination of non-hegemonic masculinities. The terms 'dominant' and 'subordinate' refer to relationships between groups of men. Subordinate

masculinities are those that threaten the legitimacy of hegemonic masculinity. Masculinities associated with femininity are considered subordinate to hegemonic heterosexual masculinity (Warrick 1999, 25). Homosexual masculinity is an example of subordinate masculinity (Connell 2005, 79). Considering the association of ECE with female workers and femininity, men who work in ECE can also be considered to practice subordinate masculinity, as their masculinities are often under scrutiny (Sargent 2004, 174). Complicity refers to how hegemonic masculinity provides a patriarchal dividend for men who do not themselves embody hegemonic characteristics.<sup>6</sup> Finally, ‘marginalised’ and ‘authorised’ refer to relationships within dominant or subordinate masculinities formed by interactions between gender and other social structures, such as race and class. Marginalised and authorised masculinities depend on authorisation from the hegemonic masculinity of the dominant group (Connell 2005, 80). Understanding power relations between masculinities is useful for my work, revealing how society and male teachers perceive the masculinity of men who work in ECE, in relation to culturally idealised or hegemonic masculinity.

Connell and Messerschmidt’s (2005) concept of hegemonic masculinity recognises the complex relationship between various constructions of masculinities. They adopt Demetriou’s (2001, 348) concept of a ‘hybrid masculine bloc’ that implies hybridisation of ‘various and diverse practices in order to construct the best possible strategy for the reproduction of patriarchy’. This means that hegemonic masculinity is dynamic and flexible, due to the constant hybridisation of the diverse components of various masculinity constructs. It highlights incorporation, appropriation and the negotiation of different or oppositional masculine elements (Demetriou 2001, 348). Thus, a new pattern of hegemonic masculinity emerges from these incorporations and

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<sup>6</sup> According to Connell (1996b), men enjoy advantages from a patriarchal structure that places them in the dominant position in the gender order; for example, a higher average income and ten times the amount of political access compared to women. Connell defines the advantage as a ‘patriarchal dividend’ for men. However, not all men benefit from the dividend; men with subordinated masculinities gain very little from it. Men from lower economic classes and disenfranchised young men may not gain any economic advantage at all over the women in their communities. Other groups of men, such as gay men, effeminate men, and coloured men may also suffer as much as women from violence initiated by other men, due to the patriarchal structure. Source: <http://www.australianhumanitiesreview.org/archive/Issue-Dec-1996/connell.html>

negotiations. This is useful to my work, as I show how these shifts and hybridisations occur in men's reconstruction of masculinity in their self-narratives about working in ECE.

Connell and Messerschmidt (2009, 849) also incorporate a geographical element into their analysis of hegemonic masculinity. Hegemonic masculinities can be analysed at three geographical levels: local, regional and global. Local masculinities are constructions of masculinities at the level of individual social interactions. Most of my analysis will be focused on the local level, examining interactions between male teachers, female teachers, parents, schools managers and children. Regional masculinities are those constructed at the level of culture or the nation-state, which inform these local interactions (as detailed earlier in this chapter). Global masculinities are those constructed internationally and can be traced to interactions, world politics, transnational businesses and the media. Again, we have seen how 'the West', as imagined by the Indonesian state, also affects ideas of masculinity and morality. Masculinities at each level are related, especially local and regional masculinities. Regional hegemonic masculinity shapes the dominant discourse of masculinity in a society and is actualised, modified and challenged in the daily practices of local masculinities.

This thesis analyses how men who work in ECE negotiate their masculinities in a female-dominated workplace. While the analysis focuses on the local level of masculinities, it also considers the impact of masculinities at regional and global levels, as each interact. The interplay of regional and global masculinities in the Indonesian context is described in Chapter 2.

In this thesis I use the term 'gendered practices' to describe what teachers say they do and what I observed them doing; these are the narratives and performances of teachers relating to their gender. Categorising gender practices into dualistic feminine and masculine categories is highly problematic (Francis 2008, 110), as it risks devolving into an essentialist association of feminine with femaleness and masculine with maleness. However, in the context of my fieldwork—as well as Indonesian society in general—many gender practices are understood and labelled

in essentialist terms. I use these descriptions to guide my categorisation of gendered practice.

In order to make these categorisations, I draw on Paechter's (2006) conceptualization of gender. Paechter argues that in all societies there are culturally hegemonic ideals of how to be a man or a woman, which she refers to as masculinity and femininity (singular form). In social practice, a man or a woman performs a set of masculinities/femininities (plural form) that "consists of attributes that would have varying relationships to masculinity or femininity as an ideal type, and which would be related to identity and embodiment in multiple ways" (Paechter 2006, 262). Gender performance, thus, is situated but also creatively adapted by individuals. Paechter explains the gender dynamics between social structures and individual agency in this way:

... we are unlikely to be able to move away from having two main genders, in the sense that each one of us knows whether we are male or female, or, less frequently, something different or in between ... knowing that someone is male or female says very little about how their masculinity or femininity is constructed. While most, though not all, of us are men in male bodies and women in female bodies, how we understand ourselves as masculine and feminine varies according to time, place and circumstances. (261)

In a similar way this thesis explores how Indonesian masculinity and femininity is shaped in particular times, places and circumstances. Furthermore, it explores how gender is constructed and how cultural ideals are negotiated by actual men and women. I argue, that people create their identities from a range of types of gender performance. As Paechter's (2006, 262) says:

any individual's personal set of masculinities or femininities (assuming that we all have several at our disposal) would consist of attributes that would have varying relationships to masculinity or femininity as ideal types, and which would be related to identity and embodiment in multiple ways.

This framework provides a lens to view my respondents' gender performance as dynamically constructed via a range of types of masculinity. I aim to show that the masculinities they display and describe in this study are performed and narrated in the context of their profession as early childhood teachers at the same time it is also constructed with reference to dominant gender ideas and gendered values.

## **Gender and Labour in Indonesia**

The research undertaken for this thesis contributes to understandings of gender discourses in Indonesia, particularly in ECE (a non-traditional male occupation), as well as contemporary discourses of masculinities and employment in Indonesia. Specifically, this research illuminates how male teachers navigate social expectations and negotiate their masculinities in ECE in an environment where gender conformity is expected and where masculinity is uncertain. This thesis also examines the potential reconfiguration of masculinity through the discourse of nurture, love and care.

As indicated by previous studies, the pressure on men to be 'breadwinners' still prevails (Naafs 2013; Utomo 2016; Sohn 2015). In a survey of 1,761 university students from two cosmopolitan Indonesian cities—Jakarta and Makassar—Utomo (2016) concludes that 80 per cent of both male and female students agreed that a husband should be a family's main source of income. However, the survey also revealed that most female respondents supported women's continued employment after marriage. Seventy per cent of female respondents and 50 per cent of male respondents agreed that both husband and wife should work to cover a family's needs (Utomo 2016, 433–434). However, official statistics show only small increases in female labour participation, from 50 per cent in 1990 to 51 per cent in 2014; male labour force participation is still more than two-thirds higher than female labour participation (World Bank 2016a, b). The one per cent increase in female labour participation is very low compared to its closest neighbours, such as Malaysia, Australia, Singapore and Brunei Darussalam; countries that all

experienced a six to seven per cent increase in the same period (World Bank 2016a).

In addition to women's low workforce participation, other issues around gender and employment include the existence of sex-segregated occupations and the gender pay gap. Women's involvement in the labour force does not necessarily mean that women and men participate equally in all occupations. Instead, men and women tend to work in highly sex-segregated occupations, and women's work is clustered at the lower end of the occupational scale (Williams 1993, 1). Gender ideologies play a significant role in the gendering of work (Simpson 2004, 351). In Indonesia, as elsewhere the gendered prescription of women as household 'managers' influences the kinds of employment women prefer or can participate in. A recent study by Afianty and Solberg (2015), with interviews of 13 new mothers in rural West Java, found that most respondents still saw motherhood as their destiny and a source of pride. After having a baby and becoming a mother, most respondents felt they had fulfilled their destiny and social expectations (Afiyanti and Solberg 2015, 494–495). Thus, women tend to choose flexible jobs that enable them to combine work with their primary caring responsibilities, as well as employment not requiring continuous skills development (World Bank 2012, 205). Further, gender ideology's effect on socialisation has led to men and women being considered suitable for different types of work (Williams 1993). Due to women's child-rearing role, the assumption is that women are more 'naturally' suited for caring- and nurturing-related work, while men are more suited to technical and decision-making positions (Parsons and Bales 1955; Simpson and Simpson 1969). I will discuss Indonesian hegemonic gender ideology further in Chapter 2.

In Indonesia, women are over-represented in the service and trade sectors, as well as in professional fields such as teaching and nursing, while men dominate the agricultural and mining sectors, as well as the political, technical, technological and managerial spheres (AIPEG, DFAT and CDES 2015, 12; International Labour Organization 2015). Sex-segregated occupations are also observable in academic

disciplines: female students dominate psychology, dentistry, education and literature studies, while male students dominate engineering (Utomo 2016).

Low level of female participation in the workforce and exclusion from male-dominated occupations has encouraged researchers to study gender and employment to understand the barriers to women's participation in the workforce, especially in male-dominated occupations (e.g., Wright and Tellei 1993; Ellis, Kirkwood and Malhotra 2010; Priyatna 2013; Setyonaluri 2014; Ford and Parker 2008). The association of work with economic rationality and politics has led to the normalisation of work as a masculine domain central to masculine identities (Ford and Parker 2008; Morgan 1992). Globally, recognition exists that to achieve economic gender equality, women should be encouraged to enter male-dominated occupations.

On the contrary, encouragement for men to participate in female-dominated occupations is minimal, due to the assumption that female-dominated occupations have a lower status (Williams 1993). As Bradley (1993) argues, it is easier to encourage women to enter male-dominated fields than to promote female-dominated occupations to men. The gender pay gap apparent in sex-segregated roles might contribute to men's reluctance to cross over to non-traditional occupations. In Indonesia, women suffer from a 40 per cent pay gap compared to men (AIPEG, DFAT and CDES 2015, 4). This gap is high compared to Australia, which has a 27.5 per cent pay gap (Bankwest Curtin Economic Centre [BCEC] 2016, 14). Industry-type contributes to 19 per cent of this gap, among contributing factors such as marital status, level of education and skills (AIPEG, DFAT and CDES 2015, 49). This means that more men work in highly remunerated occupations. The pay gap also contributes to (and results from) the lower status of female-dominated occupations.

In western contexts, many researchers have investigated men who work in female-dominated occupations (e.g., Williams 1992, 1993, 1995, 2013, 2015; Simpson 2004, 2005; Wingfield and Myles 2014). Christine Williams (1992) analyses women in the marines and men in nursing, exploring men's experiences in relation to their non-traditional employment. Williams (1992, 256) determined

that, unlike women in non-traditional jobs, men experienced privilege in hiring and promotion. She called this privilege the ‘glass escalator effect’, so that men progressed more quickly than did women. Masculinity can be a bonus for men in female-dominated fields, as they tend to receive power due to a cultural script that perceives men as better than women. In contrast, for women in male-dominated fields who must embrace masculine characteristics to survive, men are still rewarded for their masculinity in female-dominated fields. However, Williams also noted that men experienced social prejudice from people outside their field of work. Male teachers in kindergartens and elementary schools often received emasculating comments, including suspicions of paedophilia (Williams 1992, 261). Williams’s work is often cited and has become the core theory used when analysing men in stereotypically female occupations, including studies of male teachers in ECE.<sup>7</sup> Her work has been supported by many scholars, such as Cognard-Black (2004), Simpson (2004) and McDowell (2015) who analyse the phenomenon further by considering the contribution of hegemonic masculinity to ‘token’ men’s experiences.<sup>8</sup> Using inferential statistical data from the United States Teacher Survey, Teacher Follow-up Survey and the School and Staffing Survey, Cognard-Black (2004, 118–121) tested Williams’s (1992, 256) ‘glass escalator effect’ theory. The result shows strong statistical evidence to support William’s theory that men benefit from the patriarchal dividend—‘the advantage men in general gain from the overall subordination of women’ (Connell 2005,

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<sup>7</sup> Later, Williams edited a comprehensive book (1993) about men in non-traditional occupations. The book consists of ten articles from fourteen contributors discussing men in various female-dominated professions including kindergarten and elementary teachers, nurses, social workers, librarians, secretaries, and strippers in Western contexts. This book provides a sound understanding of men in non-traditional posts. These include the sociocultural prejudices that can be advantageous or disadvantageous for men (Allan 1993; Tewksbury 1993); historical perspectives of sex-typing work and crossing over to gender atypical professions (Bradley 1993); wage discrimination issues in female-dominated occupations (England and Herbert 1993); the typology of men’s motivations in the field (Williams and Villemez, 1993); comparison studies of men’s experience in their occupations across Western countries (Kauppinen-Toropainen and Lammi, 1993); strategies to protect men’s masculinities in their working environment (Pringle 1993); the psycho-social dynamics of men who work as caregivers (Applegate and Kaye 1993).

<sup>8</sup> Based on her research on women working in multinational corporations, Rosabeth Moss Kanter (1977) defines tokens as member of a minority subgroup who comprises only 15% of a group. Researching on women in male dominated occupations, Kanter labels the women as ‘tokens’. Token positions will have negative impacts on the tokens, such as being in the spotlight due to their differences from the (male) majority, with consequences for performance pressures, isolation, and gender-stereotyped role encapsulation (Yoder 1991, 180). Kanter’s theorisation of tokenism has received criticism for its focus on numerical perspectives and its failure to take gender status into account (see Yoder, 1999; Williams, 1992).

71)—in female-dominated occupations. Cognard-Black (2004) concluded that male elementary school teachers were two to three times more likely than were their female colleagues to be promoted.

Other scholars, such as Simpson (2004) and McDowell (2015), go beyond statistics to examine the dynamic of gender identity formation of men working in traditionally female occupations. Simpson (2004), based on her interviews with primary school teachers, flight attendants, librarians and nurses in London, developed Williams and Villemez's (1993) typology of men's motivation to work in a female-dominated fields. Williams and Villemez's (1993, 64) original typology of men included 'seekers', 'finders' and 'leavers'. Seekers are men who aspire to a certain kind of employment and actively seek opportunities to work in the field. Finders do not think about working in a certain field, but end up employed in it. Leavers are men who work in a field temporarily while looking for or relocating to male-dominated occupations. Simpson (2004, 355–365) also defined 'settlers': men who have worked in other fields before entering and staying in a non-traditional occupation. In terms of these men's masculine identity, she suggests that the differences between seekers, finders and leavers can be used to consider multiple masculinities constructed in the field. She argued that men's attempts to reinforce masculinity in their employment could be contradictory and disrupted by feelings of comfort with the perceived traditional feminine construct of service and care. Focusing on three male nurses' linguistic behaviour in a Northern Ireland hospital, McDowell (2015, 278) investigated how hegemonic masculinity was negotiated and how workplace culture, gender and professional communication contributed to the negotiation process. He argues that gender identity formation is intertwined with professional identity. All three men in the study adopted a perceived feminine linguistic repertoire to construct their professional identity and at the same time challenge hegemonic masculinity (McDowell 2015, 287). These studies provide invaluable insights into how masculine identity is maintained and reconfigured by men in female-dominated jobs. This will be further explored in my thesis.

In an Indonesian context, men in female-dominated occupations have been largely overlooked. Women's experiences still dominate the research related to gender and work. This is understandable, given the gendered wage gaps and obstacles that still exist in female employment. Thus, this thesis contributes to the literature on men in non-traditional occupations, with a special focus on the dynamics of masculine identity in a female-dominated field. Understanding the concept and construction of masculinity in a changing Indonesia is vital as the starting point of this thesis. However, research on masculinity and work is still limited to analyses on compensatory strategies if men fail to fulfil their 'breadwinner' role (e.g., Elmhirst 2006; Alcano 2011). It is difficult to locate research on men in alternative non-traditional occupations in Indonesia.

### **Studies of Indonesian Masculinities**

Most research on Indonesian masculinity focuses on questions of men and various masculinist discourses, such as sexuality, violence and hyper-masculine behaviours. Distinct from previous studies, this thesis investigates how masculinity is negotiated through a discourse of nurture, love and care, traditionally perceived as the feminine domain. I aim to broaden understandings of masculinity by exploring other forms of masculinity inclusive of traditionally perceived feminine practices. Research on masculinity in Indonesia flourished after the fall of Suharto's authoritarian New Order regime in 1998. During the New Order period (1966–1998), militaristic secular hegemonic masculinity was imposed by the state (Robinson 2015, 54). Men's domination in politics and public life was protected by the state through various means, including family planning programs, marriage law, education and control of the media (see Robinson 2000, 2015; Logsdon 1985; Parker 1997; Brenner 1999). I will discuss New Order hegemonic masculinity further in Chapter 2. In the post-New Order period, government control loosened and a new liberal-democratic era replaced the authoritarian regime that had dominated Indonesian life for 33 years. Political and cultural groups repressed during the New Order began organising themselves to challenge the status quo and gain power (Robinson 2015, 56). Thus, most studies of masculinity have analysed how New Order hegemonic masculinity was

contested, challenged and reconfigured through various masculinist discourses related to sexuality and hyper-masculine behaviours, including violence (e.g., Nilan 2009; Nilan, Demartono, and Wibowo 2011, 2014; Elmhirst, 2007; Wichelen 2009; Clark 2004a, b; Wilson, 2012; Naafs 2013; Hayati, Emmelin and Eriksson 2014; Handajani 2012). Previous studies on masculinity concentrated on four main areas of analysis: violence, Islamic influence, sexuality, and cultural representation. These studies provide useful insights into sources of masculine honour—such as wealth and economic capability, education, power, leadership and sexual potency. They have examined how these elements are emphasised to construct variations of masculinities with one goal: defending honour. These studies also provide a starting point to consider diverse masculinities in Indonesia.

Focusing on youth masculinity and violence, Pam Nilan, a sociologist, has conducted several studies in Bali, Sulawesi, Jakarta, Solo and Yogyakarta on how Indonesian male youth negotiate their masculinities in the context of hegemonic masculine ideals and pressure (Nilan 2009; Nilan, Demartono and Wibowo 2011, 2014; Nilan and Dermatoto 2012; Nilan, Dermatoto and Broom 2013). In her 2009 study, she identified three different types of masculinities displayed by young men in Indonesia: young Islamist, young secular and '*preman*' or protest masculinity. Young Islamist masculinity challenges hegemonic masculinity through anti-western rhetoric, religious chauvinism and control over sexuality. In contrast, secular masculinity challenges hegemonic masculinity by adopting a global hyper-masculine discourse that celebrates heterosexual virility. *Preman* masculinity confronts the hegemonic ideals of successful, progressive and secular manhood with hyper-masculine behaviour such as involvement in crime, gangs and illegal racing. Even though all these young men have explored counter-hegemonic masculinities, once they reach adulthood, the conservative status quo of men as fathers and leaders is preserved (Nilan 2009, 340).<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Together with Demartono and Wibowo, Nilan (2011, 2014) has also studied masculinity and violence, focusing on male student street fighting in Solo, Indonesia and how the construction of youth masculinity is informed by warrior mythology and concepts of the male body. Still focusing on youth masculinity and violence, Nilan and Dermatoto (2012) analyse how patrimonialism contributes to the continuation of violent culture among men. In her article co-authored with

Other studies have also analysed the pressure on young Indonesian men to be a secure and dependable provider resulting from the changing economic context and an increasing consumer culture (Elmhirst 2007; Naafs 2013; Wilson 2012; Alcano 2011). This pressure on men was exacerbated by the 1997–1998 financial crisis, which pushed many men out of employment, along with a corresponding demand on women to engage in migrant-based or factory work as a cheaper source of labour. Nilan (2009), Elmhirst (2007), Wilson (2012) and Alcano (2011) all conclude that the struggle against the hegemonic Indonesian masculinity rotates around the principles of a patriarchal praxis. Nilan (2009), Elmhirst (2007) in her study of male unemployment in Lampung, Alcano (2011) in his study of male sex workers in Bali, and Wilson’s (2012) study about young men exerting territorial dominance in Jakarta show that men use ‘protest masculinity’ to deal with their failure to be economically productive. ‘Gangster’ and ‘Tiger’ masculinities (Elmhirst 2007, 234–235) and ‘*jago*’ masculinity (Wilson 2012, 321) were configured to compensate for this masculinity crisis (Elmhirst 2007, 234–235). Gangster and Tiger masculinities involve gambling, alcohol consumption and sexually harassing women, while *jago* masculinity uses symbolic violence, fortification, dominance and control over territory to gain respect and income. Alcano’s (2011) research on the Villa Mangga gang of male sex workers in Bali shows that heterosexual men who choose to work as submissive gay sex workers used violence to invent their gay–male masculinity and at the same time retain their heterosexual masculine selves. To maintain compliance with hegemonic masculinity, heterosexual men who engage in homosexual prostitution redefine sex work as entrepreneurship and ‘hard work’ to accumulate wealth. They see their entrepreneurship as what distinguishes them from female and ‘real gay men’ sex workers. They deconstruct homosexuality not as sexual desire or orientation, but as a performance that can be fabricated, constructed and commodified. Violence is used in the process of making of homosexual masculinity. As heterosexual men do not experience homosexual acts as pleasurable, enduring pain during their violent initiation symbolises their readiness to use their bodies as financial resources and sex objects for other men (Alcano 2011, 374–379).

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Dermatoto and Broom, Nilan (2013, 17) shows how male violence is rationalised as a compensatory strategy for economic frustration and resentment.

In this thesis, I examine the complex process of how male ECE teachers, who practice a subordinate masculinity, redefine and rework their masculinity in relation to their profession and hegemonic ideals. This thesis explores how men use the discourse of nurture, love and care as a strategy in this reworking. As such, the research diverges from other studies that focus on violence as compensatory strategy of masculinity.

Other scholars have begun to pay more attention to Islamic masculinities—including a new emphasis on normalising polygamy—as the focus on Islam in society has increased (Wichelen 2009; Robinson 2015). In her analysis of a pro-polygamy campaign (initiated by Puspo Wardoyo, a franchise restaurant owner), Wichelen (2010, 91) argues that the campaign was not only about Muslim men’s identity formation, but rather signalled an increased sense of crisis about masculinity. Islamic doctrine is used to justify the reaffirmation of a hegemonic masculinity threatened by the social changes that emerged in the post-New Order era. Robinson (2015, 61–63) concurs with Wichelen and argues that political Islam camouflages the restoration of male privilege. In the struggle to gain hegemonic status, Islamic radical groups, such as *Front Pembela Islam* (FPI) (Islamic Defenders Front), control women’s bodies and sexualities as a common strategy to assert masculine power.<sup>10</sup>

Considering the robust government censorship of media and cultural expressions during Suharto’s New Order, a new analysis of men and masculinity in popular culture will also contribute to understanding the contestation of masculinities in contemporary Indonesia. Marshall Clark’s (2010) compilation of writings on masculinity in Indonesian films, novels and poems provides a comprehensive understanding of how cultural changes and literary development can reconfigure masculinities. Clark (2010) analyses the cultural representation of men and masculinities in both authoritarian and post-authoritarian contexts. He examines

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<sup>10</sup> FPI is a hardline Islamic organisation founded in August 1998 by Habib Muhammad Rizieq Shihab. FPI announced itself as an Islamic moral police. FPI’s political goal is to impose sharia law throughout Indonesia. In 2010-2011, it engaged in more than 29 incidents of violence and destructive actions in the name of Islam in several cities in Java and Sumatra in (Beritasatu, 2012). Recently, in 2016 to 2017, FPI was at the forefront of a campaign against Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (Ahok), an Indonesian-Chinese Christian governor of the Indonesian capital.

the literary works of Ayu Utami, a contemporary female Indonesian writer, Pramoedya Ananta Tur, an award-winning male writer and ex-political prisoner from the New Order era, the poet Binhad Nurrohmat and Rudi Soedjarwo, a movie director, along with other Generation X filmmakers. Taking insight from the work of Ajidarma, *Runtuhnya Kejantanan (The Fall of Masculinity)* Clark (2010, 148–149) argues that through the artistic expression of writers, poets and filmmakers, the state's construction of gender—including masculinity—is reshaped and renegotiated. Through post-New Order cultural expressions, the hegemonic masculine imagination can be unsettled by the emergence of alternative masculinities. Alongside New Order hegemonic masculinity, Islamic masculinities are also reshaped through contemporary Indonesian Islamic film culture. Hoesterey and Clark (2012, 221) found that violent and misogynistic Islamic masculinity (as represented by radical groups, such as FPI), was partially challenged in contemporary Islamic movies. Most Islamic movies offer an idealistic Muslim masculinity that is compassionate, pro-woman, heterosexual and protective, pious and wise, providing for women and family. These new taxonomies, however, could be taken as examples of other changes underway in Indonesian society. In this thesis, I will expand on the diversity of masculinities in Indonesia, including a range of 'nurturing masculinities'.

## **Gender and Education in Indonesia**

Although several studies of gender and education including ECE have been conducted, very few have focused on masculinity in Indonesian ECE contexts. Most research on gender and education has been conducted in primary school environments. Some research focuses on gender representation in elementary school materials and textbooks (Logsdon 1985; Utomo et al. 2009; Azisah and Vale 2008) and secondary school textbooks (Ena 2013). Other scholars focus on gender identity development (see Parker 1997; Juwitaningrum, Yulindrasari and Adriany 2008) and gender discourse at school (see Adriany 2013).

Logsdon (1985), Azisah and Vale (2008), Utomo et al. (2009) and Ena (2013) analyse representations of gender in government-accredited Indonesian school

textbooks. All of these studies, including older studies by Logsdon (1985), along with the relatively new studies by Utomo et al. (2009), Ena (2013) and Azisah and Vale (2008), conclude that women and men remain aligned with conventional gender-based divisions of labour and stereotypes. Women are associated with domestic chores, child-rearing, ‘softness’ and emotion, while men are associated with earning money and outdoor activities, strength, power and assertiveness (Azisah and Vale 2008; Ena 2013; Logsdon 1985; Utomo et al. 2009). Also prevalent in these studies is both women and men being represented as involved in productive work. However, the occupations represented still concur with traditional gender stereotypes. For example, textbooks represent doctors, politicians and soldiers as male; kindergarten teachers are female, while teachers in the higher levels of schooling are male (Ena 2013, 72).

Newer Indonesian school textbooks (mainly published after 2004) show progress towards an equal representation of gender and the depiction of non-stereotyped gender roles (Azisah and Vale 2008; Ena 2013). Ena (2013, 71) analysed eight senior high school English e-textbooks published online in 2008. He argued that a depiction of a man holding a child’s hand and a man watering a flower illustrate non-stereotypical gender roles. Azisah and Vale (2008, 64) mentioned a depiction of husband and wife preparing food together in a textbook of Islamic Studies<sup>11</sup> for Grade 1 students.

Focusing on the gender socialisation process, Parker (1997) has analysed how children construct their gendered identity through social interactions and gendered experiences. This research was conducted in Balinese primary schools in the mid-1990s. Parker (1997, 512) concluded that school experiences contribute to the construction of gendered selves. Girls internalise their subordination to boys when boys dominate in the class by revealing their knowledge and asking questions. This behaviour is compounded by the lack of attention given to girls by teachers. Despite this process, Balinese school activities, such as sport and music

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<sup>11</sup> The national curriculum includes a compulsory subject on Islamic studies. The textbook is that is used for this subject. It is called *buku pelajaran Agama Islam*; the translation is Islamic studies textbook.

*gamelan*,<sup>12</sup> traditionally played by men only, are now open to girls and have changed traditional gendered bodily manners for girls (Parker 1997, 506–507). Schools also challenge girl’s passivity. Girls are encouraged to speak in public and develop leadership skills, as well as work in teams with boys. Schools have also provided new social opportunities. Being educated has opened girls’ opportunities for employment and independence (Parker 1997, 508). Small-scale research by Juwitaningrum, Yulindrasari and Adriany (2008) analysed the gender identity development of four- to five-year-old kindergarten students from a psychological perspective. The researchers concluded that Kohlberg’s gender identity developmental stages (developed in 1966) were relevant when explaining these children’s understandings of their gender identity. Consistent with Kohlberg’s (1966) theory, the researchers found these children were in a stage of gender stability, where they knew that their gender would stay the same over time, that boys would grow up to be men and girls would grow up to be women. However, they still had a flexible understanding about gendered physical and social attributes. They could easily accept cross-gender activities without being concerned about disrupting their gender identity. This research supports the hypothesis that ECE has the potential to create future transformations of gender relations in society (Warin and Wernersson 2015, 4).

The most recent research on gender in ECE is Adriany’s (2013) study. This research analysed how the discourse of child-centred learning, combined with the discourse of play (which is widely practised in ECE in Indonesia) maintains gendered power relations in school, and analysed how masculinity operates in a middle-class kindergarten. The findings suggest that three dominant discourses of masculinity exist: ‘kicking boys’, ‘passive boys’ and ‘Barbie boys’. Even though the school clearly discourages aggressive behaviour, the child-centred discourse, in conjunction with the discourse of play, has made ‘kicking boys’ acceptable.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>*Gamelan* is a traditional percussion orchestra traditionally played by males in Bali.

<sup>13</sup> Child-centred discourse is an approach commonly used in ECE, an area influenced by theories in developmental psychology. The discourse views children as following universal developmental milestones and is applied to any child regardless of the child’s socioeconomic and cultural background. The discourse places teachers and other adults as facilitators who assist but do not interfere in the children’s development (Piaget 1971; Marsh 2003; Adriany 2013).

Thus, aggressiveness is preserved as one aspect of acceptable masculinity (Adriany 2013, 185–192).

Adriany's (2013) research shows that even in the absence of male teachers, hegemonic masculinity is present and acceptable in boys' behaviours. Drawing on Adriany's research, I assume that boys might not need a male role model who displays hegemonic masculinity, as they already reproduce hegemonic masculinity without male teachers being present, and without intervention from female teachers. To transform gender relations in society, male teachers' involvement in ECE, instead of strengthening the internalisation of hegemonic masculinity in boys, should provide alternative masculinities to challenge the acceptance of aggressiveness in boys. This thesis will investigate the presence of male teachers in ECE, and how they 'perform' gender. It will also explore their potential as agents of gender reform for future generations.

### **Men in Early Childhood Education**

Looking beyond Indonesia, studies of men teaching young children in western countries such as Australia, the United States of America (US), the United Kingdom (UK) and Sweden began in the 1970s and had developed since then. Three main areas of investigation dominate research about male ECE teachers in a western context. The first focuses on investigating male teachers' effect on students' achievements and the male teachers' unique pedagogical approach (e.g., Dee 2007; Helbig 2012; Moreau 2011; Rose 2009; Shaham 1991). The second explores the social and self-perceptions of men who teach young children (Barnard et al. 2000; Murray 1996; Sargent 2000, 2005; Shaham 1991; Sumsion 1999a, 1999b 2000b; Warin 2006). The third investigates gender dynamics in ECE and the potential of male teachers as agents of social transformation in relation to gender (Francis 2008; Murray 1996; Warin 2006; Sumsion 1999a).

In line with the second and third areas of research, this thesis focuses on male teachers in ECE as potential agents of gender reform. The scope of the thesis does not allow for exploring the impact of male teachers on children's achievements and development. This current research is most inspired by the work of Murray

(1996), Francis (2008), Warin (2006, 2014, 2015) and Sumsion (1999a, b, 2000a, b, c, 2005). Using a multi-method approach that includes observation, interviews and surveys, Murray (1996, 369) researched men and women childcare workers over four years in the US. She found that men and women working in child care were expected to adopt the traditional roles of mother and father. Men, like fathers, had less access to children compared with their female colleagues. They were restricted from cuddling, kissing and providing physical comfort to children. The fear of paedophilia led to the pathologisation of men interested in nurturing roles. However, such restrictions have instigated examinations of how childcare centres can be important sites for children's gender identity acquisition. The gender relations that children learn about while in child care can continue beyond their childcare experience (Murray 1996, 383). Developing Murray's insights, I hypothesise that men who undertake ECE work involving caring and nurturing send a powerful transformative message about gender to children. When young children are familiar with nurturing and caring men, they will assume this is typical men's behaviour (see also Piburn 2006, 20). Children will then model and reproduce the gender roles they learn during their early childhood in their adulthood (Adriany 2013; Aina and Cameron 2011; Blaise and Taylor 2012; Ebbeck 1998). Francis (2008, 119) observed the performance of three male teachers in the classroom and argues this approach is key to gender reform. Accordingly, this thesis suggests that potential gender reform should focus on how gender is performed through repeated language, conversations, bodily gestures and expressions of male and female teachers, boys and girls (Blaise and Taylor 2012, 92).

Jo Warin has produced some insightful and in-depth research into the experiential aspects of men in ECE. In her 2006 work, Warin examined a man who was working in ECE in England, to understand the process of a man negotiating his masculinity. Her concern was the 'internal (psychic) and external (institutional and community) transformations of masculinity' (Warin 2006, 526). She identified three categories of masculinity: protector, pioneer and professional expert. These relate to a man's experience in the field, where an identity dissonance results from the struggle between competing aspects of masculinity.

Warin (2006) argued that masculinities, both those complicit with and those resistant to hegemonic gender norms, remain in ‘a constant state of tension and competition’ (535). For example, the male teacher’s position as a nursery worker was seen by some men as an act of bravery and heroism. In this instance, hegemonic masculinity reappears subtly as a form of complicit masculinity. Thus, Warin (2006) suggests to ‘value the concept of hegemonic masculinity as a tool to revealing the very deep-rooted obstacles to gender transformation: it subverts alternative masculinities through unwitting complicity’ (535). The man who embraces softer and more feminine practices is likely to disguise his practice with masculine attributes, thus reclaiming his masculinity. This is done instead of challenging hegemonic masculinity by embracing feminine practices as inclusive to his masculinity. As with Warin, I explore how hegemonic masculinity is negotiated by men who work in the Indonesian ECE sector and how they may contribute to gender transformation in ECE.

This research considers the discourses developed by Sumsion (2000b) to prevent counterproductive outcomes in the gender reform agenda. Sumsion (2000b) wrote a reflective article about five competing discourses relating to perception, experience, and the contributions of men working in ECE. Through her reflective analysis of these discourses, Sumsion provides guidelines for men in ECE research who wish to contribute to a gender reform agenda. The first discourse she discusses is the discourse of ‘male as victim’ (2000b, 263). This discourse perceives men as victims of discrimination and suspicion. Sumsion argues that men who victimise themselves are more likely to reinforce normative gender roles. However, she also suggests that the pressure of conforming to normative masculinity can create emotional distress for men who challenge it. Therefore, men who challenge the hegemonic masculinity in ECE may need support. The second discourse is ‘non-critical advocacy for an increased male presence in early childhood education’ (Sumsion 2000b, 264). Sumsion argues that a simple agreement to promote more men to participate in ECE, without considering the possibility of men who have an agenda to retain normative masculinity, would be counterproductive to the gender reform agenda. The third discourse criticises the interpretive approach taken in research about men working in ECE. Sumsion

(2000b) highlights the importance of understanding the researcher's position in the gender debate and his or her agenda (267). The fourth discourse concerns 'feminist perspectives'. Sumsion (2000b) criticises feminist perspectives opposed to advocating increased male participation in ECE:

if we are to develop a deeper, more informed understanding of the potential contribution of male early childhood educators to gender reform, we must support investigations of these men, their masculinities and their perspectives on gender issues. To do so is not to condone non-critical assumptions that men in the early childhood sector are disadvantaged, marginalised or oppressed, but to acknowledge that hegemonic gender stereotypes can be problematic for both men and women. Moreover, such investigations might help early childhood workers of both sexes to refine their understandings of gender and consequently to work more effectively towards gender reform (269).

The last discourse Sumsion (2000b) discusses is 'the traditional early childhood stance' (269). She argues that ECE has been trapped within a scientific-humanist-naturalist perspective, such as that found in psychology and biomedicine. Thus, she suggests incorporating analysis from sociopolitical and social justice perspectives to challenge the gender status quo. It is important to understand ECE in a cultural and political context to perceive the hidden power structure influencing the conceptualisation of childhood, children and their education. A critical approach, which enables the analysis of power structures operating in ECE, is vital for gender reform (Sumsion 2000b, 270).

### **Situating the Thesis**

Building on the work of Murray (1996), Warin (2006), Francis (2008) and Sumsion (2000b), this thesis moves beyond an analysis of a numerically based gender balance in the ECE workforce. Instead of justifying an invitation to men to enter ECE simply to decrease the gender gap in this workforce, this thesis aims to understand the complexity of men and their gender performance in ECE as a potential basis for gender reform in Indonesian society in general. With the hope

of broadening understandings of men in ECE in Indonesia, and the nature of Indonesian masculinity within a global context, this research will contribute to new insights about men in ECE in a non-western context.

This thesis is the first study of men who teach in Indonesian ECE, focusing on gender and masculinities. Suyatno (2004) only mentions the issue of male teachers briefly. His discussion is framed in terms of improving the gender balance in ECE environments. Suyatno's study points to the social stigma attached to men who teach in kindergartens. However, no further analysis is provided. Yunita (2016) provides a similarly limited study, focusing on male teaching styles with no comparison to their female counterparts. Based on interviews with three male teachers in two different kindergartens, she describes male teachers' assumptions of why only a few men are interested in working in ECE, summarising their reasons for teaching in kindergarten. Her respondents confirm that the low salaries and the perception of ECE as stereotypically female hinder men from working in the area (Yunita, 2016). Neither of these studies adequately examines the social perceptions argued as being the obstacles to men working in ECE. In contrast, this thesis provides a comprehensive analysis of male teachers' experiences in coping with the challenges they face. This especially concerns the teachers' masculine subjectivities and their relationship to social expectations. Based on interviews and observation, this thesis further examines the consistency and inconsistency between the gender narratives of male teachers and their classroom gender performance. The research will contribute to an understanding of male teachers' involvement in ECE in Indonesia. At the same time, this research will contribute to comprehending the dynamics of masculine identities in a female-dominated field. Here, men are 'actors in gender change', rather than only shadows within the discourse of gender equality in education (Connell 2010, 605). Given the dearth of research on gender, education and masculinity, this research must begin by examining contemporary masculinity discourses more broadly in relation to work, offering a new analysis of masculinity in Indonesia.

## **Methodology**

This thesis uses mixed and novel research methods compared to similar research on male teachers in ECE contexts. Other similar research has generally incorporated interviews or observations exclusively with male teachers. This research instead takes a relational approach to the construction of masculinity by interviewing male teachers, female colleagues, school managers, parents and Indonesian ECE bureaucrats. It also combines media, document analysis, interviews and observations to analyse the uniqueness of each male teacher's experience and his interaction with the social structures, gender discourses and professional subjectivities that require a constant negotiation of masculinities. It provides a comprehensive analysis of male teachers' experiences, based on their narratives and pedagogical performance.

This research uses a qualitative approach with a focused ethnographic research design (Knoblauch 2005). Focused ethnography is characterised by short-term, short-range and discontinuous field visits and specific research questions. It also involves the researcher having background knowledge about the field of study. The short research period is compensated for by other intensive data collection methods, such as video and audio recording (Knoblauch 2005). All the interviews and any other textual data were in Indonesian and were translated by me unless stated otherwise.

This thesis uses focused ethnography for several reasons. First, the number of male teachers is very limited; usually, a school will only have one male teacher. Second, focused ethnography enables investigation of the interaction between a cultural context, work culture, patterns of behaviour, and the ideas and beliefs of men who teach young children. Third, I have more than 12 years' experience in the field of ECE, ensuring my familiarity with the topic. Instead of being a 'stranger', I am a member of the ECE community. In addition, I am an Indonesian with experience living in both cities where the fieldwork was conducted. Fourth, instead of beginning with an open-ended intention to learn about a culture (as in conventional ethnography [Wall 2015]), I came to the field with specific questions

regarding the perceptions of men teaching young children, and those men's pedagogical practices. Finally, the scholarship I received, Beasiswa Luar Negeri Direktorat Pendidikan Tinggi (the scholarship of the Indonesian Directorate of Higher Education), only allowed a maximum of two months fieldwork.

The fieldwork was conducted from early October to early December 2014, in two cities: Bandung, West Java, Indonesia (my hometown) and Yogyakarta, where I have education networks and access to kindergartens. In addition, both Bandung and Yogyakarta are two of Indonesia's largest cities, where the ECE industry is growing at a fast rate. Bandung and Yogyakarta have diverse iterations of ECE, ranging from local to international standards, from secular- to religious-based ECEs. Bandung has 5,309 ECE centres and Yogyakarta 5,154 (Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan [KEMDIKBUD] [Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture] 2016c, d).

As with all gender identities, masculinity in Bandung and Yogyakarta is constantly reworked. A growing trend of 'metrosexual' men (Hudiandy 2010; Riveli 2009; Wardhana 2007) is apparent. Metrosexual men define masculinity by their neat and 'trendy' physical appearance and their 'bravery' in fashion experimentation, something that conventional men avoid (Handoko 2004, 134). The metrosexual trend is growing in Bandung, as this city is famous for fashion. Bandung is even called 'the Paris of Java'. The New Men Alliance, Aliansi Laki-Laki Baru (ALB), was established in Bandung in 2009. This group is a network of men concerned about gender-based violence and discrimination. These men are committed to promoting gender equality (Aliansi Laki-Laki Baru (ALB) 2014). In contrast to these developments, conventional masculinity symbols are also being preserved. For example, violence as a symbol of masculinity is upheld by the *genk motor* (motorcycle gangs). Dewi (2011, 15) identified at least four motorcycle gangs in Bandung. Each gang practices violence as a ritual for new members. These gangs do not follow safety procedures for bikers and tend to violate traffic rules (Dewi 2011, 18).

'The male feminist', is a term first used widely in Yogyakarta (see Budiman 2000). The dominant gender ideology is challenged intensely in Yogyakarta. A

controversial *pesantren waria* (Islamic religious school for transgender persons) began there (Zakaria 2013). The Yogyakarta Principle, regarding the application of international human rights law in relation to sexual orientation and gender identity, was also developed in Yogyakarta.

In addition, Bandung and Yogyakarta are multicultural centres, with most Indonesian ethnicities being represented in the population; these cities are also home to Indonesia's most prominent universities.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, investigating how male ECE teachers in Bandung and Yogyakarta negotiate their masculine identity is interesting, as these cities are the centre of men's activism for gender equality.

This research combined several methods of data collection. This research involved narrative inquiry to uncover subjective experiences (Clandinin 2006, 45), using audio-recorded, semi-structured and in-depth interviews as the primary data collection method. In-depth interviews are appropriate to reveal how male teacher respondents perceive their experiences and to collect unobservable data. I also interviewed the male teachers' female colleagues, school principals and parents to understand how they perceived male teachers in ECE. To gain a comprehensive understanding of ECE and gender at the government level, I interviewed ECE authorities. Probing follow-up interviews were conducted during my informal interactions with participants on site and through social media chat rooms.

I combined in-depth interviews with non-participatory observation, aided by a video recording device placed in a static location. This allowed me to understand how male teachers interacted with their students, colleagues and parents in their natural setting, and gave me a profound experience to observe male teachers and the classroom atmosphere they created. Non-participatory observation was conducted during teaching activities for one to five consecutive days.

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<sup>14</sup> In Bandung there is ITB which is the 2<sup>nd</sup> rank of university in Indonesia, and in Yogyakarta there is UGM which is the 1<sup>st</sup> rank university. Universitas Indonesia (UI which is in Depok is in the 4<sup>th</sup> rank. (Based on assessment by the Directorate of Higher Education available from <http://kelembagaan.ristekdikti.go.id/index.php/2017/08/18/daftar-100-peringkat-perguruan-tinggi-non-politeknik-tahun-2017/>)

Since the fieldwork period was short, this research used critical discourse analysis (CDA) to analyse media and public discussions to outline two important aspects of the cultural context of this research - existing discourses around masculinity (Chapter 2) and the dominant gender discourses in ECE in Indonesia (Chapter 3). These two contexts I argue contribute to individual and social understandings and perceptions of men who teach young children. The method of CDA allows me to capture key aspects of the socio-political context contained in texts and other forms of representations (Gee 2004, 21). Materials from advertisements and the media are thus used (in Chapter 2) in an illustrative way to provide additional contextual background. To understand the cultural context surrounding ECE, I analysed government documents, online articles and interview with ECE teachers and government officials who dealt with ECE related policy making. Understanding broader discourses around masculinity and work allows me to place my study within the context of dominant contemporary ideas about ‘the real man’ and how these meanings are constructed, promoted, challenged, and reworked in the contemporary Indonesian context. Masculinity discourses identified from this analysis are used as a reference point in analysing the types of masculinity the male teachers negotiate in their occupational context.

Participant confidentiality has been respected at every step of data collection. Pseudonyms are used for most participants. Some participants gave permission to use their real name; however, in this thesis I have only used real names with participant consent for one whose identity was impossible to conceal due to connections with an important figure in Indonesia. Explaining the participant’s background and their relationship with the figure was relevant to understanding their opinions and ideas about gender and ECE. I also used pseudonyms for the schools, except Fastrack Funschool whose owner was related to a prominent figure in Indonesia and thus easily identifiable. Although I decided to use pseudonym for the teachers it was explained to them, as per my ethics application, that because the sample size was small it might be possible for people to identify them.

Even though the focus of this study is on adults, the ECE research sites meant that interaction with young children was inevitable. For that reason, I sent out plain language statements and consent forms to parents of the students in the classes I observed. With parents' consent, I used the data of student–teacher interactions in this thesis; all teacher and student names cited in this thesis are pseudonyms.

Only a few kindergartens or ECE centres employed men as teachers. Therefore, this research used a convenience sampling method. Convenience sampling relies on the most accessible sample (Lune and Berg 2017, 38). My work as a lecturer at an early childhood teacher–education program in the Indonesian University of Education, and as a trainer for kindergarten teachers' professional development, gave me access to the Indonesian association of kindergarten teachers, Ikatan Guru Taman Kanak-Kanak Indonesia (IGTKI) and the Indonesia association of ECE, Himpunan Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini Indonesia (HIMPAUDI). I identified prospective research sites and/or participants through these two organisations.

Purposive sampling was used to determine the most effective participants for the study. Eight male teachers were selected according to their employment status and a minimum six months' experience teaching in kindergarten or other ECE centre. This was to ensure the participant was not in an adjustment or probation period. The teachers in my sample did not necessarily have a background in ECE, but they had at least ten days of standardised training in ECE. Presumably, they had knowledge of child development, ECE curricula, and teaching and learning methods in ECE settings. In addition, I also interviewed at least one female colleague, school principals, the school board and at least one parent. I also interviewed policymakers to gain information regarding particular government concerns about gender in the ECE workforce.

