



# INSANIYAT

## Journal of Islam and Humanities



### The Identity Construction of Jordanian Muslim Woman Reflected in Willow Trees Don't Weep Novel (2014) by Fadia Faqir

Ida Rosida, Molalita

1. English Letters Department, Adab and Humanities Faculty, Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University Jakarta, Indonesia
2. English Letters Department, Adab and Humanities Faculty, Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University Jakarta, Indonesia

*email: idarosida@uinjkt.ac.id  
molalita25@gmail.com*

#### **Abstract**

*This article discusses the identity construction of a Jordanian Muslim woman through the main female character named Najwa reflected in Willow Trees Don't Weep novel (2014) by Fadia Faqir. The method used in this study is descriptive qualitative. It is supported by the concept of identity by Stuart Hall and that of patriarchy to analyze the text. The aim of the study is to point out how Najwa, as a Jordanian Muslim woman who lives in a strong patriarchal culture without male figure in her family, constructs her identity, particularly when travelling to some different countries including Pakistan, Afghanistan, and England just to find her father. The way Najwa Lives in a new country, where she interacts with new people and be immersed in new culture, has an immense impact on her. Subsequently self-identity construction is definitely inevitable. Here, Najwa herself strives to negotiate and articulate her identity through her appearance and behavior, especially in Islamic practices and rituals. Consequently, the negotiation and articulation turn out to be the two major things in her self-identity construction. Culture, however, becomes a crucial mean to identity. Different culture represents different identity, and it keeps changing relaying on place where she lives.*

**Keywords:** *self-Identity construction, Jordanian Muslim woman, patriarchal cultures.*

#### **A. Introduction**

Identity becomes one of the important issues nowadays same as Mercer (1990) who said in Woodward's book (1997:15) that "Just now everybody wants to talk about identity" for it also represents culture. Moreover, identity is constructed through culture, both symbolic and social, which creates the possibilities of what we are and what we can become (Woodward,

1997: 10). As the cultural being, human tries to construct their identity for the reason to distinguish their position as an individual or group through differences and of commonalities. However, Mercer adds that "identity only becomes an issue when it is in crisis, when something assumed to be fixed, coherent and stable is displaced by the experience of doubt and uncertainty" (1997:15). In other words, identity becomes



an issue only when it is in crisis or conflict.

Based on the statement by Woodward (1997), conflicting identity is located within social, political, and economic changes to which they contribute and it appears through some aspects such as nationality, ethnicity, sexuality and community. Its conflict might suggest the significant changes and at once it becomes the way to look at how identities are formed, and at the extent that identity are fix or alternatively fluid and changing. However, Newman argues that human has a profound tendency to define, classify, and categorize their identity since “every human society – from the simplest to the most complex – has a means by which members differentiate themselves from one another” (Newman, 2012: 35). In short, identity is something that we use to distinguish both ourselves and others about who we are. At the same time, we purposely call the attention of others through the way we dress, walk, and use of language as a distinction that we choose to associate with and where we lived (2012:35).

In addition, this concept of identity becomes such the highlight of an issue in literary works since most of literary works raise this issue of identity whether it is self-identity or cultural identity. One of the writers who reveal identity issue is Fadia Faqir with her novel *Willow Trees Don't Weep*. This novel is printed by Heron Books publishing and first published in London (Great Britain) in 2014 in English language. It is important to analyze it with the concept about identity because this novel explores the issues about identity and culture as part of cultural studies. Then, it aims to be part as the application of cultural studies, to vary the knowledge of the researcher herself, and as the references.

Fadia Faqir<sup>1</sup> (1956) is an Arab-British

1 Fadia Faqir has written four novels in English, establishing herself as a leading Arab and Muslim fiction writer. Faqir's works is recognised for its stylistic

writer. She was born in Amman, Jordan but has lived in British since 1984. Faqir's works, as well as this novel, mostly expose the theme of the injustices and prejudices rooted in tradition that run through both Arabic and Western societies, and reveal the way in which marginalized people, particularly woman, become victim of these prejudices in the way to perform their identity (Black, 2015).