I invited two schools in Yogyakarta and four schools in Bandung to participate through IGTKI and HIMPAUDI. These were Fastrack Funschool and Little Stars in Yogyakarta and FCF, Al Ikhlas, Al Hikmah and KJ (American-franchised ECE) in Bandung. Fastrack Funschool in Yogyakarta was the first to confirm its participation. Fastrack Funschool was also the only school matching the participant criteria I established for this research, which was that male teachers

should be teaching full time. For that reason, I started my fieldwork in Fastrack Funschool in October 2014. At the time of my fieldwork, Fastrack Funschool had five male teachers: one in charge of a playgroup (3–4 year olds) and four in the kindergarten area (5–6 year olds). All four male teachers in the kindergarten agreed to participate in the study. Thus, I allocated four weeks of fieldwork in Fastrack Funschool to allow five consecutive days of class observation in each of the male teacher's classroom.

In November 2014, I moved to Bandung. In Bandung, my search for male teachers was difficult. I managed to access four male teachers in four different schools in Bandung: two male teachers from Islamic kindergartens, one teacher from a secular US-franchised playgroup, and one from a secular local kindergarten. Each school had different social characteristics. Two were located in north Bandung and two in the east. However, I could not analyse the data from Bandung as comprehensive as I did on the data from Yogyakarta, since three of the four male teachers I had access to (as recommended by IGTKI and HIMPAUDI), were no longer teaching. Instead, they had become school principals. For this reason, I could not conduct observations at the same depth as I had at Fastrack Funschool. Accordingly, I focused my analysis on Fastrack Funschool. Data from fieldwork in Bandung has been used only for comparative purposes and largely as a contrast, as the schools had very few male teachers.

Once I arrived at the research site, I circulated information about the study and a consent form for participation. Following an ethics application at the University of Melbourne, prospective participants who agreed to participate in the study were asked to complete a consent form. Interview and classroom observation times were then set up. Probing interviews were conducted either during informal conversations with teachers at the site or by social media private messages and emails. The following section describes the characteristics of the schools and participants whose data were used in the main analysis. Descriptions about other schools and participants are given in the appendices.

Fastrack Funschool is an upper middle-class early childhood institution that provides ECE services for children from six months to six years. The school's

social status is reflected in the school fees, facilities and program. The school registration fee ranges from Rp. 4,000,000 (approximately AUD400) up to Rp 7,500,000 (approx. AUD750) and the monthly fee ranges from Rp 475,000 (approx. AUD47.50) to Rp. 850,000 (approx. AUD85), depending on the program. Fastrack Funschool offers three main programs: one play-based, one Indonesian program and one international. The play program is bilingual and consists of 1.5 hourly sessions for children from six months to 2.5 years old. The Indonesian (Nusantara) program consists of a playgroup for two to four year olds and a kindergarten program for four to six year olds, with Indonesian as the instruction language. The international program consists of a playgroup and kindergarten with English as the instructional language.

Most ECE schools in Indonesia are private, and parents are charged the total school fee. Indonesian society is comprised of a very large working class and a smaller middle-class, which is still numerically very large given the total population of 263 million people. The Indonesian statistical board, Badan Pusat Statistik (BPS) (2015), reports that the average income of city-based Indonesian families ranges from 19 million rupiahs (approx. AUD1,900) to 41 million rupiahs annually (approx. AUD4,100). This is equal to 1.6 million rupiahs (approx. AUD160) up to 3.4 million rupiahs monthly (approx. AUD340). As no government rebates are provided for ECE services, only upper middle-class families and those who earn higher than the average income can afford to send their children to Fastrack Funschool. The outward appearance of the school already marks it off as more elite than more typical ECE facilities (see Figure 1.1). The school has two storage buildings with a relatively large outdoor playground area, as well as a large car park. The outdoor playground consists of three gross motor skill stimulation areas, a sand pit, and a gardening area. Each class in Fastrack Funschool is equipped with an air conditioner, book collections, multimedia facilities, toy collections, children's lockers and a closed-circuit television (CCTV) accessible by parents online. These facilities are uncommon in ECE institutions. Average kindergartens in the city are one-storey building with limited play area and facilities, no allocated car park, and do not provide online viewing CCTV for the parents.



**Figure 1.1: Fastrack Funschool (top) and an average kindergarten in Yogyakarta (bottom).**

In Fastrack Funschool, I interviewed the school principal, four male teachers, four female teachers, four parents, the owner and the directors. The following paragraphs detail the profiles of these participants.

Alissa Wahid is the director and owner of Fastrack Funschool. She is a psychologist and humanitarian activist. She has extensive experience in various non-governmental organisations dealing with humanitarian issues: gender and human rights are her main concern. She is also the oldest daughter of Abdurrahman Wahid, the fourth president of Indonesia (20 October 1999 to 23 July 2001). Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur) is well known as the president who defended democracy through *Pancasila* and *Bhineka Tunggal Ika* (Unity in Diversity). This was evident in his strong advocacy for marginal and minority groups, such as *Ahmadiyya* and the Chinese community. Gus Dur was also the head of *Nahdatul Ulama* (NU) and was known as a proponent of progressive Islam. Gus Dur's pluralist and egalitarian values (Barton 2002, 119) are deeply

rooted in Alissa's thinking, and she has taken them as her principles. Alissa's mother, Sinta Nurriyah, is also a humanitarian activist.

Erman Royadi is the managing director. Like Alissa, he has a humanitarian activist background. He is Alissa's husband. He manages the school's non-pedagogical areas.

Arief Sugeng Widodo (Dodo) is the executive director of Fastrack Funschool. He deals with teacher recruitment, curriculum development and academic affairs, along with other issues directly related to the processes of education and care. Like Alissa, Dodo is a psychologist and former humanitarian activist. He was active in Perkumpulan Keluarga Berencana Indonesia (PKBI), the Indonesian Association of Planned Parenthood, and Lembaga Pengembangan Perempuan dan Anak (LSPPA), a centre for women and children studies, both non-government organisations (NGOs) concerned with child and gender issues.

Ghita is the school principal; she interacts directly and daily with the teachers. She is responsible for placing teachers in classes, distributing tasks and monitoring program implementation.

The parents I interviewed were from both the Indonesian and International playgroup and kindergarten programs. They are Mama Kiki, Mama Erni, Mama Fani and Mama Rosy. Mama Kiki, Erni and Rosy have children in a class with a male teacher, and Mama Fani does not. Mama Erni is a general medical practitioner. Mama Rosy has a degree in psychology and works in ECE. Mama Fani also has a degree in psychology, but does not practice. Mama Kiki is a stay-at-home mother with a university degree. All originate from upper middle-class families.

The male teachers who participated in this research were Budi, Putra, Wawan and Wisnu (all pseudonyms). Detailed information about the male teachers' backgrounds is given in Chapter 5. I also interviewed their female teaching partners: Hawa, Sophia, Sinta and Risa. All the teachers were university graduates with previous experiences in industries other than ECE. They were all married

and had children. They claimed that working in ECE was family friendly; therefore, they had chosen to resign from their initial occupation and were working in ECE.

Data from in-depth interviews were transcribed, selectively translated by myself and grouped in three phases. First, the data were grouped based on three categories: male teachers, the school community (colleagues, school board, parents) and government officers. Then, the data in each category were further classified based on general themes that had emerged. Finally, the data were sorted into specific themes. During the writing process, I cross-referenced participant quotations from each respondent and thematic category to build my arguments.

Video-recorded data were transcribed and combined with field notes. I coded the data based on four major aspects: male–female teacher interaction, teacher–student interaction, language used in the interaction, and selected class activities.

## **Thesis Overview**

This thesis focuses on the connection between masculine identity, hegemonic gender culture, professional identity in a female-dominated workplace, and the gender and pedagogical practices of early childhood male teachers. This thesis is organised into seven chapters, including this one.

To understand Indonesian masculinities in detail, Chapter 2 discusses a typology of masculinity in relation to work and occupation. Hegemonic gender ideology plays an important role in the formation of sex-segregated occupations. Thus, the first section of Chapter 2 discusses hegemonic gender ideology in Indonesia, including an analysis of hegemonic masculinity. Chapter 2 includes a literature review on theories of masculinity in Indonesia, an analysis of media sources and interviews about men, their activism and work. This chapter argues that hegemonic masculinity in Indonesia is constructed by men's heteronormative roles as leaders, providers and protectors. Wealth, physicality, nobility and spirituality are highlighted in different ways by different socioeconomic classes, religions and cultures.

Chapter 3 examines the discourse of maternalism that operates in ECE in Indonesia. As this chapter shows, maternalism (and thus feminisation) is a result of global Frobelian ECE practices, combined with the deeply rooted notion of *kodrat*, an Islamic-inspired ideology of gender as a series of innate characteristics. The discourse has also generated visible and invisible barriers to men teaching in ECE. Based on document analysis and in-depth interviews with ECE authorities, and male and female teachers in Bandung, I investigated several recent policies related to the ECE development and the professionalisation of ECE teachers. Although no national-level written policy exists that directly prohibits men from teaching young children, a hidden policy does hinder men from working in ECE. From interviews with the ECE community (ECE authorities, professional associations, male and female teachers) I have identified three main obstacles that contribute to the small number of men working in ECE. These are the perceived risk of men working with young children; gender-blind policies that fail to recognise the influence of entrenched gender ideology on people's career choices and the low salary and significant gap between ECE teachers' salary with teachers in other levels of schooling and other professions.

Chapter 4 explores the social perceptions of male teachers working as educators and carers of young children (aged 4 to 6). This chapter is based on interviews with parents, female colleagues and the Fastrack Funschool's board. This chapter argues that conventional constructions of gender still play a role in shaping social perceptions of men who teach in kindergarten. Conventional and gender stereotypical perceptions of gender have led to the placement of male teachers as secondary educators, and complementary to female teachers. Their tasks as secondary teachers, however, have exposed them to a child-handling role that involves much caring and nurturing, contributing to the construction of nurturing and caring masculinities. This study did not identify any strong resistance to male teachers; instead, it uncovered positive perceptions of male teacher involvement in the school. The moral panic against men in ECE has been managed effectively by Fastrack Funschool, through teacher selection policies and a protocol regulating physical interactions between students and teachers. Some contradictory perceptions were shared by respondents when they expressed ideas

about gender being innate. At other times, they perceived it as something that was learned. Further, this chapter shows that rather than challenging hegemonic masculinity, male teachers were expected to display masculine characteristics as scripted by conventional constructions of gender. Male teachers were also expected to be agents of gender conformity, especially for boys.

Chapter 5 examines male teachers' narratives about their experiences teaching in ECE. This chapter analyses how male teachers process the social expectations and suspicion placed upon them and how they view and give meaning to their non-traditional occupations. I interviewed four male teachers (Budi, Wawan, Putra and Wisnu) working as assistant teachers in Fastrack Funschool to understand how male teachers negotiate their masculine identity in a female-dominated field. I explored their decision to work in ECE, gender-related obstacles, the benefits of working in ECE, and their perception of child handling and teaching practices. Throughout this chapter, I argue that in their attempt to maintain their masculinities, most men advocate the dominant discourse of masculinity and gender essentialism, while simultaneously challenging it through nurturing practices that involve love and care. This chapter focuses on two analyses: gender- and work-related challenges, and their concomitant coping strategies. Three dominant challenges were discussed during interviews: 1) salary, 2) conflict with female colleagues, and 3) the social stigma and expectations related to their maleness. Their way of coping with these challenges was unique, but within this uniqueness, similarities were apparent that enabled me to categorise them into two major themes: negotiating masculinities and re-gendering ECE. I use the term 'negotiating masculinities' to mean any attempt to adjust their masculinities to the characteristics of ECE by reconstructing both ECE and their masculinities. By 're-gendering ECE', I refer to any attempt to highlight their contribution (as males) to ECE that enhanced conventional gender stereotypes instead of challenging them. This chapter begins with each male teacher's life history, to give an overview of their journey in becoming an ECE teacher. I highlight the similarities and differences in their life histories and then categorise these into themes based on the strategies used to maintain their masculinities. I elaborate on both the challenges and coping strategies in each theme, viewing these as inter-related and

simultaneous. With every attempt to reconstruct ECE, these men also negotiate their masculinities.

The expectations of men teaching ‘boys to be boys’ is investigated in Chapter 6. This chapter explores men’s gendered practices in the classroom. I focus my analysis on the type of activity, the use of language and male teachers’ gestures during pedagogical activities to consider two questions. First, how are masculinities practised and negotiated through pedagogical performances by the male teachers in this study? Second, in what way do male teachers’ performances contribute to the dynamics of gender construction of gender in ECE contexts? Here, I argue that, despite the strong social expectation to behave as a male role model, male teachers reveal a diverse representation of how to be a ‘man’, and what this means, in their pedagogical performance. This suggests that gender diversity might contribute to the deconstruction of cultural gender stereotypes.

Throughout this thesis, I argue that that heteronormative hegemonic masculinity is constantly being defended, challenged, and negotiated in the workplace, through the dynamic interaction between male teachers’ masculine identities and the competence and characteristics required by their profession as ECE teachers. The discourse of nurture, love and care pervasive in ECE has become the modality in which negotiations occur. I argue that the negotiation of male teachers’ masculine identities is mediated by institutional factors, such as school policies and cultural situations, social expectations, and the male teachers’ personal interpretations of gender and occupation. Conventional constructions of gender shape the social and self-perception of men working in ECE. Conventional perceptions of men in ECE have encouraged men to work as assistant teachers and male role models for boys. Working as assistant teachers, with child handling as their primary responsibility, enables men to incorporate caring practices (usually seen as female) into their work roles. This is reflected in both their self-narratives and practices of masculinities. Therefore, I argue that in the ECE context, male teachers constantly rework, defend and challenge hegemonic masculinity through the discourse of nurture, love and care that pervades the early childhood profession.

## Chapter 2: Masculinities in Indonesia

This chapter analyses Indonesian gender ideology, especially constructions of masculinity. It does so in order to establish social perceptions of male teachers and men's decision to work in ECE, where a feminine discourse of love and child caring dominates. This chapter provides a broad context for understanding both contemporary constructions of masculinity and how male ECE teachers negotiate their roles in this female-dominated profession.

My colleague's comment (noted in the introductory chapter) about the male student being effeminate due to his career choice implies a homophobic culture,<sup>15</sup> where a common assumption is held that doing work commonly undertaken by women, such as teaching young children, decreases manliness and increases the chance of being labelled *banci* or 'homo'<sup>16</sup>/gay. The word *banci* (another word for *waria*,<sup>17</sup> which means neither a man nor a woman) is often used to insult men perceived as failing to fulfil expected masculine characteristics. The characteristics that result in a man being called *banci* are not limited to feminine characteristics. Irresponsibility and cowardliness can also trigger a man being called *banci*. Consequently, as indicated by previous research, Indonesian men experience pressure to authenticate their masculinity by confirming their

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<sup>15</sup> Anderson (2009) provides a comprehensive understanding of a culture in which homophobic discourse becomes the most important policing agent of masculinity. Anderson labels this culture as 'homohysterical culture' (7). In homohysterical culture, men who display socially perceived feminine characteristics will face a social stigma and the suspicion of being homosexuals. In Indonesia, homosexual accusations increase the risk of being a victim of anti-homosexual violence. In the post-New Order period, violence against homosexuals has increased. A survey by the Indonesian Survey Circle (LSI) in 2012 showed a significant increase of intolerance against the LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) community from 64.7 per cent of 1200 respondents in 2005 to 80.6 per cent (Jakarta Post 2012). Hostility towards the LGBT community began in 1999, where a meeting of Indonesian homosexual community in Solo was cancelled due to the venue being burnt down and death threats (Boellstorff 2004a, 465–467). One year later, 350 homosexuals and transgender people were attacked and at least twenty-five people were injured. The attackers shouted 'God is Great' and 'look at these men done up like women. Get out *Banci!*' (Boellstorff 2004a, 466). In 2014, the JIS case discussed in the introduction combined with the legalisation of gay marriage in the US increased anxiety towards homosexuals. Sherina Munaf, a famous young Indonesian musician, was petitioned through change.org to be boycotted because she explicitly stated in her Facebook status that she supported gay marriage (Alia 2015).

<sup>16</sup> 'Homo' is common Indonesian word for homosexual men.

<sup>17</sup> Most Indonesians are familiar with a third gender called *waria/banci/wadam/bencong* (male-to-female transvestite). *Waria* is a combination of *wa* (from *wanita*, women) and *ria* (from *pria*, men) (Boellstorff 2004b, 160).

heterosexuality through marriage and fulfilling family obligations (Howard 1996, 47). Young and unmarried men like my student must prove their masculinity through masculine behaviours, such as sport and adventurous activities (see Nilan, Dermatoto and Wibowo 2011, 2014). Homophobia is also related to heteronormativity, which assumes heterosexuality as natural; thus, it becomes the social norm for sexual conduct and kinship relations (Wieringa 2012, 516).

In this chapter, I introduce the construction of gender in Indonesian society. I also examine how the construction of masculinity has changed over time and been influenced by politics, culture, religion, consumerism and globalisation. I refer to a range of materials, including advertisements, interview data, scholarly literature, documents from men's organisation and online news and blog articles (those available from 2013 to 2017) to propose a typology of masculinities related to work. In Chapter 5, I later examine how the male teachers I observed and interviewed reference and reshape this typology.

This chapter demonstrates how Indonesian hegemonic masculinity is organised around the heteronormative idea of men's roles as breadwinners, leaders and protectors. I adopt Connell's (2005, 77) definition of 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'. Hegemonic masculinity occupies the highest position in a hierarchy of masculinities. In order to be hegemonic, particular gender practices are perceived as normal and natural by society; they are promoted as such through the media and other social institutions (Donaldson 1993, 645; Connell and Messerschmidt 2005, 832).

I argue that hegemonic masculinity in contemporary Indonesia is simultaneously preserved, challenged and negotiated (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005). However, the key roles of heteronormative hegemonic masculinity, such as men being breadwinners, protectors and leaders, persist. I identify four different focal points of masculinity: materialism (the accumulation of wealth), physicality, nobility and spirituality. These are highlighted differently in each construction of

masculinity, as idealised according to a person's socioeconomic status, religion or culture. For example, a cosmopolitan middle-class masculinity highlights the accumulation of wealth as the core of masculinity, while a Muslim masculinity will highlight spirituality.

Throughout this chapter, I argue that each Indonesian masculinity discourse is a hybrid of factors such as religion, globalisation, politics and cultural traditions that sometimes compete with, and sometimes complement, each other. My finding resonates with Hearn's idea (1992, 2) that male domination 'is not reducible to one societal system or process; instead, there are effectively lots of patriarchies, dominated by different types of men, operating simultaneously, overlapping, interrelating, contradicting'. My findings also align with Connell and Messerschmidt's (2005, 847) perception that the pattern of hegemonic masculinity changes due to interactions between masculinities. The pattern may vary and change, but its function as the protector of men's domination over women prevails (Connell 2005, 77).

This chapter is organised as follows. First, I explain the concept of *kodrat*, an innate characteristic of God's creatures, as the centre of the hegemonic construction of gender in Indonesia. This is followed by an analysis of hegemonic masculinity construction across historical political regimes in Indonesia. The second part of the chapter examines the contemporary discourses of masculinity, especially those related to work, that are widely promoted in Indonesian contemporary society through various methods including media representation, public discourse and non-government activism. Finally, I discuss how the discourse of love and care—as used by feminist and Muslim men—has created a new meaning of 'real men'.

### **Hegemonic Indonesian Gender Ideology: *Kodrat***

Gender is structured in a variety of ways across the Indonesian archipelago. This is visible in the patterns of gendered social organisation that range from bilateral, matrilineal, matrilineal, patrilineal and patrilineal, as well as in cultural practices that differentiate male and female power (such as marriage, sexuality and fertility

customs, and property and inheritance arrangements [Robinson 2009, 13]). Despite the varieties of and differences between gender ideologies in Indonesia, hegemonic ideas about masculinity and femininity have been reinforced through public institutions imposed by the New Order regime (1966–1998), such as Law number 1/1974 on marriage, which was still valid at the time of writing (2017). This law prescribes husband’s responsibilities as being the breadwinner, protector, and head of the family, while the wife should be a ‘housewife’ and household manager (Law of Republic of Indonesia, No. 1/1974: Chapter VI, article 31 and article 34):

Article 31: (3) Husband is the head of the family, and wife is the housewife.

Article 34: (1) It is compulsory for the husband to protect his wife and provide the family as best as he can; (2) It is compulsory for the wife to manage all household issues as best as she can.

The gender ideology embedded in the law is influenced by Javanese culture (Brenner 1998, Setyawan 2007, Wichelen 2009, Ford and Parker 2008) and partly by Islamic teaching (Yafie 1999, Yusuf 2000, Liddle 1996). The Javanese are a dominant ethnic group, especially in the political arena (Wongkaren 2007, 3; Sutherland 1975, 60). Six out of seven Indonesian presidents have been Javanese. Many Javanese values and traditions were nationalised during the Suharto era in 1967 to 1998, a process known as ‘Javanisation’ (Sutarto 2006, 40). According to Wongkaren (2007, 9), Javanisation is exercised through ‘the use of Javanese history as the nation’s grand narrative, the introduction of terms, proverbs, and symbols in formal official affairs, and the interpretation of *Pancasila*, or the state ideology’. Examples of Javanisation include *kebaya*, a traditional Javanese female outfit that became the Indonesian national outfit during the New Order era, and the use of *Tut wuri handayani* as the official slogan of Ministry of Education and Culture; this means that to educate is to motivate and support. The Javanese elite’s construction of gender has also been adopted as the norm for Indonesian men and women. The Javanese elite prescribes women’s role as *kanca wingking* (friend

behind), which means being a companion of her husband whose role is to manage the family's domestic affairs (Robinson 2009, 123).

In addition to this Javanese influence, another dominant influence on gender construction in Indonesia is *kodrat* (Munir 1999, 16). The notion of *kodrat* refers to the fixed, permanent and innate characteristics of God's creatures. *Kodrat*, as a heteronormative system, dictates the dominant view of morality including gender relations, biological sex, sexuality, psychological dispositions, gender identity and normative gender roles (Dewantara 1961, 6; Yafie 1999, 67–69). Consequently, any deviation from the norms of *kodrat* is unacceptable and will be stigmatised as abnormal. As *kodrat* originates from a religious concept, violating *kodrat* means not only transgressing societal norms and values, but also violating God's will. *Kodrat* ideology determines the division of labour between men and women, both in a family context and society in general. In Islamic teaching, a Quranic verse from *Surah An Nisa*<sup>18</sup> is used to justify the *kodrat* of men and women. The verse says 'men are the leaders of women'. Textual interpretations of this verse support the naturalisation of men as leaders, both in the family and society.

*Kodrat* comes from Islamic teaching, but the interpretation of *kodrat* cannot be detached from local cultural values (Shihab 1999, 77–89). Javanese culture has influenced the interpretation of *kodrat* significantly by prescribing women as *pemangku turunan* (the maintainer of the offspring) and men as *pangkal keturunan* (the root of the offspring) (Dewantara 1961, 10). As the 'maintainer of offspring', a woman's core role is that of a mother. As a mother, a woman must be a caretaker, caregiver and educator of her children. Women who are not yet mothers must still possess motherly qualities, such as being caring, loving and altruistic, - perfect elements for caregiving occupations. Men and women's roles are viewed as complementary; thus, men are associated with the father's role, as the protector of and provider for a family (Dewantara 1961; Kartodirdjo, Poesponegoro, and Notosusanto 1977; Yafie 1999). Ideal womanhood in Indonesia centres on motherhood (maternalistic discourses), while hegemonic

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<sup>18</sup> *Surah An Nisa*' (The Women) is a chapter in the holy Quran that discusses women, marriage and family.

manhood focuses on leadership, providing and fatherhood. Indonesian policies relating to maternity leave (and the lack of paternity leave) give an important clue to the centrality of childcare responsibilities for women.

### **Women as Housewives and Mothers**

Even though the New Order's ideal construction of womanhood centres on the domestic sphere, the government also urged women to participate in the economy, although without neglecting their *kodrat* as wives and mothers. Maternalistic discourse (maternalism) legitimises the extension of women's motherly roles to society in general—including women's public relationships with politics and the state—to the community, workplace and marketplace (Koven and Michel 1990, 1079). These maternal public roles were evident in the New Order's 'five women's role in development', as imposed by the government. In 1974, the government created *Dharma Wanita*, a compulsory organisation of the wives of male civil servants, and intensified involvement in the women's grassroots organisation, Pemberdayaan dan Kesejahteraan Keluarga (PKK), the Family Welfare Movement, which had been established in 1957, before the New Order (Bianpoen 2000; Buchori and Sunarto 2000). According to the idealisation of these five roles, women should be household managers, companions to their husbands, procreators and educators, additional income earners, and good citizens (Aripurnami, 2000; Bianpoen, 2000; Oey-Gardiner, 2002). Women were also idealised as guardians of tradition and the New Order's moral codes (Brenner, 1999).

In the *reformasi* era (1998–present), conventional constructions of gender have been challenged by feminist groups and defended by conservatives groups. Pushed by the gender mainstreaming policy, membership of *Dharma Wanita* is no longer compulsory for male civil servants' wives. The number of women's NGOs who work on women's rights issues has also increased (Parawansa 2002). Women's participation in strategic positions in government institutions and enterprises has also improved. Joko Widodo's administration (2014–2019) has eight female ministers, holding strategic ministries (such as the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Fisheries, Foreign Affairs and State-owned Enterprises).

During Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's administration (2004–2014), a woman was elected as the CEO of Indonesia's biggest oil company, Pertamina (with the oil industry a male-dominated field. Even though men still dominate in the political arena, the number of women in parliament has fluctuated: from the highest level of 13 per cent in the New Order period, to 17 per cent from 2014 to 2019 (Indonesian Election Commission 2014, 135). Women also successfully attained the highest positions as Rectors or Vice Chancellors in five reputable universities (Universitas Gadjah Mada, Universitas Sriwijaya, Universitas Terbuka, Universitas Hasanuddin and Universitas Sriwijaya).<sup>19</sup>

Despite the increase of women's participation in political and strategic positions in the public sector, the reformation-era government still paradoxically embraces maternalism in many policies, preserving the ideal construction of women as mothers, moral figures and active participants in economic development (Love 2007, 96). In 2009, the Ministry for Women's Empowerment changed its name to the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection, strengthening the maternalistic discourse by pairing women with children. Free government courses conducted through *Dharma Wanita* and PKK for women continue to support issues related to the family, children's health and nutrition, housewifery, cooking, fashion and cosmetic use (Jones 2010, 275).

Another example of continuing maternalism is the policy of allowing female civil servants to finish work early. This was proposed by Jusuf Kalla, vice president in Joko Widodo's administration (2014–2019). The Minister of Human Resources, Hanif Dakhiri, explained that the reason behind Kalla's proposal was to encourage mothers to give their love and attention to their children and take care of their children (Detiknews 2014). The proposal invited controversy, especially from feminist groups who argued it would reinforce the conventional female role as the primary caregiver of children. They also argued that instead of providing women

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<sup>19</sup> Internationally, the number of female university chancellors is very low, with only one in six top universities led by women in 2016 (source: <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/one-six-top-universities-led-woman>). Indonesia has 97 higher education institutions and only five are led by women. Nevertheless, this is still a good progress, as Indonesia had no female university chancellors before 2010.

with equal opportunity to be economically productive, the policy would work against this.

Further, the increase in conservative Islamic groups has also promoted maternalism. Relaxations of the government control over public discourse, media and religious expression, as well as government decentralisation, has led to the partial integration of Islamic law into regional law in some parts of Indonesia. This has restricted women's autonomy in terms of clothing, mobility and political participation (Robinson 2009, 21). This emerging Islamic conservative political force has disrupted the progressive feminist movement (186). Conservative groups tend to relegate women to their *kodrat* as mother and wife. They recommend women work only in areas that are more suitable to their *kodrat* and require no interaction with men (White and Anshor 2008, 139). As an example, in 2016, some conservative groups formed an alliance called AILA Aliansi Cinta Keluarga (Family Love Alliance). They claim this movement intends to civilise Indonesia by strengthening family values and protecting society from feminism and gender equality. Similar to conservative Christians in the West, AILA promotes the idea that feminism will destroy families, as feminists hate men and reject religion vehemently (Salimah 2014, Hermawan 2016).

In general, although women's participation in the public sphere has increased and some government strictures (such as membership of *Dharma Wanita*) are no longer obligatory for the wives of civil servants, women's *kodrat* as the primary caregiver of children prevails. Feminist attempts to improve gender equality have been hampered by maternalistic government policies and resistance from Islamic conservative groups.

### **'Real' Men**

Unlike women's *kodrat*, which is often discussed in both scholarly and popular literature, men's *kodrat* is often missing from the discussion. However, as I mentioned earlier, *kodrat* prescribes that men should be the leaders, providers and protectors of the family. Thus, the meaning of 'real man' is organised and constructed around these three primary male roles.

During the New Order period, the state imposed a hegemonic idea of what it meant to be a ‘real man’: *bapakism*, whose legacy is preserved in different and multiple forms today. The New Order legacy continues; however, the ideological elements of the regime, such as Javanism and militarism, are no longer as cohesive and dominant (Heryanto 2008, 8). Relaxed media censorship and the establishment of liberal democracy in the post-authoritarian regime have created opportunities for diverse groups to express their identities more freely.

In the New Order regime, Javanese masculinity, nationalism and militarism determined the hegemonic meaning of real men (Clark 2010, 18; Wulan 2013, 160; Wichelen 2009, 179–180). Two important keys to Javanese masculinity are *bapak-ism* (fatherism) and *priyayi-ism*. *Bapakism* derives from the word *bapak*/father. *Bapak* implies seniority, authority and paternalism. According to *bapakism*, the person of a higher rank is entitled to *hormat* or respect, which is shown through certain forms of etiquette (Irawanto, Ramsey and Ryan 2011, 129). Suryakusuma (2011, 5–8) argues that calling the respected man *bapak* has become a masculine norm. ‘*Bapakism*’ (fatherism) organises a man’s relationship to other men, women and children. *Bapakism* is related to the man’s role in the family, as a provider and protector (Wichelen 2010, 89). This pattern extends to society. The ‘family-state’ concept was adopted; Suharto, the president, was *bapak*, the country and the people were his children.

*Priyayism* originates from *priyayi*, a traditional Javanese ruling class, consisting of men and women from various backgrounds including the nobility, government officials, court administrators, well-educated Javanese and teachers (Geertz 1976; Sutherland 1975; Koentjaraningrat 1985). Suharto adopted *priyayi* traditions to preserve his domination. The *priyayi* tradition dictates the power relation pattern between classes—between the superior and inferior—and the etiquette required between classes. Within the *priyayi* tradition, the leader plays a role as patron and the people as the client (Errington 1984, 277). The patron/leader should guarantee the welfare of the people/client, as a father does with his wife and children. Consequently, the people have to obey, be loyal and responsible to, and respect the ruler (Shiraishi 1990, 139; Supriadi, Radjiman and Setiasih 2013, 76).

Following this pattern, a man with the greater capacity to protect and provide is more likely to be respected and obeyed.

*Priyayi* culture also differentiates classes by etiquette (Errington 1984, 282–283). Thus, a man should follow a particular etiquette according to his class. The way a man speaks and behaves can be a marker of his social position. Etiquette prescribes the level of language used and certain codes of politeness. A hierarchy of language differentiates class, age and gender in terms of roughness and refinement. *Ngoko*, a language considered *kasar* (rough), is for the lower classes, or for when a member of a higher class or an elder speaks to a member of a lower class or a younger person. *Kromo*, the *halus* (refined) language, is for a member of a higher class, or when a member of a lower class or a younger person speaks to a member of a higher class or an elder (Moedjanto 1993, 55). Since a wife's position is lower than that of the husband, she should speak *kromo* to her husband to show her respect, but for a husband to speak *ngoko* to his wife is acceptable (Handayani and Novianto 2004, 134).

Traditional *priyayi* masculinity is inspired by the characteristics of *ksatria* (heroic warrior) featured in *cerita pewayangan* (Javanese legends and myths), which combines refined personal characteristic (such as using *halus*/refined language, forgiveness, self-control), physical strength, and *kesakten/sakti* (supernatural power) (Moedjanto 1993, 126). A perfect *ksatria* should possess these five things: a wife/wives/women (*wanita/wanondya*),<sup>20</sup> a house (*wisma*),<sup>21</sup> a ceremonial dagger (*curiga-keris*),<sup>22</sup> a horse/vehicle/transport (*turangga*),<sup>23</sup> and a cockfight

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<sup>20</sup> *Wanondya* symbolises two things. First, it symbolises the feminine quality that the ruler must have, such as forgiveness, politeness and refined behaviour, gestures and language (Supriadi, Radjiman, and Setiasih 2013, 155). Second, *wanondya* validates the 'heterosexual' *kodrat* of men.

<sup>21</sup> *Wisma* (house) symbolises territory or a place of his own where a *ksatria* exercise his authority. Now it can be a house or a property. A man should have a house of his own, not live in someone else's property/house.

<sup>22</sup> *Curiga/keris* (ceremonial-dagger) is a kris weapon believed to have a mystical power. It signifies the honour of the owner (Al-Mudra 2009, 41). In modern times, the *curiga/keris* symbolises discipline, bravery, self-awareness and the ability to protect and defend one's honour, family, people, religion and country.

<sup>23</sup> *Turangga* (horse) symbolises transport or something that can take a warrior to his destination or guarantee his mobility. Nowadays, *turangga* is associated with modern vehicles or it can also be knowledge, wisdom, skills, capability and visions. *Wisma* and *turangga* can also be a measure of wealth and a man's ability to provide. However, as *turangga* can also mean knowledge, being

bird (*kukila*)<sup>24</sup> (Priyanto 2009, 5; Frey 2010, 18; Supriadi, Radjiman, and Setiasih 2013, 246). Each of the things symbolises particular qualities that determine men's honour, such as heterosexuality, a wife/wives, wealth, knowledge, bravery, spirituality and refinement (Nilan, Demartono and Broom 2013, 4).

In Javanese beliefs, humans consist of two elements: *kasar* (crudeness) and *halus* (refinement/control). *Kasar* is associated with human's animalistic nature, while *halus* is linked to divine power from God. Thus, refined personal characteristics that can only be achieved with effective self-control are associated with closeness to God. Refined characteristics, therefore, signify higher social status and power (Errington 1984, 278, Nilan, Demartoto and Wibowo 2014, 72). The man of power in traditional Javanese belief systems is a man who possesses conflicting and oppositional elements such as feminine and masculine characteristics but is able to control and keep the elements balance (Anderson 1972, 14). This idea of power is different to the Western idea of power that is related to wealth, status and profession (Djajadiningrat-Nieuwenhuis 1992, 46). For Javanese *priyayi*, power comes from closeness to God or spirituality, self-discipline, and self-control over the worldly and personal desires (Anderson 1972, 9).

During the New Order era, *ksatria*/warrior-ism was reinterpreted as militarism (Clark 2010, 10). Soeharto positioned himself as the father, with supreme power like a Javanese king. As Suharto himself was a military general, his leadership placed the military in the *priyayi* position; thus, the military became the ruling class (Fernando 2012, 151). The military was also given a dual function (*dwi fungsi* Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia [ABRI]) that allowed them to play both a security and defence force role and a sociopolitical role (Suryakusuma 2012, 200). In this way, the military influenced every sector of Indonesian life.

Masculine military command structures and values such as discipline, toughness, aggression, domination and competition were idealised, socialised and practised

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knowledgeable and well educated is also a source of prestige and honour for a man and can be valued more than wealth.

<sup>24</sup> *Kukila* (a bird) symbolises leisure and entertainment.

in society during the New Order (see Suryakusuma 2012, 200–202), including in schools. School orientations for new students followed the military pattern of mentorship, which included activities such as running, performing squats and push-ups, marching, and could sometimes involve physical contact and humiliation. The relationship between senior and junior students reflected the patron/client relationship. Juniors had to obey seniors if they wanted to survive and adapt to the new school environment. Learning environments were arranged in a militaristic manner. Militaristic flag ceremonies were conducted every Monday morning at school. Students marched and lined up, saluted to the school principal as the ceremonial leader, and to the flag when raised. The relationship between teacher and student also followed both *priyayi* and a militaristic ethos. Obedience was the measure of a ‘good’ or ‘bad’ student.

State-imposed Indonesian hegemonic masculinity constructs the ‘real man’ as the leader of the family, both in the context of a nuclear family or the ‘family-state’ (Boellstorff 2005b, 96). A leader must have the capacity to protect and provide for the family, and should be respected and obeyed by members of that family. These roles should be performed through refined and highly controlled behaviour. Roughness and impoliteness are associated with lower class masculinity (Nilan, Demartono, and Broom 2013, 7). The noblest and most respected man is a heterosexual man who combines masculine characteristics such as bravery, strength and power with characteristics such as loyalty, dedication, politeness, refinement and controlled behaviour, which were considered feminine by the Dutch colonial authorities (Gouda 1999, 164). Proximity and obedience to God are also important aspects of being a respected man. Even though men should provide for their families, dedication to the nation is more honoured than wealth accumulation (Bertrand 2015, 252–253). As militarism permeates this archetype of masculinity, dominance and control are also markers of hegemonic masculinity. In the New Order, other alternative masculinities and femininities were repressed, as they were considered threats to the state’s stability (Robinson 2009, 32; Wieringa 2003).

## Contesting ‘Real’ Men

This section discusses contestations of the New Order’s hegemonic masculinity in the *reformasi* era to understand what parts of masculinity have remained and what parts have been challenged. The fall of the New Order in 1998 created a space in which other forms of masculinity gained visibility, including metrosexual, gay, various transgender iterations and jihadist versions, particularly in artistic circles and the popular media (Robinson 2009, 134). In the 2000s, contemporary novelists, such as Ayu Utami and Dorothea Rosa Herliany, started to critique men and the military; these authors portrayed women demanding equality, power and dominance (Clark 2004a, 12). Seno Gumira Adjidharma’s work, published in 2000, *Wisanggeni Sang Buronan* (wisanggeni, the outlaw), symbolically discarded the Javanese heroic model taken from *cerita pewayangan* (the traditional Javanese puppet story) (Clark 2004b, 119). Homosexual identity, which was almost impossible to express during the New Order era, started to be portrayed in films such as *Arisan* in 2003 (Clark 2010). Based on her research on a male adolescents’ magazine, however, Handayani (2012, 480) suggests that in the Indonesian context the media cannot directly challenge heteronormativity. Due to dominant societal values and the increasing influence of conservative Islam since the end of the New Order period homosexuality must continue to be presented as deviant.

The growth of democracy triggered both progressive and conservative movements to arise. Islamic genre films, such as *Ayat-Ayat Cinta (Verses of Love)* and *Ketika Cinta Bertasbih (When Love Glorifies God)*, flourished, promoting Islamic masculinity and teasing out the ideal of monogamous marriage with the discourse of polygamy, but strengthening the idea of men as Imam/family heads (Hoesterey and Clark 2012, 211). The above books and films portray diverse versions of masculinity that rarely appeared during the New Order period. They challenge the hegemonic ideal of real men imposed for 32 years by the New Order regime.

Feminist men’s organisations are also growing alongside Islamic conservatism. In 2009, the ALB was established by several NGOs across Indonesia. It is a

consortium of men who claim to be feminist and who have been actively involved in feminist activities in NGOs, such as Rifka Anisaa in Yogyakarta, Pulih Foundation and Yayasan Jurnal Perempuan in Jakarta, Men's Forum in Aceh, Rumah Perempuan Kupang, and Women's Crisis Centre Bengkulu (Yayasan Pulih Indonesia and UN-Women 2011). The ALB explicitly states their commitment to gender equality. The ALB is also related to the global white ribbon campaign to stop violence against women. The ALB's ideas about gender are evident in their training module 'Raising Men's Gender Awareness'<sup>25</sup> (Hasyim 2012). Their commitment is to change men's perspectives on gender from an essentialist *kodrat* position to a more socially constructed one:

It is not easy to deconstruct hegemonic ideas about manhood that operate in our society. From the minute a baby boy is born, norms, responsibilities and family expectations are attached to him. Various cultural norms and attributes are internalised in him through rituals, religious texts, parenting, toys and play, and life philosophy. Patriarchal culture produces a monolithic idea of manhood. You can observe it from the way men dress, choose accessories, choose activities, make friends, solve problems, and express their ideas. A monolithic self-image of men has been transferred down from generation to generation through traditional heritage and ideas about the fixed obligations of men. The obligation to follow a certain type of manhood (*dogma kejantanan*) is a result of the assumption that it is natural and innate (Kurniawan 2012, 13).

ALB discusses how hegemonic masculinity has affected women's lives and can have negative outcomes for men too. The ALB argue that considering men protectors has made men more selfish, and often creates stress for men who cannot conform to this ideal. They also challenge heteronormativity by noting that it oppresses and marginalises men with different sexual orientations. Feminist ideas of gender equality are promoted significantly by the ALB movement.

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<sup>25</sup> The training module can be downloaded from <http://lakilakibaru.or.id/modul-penyadaran-gender-untuk-laki-laki/>.

However, this feminist men's movement faces challenges from conservative groups who are promoting their own versions of masculinity.

Islamisation has intensified after Suharto's demise in 1998. As such, the New Order's hegemonic masculinity has also faced challenges from Islamic masculinities that emphasise spirituality and piety over secular and materialistic goals (Nilan 2009, 328). However, Islamic masculinities do not comprise a single category. Modernist Islamic groups thrive alongside fundamentalist's attempts to impose an 'Islamic' gender regime through establishing shari'a-based regional regulations (Afrianty 2011; Grossmann 2014). As a result, various Islamic masculinities are promoted simultaneously. Ikhwan ideology leads men to find their moral roles as devoted husbands and fathers and strongly emphasises the importance of religiosity and marriage as the basis of social life. It also restricts the expression of non-marital sexuality. An example of Islamic masculinity is depicted in popular culture: *Ayat-Ayat Cinta (Verses of Love)* and *Ketika Cinta Bertasbih (When Love Glorifies God)*. In these movies, the male protagonists are depicted as pious. Following religious teaching is their priority; they respect women, but are open to consensual polygamous marriage, perceived as prescribed in Quran. Another version of Islamic masculinity reveals a more violent face, such as that portrayed by vigilant Islamic fundamentalist organisation, FPI. FPI is often involved in violent acts against gender and religious minority groups in the name of 'jihad'.<sup>26</sup>

Contestations of hegemonic masculinity by the groups described above, however, do not challenge men's primary roles as leaders, protectors and providers. What is contested is what defines leaders, protectors and providers, and this will be discussed in the following sections.

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<sup>26</sup> Jihad is an Arabic word defined as 'struggle' or 'striving' and is generally described as taking place at two levels: the inner (or greater) and the outer (or lesser). According to the hadith (records of the sayings and deeds of the Prophet Muhammad), inner jihad is the struggle within oneself to avoid sinful behavior and live according to the principles of the Quran, Sunna (example of the Prophet Muhammad) and Sharia (Islamic law). Outer jihad, on the other hand, refers to the defence of the Muslim community under attack. This can be a 'soft defense', such as through verbal or written debate or persuasion (jihad of the tongue, or jihad of the pen), or 'hard defense' (also known as 'jihad of the sword'), such as through physical or military defense of a community. (DeLong-Bass 2009).

## Men as Leaders

Since the New Order structured the state as a family, the ideal during this era was shaped around men's role as leaders of the family who represented that family in the outside world (Robinson 2009, 10). The role of the leader (a man) is shaped by the notion of 'fatherism', Javanism and nationalism (Wichelen 2009, 179). 'Fatherism' (*bapakism*) calls for a supreme power of some men in relation to other men, women and children (Suryakusuma 2011, 6–7). Javanism shapes fatherism in terms of spiritual power (Wichelen 2009, 179). According to Javanese *priyayi* ideology, only men can attain unification of the human self and God (Brenner 1998, 135). Thus, men can gain more spiritual power than can women. Men's spiritual superiority justifies men's position in the social hierarchy (Setyawan 2007, 51). This implies that men should be prioritised over women in leadership. This sentiment was used in the 2009 presidential election to prevent Megawati from being elected as Indonesian president. At that time, many religious groups declared their disagreement at choosing a woman to be president. See, for example, the statement of disagreement from 24 Islamic clerics from *Nahdlatul Ulama*,<sup>27</sup> East Java. Stereotypical assumptions of women lacking rationality and religiosity are used by many Islamic clerics to justify their appeal not to vote for women (see e.g., Tausikal 2010). As an Indonesian woman, I often find this sentiment has also been internalised in women and men. Many women feel incapable of being a leader, and many women do not vote for a woman as leader just because the candidate is a woman. In the 2009 presidential election, it is too simplistic to say that Megawati's gender caused her loss, but the 'no female leader' sentiment was used extensively, and she was not elected.

Sixteen years after the fall of Suharto in 1998, the Javanese hegemonic masculinity described above still played out in the last Indonesian presidential election (in 2014). In this election, Indonesia had only two presidential candidates, Prabowo and Joko Widodo. Prabowo used a hegemonic masculinity discourse as a

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<sup>27</sup> Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) is the largest Islamic organisation in Indonesia, and was established on 31 January 1926 by KH Hasyim Asyari. NU takes the middle path between rationalist and scriptural Islam. In NU teaching, Islam is not only practised based on Al-Quran and Al-Hadiths; rational thinking and current cultural context are also used in their religious practices (Nahdlatul Ulama, 2013).

significant part of his campaign strategy. Prabowo, who has a military and royal family background, tried to build a public perception that he was the most masculine man, and only a masculine man was worthy to be Indonesia's president. In ways similar to Sukarno and Suharto, Prabowo adopted Javanese hegemonic masculinity. The symbols of *wisma*, *turangga*, *curiga*, and *kukila* were used widely in his campaign.<sup>28</sup>



Source: Detik.com. <https://sgimage.detik.net.id/content/2014/03/23/1562/prabowokeris.jpg>

**Figure 2.1: Prabowo rides a horse (*turangga*) with *keris*, a Javanese dagger slipped on his waist as a symbol of *curiga*.**

Prabowo's campaign tactics portrayed Joko Widodo (Jokowi), his opponent from a merchant background, as 'subordinated masculinity' (Connell 2005, 79). In his political speech, Prabowo often mentioned that 'We don't want a puppet leader!

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<sup>28</sup> A longer discussion of Javanese masculinity in the 2014 presidential election is available in my article 'Hail the hero: Playing the man in Indonesian politics', see <http://past.electionwatch.edu.au/indonesia-2014/hail-hero-playing-man-indonesian-politics>.

Do you want to be led by a puppet?’<sup>29</sup> implying that Jokowi was a controlled puppet. Many memes portrayed Jokowi as a puppet of Megawati, the leader of Partai Demokrasi Indonesia-Perjuangan (PDI-P).<sup>30</sup>



Source: Picture by Agung SW. [http://static.skalanews.com/media/news/thumbs-396-263/Petugas\\_Partai.jpg](http://static.skalanews.com/media/news/thumbs-396-263/Petugas_Partai.jpg)

**Figure 2.2: Smear campaign meme portraying Joko Widodo being controlled by Megawati.**

This representation of the lack of independence is in extreme opposition to hegemonic masculinity. Jokowi was accused of being weak through this representation of him as the subordinate of a woman. Therefore, he lost his supremacy over other men. Ahmad Dhani, a musician and Prabowo’s supporter, challenged Indonesian men’s masculine identity by saying that men who did not vote for Prabowo were not real men (Suhendra 2014). However, Prabowo’s masculinity-based politics failed to win him the election. Joko Widodo, a more inclusive leader, was accepted by women’s groups, LGBT and other minority groups, including religious minorities such as Syiah, Ahmadiyah and Baha’i

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<sup>29</sup> Many of Prabowo’s political speech video can be accessed in YouTube. One of the video showing him discredited Joko Widodo is available in this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FxHgZxpTlu8>.

<sup>30</sup> PDI-P, established in 1999, was the winning political party in the 2014 election and the party of Joko Widodo the current president of Indonesia (2014–2019). It is currently led by Megawati Sukarnoputri, a daughter of Sukarno, the first president of Indonesia. Megawati was also the president of Indonesia from 2001 to 2004. In 1996, the New Order government forced Megawati from the leadership of Partai Demokrasi Indonesia (PDI), the Indonesian Democratic Party. Only after the fall of Suharto (the president during the New Order) did Megawati form the Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan (PDI-P) (Rinaldo 2017).

populations. The hegemonic masculinity rhetoric seemed no longer effective in gaining people's votes.

Taking insights from the masculinity-based politics of the 2014 presidential election, people's definitions of an effective leader are no longer marked by hegemonic Javanese masculinity. *Priyayi* and a militaristic-style leadership are being challenged by a civilian leadership in which a record of combatting corruption and reforming bureaucracy is more important than a grand portrayal of a Javanese royal leader. Joko Widodo, who has a soft and calm manner, is a commoner with no royal background. He was a furniture business operator, a traditionally less respected occupation in Javanese society, who won the election. He won the most votes due to his excellent record when a mayor in Solo, a large city in Central Java.

### **'Heroic' Men**

The notion of heroism is an important key to hegemonic masculinity in Indonesia. However, what constitutes a hero varies across time and contexts. In the West, but also in Indonesia, the core of heroism has become culturally androgynous, as heroism involves masculine elements, such as risk-taking, and feminine elements, such as altruism or concern for other's welfare (Becker and Eagly 2004, 166). Heroism has been framed traditionally as a masculine domain. Male heroes in Indonesian traditional myths and iconography are invulnerable, possess supernatural powers, express masculine altruism<sup>31</sup> and a hyper-masculinity that includes toughness, physical strength and distance from femininity (Nilan, Dermatoto and Wibowo 2014, 72–72). *Si Pitung*, a heroic legend of the Betawi<sup>32</sup> people who fought against the Dutch, stole from avaricious wealthy people and gave to the underprivileged, much like Robin Hood in English folklore (Till 1996, 456). *Si Pitung* was pictured as a man who was expert in martial arts, pious, and who possessed a magical power that rendered him invulnerable. A similar hyper-masculine hero figure was also adopted by the nationalists who fought for

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<sup>31</sup> Masculine altruism here refers to acts of bravery against authority to protect other people considered weak. For example, a Robin Hood-like act, robbing rich people to give to the poor.

<sup>32</sup> Betawi is the other name of Jakarta, the capital city of Indonesia.

Indonesian freedom and independence. During the era of struggle for independence (1945–1949), the traditional gentle and refined Javanese qualities were discredited and labelled as feminine. The Dutch stigmatised Javanese men as effeminate. To challenge this emasculating attitude towards Javanese/Indonesian fighters, traditionalist fighters distanced themselves from refinement and embraced the militaristic masculinist discourse of bravery, courage and virility in order to protect Indonesia from the colonial Dutch (Gouda 1999, 169–171).

After independence (1949-1965), the definition of hero expanded to include any form of action and behaviour that contributed to the Indonesian nation. The designation *pahlawan* (hero) was no longer a men-only domain. In 1964, the first president of Indonesia, Sukarno, inaugurated the first three female heroes acknowledged by the government: Cut Nyak Dien, Cut Nyak Meuthia and Kartini (Said 2014, 347). Similarly, heroic acts are no longer restricted to men; teachers and Indonesian migrant workers,<sup>33</sup> groups dominated by women, are also hailed as heroes, despite the controversial lack of government attention to their welfare. One very famous song performed in Indonesian schools at teacher-student farewells is ‘*Guru, Pahlawan Tanpa Tanda Jasa*’ (*Teachers, Heroes without Medals*). This song celebrates the idea of teachers as altruistic people who sacrifice themselves for the nation’s future without asking for anything in return.

Even though heroism has been expanded to include ‘unsung’ heroes, the ultimate hero is still ‘the real man’. Physically heroic men are still widely promoted in the media. For example, a cigarette advertisement (Fig. 2.3) for *Gudang Garam International*, with the tagline ‘Need more adventure to be a man’, portrays a man in a heroic quest. The man is crossing snowy mountains and tropical jungles, and diving into the deepest ocean to save the black box from an aeroplane that has crashed. The advertisement conveys that to be a man requires heroic acts.

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<sup>33</sup> Indonesian migrant domestic workers, mostly women, are also regarded as heroes for their remittance contribution to Indonesia. They are called ‘*pahlawan devisa*’ (the remittance hero).



Source: This picture is captured from an advertisement of Gudang Garam International – Black Box. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=twJXWX2qj6o>

**Figure 2.3: A Gudang Garam International advertisement, ‘The Black Box’, portraying a man undertaking a high-risk journey alone to save a black box from a crashed aeroplane**

Diverse constructions of heroic masculinity exist, yet the important point of heroic acts concerns devoting one’s self for the nation’s greater good and protecting the nation. To that end, various ways to be heroic are possible. Heroic masculinity can, therefore, be framed within a hyper-masculine discourse or a more feminine discourse, such as the song used to acknowledge teachers as heroes.

### **Working Men**

‘It is a husband’s obligation to provide for his family’, states one clause of the Indonesian Marriage Law.<sup>34</sup> As providers, men are required to have stable jobs that enable them to meet the family’s needs. The type of occupation a man works in determines his status in society. As with other aspects of Indonesian society, Javanese ideology has influenced the hierarchy of occupations significantly. According to Javanese philosophy, life should be oriented to peacefulness and spirituality rather than to materiality. Human life consists of two core elements—*halus*/refinement and *kasar*/roughness—by which social status, morality and

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<sup>34</sup> The Marriage Law was established in 1974 during the New Order era. After the fall of Suharto, some Indonesian feminist groups, such as the Indonesian Women Coalition and Women’s Health Foundation demanded amendments to the law. Some issues proposed for change were the minimum age of marriage, legal requirements of marriage, the status of children born outside marriage, the automatic status of husbands and the head of the family, and polygamy. Not all issues, however, were accommodated and revised by legislators. The clause stating husbands are the head of the family remains until today.

norms are organised (Irawanto, Ramsey and Ryan 2011, 127). *Halus*/refinement consists of spirituality, softness, politeness and intelligence, whereas *kasar*/roughness is associated with physicality, materiality and worldly desires that are thoughtless and lustful. Thus, in Javanese society, occupations that symbolise spiritual power, dedication and service to the state (and are thus considered *halus*/refined) are more respectable than manual labour (blue-collar). Occupations that focus on material benefits and the accumulation of wealth, such as trading or business are inappropriate for men from the *priyayi* class (Wongkaren 2007, 7; Brenner 1991, 63–65).

Three types of worker are organised according to the dichotomy of *halus/kasar*: *pegawai* (white-collar workers), *pekerja/buruh* (blue-collar workers/labourers) and *pedagang/pengusaha* (traders/merchants/entrepreneurs). *Pegawai*/white-collar workers are those who do *halus*/refined work that encompasses spirituality and intellectuality. This includes workers in government and private offices, such as civil servants (*pegawai negeri sipil*), clerks and administrators. *Pekerja/buruh* (blue-collar workers) and *pedagang/pengusaha* (entrepreneurs) are considered *kasar*/rough, as they focus on physicality and materiality. Regardless of how much they earn, the social status of *pegawai* is higher than that of *buruh/pekerja* and *pedagang/pengusaha*.

*Pegawai* is accorded a higher status due to the historical connection with Javanese *priyayi* (the aristocratic rulers of Java). Traditional *priyayi* perceived market-based activities such as trading as distasteful due to the focus on profit. Therefore, market-based occupations were usually undertaken by members of the lower classes (peasants and merchants); they were known as *wong cilik* (commoners) (Wongkaren 2007, 7; Gerke 2000, 139). In the late eighteenth century, the Sultan of Paku Buwana IV, the King of Solo, wrote in *Serat Wulangreh*:

There are four worst infidelities: first is taking drugs, second is gambling, third is stealing, and the fourth disability is a man who has [a] merchant spirit. His character is bad for only wanting to be rich. Day and night, what he does is calculating profit, so afraid [is he] to be broke. He is never satisfied, not even when he has seven sacks of money. If he

loses a penny, he will regret it for four years like losing thousands. A man with [a] merchant's heart hesitates to do good deeds, except when someone comes with something to be pawned, [then] he is excited and will show a happy face (cited in Sujanto 1992, 152).

During the colonial period (1596–1945), the Dutch gave the *priyayi* class the privilege of working in the colonial government as civil servants; they were also able to access the formal education required for their employment (Kistanto 1991, 297). After independence (1949-1965), *priyayi* no longer dominated the civil services, but the high status of civil servants and office employees prevailed (Hayati, Emmelin and Eriksson 2014). During the New Order era, the legacy of this *priyayi* tradition played a significant role in people's—especially men's—career choices. Working for the government as civil servant in government offices, state schools and hospitals was desirable in Indonesian society, regardless of the low salaries (Filmer and Lindauer 2001, 189).

In contemporary Indonesia, where global neoliberal discourse has permeated every sector of development, the citizens' dedication to their nation is measured by their contributions to its economic growth (Adriany and Saefullah, 2015; Purnastuti, Salim and Joarder, 2015; Robertson, 2007). Thus, Javanese ideology that highlights dedication, nobility and spirituality as the main motivation for career choices faces a significant challenge from capitalist ideology. During the New Order era, the Indonesian government's attempt to increase the capitalist class was hampered by the *priyayi* ideology also adopted by the regime (Wongkaren 2007, 18). In the *reformasi* era (1998–current), a challenge to the *priyayi* mentality has intensified since Susilo Bambang Yudoyono's government (2004–2014) and even more in Joko Widodo's era (2014–2019). Currently, trading and profit-oriented businesses are promoted as ideal occupations, as they contribute much to Indonesia's economic growth. The government has established various strategies to attract and train young Indonesians to become entrepreneurs (Mirzanti, Simatupang and Larso 2015, 411–412). Thus, the traditional occupational hierarchy is being challenged. Entrepreneurship is encouraged and integrated into the curriculum at every educational level. The current President,

Joko Widodo, and his ministers often mention that Indonesia needs 5.8 million more entrepreneurs to reach the goal of having four per cent of the total Indonesian population being entrepreneurs (e.g., *Republika.co.id* 2016; Deny 2017). Joko Widodo himself was a business person before entering politics.

Today, the high status of *priyayi* masculinity is being challenged by entrepreneurial masculinity, a discursive form of ‘transnational business masculinity’ (Connell 1998, 16) that is promoted in the media. Transnational business masculinity is an emerging form of masculinity originating in the increased power of transnational business corporations in the global market. This new hegemonic masculinity is characterised by business executives operating in the global marketplace, and the politicians who interact with them (Connell 1998, 16). The picture below (Fig. 2.4) is an advertisement for *Wismilak Diplomat*. Using the word ‘diplomat’, a person who represents his or her country abroad, suggests a link between the product and transnationalism. The depiction of a man in a western-style business suit, with an aeroplane flying in the background and his face looking up optimistically with the caption ‘*arti sebuah kesuksesan*’ (‘the meaning of success’), defines success as participation in a global market dominated by aggressive competition and wealth.



The caption reads ‘*arti sebuah kesuksesan*’ (the meaning of success). Source: <https://copydancoffee.files.wordpress.com/2010/11/billboard-kurir-titanic.jpg>

**Figure 2.4: A portrayal of transnational business masculinity in a cigarette advertisement for *Wismilak Diplomat***

Entrepreneurial masculinity reshapes what it means to be a man by linking high social status to wealth accumulation. It is marked by egocentrism, conditional loyalty and a declining sense of responsibility to others (Connell 1998, 16). It competes with the traditional *priyayism* that despises an obsession with wealth and describes members of a high social class as those who inherit social status through their family lineage, who have blood connections with a ruler, and who work in the bureaucracy (Wasino 2014, 40). Materialistic middle-class masculinity, such as transnational business masculinity, is idealistic and unrealistic for most Indonesian men. It only represents a small group of elite men.

In addition to the dichotomy of *pegawai*/white-collar workers versus entrepreneurs, another dichotomy exists. This is based on intellectuality versus physicality. Those who work using physical strength, such as construction and industrial workers, are called *buruh/pekerja* (labourer/blue-collar). Regardless of how much they earn, the status of a *buruh/pekerja* is lower than that of a *pegawai*. Realising the low status of *pekerja*, an energy drink advertisement (Fig. 2.5) tries to sell the product using a masculinity discourse. The advertisement suggests that hard physical work, bravery, power and stamina are the markers of men. Therefore, *pekerja* is 'laki'/manly. The advertisement tries to produce masculinity through work that involves the body (Haywood and Ghail 2003, 29–30). Difficult, physical work thus becomes the marker of masculinity.



Source: the picture is captured from Extra Joss advertisement posted on youtube.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uU-WfvxsL4s>

**Figure 2.5: A portrayal of men who work as *pekerja* in an energy drink advertisement**

Teachers are categorised as *pegawai* as they work with their intellectual capabilities. They comprise 37.74 per cent of the civil service (State Personnel Board 2016). Therefore, teaching offers a higher status than *buruh* and receives more respect socially. The Indonesian word for teacher is *guru*. This means a person who enlightens and lifts other people out of darkness. A *guru* is respected for his or her knowledge, wisdom and spirituality. Javanese philosophy praises the *guru* as *digugu lan ditiru*; this means that his or her words must be obeyed and his or her behaviour emulated (Sudira, nd). Teaching, however (as I will elaborate upon further in Chapter 3), has suffered from a low economic status that has led to a feminisation of the profession. Women comprise 60.66 per cent of civil servant teachers (State Personnel Board 2016). The total income of some *buruh/pekerja* (blue-collar workers) can be higher than that of teachers. For example, a male casual *buruh* who works in building construction can be paid as much as Rp 85,000<sup>35</sup> (AUD8.5) per day for seven hours work, while a casual school teacher may be paid only Rp 250,000 to 350,000 (AUD25–30) per month (Romadoni 2017). Distinct from the *buruh* with a standard minimum wage, no standard minimum exists for how much a teacher should be paid. Thus, teaching has become less attractive to male ‘breadwinners’.

### **Counter-Hegemonic Masculinity: Men as Loving Husbands and Caring Fathers**

As discussed above, men’s roles as breadwinners, protectors and leaders remain hegemonic with various definitions of what it means to be these things. In addition to this diversity of definition, counter-hegemonic masculinity projects also exist. These unsettle men’s hegemonic position in the family by promoting the discourse of partnership within marriage. One example of this is seen in the ALB’s challenge to husbands’ positions as family leaders in their advocating of

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<sup>35</sup> Based on the standard fee for construction workers in 2017 available from <http://hargabahanbangunan.co/harga-upah-tukang-bangunan.html#>.

men's involvement in domestic chores and childcare responsibilities. Family relationships are built upon partnership, negotiation and understanding. The loving, egalitarian and understanding husband and father is promoted as the new definition of a real man. However, the ALB's agenda is challenged by the Fatherhood Forum, a group that wishes to reinstate men's position as family leader. Despite its agenda to strengthen men's position as leaders, the Fatherhood Forum uses a similar discourse to that used by the ALB, also promoting husband and fathers as loving, caring and understanding. Counter-hegemonic masculinity projects reveal increasing attempts to incorporate love and care in masculinity in the domestic context. Despite this, minimal attention is given to the incorporation of love and care into public domain masculinity, such as encouraging men to participate in the caring occupations.

Being a *bapak*/father is the highest achievement of a man, as this symbolises authority, maturity and closeness to God (Nilan, Dermatoto and Wibowo 2014, 72). Being a father proves a man's potency and heterosexuality. In Indonesian society, no matter how feminine a man is, as long as he is married and has children he is a 'real' man (Howard 1996, 350). The role of *bapak*, however, is structured around being a provider and protector, as prescribed in the marriage law. In the past 15 years, the call for fathers to be more engaged with child-rearing activities has intensified through parenting magazines and parenting books. It is often mentioned in parenting education classes. NGOs and parenting communities such as *Laki-Laki Peduli*—part of a global fatherhood campaign MenCare+ (Fig. 2.6)—, *komunitas ayah Edy* (father Edy's community) and *Selamatkan Generasi Emas Indonesia 2045 (SEMAI-2045)*, all promote paternal involvement in parenting practices.



MenCare+ is a feminist men’s organisation. It promotes a more emotionally expressive and caring father with the caption ‘*Selalu kasih peluk waktu aku sakit. Itulah ayahku!*’ (‘Always hug me when I am sick. That’s my father!’). Source: MenCare+ official website, <http://men-care.org/resources/indonesia-poster-1/>

**Figure 2.6: Poster promoting father’s involvement in child caring by *Laki-Laki Peduli*.**

In January 2015, a group of Muslim men established a forum called the (aforementioned) Fatherhood Forum.<sup>36</sup> Here, men can discuss family and parenting issues. This forum was established due to a concern with men’s minimal involvement in parenting activities. A father named Fahmi, who is also active in SEMAI-2045, initiated this forum. He claimed the forum was not exclusively for Muslim men, but admitted that the forum held Islamic values and tended to invite parenting experts with similar values.

Fatherhood Forum’s activism is conducted online via social media and offline spaces. Their activities range from sharing parenting articles online, calling more men to become involved in parenting practices, to organising parenting seminars and training for men only. Their activities seem to be a form of progressive masculinity challenging the idea of caregiving as a role naturally carved out for women. Their online introduction highlights how discussions about parenting

<sup>36</sup> I will describe the Fatherhood Forum more fully in the following paragraphs.

always place mothers at the centre. In one video broadcast entitled ‘Father, The Real Man’, they claim to redefine masculinity:

Being a father is the greatest blessing for a man ... A man as a father should be the new definition of a real man. All this time we measure manhood by what we do for a living, the wealth that we accumulate, and how high our position is in the workplace. We need to rethink these measures and create new measures. Being a father is the true measure of masculinity because it reflects men’s leadership quality (Salman TV, Kultube episode 14, *Youtube post*, 1 July 2015, accessed 13 January 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S8oBYCJsp-I>).

The above comment also insinuates critiques of the materialistic masculinity that dominates contemporary Indonesian society. In an early discussion, similar ideas of changing masculinity appear:

The image of manliness has changed. Manliness was measured by the absence of men in feminine activities such as home cooking and caring for children. Now, a manly man is a man who is willing to *gendong* (carry) his child (Dodik Mariyanto at the first Fatherhood Forum meeting on the 24 January 2015).

Fatherhood is a signifier of masculinity. This is not new in Indonesia. As discussed previously, hegemonic masculinity adopts the principle of *bapakism*, the supreme position of a man in his family. Therefore, I argue that the Fatherhood Forum is trying to reclaim *bapak* hegemonic masculinity and polish it with a version attractive to wives. This argument is based on an interview with the founder, Fahmi, and a textual analysis of several published articles.

The Fatherhood Forum uses the term ‘prime leadership’ as its motto. This motto attempts to retain men’s position as the primary leader of the family. They perceive that the contemporary husband or father has lost his leadership position; thus, men must be enlightened and reminded of their primary duty as leaders, providers and protectors. The Fatherhood Forum believes that ineffective male

leadership is the main cause of the increased burden on women as they enter marriage, becoming a wife and then a mother. As Fahmi explains:

When a husband focuses only on his career and not his family, there is a great chance that the wife will feel alone and overwhelmed with the domestic responsibilities, let alone if she has to also work outside the home. These burdens can lead to the failure of the marriage. The condition could [become worse] when they have children, the wife's burden gets heavier. The wife would feel that marriage complicates her life. She could lose focus and be puzzled why she has to go through so many hurdles. This is a sign of weakened leadership. The husband should be able to direct his wife and children, why should she have to face all the problems on her own. The husband should be able to instil the family's values and purposes so his wife and the entire family will not lose focus (Fahmi, 25 April 2015, Bandung).

The above comment suggests that a real man understands his wife's burden. However, the solution offered is to ensure that the wife understands family values and the purpose of her dedication to the family. Fahmi also mentioned that a husband should be flexible and willing to do whatever is required of him, as long as this results in the family reaching its ultimate goal. He noted, 'when the wife just delivered a baby, a husband should be willing to cook and wash the dishes and do the laundry'. Rather than saying that domestic chores are the husband's responsibility too, he framed this in a context where the wife may be unable to undertake household tasks, and this is when the husband takes over. This implies that household chores are still the wife's responsibility; the husband only takes over when needed. In this sense, the Fatherhood Forum still holds conventional ideas regarding the gendered division of labour. They try to return women to the *kodrat* subtly, polishing hegemonic masculinity as more amenable to women through the image of husbands helping to ease their wives' burden.

Further, Fahmi emphasises the mother's role as primary child carer, and the father's as the main provider:

A man should be the leader of the family. If your wife wants to have a career and work outside the house, discuss it. You have to know what ... the purpose of your wife's career [is]. If it is for a financial reason, please postpone it. I am not saying that it should be cancelled or stopped but postpone it, wait, everything has to be arranged and scheduled. Every child needs a father figure and a mother figure. For the first ten years of the child's life, he/she needs mother's presence all day long, every hour at home. Therefore, if the wife is working only for a financial reason, the husband must take over. The husband should provide everything. If the family need 5 million rupiahs a month and the husband's salary is only 2 million rupiahs, he has to find the 3 million rupiahs more, not the wife. A husband should give his wife the freedom to stay at home. If he fails, he fails as a man, fails as a leader. If the wife is working for self-actualisation, then again the husband should be able to arrange the perfect time for the wife to pursue her career, after their children are old enough, maybe 7–10 years old (Fahmi, 25 April 2015, Bandung).

The above comment obviously advocates the New Order's institutionalised construction of gender with men as the head of and primary provider for their family. This construction pressures both men and women to adhere to gender stereotypes. Fahmi's assertion that 'if he fails, he fails as a man, fails as a leader' reflects this pressure. Failing to fulfil such expectations can jeopardise a man's masculine identity.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has demonstrated that hegemonic masculinity in Indonesia defines men as providers, protectors and leaders. These roles, however, vary across time and context, and depend on social, economic, political and cultural location. For example, men's role as protectors remains important in the construction of a 'real' man. However, the protector role is not necessarily achieved through physical means. Being a hero and protecting the nation meant going to war during the

independence era (1945–1949), while in the post-independence era, protecting the nation could mean educating younger generations as good citizens. However, this does not mean that becoming a hero through physical methods is less respected. Instead, the criteria for being a hero have diversified.

Contestable and dynamic constructions of hegemonic masculinity, therefore, allow different versions of masculinities to flourish. However, particular boundaries cannot be crossed: one of the most restrictive is the hegemony of heteronormativity. Being a husband and a father is still crucial to the construction of a ‘real man’. What has been challenged is the definition of a good father and husband. Here, the focus has developed from a man as a provider, working outside the house and focusing on earning money to fulfil the family’s requirements. Instead, the focus here is on a more outwardly caring and loving husband and father willing to be involved in childcare and domestic chores.

This may create a space where education becomes a respected and even heroic form of work for men. As will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter, ECE is constructed as a profoundly female-centred and feminine domain. As I will show, men who work in ECE place themselves in the paradoxical position of being heroic in their role while simultaneously being viewed as a traitor to hegemonic masculinity. How they deal with this paradox is explored in Chapter 5.

### **Chapter 3: Teachers with Maternal Souls**

To teach in ECE, women do not need a specific passion and aspiration since it is natural for women to love and care for children. Like me, I never wanted or aspired to teach young children but I can, because I am a woman. My heart is easily moved by young children, my maternal soul (*jiwa keibuan*) is automatically triggered by seeing young children. For a man, it is difficult. He has got to have a special soul, a high sense of art, not a manly soul (*jiwa laki-laki*) (Ati, 1 December 2014, Bandung).

The central question this thesis investigates is how men negotiate their masculinity when working in ECE settings. As the above quotation suggests, ECE is perceived to draw on women's natural maternal qualities—their 'soul'—whereas men (who are 'manly') are commonly seen as unable to perform nurturing duties involving such love and care. This chapter will provide a comprehensive overview of ECE in Indonesia, including the history of its development, the reasons it is dominated by women, the possible barriers for men entering the field, and teacher reforms that have increased teachers' status to establish ECE as a career opportunity not only for women, but also for men. This chapter is based on an analysis of government policies related to ECE development in Indonesia, online public discussions, and interviews with government officers working in ECE, as well as female and male ECE teachers.

In the first section, I will briefly introduce the historical context of ECE development in Indonesia and globally. The ECE system in Indonesia has no written regulation restricting men from working in the area; however, the deeply entrenched discourse of maternalism in ECE practices has created both visible and invisible barriers to men's participation in this workforce. As a natural extension of the maternal role, ECE is considered to require little skill or training and is therefore economically and socially devalued.

## Maternalism in Early Childhood Education

Care, love and passion for children are considered the most important requirements for an ECE teacher. I sampled 108 random ECE vacancies, posted online over a three-year period from 2013 to 2016, to investigate workforce demand patterns. The vacancies listed the required sex, age, personal characteristics, religion and skills, such as English fluency, the ability to read Quran and educational background. Care, love and passion for children were always mentioned. The 108 vacancies came from 36 Islamic ECEs, 8 Christian/Catholic ECEs, 10 international ECEs and 31 national ECEs. Only 4.6 per cent of vacancies explicitly mentioned ‘a man/men needed’; 49 per cent of vacancies explicitly asked for women; 20.4 per cent mentioned ‘male/female’, and 25.9 per cent mentioned neither. These numbers show that women are still the preferred candidates to teach young children. This suggests that love, care and a passion for children are still considered more natural in women.

The perception of early childhood teaching as an inappropriate and undesirable occupation for men can be linked to the history of ECE development around the world. This has frequently used the discourse of maternal love and care (Ailwood 2008; Aslanian 2015; Brown, Sumsion and Press 2011). Maternalism is defined as a social and cultural understanding of motherhood as natural for women; thus, mothering roles and raising future generations is seen as a female role (DiQuinzio 2005, 228). The comment below is from Retno, an Indonesian government officer in charge of ECE employment nationally. When I asked her if ECE needed male teachers, she replied:

Family is the first site of a child’s education. *Asah, asih, asuh* are women’s *kodrat*. That is the foundation. Men don’t understand children. Mothers are always the one who takes the role of caregiving. It is her instinct. Men do not have that. We need mothers as the primary educators to build children’s character. Yes, we need fathers, but not as much as we need mothers [in child’s education] (Retno, 21 November 2016, Jakarta).

The terms *asah*, *asih*, *asuh* mentioned by Retno are Javanese *among* (nurturing) principles adopted by Ki Hajar Dewantara as part of ECE principles (Dewantara 1961, 16). Nurturing includes *asah* (educating and modelling), *asih* (providing affection/love) and *asuh* (fulfilling the needs of a child) (Hakim et al. 2012, 7). Retno's comment is influenced strongly by the conventional gender ideology discussed in Chapter 2, in which men are supposed to be providers, with child care and education as women's domain. This ideology is not unique to Indonesia; globally, women are traditionally positioned as the caregivers and educators of children (see Drudy 2008; Sumsion 2000a; Williams 2009).

Maternalism has been at the core of early childhood learning since it was initiated by Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi and Friedrich Froebel in Germany, and Maria Montessori in Italy in the eighteenth to nineteenth centuries (Aslanian 2015, 156). For these educators, professionalism in ECE was based on an introspective and spiritual concept of love. However, each had slightly different views on maternalism. Pestalozzi believed that love was at the core of education:

Teaching, by itself and in itself, does not make for love, any more than it makes for hatred. That is why teaching is by no means the essence of education. It is love that is its essence. Love alone is the eternal effluvia of the divinity that is enthroned within us. It is the central flow point from which the essentials of education flow (Pestalozzi cited in Tröhler 2013, 67).

In terms of early education, Pestalozzi argued that maternal love was foundational to a child's moral, spiritual and intellectual development (Allen 1982, 321; Tröhler 2013, 71). The mother-child relationship influenced a child's religiosity and morality. Pestalozzi also emphasised a family love-based early education. For him, early education needed to be based in a nuclear household (family), with the father as the ruler and the mother as the educator (Allen 1982, 321).

Similar to Pestalozzi, Froebel—who was also religious—agreed that the family was where initial education occurred, and love was at the core of that education. However, he doubted the suitability and adequacy of families to impart

appropriate child education. Therefore, he initiated the first institutionalised early education centres, called kindergartens, to support and educate mothers in all their responsibilities (Allen 1982, 321–322). The term ‘kindergarten’ originates from the German ‘*kinder*’ (children) and ‘*garten*’ (garden); children were viewed as flowers to be nourished, nurtured and protected by teachers (Muelle 2005, 87; Malone 2007, 515). During his time, kindergartens served children age three to six years. Froebel believed that women were the best educators for young children, but he also thought that women need specialised training to grasp the complexity of a professional caretaker (Allen 1982, 322). Based on maternalism, Froebel prescribed the love of children, the love of singing, playing and occupation as prerequisites for kindergarten teachers (Aslanian 2015, 157). Froebel’s maternalism moved the caretaking role from the domestic sphere and expanded it to public sphere (Rabe-Kleberg 2009, 215).

In the late nineteenth century, an Italian feminist, Maria Montessori, also adopted maternalism in her early theorisation of childhood education. Her emphasis on women as teachers of young children was underscored by the political mission of women’s emancipation. She asserted that maternal care was an important contribution to challenging the assumption that women made meaningless contributions to society (Babini 2000, 51). Although she believed that maternal qualities were instinctive, Montessori claimed that the instinct was not exclusively female (Aslanian 2015, 159). According to Montessori (1966, 201), maternal instincts were found in both parents and could spread to the whole community. Despite this, she still adopted female maternalism as the foundation of her theory in child education<sup>37</sup> (Ailwood 2008, 161). Montessori’s (1912) books about scientific pedagogy consistently use ‘she’ and ‘her’ when talking about teachers in early childhood contexts.

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<sup>37</sup> Montessori’s account of how ECE teacher should behave shows a strong maternalism discourse that considers teachers as mothers: ‘the teacher, as part of the environment, must herself be attractive, preferably young and beautiful, charmingly dressed, scented with cleanliness, happy and graciously dignified. This is the ideal, and cannot always be perfectly reached, but the teacher who presents herself to the children should remember that they are great people, to whom she owes understanding and respect. She should study her movements, making them as gentle and graceful as possible, that the child may unconsciously pay her the compliment of thinking her as a beautiful as his mother, who is naturally his ideal of beauty’ (Montessori 1948, 87 cited in Ailwood 2008, 161).

From the twentieth century, psychology and biomedical scientific rationalism supported behaviouristic ‘scientific mothering’, which complemented the maternal instinct with a more science-based education (Johnson and Johnston 2015, 252). Through the concept of ‘scientific mothering’, male psychologists and medical scientists took over from women as the source of expertise and authority in child-rearing. For example, John B. Watson, a behaviourist who researched infant development at Johns Hopkins University, argued that love was not instinctive. Instead, it was an observable reaction resulting from certain stimuli. As Watson (1928, 81 quoted in Bigelow and Morris 2001) suggested:

Let your behaviour always be objective and kindly firm. Never hug and kiss them, never let them sit in your lap. If you must, kiss them once on the forehead when they say good night. Shake hands with them in the morning. Give them a pat on the head if they have made an extraordinarily good job of a difficult task (27).

The detachment of care from emotionality did not necessarily negate women’s from the responsibility for child care. Teaching young children requires more than maternal instinct, it requires intellectual capacity and rationality (Aslanian 2015, 161). Accordingly, women were required to adjust to caring behaviour as defined by masculine scientific ‘experts’.

Ailwood (2008, 160) captured the contradictory effect of the scientific rational discourse on motherhood in ECE. The discourse of scientific rationalism and the separation of child care from natural instinct opened up a space to recognise ECE teachers—predominantly women—as professionals. In contrast, scientists—mostly men—rationalised and reinforced maternalism through science. For example, G. Stanley Hall and Edward Thorndike, pioneers of developmental and educational psychology, argued that women were more suited to homemaking and childrearing or non-competitive professions involving nurturing as they were naturally incapable of intellectual tasks (Seller 1981, 366).

Later feminist and education theorists attempted to understand how care was socially constructed as an inherent feminine quality. The concept of ‘ethics of

care' (Gilligan 1982) was adopted to disentangle care from the maternal instinct. Caring was not only a feeling and an attribute, but was also a moral, intellectual attitude and action. Ethical caring is unnatural and not instinctive; instead, it arises from an established relationship between the one who cares and the one who is cared for (Noddings 2013). The relationship could be a professional relationship, such as that between a teacher and student or a nurse and patient. The ethic of care concept combines the traditional perception of care as an emotional act with intellectual and productive thought (Jaggar 1989; Freedman 1990). Using this ethic of care framework, ECE professions can potentially be freed from entrenched maternalist assumptions. However, ECE globally, including in Indonesia, remains a female-dominated occupation. As exemplified by Retno and Ati's comments, conventional views of gender roles are pervasive and play an important role in the suspicions about men working in ECE. This will be discussed further in the context of barriers to men's ECE participation.

### **The History of Early Childhood Education in Indonesia**

As in many parts of the world (see Beatty 1995; Lascarides and Hinitz 2000), maternalism has been central to ECE development in Indonesia. While some men have initiated ECE programs, usually women have been the instigators. Clues as to maternalism's centrality are implicit in ECE's high level of dependency on women's organisations and in the absence of men from discussions about children's education. This section discusses how maternalism became an undetected normalising discourse (Brown, Sumsion and Press 2011, 265) in four periods of ECE development in Indonesia: the Dutch colonial period and the Japanese occupation, the early years of independence, the New Order era, and the *reformasi* era.

Dutch colonialists first introduced a formal European-style ECE system to Indonesia (at that time Netherland–Indies) in the early twentieth century (Thomas 1992, 86). Dutch kindergartens were restricted to Dutch children and some high-ranking local residents, and all were privately sponsored and located in large cities (Kementerian Pendidikan Nasional [KEMDIKNAS] 2011, 14; Thomas 1988, 35).

The Froebelian method, which used traditional modes of child nurturing, was the principal instruction medium. As in Germany, where Froebel first established kindergartens, a kindergarten teacher in Indonesia extended the maternal role. In the 1920s, the Dutch opened opportunities for a limited number of elite local women to enrol in a Froebel teacher-training school in the Netherland–Indies (Thomas 1992, 88). To counter colonial influences, Indonesian nationalists established ECE programs for local people. As explained in the previous chapter, the construction of women's *kodrat* prescribes that women's first and central duty is as wives and mothers; child care and education are women's responsibilities. Therefore, Indonesian society easily accepted the use of maternalism in Froebelian kindergartens.

ECE development in Indonesia relied greatly on local women's organisations. The first local ECE was initiated by the *Aisyiyah* union of Muslim women in 1919, in Yogyakarta. *Aisyiyah* is a women's organisation affiliated with Muhammadiyah, a modernist Islamic organisation concerned with education.<sup>38</sup> The kindergarten was first named the 'Froebel school' (Muhammadiyah 2014). After the 1928 *Sumpah Pemuda*,<sup>39</sup> reflecting a new spirit of nationalism, all kindergartens established by *Aisyiyah* changed their name to *Taman Kanak-Kanak Aisyiyah Bustanul Athfal* (TK ABA) (KEMDIKNAS 2011, 14). Currently, 5,865 TK ABA are located across Indonesia (Muhammadiyah 2014).

In 1922, Ki Hajar Dewantara established an ECE institution called *Taman Indria* (KEMDIKNAS 2011, 14; Thomas 1992, 87). Ki Hadjar Dewantara (1962, 276) adopted Froebel and Montessori's concepts of ECE. He believed that women were

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<sup>38</sup> Muhammadiyah is an Islamic organisation established in 1912 by Kyai H Ahmad Dahlan in Yogyakarta. Muhammadiyah was established with the spirit to purify 'local Indonesian' Islam, which was perceived to have been contaminated by traditional local beliefs. Muhammadiyah is considered the pioneer of Islamic resurgence in Indonesia through bringing Islamic thought to Al-Quran and Hadist. Until this thesis was written (2017), Muhammadiyah actively established modern educational institutions, mosques, and orphanages. Muhammadiyah also holds discussions on contemporary social, political and Islamic issues (Hosen 2003, Nurdin 2005). More information about Muhammadiyah can be accessed at <http://www.muhammadiyah.or.id/>.

<sup>39</sup> *Sumpah Pemuda* is a declaration of the unity of the nation, homeland and language of Indonesia. It was made in the youth congress on 27–28 October 1928 in Jakarta. This event is considered the birth of Indonesia as a nation. Since *Sumpah Pemuda*, Indonesian nationhood has been constructed through language. Most European names were changed to Indonesian names after this event (Foulcher 2000).

the first educators of young children. Women's natural capacities of softness, magnanimity, beauty, purity and justice were best able to educate young children. This is why Ki Hajar Dewantara established a training school for early childhood teachers (*Kursus Guru Indrya*) in Yogyakarta. This was for women who would teach in *Taman Indria*/kindergarten and the first year of *Taman Anak*/primary school (Dewantara 1961, 16–17). Ki Hadjar Dewantara's wife, Nyi Sutartinah, actively taught in the Taman Indrya (Dewantara 1979, 114). Both Muhammadiyah and Ki Hajar Dewantoro were concerned about expressing national ideas through education in order to resist Dutch colonial culture and create cultural change in Indonesia (McVey 1967, 131). Even though kindergartens had emerged in the Dutch colonial period, the ECE sector was not a priority. The colonial government, along with European and Indonesian private organisations, focused instead on primary and secondary education. Later, from 1943 to 1945, the growth of ECE was hampered by the Japanese occupation and the return of the Dutch from 1945 to 1949 (Thomas 1988, 35).

After independence (1949–1965) the government focused on the voluntary work of women's organisations in the education movement; establishing kindergarten and childcare programs was prioritised by the women's movement (Martyn 2005, 85–86). In late 1945, a group of women in Jakarta educated as Froebel school teachers established a Women's Secondary Education Foundation in resistance to the Dutch (*Yayasan Pendidikan Lanjutan Wanita*) (Thomas 1988, 39; KEMDIKNAS 2011, 15). This foundation built a school that produced kindergarten teachers: the National Kindergarten Teacher Training School (*Sekolah Pendidikan Guru TK [SPG-TK]*).

In 1950, the government included kindergartens in the national education system, through the Law of the Foundation of Education and Teaching in Schools. However, the development of ECE continued to be sponsored mostly by women's organisations, such as Bhayangkari, Perwari, Gerwani, Persit, Perwani, *Aisyiyah*, and Muslimat NU (Martyn 2005, 79–85) and *Yayasan Bersekolah pada Ibu* (Mother as School Foundation) (KEMDIKNAS 2011, 15). In the 1960s, the government started to build state-owned kindergartens and modernised them,

sending people to study ECE in Australia, the US and New Zealand. Indonesia's kindergarten-learning model was influenced by these countries. The first kindergarten national curriculum was formulated in 1963 to 1964 (KEMDIKNAS 2011, 16).

The development of kindergartens from 1951 to 1965 in villages was influenced by Gerwani (National Commission for Women 2007, 46; Martyn 2005, 86; Wieringa 2010, 350). Gerwani is the Indonesian Women's Movement, a women's organisation focused on improving women's lives and education, eradicating illiteracy, improving young children's education through child care and kindergartens, and improving female working conditions and wages. It was established in 1950 and was originally named Gerwis (Movement of Conscious Indonesian Women) (McGregor and Hearman 2007, 356). From 1951 to 1963, Gerwani established 1374 kindergartens (Wieringa 2010, 350) out of the country's total 2,473 kindergartens (Thomas 1988, 39). In addition, Gerwani also created kindergarten teachers' training courses in the early 1960s (McGregor 2012, 199).

However, *Gerwani's* contribution to ECE development in Indonesia has been covered up or deliberately neglected in government publications, due to allegations related to events in 1965. In 1965, a group calling itself the Thirtieth of September Movement (G30S) killed six army officers and one lieutenant. The Partai Komunis Indonesia (PKI), the Indonesian Communist Party, was blamed by the army for the incident. Leftist organisations, including Gerwani, were accused of involvement and their members killed and imprisoned (McGregor and Hearman 2007, 355). In the ensuing army take over, Gerwani was demonised and accused of being a threat to children's minds (Wieringa 2003, 81). On 31 May 1966, Gerwani and TK Melati were officially banned by a Presidential Decree (National Commission for Women 2007, 147).

During the New Order Era, ECE development concentrated on cities, and the dependency on women's organisations continued. Women's organisations, such as Dharma Wanita, Bhayangkari, Perwari, *Aisyiyah* and Fatayat NU, were still the main contributors to ECE development (Thomas 1988, 1992). As discussed in the

previous chapter, the New Order government imposed a *kekeluargaan*/'family-ism' approach (Newberry 2010, 406). 'Family-ism' defines the government as the father (*bapak*), citizens as his children and married women as national homemakers and mothers (*ibu*). The notion of *kodrat* was accentuated. Women were supposed to be obedient and submissive homemakers, and the educators of children (Wieringa 2003, 73). Newberry (2010, 406–408) argues that family-ism was used in government development programs specifically related to community management; the success of community management relied on the unpaid, social labour of women. This voluntary labour continued and was mobilised through the women's organisation PKK (Bianpoen 2000, 158–159; Newberry 2010, 408–409; Wieringa 1992, 104). The New Order established another organisation to intensify women's participation in development. This was *Dharma Wanita*, a civil servants' wives organisation (see Buchori and Sunarto 2000). Both organisations—PKK and *Dharma Wanita*—strengthened the notion of women's role in development through voluntary work related to community education, health and social services.

In 1968, the New Order government started to cooperate with UNICEF in relation to the consultancy and funding of kindergarten teachers and management training. However, international agencies such as UNICEF and the World Bank were still focusing on primary education; therefore, ECE did not grow extensively (King 2007, 379). Due to the lack of global encouragement and the concentration on primary education, the government relied almost exclusively on communities in the development of ECE. Up until 1997, around 93 per cent of kindergartens were community organised (UNESCO, nd). Women's organisations remained the largest contributor to ECE development.

The New Order era saw the establishment of the first university course (as a major stream) on preschool and primary education in 1979, in Institut Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan (IKIP) Jakarta, an institute of teacher education. The following year, other teacher-education institutions established two-year college diplomas in kindergarten teacher-education programs. However, no strict regulation of the ECE teacher profession existed. Even without a written requirement specifying

persons of which gender could study ECE, ECE teacher-training programs have mostly been dominated by young women.

ECE development cannot be detached from significant political reforms. In the reform era (1998–now), neoliberal reforms have been intensified through International Monetary Fund (IMF) intervention (in response to the Asian economic crisis in 1997) (Parente 2009; Dalrymple 1998). Economic growth, as the centre of neoliberal doctrine, has ensured that development in any area is regulated around growth, including education. Privatisation, standardisation and accountability signify the neoliberal agenda in educational reforms (Hart and Mullooly 2015). The policy of regional autonomy and decentralisation in governance also influenced the education sector significantly (Firman and Tola 2008, 72; Raihani 2007, 172). In addition, international influence has become stronger and stronger, especially through UNICEF and the World Bank.

ECE is not compulsory or universal in Indonesia; however, the internationally agreed upon ‘Education for All’ and ‘Millennium Development Goals’ commitments have created major changes in ECE since 2001 (Hasan, Hyson and Chang 2013, 1; KEMDIKNAS 2011, 4). UNICEF and the World Bank’s interventions have led to the rapid growth of ECE. Recognition from child psychology and neuroscience that early childhood (from 0–6 years) is a critical period of human development has rationalised the World Bank’s emphasis on investment in ECE (Mahon 2010, 176). The World Bank’s influence on the development of ECE in Indonesia started in 1998, with a loan of around USD21.5 million (World Bank 2007). Since then, the World Bank has pushed the Indonesian government to reform its ECE policies. Further, Education for All (EFA) demands the expansion and improvement of ECE services for children aged 0 to six (UNESCO 2000, 8). To accommodate this demand, in 2001, the government set up the Directorate of Early Childhood Education (DoECE) in the Ministry of Education and Culture (Hasan et al. 2013, 1; KEMDIKNAS 2011, 4) and the Indonesian ECE movement began.

Since that time, ECE development has flourished in Indonesia. The ECE gross enrolment rate (GER) increased from only 15 per cent in 2000 (UNESCO 2005,

14) to 53.7 per cent in 2009 (KEMDIKNAS 2011, 21). This rate will continue to increase. Aiming for a GER of 78.70 per cent in 2019, the government developed a target of establishing at least one ECE centre in every village in Indonesia (KEMDIKBUD 2013, 41; KEMDIKBUD 2015, 45). This is the *satu desa satu PAUD* program.

Consequently, ECE contains opportunities for both job seekers and education business owners. To achieve the *satu desa satu PAUD* program target, and continuing what has long been practised in Indonesian ECE development, the government is using women's organisations, as well as private business owners. Female volunteering has increased. Women's grass root organisations are obliged to be involved in this program. Led by the wives of regional leaders, the PKK are encouraged to work hard to realise the program in their region. The wives of regional leaders are crowned as *Bunda PAUD* or 'the mother [s] of ECE (see Edwardi 2016; Elo 2017). To motivate the development of ECE in Indonesian regions, the government established an award system, *Anugrah PAUD* (ECE awards) (KEMDIKBUD 2016a). This includes *Bunda PAUD Award*, *ECE Teacher Award*, and *ECE Teacher Learning Group Award*. The awards are bestowed by the Ministry of Education and Culture. In the award ceremony, the First Lady, as the National Mother of ECE, hands the awards to the winners (Bachtiar 2016).

Suryakusuma's (2011, 9–12) notion of '*state ibuism*' prevails in ECE development. *State ibuism* is a state-created ideology of womanhood that considers domestic affairs the primary responsibility of women, regardless of whether they also work in the public sphere. A woman is always seen as dependent on her husband, receiving money from her husband; her work is always undertaken free of charge. Simultaneously, women are positioned as the guardians of future generations. A woman's value is defined according to her devotion to her husband, family and the state. Establishing an ECE or working in ECE is considered a devotion to children and the state. Under this ideology, the government program of 'one village, one ECE' could be reached in a considerably short time.

Women's organisations, especially PKK, have played a significant role in the establishment of non-formal ECEs in Indonesia. Non-formal ECEs contribute much to ECE accessibility for poorer families (World Bank 2006, 22). Non-formal ECE development uses communities as the main providers. The New Order created a legacy where the community and lower class women (through the Family Welfare Movement), were used as unpaid workers to ensure the success of development programs (Newberry 2012, 11–12). Other communities and women's organisations were also encouraged to establish non-formal ECEs (KEMDIKNAS 2011, 49–50).

This intensification of women's grass root organisations as the driver of ECE development has also been accompanied by the growth of high status and internationally franchised ECEs in large cities (Adriany and Saefullah 2015; Newberry 2012). Internationally franchised ECEs are more male-friendly, as the international status, sophisticated facilities and relatively higher salaries than local ECEs have improved the profession's standing. One of my respondents, Awan, received a salary of eight million rupiahs per month for teaching in an US-franchised ECE, a figure more than ten times higher than the average salary of private ECE teachers in Indonesia. In addition to this higher salary, Awan also noted he did not feel awkward working in an internationally franchised ECE:

When I was accepted to work here, the owner sent me to a special training. In the training videos, I saw many men doing the work. So, I thought this school was not like other ECEs (Awan, 6 December 2014, Bandung).

Awan's comment is consistent with research findings from central and northern Europe suggesting that men's presence in ECE may change other men's perceptions of the field as a female domain; thus, they begin to see ECE as a career opportunity (Johannesen and Hoel 2010, 3; Rolfe 2006, 110). Internationally, campaigns have attracted more men to ECE occupations. In Australia, a Males in Early Childhood Network Group was established in 2002,

accompanied by the slogan ‘Blokes can do it as well’.<sup>40</sup> This network encourages men to enter ECE and supports men already working in the area. New Zealand’s early childhood network, ChildForum, encourages more men to work in ECE and provides scholarships for interested male students (ChildForum 2014). The Network on Childcare in the European Union campaigned for more men in ECE in 1995, and established a target of 20 per cent males working in EU child care (Piburn 2010, 47).<sup>41</sup> The Working Forum on Men in ECE (WF MECE) of the World Forum Foundation is a global organisation.<sup>42</sup> The World Forum Foundation advocates for early childhood professionals around the world. They hold biennial meetings, with up to 600 to 800 early childhood professionals from more than 80 countries attend these meetings (World Forum Foundation 2017). Increasing the number of men in ECE is a priority project.

In Indonesia, no campaigns have been undertaken to increase the number of men in ECE, either from the government or from NGOs. The need for more men in ECE has been mentioned in several ECE teacher meetings but no serious program or campaign to attract more men into the field has been developed. Instead, the government continues to strengthen maternalism through the symbol of *Bunda PAUD* (the Mother of ECE), which risks the further exclusion of men from ECE.

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<sup>40</sup> Information about this network can be accessed at <http://malesinearlychildhood.blogspot.com.au> and [http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/every\\_child\\_magazine/every\\_child\\_index/blokes\\_can\\_do\\_it\\_as\\_well.html](http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/every_child_magazine/every_child_index/blokes_can_do_it_as_well.html)

<sup>41</sup> Other countries whose governments have encouraged an increase in the number of men in ECE are Norway (Hauglund 1998), Denmark (Peeters 2007), Sweden (with its Delegation for Gender Equality in Pre-School) (Flishing 2005), Belgium, the UK in general (and England with its Childcare Recruitment Campaign), and South Korea with the proposal of a gender quota system in the teaching profession (Piburn 2010, 49). In other countries, invitations for more men to be involved in ECE have been issued by NGOs, such as Men in Childcare (MIC) in Scotland and Ireland, the Mphunziro Foundation (MF) in Malawi, the National Center for Early Childhood Education (NCECE) in Kenya, MenTeach.org in the US and Argentina, the National Association for the Education of Young Children in the US, and the Manitoba Chapter of Men in Early Childhood Education (MECE-Manitoba) in Canada (Piburn 2010, 49). In Brazil, the 2009 Rio Declaration encouraged shared responsibilities in care-giving activities and gender equality in the workplace.

<sup>42</sup> Information about WF MECE can be accessed online at <https://connect.worldforumfoundation.org/focusedwork/men-in-ece> and [http://menteach.org/news/world\\_forum\\_men\\_in\\_early\\_childhood\\_education](http://menteach.org/news/world_forum_men_in_early_childhood_education).

## **The ‘Glass Door’ Barriers to Men’s Participation in Early Childhood Education**

Although there is no national-level written policy that directly prohibits men from teaching young children, a hidden policy exists that hinders the government from campaigning formally for more men in ECE. This policy entails unrecognised consequences that result from both written policies and the social conventions that have become invisible barriers for men to work in ECE. Koch and Farquhar (2015) call this ‘the glass door’ (381). From interviews with the ECE community—ECE authorities, professional associations, male and female teachers—I have identified three main obstacles contributing to the small number of men working in ECE. These barriers are the perception of risk in men who work with young children, gender-blind policies that fail to recognise the influence of entrenched gender ideology on people’s career choices, the low salaries in general and the significant gap between ECE teacher salaries with teachers in other levels of schooling. This thesis does not intend to determine which barrier is the most effective in sabotaging men’s participation in ECE. One barrier alone is enough to discourage men from working in ECE, and a combination of barriers could push men further away from this occupation.

### **Risky Men**

As locations where future generations are developed, schools are important regulatory sites in which normative gender and sexuality ideals are monitored and policed significantly (see Martino and Cumming-Potvin 2015; Martino 2000; Blaise 2005). In Indonesia, as detailed in Chapter 1, a moral panic emerged around child sexual abuse in schools and in society generally. This increased perception of the risk of paedophilia is connected to increased homophobia and the perceived need to safeguard morality, including heteronormative standards of gender and sexuality. These perceptions carried over into the comments of my respondents, including those of male teachers, a school principal and a parent, as will be discussed in Chapter 4. A heteronormative ‘political morality’ (Cohen 2011, xxxii) that perceives non-normative gender and sexuality as risky and

dangerous to children (as a social group requiring safeguarding) makes the early childhood and primary education arena prone to a risk-based anxiety culture (Jones 2004, 323).

Indonesian men who work in ECE are judged to have failed as a man; they do not conform to normative gender signifiers, and thus are potential threats to sexually innocent children, as they (the men) may provide examples of non-normative gender and sexuality information (Robinson 2008, 116–117). Indonesian men who work in ECE are judged to have failed as men; they do not conform to normative gender signifiers, and thus they are viewed as potential threats to sexually innocent children, as they (the men) may provide examples of non-normative gender and sexuality (Robinson 2008, 116–117). The assumption of failure is related to ideas about heterosexual masculinity, which dictate that masculinity and femininity are a bipolar set of behaviours, social roles, and traits (Theodore and Basow 2000, 32). It is perceived that the association of ECE with the feminine domain will destabilise a man's social identity and his heterosexuality. Thus, a man who works in ECE is assumed to be a man who fails to conform to dominant gender norms. A strong sentiment of moral panic and resistance to male teachers was evident in Retno, a bureaucrat who dealt with policy making concerning ECE teachers and education staff at the national level in Indonesia. The risk implied in Retno's comments concerned sexual safety, with homosexual men as 'the subject of blame' (Cohen 2011, xxxii). Similar concerns are also apparent in western contexts (see Jones 2004; Tobin 2004; Critcher 2008). As I introduced myself and discussed my research on male teachers in ECE, Retno said promptly that she did not agree with the idea of men teaching in ECE full time. After gaining her consent for the interview and turning the recorder on, I asked her again about her opinion. She answered in the following way:

One of the reasons is that male teacher[s] have signs of *kewanita-wanitaan* (effeminate). That is why we don't recommend male teacher[s] in ECE. We have an experience with one quote and unquote ('*tanda kutip*') 'male teacher', at night he practices ('*praktik*', an allusion to), because he has two souls, so it affects his gesture, way of talking, soft

and graceful (*lemah gemulai*), it is not manly. I understand that children need a man or a father figure, but when we teach children, we need to be firm. Except for a religion, music, and PE teacher[s], we do not recommend men teaching in ECE (Retno, 21 November 2014, Jakarta).

I then asked her what she would think if the man was manly, firm and not feminine; could he be recruited as a teacher? She answered:

That is only the ‘casing’ [sic] ... manly and everything they can pretend, but when he talks, when he moves his curly fingers and all. The children are copier[s], what they see is what they do. Unless he is a PE teacher, who stimulates gross motor development, a religion teacher, or music teacher (Retno, 21 November 2014, Jakarta).

The word ‘casing’ refers to physical covering, meaning the man can pretend to be ‘a real man’ physically, but he cannot cover the womanly gestures (curly fingers and swaying hands) he exhibits that are commonly perceived as signifiers of homosexuality. Retno used the word *kewanita-wanitaan* (effeminate) to refer to men working in ECE. From her statement, I sense a generalisation of all men who work in ECE. She also gave an example of a male teacher using the words *tanda kutip* and *praktik* to signify that the male teacher was transgender. *Tanda kutip* literally means ‘quote and quote’; in Retno’s comment, it was used to describe the abnormality of the man being discussed. The word *praktik*, which means practice, is commonly used for men who change into *waria* (an Indonesian term for transgender) at night and are involved in street sex work. This one example is the basis of her generalisation.

Retno’s comments confirm the presence of a ‘homohysteria culture’ (Anderson 2009, 7) in which ECE’s association with child caring and education leads to a suspicion that men working in this field are homosexual or transgender. Suspicions towards men who teach children are due to a combination of maternalist and homophobic discourses. Homophobic discourse interprets homosexuals as sexual offenders. Thus, they threaten children’s safety, especially boys (Mills, Haase and Charlton 2008, 74).

Retno asserted that some men could teach in ECE: those who confirmed their heterosexuality. This assertion suggests that she exempted religion, music and PE teachers. There is a common perception that homosexuality results from a lack of religious faith. This perception leads to the assumption that religion can cure and repel homosexuality.<sup>43</sup> According to the two major religions in Indonesia, Islam and Christianity, homosexuality is sinful (Boellstorff 2005a; Jäckle and Wenzelburger 2015). Retno assumed (and this is a very common assumption) that someone with a religious faith who teaches religion would not be involved with homosexuality and its 'sinfulness'. In a homohysterical culture, involvement in sport is also assumed to reverse femininity in men (Anderson 2009, 41).

Retno's negative perceptions about male teachers somehow became stronger, yet still ambivalent, when she said that the absence of male role models in boyhood could make a boy homosexual:

0–2 year-old children are in the sensory-motor stage, ages 2–7 ... is the concrete stage when children reach an abstract thinking ability ... (children can have male teachers). We are now facing many children, who later when they've grown up, are having problems with their sexual and gender identity, such as transsexualism and transgenderism. It is because they have lost a (male) figure. One example is a boy who lived only with his mother ... the mother worked in a beauty salon as a hairdresser; he never saw men. It used to be like that. Now there are many men who go to beauty salons. All he saw was women, beautiful women. This boy helped his mum in the salon. He grew up without showing any male (masculine) characteristics (Retno, 21 November 2014, Jakarta).

This comment suggests two meanings that complement and contradict her previous comment. First, she agreed that boys needed men as role models, as a

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<sup>43</sup> In Indonesia, religion is often seen as a cure for social, moral and behavioural problems and abnormalities, including homosexuality. Many Islamic alternative medicine institutions, such as Abu Albany Centre and Quranic Healing Indonesia, offer treatment to rehabilitate and 're-normalise' lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgender people. Refer to <http://www.abualbanicentre.com/> and <http://www.quranic-healing.com/>.

boy who had never seen a man would grow into a feminine man. This is similar to the logic used by other study respondents to justify men in ECE as role models for boys (discussed in Chapter 4). Nevertheless, Retno did not agree with men teaching in ECE. Her ambivalence conveys that men in ECE are not worthy role models for boys because they are not ‘real men.’

Retno’s homosexual suspicions about male teachers led to a negative perception not only of the male teacher’s sexuality, but also his morality and personality:

Because we fear something would happen [if we employ male teachers], we don’t see men having the skills to teach children how to be intelligent in talking/communicating, to be responsible, to be obedient and follow the rules, to be disciplined (Retno, 21 November 2014, Jakarta).

Here, Retno expresses the opposite to what much research on male teachers in ECE suggests; men are expected to be disciplining figures (Manke 1998; Mills, Haase and Charlton 2008; Francis 2008). Retno doubted men’s ability to be responsible, to follow the rules and to be disciplinary figures. This contradicts the construction of a ‘real man’ in Indonesia. Here, men are required to be responsible, to follow the rules and be self-disciplined. Therefore, Retno’s comment insinuates a negative stigma regarding the masculinity of male teachers; they are handicapped in terms of morality and personality.

Retno’s comments represent her personal views. However, keeping in mind her high-level position (as head of the ECE teacher and education staff division at the Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini, Non Formal, dan Informal (Dirjen PAUDNI), the Directorate General of ECE and Non-formal and Informal Education and her decision-making powers, Retno’s opinion can be perceived as a reaction to an already widespread moral panic from policymakers (Robinson 2008, 125). Her judgemental views potentially perpetuate the regulations and surveillance associated with moral panic (Bray 2008, 324). Therefore, it is reasonable to argue that her statements might spread or worsen the effects of moral panic, discouraging ECE providers from employing male teachers, and increasing discrimination against existing male teachers in ECE.

To cope with this issue, Western countries have established a problematic care ethic in ECE by regulating physical contact between teachers and students and legislating for compulsory background screenings for all prospective teachers, regardless of their gender (Tobin 2004; Berson et al. 1999; Cortines et al. 1994; Australian Broadcasting Commission [ABC] 2004). In Indonesia, background screenings are uncommon, and I could not find any specific government regulation about this.

The perception that men embody risk has led to the alienation of men from ECE. Avoidance is an easy way to manage this risk. Avoidance is also behind decisions not to recommend that men teach in ECE. When I asked if a written policy recommended not to employ men as ECE teachers, Retno said that the policy was gender neutral as discriminatory policies were unacceptable. This lack of encouragement to employ men is however announced verbally every time government officials discuss the formal written policy. As Retno said:

Every time we talk about government policy (in ECE), we always urge ECE managers to not place male teachers in the classroom, except for extra subjects such as music, religion, and PE.

If we found ECE managers who already employ male teachers, we did/will not do anything. They already know the risk and its consequences. Usually, the society will judge, when they feel that there is something not right, they will take the necessary action (Retno, 21 November 2014, Jakarta).

Retno's comment shows how personal perceptions and prejudice influence policy implementation. Just as with the notion of a hidden curriculum (see Wren 1999; Zhang 2016; Wilkinson 2016), these claims constitute a hidden policy. This hidden policy operates informally through direct and indirect cultural messages. Although it is not openly acknowledged, its contribution to men's exclusion from ECE cannot be overlooked.

## Gender-blind Policy

Gender blindness has led to the preservation of the dominant maternalist discourse in ECE. Conventional gender ideology situates women as the primary caregiver and educator of offspring and this implicitly manifests in the implementation of government policy in the ECE sector. Instead of challenging the ideology, the government continues to organise and develop ECE based on the conventional maternalistic assumptions without realising the influence of ideology on their policies. Maternalist policy can be seen in the way the government instrumentalises women's organisations as the primary driver of ECE development in Indonesia. It is also apparent in the absence of government attempts to involve men in ECE development. Despite the fact that some men already actively work in ECE, the government denies these men's progress by excluding them from formal governmental leadership in ECE development. The responsibility for ECE development is in the hands of *Bunda PAUDs* (the Mother of ECE), government leaders' wives. Maternalism also manifests in ECE authorities' views about women's superiority to men. For example, Vera, a provincial ECE authority in Bandung, said below:

Not many men [are] exposed to child caring activities, so they don't know and understand how to do it. For women it is natural, it is '*naluriah*' (instinctive) to care for children (Vera, 26 November 2014, Bandung).

As it is considered common sense that women are the natural educators for young children, no government officers I interviewed thought it necessary to recruit more men actively to work in ECE. They claimed the policy was non-discriminatory, as both men and women had equal opportunity to work in ECE. In an interview with Vera, the head of ECE division in a West Java education authority office, I asked her opinion on the shortage of male teachers in the field. Despite the strong maternalism shaped by the government through various schemes, such as the ECE Mother Award, she argued that men's lack of willingness to work in ECE was behind the shortage. I explored further and tried to link the shortage to a provider-based masculinity discourse. I asked her whether

the low salaries of ECE teachers could be one reason for men's minimal participation. She replied:

No, I don't think it is because of the salary. Many men are willing to do rough work such as construction workers with salaries lower than ECE teachers. Many men refuse to work in ECE even though there is nothing else for them. It is about their passion and willingness (Vera, 26 November 2014, Bandung).

It seems reasonable to compare the salary of ECE teachers to construction workers to strengthen this opinion on the shortage of men in ECE. However, as discussed earlier in Chapter 2, the salary of construction workers is significantly higher than that of ECE teachers. Similar to Vera, Feni, the leader of the National Kindergarten Teachers Association, said that passion and willingness were important. She said, 'the call to be a kindergarten teacher should come from the heart. The gender of the teacher does not matter'. She argued that the call would come from love and care for children, and sincerity.

Feni and Vera's comments can be considered gender blind. Their denial aligns with studies in Western societies that identify the common usage of gender-neutral arguments by people of the dominant gender. In this case, Feni and Vera are members of the dominant gender in ECE, because they take their behaviour and perspective as representative of humans in general (Acker 1990; Gheradi 1995; Sumsion 2000c). Feni and Vera neglected the structural conditions that might hinder men from working in ECE as teachers. They blamed the low numbers of men in ECE on men themselves, assuming that both men and women already have equal opportunity to enter the field. One current challenge is the rarity of vacancies specifically requesting that 'a man/men' is needed. Affirmative action and active recruitment are the first steps in encouraging male ECE participation.

At the same time, Feni and Vera did not consider maternal care and love in essentialist terms. Vera expressed being open to the possibility of men working in

the field, as long as they were competent. She emphasised that skills were more important than gender when recruiting ECE teachers:

If the man is competent, yeah ... go ahead [to teach in ECE]. The consideration is not gender, but competency. We are not fanatical about women [as ECE teachers]. Not all women are capable and competent. ECE teachers must be educated and knowledgeable. Young children in ECE are in their golden age. They can absorb 80% of information given to them. The teachers should know how to give appropriate stimulation to the children. If not it could be bad for the children's development (Vera, 26 November 2014, Bandung).

Feni, the leader of National Kindergarten Teacher Association, who had 41 years' experience teaching in the field and had been active in kindergarten teacher associations since 1995, said that the men she knew who taught in ECE had the capability to love and care for children:

No problem at all [with men teaching young children]. Any men could teach young children. Including *gemulai* men. I am happy if there is one [*gemulai* man]. He can teach dancing and singing. He does not have to be the father figure at school, but he has to be soft, patient and not rough (Feni, 21 October 2017, Solo).

Feni was more concerned about teaching competency, including the ability to teach children how to sing and dance—activities perceived as a feminine domain. Instead of emphasising masculine traits in men who teach young children, Feni suggested the benefits of feminine masculinity in teaching young children. A *gemulai* (effeminate) man, who is in Retno's view threatening to children, has value in Feni's eyes. For her, feminine qualities such as softness are necessary for a man teaching in ECE.

ECE will remain challenging for men if the government fails to increase gender awareness in ECE. Fikri, a male teacher from Bandung (who at the time of interview had been promoted to school principal) mentioned that significant

opportunities existed for men in ECE, but not many men saw these due to ‘the taboo’ (his word) against working in a feminine field. When I asked him what he meant by taboo, he replied:

Yeah, society thinks it is a taboo, but I do not think so. It is a taboo because to work in ECE we need to be soft and gentle, loving and caring. The taboo makes men hesitant to teach in ECE. I like children a lot. Before teaching in this kindergarten, I had been teaching in a non-formal ECE, a Taman Pembelajaran Quran (TPQ), I taught children how to read Al-Quran (Fikri, 2 December 2014, Bandung).

Love, care and passion for children were also strongly emphasised by another male respondent from Bandung, Handi. He claimed that his love for educating children started when he was around 15 years old. Like Fikri, he began with TPQ, teaching children to read Quran at mosques. After graduating from high school, Handi decided to establish his own non-formal ECE, operating in the afternoon, teaching Islamic religion and reading Quran to young children. In 2006, he established a small kindergarten at his rented house. Handi worked together with his wife and sister-in-law. The kindergarten was his passion but it was not profitable; instead, he undertook extra work to provide for the kindergarten.

Although men are considered inferior in child care, this does not place men in the lower rungs of ECE organisational structure. Instead, the results of this study, as well as many others on gender and occupation, show that men receive a privilege that operates through a subtle mechanism called the ‘glass escalator effect’ (Williams 1995, 237). Men are promoted more quickly to managerial positions. The glass escalator effect can be viewed as both advantageous and disadvantageous for men in ECE. Faster upward mobility can be an advantage for men with a passion for leadership, but men whose passion is teaching young children will see this as a dilemma (see Warin 2015, 99). Three male teacher respondents from my fieldwork in Bandung—Fikri, Handi and Awan—experienced the effect in a variety of ways, as detailed below.

Fikri began working as a teacher in a kindergarten in 2008, after working in a primary school for three years. He was the only man who applied for the job, and he was selected. He was also the only man teaching in the kindergarten. After four years, he was promoted to the position of school principal. He was selected based on the results of a written test combined with an interview. He denied that the promotion was due to his male privilege. He insisted he was selected purely because his results were outstanding in comparison to those of the three other candidates (who were all female; one had 20 years of teaching experience in the kindergarten). He believed that his appointment as the school principal was not because of female teachers' lack of aspiration to be a school principal or because he was a man. However, in another comment, Fikri mentioned that the test was conducted to avoid accusations of unfair treatment in his favour.

The status of the kindergarten as an Islamic institution may have contributed to Fikri's rapid upward mobility. Suyatno's research (2004) in Semarang Central Java determined that Islamic kindergartens preferred female teachers to male teachers. Moreover, conservative Islamic teaching, as explained in the previous chapter, avoids female leadership when a man is present in the group. For many participants in my study, the position of a school principal and/or manager of ECE were considered more acceptable by both male and female respondents. For example, Retno suggested:

There are many male school principals in kindergartens. That's fine! They manage the school, and they are not educating the children. The children need women for their character development (Retno, 21 November 2014, Jakarta).

Conventional gender ideology that positions men as leaders and the stereotypical discourse of rationality versus emotionality has ensured that male school principals in ECE are more acceptable than are male teachers. Rationality is associated with masculinity and leadership, whereas emotionality is associated with femininity and teaching (Blackmore 1999, 23). Like Fikri, Handi found his way to the leader position relatively quickly. Unlike Fikri, Handi had no experience applying for ECE teaching roles. He established his own kindergarten

in 2006 and joined the Kindergarten Teacher Association in the same year. In 2012, he was appointed as leader of the Cibiru sub-district level Indonesian Kindergarten Teacher Association. Since then, he has been active in teacher organisations and has spent more time in managerial activities than in teaching.

In Western countries, the structure of teaching places women and men in different hierarchical positions (Sargent 2005, 258). For example, the upward mobility of male teachers in primary schools to managerial and administrative positions has been found statistically significant in the US, England and Wales (Cognard-Black 2004, 133; Thornton and Bricherno 2000, 203). In Indonesia, women occupy the lower levels of the schooling and education workforce (this will be discussed further). In terms of teaching roles, the common perception is that women are teachers and men are managers or administrators (Hansot and Tyack 1988, 752). Similarly, in Indonesia, Badan Perencanaan Pembangunan Negara (BAPPENAS) (Indonesian Ministry of National Development Planning) (2013, 36) reported that in 2010, the ratio of female school principals to males in all level of education was low: only 33.6 per cent at the primary level and 14.8 and 12.1 per cent at junior and secondary levels, respectively (BAPPENAS 2013, 36). The gendered structure of these occupations will influence how people see anomalies in gender-based positions (Leidner 1991, 155). Thus, a man who teaches young children will be considered an oddity and people would be more comfortable if the man transferred to a more gender-appropriate position in the structure (Sargent 2005, 256).

Women's perceived superiority at child caring and men's perceived superiority at leadership shows that a 'masculine ethic' of rationality and reason (Kanter 1975, 43) is operating in ECE structures, even though it is a female-dominated organisation. Men are still assumed to possess the essential characteristics for effective organisations, such as rationality, analytic skills, and detachment from emotional and personal influence.

## **Low Salaries**

Gender influences men and women in their career choice. In Indonesia, children and family determine women's employment decisions, but this is not the case for men (Gallaway and Bernasek 2002, 319). Social pressure to be the primary provider for the family influences men's career choices (Cooney and Bittner 2001, 78). Teaching is perceived as an ideal job for women as it only requires six working hours a day; thus in theory, women will still have a lot of time for their family. However, teaching—especially in ECE—is not financially rewarding. Research undertaken in Western contexts show that a low salary is a significant barrier to men choosing a career in ECE (see Koch and Farquhar 2015; Cooney and Bittner 2001; Milloy 2003). I suggest that this is also the case in Indonesia.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, the common perception is that men should be placed in higher positions relative to women due to their ability to attain spiritual power and their expected role as primary providers. The lower pay in ECE makes the teaching profession unappealing to men who centre their masculinity on their provider identity. This is reflected in the low numbers of men enrolled in ECE. There are high rates of unemployment and underemployment in Indonesia and my respondents were certainly happy to have a job. Yet my research confirmed the findings of others that for men, having a low paid job undermines their position as leaders in the family and as proud providers (Aisyah and Parker 2014, 215). Most teachers (male and female) interviewed for this study agreed that increasing salaries was important to make ECE more attractive to men. When I asked Handi why only a small number of men worked in ECE, he replied:

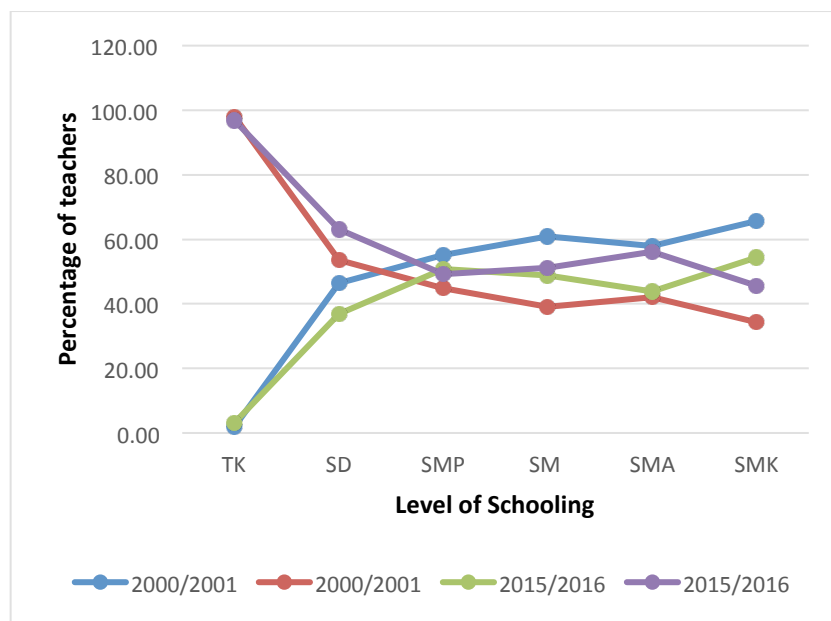
Actually, there are a lot of men teaching young children, just look at in mosques! There are many men teaching children to read Quran and tell them stories. They love children and care about children's education like me. They teach children for free, they volunteer! But it becomes problem when it comes to making it [teaching young children] a profession. Because the salary is very low. They will only earn 250,000 rupiahs (AUD25) a month! Men have responsibility to feed their wives and children. That money a month is not enough! The government

should do something about this if we want more men in ECE (Handi, 2 December 2017, Bandung).

Of all teachers, ECE teachers receive the lowest salary and usually have the lowest educational qualifications. As nurturing and caring is presumed to be natural to women, it is not recognised as a skill. Consequently, payments for caring and nurturing skills are very low. This also reflects capitalist and patriarchal thinking, which undervalues reproduction and emotionality compared to production and instrumentality (Hearn 1982, 188). Most women's organisations mentioned earlier in this thesis focus on social and voluntary work. For example, *Aisyiyah*, which established the first local kindergarten in Indonesia, focuses on worship and charity, especially in education and health. Women in *Aisyiyah* kindergartens would consider their involvement a form of charity and worship. Thus, it is not appropriate to ask for a proper salary (Marcoes-Natsir 2000, 135–137). Teaching and caring for young children is a female responsibility that should not be commercialised. Material compensation for the time and energy spent by non-formal ECE workers is extremely low. Their salary ranges from nothing to three hundred thousand rupiahs (around AUD30) per month. They are eligible for a monthly incentive from the government (as much as one hundred thousand rupiahs [AUD10] to three hundred thousand rupiahs] AUD30]), depending on the local government's budget. The highest salary they can receive is six hundred thousand rupiahs (AUD60) monthly, while the province's average minimum wage for a single person is more than one million rupiahs per month. Not all ECE teachers are lucky enough to get eight hundred rupiahs monthly. Most receive less than five hundred thousand rupiahs per month. Only those who are civil servants or government teachers and those who work in established private ECEs can obtain a decent salary; and their numbers are very low. Only 3.27 per cent of government ECE teachers have a monthly salary of 1.7 million rupiahs (AUD170) to three million rupiahs (AUD300). Private ECE teacher salaries range from 50 thousand rupiahs (AUD5) to two million rupiahs (AUD200) per month. Indonesian teacher incomes are lower than those of other professions in the country, and lower than those for teachers in other countries (Chang et al. 2014, 17). A UNESCO report shows that Indonesian teachers ratio

of salary after 15 years of experience to GDP per capita is the lowest of teacher salaries among South East Asian countries (Siniscalco 2004, 3). Although the report does not include ECE teachers' salary, the data for primary school teachers illustrates the condition of Indonesian teachers in comparison to teachers in other South East Asian countries. Indonesian primary school teachers receive only 61 per cent of the GDP per capita after 15 years of service, while a teacher in Malaysia receives 159 per cent of GDP per capita. In the Philippines, they receive 306 per cent, and in Thailand, 249 per cent of GDP per capita. Teaching salaries are also considerably lower than in other jobs requiring the same level of education (Chang et al. 2014, 18).

Assumptions about gender and social status ensure teaching is a highly segregated profession, as I have shown throughout this chapter. Female teachers dominate low levels of schooling, like pre- and elementary school, while men dominate high schools. The graph below shows how gender-segregated the teaching profession is in Indonesia.



Note: TK= Kindergarten; SD = Primary School; SMP = Junior High School; SM, SMA, SMK = Senior High School (General and Vocational). Source: The Summary of Statistical Data on Schooling in Indonesia year 2000/2001 (KEMDIKNAS 2001)–2015/2016 (KEMDIKBUD 2016b)

**Figure 3.1: Percentage of teachers based on gender and education level.**

The graph shows that the widest gender gap between teachers is in kindergartens, where in 2001 and 2016, more than 96 per cent of teachers were female; this was 98.05 per cent in 2001 and 96.77 per cent in 2016. In primary school, female teachers also dominated the workforce by 53.67 per cent in 2001 and 63.04 per cent in 2016 (KEMDIKNAS 2001; KEMDIKBUD 2016b). The gender gap in secondary school (junior and senior) was relatively small, especially in 2016. The same trends are apparent in Western countries. Bolton and Muzio (2008, 290) argue that segregation is evident in the traditional division between ‘soft’ and ‘hard’ skills, between nurturing and educating, and is at the core in differences between women’s and men’s work. Caring and nurturing work, dominant in kindergarten and the lower grades of primary education, marks out this occupation as female.

According to the ECE Grand Design (KEMDIKNAS 2011, 47), Indonesia aims to reach an 86.5 per cent ECE GER by 2025. This means that Indonesia needs an additional 30,000 to 42,000 ECE services each year to reach this target. Consequently, the demand for ECE teachers is increasing. Indonesia needs approximately 130,231 additional teachers every year (KEMDIKNAS 2011, 47). The high demand for ECE teachers, alongside the limited supply of qualified ECE teachers and paired with the flexibility of non-formal ECE, has led to the random recruitment of teachers (Yulindrasari, Kurniati and Setiasih 2012). Anyone can be an ECE teacher, regardless of his or her educational background. The core competencies of people who work with children are also not defined (World Bank 2006, 33). ECE has become a place of opportunity for those who are, for some reason, not able to compete in or access the labour market. As argued by Osgood (2005, 291–290), in the context of ECE in the UK, this is a default career for those who have extra time and are not well equipped either educationally or socially to obtain a ‘real job’. It is reasonable to assume that this excuse is also used by men who cannot compete in a more competitive workforce. This may explain why there has been an increase in the number of male kindergarten teachers in Indonesia.

The low pay and low status of teaching, in general, has triggered the government to reform the teaching profession. This began in 2005 with the Indonesia's Law about Teachers and Lecturers, government regulations about teachers, and the Minister of National Education regulations, Standard of Teacher's Academic Qualification and Competences. The reforms were conducted through a professionalisation framework, which involved specific higher education, skills enhancement, professional training and development, standardised evaluation and assessment systems and financial benefits (Boyd 2013, 4; Larson 1977, 40). The legal system has regulated teacher's educational qualifications and competencies, teacher management and development, and included additional allowances to improve teachers' take-home pay. Teacher reform has elevated their welfare and status in general. Improvements have made the teaching profession more popular and desirable for both men and women.

One of the most significant strategies to teacher professionalisation in Indonesia is certification with a quality assurance mechanism (Chang et al. 2014, 2–4). A certified teacher is eligible for a professional allowance of as much as one month of a civil servant's standard salary. This process has successfully improved the status and welfare of teachers in the formal schooling system. The teaching profession has become more attractive. Chang et al. (2014, 99–101) show that the number of enrolled student teachers in educational institutions increased fivefold after 2005. Student input quality has also improved. The average in the national exam scores of teacher candidates is higher than the national average. For in-service teachers, this professional allowance prevents them from taking on additional jobs to cover their household expenses (Chang et al., 2014, 114).

These reforms might explain the increased number of men who teach in ECE. In 2000 there was only 1.95 per cent of ECE teachers were male (KEMDIKNAS 2001). It increased to 3.33 per cent in 2016 (KEMDIKBUD 2016b, 122). However, the process of ECE teacher professionalisation is problematic due to the government's inconsistent and unclear definition of ECE teachers. The law only regulates formal ECE teachers. Yet non-formal ECEs are the greatest contributors to the increased GER. They contribute 36.51 per cent from the total GER of 53.70

per cent, while formal ECEs only contribute 17.19 per cent (KEMDIKNAS 2011, 22). Non-formal ECEs (PAUD) are only regarded as efficient instruments to reach the goal of increasing ECE access. The workforce contributing to its development is not considered professional and their welfare continues to be neglected. However, the increased welfare of teachers in general has created hope for men building careers in formal ECE centres.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has explored how ECE in Indonesia has been historically gendered through the discourse of maternalism. The dynamism and fluidity of contemporary Indonesian constructions of gender, as discussed in Chapter 2, do not apply in the context of ECE. Maternalism continues to operate in ECE discourses. From the time the first Indonesian ECE was established in the early twentieth century until now, the assumption has remained that women are the best educators of young people.

Maternalism and gender blindness has resulted in a 'glass door' phenomenon for men wanting to work in ECE as teachers. The perception of risk in men who teach young children, gender-blind ECE policies, and low salaries are the invisible barriers hindering men from working in ECE. Work is highly gendered in Indonesia and female-dominated professions are usually less valued, lower paid and lower status. Certain aspects place ECE in the lowest levels of the teaching profession hierarchy. These include interaction between the (unrecognised) dichotomies of 'soft' skills versus 'hard' skills, nurturing versus educating, natural skill versus professional skill and the main provider versus a second-income earner dichotomy. The maternalism discourse has also led to the marginalisation of men in teaching ECE; at the same time, it has allowed men to enter ECE managerial positions. The issue of homophobia and child sexual abuse has also strengthened the maternalism discourse in ECE. Men who teach young children are prone to suspicions of homosexuality and paedophilia. In ECE, men face the challenges of a low-status profession, perceptions of men lacking nurturing skills, suspicions of homosexuality and paedophilia, and gender blindness in both hidden

and formal ECE policies. The next chapter will analyse how maternalism influences parents, female teachers, and school manager perceptions of men in ECE. How male teachers perceive themselves and the challenges faced in ECE will be discussed in Chapter 5.

## **Chapter 4: Protective Fathers: Social Perceptions and Expectations of Male Teachers in Early Childhood Education**

Nurturing is *naluri perempuan* (women's instinct), so yeah ... maybe women are the best teachers for kindergarten (Mama Erny, 30 October 2014, Yogyakarta).

Female teachers have *jiwa keibuan* (motherly soul), they are more *telaten* (patient and detail[ed]), because *bapak*/father is more *tulang punggung*/the protector and provider of the family (Mama Kiki, 30 October 2014, Yogyakarta).

In my interviews with parents whose children attended ECE, they associated kindergarten teaching to a woman's 'motherly soul and women's instinct' (as above). Parents perception of ECE teaching and child care as an extension of female nurturing roles demonstrates the longevity of Ki Hajar Dewantara's concept of ECE as an extension of a mother's care roles at home and gender roles outlined through *kodrat*. These comments are consistent with the discourse of women's superiority in young children education, as discussed in Chapter 3. Mama Kiki and Mama Erny used essentialist arguments about the distinction between gender roles for men and women. The word *naluri*/instinct, *jiwa keibuan*/motherly soul implies that women are naturally equipped with all the characteristics required to care for and educate children. The phrase *tulang punggung*, which literally means 'backbone', was attached to *bapak*/father. *Tulang punggung* is a common phrase that connotes the role of protector and provider.

In Chapter 3 I demonstrated how gender discourses play out in the field of ECE in Indonesia. As explained in Chapter 2, there have been changes over time regarding these perceptions. Some Indonesians have advocated a newly emerging discourse of masculinity that includes care, love and child education. Caring for

and educating young children is no longer viewed as exclusive to women and mothers. This discussion about care, education and masculinity, however, has been largely confined to the family context and not the public sphere. My thesis seeks to analyse how the idea of child care and education applies to men who work both as educators and carers in educational settings, such as in ECE.

This chapter will offer a new analysis of the social perceptions of male teachers working as the educators and carers of young children. According to the most recently available data from the Ministry of Education and Culture's Centre of Data and Statistics of Education and Culture (KEMDIKBUD 2016b, 122), the number of male teachers in Indonesian ECE is very small, comprising only 3.23 per cent (11,841) of total numbers (366,635) of ECE teachers, males and females. However, the number of male teachers has increased from 2001, where the data show that 1.95 per cent of teachers in ECE were male at this time (KEMDIKNAS 2001). Chapter 3 outlined the three barriers preventing men from teaching in ECE, factors deeply entrenched in the ECE maternalist discourse. The assumption that children's care and education are natural roles for women has led to the feminisation of the ECE workforce and the exclusion of men through the three barriers discussed in Chapter 3. This chapter investigates how parents, female teachers and school managers who have interacted with male teachers in ECE perceive men's involvement; the aim here is to understand what expectations these groups have of male teachers and their contributions to ECE.

This chapter is based on fieldwork undertaken from 7 October 2014 to 5 November 2014 at Fastrack Funschool, Yogyakarta. As explained in Chapter 1, since my scholarship only allowed for two months fieldwork, I did one month field work in Yogyakarta and one month in Bandung. Data from fieldwork in Bandung have been used occasionally for comparison, since the male teachers in Bandung were promoted as school principals and no longer directly teaching children. Fastrack Funschool, an upper middle-class ECE centre, revealed more progressive values about gender equality than did schools in Bandung, which I will explain later in this chapter. However, the implementation of these values was challenged by individual teachers' beliefs about gender and market demands

(from parents). Parents and female colleagues expected male teachers to safeguard, instead of challenge, the conventional heteronormative construction of gender. My findings are consistent with previous research conducted in countries such as Australia, the UK, Turkey and New Zealand (see Cushman 2012; Mills, Haase and Charlton 2008).

In this chapter, I argue that conflicting social perceptions of male teachers exist in kindergarten environments, due to the contradictions and ambiguities embodied by conventional Indonesian constructions of gender (Brenner 1995, 41). The binary construction of gender has influenced participants' perceptions of men who teach in ECE. The discourse of gender as natural and rooted in the notion of *kodrat* interferes with how participants perceive male teachers, especially their nurturing abilities, emotional competence and physicality. However, participants also perceived gender as a product of culture and socialisation; therefore, they recommended male teachers be role models, particularly for boys. Parents and female colleagues suggest that, as role models, male teachers should be 'real men' and should possess the characteristics of *bapak yang mengayomi* (the protecting father). The definition of 'real men' is located somewhat arbitrarily between being masculine and expressing feminine qualities such as being caring, patient and soft. This contradictory perception shows that cultural systems, including gender, embody contradictions and ambiguities. Social phenomena are complex (Brenner 1995, 44), as are the social perceptions and expectations of men who work in ECE environments.

### **Fastrack Funschool's Progressive Values**

According to the owner, Alissa Wahid, Fastrack Funschool adopts the Indonesian democratic values of *Pancasila* and *Bhineka Tunggal Ika*. *Pancasila* is the official philosophical foundation of Indonesia and consists of five principles: 1) belief in the one and only God;<sup>44</sup> 2) a just and civilised humanity; 3) the unity of Indonesia; 4) a democracy led by the wisdom of its representatives' deliberations; and 5)

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<sup>44</sup> The first principle of Indonesia is 'to believe in the one and only God', which implies monotheism. There are seven recognised monotheist religions in Indonesia: Islam, Christianity, Catholicism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Confucianism, and other animistic beliefs.

social justice for all the people of Indonesia. *Bhineka tunggal ika* is Indonesia's national motto: it means 'unity in diversity', reflecting a plurality of race, ethnicities, religions and cultures.

Alissa Wahid established Fastrack Funschool in 2010 out of a concern about the standard of ECE in Indonesia. She considers Fastrack Funschool an alternative to religious-based schools in Indonesia. Alissa worries that a lack of experience living within a diverse community may make children reluctant to accept unity in diversity:

I specifically see Fastrack as an alternative to faith-based schools, such as Catholic schools and Islamic schools. It is indeed a legitimate choice of choosing which school for our children. However, it makes me sad if there is no alternative school that offers nationalistic values that cross the bulkheads between religions. If all children go to faith-based schools, their friends will be relatively homogeneous. Without sufficient experience (in interacting with people from different backgrounds), they will face difficulty in developing positive attitudes and respecting diversity. They will see other people as 'the other'; they don't learn how to live together and get along with each other. That is why we decided to make a national school, not a religious school (Alissa, 29 November 2014, Yogyakarta).

This concern is not unfounded: Indonesia faces problems in relation to interfaith intolerance. These problems can be illustrated by several examples: an Islamic fundamentalist group's attack on Ahmadiyya followers in 2011;<sup>45</sup> conflict over Gereja Kristen Indonesia Yasmin (GKI Yasmin), an Indonesian Christian Church

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<sup>45</sup> Ahmadiyya is an Islamic sect that was officially recognised in Indonesia by the colonial government in 1930 and was legally recognised in 1953 by the Republic Indonesia Ministry of Justice (The Persecution.org 2005). In 2005, Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) released a *fatwa* (a religious edict) stating that Ahmadiyya was outside the pale of Islam, deceiving, and heretical, and therefore should be banned (MUI 2005). Since then, there violence has been perpetuated against members of Ahmadiyya organisations throughout Indonesia, such as in Lombok Timur, Manislor, Tasikmalaya, Parung, Garut, Ciaruteu and Sadasari (The Persecution.org 2005). In February 2011, a group of people attacked and destroyed the house of an Ahmadi in Cikeusik, Province of Banten. Three Ahmadi were killed in the incident.

in Bogor since 2008;<sup>46</sup> the Sunni-Shiah conflict in Sampang since 2004;<sup>47</sup> and a hardline Islamic organisation's (FPI) protest against a documentary television program about religious pluralism in Indonesia (Sakai and Fauzia 2014, 41). Regarding ECE and child care, Formen and Nuttall (2014, 28) argue that the combination of private provider domination and increasing '*sharia*-isation' has triggered the development of 'neo-Islamic' ECE providers. These promote anti-democratic fundamentalist Islamic ideology, which is anti-pluralistic and demands the implementation of *sharia* law in Indonesia. The concern is that these ECE providers will reproduce a religious fundamentalism that will stall Indonesian democracy (Formen and Nuttall 2014, 28).

Fastrack Funschool's commitment to Indonesian democratic values combines with the psychology and gender activism background of the owners (Alissa and Erman). Arief Sugeng Widodo (Dodo), the program director, has made the school's policy more inclusive:

Our experiences in gender activism in PKBI<sup>48</sup> and LSPPA<sup>49</sup> have made us more sensitive to gender issues. It is just automatically embedded in our mind; actually, our target is not only gender, but also diversity in various features, gender is only one of them, and religion is another. We have to know the variety of religious backgrounds of the students; we will try to provide teachers with various religious backgrounds. We also think about the variety of personalities (Dodo, 29 November 2014).

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<sup>46</sup> The conflict of GKI Yasmin was over a church development in Bogor, West Java. The church was sealed by Bogor local government based on a pressure from an Islamic organisation who disagreed of the church development. Bogor local government then withdrew the church building permit. Although the Indonesian Supreme Court ordered the reopening of the church in 2012, the pressure from a vigilante Islamic group made the Bogor local government deny the Supreme Court order in the name of public order. The churchgoers also received harassment from the Islamic group (see Prihandoko 2012).

<sup>47</sup> A Sunni-Shiah conflict in Sampang Madura has been reoccurring since 2004. In 2012, a group of Muslim Sunni burnt 37 houses of minority Shiite followers. One Shiite follower was killed and many were injured in the incident (Mawuntyas, 2012).

<sup>48</sup> Perkumpulan Keluarga Berencana Indonesia (PKBI), Indonesian Planned Parenthood Association is a non-governmental organisation (NGO) working on reproductive health issues.

<sup>49</sup> Lembaga Studi Pengembangan Perempuan dan Anak (LSPPA), Women and Children Development Studies Centre is a NGO working on women and children issues.

Fastrack Funschool employs a gender perspective in its staff recruitment process and when placing students in classes. The school is aware of the stigma and disadvantages male teachers may experience because of their gender, so an affirmative approach operates to reduce any gender discrepancies regarding access to ECE. The school also considers the gender proportion of students and teachers when placing teachers.

When I asked what kind of men they expected to have taught at the school, Alissa explained that no particular characteristics were required, except that the teachers loved children and learning. Alissa believed that masculine and feminine attributes were detached from the physical body. She thought that both males and females could have either feminine or masculine quality. A person, whether female or male, would have a combination of masculine and feminine elements in his or her personality. She thought this was something to celebrate instead of being a source of shame:

Men and women are the same, what we are looking for is someone who loves children and loves learning; that's all. It doesn't matter male or female. However, our gender awareness has helped us to understand that men are usually not trained enough for this (child care and education), we are aware of this. We understand that feminine or masculine is not attached to the sexed bodies. In many things, I have more masculine characteristics than Dodo; that is something we should celebrate (Alissa, 29 November 2014, Yogyakarta).

In this sense, Alissa considers gender as shaped by social norms and not innate qualities. She is aware that gender stereotypes influence society's perceptions and expectations of women and men. According to her, society's gender norms and expectations are the reason for men's minimal caring skills. Thus, her awareness leads to an understanding that men might be less capable of caring for a child simply because society does not require them to care for children. This understanding is similar to Vera's comment (quoted in Chapter 3), in which she mentions men's lack of exposure to childcare activities. The difference is that Alissa does not relate this to a natural quality. She believes that gender is learned;

thus, men's lack of child-handling skills should not deter ECE administrators from recruiting men for the ECE and childcare industries. Alissa uses an affirmative strategy in teacher recruitment to offer wider opportunities for men to teach at her school. She emphasises that both feminine and masculine characteristics should exist in one personality. Female and male teachers should both have a nurturing quality, firmness, discipline and physical strength.

At the time of my fieldwork (from October to November 2014), Fastrack Funschool had 35 teachers, with five males. In 2016, Fastrack Funschool had 37 teachers, with nine males. This is a high ratio compared to most ECE centres in Indonesia; the national ratio of male to female teachers is only three per one hundred ECE teachers. However, most male teachers at Fastrack Funschool occupy assistant teacher positions. Their primary duty is to help the main teacher execute learning activities in class, along with child handling. Male teachers have authority to set learning programs for classes. According to Ghita, a placement is based on two reasons. The first of these is experience: new teachers are placed in an assistant position so they can learn from the main teachers. Second, when the principal considers a new teacher is ready to lead, the main teacher and assistant will switch positions. By the time I undertook my research; all male teachers in the kindergarten program were assistant teachers, but the reasons for their placements vary.

Implementation of the directors' progressive values regarding gender was challenged by social expectations. Even though a gender-based requirement is not specified for ECE teaching roles at the school, stakeholders expect and perceive the opposite. In turn, this drives Fastrack Funschool into negotiations over parent (and the education market) expectations. As Erman explains:

We received input from some parents about our male marketing staff who doesn't look masculine. They did not say that they didn't like him, but they said ... '*pria kok melambai*' (he is a man, why is he swaying?) ... [laughing]. For us it is not a problem at all, as long as he can deliver good service and meet our standard and capable to build good

relationship with parents, that is all okay (Erman, 29 November 2014, Yogyakarta).

The school's program director, Dodo, was aware of parents' resistance to *pria melambai* and anticipated this in the recruitment process:

I am aware that most parents are not yet ready to accept [gender difference]. This is one of my considerations, and it is why we do not select men with strong feminine features as a teacher. Maybe someday, when parents are ready [laughing] (Dodo, 29 November 2014, Yogyakarta).

Three words are commonly used to refer to effeminate men in terms of gesture and their manner of talking: *gemulai*, *lebay* and *melambai*. Study participants generally used these words when referring to effeminate men. *Gemulai* is a formal term meaning 'soft', 'delicate' and 'graceful'. *Lebay* is a slang word for *berlebihan*, meaning 'excessive'. A *lebay* man is one who wears many items unnecessary for a man, speaks unnecessarily and overacts. *Melambai* means to 'sway'. Swaying hands and many fine body movements while talking or walking are considered feminine markers. Social expectations, as implied by Erman and Dodo, emerged during interviews with parents, as well as with Fastrack Funschool's school principal Ghita. These social expectations are grounded in certain perceptions: 1) that gender is natural but also learned; 2) trust and risk issues; and 3) issues of sexuality and heteronormativity. These perceptions are still influenced by conventional Indonesian constructions of gender, as explained in Chapter 2. The following sections will discuss each of these perceptions in detail.

## **Gender and Nature**

In respondents' comments, the notion of gender as a natural construct was common. The respondents expressed assumptions about innate aspect of gender to highlight the benefits of male teachers working in the school, and praising men who possess nurturing qualities. I have classified their comments about gender as

a natural concept into three major themes: nurturing competence, emotional versus rational competence, and physical competence.

### **Nurturing Competence**

The data reveal that most parents still perceive ECE as a woman's domain because of women's innate nurturing roles. These perceptions are of course not unique to Indonesia. As discussed in Chapter 3, this is a global discourse with historical roots in the establishment of institutionalised ECE by Froebel in 1830s Germany (Albisetti 2012; Read 2003). Clyde (1989, 94) calls this 'traditional conservatism in early childhood settings', or maternalism discourse. Prior to the 1960s, in some states of Australia and the US, men's involvement in ECE was restricted by law (Clyde 1989, 94–95). The maternalism in ECE has continued into contemporary times, men are still minority in ECE workforce even though laws in those countries no longer restrict men from teaching in ECE and men are now encouraged to teach in ECE (Janairo et al. 2010; Johnson 2008; Mills, Martino and Lingard 2004; Piburn 2006; Piburn 2010). As discussed in Chapter 3, in Indonesia, the ideology of maternalism also still dominates, but no national legal restrictions exist. Men are not encouraged to work in ECE and neither do they choose to do so in large numbers.

The assumption that ECE is a naturally female field creates a view that for men to work in this area is strange (Rentzou and Ziganitidou 2009, 275). Many interviews with parents reveal this sense of strangeness, as with Mama Kiki:

There was no male teacher in my daughter's school before. Here in Fastrack Funschool, I see men teaching in ECE. I think it's good to know. My mum was also a teacher, she was also amazed and surprised [seeing men teaching in ECE] '*eh kok ada laki-laki yang mau ngajar di PAUD?*'/'Hey look! There's a man who is willing to teach in ECE' (Mama Kiki, 30 October 2014, Yogyakarta).

Translating '*Eh kok ada laki-laki yang mau ngajar di PAUD?*' into English is complicated. Mama Kiki means that she and her mother were surprised that some

men would be willing to teach in an ECE setting. The phrase ‘*eh kok*’ usually refers something unexpected or strange. The sentence also can be translated as questioning why some men are willing to work in ECE. Two underlying reasons for this surprise exist: the lack of encounters with men teaching in ECE and conventional gender-based assumptions about who should care for and educate children. The number of male ECE teachers in Indonesia is very small. Therefore, some Indonesians do not realise that some men are already working in ECE. Once they see a man working as a kindergarten teacher, they are surprised, as reflected in the above comment.

This feeling of surprise could also arise from gender-based assumptions, such as young children should be educated by women simply because it is ‘natural’. The two responses from parents quoted at the beginning of this chapter also exemplify the later assumption.

A common perception is that as nurturing is unnatural for men, thus men need hardwork to perform this role. Therefore a man should be greatly appreciated for his nurturing accomplishment. As Mama Rosy comments:

I once worked with a male teacher, he likes to cuddle, and I asked him how did he learn that? He said ‘nothing, it just came naturally to me’, but from outside he looks like *slengean*, I didn’t believe that he could do it. He must be very patient, two thumbs up for him (Mama Rosy, 24 October 2014, Yogyakarta).

Mama Rosy, who also worked in the ECE sector, was amazed by the nurturing skills of her male colleague. Mama Rosy thought that the nurturing skill might be separated from masculinity. Her colleague’s *slengean* appearance dismissed the possibility of being caring and nurturing. *Slengean* is a slang word for ‘relaxed’, ‘clumsy’, ‘lacking seriousness’, and ‘indifference’. This word is commonly associated with selfish, fearless and easygoing young men and teenagers. Even though her colleague said nurturing was natural for him, Mama Rosy still doubted him. She insisted that he might have trouble in applying this skill. Men are not destined to nurture children; that is why nurturing is more difficult for men.

Alongside the essentialist discourse of women as natural carers, parents also considered that men could learn how to nurture. A conversation I had with Mama Rosy reveals this:

Mama Rosy: Dealing with children, it's about skill not only knowledge.

Hani: Is it possible to increase the skill?

Mama Rosy: Yes, because what I believe, yes is women have that genuine feeling of being a mother, but for fathers, if you put more effort to make him a good father, he'll actually be better than a woman, that's how I see it. Because there is a soft side of masculinity right? That is so different from the female soft side. A female looks soft outside, but is fiery inside; men are not like that. Men look tough outside, but [are] fragile inside (Mama Rosy, 24 October 2014, Yogyakarta).

The above comments show that men are potential carers. Unlike those of women, men's child-handling skills are perceived as a learned behaviour. Ineffective child-handling skills can be improved with training. However, men may need to make a greater effort to become skilled in this area, due to the lack of a maternal instinct and appropriate emotions. Once men can attain nurturing skills, they must be appreciated.

### **Emotional Skills**

Respondents also had positive perceptions of male teachers' involvement in ECE. However, the fundamental reason for these perceptions is the belief in conventional gender-based, stereotypical norms. A discourse of rationality versus emotionality was raised consistently in my data. Men are assumed as more stable emotionally than women. Thus, there is a positive perception of a male teacher is his role as an emotional balancer in class. Ghita, Fastrack Funschool's principal, connected emotionality with female biology (Shields 2013, 425):

Believe it or not, every woman has a monthly cycle that influences her emotions and mood stability. Maturity is needed to maintain her stability

and (emotional/mood) consistency. To me, men seem to be able to maintain their mood consistently. So ... male teachers can be a mood balancer (Ghita, 10 October 2014, Yogyakarta).

Gender beliefs and stereotypes influence the way an individual interprets his/her own and other's emotional behaviours significantly (Shields 2013, 424). Ghita's comment is influenced by a classic stereotypical dichotomy of emotionality versus rationality; in this dichotomy, emotionality is associated with instinct, nature and women, whereas rationality is aligned with culture and men (Seidler 1997, 121). Ghita's stereotypical beliefs reflect socially learned gendered rules about men and women in relation to their roles (Alexander and Wood 2000, 192). As discussed in Chapter 2, Indonesian gender ideology is influenced by Javanese *priyayi* ideology, which states that men have better self-control over their emotions and behaviour (Brenner 1995, 21). Therefore, it is not surprising that cognitive emotional control is attributed to men and difficulties in maintaining emotional consistency is attributed more often to women (Zammuner 2000, 66).

Ghita's comments concerning the difference in nurturing ability between male and female teachers contradict her previous comment. In her comments below, expressing ideas shared by most parents, Ghita suggests that men have less patience than do women when dealing with children:

Yes, there are some differences [between men and women]; I suppose female teachers have more empathy for children. For example, male teachers usually cannot stand stubborn children; they are usually not '*telaten*' (patient and persistent) enough to make the child follows their instructions. They are not as patient as women. Their emotion is easily provoked, I can see when the emotion starts to go up, I can see that he is angry ... they are indeed not as patient as women ... (Ghita, 10 October 2014, Yogyakarta).

The above comment reflects the stereotypical belief related to women's expected social role and the assumption that nurturing is a female attribute. Expectations about women's social role as caregivers and caretakers frame stereotypical beliefs

that insist women should express positive emotions and gain control over negative emotions (Alexander and Wood 2000, 191; Shields 2013, 424). This contradiction is also noted in Brenner's (1995, 31–37) observation about gender and self-control in Java. Brenner argues that in formal discourse where gender ideology is at stake, men are considered to have more self-control, while in casual discourse men, are less capable of controlling their desire than women. This contradiction reveals a discrepancy between gender ideology and practice. Ghita's contradictory comments reveal that, ideologically, men are expected to be more rational than are women and more emotionally controlled. However, when the context highlights nurturing qualities, which ideologically are women's domain, men are considered less emotionally controlled.

### **Physical Competence**

The assumption of gendered behaviours as natural raises expectations for male teachers to perform gender-normative roles (see Sumsion 2000a; Mills, Haase and Charlton 2008; Murray 1996; Sargent 2005). The idea of men as physically stronger, more active and more agile than women is seen as an advantage of having male ECE teachers. For Ghita, the school principal, having male teachers meant having extra workers to engage in physical labour. While in a masculine working environment work tends to be disembodied to enhance productivity (Acker 1990, 151), in this case, a male body is more visible.<sup>50</sup> In ECE, a male-sexed body bears the cultural expectations of certain acts and behaviours in a visual manner (Butler 1988, 521). Ghita implies the expectations surrounding male bodies:

Teachers' responsibilities are not only teaching, sometimes we have activities outside teaching, such as organising graduation day and field

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<sup>50</sup> Joan Acker's (1990, 149-151) concept of disembodied workers is based on an assumption that work and organisational hierarchy has no bodies and no gender. Therefore, occupation/work is assumed to be gender-neutral and the workers are disembodied (the workers' bodies and gender are denied) and assumed to be universal beings. The bodiless workers are assumed to have no sexuality, no emotionality and no need for procreation to push them to commit only to their work for productivity. In male-dominated work, a masculinist assumption of a man who centres his life on his job, while his wife takes care of his personal needs and those of their children becomes the organisational norm. Women who enter masculine fields will also be seen as bodiless and will be pressured to keep up with masculine norms.

trips. Often we need men's strength for these kinds of activities. For example for decorating a hall, it is extraordinarily difficult if we do not have any male teacher. I can't imagine a female teacher climbing a ladder! Another value added of having male teachers is that they have better sense of art than female teachers. They are more creative. That is why we prioritise male teachers. There was a time when we only had one male teacher, poor him, there was too much to handle. We need male teachers to deal with equipment, electricity, decoration, and also working late, even though we (female teachers) also work late if needed, we feel safer when there are male teachers around (Ghita, 10 October 2014, Yogyakarta).

Here, the male body is associated with strength, bravery and intelligence. Ghita's interpretation of a male body and its qualities is influenced by cultural constructions of men as protectors and providers. Ghita's comment also reflects the 'historical conventions' (Butler 1988, 521) of certain gender performances attached to the male body. The expectation of men to act or perform accordingly would preserve such conventions if men complied with them (Butler 1988, 528). In this sense, gender cultural transformations depend on how male teachers respond to the expectations that will be discussed in Chapters 5 and 6. Ghita's comment also reflects women's complicity with patriarchy, which in turn sustains hegemonic masculinity (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005, 848). As we have seen in the quotes above with female teachers, they contribute and reinforce male teachers' masculinity as hegemonic.

## **Gender and Nurture**

The ideology of gender as natural is contradicted in participants' comments about the importance of male teachers in ECE as agents of gender socialisation, assuming that gender is a result of social learning and modelling (Burn 1996; Wharton 2005).<sup>51</sup> Most participants argued that male teachers were father figures

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<sup>51</sup> Social learning is a concept in psychology, which states that individuals learn from other individuals through observation, imitation and modelling. This concept was first introduced by Albert Bandura and Richard H. Walters (1963) and further developed by Albert Bandura (1977).

at school and role models for boys in particular, which suggests that gender results from social learning and modelling, rather than something innate. Mama Kiki and Mama Rosy are examples here:

It is important (to have male teachers) for me, at home we have father and mother, at school, it is supposed to be the same, there should be male teachers and female teachers (Mama Kiki, 30 October 2014, Yogyakarta).

I see the different way men treat the children, this resembles figures at home, we have mother and father (Mama Rosy, 24 October 2014, Yogyakarta).

A common belief is that a father figure is needed at school due to the absence of father figures at home. In cases where a father is a family's main provider, men often have limited time to interact with their children. In Indonesia, many men must work long hours, find employment in different cities or countries, and are separated from their family. In these situations, male teachers operate as substitute father figures. Mama Erny's comment illustrates this:

When my daughter first enrolled in this school, she had Al as a teacher in her class, well he was only an assistant teacher, but I am happy enough. At that time, Fay's dad was pursuing his medical specialist education, so I think having a male teacher at school was a benefit, at least there was a (father) figure. At home, there were all women. At that time, my husband went to work before Fay (a girl) woke up and came home after Fay was asleep. When we visited my hometown Klaten, Fay had her uncle and grandpa here [at her house]; it was all women (Mama Erny, 30 October 2014, Yogyakarta).

For boys, male teachers are not only father figures at school, but also masculine role models. Social learning theory, which is prevalent in ECE pedagogy, influences parents' expectation of male teachers to act as role models for boys, assuming that men will automatically display and offer socially expected

masculine characteristics and teach boys about expected gender norms (Skelton 2003, 195). Mama Kiki commented:

Yes (male teachers could show) ... how to be a man, (so the boy would think) 'I am a man, I have to be firm like Al. If I want to be a policeman I have to be like Al ... not the Miss'. A male teacher completes the classroom. For example, when teaching the children how to draw, Al can draw cars, draw pictures that are more *gagah* (gallant/manly). If there are only female teachers in the class, they will teach the children to draw flowers and flowers [repeated by the respondent for emphasis]. Male teachers are more gallant; female teachers are softer. If you want to do physical exercise, go to Al. Yes, they (male teachers) complete the school (Mama Kiki, 30 October 2014, Yogyakarta).

Another reason to justify male teachers in ECE centres on male teachers' compatibility with boys' physical activities. As Mama Rosy noted about Budi, who taught children aged five to six years old:

Maybe the benefit is if the student is a boy. Like in Budi's class, there are more boys in his class, and the boys seem to be very physical (physically active) and Budi seems to enjoy it. They seem to be close (Mama Rosy, 24 October 2014, Yogyakarta).

Mama Rosy assumed that male teachers could keep up with boys' physical energy. Mama Rosy considered that boys were better taught by men, as they would possess a similar strength and set of interests to boys. Similarly, in the 1960s in the US, male teachers were perceived as more capable of coping with boys' active behaviours and as more effective at helping boys attain their masculine identity (Clyde 1989, 96).

Mama Rosy's assumption and Mama Kiki's comment resonate with a 'common sense truth' that has been used in the West since the 1920s to promote the idea that boys would be better off with male teachers as role models (Burn and Pratt-Adams 2015; Martino 2008; Clyde 1989). At the time of writing, in Indonesia,

written campaigns about male role models are framed in relation to family contexts and aim to strengthen fathers' involvement in child care and education (as discussed in Chapter 2).

Mama Rosy and Mama Kiki's comments also show that parents expect schools to be sites of gender normalisation (Connell 1996a, 212). Gender non-conformity threatens hegemonic gender conventions and stability; therefore, the incorrect performance of gender will trigger direct and indirect punishment Butler (1988, 528). 'Fixing' a feminine boy is important to establish heterosexuality and the hegemonic gender order. Ghita, the school principal, commented:

Yeah, for example, Jack, a boy, he only had female figures at home, only his mum, aunty and little sister. He had a problem, he always asked for Barbie dolls, he played Barbie ... 'Oh dear, what's wrong with this boy?' ... then the next semester I placed Budi in his class. We expected Budi to be able to provide a male figure for him. Yes ... I understand that it is not a compulsory for boys to play with car toys or refuse to wear pink. But a male figure is needed to show what a man is and how to be a man. A man may be sad and cry, but what to do when a man is sad, how to cope with the sad feeling. We hope that will come from male teachers (Ghita, 10 October 2014, Yogyakarta).

Gender socialisation can also be undertaken through the positive or negative reinforcement of appropriately gendered behaviour from significant adults (parents or teachers) (Burn 1996). The adult involved does not need to have the same sex as the child. Although a male figure is needed to balance the teaching of gender norms, Ghita is aware, based on her experience, that female teachers can also teach gender norms to boys:

We had a female teacher; her name was Vita. She had a *gemulai* (soft and delicate) boy in her class. Her assistant was Tim, but he was very calm, *kurang cowok* (not manly enough). Vita took over and she was the one who taught the boy how to act like a man (Ghita, 10 October 2014, Yogyakarta).

Ghita's first comment highlights the expectation that male teachers will be models of normative masculinity and protectors of normative gender socialisation instead of potential agents for gender reform. Ghita's comment derives from the dominant understanding of gender modelling, which assumes that children imitate others of the same sex more than the opposite sex. The second comment is inspired by her experience of seeing a female educator teaching gender to boys. This implies that sex differences are not always important in teaching gender norms, as long as the teacher is aware of, and is willing to teach, those norms to children. Even though Ghita's comments refer to fixing gender as part of a normative gender conformity, the idea aligns with Francis' (2008, 119) argument that a teacher's sex is not important in gender reform, but rather the teacher's gender performance. Instead of proposing men's gender performance as supporting gender reform, the comment reflects Ghita's perception of how important it is to fix a boy's behaviour so it is gender appropriate. This comment emphasises the normalisation of heteronormative gender ideology and performance. The anxiety that arises from seeing a 'different' boy or man is a product of this normalisation (Sargent 2005, 252).

As we have seen in the quotes so far, high social expectations of gender conformity in children lead to expectations of male teachers to represent idealised constructions of masculinity; as *bapak*/fathers. The role-model discourse demands that male teachers can ensure boys' internalisation of masculinity. Martino (2008, 193) argues that being a role model is synonymous with being '[a] real man'. A real man in Indonesia is valued according to the characteristics of a heterosexual father (Howard 1996, 2) (as described in Chapter 2).

Heterosexuality is perceived as identifiable through observable signs, such as physical attributes and gestures. Gender is often symbolised in bodily performance: the failure to stick to a socially expected performance could jeopardise one's gender identity (Connell 2005, 54). The embodiment of heterosexuality excludes feminine movements or gestures in men. Therefore, parents and the school community can tolerate feminine qualities in male teachers,

such as softness, caring and nurturing, but cannot tolerate feminine gestures, such as *gemulai*, *lebay* or *melambai*. As Mama Fani notes:

The most important thing for a male teacher is to have a soft yet still firm attitude to the children. If the man is *gemulai*, please don't (let him teach). But he doesn't need to be macho either (Mama Fani, 03 November 2014, Yogyakarta).

Mama Fani's comment suggests that feminine and masculine characteristics are combined in her concept of 'a real man'. However, the feminine qualities of male teachers should not materialise as *gemulai* gestures. These would suggest that a man is homosexual or transgender. This is difficult for male teachers, as no clear and fixed pattern exists regarding how *gemulai* gestures are expressed by men. Judgements about *gemulai* are subjective. Thus, it may encourage male teachers to be self-aware and modify their gestures so they are perceived as more masculine, proving they are 'man enough' (Seidler 1997, xi).

Ghita describes the expected characteristics of male teachers as being like those of '*bapak yang mengayomi*' (the protecting father). *Mengayomi* means not only protecting, but also caring for and comforting. Therefore, the term '*bapak yang mengayomi*' requires a father to care for, nurture, be smart, playful, firm, wise, and be disciplined:

[laughing] well this is my personal opinion; the best father is the one who can position himself flexibly. He can be the child's partner and friend, when the child is sad he can be *bapak yang mengayomi* (the protecting father), he can be a cool playmate and smart partner to discuss things. A man also has to be able to make things right. He has to be firm but caring and friendly. He has to be able to gain respect from the child without making the child scared, but he makes the child understand his decisions and rules, so the child would willingly follow him (Ghita, 10 October 2014, Yogyakarta).

The above portrayal of the idealistic *bapak yang mengayomi* (the protecting father) is consistent with both the idea of *bapakism*—the father as the source of authority—and the contemporary discourse of fatherhood promoted by a parenting magazine in Indonesia—father as playmate, entertainer and provider of intellectual stimulations (Yulindrasari and McGregor 2011, 613–615). Ghita does not include the father as provider in her explanation about *bapak yang mengayomi*. This means that in an ECE context, providing is not the primary marker of fatherhood (Brandth and Kvande 1998, 299). The value of fatherhood has shifted to a more father–child-based interaction. However, the pattern of interaction between a father and child still differs from the pattern of mother–child intimacy. The father–child interaction is based on a ‘masculine construction of intimacy’ (Brandth and Kvande 1998, 301). Instead of positioning the father as a carer, he is positioned as the child’s friend. Ghita considers fathers as the cool playmates and partners of the children.

The school community (parents and female colleagues) expect male teachers to be agents of gender socialisation, especially for boys. They expect male teachers to be a father figure at school and possess the characteristics of an idealised *bapak yang mengayomi*, one who is comforting, protecting, caring and playful, but also firm and disciplined.

### **Trust and Risk**

As discussed in Chapter 3, according to Ki Hajar Dewantoro’s philosophy, women are destined to be maintainers of offspring (*pemangku turunan*), with the primary duty of imparting education (*asah*), love and emotional comfort (*asih*), and care (*asuh*). Thus, throughout ECE’s development, women have been the primary facilitators. The ideology excludes men from childcare and educational activities. This exclusion perpetuates the perception of men as inferior and inappropriate for child caring and education (Sargent 2004, 179). This has implications regarding trust. A lack of trust is framed around male teachers’ competence as carers, their sexuality and morality.

Stereotypical beliefs about gender are used to justify the lack of trust in a male teacher's nurturing ability. Most parents agree that it is important to have male teachers in ECE. However, they do not think that the number of men in ECE should be increased, as they still consider women the best educators for young children. The debate about male and female natural instincts and gender stereotypes, such as emotion versus logic, patience versus impatience, are commonly used as reasons for doubting men's nurturing skills. As Mama Fani and Mama Rosy describe:

Men have fewer (nurturing) skills compared to women; women have more feeling, so for women, it is easier to understand children. That is why women are more capable of approaching the children than men. It is because of her feeling; she can be more patient than men can (Mama Fani, 3 November 2014, Yogyakarta).

I trust female teachers more than [I do] male teachers. Maybe especially in the Indonesian education system, there are areas that still need to be improved, and it is not part of the male responsibility, maybe this is related to the domestic work that women and man have to do. I carry it out into the real life. Also, I don't know if the male teacher knows how to handle a child that is crying, how to handle a child that is having a tantrum or know how to handle a child who ... you know ... you never know (Mama Rosy, 24 October 2014, Yogyakarta).

Gender stereotypes are deeply entrenched in both of these comments. Keeping in mind that I interviewed parents whose children were taught by male teachers, even seeing men teaching young children and caring for them did not destabilise these stereotypical beliefs (Sargent 2005, 254). Even though most parents doubted male teachers' abilities to care for and nurture children, they accepted the involvement of men in ECE as long as the man was not the primary teacher. They were supportive only when the male teachers were working as assistants. As Mama Kiki notes:

Yeah ... it is okay that this school has male teachers as long as the large portion (of teaching) is by women (Mama Kiki, 30 October 2014, Yogyakarta).

This comment is consistent with the discourse of women's superiority in teaching discussed in Chapter 3, according to which men are seen as inferior to women in ECE. Similar perceptions of men as less capable than women in child care appear in other research on fatherhood discourses, both in Indonesian contexts (see Yulindrasari and McGregor 2011) and in Western countries (see Sunderland 2002; Howard, McBride and Hardy 2003). Parents were only happy with males as assistant teachers. Regarding ECE, the main responsibility of assistant teachers is child handling; this requires a high level of nurturance, care and patience. Child handling includes preparing children before learning activities, calming children, taking children to the toilet when required, handling children throwing tantrums, caring for sick children, and many other activities that help the main teachers' educational activities in the classroom.

The placement of men as assistant teachers thus reveals the paradox of the discourse about women as the main child educators in ECE. The basic assumption of the discourse is that women's nurturing instincts make them the best educators; thus, women are positioned as the primary teacher whose role is to deliver content in the learning process. In Fastrack Funschool, the assumption that males are not nurturing enough, not patient enough, and lack a maternal instinct prevented men from attaining higher positions, such as managerial roles away from children, such as was apparent in schools in Bandung and other studies in Western contexts (Hansot and Tyack 1988, 752; Sargent 2005, 256). Instead, Fastrack Funschool placed men in a secondary role, as the teacher's assistant with the main task of child handling, a task that requires the most nurturing, patience and care.

In addition to the lack of trust concerning male teacher's competencies, the combination of homophobic sentiments and child abuse anxiety, as discussed in previous chapters, has resulted in the perception of male teachers as a potential risk. My data show that the perception of this risk is embodied in the male body. A male teacher's sexuality becomes the focus of attention and caution. When I

asked Ghita whether it was necessary to invite more men to work in ECE, one response implied this sense of risk:

Hani: Do you recommend inviting more men to teach in ECE?

Ghita: Yes, with notes. The screening should be tight. Recently there have been [paedophilia] incidents involving men [she referred to the JIS case], so the screening should be very tight. We have to know their background, once we choose a wrong person; we would feel guilty for the rest of our lives (Ghita, 10 October 2014, Yogyakarta).

Fastrack Funschool focused more on the teacher's employment record over religiosity. In most Bandung schools, teacher screening involved religiosity. Religion is strongly believed by to be a shield protecting against perceived immoral behaviour, such as paedophilia and homosexuality. Tina, a female teacher from Al Hikmah kindergarten in Bandung commented, 'It is indeed worrying to recruit men to ECE [after the JIS case]. We need to find someone with good *iman* (faith and religiosity)'.

In addition to religiosity, being a 'real man' is also considered to guarantee normalcy and safety. The operating discourse around 'real men' reflects the logical fallacy of associating homosexuality with paedophilia. A common perception shared by most participants is that being married or having a girl friend supports identification as a 'real man'. Lila, a parent I interviewed in FCF kindergarten in Bandung said, 'I am pretty sure *Pak Asep* (a male teacher, in the school) is a good person and normal [sic], he has a girlfriend'.

Most respondents were more aware of the paedophilia issues after the JIS case. During the interviews with parents at Fastrack Funschool, and four other schools in Bandung, only one parent showed an obvious concern about paedophilia. This parent from Fastrack Funschool said:

When I found out that my daughter had a male teacher and a female teacher in the classroom, I asked her, 'how is Mr Wawan?' and my daughter said, 'he is okay!' But then I asked again, 'who accompanies

you to the toilet when you need to go to the toilet?' ... that is my concern. My daughter said that they went by themselves, and the teacher waited outside ... okay then. It is privacy; even her father never takes her to the toilet. So that is my only concern. One day Sisca had an upset stomach, I asked her, 'who helped you?' She said Mr Wisnu. 'Oh my goodness, so what did he do?' [laughing], she told me that Mr Wisnu wanted to put eucalyptus oil on her tummy, Mr Wisnu was only helping to put the oil on her palm, Sisca did it [rub the oil on her tummy] to herself ... okay, then it's fine (Mama Rosy, 24 October 2014, Yogyakarta).

Mama Rosy's concern, however, was not shared by other parents in this study. Most parents did not worry that sexual abuse would happen to their children while at school. From my observation, the layout of every school in this study was considerably open and locating the toilets close to the parents' waiting area may have contributed to parents' sense of safety. In Bandung schools, kindergarten classes run for only three hours. The short time means that parents can wait at school while the classes run and watch their children easily.

Although the issue of paedophilia was not highlighted, Fastrack Funschool was very responsive to this issue. The managing director who was also the owner, Erman, called all male teachers and staff for a special meeting immediately after the JIS case became public. In addition, Fastrack Funschool also reaffirmed their care policy. This policy states that neither male nor female teachers can initiate physical touching, such as hugging and kissing, with children. In practice, I had observed that hugging and kissing were unavoidable; most of the time, children had initiated it. Teachers were only allowed to accompany children to the toilet door. Teachers encouraged the children to clean themselves and avoided touching the children's genital and anal areas. Fastrack Funschool also has the PANTS rule, which was introduced and reinforced to the children. PANTS is an acronym: 'P' is for private is private, no one can touch your vagina and penis and other private parts except yourself; 'A' is for always remember that your body belongs to you; 'N' is for no means no; 'T' is for telling others about any secret that upsets you;

‘S’ is for someone will help you. With this policy, parental concerns about the risk of male teachers have been managed.

## **Conclusion**

Employing several male teachers is a special characteristic of Fastrack Funschool. The directors are committed to providing an ECE experience that serves Indonesia’s philosophy of unity in diversity: *Bhineka Tunggal Ika*. Therefore, Fastrack Funschool is committed to providing a diverse and democratic school environment, including gender diversity. This is their main reason for employing men as teachers, to reflect society outside the school. The owners’ understanding of gender as a social construction, and that feminine and masculine characteristics can be embodied by both males and females, is restricted by dominant social perceptions of gender categories that replicate traditional gender boundaries. My data reveal that a combination of awareness concerning gender equity (in terms of giving men more opportunities to work in ECE) and a willingness to provide diverse representations of gender in ECE, along with a more conventional agenda of placing men in ECE, promotes masculine role models, especially for boys who lack the so-called ‘masculine’ characteristics. The benefits of having male teachers are also connected to stereotypical characteristics attached to sexual differences. The potential of male teachers to be transformers of gender relations, as suggested by key scholars such as Warin (2006), Sumsion (1999a, b, 2000a, c) and Murray (1996) is likely to be inhibited by the social perceptions and expectations that male teachers act and perform according to the script of conventional gender ideology.

This chapter has discussed how parents, female colleagues and school boards perceived men teaching in ECE. Two contradictory points emerged from this analysis. Male teachers are perceived as advantageous in ECE; they provide a gender balance at school and operate as male role models. The ECE community expects male teachers perform like a protective father to complete the school. Conversely, male teachers are also viewed as a risk; therefore, employing them requires special caution, especially in terms of their sexuality. The next chapter

analyses male teachers' narratives about their experiences teaching in ECE settings.

## **Chapter 5: ‘I am Macho!’ Male Teachers’ Negotiating Masculinities**

I love my job so much. If people think that this job is not macho enough, I will prove to them that it is macho. I am here (teaching young children), and I am still macho (Budi, 7 October 2014, Yogyakarta).

The strong association between ECE and femininity creates potential homosexual suspicion of men who teach in ECE, as illustrated by Retno’s comments discussed in Chapter 3. Expectations arise that these teachers can demonstrate they are real men, as described in Chapter 4. The suspicions encourage male teachers to prove their masculinity, as exemplified by the quotation above.

This chapter provides an analysis how male teachers process the social expectations, doubts and suspicions they experience and how they view and give meaning to their non-traditional occupations. To understand how male teachers negotiate their masculine identity in a female-dominated field, I interviewed eight male teachers: four (Budi, Wawan, Putra and Wisnu) working as assistant teachers in Fastrack Funschool, and four (Asep, Awan, Fikri, and Handi) working in four different Bandung kindergartens. I analysed information about the decision-making processes that had led to ECE employment, gender-related obstacles, the benefits of working in ECE and their perception of child handling and teaching practices. I will only focus on teachers from Fastrack Funschool in this and the next chapter, as the male teachers in Bandung had become school principals by the time of the fieldwork and were no longer actively teaching children. In this chapter, the analysis will focus on active male teachers. Fastrack Funschool is also unique in its progressive view about gender, but as discussed in Chapter 4, the school community (parents and female colleagues) still perceives and expect male teachers to act in adherence to hegemonic constructions of masculinity, such as the *bapak yang mengayomi* (the protecting father).

In this chapter, I focus on two areas: gender- and work-related challenges and the coping strategies used to address them. The four teachers I focus on here—Budi,

Wawan, Putra and Wisnu—encountered three main challenges while working as assistant teachers at Fastrack Funschool: 1) salary, 2) conflict with female colleagues, and 3) the social stigma and expectations related to their maleness. Their ways of coping with the challenges were unique. Within this uniqueness, similarities existed that can be categorised into two major themes: negotiating masculinities and re-gendering ECE. Taking insight from Lupton (2000), I use the term ‘negotiating masculinities’ to mean any attempt to adjust their masculinities to reflect the characteristics of ECE by reconstructing both ECE and their masculinities. ‘Re-gendering ECE’ refers to any attempt to highlight their contributions, as males, to ECE. Throughout this chapter, I argue that in their attempts to maintain their masculinities, most male teachers advocate the dominant discourse of masculinity and gender essentialism, while simultaneously challenging it through the discourse of love and care.

The challenges and coping strategies I outline are not unique to men in this study. In Western contexts, common challenges faced by men who work in female-dominated work include restrictions on performing particular masculine roles, feminisation and stigmatisation (see Lupton 2000; Pringle 1993; Korek et al. 2014). Lupton categorises two strategies his respondents use to cope with the challenges: ‘reconstructing the occupation’ and ‘renegotiating masculinity’ (Lupton 2000, S42–S44).<sup>52</sup> First, the men tried to reconstruct their occupations by disconnecting feminine associations from their roles (Pringle 1993, 138–139).<sup>53</sup> Second, they also tried to renegotiate their masculinities such that they would be more acceptable; for example, by minimising overtly masculine behaviour and participating in conversations related to women’s issues (Lupton 2000, S42–S44).

I begin this chapter with each male teacher’s life history, offering an overview of their journey to becoming an ECE teacher. I highlight the similarities and contrasts in their life histories and then categorise these into themes based on the

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<sup>52</sup> Lupton (2000) studied men who work or have studied to work in female-dominated occupations in the north-west of England in the late 1990’s: administrative and clerical staff, human resource management students, pre-service primary school teachers, and pre-service librarians.

<sup>53</sup> Pringle (1993, 138–139) in his study on men who did secretarial work in Australia, found that the men distanced themselves from femininity by re-labelling themselves as administrative assistants. They would also avoid doing feminine associated tasks such as typing and emphasised the masculine aspects of the job due to a fear of destabilising their masculinity.

strategies used to maintain their masculinity. I elaborate on both the challenges and coping strategies in each theme. In contrast to Lupton (2000), who saw the process of ‘reconstructing occupation’ as distinct from ‘renegotiating masculinity’ (S38–S44), I view both strategies as related and occurring simultaneously. In every attempt to reconstruct ECE, these men are also negotiating their masculinities.

### **Male Teachers’ Life Histories**

Each of the male teachers had different reasons behind their decision to work as a kindergarten teacher. Budi and Putra had a clear idea of what they wanted to do as ECE teachers; they chose to teach in kindergarten because of their idealism. By contrast, Wisnu and Wawan chose to work as kindergarten teachers because they needed a stable job, and Fastrack Funschool was the best option at that time. Despite these differences, they all worked—albeit in varying ways—to renegotiate their masculinity with their ECE roles.

#### **Budi**

I was waiting in the principal guest room on Level 1 before my interview with Budi. Ghita called him and he approached me with a warm smile; we shook hands. His grip was strong, and I could see the enthusiasm in his eyes. He asked me where I would like to have the interview. ‘Anywhere that is most convenient for you’, I said. Then he led me to an open room close to reception on the ground level: a room where they usually run the infant program. The room had no chair, only some wooden cubes of various sizes, a small trampoline and a toy rack. He asked me how I would be comfortable. He moved one of the cubes, put it in front of me, and said, ‘in case you need a table, Miss’. We sat on the carpet. Budi sat the way men usually sit in Javanese society, cross-legged. Then he asked me what he could do to help me. I explained and reminded him of the information given in the plain language statement about my research, which I had already sent. Then he agreed to the interview and filled out the consent form. Instantly, I felt comfortable talking with Budi, as he was quite open and very friendly. He treated me like a guest. Throughout the interview, Budi frequently used gestures while

talking. He was also very expressive, modifying his facial expression and imitating a child's expression when he gave an example of how a child had expressed or done something.

Budi is in his mid-30s. He is married with one daughter. He has a degree in philosophy from the most prestigious university in Yogyakarta. Budi told me about his decision to teach in a kindergarten. Budi's first experience of teaching young children was a result of his curiosity about the lack of men in ECE:

I only satisfied my curiosity; why were there no men teaching young children? When I did my student community service, I decided to teach in a local ECE.<sup>54</sup> Yes! I got the stigma that it is not a 'macho' job, a man should not do that, it is only for women. And some parents were surprised when there was a man (me) teaching in ECE; they thought I was only trying it out, not seriously wanting to be a kindergarten teacher (Budi, 7 October 2014, Yogyakarta).

His first experience did not lead him directly to ECE teaching. After graduation, he worked as a human resource development officer in a small private company. After three months there, he resigned. He felt he did not belong there, as the work was misaligned with his values:

They asked me to recruit salespeople to work around Yogyakarta marketing products from door to door. I knew their product[s] were not good. I felt like I was deceiving people asking them to sell bad products and promising bonuses that were not achievable. So I quit (Budi, 7 October 2014, Yogyakarta).

Budi's father was a university lecturer, and based on his first experience of teaching young children, his passion for ECE continued. Following his passion, Budi worked at Bambini Montessori, an ECE centre, for one year. In 2009, he left Bambini and began a maths course for children at his house. Then in 2010, he

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<sup>54</sup> Student community service (SCS) is a curriculum requirement for undergraduate study. During their SCS, students are posted in villages and are obliged to undertake some community development activities. The activities range from education, economy and infrastructure.

volunteered to teach child victims of the Merapi eruptions and joined Fastrack Funschool in 2011. He explained enthusiastically that he learned many lessons from children:

There is a type of wisdom in children's lives, which I think should be preserved for adulthood. Firstly is their curiosity, and then is their bravery. Children are genuine, they always think positively, and forgive easily. Adults don't forgive easily. I would like to know whether this wisdom can be applied to an adult's life (Budi, 7 October 2014, Yogyakarta).

Budi reworks hegemonic masculinity in a variety of ways. First, in his life narrative he views his masculinity as not tied to wealth and social status; instead, it centres on contributing value to society. Second, his teaching practice combines both masculine and feminine qualities. He presents himself as the guardian of masculinity in boys, but at the same time promotes *hati*<sup>55</sup> (heart/emotions), which are normally despised as a stereotypical sign of weakness or femininity (Seidler 1997, 120).

### **Wawan**

Wawan was born in 1984. He is married with a son (aged 19 months at the time of the interview). He has a diploma in English education. The first time I saw him was in his class when I was about to begin my five days of classroom observation. My first impression was that most Indonesians would perceive him as masculine—muscular, with a military hairstyle, wearing masculine apparel such as fieldwork boots, a wooden wristband and a big sporty watch. The school principal once told me, 'we have *yang laki banget* (a very masculine man) teaching here'. I guessed Wawan was this person.

He had sharp eyes that gave an unfriendly impression, and he did not talk much. I felt a little bit intimidated by this. The main teacher welcomed me and asked me

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<sup>55</sup> *Hati* is an Indonesian word; literally, it means liver. However, in daily conversation *hati* often refers to 'heart'; not the organ, but rather feelings, emotions, conscience, inner voice and moral sense.

to find a comfortable place to sit. I sat in one corner of the room and set up my camera. Wawan was sitting on a child-sized chair facing his laptop, doing something, perhaps something for the class. He just smiled at me. I tried to start a comfortable conversation with him when I had a chance, so by the time of the interview, he would be more familiar with me. He was friendly, but approaching him was not as easy as approaching Budi. I observed his class for three days before interviewing him; this gave us time to become familiar with each other. On the day of the interview, everything went well. The interview was at three o'clock in the afternoon when the school was not as crowded as before noon. Wawan chose the interview location, an open space in the backyard corner. This was close to a motorbike parking lot and a small room usually used by the general male staff to rest, have a cup of coffee, chat and smoke cigarettes. I felt the space he chose was quite masculine, in the open air and free of the school's restrictions. He said to me, 'Is it okay if we do it outside? So I can smoke?' I did not mind, and he then provided a child-sized chair for me to sit on. He sat on another small chair similar to mine. I handed him the consent form and explained why I wanted to interview him. Then I started with my first question about his background.



**Figure 5.1: The area where I interviewed Wawan and area where Wawan, Putra, and other male staff usually rested, smoked and drank coffee.**

I know that he had started to work at Fastrack Funschool in June 2013 without any teaching experience, let alone any experience in teaching young children. Before working with Fastrack Funschool, he had worked on a Dutch-American cruise ship as a waiter for five years. This work environment was male-dominated and required him to be away from his family in Indonesia. He used to sail for ten months and only be at home for three to four months before sailing again. He is the oldest son of the family; he is also the provider of the family, which consists of his mother, father, sister, wife and a son. He worked on the cruise ship to pay his sister's education fees and provide for his family.

In early 2013, his father passed away. Then in March 2013, he decided to stop working on the cruise ship and came home; as his father had passed away, his family needed him to be home. As the oldest son, he was worried about leaving his mother and his pregnant wife alone without a man at home. Then in March 2013, he decided to find a job in Yogyakarta, the city where his family lived. He consulted his wife about what type of job he should seek. His wife wanted him to work in the education sector. From the many schools he applied to, Fastrack Funschool was the best option. It was part of the education sector, he would receive a moderate salary, and the school would allow him to work and undertake a part-time university degree. I was curious about if he had deliberately aimed to work in a kindergarten. He said, 'I was looking for a job in the education sector, it did not have to be a kindergarten, but Fastrack was the best option'.

Throughout the interview, Wawan kept referring to teaching in ECE as a *pekerjaan*/occupation, and reiterating that working in ECE fulfilled his role as the family provider. When I asked how his friends from his previous male-dominated occupation would react to his new employment, he said defensively, 'I am still a man, Miss!' He strengthened this statement by indicating he had received some negative comments about his job from neighbours and relatives; however, they stopped questioning him when he explained he worked in an upper middle-class kindergarten. Fastrack Funschool has a large building. It is more established than most kindergartens in Yogyakarta. As discussed in Chapter 1, Fastrack Funschool is an upper middle-class school with relatively higher tuition fees compared to

other schools in Yogyakarta. Working in a large school kept his prestige intact and muted the question of whether his job was sufficient to provide a family.

This pragmatic attitude epitomises Wawan's approach to his work. He considered his role as that of the provider; he saw teaching children as being the same as any other challenging occupation. He claimed to enjoy working with children. He even said that the work was easy. He said the most difficult thing was interacting with female teachers, which he thought of as a gender issue. He thought that female teachers interfered too much with other people's business and liked to gossip. To overcome this problem, he chose to avoid intense interactions with female teachers. He would find a private space where he could smoke and drink coffee. Unlike in Australia drinking coffee and smoking is gendered social practice in Indonesia. For men, smoking cigarettes is associated with machismo, bravery and self-confidence (see Chapter 2), whereas women who smoke cigarettes are stigmatised as improper, impolite and 'naughty' (Ng, Weinehall and Ohman 2007, 798–799). It is common to drink coffee when smoking. Culturally, when men gather, coffee and cigarettes are always served (Ng, Weinehall and Ohman 2007, 798). Wawan explains it this way:

Working with children is very new to me; I have never been close to children. I've always been in an adult environment. The adaptation process was easy but also difficult. Getting along with the kids was easy, but with my [female] colleagues ... that was tricky. Some of the senior teachers felt they were senior, and were very critical but refused to be criticised. They are all women; men (senior teachers) are not like that. Women and men's characters are indeed different. Women are so sensitive, moody and get offended very easily. This creates conflicts. Men are more indifferent (than women) are, they don't mind other people's business and don't take anything personally. What is needed in this kind of environment (female majority) is *ndablege* (Javanese word for indifference). My strategy is keeping my distance from them. I never

hang around in the teachers' room; I go out and find a *warung burjo*<sup>56</sup> (a small traditional café near the school) where I can smoke and have a cup of coffee (during the break) (Wawan, 14 October 2014, Yogyakarta).

A *warung burjo* is a traditional café where the working class or young men on restricted budgets congregate (Fig. 5.2). These cafes are not restricted to men, but most customers are male. Wawan used this spatial separation to highlight his masculinity.



**Figure 5.2: *Warung Burjo*, where Wawan would take his breaks**

Workplaces consist of multiple, distinctive and differentiated spaces where gender identities are negotiated (Halford and Leonard 2006, 12), and people tend to find situations that fit their personality (Korek et al. 2014, 249). Wawan's choice of avoiding the space where most female teachers interacted during a break highlights his masculine identity by separating himself from women's space.

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<sup>56</sup> *Warung Burjo* is a small traditional café selling mung bean soup, instant noodles and many traditional snacks and beverages. They sell cheap food and most are open 24 hours a day.

Wawan claimed that every male teacher in the school had his own space and unlike female teachers, male teachers did not need to do things together all the time. This is a common stereotypical perception of relationships within each gender. Women in Indonesia are stereotyped as dependent on each other, always doing things together, in groups or at least as a couple. In contrast, men are more independent. Wawan said, 'Sometimes Putra and I smoke together here (in the space where I interviewed him), but we don't hang around. We do our own business. Men don't hang around'.

Wawan made a clear distinction between women and men from an essentialist perspective. For him, most workplace conflicts derived from gender differences in communication and interactions. Wawan's account of gendered interactions and space resonates with Deneen's (2011, 199) findings. In his study about male teachers in primary and secondary schools in the US, he found a respondent who felt removed from faculty room discussions. The difference is that Deneen's respondent felt excluded from the discussion, whereas Wawan excluded himself from the interaction. In Deneen's explanation, his respondent was excluded, as his female colleagues did not want him to hear what they were discussing because he was a man. Wawan positioned himself as a masculine man who did not want to be involved in 'feminine gossiping'. A negotiation of space became his strategy to minimise interaction.

In my analysis below and in Chapter 6, I will illustrate how Wawan highlights his masculinity by constantly restating the idea of hegemonic masculinity in his narrative and his performance. At the same time, Wawan also admits that being a kindergarten teacher has changed him; he is now more sensitive to children's needs, and he feels he has become a more caring and patient person.

### **Wisnu**

Ghita had warned me that Wisnu was very introverted. When I first observed him during morning activities for the whole school, I did not see him doing as much work as other male teachers. He seemed a little bit awkward singing and moving his body to the music. In class, it was obvious that most of the children liked

Wisnu. They leaned on him, sat on his lap and lay their heads on his lap without any hesitation. He seemed to handle the children patiently; they often teased him, as he was not strict at all.

Wisnu was 25 years old and was the youngest male teacher at Fastrack Funschool. He has a bachelor's degree in international relations from a private university in Yogyakarta. He was originally from Sumbawa, West Nusa Tenggara province. After his graduation in 2013, he returned to Sumbawa hoping to become a lecturer at a new university there. However, after waiting for several months, this opportunity did not eventuate, so he returned to Yogyakarta looking for employment. However, he did not feel he was ready for work in a large company, due to his lack of communication and public speaking skills. He thought he needed to learn more about communicating and speaking in front of other people. Teaching in a kindergarten was his first step in this process. Wisnu considers children less judgemental and more sincere than adults. As he said:

I did not intend to be a teacher. What was in my mind after graduation was to work in another field (not education). But then I thought, I still have a lot to improve. My communication skills [needed improvement]. I often feel nervous when I have to talk in front of many people. I am always nervous when I have to do a presentation in the class. I realised that I have to learn step-by-step, start from little things to bigger ones. I felt that I didn't have enough courage to speak my mind ... well, not enough for a job in a big company. I never had a problem being heard, I was once the chair of a student organisation, but I still felt that it was not enough. I did not know why I was interested in working at Fastrack Funschool, but I thought I could learn from children. Communicating with children is easier and loose because they are sincere ... adults are full of hypocrisy (Wisnu, 15 October 2014).

Wisnu's encounter with a male kindergarten teacher in his childhood gave him some familiarity with men teaching young children and destabilised for him the maternalism discourse present in ECE. He did not feel awkward at all working in a kindergarten. He said, 'Maybe one of the reasons I teach in kindergarten without

hesitation is because I had a male teacher when I was a kinder. And all my brothers had a male teacher as well'. Wisnu believed that caring ability was genderless. He said, 'both women and men have the ability take care of children and love them. It is innate'. Wisnu's memories of his male teacher at kindergarten support his view that this role does not threaten his identity as a man. His experience created an awareness that his involvement in ECE could change children's—especially boy's—perceptions of kindergarten teachers. In turn, this could then alter the gender stereotypes attached to the profession; as Warin (2014) argues, the presence of male teachers in ECE settings could destabilise existing professional gender stereotypes and further could disrupt dominant gender relation patterns in society. However, this will depend on how male teachers perform their gender within the work environment.

Throughout this chapter and chapter 6, we will see that Wisnu challenges gender stereotypes in kindergarten. He does not highlight the differences between male and female teachers as being inherent to sexed bodies. I draw on his responses primarily to discuss teaching skills and experience, rather than gender.

### **Putra**

Putra was the last male teacher I interviewed at Fastrack Funschool. Before the interview, I saw him several times during the mixed class activities in the morning. My first impression of Putra was that he was fun and energetic. Even though I could see the passion of teaching in all teachers, I perceived Budi as being more in tune with the children's world, as he blended with the children, was sometimes willing to copy their behaviour, and did not hesitate to play with children the as their friend not as an adult friend. As I had spent almost one month in Fastrack Funschool at the time I interviewed Putra, I was already familiar with the school, and waited for Putra at the reception area instead of in the principal's guest room. Putra arrived and asked where I would like to conduct the interview. He suggested we go outside to the corner of the backyard, close to the motorbike parking area, the same location where I had interviewed Wawan.

When I interviewed him, Putra was in his late 20s, married and expecting a baby boy. He has a degree in maths education from a private university in Yogyakarta. He chose this major at his parents' insistence; his father also worked in the education sector. He never dreamed of becoming a teacher, but his education led him to the teaching profession. After graduation, he did not search for a teaching job. He tried to work in a finance company with the idea of obtaining a high salary:

Once I worked in a finance company, I was money oriented. So I became a [member of the] marketing staff. I got clients, got bonuses, but ... I did not feel good. Well, I was doing a sin. Asking people to buy something and take a certain percentage of profit from them for myself. I thought I had to find a better job, a more honourable job. I thought I have to be a teacher (Putra, 24 October 2014, Yogyakarta).

After feeling uncomfortable working in the finance sector, in 2010 and 2011, he taught at an elementary school in Jakarta. He was promoted to school supervisor, but he decided to go back to Yogyakarta and teach in kindergarten; he considers that a child's early years are the perfect time to build a positive character. Similar to Budi, Putra perceived teaching as an honourable job.

Before teaching at Fastrack Funschool, Putra worked in an internationally franchised kindergarten, but this role only lasted for one year, as he did not agree with the school's commercialised nature. He joined Fastrack Funschool in February 2014.

Putra has an interesting past that in Indonesian society would generally be perceived as the antithesis of what characterises 'a good teacher'. As he describes:

I was a punk; my body was full of tattoos. I had a lot of piercing. My hair was a Mohawk hairstyle. I lived on the street. I played hard-rock music. I was a drummer. People asked me how it was possible someone like me could teach young children. I wanted to prove them that I could (Putra, 24 October 2014, Yogyakarta).

Many people around him questioned his decision to teach in the ECE sector due to his non-normative past, as well as his identity as a man. When I asked why he chose to teach in kindergarten, Putra's answer was straightforward:

I have personal reasons for working as a kindergarten teacher. I know how society thinks about men who work as a kindergarten teacher. I want to change the image that a man cannot be a kindergarten teacher. I also want to change my bad image because of my not so good past. So people doubted me because I am a man and even worse a man with a bad past. Someone even thought that I was desperate just because I work in ECE (Putra, 24 October 2014, Yogyakarta).

Putra's comments reflect his opinion about ECE and his awareness that society perceives teaching in ECE as a women's job and as appropriate for a person of good moral character. Throughout this chapter and Chapter 6, we will see how Putra reconstructed masculinity by challenging the provider identity, at the same time reconstructing ECE to match his sense of masculinity.

### **Negotiating Masculinities**

Budi, Wawan, Wisnu and Putra varied in the ways they negotiated their masculinity. Each had a unique way of defining their masculinities and their role in the workplace. Negotiations took place in relation to their attempts to cope with the gender and work challenges they encountered. As explained earlier, the strategies Lupton (2000) has described (of reconstructing the workplace and masculinities) will be used in this chapter. My data show that each male teacher used different strategies to deal with the same issue.

Studies about gender minorities in occupations associated with one gender reveal that members of the minority often attempt to maintain and redefine their gender identity (Allan 1993, 115; Korek et al. 2014, 244). As members of the gender minority in ECE, all male teachers in this study tried to maintain their gender identity by redefining the job and their role in the workplace. First, instead of seeing their work as a job, they considered it a calling and education and as a

medium of learning. Second, they re-gendered ECE by emphasising their contributions to ECE through the discourse of gender balance and children's gender identity development. Within each of their attempts to reconstruct their work, they simultaneously negotiated versions of masculinities.

### **Negotiating the Provider Identity**

As discussed in previous chapters, the discourse of man as the provider is still strong. A man's salary is inevitably important in the construction of Indonesian masculine identity. The first and foremost challenge faced concerned questions about the men's ability to provide. This section discusses how male teachers negotiate the provider masculinity to address this question. Putra, Budi, Wisnu and Wawan were aware of this issue. Wisnu's comment below represents my respondents' awareness this issue:

It is difficult unless he has an educator's soul. Many more people are materialistic now, especially men. Men's position as the head of the family requires them to fulfil the family's need. Being a kindergarten teacher holds a lack of prestige (for men). Most people are very money oriented (Wisnu, 15 October 2014, Yogyakarta).

All of my respondents agreed that income was the top factor that hindered men from working in ECE. Two of my respondents received resistance from their closest confidants because of this. Budi was rejected by his girlfriend. He said, 'she thought this job was not macho and not financially promising'. Putra also experienced resistance from his parents, who made assumptions about the low income:

My mother was disappointed in me because I chose to come back to Yogyakarta and teach in a kindergarten. My parents worried about my income, would it be enough? Would I be able to save a little bit? Then I said ... yeah, we will see ... I want to be an educator not only teacher (Putra, 24 October 2014, Yogyakarta).

Budi's girlfriend and Putra's parents' concerns about income are typical. As I explained in Chapter 3, teachers in Indonesia receive very low pay, and ECE teachers receive the lowest amount. The average salary for teachers is only AUD94.88 per month; the standard minimum cost of living in Indonesia is higher than that.

The low economic status of teachers is not specific to Indonesia; in fact, this is probably an issue for male teachers worldwide. Skelton's study (2002, 82) in England found that most in-training female teachers thought that men hesitated to become teachers due to expectations that they would be the provider. Browne (2004, 150) argued that increasing teacher salaries, especially for those in ECE, is important to improve the profession's status and to eliminate the perception that educating young children was a form of child minding.

Wisnu and Wawan agreed with Browne's claim that improving salaries would attract men to teach in ECE. Wisnu and Wawan subscribed to the idea of men as providers. They viewed their work in ECE as part of their way to fulfil the role of a provider. Wawan even said that he worked at Fastrack Funschool mostly for financial reasons:

Now, I stay in Fastrack Funschool because of the financial reason; I am a man, and I have to work for my family and Fastrack Funschool gives me a chance to develop myself outside the school. Fastrack Funschool allows me also to do my bachelor degree (Wawan, 14 October 2014, Yogyakarta).

Wisnu said Fastrack Funschool looked convincing and reliable compared to other schools, so he applied:

Once I applied to a *Bimbel* (an academic learning course), but it was not that good. I doubted the company; there was no company label, the interviewer was smoking, not good. So I thought I have to be more careful. I found Fastrack Funschool's vacancy announcement then I searched the internet and checked their website. Well, this school looked

good, so I applied. Fastrack Funschool uses English as its instructional language, so I thought I could practice and improve my English here too (Wisnu, 15 October 2014, Yogyakarta).

In their statements, Wisnu and Wawan reconstruct ECE as an occupation. They do not see ECE centres as places to educate children but as workplaces. They emphasise the masculine aspect of working in ECE; that is, the income earned. Constructing ECE as having financial benefits is possible for them as they work for Fastrack Funschool, a school that is quite large and professionally managed, with a salary above the average for Indonesian ECE teachers, especially in Yogyakarta. As an upper middle-class school, Fastrack Funschool can pay the minimum standard wage for its teachers; this is above the average of ECE teacher salaries in Indonesia. (Chapter 3 explains ECE teacher salaries in Indonesia.) Not all ECE centres are as professionally managed as is Fastrack Funschool. The majority of ECEs struggle to pay teacher salaries. At Fastrack Funschool, a teacher's salary ranges from AUD130 to 250 a week or month, which is higher than average for kindergartens in Yogyakarta and Indonesia. Budi and Putra admitted that their salaries were enough to fulfil their modest lifestyles. Budi stressed the benefits of working at Fastrack Funschool; he even felt lucky:

Whether we earn enough or not, it depends on us. As long as we think it is enough, then it is enough. I am lucky, here in FF, the owner thinks about teachers' welfare thoroughly and wisely. We get extra hour money. When a parent is late picking up the kid, the late fee is given to the teacher; it is fair. The owner cares about us (Budi, 7 October 2014, Yogyakarta).

Although they felt lucky to work at Fastrack Funschool, these men did not view ECE as a place to fulfil their breadwinning roles. Instead, they reconstructed breadwinning masculinity as heroic masculinity by emphasising their work as a dedication to the nation, a point I return to in the next section. Putra tried to reconstruct masculinity by excluding the provider identity from masculinity markers and including an educator identity in his version of masculinity:

Personally, I do not agree that a husband is the sole provider; I know that a man should be responsible for the family. Now we have to share everything. Many women also work. If a man only thinks about earning money, then who is going to educate the boys? Men should also be the educator of their children. We don't live only for money (Putra, 24 October 2014, Yogyakarta).

As argued in Chapter 3, child education in Indonesia is strongly identified with women. In the above comment, Putra was trying to renegotiate his provider identity by saying 'we have to share everything'; 'If a man only think about earning money, then who is going to educate the boys?' Two messages are apparent here. First, he promotes a shift from the man as provider model to a dual-earner model (Hanlon 2012, 127). However, remembering that he works from seven in the morning until five o'clock in the afternoon, five days a week, his working hours were no different to those of a typical provider father in Yogyakarta. His narrative is focused on maintaining his masculinity based on his perception that education and care-related work are not 'breadwinning'. He also implies that according to 'traditional' (his word) masculinity, his job as an educator was not masculine. In the next section, I discuss how he defended his masculinity by criticising men's provider role while undertaking this role by educating children in the public sphere. Instead of defining his work as earning, he defined his work as a 'calling' and 'learning.' Second, Putra's question, 'who will educate the boys?' highlights what a male teacher has to offer that cannot be fulfilled by female teachers, especially in relation to the feminisation of boy's education, which I will discuss later in this chapter.

Thus, here we can see that two types of strategies are used to negotiate the provider identity. Wawan and Wisnu held on to a culturally dominant masculinity—the provider role—but reconstructed their employment in ECE as earning or breadwinning. Wawan tried to eliminate the dichotomy of working and educating by implying that educating was also 'working' as long as it was conducted in the public sphere and the worker received proper remuneration. In contrast, Budi and Putra challenged the construction of men as providers; they

focused less on financial income and reconstructed their masculinities as heroic by stressing that educating children was a service to the nation, which will be discussed further in the following section.

### **Negotiating Heroic Masculinity**

Putra and Budi used religious discourse to cope with the challenges to their provider identity. Putra and Budi argued that financial matters were not a priority. They emphasised that teaching was an honourable occupation. They had a specific purpose and claimed they did not demand any economic benefit other than the meaning of purpose and *kepuasan bathin*/inner satisfaction. Putra criticised the role of provider (as explained in the previous section). Their spirituality stabilised any insecurities about their ability to provide. They diverted their provider role to God, whom they believed would provide for them, so they did not have to worry too much about money:

I also learned from my parents that when I have goodwill, there will always be a way; God has arranged everything for us. If my intentions working here are good, '*Tuhan akan mencukupkan*' [God will fulfil our needs]. And it is true! I feel my needs are met (Budi, 7 October 2014, Yogyakarta).

There are many men in the educational sector, not as teachers, but supervisors and school principals. The reason [given] for not being a teacher is usually due to the low salaries. This is my concern; I am afraid that men who work in ECE will think that the salary is not enough, and one by one they will give up just because of this financial reason. We are not going to die just because of money; we will live, God will provide for us (Putra, 24 October 2014, Yogyakarta).

The religious discourse used by Putra and Budi aligns with Javanese philosophy, which prioritises spirituality over materiality. They believed that teaching young children was a calling/*panggilan*. *Panggilan* (a calling) implies the heroic values of devotion and dedication to the nation, God and the society. As discussed in

Chapter 2, heroism plays an important role in the construction of hegemonic masculinity in Indonesia. Budi and Putra used the discourse of heroic masculinity to counter homosexual stigma. When I asked Budi about how he would respond to people's assumption that teaching young children was neither manly nor financially promising, he answered:

That presumption will go away anyway, because this is my *panggilan*/calling to teach children. I love my job so much. If people think that this job is not *macho* enough, I will prove to them that it is macho. I am here (teaching young children), and I am still macho. When people asked me why I chose this job, I told them that this is my calling, and they understood. Working in ECE and teaching children is my calling; I am totally for it (Budi, 7 October 2014, Yogyakarta).

Putra said something similar:

When I was about to work in ECE, I was afraid that people would brand me as less masculine. I am actually quite sensitive to feminine men. I don't like them. I avoid friends who have those characteristics. But yes this is my calling, educating children. So I don't care anymore what people are going to say about me. And it is only people who don't know me enough who think like that. My close friends never question me [about] that (Putra, 24 October 2014, Yogyakarta).

Both comments reflect a certain anxiety about the stigma of homosexuality, which men risk when working in a female-dominated field. Putra was open about his fear, and although Budi did not explicitly say he was worried, he felt he had to prove he was still a 'macho' man. According to Freudian psychoanalytic theory, a man will always fear not being manly enough (Kimmel 1994, 127). To conceal this fear, a man must prove his masculinity constantly. Through their comments, Putra and Budi tried to convince me (and people in general who asked the same question) that they were masculine enough, claiming the job was a calling. Putra's comment about how he used to avoid friends with feminine characteristics confirms his fear of femininity in men.

Connecting the fear of unmanliness and the concept of work as a calling offered a way to negotiate their masculine identities in relation to their work as ECE teachers. As both men said, people did not ask about their gender identity once they said their ECE work was a calling. Defining their work as a calling was socially acceptable, aligning with the archetype of Javanese hegemonic masculinity (see Chapter 2), which views proximity to God and dedication as more honourable than wealth (Bertrand 2015, 252–253).

In their attempt to reconstruct working in ECE as a calling, Putra and Budi constructed their masculinities as heroic, which is an important part of Indonesian hegemonic masculinity. In the context of work, the notion of a calling intersects with heroism, combining three aspects. These aspects are 1) the notion of an external summons that implies a higher external power, such as a family legacy, God/religiosity, and the needs of society or a nation, 2) work that aligns with a sense of purpose in life and 3) a pro-social motivation in which work performs a greater good in helping others (Dik and Duffy 2009, 429). Both ‘calling’ and heroism encompass doing something unselfishly for the greater good. The reasons for involvement in ECE incorporate ‘heroism’, which is culturally ascribed to men and is a component of socially desired masculinity (Becker and Eagly 2004, 175; Rankin and Eagly 2008, 414).

Heroism, in the context of Budi’s and Putra’s comments, corresponds to heroism based on nobility of purpose (Alvis 1995, 79), teaching children as a dedication to the nation. As discussed in Chapter 2, dedication to the nation is an important characteristic of Indonesian hegemonic masculinity. Being a teacher is one way of doing something for the nation. Teachers in Indonesia have long been presented as heroes and the profession as honourable. However, this perception does not make the teaching profession popular among young generations, as wealth and material wellbeing remain the measure of success. Only recently, after the government established a new policy to improve the condition of teachers in 2008, has the teaching profession become more popular. However, this policy has not improved the status of ECE teachers in the private sector (such as Fastrack Funschool).

Budi and Putra's comments confirm the three characteristics of a calling. They did not consider their calling as coming from God. They claimed it was a calling from Indonesia (the nation). As Budi put it:

I am so concerned by many Indonesians who use their intelligence to exploit other people just to become rich. I would say 'they have a brain but no heart'. I have a dream to be able to contribute to Indonesian development by the thing that is very close to me, the world of children. To be honest, here, parents expect us to teach reading and counting a lot, very academic [work]. That is only 30% of my mission. I would rather teach them about honesty and integrity. I would also teach them about how to listen to their heart, understanding their feelings and others, treating others the way they want to be treated. More specifically, they need to learn about love and care. Compassion is the key to conscience, to be brave enough to defend humanity, to treat others respectfully. That's what they need for the future (Budi, 7 October 2014, Yogyakarta).

Putra also had a specific purpose as a teacher of young children:

I wanted to teach in a primary school because I thought that it is the first formal school that children [will attend]. I wanted to teach children who were as young as possible. Then I saw ECE centres growing everywhere. So I changed my mind, I wanted to teach in kindergarten. I wanted to do something to change education in Indonesia. Indonesian education just doesn't work. It puts too much emphasis on marks and grades, not the human quality (Putra, 24 October 2014, Yogyakarta).

Budi and Putra have tried to reconstruct their work to fit one aspect of hegemonic masculinity, which is proximity to God and dedication. They merely challenged the provider identity with another aspect of hegemonic masculinity. Therefore, their attempts to negotiate their masculinities did not necessarily construct an alternative masculinity or counter the construction of Indonesian hegemonic

masculinity. Instead, they highlighted one aspect of hegemonic masculinity over another.

### **Learning How to be a Father and Negotiating Nurturance**

Most male teachers interviewed perceive their involvement in ECE as a form of ‘learning to be a father’; this narrative was raised in every interview. As Putra states:

I never wanted to be a teacher. My interest in teaching began in my last year of undergraduate study. I was concerned about how young people now are influenced more easily by negative things, bad behaviour, language and lifestyle. I was one of the victims of bad influences [laughing] ... I think ... one day I will have children, and I don’t want my children to be like that [at the time of the interview, Putra was expecting his first child]. So I need to learn. How? ... yeah by working with children. I teach them, and I learn and gain a lot of information about how to teach children ... I even have forgotten my mathematician side [laughing] (Putra, 24 October 2014, Yogyakarta).

Wisnu, who was still single when I interviewed him, also connected his teaching role with preparing himself to be a good father:

My friends here support me; it is good I am *latihan jadi ayah*/learning how to be a father so that I can help my wife in the future (Wisnu, 15 October 2014, Yogyakarta).

The term ‘learning’ implies two things at least. First, the men are not trained to teach in ECE, so they entered the field without these skills. Second, they emphasised that child care and education were not natural for them. Wisnu used the term ‘learning to be a father’ to confirm his heterosexual masculine identity. He asserted this masculinity by implying that nurturing was not an innate characteristic, but had to be learned. This implies that child care and education was not his (men’s) field. In saying ‘I can help my wife in the future’, he also confirmed that child care and education were not his responsibility; he would only

be helping his wife. As in Indonesia, masculinity and care in Western cultures have long been assigned as incompatible (Hanlon 2012, 53). Masculinity is associated with rationality, inexpressiveness and a lack of emotions, while care requires emotional aspects such as empathy, tenderness, intimacy and intuition; all categorised as feminine attributes (Seidler 1997, 119, Hanlon 2012). For women, child care and education are natural and instinctive. None of my respondents though caring for children was instinctive for them. As explained in Chapter 2, conventional constructions of gender in Indonesia prescribe child care and education as women's obligations.

Simultaneously, however, the men were also trying to embrace a father's caring role. The phrase 'learning to be a father' could also mean they perceive fathering as not being about providing alone. Connecting ECE with fathering suggests that to them, fathering involves child care and education. Associating fathering with child care and education challenges the concept of men as providers. This construction of fathering matches the growing discourse of contemporary fatherhood in Indonesia (explained in Chapter 2).

In addition to learning how to be a father, Budi and Wisnu also thought that working with children helped their self-development. Budi's first experience with children enabled him to acknowledge the wisdom he could learn from children:

My decision going back to ECE was because I wanted to make myself better. I believe when I work with children, it is not I who am teaching them, but they who are teaching me. They teach me how to see life easier. Yeah ... my background is philosophy; that is why I am always interested in something that people might say unnecessarily. I am wondering whether a child's mentality can be transferred to or adopted by adults for better lives ... I learn a lot from children. I was temperamental. After working with children, I know that I can transfer my temperament into something more positive that can drive me to be brave enough to try new things (Budi, 7 October 2014, Yogyakarta).

Budi's comment romanticises childhood as a resource with which he can adjust his masculinity as braver and less temperamental. He has adopted Jean-Jacques Rousseau's view of childhood as a time of purity, joy, love and delightful instinct, the opposite of a corrupt adulthood (Brockliss and Montgomery 2003/2013, 83). Similar to Budi, Wisnu also viewed his job in kindergarten as a medium of learning and self-development:

I never had any intention to be a teacher, but then I realised that I had a lot of weakness, my communication skills is one of them. I often feel nervous when I have to speak in front of other people. I realise that I need to learn gradually, starting from small things to big things. To work in a big company, I feel that I still lack the courage to speak up with my opinions. Well, I never have a problem being heard. I was the chair of a student organisation, but still, I feel it is not enough. When I saw that Fastrack Funschool opened a vacancy for teachers, I was interested in applying. I thought I have to start with young children. I thought communicating with young children is more sincere and free; communicating with adult ... there [is] a lot of hypocrisy (Wisnu, 15 October 2014, Yogyakarta).

Budi and Wisnu's comments reflect a negative self-perception and a lack of self-confidence, which contradicts the self-confidence culturally ascribed as masculine (Francis 2008, 115; Archer and Lloyd 2002, 21–23). Therefore, their comments convey a message about inferior masculinity that prevents them from competing in a male-dominated field.

When I asked explicitly about how teaching young children has changed them, they admitted that working in ECE had altered their character. Even though they did not state it had influenced their masculine identity, the changes they described had moved them from a masculine to a more feminine spectrum. Most male teachers interviewed claimed they had become more caring after working in ECE:

Before working with children, I didn't have a good nurturing sense. It just didn't work. I had an intention to teach way before I worked in ECE.

I often played school maybe it was because my father often took me to his class. But I did not have any nurturing sense. It has just recently worked (my nurturing sense). I have become caring to others, not only to children but also to adults. Like one day, I saw a woman crossing the road; I helped her automatically. I was not like that before working with children (Budi, 7 October 2014, Yogyakarta).

This attitude strengthens the idea that nurturing qualities in men result from learning instead of natural instinct. Caring responsibilities (in the context of work) can be internalised into an individual personality and extended outside the classroom to society in general (Mitrano 2014, 312). This is suggested in Wawan's statement:

I was never close to any child before. Now I have become more caring, not only to the children at school but also to other children outside the schools. Now, I have an interest in saying 'hi' to a kid. I was indifferent to kids before (Wawan, 14 October 2014, Yogyakarta).

The male teachers' accounts about this increased sense of nurturance show that, despite their attempts to strengthen their masculine identities by implying that nurturing was not innate, working in ECE has transformed their masculinities to reflect a nurturing base.

### **Re-gendering Early Childhood Education**

In their interviews, male teachers negotiated their work and masculine identity in a variety of ways. Most commonly, however, they incorporated their work caring for children into definitions of hegemonic masculinity rather than challenge essentialised notions of gender. They did this by emphasising the 'innate' qualities of masculinity and femininity and the essential differences between them. In doing so, they both ensured that their masculinity conformed to gender ideals as well as ensuring that their contribution to ECE differed to those of their female colleagues.

Previous studies undertaken in Western contexts show that most male teachers feel pressured to play a role that matches social expectations (see Sargent 2005; Andrew 2010; Mills, Haase and Charlton 2008). Instead of perceiving this as pressure, the male teachers at Fastrack Funschool felt honoured and viewed this as a benefit when compared to the female teachers. Therefore, they complied with social expectations. They glorified stereotypes such as men being better than women at reasoning, technology, creativity and having greater physical strength; this thinking enhanced their position in ECE. These men mentioned two main contributions. First, they claimed to operate as a father figure and role model, especially for boys. Second, they claimed that their maleness completed the school. They could balance the prevailing mood, fix objects, keep up with active children (especially active boys) and give the school an extra ‘support team’ for other physical work. The following sections will analyse how the male teachers reaffirmed their masculinities and re-gendered ECE by highlighting the contribution of their maleness to ECE.

### **Constructing the Masculine Role Model Identity**

As commonly found in research about male teachers in early childhood and primary education in the West (see Haywood, Popoviciu and Ghail 2005; Martino 2008; Riley et al. 1985), the role model discourse also arose repeatedly in my data. Most male teachers did not fit Goodman and Kelly’s (1988, 6) definition of pro-feminist. Instead of challenging conventional gender stereotypes and promoting pro-feminist alternative masculinities, most male teachers complied with the existing gender dualism. They hailed their position as role models for both girls and boys, with a special emphasis on boys:

A male figure is not only for boys. Even girls need a male figure. They should know that this is how men are and how women are. They have to be able to differentiate which one is men which one is women. For boys, oh ... this is how to be a man ... so boys do not have to model a woman. The result of having a role model is not quickly observable. In the future, it will show that boys who had male teachers in their preschool

will be more mature. His masculinity will be more mature. We have to show them how to be a man (Putra, 24 October 2014, Yogyakarta).

This comment reflects gender socialisation theories that suggest exposure to an array of external influences and role models, such as teachers and parents, is important to children's understanding of appropriate gender practices (Lyons, Quinn and Sumsion 2005, 9). It also implies that femininity and masculinity are embodied within the female and male body (Skelton 2003, 195). The basic assumption is that, in addition to the teachers' pedagogical capacities and experiences, the teachers' physical bodies are essential to children's learning experience. The presence of male teachers enriches children's understanding of gendered bodies (Koch and Farquhar 2015, 382).

The fear of boys' feminisation, as discussed in Chapter 1, gave male teachers ammunition to strengthen their position in ECE and their compliance with hegemonic masculinity. Most male teachers in this study agreed that boys should be boys. Boys who showed signs of femininity had to be masculinised. Putra said, in response to a question about the lack of masculine prestige in his job, 'what if you have a son? What if all of his teachers are women and your son transforme[s] into a girl?' This implies that female teachers have a negative influence on boys. Policing men and discrediting women are important mechanisms to sustain hegemonic masculinity (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005, 844). By implying that women would feminise boys, Putra simultaneously strengthened his place in ECE and showed his compliance with hegemonic masculinity.

Budi also described how feminine characteristic in boys should be corrected:

I have a boy in my class who has a feminine characteristic, especially his gestures. He is different from other boys. Other boys would just be silent and calm down when they are upset [he did the gesture and frowning expression]. This particular boy whines ... eeeeuh euh [he gestured moving his arms, body and head in and out]. This boy whined like a girl. His parents were worried. My partner [female teacher] was also worried. My partner asked me whether I could do something about it. Then I tried

to talk to the boy, of course not in front of other children. I took him out of the class and talk to him, ‘if you have a problem, try not to shout, try not to cry, just calm down take a deep breath. If you have a problem with your toys, your drink spilt, look! Don’t shout, take a look and fix it. If you can’t do it, ask for Miss’s help [Miss is what the children call a female teacher]. Don’t make a sound and try not to move’ (Budi, 7 October 2014, Yogyakarta).

According to the above comment, Budi was focusing on gestures or body movements as gender markers. This is similar to the comment from Retno included in Chapter 3 about the ‘curly fingers’ that suggested homosexuality in a man. This indicates a heterosexual regime where males are strictly socialised and governed to show a particular body and specific way of moving; masculinity is then policed through these elements (Reigeluth and Addis 2016, 76; Risner 2007, 144; Martino and Cumming-Potvin, 2015, 87). Budi explained that for him, all that matters is the gestures:

I do not dare to say a man should be like this and that. I am afraid that the boy does have an effeminate tendency. If he does, saying that a boy should be like this and that could make him feel guilty and sinful. Then he would withdraw. I don’t mind a boy wearing pink, drawing what usually would be drawn by girls. I even disapprove when children laugh at boys who like pink and draw clothes. I said to them boys can wear pink and pink is a good colour. A boy can also be a designer. I believe that effeminacy is something difficult to change; it is given. But yeah ... boys have to maintain their gestures. I will work on the gesture techniques. I believe that body techniques will affect the mind (Budi, 7 October 2014, Yogyakarta).

Budi’s comment aligns with Judith Butler’s theory of gender performativity. According to Butler (2007, 191):

The effect of gender is produced through the stylisation of the body and, hence, must be understood as the mundane way in which bodily

gestures, movements, and style of various kinds constitute the illusion of an abiding gendered self.

Here, Budi tries to stylise the boy with bodily gestures and movement that society expects in men; thus, an illusory gender conformity is performed in the boy. Budi did not reveal many concerns about the boy feeling effeminate inside. In saying ‘effeminacy is something difficult to change’ and not wanting to make the boy feel guilty about being effeminate, Budi accepted the boy’s effeminacy; despite this, he had to suppress it and submit to the social pressure of ensuring the boy expressed socially appropriate gestures of masculinity. He hoped that repeated training in masculine gestures would create a masculine identity illusion, and thus the boy would not experience difficulties resulting from gender non-conformity. Being a gender non-conforming man in Indonesia is prone to stigmatisation and normalisation attempts.

In contrast to Budi, who focused on gestures, Putra and Wawan emphasised bravery and responsibility being taught to boys. We discussed what they would teach to boys and girls in the school:

Putra: I want the children both girls and boys to be mature, be themselves. Boys should be boys; girls should be girls. I want the children to be honest and tough.

Me: What do you mean by being boys/men (*laki-laki*)?

Putra: yeah ‘a man who is a man’ is like *ksatria* (knight). He should be ‘*berani dan tegas bertanggung jawab atas apapun yang dilakukannya*’ brave and firmly responsible for whatever he has done. Women are more a tranquiliser. She should be able to be calm and calming people and wise, also tough and able to face their problem (Putra, 24 October 2014, Yogyakarta).

Wawan: Fastrack Funschool chose real men to teach here; men who have masculine characteristics more than feminine characteristics. They (Fastrack Funschool) did not look for softness from male teachers. They

expect the masculine characters to be introduced to the children through us. Men are men; they have to be brave and responsible (Wawan, 14 October 2014, Yogyakarta).

Putra associated masculinity with *ksatria*, a concept used in traditional Javanese masculinity. As explained in Chapter 2, *ksatria* (similar to a European knight) is a concept of idealised masculinity in Javanese mythology that embodies both feminine and masculine characteristics. Ignoring the feminine characteristics of *ksatria*, Putra and Wawan marked *ksatria* as being responsible and brave. In Indonesia, a strong association exists between responsibility (*tanggung jawab*) and manhood; this is related to the religious, as well as the state doctrine of men as leaders of their family (*kepala keluarga*). The doctrine of men as family leader implies that men are responsible for the wellbeing of every single member of the family. In Islamic doctrine, a man is responsible for his wife and children's wellbeing in the mortal world and the hereafter, as stated in the Quran.<sup>57</sup> Putra believed that girls should be tough, smart, brave and able to solve problems, but he excluded responsibility from this list.

The way Budi, Putra and Wawan constructed themselves as role models for boys aligns with social expectations. Instead of challenging the expectation of being a male role model, they embraced it to strengthen both their position in ECE and their masculine identities. To this end, male teachers in this study facilitated rather than challenged the children's gendering processes.

### **Balancing the School**

Most male teachers also argued (to strengthen their position in ECE) that they filled a gap that female teachers could not. The stereotypes that emerged in their comments concerned men's superiority in rationality, creativity, technology and physical strength. They claimed that their maleness was 'value added' and a 'bonus' for the school (Sumsion 2000a, 135). In asserting that they offered

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<sup>57</sup> Surah At Tahrim verse 6, 'O you who have believed, protect yourselves and your families from a hell fire whose fuel is people and stones, over which are [appointed] angels, harsh and severe; they do not disobey Allah in what He commands them but do what they are commanded'.

something different from female teachers, the male teachers celebrated conventional gender stereotypes (Sumsion 2000c, 90).

The dualism of reasons versus emotions is associated with gender differences (Seidler 1997, 119). Budi used this dualism to strengthen his masculine identity in ECE; this was not so much about teaching children masculine ways of thinking or rationality. I base my argument on Budi's contradictory comments about the reason versus emotion discourse. At times, Budi said he needed to introduce masculine ways of thinking—thinking with reason—as stated below:

There are things that cannot be done by women. I cannot tell you what they are now, but I believe that it will have a negative effect in the long term when we only have one way of thinking (feminine), especially in the educational field. It should be balanced: feminine and masculine. Roughness is as important as softness. Reason (*logika*) is as important as emotion (*rasa*). I am aware that not all women think with emotions (*pakai rasa*), but the women's world tends to be more emotional. Love and care are important; firmness is also important (Budi, 7 October 2014, Yogyakarta).

These comments related to questions about how male teachers would differ from female teachers. As such, his answers may be a defence of his masculinity. However, when I asked him what he wanted to teach children, he critiqued rationality applied without emotion; here, rationality could become corrupt. He claimed 'they have brains but no hearts' to illustrate this. He blamed corruption in Indonesia with a focus on rationality. Budi suggested that ECE overemphasised academic attainments, placing too much emphasis on reason. That was why he wanted to teach compassion, love and care to children.

This contradiction shows that when Budi did not feel it was necessary to confirm his masculinity, he could cherish feminine characteristics. His narrative used the reason versus emotion discourse to confirm his masculine identity, saying that he was more rational than women. Yet, when the question was not related to his maleness, he criticised the over-masculinised education in his phrase, 'they have

brains but no heart'. In his later comment, he tried to incorporate emotions into ECE. He contradicted the link between gender and the dualism of reasons versus emotions, a link he had referred to earlier. My later question did not relate directly to masculine identity. I assume this was why Budi did not feel his masculinity was being questioned. Thus, he did not have to defend it. Instead, he criticised one of the strongest conventional markers of masculinity: rationality. In this context, he did not feel his masculine identity was being scrutinised, so he embraced emotion, compassion and care.

Budi's recommendation to balance reason with emotion when working in ECE applies to all students regardless of their gender. As such, he is challenging social expectations of male teachers to be masculine role models (as discussed in Chapter 4) and the (global) assumption that male teachers in ECE and primary education will re-masculinise schools and ensure they are suitable environments for boys to develop their masculinities (Martino 2008). Regarding the Indonesian context, emphasising a balance between reason and emotion is not alien to the archetype of Javanese masculinity (detailed in Chapter 2). Archetypal Javanese masculinity considers a man's position as most respectable if he harmoniously combines feminine, masculine and spiritual aspects.

Another stereotype used by most male teachers to strengthen their masculinities was the presumption of an innate superior physical strength. This disparate physical strength between men and women was legitimated by both the male and female teachers. In addition to physical strength, Putra added technological competence as one of his strengths, but other male teachers did not claim this. Putra and Budi's comments that follow illustrate their perceptions of men's physical strength:

There are seven boys in my class. Their masculine character is very strong. My class is the most chaotic. When they play with other kids from other classes, my boys are dominant. In term of the task, men can do things that cannot be done by women. For example, when a child falls; you know that children now are big, and most women now have tiny bodies. I don't think she can lift up and carry the child. A man is

needed in that situation when a child needs help (Putra, 24 October 2014, Yogyakarta).

Putra discussed a gender script regarding physicality. Putra's perception of his role as a man in the school is consistent with what the female teachers and parents expected of him (see Chapter 4). Similarly, Budi also embraced these expectations:

I think a male teacher adds value to physical activities. That is the most significant difference (from the female teacher). For example, when we did a field trip we had to cross a quite wide trench, automatically male teachers came forward helping the children. Or, if we want to put children's artwork high up on the wall, male teachers usually do it (Budi, 7 October 2014, Yogyakarta).

My observations confirm their claims. A division of tasks between female and male teachers was obvious during outdoor physical and musical activities. Even though all the males were assistant teachers, during these two activities they took charge. During musical activities, male teachers played musical instruments, and female teachers sang. During physical activities, male teachers always showed the children what to do (Fig.5.3). In one of my observations in Wawan's class, Risa planned to take the children to the backyard; they were going to play *kasti*, an Indonesian version of softball. Wawan arranged the children in a line and walked them to the backyard. Once they were in the backyard, Risa explained what they were going to do, and Wawan set up four bases, using a drum at each base. Wawan then demonstrated every *kasti* move. He demonstrated how to hit the ball with the stick, run to the base, catch the ball and run back to finish. Risa threw the ball to Wawan.



Source: Fastrack Funschool's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/fastrackfunschool>

**Figure 5.3: Male teachers played music while the children sang and danced with female teachers**

In addition to the benefit of male teachers' physicality in the context of teaching and learning, male teachers claimed that they could also undertake extra work that female teachers would not do, such as lifting objects, decorating, and going out to purchase school supplies. Figure 5.4 shows the male teachers carrying boxes, while the female teachers lead the children into the building.



Source: Fastrack Funschool's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/fastrackfunschool>

**Figure 5.4: Male teachers carrying boxes**



Source: Fastrack Funschool's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/fastrackfunschool>

**Figure 5.5: One of the examples of decorative works installed by mostly male teachers**

The male teachers did not view this as a burden; rather, it was an acknowledgement of their masculine strength. Budi indeed said that he probably would not remain working in the school if all the activities were 'soft' or feminine. Physical activities, such as outbound games in an open space, decorating (Fig. 5.5) and physical work, and other responsibilities were given exclusively to male teachers, helped the men survive in an environment perceived socially as feminine.

### **Managing Paedophilia Suspicions**

In previous chapters, I discussed the growing moral panic around child sexual abuse, and about how paedophilia has been arbitrarily linked to homosexuality. This panic had affected how male teachers undertook their work in relation to child handling and physical contact in the classroom. However, the school soon addressed these concerns with the PANTS rule (as detailed in Chapter 4). By the time I conducted my fieldwork, I had observed that cuddling and physical contact between male teachers and children in the school were frequent, but that these were often initiated by the children (see Figure 5.6).



**Figure 5.6: A boy hugged a male teacher while the teacher talked to a girl who was leaning on his lap**

I also observed male teachers taking children to the toilet and waiting for them by the door. All respondents said that taking children to the toilet was a significant problem. Other than this, the moral panic had not affected the way they treated children:

After the JIS incident, many parents were scared. Many parents do not want male teachers to take their kids to the toilet. I think here, in this school, everything is going to be all right. I think we are all normal. No case like that, all normal. Here, when a kid wants to go to the toilet, we usually ask him/her first. I usually ask the child, especially girls, ‘can you wash<sup>58</sup> by yourself?’ If she/he says no, I ask again, ‘do you want *mister* [sic] to help?’ I always ask before helping. If she/he doesn’t need

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<sup>58</sup> In Indonesia, water is used to clean oneself after going to the toilet. We do not use tissue or toilet paper. It is tricky for a 4- or 5-year-old child to wash themselves after going to the toilet. It is a common practice that teachers in kindergarten help children wash themselves after their toilet activities.

my help, I will stand by the door (Wawan, 14 October 2014, Yogyakarta).

Wisnu, Budi and Putra explained they had to work harder to gain trust from some children and parents just because of their gender. Putra said:

Especially after the JIS incident ... Some parents were very afraid. I was amazed how negatively that case affected how parents saw us. We may not hear what they think and say directly, but we know by the look in their eyes when we touch their kids. I have tried to ignore that. The most important thing is that I care about the child, and I want to protect him/her, so I keep going. At the start of the year, some kids did not want to be accompanied by a male teacher when he/she wanted to go to the toilet; maybe their parents told them not to. But after two to three months, wherever they want to go, they want to go with their *misters* [sic] (male teacher) (Putra, 24 October 2014, Yogyakarta).

My respondents from Fastrack Funschool felt most affected by the moral panic only when taking children to the toilet; they had had to become more cautious about this.

Handi, a male teacher from my fieldwork in Bandung felt more than that. Handi confessed that the stigma had hindered him from pursuing his passion to teach young children. He never heard direct comments from anyone suspecting him, but he could feel it:

I could not sleep. I know people will think negatively about me. But I have to prove it. I am normal. So I got married then I chased my dream building a small kindergarten (Handi, 3 December 2014, Bandung).

Handi perceived the suspicions as a threat to his career. In this situation, moral panic can result in 'self-policing' (Burn and Pratt-Adams 2015, 131). It was not enough to be married; Handi also tried to display and confirm his masculinity by adopting a military- and police-style costume as the school's uniform. He said:

Once I wanted to be a policeman, very macho. But then I realised I could not. Now I have a school; then I thought why not military and police uniforms for my students (boys and girls). I am now the father of military and police force ... [laughing] (Handi, 3 December 2014, Bandung).

As discussed in Chapter 2, militarism was associated with the state's hegemonic masculinity during Suharto's era. Thus, military symbols may be perceived as effective tools to confirm masculine identity. Unlike Handi, male teachers from Fastrack Funschool did not feel they had to verify their heterosexuality and masculinity. Although they were married or engaged to be married, no one explicitly said that they had to prove their 'normality' as Handi did. Fastrack Funschool teachers were instead focused on how to prove their trustworthiness. The school's PANTS regulation also helped the Fastrack Funschool teachers gain parental trust.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has investigated how male teachers, in their narrative, reconstruct and negotiate their masculinities in terms of their occupation as ECE teachers. In this chapter, I argued that the male teachers both defended and modified their masculinities. Attempts were made to realign their masculinities with their occupational identities (Lupton 2000). However, the male teachers each used different strategies. Budi and Putra submitted to the common perception of teaching as honourable but financially less favourable; thus, they highlighted heroism as the centre of their masculinity. In contrast, Wisnu and Wawan ascribed to the breadwinning role and redefined ECE as a favourable workplace.

No participant in my study said they had lost their sense of masculinity working in ECE. They rationalised their existence in ECE in various ways. However, every argument they made about their gender identity and work roles was still based on the dominant Indonesian construction of masculinity (hegemonic masculinity). Budi and Putra chose to challenge materialistic masculinity and replace it with a heroic masculinity by redefining their job as a calling. Heroic masculinity is not

foreign to Indonesian hegemonic masculinity, but an alternative form that is sanctioned in religious and moral context. Therefore, they were still emphasising other aspects of hegemonic masculinity. Wawan and Wisnu framed their roles within the provider masculinity model and argued that they were fulfilling their duty as providers by working at Fastrack Funschool. Each male teacher also suggested that they were learning to be a good carer; none of them claimed they possessed an innate ability to care and nurture. However, they also framed this caring in heteronormative terms; they were learning to be good fathers, not taking on maternal roles. They also affirmed their masculinity as an advantage for the school, for instance, they viewed additional physical work as a way their masculinity was appreciated.

Despite these narratives about conforming to the construction of hegemonic masculinity, the male teachers negotiated this in their narratives about care. They did not feel threatened by a fear of feminisation (Lupton 2000, S40), they were willing to learn how to care for children and become more patient. They admitted that working in ECE had made them more caring and patient. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that male teachers in this study played along with the gender culture of ECE without trying to radically challenge hegemonic masculinity; this concurs with Sargent's (2000, 258) findings. Instead, the male teachers in this study negotiated their masculinities within a framework that was still acceptable to hegemonic masculinity. They modified their masculinities to reflect a version that was more inclusive of love and care, a version that did not threaten the construction of Indonesian hegemonic masculinity. In the next chapter, I use my in-class observations to see how the same teachers perform and negotiate masculinity in the Fastrack Funschool environment.

## **Chapter 6: Male Teachers' Gender Performance in the Classroom**

### **Introduction**

In this chapter, I analyse male teachers' gender performances in the classroom, alongside narratives of gender in their interviews. In doing this, I will explore how the social expectations discussed in previous chapters operate in the male teachers' pedagogical practices. I examine their interactions with female colleagues and children, the language they use, and the types of activities they choose. This chapter will scrutinise the assumption that male teachers are good for boys' education in ECE, an assumption I found in my analysis of the social expectations of male teachers (as explained in Chapter 4). These assumptions include the expectation that male teachers, as role models, will teach boys to be boys and that the teachers will operate as father figures. A father figure is expected to display masculine attributes and socialise boys into hegemonic heteronormative masculinity. He is also expected to be the child's playmate, as well as a disciplining agent. Parents also expect male teachers to provide culturally appropriate activities for boys. I build on the work of Read (2008) and Francis (2008), who look at gender practices in early childhood classrooms. My analysis will focus on the type of activities, the use of language, and the male teachers' gestures during their pedagogical activities to answer two questions. First, I examine how masculinities are practised and negotiated through pedagogical performances by the male teachers in this study. Second, I ask how male teachers' performances contribute to the dynamic of gender construction in an ECE context.

My main argument in this chapter is that despite the strong social expectation to act as a male role model, male teachers enact diverse representations of what it means to be a man in their pedagogical performance. A relational pattern exists between the pedagogical demand related to their work as assistant teachers and their masculinities. ECE teaching involves many caring practices that require

them to negotiate their masculinities. However, their masculinities also influence their pedagogical approach. The variety of male teachers' gendered pedagogical performances in the classroom suggests that gender diversity may contribute to the transformation of cultural gender stereotypes.

Male teachers' gender performances in the classroom context are most likely framed in relation to pedagogical practices. Pedagogical practices are any methods and processes of upbringing and education in relation to the transfer and acquisition of knowledge, skills and moral messages (Bernstein and Solomon 1999, 267). According to Bernstein (2003, 79), pedagogy can be visible or invisible, depending on power relations between the teacher and student. This is determined by two factors: 'classification' and 'frame'. Classification refers to the strength of the boundary between the knowledge and subjects taught. Discrete subjects, for example, mathematics, English and science, share the characteristics of a strong classification. The stronger the classification is, the more visible the pedagogy is.

Another determinant factor of the visibility of pedagogy is the frame. The term frame refers to 'the degree of control teacher and pupil possess over the selection, sequencing, pacing, and evaluation of the knowledge transmitted and received in the pedagogical relationship' (Bernstein 2003, 80). Frame is related to how the content is organised: the teacher and student's control over the content and sequence of the content. Strong frame is characterised by a rigid syllabus with a rigid time sequenced and rigid teaching and learning plan. The stronger the frame, the more visible is the pedagogy. In terms of teacher-student power relations, the visibility or invisibility of a pedagogy depends on how explicit the teacher's control over students is in the process of knowledge transmissions. The more control the teacher has, the more visible is the pedagogy (Bernstein 2003, 107). *Fastrack Funschool* adopted a visible pedagogy. There are clear boundaries between subjects taught to the children. The teacher had full authority to decide what to be taught to the children and to control the time-sequence.

Read (2008) uses Bernstein's visible/invisible pedagogy theory to characterise the gendered discourses underpinning classroom discipline. She argues that gendered

characteristics infuse a teacher's pedagogical practices. She relates visible pedagogy with a disciplinarian discourse that is traditionally associated with hegemonic masculinity, and invisible pedagogy with a liberal discourse that is culturally linked to femininity and middle-class masculinity. Read's disciplinarian discourse is characterised by ongoing confirmations of the teacher's ultimate authority and the children's lack of agency. Giving sanctions to children who challenge the teacher's authority is one example. In contrast, liberal discourse is inspired by Bernstein's invisible pedagogy. Within liberal discourse, children have a high degree of agency, and the teacher-student power gap is narrowed as much as possible. Liberal discourse is characterised by 'pseudo-adultification' (Read 2008, 613), where the teacher's way of communicating with the children resembles adult-to-adult communication. Here, an expectation exists that the children will act like a 'good' adult who is respectful of the teacher's authority, responsible, kind, tolerant and sensible. The teacher's authority in liberal discourse is not explicit, but ultimately, it should be as strong as in the disciplinarian approach (Read, 2008, 612–613).

Using this concept, Read scrutinises the debates about the feminisation of primary schooling in the UK by carefully examining teachers' classroom language practices related to disciplining practices (Read 2008, 610). She criticises the argument that men are perfect disciplinarian agents for boys; an argument used widely to promote more men teaching in primary schools in an attempt to overcome the feminisation of primary-level schooling.

Similarly, Francis (2008) has also investigated the gender performance of male teachers through their disciplinary practices in the classroom. Francis's (2008) study is also a part of her assessment of the UK government's call for more male teachers at schools to overcome boys' underachievement. In line with Read (2008), Francis argues that analysing male teachers' gender performance is

essential to assess the ‘gender match assumption’<sup>59</sup> (Francis 2008, 110) that underpins the government’s call.

This chapter is based on my observation notes, and recorded videos of classroom activities gathered at *Fastrack Funschool* over one month from 7 October to 5 November 2014. The objective was to observe how the male teachers interacted with their colleagues and students in the pedagogical context. Anticipating that my presence would create some awkwardness and unnatural behaviour, I observed each of the male teachers on five consecutive days during school hours from eight o’clock in the morning to 12 o’clock in the afternoon. The teachers may have felt a little awkward on the first day of observation, but they became more and more relaxed in the following days. Classroom activities during the observation were video-recorded. However, the video-recorder was placed in a static location in the classroom, and many important interactions happened outside the camera frame. To capture all interactions, I took notes during and after the observation sessions.

I observed four male teachers and their female colleagues in the classrooms. Three of the male teachers’ classes (Budi, Wisnu and Wawan) used English as the instructional language. Putra used Indonesian. None of the four male teachers has a degree in ECE. However, the school regularly conducts teacher development programs to improve teaching performance, including child-handling skills. Even though the male teachers had equal levels of training in early childhood pedagogy, their pedagogical performances differed significantly. As stated in Chapter 3, each of the male teachers was paired with a female teacher. The female teacher was the main teacher who had full authority in planning and executing the process of teaching and learning.

Each male teacher had a unique teaching practice, which was consistent with their comments about their work and life goals expressed during the interviews. The version of masculinity expressed in their interviews was embodied within their

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<sup>59</sup> The gender match assumption is a stereotypical hypothesis that teachers from the same sex category as the children would be of more benefit to children than would teachers from the opposite sex.

pedagogical performances. In the following sections, I analyse each male teacher's gender performance as it intersects with his pedagogical practices. In the conclusion, I discuss and analyse differences and similarities between the male teachers.<sup>60</sup>

### **Budi's *Macho* Masculinity**

In the interview, Budi said firmly that he was 'macho'. He did not describe explicitly what he meant by this word, except for stating it meant rationality. Budi appears to have his own definition 'macho', as his appearance does not align with the dominant understanding of 'macho' in Indonesia, which relates more to an athletic body shape and strong masculine features. An analysis of my observation notes led to a clearer understanding of what Budi meant by macho masculinity. Budi's claim to being macho had nothing to do with being masculine. Budi's self-claimed macho performance consisted of a complex combination of feminine, masculine and child-like characteristics. I did not have an overwhelmingly *macho* impression of him in his class environment. Differing from other classrooms, Budi and Hawa's (the main teacher) classroom was decorated with children's artwork on the front wall. There were reminders of the school's values, such as 'love others', 'respect others', 'behave well', 'be responsible' and 'please' and 'thank you' in oversized lettering above a whiteboard at the centre of the wall.



**Figure 6.1: Budi and Hawa's classroom**

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<sup>60</sup> All names in this chapter are pseudonyms, including the children's names.

Budi's pedagogical style did not mirror hegemonic masculine stereotypes. Budi used a variety of pedagogical and disciplinary approaches, ranging from the Bernsteinian liberal and disciplinarian approach (Read 2008, 613) to what I call a 'pseudo-childification' style, by presenting himself as a child and a friend of the children. In all of his approaches, he consistently used respectful language, such as 'please', 'thank you', and 'that is so nice' more often than did his female partner, Hawa. Budi's respectful style would be considered feminine in Western culture (see Francis 2008, 114). In Javanese culture (the dominant culture of the city where I did the research and Budi's root culture), politeness and respect symbolise a higher social class, courtesy and honour. Therefore, in a Javanese context, being polite and respectful does not necessarily mean giving up masculine power. The following observation notes exemplify his respectful and liberal style:

Note B1

8 October 2014

On Wednesday morning, Budi and Hawa (the main teacher) were preparing the students for learning. Suddenly a girl shouted, 'Miss there is no boy'. Hawa stayed in her place and said, 'manage yourself' [sic] in a firm voice with two arms opened and a look as if she wanted to say 'you have to take care of the problem yourself' and she just stood still waiting for the children to react. It seems that she exercised a masculine style of discipline. Then Budi, who was at that time folding a dishtowel, took over, by saying, 'friends, you are already big, you have to manage yourself. Who wants to change (table)?' [sic] He was saying this in a relaxed way, just the opposite of Hawa, who was quite tense and had a stern look on her face. Budi then continued, 'because our agreement is one boy one table, just manage yourself for the first table, we will wait. Manage yourself, just discuss it'. He was smiling and very relaxed. Then Sam said, 'okay'. Budi smiled at Sam [boy] and said, 'thank you Sam, and you can ask your friends, can I move here?' Sam asked Ariel

whether he could move to her table, and Ariel said yes, Budi then said, 'thank you Ariel' with a smile. 'That is nice', Budi said.

These notes show that Budi uses a 'pseudo-adultification' technique that is common in the liberal disciplinary approach (Read 2008, 613). He constructed the children as having agency and autonomy when he talked to them in an adult manner, provoking the children to discuss and decide who would move to another table. He reminded the children about their 'one boy on one table' agreement. This approach plays with feminine and masculine characters in a complex way. The approach is feminine because of the use of soft language, the listening, support and respect; the teachers' authority is muted by an acknowledgement of the children's agency. However, the construction of children as individuals with agency, rationality and autonomy corresponds to the notion of a masculinised subject (Read 2008, Walkerdine 1990). Budi's approach is consistent with what he explained in his interview (discussed in the previous chapter). He wanted to teach rationality as well as sensibility to the children.

In addition to 'pseudo-adultification', Budi also used what I call 'self-pseudo-childification' as a strategy in his pedagogical practices. What I mean by 'self-pseudo-childification' is that he emulated a child-like style in his pedagogical practices. Budi's style blurred the teacher-student power divide. He effortlessly dissolved his adult self into the children's world by sometimes behaving like a child, illustrated by the following observation notes:

#### Note B2

It was a counting activity; the children were asked to move from one tile to another while counting from one to ten. As a demonstration, Hawa [the main teacher] hopped to one tile at a time and counted, 'one ... two ... three'.

Once Hawa finished, Budi said, 'I want to try, I want to try!' [in a child-like manner] ... then he said, 'I want to do it like a penguin'. He walked

like a penguin from tile to tile. He walked and counted. The children were laughing.

While watching and paying attention to the children who took turns doing the counting up and down activity, Budi laid [body face down] on the mat with his two hands supporting his body [in a child-like gesture], and soon some girls copied him. There was no distance between him and the children. A girl even did not hesitate to lay her body crossing over Budi's back. Budi did not say anything and did not try to move her from his body.

My combined notes (B1 and B2) show the complexity of Budi's gender performance. On the one hand, he built an empathic relationship with the children, which is arguably a feminine approach. On the other hand, he also subtly exercised masculine power when he indirectly took over Hawa's authority in disciplining and teaching the children, as if she were not doing enough or was not capable enough (see note B1). A lack of capability and authority are constructed as feminine within the gender dualism framework (Francis 2008, 115). In the interview, Hawa did not feel her authority was disrupted by Budi; instead, she felt Budi had helped her and listened to her better than the other female teacher she had worked with previously. She said, 'a female partner tend to disrupt my idea, she would cut before I finish talking about my idea. Male partners listen better. The competition between female teachers here is very strong' (interview with Hawa, 15 October 2014).

While seemingly giving up power by emulating the children's behaviour and treating them as adults, Budi also gained power in terms of making the children more attentive to him than they were to Hawa. Budi tried to engage the children's minds so that the children could relate to him. He hoped that an empathic two-way relationship between teacher and student would be built (Cooper 2004, 16). The children seemed more interested in the classroom activities after Budi's demonstration than they had after Hawa's. The children also seemed to obey Budi more than they did Hawa, who was the main teacher; this was evident when the teachers wanted a boy to sit at a different table (note B1).

It was difficult to determine the underlying factors for the children obeying Budi more than Hawa. Was it due to the teacher's gender? Alternatively, was it due to the approach used by the teacher? Even when a female teacher's authority is likely to be undermined (Walkerdine 1990), I am convinced that here the children's responses were determined by the teachers' approaches rather than their gender. I did not see the same pattern in any other class I observed (see my analysis on Wisnu's performance). The approach chosen did not relate to their different positions as main and assistant teacher, as the main teacher in each class had a different approach. Throughout my observation, Hawa often used a disciplinarian approach, which is considered more masculine, whereas Budi used a liberal approach, which appears more feminine. The observation note below illustrates their different approaches:

#### Note B3

On Tuesday (7 October 2014) after the literacy activity, all the children are supposed to pack up their stationery and put it back on the shelf. A child left a pencil on the table; Budi asked the children whose pencil it was. No one came and claimed the pencil. Then Budi realised that the pencil was not from the class. Budi and Hawa knew that only one child usually used stationery brought from home. It was Ratih, but Ratih did not claim the pencil. Hawa then asked Ratih, with a very authoritative gesture, no smile, staring sharply at Ratih and saying in a firm tone 'that's not our pencil!' (hoping Ratih would claim the pencil). Ratih did not say anything. Then Budi said to her nicely with a big smile and a little bit of humour, 'is this your pencil? A pencil cannot fly by itself'. Ratih smiled and admitted that it was hers. She took the pencil and put it back in her bag.

Contradicting the common pattern in teacher-student relationships in Indonesia that follow a parent-child familial pattern, Budi seemed to construct himself deliberately as the children's friend, to create closeness between them. He called the children 'friends'. Even though every teacher referred to students in the same

way, how Budi presented himself in front of the children and his ‘self-childification’ matched the meaning of the word ‘*teman*’.

Calling the student ‘friends’ or ‘*teman-teman*’ (Indonesian) is related to the school’s work principles about teacher-children relationships:

A positive heart-to-heart relationship and emotional attachment between teachers and their pupils would have a positive influence on the children’s self-worth, confidence, and self-image. Teacher-student relationships should resemble friendships that encourage joyfulness and acceptance. Good relationships will bring about children’s emotional health. The children will have positive emotions towards themselves and others (<http://www.fastrack-funschool.com/prinsip-kerja>).

The word *teman* implies an equal status between two or more people who share a feeling of commonality. Using *teman* (singular) and *teman-teman* (plural) is common among social, human rights and political activists. For example, *Teman Ahok* is a group of activists who supported Basuki Tjahaya Purnama to run as an independent governor of DKI Jakarta in the 2017 election. *Teman* is used by unpaid volunteers to show they are free from the domination and control of the candidate or any political party they are supporting.

Fastrack Funschool’s philosophy of teacher-student relationships is related to its progressive values, especially in terms of building a tolerant and egalitarian generation of children (see Chapter 4). The way the teachers dressed also demonstrates egalitarian values. All teachers and staff members wore casual polo or t-shirts and long pants, similar to the students (Fig. 6.2). Female and male teachers had the same uniform. It is more common for kindergarten teachers’ uniforms to be formal and differ from the children’s uniforms (Fig. 6.3).



Source: Fastrack Funschool's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/fastrackfunschool>

**Figure 6.2: Fastrack Funschool Teacher's Uniform**



**Figure 6.3: Mainstream Kindergarten Teacher Uniforms**

Budi's approach—calling his students 'friends' and his 'self-childification'—is neither common to teacher-student interactions in Indonesia, nor in a Javanese context. As discussed in previous chapters conventional Indonesian schools adopt Ki Hajar Dewantara's concept of school as an extension of home and family (Shiraishi 1996, 228, Dewantara 1967, 159–160). The male teacher is usually called *bapak guru* and female teacher is called *ibu guru*. Even though Ki Hajar Dewantara's initial concept promoted an egalitarian form of teacher-student

relationship, teachers still present themselves as leaders. According to this principle, calling the students friends is unusual culturally. The most common practice is that the teacher-student relationship resembles the parent-child relationship, where a parent or teacher is the authoritative figure and the children or students are expected to be obedient (Shiraishi 1996). Therefore, most teachers maintain a student-teacher distance both physically and psychologically, especially in the secondary and upper levels of schooling (Maulana et al. 2011, 45). Hawa showed typical teacher-student relationship by maintaining the distance between her and the students. In contrast, Budi's closeness to the children was obvious. The children did not have any hesitations about touching, hugging, or laying their heads on Budi's lap, and they asked Budi to play with them. Unlike in Western countries, such as Australia, where physical touch between teachers-students is regulated, what I observed in Budi's and all the other classes was that physical touch between teachers and students was common and very frequent.

Constructing himself as a friend of the children did not make him less caring towards them. Budi's efforts to combine education and care were observed frequently. Budi often used physical touch, such as touching their heads, as his way of praising a child. In Indonesia, this is commonly practised by older people or parents on younger people or children to show that the older person or parent is proud or that the child or young person has done well. Budi's eye contact and smiles while listening to children made his caring attitude obvious.

The liberal approach was dominant during my observation in Budi's class. However, I also observed disciplinarian practices in his class. He could play out and switch from one approach to another, depending on how the children had reacted to his initial approach. If several soft attempts failed to make a child behave the way he wanted, he would regain his authority using the disciplinarian approach equated with masculinity (Read 2008, 615). However, Budi kept his language consistently respectful, never shouting. The following observation notes illustrate Budi's approach:

#### Note B4

The children were doing the countdown activity. The children took turns walking/jumping/hopping back and doing the countdown. Anyone who had had a turn doing the activity had to wait under the table. Arya, a very active boy, was annoying his friends, acting like a gorilla scaring other children who were also waiting under the table. Budi reminded the children to be calm by saying, 'friends, please be quiet', but the children kept making noises, as Arya would not stop acting as a gorilla. Budi then reminded Arya, 'Arya stop annoying your friends please!' Arya stopped for a while, around one or two minutes before he started to annoy his friends again. Then Budi put his finger on his lips (a sign to be quiet); he used eye contact as well, staring at Arya. Again, Arya stopped for a while, and then repeated his annoying behaviour repeatedly. Budi kept reminding him, stared at him, put his finger on his lips and told him to stop up to four times. Finally, Budi talked to Arya, 'I have been reminding you not to annoy your friends! How many times did I tell you to stop? How many times? It was four times already. After the snack time, you cannot play okay?! You read!' He was saying this still in a soft voice, I still could see calmness in his face, but his eyes fixed on Arya as if he wanted to assert that he was serious.

Budi showed authority by taking away Arya's right to free play after snack time. Budi decided what Arya would do as a form of punishment for not behaving appropriately. He showed that as a child, Arya was relatively powerless and he, as a teacher, had the power to acknowledge or deny the child's power. In this sense, Budi also exercised masculine subjectivity in his class.

Budi also subtly exerted his power by sometimes taking over the main teacher's authority in disciplining the children when the main teacher's method had not worked. Budi was also the self-appointed leader during most large-group activities involving all classes in the school. In my interview with Wisnu, I asked him how large-group student activities were arranged, especially those conducted outside. I asked who arranged them and how the leader was appointed. Wisnu said

the activities were arranged together, but that no one appointed a leader; this was up to the teacher's personal initiative. During my fieldwork in the school, Budi always initiated leading these activities, and other teachers backed him up. There was one time that I did not see Budi during the morning physical exercise activity (*kegiatan senam pagi*).<sup>61</sup> Other teachers seemed hesitant to lead the exercise. I saw Wawan and Nunung (female) look at each other and make a sign as to who would lead. Wawan, who was at that time already in front of the children, hesitated to take the lead, and Nunung eventually came forward. This scene would have been unlikely if Budi had been there. He would automatically lead the activity.

### **Wawan, Teaching in a Man's Way**

As discussed in Chapter 5, Wawan has a strong sense of masculine self-awareness. He said firmly that he was still a man when asked about his transition from working in a masculine environment to a kindergarten. Consistent with his masculine physical attributes and his statement, Wawan confirmed his masculinity through his pedagogical practices. My observation notes led me to conclude that his gender performance was dominantly masculine. However, his position as assistant teacher inevitably required him to perform feminine practices, such as submitting and showing obedience to the main teacher's guidance and to undertake child-handling tasks that included care giving.

My first impression of Wawan's class was that it seemed less decorated than Budi's class. I only saw the artwork of four children hanging on the wall. It seemed a little rigid for a kindergarten class. There were only three boys and six girls in Wawan's class. I also observed a higher level of calmness among students in his class compared to other classes I observed in the school. Wawan was partnered with Risa, a female teacher who played the main teacher role.

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<sup>61</sup> *Kegiatan senam pagi* is a common weekly activity in Indonesian schools and government offices. All students and teachers/staff come together in a yard or in a hall, line up and undertake physical exercise with music, led by an instructor.

Wawan's pedagogical approach was very firm, rigid and product-oriented, and he rarely smiled or used affectionate touches as observed with Putra and Budi; for example, a pat on the head or back, or giving praise. This was different from Budi, who was very attentive to the children and always greeted them. Instead, Wawan displayed indifference. The following observation notes depict his pedagogical performance and disciplinary approach:

#### Note WN 1

14 October 2014, 8.20 am. I arrived at Wawan's class; I was greeted by Risa, the main teacher. Wawan was sitting on the chair at the students' table area facing his laptop. He was just smiling at me. Risa was busy greeting a child as the child was coming into the class. Wawan kept doing what he was doing with his laptop.

#### Note WN 2

8.30 am. the class was about to start. Risa asked the children to sit on the mat in a circle. Wawan then left his laptop and joined the group sitting on the mat. The class started with a circle greeting; every child said, 'good morning, Tia (for example). How are you today?' to the friend sitting next to him/her. Then, they prayed. The prayer was in Indonesian, and it was made general, not following any particular religion's rule. As I also observed at Budi's class, the children were asked to mention what day it was, and then Risa asked a question about the days in a week. 'The day after Monday is ... ?', then the question was repeated until every day was mentioned by the children. The method used in Wawan's class was different from Budi's class. Budi used song and movement instead of asking questions to the children. The children's cheerfulness in Budi's class was more obvious than in Wawan's class, which was more subdued.

I did not observe a playful learning environment in Wawan's class, especially when Risa was not around. I did not see any closeness between Wawan and the

children. From the lack of physical touch and attentive response, I got the impression that Wawan distanced himself from the children. He presented himself as a teacher who was there to teach, not to play. He also used an authoritative disciplinarian approach, which can be observed from the continuous affirmation of his authority and the students' lack of agency (Read 2008, 613).

Note WN 3

15 October 2014

9.05 am, Risa, the main teacher, did not come to work, so Wawan replaced her and played the role as the main teacher that day with Dina as his assistant. During the circle time, the children and teachers sit with their legs stretched out in front of them. As usual, Wawan asked the children about what day it was, and then he asked what the day before today was and on and on, until all the day names were mentioned. Then, he asked the children about months; the children were asked to mention the names of the months from December to December again. Then he asked the children to count from one to one hundred. His method did not involve songs or games. In the middle of counting from one to one hundred, Doni (a boy), who was sitting right in front of Wawan, did not count. He played with a piece of paper instead. With his foot, Wawan then touched Doni's foot, and said, 'count, count!' with a firm voice. Realising that Doni was playing with a piece of paper, Wawan said to him, 'count...count, put it back (he meant the paper) put it in the bin'. Doni stayed still, and then Wawan asked him again firmly, 'clean up Doni, clean up!' Doni then got up and put the paper in the bin then returned to his spot. Wawan did not smile or say please when he asked Doni. He did not say thank you either after Doni did what he asked. After they have finished the activity, Wawan praised the children with 'good job everyone'.

Note WN 4

9.20 am. During snack time, they had bread with banana filling. Doni did not seem to like it; he said, 'Mister, I don't like it', then Wawan responded, 'eat it, you don't like the banana right? Just eat the bread!' (again, with a firm voice and no sign of empathy). Wawan then took his snack and sat in an empty chair at the corner of the table. He ate without interacting with the children, with no teasing and no humour.

Note WN 5

10.15 am. The children were doing a drawing activity; Fasli came to Wawan and showed him his finished drawing. Wawan, who was standing and talking to Dina (his assistant), told Fasli to put his name on the drawing without any appreciation of Fasli's work. In an ECE class where teachers usually consistently praise the children for their work, what Wawan did was unusual. To me, it felt very detached.

Note WN 6

14 October 2014, 9.30 am. During the free play activity, Wawan was sitting on a chair facing his laptop. Andi approached him and started to ask about things on the screen of the laptop. Wawan lazily answered the questions without even looking at Andi. Andi kept asking questions and finally, Wawan said, 'don't disturb me okay?' with a firm, but not an angry tone. Andi then left Wawan alone.

Note WN 7

16 October 2016. Class activity, playing with clay. Doni seemed to lose his concentration in the activity. Wawan reminded him to follow the instructions and listen to the teacher. However, Doni was still unsettled. Then, Wawan reminded him again and threatened him that if he did not listen, he would have to sit in the corner.

Wawan's strict and serious approach confirms his stereotypical masculine characteristics. A restrained emotional expression is common among men who work in female occupations, and is used to demonstrate manliness (Brody 2015, 352). Wawan's gender performance matches with what he said during the interview:

I don't have any unsolvable obstacles working with children. I do feel a little bit awkward. It feels awkward when I have to be soft. I can't be soft. I can't be *lebay* as well. A female teacher is usually *lebay*; I can't be *lebay*. I know they suggest me to be a bit *lebay* but I can't. I do everything in a man's way (*kalau saya biasa aja, ya kayak cowok*). I can't sing or dance; most male teachers can't (sing and dance). Only some of them (male teachers) can. Female teachers are very good at singing and dancing (Wawan 14 October 2014).

The above comment shows that Wawan was aware he was in a decidedly feminine work environment, where men's behaviour was expected to be feminine but without the same behavioural expectations of women (King 1998, 87). Therefore, to reaffirm his masculine identity, he denied these expectations and said he was doing the job in a man's way. Wawan defined 'a man's way' as not *lebay*. *Lebay* is a slang word for exaggerated and unnatural behaviour. *Lebay* is also often used to describe hyper-feminine behaviours in women or men. To Wawan, an unnatural expression of empathy, support and care would be *lebay*. I assumed this was connected to his attempts to maintain his masculinity by not expressing empathy, support or care (all of which are associated with femininity) (Osgood 2004, 19).

In another part of the interview, Wawan said that teaching in 'a man's way' was the school's expectation:

Fastrack Funschool recruits real men, men who have more masculine than feminine characteristics. Fastrack Funschool would not choose a man with lots of feminine characteristics to teach children. What is expected from a male teacher is not softness, but manliness to show

[children] what a man should be. That's what Dodo [the program director] told me; men should be men, should be brave and responsible (Wawan, 14 October 2014, Yogyakarta).

Wawan's comment implies that his presence in the school filled a gap that female teachers could not. This justifies his decision to reject 'the feminine way' of teaching young children. He highlighted his maleness as an advantage for the school; thus suggesting he did not need to change. Wawan always presented himself as a masculine male figure, including when he was role-playing, as noted below:

#### Note WN 8

15 October 2014, 9.45 am. Risa did not come to work, Wawan was in charge as the main teacher with Dina as his assistant for the day. In a storytelling activity, Wawan was telling a story about Baby Bear and Pingu the Penguin using a soft hand puppet doll. Wawan was playing the Baby Bear, and Dina (the assistant teacher) was Pingu. Wawan used a hard deep voice when he played Baby Bear, instead of using a child-like voice; Wawan seemed to stress that this Baby Bear was a boy.

He received encouragement and validation to act in a masculine way from his female colleague, Risa. Risa loved to arrange outdoor activities for the children. Wawan said that Risa's preference for activities helped him feel comfortable with his job. My observation notes show how Risa strategically utilised Wawan's maleness for physical activities identified with masculinity:

#### Note WN 9

14 October 2014, 8.45 am. After the opening, the teachers led the children to the backyard where their children's playground equipment made from used car tyres, bamboo and rope was located. At the playground, Risa explained to the children that they would learn how to climb the 'tyre wall'. The tyre wall was around two-metres tall. Risa then told Wawan to demonstrate how to climb the wall by saying, 'okay

kids, Mister Wawan will show you how to climb up and down' ... Wawan seemed surprised momentarily and said, 'hah?! Mister Wawan (me)?' Risa answered, 'ya... give them an example; okay kids pay attention (to Wawan)'. After they have finished with the wall, they moved to another playground area where some other playground equipment was set up. They did another climbing activity and hung on the monkey bars. Wawan did all the demonstrations.

Wawan was looked surprised at having to demonstrate climbing, but he did it anyway after asking for confirmation. I did not see any surprise in his reaction when asked to demonstrate any other physical activity, but I saw the same reaction when he was asked to lead a morning exercise in front of the whole school. His expressions, therefore, might be a clue to his discomfort in undertaking these activities. During the above activities, I also observed Wawan and Risa treat a boy (Doni) and a girl (Santi) differently. Both Wawan and Risa encouraged the girl less to climb higher and conquer their fear:

Note WN 10

Doni was climbing the tyres wall. He was scared half way to the top, Wawan and Risa encouraged him, 'come on you can do it Doni, higher, higher'. Doni tried but still, he was scared. Wawan and Risa's encouragement was constant until he reached the top. Santi did not get the same encouragement when she tried to climb up but felt scared. Half way, she said, 'I am scared'. Instead of encouraging her to climb higher, they agreed to help Santi climb down.

At first, I assumed Wawan and Risa's different reactions to Doni and Santi was influenced by their stereotypical gender beliefs. They treated them differently without realising it as if they were reinforcing gender behaviour. However, I did not observe the different treatment of other boys and girls. Doni was a boy with attention difficulties, and Santi was a very shy, quiet and sensitive girl. I frequently observed how Doni needed more attention and encouragement from the teacher to get almost any task done. In the interview, when I asked whether they

had different treatments of and expectations for boys and girls, they said they did not treat boys and girls differently. Wawan emphasised that his treatment was not based on the child's gender, but rather on the children's special needs. He explained that Doni was a special boy who needed extra encouragement due to his difficulties in paying attention.

Many scholars argue that early childhood teachers should play an equal role as educators and carers, due to the age-based needs of the children (Brody 2015, 375; King 1998, 74; Wood 2015, 257; Gibbons 2007, 125). Wawan did not follow this formula; he positioned himself strictly as an educator, not a carer. He set aside his main child-handling role as an assistant teacher, as it required caring practices. Educators will emphasise rationality more than emotionality (Cook et al. 2013, 113). An educator is concerned more with following activity plans and facilitating children's learning processes and outcomes, while a carer prioritises nurturing and fulfilling children's physical and emotional needs (Gibbons 2007, 125). Caring involves affectivity, altruism and conscientiousness (Osgood 2010, 126, Brody 2015, 375, King 1998, 74, Wood 2015, 257). Wawan's method of teaching, which included the use of monotonous questions and demanding correct answers from the children (see note WN 2 and 3), shows that his priority was academic outcomes, which is consistent with an educator's priority. The notes below capture Wawan's prioritising of academic outcomes:

#### Note WN 11

14 October 2014. The children were doing a paper and pencil activity, filling out a worksheet. Doni finished one and told Wawan that he had finished. Instead of praising him for finishing, Wawan responded straightforwardly and said, 'you haven't done this one!' with a firm voice and put the paper back on the table for the boy to complete.

#### Note WN 12

14 October 2014. Adzra was having difficulty sticking toothpicks on the paper. When he asked Wawan to help, Wawan firmly said, 'don't push it

with your palm, just use one finger'. Adzra was still unsuccessful in sticking the toothpicks, and again firmly, Wawan said, 'leave it just wait until the glue is dry. When you have finished putting the toothpicks on the paper, leave them don't move them'. Then he gave an example of how to do it.

Wawan's responses focused on the technique and the product of the children's work, rather than on the process of learning, where encouragement, support and praise are important for building children's confidence, an indirect result of learning. Wawan's detachment from the dominant aspect of caring (nurturance and emotionality) (Wood 2015, 257) is consistent with his feminine avoidance strategy, as discussed in the previous chapter. Avoiding feminine attributes and characteristics is a clue to hegemonic masculinities (Hanlon 2009, 184). Wawan identified himself as a real man. As he said explicitly during the interview, 'I am still a man'. He displayed a stereotypical cool and macho man personality in Indonesia, through speaking less and using fewer emotional expressions.

However, within his consistent masculine performance, Wawan also simultaneously performed feminine characteristics. Wawan showed submission and passivity to the main teacher, who was a woman. He did not try to challenge or deny the main teacher's authority, as shown in note WN 9 when Wawan exclaimed, 'Hah?! Mr Wawan?' However, he did not refuse to do as asked. Even when Risa was absent and Wawan replaced her position as the main teacher, he stuck to the learning scenario set by Risa. He framed his submission and passivity around his professionalism as an assistant teacher, who was supposed to follow the main teachers' directions. Wawan compromised hegemonic masculinity in the context of his work and his position as an assistant teacher. In the interview, he commented:

I am the assistant teacher; my job is to support the main teacher. Risa prepares the learning plan and does the teaching; I am just following her. Sometimes she asks me about the technical issues of some learning activities that she wants to do with the children. I share my thoughts (Wawan, 14 October 2014, Yogyakarta).

Even though he avoided feminine characteristics, he still undertook some caring tasks as prescribed in his job description, such as handling sick children and serving food once during lunchtime. However, his response to the children was rigid, direct and without any expression of emotion, as depicted in the following notes:

Note WN 13

15 October 2016. During snack time, Fahmi approached Wawan and said 'Mister, my tummy hurts'. Wawan then asked him, 'are you sick?' and touched his forehead, without saying anything else, he rubbed Fahmi's tummy with eucalyptus oil.

Note WN 14

15 October 2014. The children did a collage activity using toothpicks. Wawan approached Sintya (a girl) and asked, 'what are you making?' Sintya answered, 'a house'. Wawan then responded, 'oooooh house'. He responded without any encouragement or support.

Wawan's pedagogical performance was highly masculine. His approach was disciplinarian and academic-results oriented. He distanced himself from the students with a lack of emotional display. His construction of masculinity was inspired by hegemonic masculinity. He infused masculine characteristics into his pedagogical performance. However, his position as an assistant teacher also allowed him to negotiate his masculine subjectivity, becoming more tolerant of tasks and characteristics that would traditionally be perceived as feminine. This is something he did not have before. He compromised hegemonic masculinity in the context of his profession as an ECE teacher and his position as an assistant teacher, whose primary tasks were to facilitate the main teacher's teaching plan and undertake child handling, which involved many caring activities. In turn, this altered his masculine personality, which became more sensitive and caring (as illustrated in his interview response in Chapter 5).

## Putra, the Surrogate Father

Putra taught in a Nusantara class for children from five to six years old. Unlike the three other classes with male teachers, Putra's class used Indonesian as the instruction language, because it was not an international program.<sup>62</sup> Putra's class was larger than the other three classes; both in student numbers and in terms of the room size. There were six boys and nine girls in the class. Putra was paired with Rahma, a female teacher. In the classroom, they shared power and authority with each other. Even though formally, Rahma was the main teacher and Putra was the assistant, they often switched places. When Putra taught, Rahma would settle the children and vice versa. Their class was louder than other classes. The children were very active when talking and moving. In a similar way to Budi's class, I felt Putra's class was a typical cheerful kindergarten class with lots of laughter, singing and moving. This is evident in my notes:

### Note P1

3 November 2014, 8.30 am. The class had just started; everyone was sitting on the mat. Then, Rahma started [breaking the ice], 'hello friends, good morning! Let's make a ball ... how are we going to do it? Do you want to sit or stand up?' The children replied, 'siiiiiiiiit'; [Rahma responded], 'okay let's sit'. Then they played a making ball game by moving their hands up and to the front of their body, forming a round shape. They did it freely. They laughed, experimenting with movements.

They continued with singing a 'Good Morning' song. Putra accompanied their singing with a percussion beat using *jimbe* (a small African style drum).

In Chapter 5, I explained that Putra wanted to prove that a man could teach young children. He was aware that he worked in a field associated with women. In the

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<sup>62</sup> Fastrack Funschool has two programs: international and *nusantara*. The international program uses English as the primary instructional language, while the *nusantara* program uses Indonesian as the instructional language. The international program also teaches students how to read and write in English using an internationally franchised method called Letter Land. Teachers in both programs are Indonesian.

interview (see Chapter 5), Putra described himself as masculine. He stressed his masculinity by describing his rebellious past, tattoos and rejection of effeminacy in men. His pedagogical performances to some extent contradicted his rebellious and masculine description. Similar to Budi, Putra combined masculine acts with feminine characteristics. When dealing with children, Putra consistently showed affection, attention, care, tenderness and understanding. He was responsive both physically and emotionally. He talked to the children with a soft intonation. The expressions *silahkan*/please and *baik sekali*/very good were used frequently in the classroom.

Unlike Budi who called the children ‘friends’, Putra only called the children ‘friends’ when he talked to them in front of the class, as part of his formal pedagogical approach. In a one-on-one context, he called the children *nak*, a short word for *anak*/child. *Nak* is commonly used by parents or by an authoritative figure to refer to children or someone younger. As explained in Chapters 2 and 3, an age-based hierarchy is important in social interactions in Indonesia, especially in a Javanese context. The age-based hierarchy determined the language level and gestures used (see Sukarno 2010). Language and gesture reflect love and respect. Using *nak* to address children reflects the love from a parent to a child. This is illustrated in my notes:

Note P2

3 November 2014, 8.30 am. The class was about to start; Rahma got the children ready on the mat. Putra sat next to a table where a pitcher of water and the children’s cups were arranged. Rahma was having random conversations with the children. Edi (a boy) approached Putra and asked for water. Putra then poured water from the pitcher into a cup, and then politely said *silahkan nak*/please son and handed the cup to Edi with a smile. After that, Putra wiped the table with a cloth, cleaned it up and rearranged the cups and the pitcher.

Consistent with using *nak*, Putra’s performance confirmed his self-positioning as a parent caring for children’s needs. He showed the parenting behaviour and

physical attention commonly displayed by female caregivers that are considered an important contribution to a child's wellbeing (Brody 2015, 354). Putra did not hesitate to initiate physical contact, hugging the children from behind, lifting the children, allowing them to sit on his lap and to display other forms of physical attention, except for kissing. He was also very cuddly, and the children liked to get his attention and his cuddles. I captured one of the moments below:

#### Note P3

3 November 2014, 9.00 am. The children were doing circle time, sitting in a circle and each one of them took turns to report on how they got to school. Brian (boy) was talking, and Jaka (boy), who was sitting opposite Putra, approached Putra. Instead of telling Jaka to go back to his spot, Putra opened his arms, letting Jaka sit on his lap. Jaka was trying to get Putra's attention by touching Putra's face and directing Putra to see him. Putra looked at him for a second, but he then returned his attention back to Brian, who was talking about how he got to school.

#### Note P4

3 November 2014, 10.00 am. Free playtime. Putra sat at the corner of the class close to where the musical instruments were placed. Ninda (girl) and Sarif (boy) came to him. Sarif took a *jimbe*, a small African drum, and played it in front of Putra. Ninda tried to get Putra's attention by saying that she was tired. Putra listened to her attentively, and Putra fixed her polo shirt, which slid off her shoulder. Ninda then laid her head on Putra's lap and tried to have a conversation with Putra. Putra paid her attention; he talked about what they were going to eat for lunch that day, 'we are going to have grilled chicken and spinach soup for today, do you like it?' He was saying that as if he meant it by looking attentively at Ninda's face, 'you can be as strong as Popeye if you have spinach'. Ninda was still lying on his lap like a spoilt child. Putra then slowly tried to get Ninda off his lap. He did so very carefully. It seemed that he did not want to give an impression of rejecting Ninda. Ninda was off his lap,

but still leaning on his body and was still having a conversation with Putra. Then, Jaka came directly aiming at Putra's lap, he touched Putra's chest and said, 'Mr Putra I have some blood in my mouth'. Putra replied, 'really? We can clean it with tissue okay'.

Note P5

4 November 2014. Snack time at around 9.30 am. Sunu did not want to eat the snack. Putra asked him why. Sunu answered that he was on a diet. Sunu was a little bit overweight. Putra then said to him, 'you don't need to go on a diet, just be active, you will be fine!' Sunu still seemed a little bit sad, and then Putra came closer to him and sat next to him, talking and persuading him not to go on a diet. Then Sunu said, 'okay, but one snack is not enough for me. I will eat it, but it will not be enough'. Putra then said, 'okay then, you can eat my snack, don't worry'.

Putra was aware of some parents' concerns about male teachers touching their children, but he did not let it affect his physical and emotional attentiveness to his pupils. He said in his interview that what mattered most was that he protected and loved the children without any bad intentions.

Throughout my observations in Putra's class, I identified at least two boys and a girl who always tried to gain extra attention from Putra. They would lean into, hug and cuddle him like children with their parents. In the interview, Putra connected their need for his attention to a lack of parental attention at home, especially from their fathers. Putra seemed to construct himself as a 'surrogate father' (Francis 2008, 118) who provided care and protection. His performance was consistent with what he explained in the interview about being a role model and a father figure.

Putra and Rahma, the main teacher, used the liberal approach to discipline the children. Both Putra and Rahma often consulted the children each time they started an activity. Usually, they gave the children two choices to choose from, as

illustrated in note P1. The way Rahma and Putra solved conflicts was also very subtle, soft and non-authoritarian. The note below illustrates this:

#### Note P6

3 November 2014, 8.10 am. They chatted about people's experience in the morning. In the middle of the chat, Juna (a boy) said, 'Mister I object!' Juna did not like Jaka, who was mimicking a crawling spider with his hand on the mat. Both Rahma and Putra did not ignore Juna's concern. They attentively addressed the concern, 'what is it that concerns you Juna?' Juna answered, 'Jaka plays spider, I don't like that'. Putra then explained, 'don't worry Juna, Jaka did not play spider he just tried to fix the mat with his hand like this (he demonstrated what Jaka was doing with his hand). It is not a spider, don't worry' (he put his arm around Juna's shoulder, trying to make him comfortable).

To calm Juna, Rahma then asked the children to sing about a turtle and use their hands as if a turtle was walking slowly on the mat. Putra sang along and every child then moved towards him, leaving Rahma behind. Putra then asked the children to go back to their spot. One girl sitting next to Putra then leaned in and laid her body on Putra's lap; Putra let her do this for a moment and then tried to make the girl return to her spot by moving her body and saying, 'please Ninda, would you sit nicely'. Ninda returned to her spot; however, she still tried to lean on Putra's thigh. I saw awkwardness on Putra's face but he did not say anything to the girl, he just tried to move her away with his hand.

They continued singing another song; Rahma and Putra let the children choose what song to sing.

Putra's pedagogical practices, as described in the notes above, were dominantly feminine. However, his performance would shift to masculine in some circumstances, such as in the music and outdoor activities, and in a one-on-one teaching situation. Putra would play *jimbe* percussion during the music activities.

In the outdoor activities, as with Wawan, Putra demonstrated the physical activities and helped the children with their gross motor skills. Different from Wawan, who received instructions from the main teachers, Putra initiated taking over the 'masculine activities' without the main teacher asking him to.

Putra also displayed a masculine approach during one-on-one teaching. He was determined to make the children understand, and focused on the children's academic achievements, as captured in the note below:

Note P7

Sunu had difficulty writing the number '8' and understanding numbers. Putra approached him and gave him encouragement and an additional lesson. Putra took numbers hanging on a small cardboard tree on the wall and put the numbers on a small blackboard. Putra taught the boy patiently, repeatedly; his determination was obvious. He used a firm tone in giving directions to the boy. He would not let the boy stop and play before he had finished the worksheet.

During the interview, he related his determination and effort to make the children understand with his maleness. He claimed that male teachers were more creative in their ways of explaining things to children. He said, 'I think male teachers are more creative, most of female teachers are less creative, they tend to resort to resources readily available to them; it is what it is, what is important is that the children know (*seadanya, yang penting ada, yang penting anak tahu*)'. His comment essentialises gender and emphasises masculine superiority. However, in another part of the interview, he said that male and female teachers do not have gender-based differences in teaching children. He believed that personality influences teaching style. However, teaching style was not related to gender. He thought that 'a female's teaching style can be like a man, a male's teaching style can be like a woman'.

The above ambivalence might be related to Putra's attempt to de-gender the early childhood teaching profession, thereby proving that men can successfully teach

young children. Even though Putra stated that teaching style was genderless, he highlighted the benefit of a male teacher. Not only could a man can teach young children, they also taught more effectively. By highlighting this discourse, he strengthened his position as a man and as a teacher.

Similar to Budi, Putra's gender performance in the classroom shifted dynamically from feminine to masculine, depending on the situation. The pedagogical context allowed him to have a flexible masculinity, sometimes even one dominated by culturally feminine characteristics. His narrative of masculine masculinity explained in Chapter 5 was negotiated through his professional subject position as an early childhood teacher. His rebellion was replaced with care; his roughness was replaced with cuddles. However, he still asserted his dominant masculinity when he taught the children about numbers persistently, and in outdoor activities.

### **Wisnu, the 'Intern' Assistant Teacher**

As explained in the previous chapter, Wisnu perceived his involvement in ECE as a medium through which he would learn to be more confident, especially in terms of public speaking. My observation in Wisnu's class confirmed this. Wisnu was paired with Sinta (female), the main teacher. The task division between Sinta and Wisnu was as clear as it had been in Wawan's class. Wisnu was the supporting teacher and Sinta was the main teacher. However, Wisnu was involved in more teaching than Wawan. Wisnu did not integrate with the children as much as Budi and Putra. Nevertheless, he made much effort to blend with the children, but could not hide his introverted personality. He did not talk much unless he was teaching. During the free play session, he supervised rather than interacted with the children.

In disciplining the children, Wisnu used a liberal approach. He used indirect language to correct the children's behaviour. Sometimes he just called out the child's name to quieten them or to encourage them to listen to him or Sinta. He never shouted or used a loud tone with the children. However, I often observed his disciplining attempts fail, with the children ignoring his authority, as noted here:

#### Note WS1

20 October 2014, 9.30 am. In the free play session, a girl played with a book. Wisnu then reminded the girl (with a firm, but calm tone), ‘Susi, that book is for reading not playing, okay? You can read the book not play with the book, okay?’ He was just saying that without following it up by physically stopping the girl playing with the book. The girl kept playing with the book, and he ignored it. The free playtime finished. Wisnu asked the children to pack up, ‘come on friends, let’s pack up, everybody packs up’. He told everyone to pack up, but he stayed sitting on his spot. Sinta stood up and told the children to pack up, ‘clean up ... clean up; everybody cleans up!’ (she sang the words). Sinta then pointed out things to be picked up and packed up by the children. Three girls next to Wisnu were still playing; Wisnu did not ask them to pack up.

#### Note WS2

24 October 2014, 10.30 am. Lunchtime. The children and Wisnu were waiting for the food to come. They were sitting on their chairs. While waiting for the food, they had a conversation. During the conversation, a boy mistakenly called Wisnu ‘Mister baby’ [sic]. Wisnu smiled. But then every child was calling him ‘Mister baby’ and pointing their fingers and arms to him, ‘Mr baby ... Mr baby ... Mr baby’. Instead of correcting the children and telling them that it was not polite calling people like that, Wisnu smiled and put his finger on his lips giving a sign to the children to stop and be quiet. Then he said, ‘are you ready friend?’ The children answered, ‘no not ready’. The children then laugh[ed] and stop for a while. Then, Tanu, a boy, shout[ed], ‘Silly Mister!’ and other children then followed by again calling Wisnu ‘Mister baby’ repeatedly. Wisnu then said, ‘are you ready friend?’ Again, he tried to calm the children. The children then stopped for a while and said, ‘not ready’. Wisnu then continued, ‘let’s pray!’ (a prayer before the meal). The children did not listen; they laughed loudly. Wisnu then said, ‘close your eyes ... let’s pray ...’ [pause, the children listened to him and followed

him[, ‘then ... sleep’, Wisnu said. Then the children laughed again. Then Wisnu said, ‘let’s sleep, while we are waiting for the food, let’s sleep! Close your eyes, no one talk, no one make a noise. We will wake up when we hear the cock crowing’. Then they laid their head on the table. A boy then said, ‘mister ... mister’, in the way that Indonesians usually say when showing people their silliness. Wisnu then tried to quieten him up only by saying, ‘sssstttt’.

Power relations in the classroom are not embedded in an individual’s materiality and institutional position alone; they also depend on the discourse in which they are located (Walkerdine 1990, 5). The above notes show that Wisnu’s male material body and his institutional position as a teacher did not automatically make him an authoritative figure. The children challenged Wisnu’s authority. The children seemed to have more power over Wisnu than Wisnu had over them. Wisnu seemed unconfident about his authority, regardless of his relatively powerful institutional position. Wisnu took his time until finally deciding to do something to stop the children, and yet the technique he chose was ineffective. However, this condition is not a reflection of whether or not the children like him. Even though the children sometimes ignored his authority, I could see that they obviously also felt very comfortable around him. I often observed a child leaning on his body and trying to hug him. Wisnu himself never initiated physical touch with the children.

Wisnu’s case differs from Walkerdine’s (1990, 3–15) observations in two nursery schools in the UK in the early 1980s, where a patriarchal gender discourse was played out in sexist comments used by two four-year-old boys to reject a female teacher’s authority. In her observation, the boys were aware of their gender differences from the female teacher. Through language, they rejected their powerlessness within the institutional discourse of teacher-student power relations and gained power by positioning the female teacher as their object of oppression within their discourse of patriarchal male subjects. In Wisnu’s case, his maleness did not affect the children’s perception of his authority. Wisnu’s lack of authority originated instead from his doubts about his professional identity, rather than from

his gender identity. I suggest that the children's ignorance of his authority is a result of him constructing his professional identity as an 'intern' teacher assistant. Wisnu subjectively positions himself as someone who is learning, not someone who is teaching (as explained in Chapter 5). Looking at his interview transcript, I found that his hesitations in handling the children's unacceptable behaviour were due to his awareness of limited professional ECE skills. He did not connect these limitations to his gender. This is what he said in the interview:

One of the obstacles that I find is the choice of language when I want to direct the children. I am aware that I have to use positive language. I can't use negative language. It is difficult to decide which words to use and how [to use them]. I often doubt whether I should restrict the children from doing things that I don't like them to do. If I place too many restrictions, will the children be less confident and discouraged? Will my words threaten them or make them feel threatened? I am glad that just recently Dodo (the program director) trained us in how to face difficult kids. We have to use a firm tone, but we have to keep neutral. So I learn ... I think I am getting better and better (Wisnu, 15 October 2014).

Consistent with what Wisnu explained during the interview, the idea of his being in ECE to learn was clearly observable. Wisnu was constantly asking for reassurance from the main teacher before making a decision in the context of his pedagogical practices, as depicted in the note below:

#### Note WS3

20 October 2014, 9.45 am. At the end of a free play session, Wisnu got up and approached Sinta. He asked Sinta what they would do next, 'Miss should we sing first or get straight to the point (teaching about organic and inorganic waste)?' 'It is up to you Mister, what would you like to do first?' Sinta answered. 'I think we sing first', Wisnu replied. 'Yes, we can do that', Sinta agreed.

After singing and dancing ‘hokey pokey’ and ‘Miss Polly’, they sat on the mat and Wisnu started to explain about different types of rubbish, organic and inorganic. He explained the material clearly and looked confident, but sometimes he implicitly asked for Sinta’s confirmation about whether what he was explaining it correctly.

Wisnu’s unconfident and doubtful practice suggests a non-hegemonic masculinity. However, Wisnu perceived this more as a part of his professional identity, instead of his gender identity.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has analysed how the male teachers produce, challenge and negotiate constructions of masculinities in their pedagogical performances within early childhood classrooms. My analysis shows that male teachers’ gender performances resulted from interactions between their subjective constructions of masculine identity and their professional identities as early childhood assistant teachers. Their pedagogical approaches and practices varied, despite the fact that they had only received ECE training from the school and none of them had a formal early childhood education background. The variety of pedagogical practices displayed by the male teachers shows that their maleness did not lead to a uniform pattern of pedagogical approaches and practices. Thus, the social expectation those male teachers will offer different pedagogical approaches to women and based on their masculinity, explained in Chapter 4, is more ideological than realistic. My findings correspond to those of Francis (2008) and Brownhill (2014), who determined that the discourse of male teachers as uniform role models was unrealistic. Although the male teachers in this study claimed (see Chapter 5) to embrace what society expected of them (including being a male role model), in practice the male teachers revealed no identifiable set of characteristics that could be considered a singular and ideal pattern of male role model.

My research shows that the social expectations of male teachers to be gender normalising agents for boys are also ideological (see also Brownhill 2014). Little evidence emerged during my observations to support the idea of male teachers

teaching ‘boys to be boys’. I observed only one incident in Wawan’s class, during the tyre wall climbing activity, when the teachers encouraged Doni (a boy) more than they encouraged Santi (a girl) to climb higher. However, this incident was not clear enough to determine if the differing treatment was based on gender or the child’s unique needs. Moreover, I did not see any significantly different treatment of boys and girls in other classes and activities. The male teachers did not encourage boys to draw cars or other masculine-associated objects (as a parent had expected, see Chapter 4). The activities were the same for both boys and girls, or they were based on the child’s unique individual choices, which could be gendered. The teachers neither directed students to choose gender-appropriate activities nor challenged their preferences by deliberately offering other options that could challenge gender stereotypes (see also Adriany 2013).

My analysis also shows that male teachers’ gender performances were not consistent across contexts. Gender performances varied among male teachers, but also within each individual male teacher. Their professional position as assistant teachers placed them in the main child handling and supporting role. This meant they had to engage and familiarise themselves with feminine tasks, such as caring for sick children, preparing food and following the female teacher’s instruction. Wawan illustrated this: despite his conformity to hegemonic masculine characteristics, he was willing to negotiate his construction of masculinity by undertaking tasks perceived as feminine, such as caring for sick children and preparing lunch, and submitting to the female teacher’s authority. In particular, this was revealed when he followed and submitted to Risa’s instructions to climb the wall of tyres. These roles contributed to the male teachers’ self-proclaimed personality changes, especially in relation to their adoption of caring and nurturing qualities such as patience, empathy and sensitivity to children’s needs, not only in the school context, but also outside it.

The intersection of masculinity performance and professional identity contributed to the men’s choice of pedagogical approach. Budi and Putra, who considered teaching ECE a calling, were flexible in performing stereotypical feminine and masculine characteristics in their pedagogical practices. Wawan, who thought that

his masculinity was the reason for his employment, asserted characteristics that are more masculine in his pedagogical approach. Wisnu, who saw his professional identity as a learner, adopted a passive and somewhat powerless masculinity within the pedagogical context.

Even though every male teacher adopted a similar idea of gender every human being, male or female, has some level of both feminine and masculine characteristics (as advocated by the school director; see Chapters 4 and 5). Male physicality was often used as the basis for the gendered task assignments for male teachers, especially in outdoor and physical activities. As argued in Chapter 5, male teachers perceived these gendered tasks as a positive contribution to ECE, and often used this to strengthen their position in ECE.

At Fastrack Funschool, the idea of male teacher as a role model for a singular version of masculinity and as a gender normalising agent was more ideological than evident in practice. The variety of the male teachers' gender performance might go some way to deconstruct the hegemonic ideal of being a man. Instead of teaching children conventional constructions of gender and re-masculinising boys, male teachers in ECE can potentially be role models that expand masculine and feminine definitions and the type of roles men and women can undertake. Thus, in ECE the male teachers could potentially contribute to children's understanding of gender, which could destabilise common perceptions of gender stereotypes in society.

This chapter has also demonstrated the complexity of masculinity in practice. Hegemonic masculinity can easily be affirmed through the teachers' narratives. However, in practice, the manifestation of hegemonic masculinity was modified by the men's other identities. In the context of this study, men's identities as ECE teachers, their position as assistant teachers, and their primary task as caregivers in the classroom allowed the men to engage with alternative practices of masculinity. In particular, they accomplished this through engaging in caring and nurturing practices.

## Chapter 7: Conclusion

### Introduction

‘Hey how are you Matt (pseudonym)! Are you still a man? Just take care! Don’t be *melambai*.’ My colleague’s comment to a male student was crucial in the initiation of this research. Since the day I overheard him commenting about the only male student in the ECE program, I wanted to know if my colleague’s attitude represented a common perception among men who teach in ECE settings. How do the men themselves perceive their occupation in relation to their maleness? Do social perceptions and expectations affect their self-perception and their performance as teachers of young children?

The comment from my colleague suggested that being an ECE teacher was in opposition to being a man. This thesis has investigated how male teachers in Indonesian ECEs negotiate their maleness and masculinities in their professional practices as teachers. Throughout this thesis, I have argued that heteronormative hegemonic masculinity is constantly being both defended and challenged in the dynamic interaction between male teachers’ masculine and professional identities. I have argued that the masculine identity of male teachers is mediated by institutional factors, such as the school’s policies and cultural situation, social expectations and their personal interpretations of gender and their occupation. Men’s positions as assistant teachers, with child handling as their primary responsibility, allow them to incorporate feminine attributes into their masculinities, in both their narratives and practices. Gender balance and role model discourses are used by the male teachers to reproduce the hegemonic discourse of masculinity. In contrast, their masculinities in practice are modified through the discourse of love and care.

Despite Indonesian multiculturalism and religious plurality, its hegemonic culture is influenced by Islam and Javanese culture. A combination of Islamic and Javanese teaching has produced a construction of gender that was imposed nationally by the New Order regime (1966–1998). This is the essentialist and

heteronormative notion of *kodrat* I discussed in Chapter 2. According to *kodrat*, both men and women have predestined roles; women are predestined for reproductive and men for productive roles. Feminine and masculine attributes, therefore, are arranged based on the attributes attached to the roles. Attributes associated with caregiving and child education are considered feminine, and attributes associated with leadership, provision and protection are masculine. Crossing the boundaries of gender roles is considered a violation and disastrous for society. In the post-New Order democratic era (1998 onwards), the hegemonic construction of gender has been challenged.

In Chapter 2, I analysed various online materials to outline contemporary discourses of what it means to be a man in Indonesia. I argued that heteronormativity was still hegemonic in the construction of Indonesian masculinity. Being heterosexual, a leader, a provider and a protector (hero) are still the keys to being a 'real man'. However, what constitutes a leader, provider and protector is not static and varies across socioeconomic classes, religions and cultural locations. This variation is produced by different emphases on what forms the core of masculinity: wealth, nobility, spirituality and physicality. Thus, 'real man' is not a fixed and singular category. Apart from men being protectors and providers, the attributes that characterise masculinity are not restricted to those that are conventionally categorised as masculine. Contemporary masculinities in Indonesia incorporate both masculine and feminine features. Care giving, a conventionally feminine practice, has particularly been promoted to men within the narrative of 'good' fatherhood since the early 2000s. However, the portrayal and discussion of men working in female-dominated sectors, such as nursing and ECE, remains minimal. Even though the discourse of care and love has been actively imposed in some contemporary masculinities, it is still presented within the framework of the family. Increasing attempts to counter-hegemonic masculinity through the discourse of a loving and caring husband and father have created optimism that the ECE workforce can be more attractive to men. ECE can be a site of internship for men to learn how to be a good father and husband, as the discourse and practice of love and care is pervasive in the field. Thus, the

discourse of learning to be a good father may also be used to validate men working in ECE, as claimed by male teachers in this study (see Chapter 5).

Feminine and masculine attributes may differ across social groups, but a construction in ECE exists that is endorsed by the government: I term this 'ECE gender culture'. ECE gender culture normalises women as natural educators of and caregivers to children, which leads to a lowered financial appreciation and the exclusion of men. As discussed in Chapter 3, men face three main challenges in ECE: suspicions of paedophilia connected to homophobia, gender-blind policies that lead to hidden policies in favour of women, and a low economic status that makes ECE challenging for men who have adopted a provider role as the core of their masculinity.

### **Thesis Findings**

This study was conducted in Bandung and Yogyakarta, Indonesia, with greater emphasis and analysis on Yogyakarta's school due to the richness of the data and progressive values adopted by the school. The circumstances of the schools in Bandung did not allow me to obtain comprehensive information about the pedagogical practices of the male teachers since most of the male teachers had been appointed as school principals with very little obligation to do the actual teaching. In Chapter 3, I have discussed conventional gendered assumption that enables these teachers to have an acceleration (the escalator effect) of their career in ECE, although, like male teachers in Fastrack Funschool, none of them had a degree in ECE. Fast career promotion potentially hinders men from improving their skills in teaching young children and takes them further away from teaching roles. In Yogyakarta's school, on the other hand, the owner's progressive understanding of gender led to an affirmative approach to tackle disadvantages men faced in teaching young children instead of easily promoted them to managerial and administrative positions. They were periodically trained by the school to improve their teaching skills.

This thesis was guided by three points of investigation: 1) the social perceptions and expectations of male teachers in ECE; 2) how male teachers negotiate their

masculinities in a female-dominated workplace through their narratives; and 3) how they perform their masculinities in their pedagogical practices. The investigation of how the ECE community—female teachers, parents, school managers and administrators, and ECE authorities—perceive and hold expectations of male teachers has revealed conflicting perceptions about men who teach in ECE. This conflicting perception was apparent among respondents, who agreed and disagreed with men teaching young children. For example, Retno’s comments about how boys needed male role models, yet still resistant employing men in ECE, since she thought that men who worked in ECE were violating gender norms (see Chapter 3). All respondents justified their perceptions using discourses of gender essentialism and social learning. The social expectations of men and women were organised around the normative beliefs of what men and women should be and do. Thus, male teachers are expected to embody the conventional masculine ideals of a father/*bapak/kebapakan*.

Some respondents’ hesitations about, and the government’s ignorance of, men teaching young children relate to the legacy of a deeply entrenched maternalism in Indonesian ECE development; this is the same in other countries. Ailwood (2008, 157) defines maternalism as cultural understandings attributed to the role of women in parenting a child. In Indonesia, Ki Hajar Dewantara endorsed the doctrine of maternalism, linking ECE with the deeply rooted religious discourse of *kodrat*. At the time of writing (2017), the association between ECE and motherly care prevails.

Although global initiatives to de-gender ECE are growing, perceptions about women as the best educators of young children persist (Ailwood 2008, Sargent 2005). In Indonesia, the government has instrumentalised women’s groups and organisations to achieve ECE participation rate goals. At the governmental level, the call for men’s participation in ECE teaching is absent and foreign, despite the fact that an increasing number of men are entering ECE. As noted in Chapter 3, an interview with a government officer from the DoECE in the Ministry of Education and Culture revealed that gender stereotypes operated subtly in unwritten government gender preferences for female ECE teachers. As discussed in that

chapter, stereotypical beliefs about gender among government officers interact with homophobic sentiments and prevent the government from encouraging more men to teach in ECE. Deeply entrenched understandings of *kodrat* have resulted in a rigid understanding of gender. A heteronormative gender regime has established rigid boundaries, especially for men. Crossing these masculine boundaries, as when men undertake care (conventionally perceived as feminine) of a child not his own, will trigger suspicions of homosexuality. Paradoxically, the fear of homosexuality has also driven increasing support for men to teach in ECE. With the assumption that gender is learned socially, most participants argued that more men were needed in ECE to be role models, especially to teach boys how to be boys and save them from femininity. This finding corresponds with previous research in the US, Australia and the UK (Manke 1998, Mills, Haase and Charlton 2008, Thomas 1992, Sargent 2005, Warin 2006). The idea of *kodrat* is idealised: males are expected to possess masculine characteristics or to be ‘doing gender’ accordingly (West and Zimmerman 1987, 126). However, this ideal is not static and is sometimes contradictory. The contradictions are clear in the participants’ narratives about emotionality. Within the ideal discourse of ‘men as rational beings, female emotions are viewed as immature and unstable. Consequently, the participants expected men to be ‘mood balancers’ in classrooms. However, in the ideal discourse of ‘females as nurturing beings’, men are emotionally less stable than women. Thus, men are less fit for nurturing and care giving duties.

Positive attitudes to men teaching young children are influenced by both gender essentialism and a progressive understanding of gender. Gender essentialism plays in the discourse of the male role model and father figure. In contrast, participants who advocated men working in ECE wrapped their argument around the discourse of gender representativeness, gender balance and equal opportunity. The progressive participants understood gender as a social construction, unfixed and fluid, shaping positive attitudes towards men who taught young children. However, market demands and the sociocultural environment required progressive school managers to negotiate their progressiveness with what was socially acceptable. Employing male teachers was still restricted to men who showed no sign of effeminacy. Only ‘real man’ could teach in ECE. However,

most participants could not articulate what a ‘real man’ was. In my study, a ‘real man’ was considered married, with a child. Having a wife and a child ensures that no doubts about this existed; marriage and family are assumed as the core of the social order within Indonesia’s heteronormative gender regime (Howard 1996, 47). A married man is not threatening to society, for he has proven his heterosexuality and his commitment to family obligations and responsibilities. Thus, heterosexuality as the essence of a ‘real man’ persevered.

Moving on to the second focus, social perceptions and expectations shaped the way male teachers in this study narrated their experiences in an ECE context. As outlined in Chapter 5, most male teachers in this study appreciated their job as early childhood teachers. Their self-narrative about masculinity was highly context-dependent and sometimes contradictory. They simultaneously defended hegemonic masculinity and carefully reworked it in a way that was not confronting to hegemonic masculinity. A common perception of ECE as a female-dominated field triggered male teachers to defend their masculine identities by simultaneously re-gendering or reconstructing the field, and negotiating diverse constructions of masculinities. However, new versions of masculinities, which incorporate nurture, love and care, emerged through their attempts to reconstruct and negotiate their field of work, social expectations, professionalism and manhood. This was done without completely challenging the hegemonic construction of masculinity. Heterosexual provider and heroic masculinities were still upheld by the male teachers in this study, with modifications regarding nurturing, love and caring for children, conventionally in the feminine domain, as they are related to the maternal instinct (discussed in Chapter 3).

My findings correspond with other studies in a Western context, where men who work in female-dominated occupations face a crisis due to the gap between images of the work as feminised and conventional social constructions of masculinity (see Lupton 2000, Korek et al. 2014, Luginbill 2016, Simpson 2004). Therefore, men attempt to narrow this gap and defend themselves as not having deviant masculinities. Even though they have the same goal, which is to maintain their masculine identities, they used unique strategies to do this.

Studies in Western contexts often revealed men who were disturbed by expectations based on gender essentialism (e.g., Sargent 2004, 2013; Luginbill 2016). Male teachers in Western contexts often perceived gendered expectations, such as men being disciplinarian role models and responsible for additional physical work, as a pressure to conform to the hegemonic gender order. Many of the male teachers also view faster promotion to an administrative position (the ‘glass escalator’ effect) as an obstacle to the work they loved, teaching young children (Sargent 2004, Luginbill 2016). In contrast, male teachers in this study claimed that as men, they made unique and positive contributions to ECE. By embracing these social expectations, they also confirmed their masculinity.

When male ECE teachers discussed their masculinity, they often referenced archetypal masculinities, such as heroic and provider masculinities (discussed in Chapter 2), but with further nuances. In Fastrack Funschool, which was a well-established private school, two male teachers challenged the provider masculinity with another archetypal version of masculinity: heroic. Budi and Putra used a religious discourse to construct their version of heroic masculinity. They defined their job in ECE as fulfilling a call from and a dedication to the nation. They set aside the materialistic world for a greater good they felt would prepare the children to be good citizens of Indonesia. Budi and Putra preserved the traditional dichotomy of economy (public) versus culture (private) (Mayall 2000, 247). This is embedded in Ki Hajar Dewantara’s philosophy in which education teaches children norms and behaviours; therefore, it is more about culture. That is why education is not an area for generating money or gaining economic benefits, as portrayed in a famous Indonesian song for teachers ‘*Guru, Pahlawan Tanpa Tanda Jasa*’ (*Teachers, Heroes without Medals*). Referring to teachers as heroes justifies their low economic status. In the context of ECE, the gender essentialist discourse of education and care ensures that ECE workers are placed in the lowest hierarchy of teachers (Osgood 2005, 290). Despite this, Wawan and Wisnu, even though they worked at the same school as Budi and Putra, did not view ECE as separate from their economic activities. They perceived ECE as public sector employment, an area where they could gain economic productivity. By doing this, they defended their provider masculinity.

In all four male teachers' narratives, they modified their masculinity with nurturance, love and care that attached to their work as ECE teachers. They did this subtly while also affirming their hegemonic masculinity. They suggested that love and care were unnatural to them as men and instead suggested they only gained these skills through 'learning to be a father' and thus upholding heteronormative gender relations. They admitted that working in ECE had transformed them into more caring men, but they admitted this cautiously, without jeopardising dominant ideas of masculinity. Even though they insisted that working in ECE had not changed their conformity with hegemonic masculinity, their masculinities had been altered towards more nurturing masculinities. As Budi said, he had become more aware of other people's needs and more helpful not just to children, but to other adults. Similarly, Wawan said that after teaching in ECE, he had become more sensitive to children even outside the school.

Chapter 6 addressed the third research question about how male teachers performed gender in a professional context. The aim was to understand how masculinities were produced, challenged and negotiated in the interactions between male teachers, female colleagues and their students in a pedagogical context. The analysis in Chapter 6 showed that in practice, masculinity was continuously negotiated and challenged. Power relations between male teachers, female teachers and students did not operate based only on gender. Instead, they were based on interactions between the male teachers' subjective perceptions about their responsibilities (in relation to their profession), their position as assistant teachers and their gender subjectivities. An analysis of Wisnu and Wawan's performances exemplifies this. Positioning themselves as assistant teachers and learners ensured their submission to their female colleagues' guidance and instructions. Wisnu let his students ignore his authority because of his self-perceived lack of professional skills in ECE.

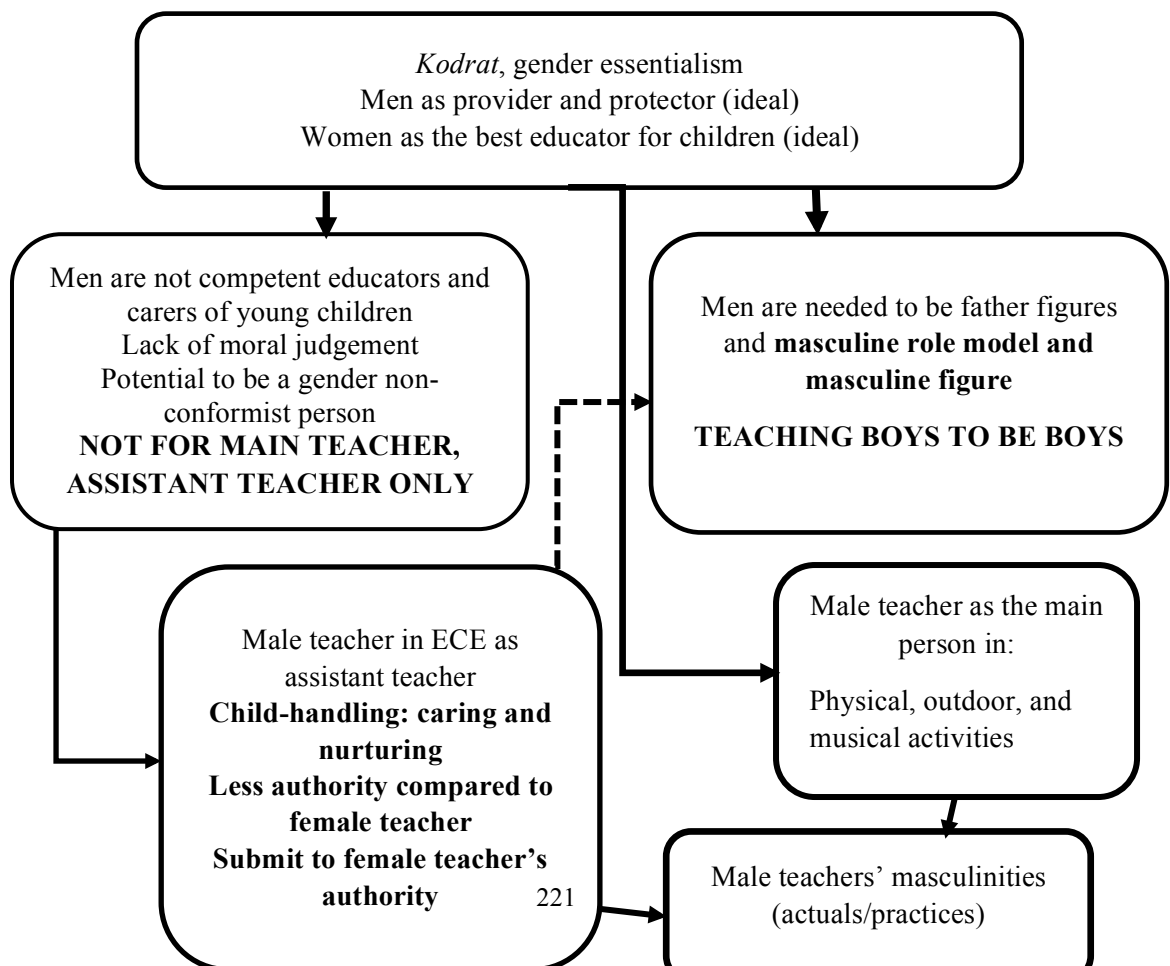
The notion of a role model, which was embraced by the male teachers and expected by the parents and colleagues (as explained in Chapters 4 and 5), did not manifest as predicted. Normalising boys or teaching boys to be boys was more ideological than practical. Despite the male teachers' confirmation, parents'

expectations that male teachers would be masculine role models for boys were partially ideological. The male teachers in this study displayed various masculinities due to the interactions between their perceptions of manhood and their understanding of their professional tasks. Parents expected male teachers to perform according to hegemonic ideology, thus ensuring that ‘boys would be boys’, but in practice, the male teachers did not provide different learning content or material to boys. The different treatment of boys and girls was not observed during the fieldwork. In terms of behaviour, in one context they presented tasks considered feminine, such as preparing food and taking care of the sick children. In other contexts, such as in outdoor settings, music and physical activities, they performed tasks traditionally perceived as male. The variety of masculinities displayed by the male teachers and unfixed power relations between female teacher, male teachers and students destabilised hegemonic understandings of gender. I believe this is a positive development, as it may contribute to children’s understanding of gender variability. This finding is consistent with Paechter’s (2006) concept of masculinities and femininities as practices that vary considerably from and masculinity and femininity as ideal types:

knowing that someone is male or female says very little about how their masculinity and femininity is constructed, While most, though not all, of us are men in male bodies and women in female bodies, how we understand ourselves as masculine and feminine varies according to time, place and circumstances. In order to understand the implications of this we may have to distinguish between ‘masculinity’ and ‘femininity’ as ideal typical forms that are connected with a local hegemonic masculinity and either its Other or something that is related to it in a more equal way, and ‘masculinities’ and ‘femininities’ as actual ways that real people construct and understand themselves in terms of how they ‘do’ boy/man or girl/woman. This would mean that any individual’s personal set of masculinities or femininities (assuming that we all have several at our disposal) would consist of attributes that would be related to identity and embodiment in multiple ways. This would make it much harder to classify ourselves and others into normative boxes (261–262).

The ECE male teachers discussed in this study did not perform an obvious feminine self-representation, but they constructed and performed various masculinities that involved masculine attributes alongside feminine attributes. For example, when Wawan obeyed Risa’s direction to climb a wall of tyres, he adopted a conventionally perceived feminine attribute of obedience and passivity alongside the masculine attributes of physical strength and bravery by climbing the wall. On another occasion, he enacted the masculine attribute of discipline and emotional distance with his students, but he was also caring towards sick children. The variety of masculinities displayed by male teachers can provide diverse models of masculinities for children, with the potential to destabilise children’s stereotypical understandings of gender.

The participants in this thesis demonstrated similar variations between the ideals and practices of *kodrat* (or Indonesian gender essentialism), along with how these have shaped male teachers’ experiences in ECE. Overall, this has resulted in the integration of nurturance and care into the male teachers’ masculinities. Figure 7.1 shows how the notion of *kodrat* influences social perceptions and the expectations of men who work with young children.



**Figure 7.1: Ambivalence implications of *Kodrat* on perceptions, social expectations, and masculinities of male teachers in ECE**

Perceptions that men are incompetent educators and carers relegate them to the position of teacher's assistants and masculine role models for boys. Although these positions result from conventional understandings of *kodrat*, the professional demand of ECE teacher assistants to care for and handle children modified the male teachers' masculinities to become more inclusive of nurture, love and care discourse. This research suggests that although a singular masculinity is idealised by the government and society in ECE, in practice, men's involvement in ECE creates opportunities for men to reshape their masculinities to include nurturance and care.

**Relevance of the Thesis in a Contemporary Indonesian Context**

Although Indonesian local tradition is partially tolerant of transgenderism and homosexuality, at the time of the research between 2014 and 2016, a growing pressure was being exerted on Indonesians to conform to conservative gender ideals. This rigidity has been strengthened by a growing homophobic culture in Indonesian society. In early 2016, the Indonesian public was impassioned over the controversial issue of non-binary gender and sexual identities. This was triggered by an arbitrary statement from the Minister of Research, Technology and Higher Education (*Menristekdikti*) banning the LGBT community in universities (Hidayat 2016). His statement concerned the Support Group and Resource Centre on Gender and Sexuality Studies (SGRC) at Universitas Indonesia, a well-known Indonesian university. SGRC is a student organisation concerned with gender and sexuality issues. In January 2016, a 'Peer Support Network' poster displayed four testimonies of students and alumni about their gender and sexuality. This became viral in social media and invited protest from various groups in Indonesia,

including moderate Islamic groups and the government. The poster aimed to give information about peer counselling services on gender and sexuality issues for students at Universitas Indonesia. This SGRC-UI issue grew and extended to LGBT communities across the archipelago. Many government officers made statements that contributed to the increase of homophobic sentiments (Erdianto 2016). Ryamizard Ryacudu, the Minister of Defence, stated that the LGBT rights movement was a part of a proxy war against Indonesian sovereignty. The Minister of Education and Culture, Anies Baswedan, encouraged parents and teachers to be alert to the LGBT phenomenon among students, asking parents and teachers to be guardians of morality (Fizriyani 2016). Their statements invited protests from LGBT communities, human rights activists, and counter reactions from conservative groups, such as FPI, AILA and MIUMI. The conservative groups accused LGBT groups, such as SGRC-UI, of promoting and recruiting people to be gay, lesbian and transgender. For conservatives, non-normative sexuality is a profound moral issue.

The debates and controversies escalated when revelations of sexual harassment and assaults perpetrated by two well-known Indonesian male celebrities on teenage male fans emerged at the end of January and February 2016 (see Nugraha 2016, Sindonews.com 2016). Thus, in 2016 saw increased cultural homophobic attitudes, a powerful agent in policing masculinity (Anderson 2009, 8). Since then, men's masculinities have been under surveillance and policed. LGBT communities were cornered and under profound scrutiny. An Islamist fundamentalist group forced the only transgender Islamic school (*pesantren waria*) in Yogyakarta to be closed and demanded that transgender people re-embrace their *kodrat*, meaning their masculinity. On 18 February 2016, the Indonesian broadcasting commission, Komisi Penyiaran Indonesia (KPI) released a circular policing masculinity by banning men from wearing feminine clothing and makeup, or exhibiting what could be perceived as feminine gestures or speech (KPI 2016).<sup>63</sup> KPI justified its action by saying that the ban was necessary to

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<sup>63</sup> Komisi Penyiaran Indonesia (KPI) is an independent body established by the government to regulate broadcasting in Indonesia. KPI was established in 2002 based on the Law of the Republic of Indonesia on Broadcasting. The KPI consists of the Central Indonesian Broadcasting Commission (KPI Pusat) and the Indonesian Regional Broadcasting Commission (KPID) working

protect children from deviant and immoral behaviour (Faiz 2016). KPI's circular denotes gender conformity as a marker of morality and normality.

Many media articles, both online and print, have campaigned to preserve gender boundaries, to prevent homosexuality and transgenderism (for example Nurdiansyah 2016; Nakita 2016; Kusnaeni 2014). In March 2016, Rita H Soebagio, the chair of an organisation called The Family Love Alliance (AILA), claimed that many mothers were anxious about representations of effeminate men in the media. AILA is an alliance of Islamic woman's organisations. It is not clear how many organisations are in the alliance. The alliance claims that their goal is to strengthen Indonesia families and make them more civilised. AILA claims to be the opponent of The National Commission of Women and is anti-feminism. AILA fights for a conventional understanding of gender, based on *kodrat*. In August 2016, AILA submitted a request for a judicial review to outlaw same-sex relationships and any sexual relationships outside marriage, whether consensual or not (Hermawan 2016). AILA's proposal was supported by academics from reputable Indonesian universities such as Universitas Indonesia, Institute Pertanian Bogor and Universitas Padjadjaran. Although these academics do not represent their institutions, their credentials as academics legitimised their attempts to encourage conservatism in Indonesian legislation (Hermawan 2016). In 2017, homophobic sentiments have increased. In May, police raided a fitness centre and arrested 141 men accused of practising homosexuality; they were stripped naked and treated as criminals (see Ramadhan 2017; Riana 2017). Reza Indra Giri, a famous forensic psychologist, and his organisation The Indonesian Movement for Human Dignity, proposed the criminalisation of LGBT rights activists (Yusuf 2017). All of these campaigns against homosexuality and transgenderism reaffirm a 'common sense truth' (Burn and Pratt-Adams 2015, 85) that femininity in men is abnormal and therefore a threat to society. Hypothetically, this increasing gender conservatism could pressure men to increase their observable masculine markers and so avoid accusations of homosexuality (Anderson 2009, 8).

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in the Provincial level. KPI is authorised to regulate and monitor Public, Private, and Community Broadcasting Institutions ([www.kpi.go.id](http://www.kpi.go.id)).

My fieldwork ended before the public escalation of homophobia in 2016. However, my colleague's comment, quoted at the beginning of this thesis, was also a form of policing masculinity in an educational institution, that revealed the broader ideological constructions of masculinity that operate in society. These have increasingly been reinforced by conservative Islamist groups. A trace of homophobic sentiment, as explained in Chapter 3 in the interview with Retno (a government officer in the Ministry of Education and Culture) has manifested in policy. In May 2016, the Head of Education, Culture, and Youth Authority (*Disdikpora*) in one Indonesian city, Metro, banned the employment of men in ECE as administrative or support staff and teachers, to prevent predatory paedophilia (Simanjuntak 2016). Even though this is a local policy, it reveals how powerful homophobic attitudes might influence male teachers in ECE. Policing masculinity continues in educational institutions. Schools and families are encouraged to guard the idealised boundaries between women and men.

In the midst of changing gender roles and identities in Indonesia, this study shows that despite pressure to conform to hegemonic ideals of masculinity, working in a female dominated occupation, in this case, ECE, has opened up space for men to rework these norms of gender, at least in practice. In doing so, this study demonstrates the work that goes into maintaining hegemonic gender ideals and their renegotiation in the workplace. This thesis provides an intimate engagement with the dynamics of masculinity and in doing so may help us to imagine how gender equality may be advanced for both men and women and especially for the children we teach.

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## **Appendices: List of Other Schools and Participants**

### **Little Stars Kindergarten (Yogyakarta)**

Little Stars Kindergarten was also located in Yogyakarta. It had four teachers, all female. This school was recommended by IGTKI because the school principal, Adri, was a man with more than 30 years' experience in teaching young children. However, at the time of my fieldwork he was no longer teaching, but focused on school management and ECE teacher training instead. Therefore, classroom observation in this school was not relevant. I interviewed him to explore his experiences when he had decided to be a kindergarten teacher in 1984.

### **FCF Kindergarten (Bandung)**

FCF Kindergarten was the first kindergarten I visited in Bandung. I undertook five days observation and interviewed all the staff and two parents in the kindergarten. FCF Kindergarten was owned by Family's Charity (FC) Foundation. The foundation was established in 2001 by a locally famous professor in education, who had once served in the Indonesian Republic's House of Representatives. The FC foundation ran three levels of schooling: kindergarten, primary education and junior high school, all in the same location. The kindergarten occupied a 40-metre square classroom and a small office. The kindergarten had only three staff members: a school principal who was also the main teacher and two assistant teachers, one female and one male. The kindergarten was one many average kindergartens in Indonesia. It was situated in the northern periphery of Bandung, around 15 minutes from the city. Most residents around the kindergarten worked as farmers. The school fees were very cheap, only 35 thousand rupiahs or around AUD3.5 per month. They only had 17 students, which meant the school only earned AUD59.5 per month. Consequently, they could not afford to pay their teachers properly.

The kindergarten's staff profiles are listed below:

Sami was the school principal as well as the head teacher. Sami was the daughter in law of the first owner of the foundation and the sister-in-law of the current owner. She was in her forties. She had a bachelor degree in early childhood education from a reputable university in Bandung. She was also a certified teacher with more than ten years' experience in teaching young children.

Asep, a male assistant teacher, was a junior high school graduate (equal the ninth grade of the Australian education system). At the time of my fieldwork, Asep was 17 years old. He had been an assistant teacher since he was 15 years old. He was an alumnus of FC junior high school. His family could not afford to send him to senior high school. This was common in the area; children only finished their nine years compulsory schooling. Some of the children who did not continue their education worked in hospitality, helped their parents with farming, or were not involved in any formal employment or education activities. Asep was the only member of his family who worked as a teacher.

Ati, a female assistant teacher, was also a junior high school graduate. Ati was in her late twenties. She had been working in the kindergarten since 2004, when she was 16. I also interviewed Lila and Wati, parents whose children went to FCF kindergarten.

### **KJ School (Bandung)**

KJ School was the second school I visited in Bandung. It was an American-franchised ECE that catered for upper middle-class parents. The school was situated in an elite area of the northern part of the city of Bandung. It served children from six months to six years old. Their services were similar to those of Fastrack Funschool, with a higher school fee, ranging from AUD40 to AUD100 per month.

In this school, I only had a chance to interview the male school principal, Awan, who taught occasionally. I was only able to observe him in a class of children aged one to two years old, with parents and/or nannies fully involved in the class helping the children.

Awan had a bachelor degree in English education and was doing his masters degree in early childhood education at the time of the interview.

### **Al-Ikhlash Kindergarten (Bandung)**

Al-Ikhlash Kindergarten was integrated in a mosque complex. It was owned by an Islamic foundation. The school was situated in an elite housing complex in the eastern area of Bandung. Islamic teaching was the dominant component of this school. Al-Ikhlash kindergarten is a well-established kindergarten for middle-class families. This school had 17 female teachers, and one male teacher, who at the time of my fieldwork had already been promoted as the school principal and was no longer teaching. The school also had three administrators: one male and two females, and one male security staff member.

In this school, I interviewed Fikri and Tina. Fikri was the school principal and a former teacher. Fikri had two bachelor degrees: in Islamic education and primary education. He had been working at Al-Ikhlash kindergarten since 2008. Prior to 2008, he worked at a private primary school in Bandung for two years. He was promoted to the position of school principal in 2012. Tina was a female teacher who had been teaching in the school since 1989.

### **Al Hikmah Kindergarten (Bandung)**

Al Hikmah Kindergarten was a small kindergarten run by a family. Al Hikmah was located in a rural-urban eastern area of Bandung. The owner and school principal was Handi (the husband); his wife and his sister-in-law were the teacher. This school had limited facilities and operated in a 48-metre square rented house. The school fee was AUD5 per month with annual fee as much as AUD15 per child. The school had 30 students. The school paid teachers as much as AUD25 to AUD30 per month for 24 working hours a week.

In this school, I interviewed Handi, Desi and Nivi. Handi was the owner, the school principal and a former teacher. Handi had a bachelor degree in Islamic education. He had established a preschool in 2002. Desi was Handi's sister-in-

law, who taught in the school. She had a degree in early childhood education. Nivi was a student's parent.

## **Government Officers and Teachers' Organisations**

1. Retno (female) was the *Kasi PTK Formal* (the chief of section) who dealt with kindergarten teachers and education personnel affairs at the Directorate of Early Childhood and Non-Formal, Informal Teacher and Educational Personnel Coaching, the Republic of Indonesia Ministry of Education and Culture.
2. Vera (female) was the *Kasi PAUD* (the chief of section) who dealt with early childhood education development in West Java province. She had been in charge of the ECE section since March 2014.
3. Feni (female) was the head of Indonesia Association of Kindergarten Teacher in the national level. She had 41 years of teaching experience in state-owned kindergartens in Jakarta, and had been active in the association since 1995. Feni was well known among kindergarten teachers all over Indonesia. She was called *Bunda Feni* (mother Feni) by the ECE community.