*Willow Trees Don't Weep* novel talks about Najwa as a Jordanian woman who lives in an environment with a culture and rule of Islamic religion, but she is described as a different woman compare with the women in Jordan. Najwa lives in Amman, Jordan where religious beliefs in Jordan are dominantly Muslims with rich religious history of ritual practices and holy places, and also its social and political system are centered around extended patriarchal family units based on ancestry and wealth (Chmidt, 2015, Culture of Jordan, <http://www.everyculture.com>, accessed on October 23, 2015). She lives with her mother, Raneen.

invention and its incorporation of issues to do with Third World women's lives, migration, and cultural in-betweenness. Her first novel *Nisanit* (1990) is currently translated into Arabic. Her second novel *Pillars of Salt* (1996) was translated into German, Dutch, and Danish. Her third novel *My Name is Salma* (The title in US and Canada is *The Cry of the Dove*) was published in 2007. Her works is published in sixteen countries and translated into thirteen languages. However, Faqir has also written a number of short stories and plays. Faqir is also known as an independent scholar and activist in human rights. She gained her BA in English Literature at the University of Jordan before undertaking the MA in Critical and Creative Writing at the University of East Anglia, England. Fatima Felemban. *Linguistic Strategies and The Construction of Identity in My Name Is Salma by Fadia Faqir*. (Saudi Arabia, Umm Al Qura University, Makkah: 2011) Journal of King Saud University, p.44

and grandmother, Zaenap. Her father, Omar, left for the reason of joining the jihad, so that he left his daughter, wife and grandmother when Najwa was three years old. After that, her mother changed and took her away from her father's memory and the things about Islam. Because she came from a family with a rarely-interaction with neighbor of their environment, it made Najwa had no relatives and chemistry with this environment.

Besides, it impacted Najwa to be a different Jordanian Muslim woman although she has background of Muslim family but she never uses veil and rarely practices the Islamic rituals. Then, it shows a contradiction with her environment of Muslim dominances in religiosity. Moreover, hijab or veil of Muslim woman has been the subject over meaning and effects on woman. One of the meanings of veil explores its connection as a religious symbol which is related as a connection to identity. In the research by Davary (2009), Muslim woman's live distinguished between the "veiled woman" as a cultural and ideological representation and as the real subjects of their respected histories.

Furthermore, the absence of her father becomes such problem for Najwa since the patriarchal system in this society where men have important roles and domination over women through specific rules which exist and influence woman's appearance and performances especially in public. In addition, this conflict becomes complex after her mother's death since Najwa is treated differently by the society for her differences as a single woman since she is separated away with her father. It is conflict for Najwa's identity because the view that flourishes in Jordan about woman, especially a daughter who is viewed as a negative when there is no male figure or father as guardian. It influences Najwa in which she is treated by the society as a Muslim since her habit and physical appearance are different from the other people in her environment. Then,

it forces her to trace her father by having adventure to some different places of Middle East countries including Jordan, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Western Europe country of England based on the information of her father's clues about the places as her father's direction after he leaves Jordan, specifically his family in Amman.

The way she goes into the trip to those different countries makes Najwa faces different culture and environment and it influences her identity including the way she dresses as a Muslim and certain rituals of Muslim. Firstly, Najwa's identity is described as an unveiled and irreligious Muslim woman. It becomes a matter since the treatments from the society in Jordan such as differentiation and discrimination as woman who has no male figure and an unveiled Muslim woman. In addition, her trip reveals the cultures and the experience of Najwa and has significantly influence Najwa's identity to become fluid and changing.

In Jordan, she learns that Muslim women commonly wear long outfit and veil, they also have to live in a rule where women are banned being in public and to go out by themselves without her male partner. Moreover, she finds out another specific factor in Pakistan by which Muslims have obligation to define themselves as Muslims through the rituals of Islamic procession such as prayer and recite Qur'an. In Afghanistan, there is a significant difference about Muslim especially for Muslim women such as the rules of a women's outfit and their limitation to speak and interact. Then, she chooses to change her physical appearance by covering her hair with veil and wearing long dress which is used continually as well as when she is in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

On the other hand, significant difference appears when she moves to England where conditions and culture between Middle East and Western Europe country are different. There are some

significant differences in England for those women's appearance as she meets a group of veiled women but freely to go out in public. Therefore, she experiences a cultural shock that makes Najwa begins to accept the changes where she can defines and reaffirms her real identity without veil and other commodities of Muslim for woman. Based on the explanation above, this research analyzes the identity construction of Najwa's character which is portrayed in the novel. Furthermore, it is clear that the process and experiences that occur during her adventure to trace her father to different places or states consist of Pakistan, Afghanistan, and England influence her to find her identity and to become fluid with each culture. Then, this also shows that it is important for someone to have a certain identity as a self-representation and at once as the way to characterize themselves in the case of differences and commonalities. Relate to explanation above, this research uses the concept of identity by Stuart Hall.

The significant of the study aims to give the contribution and vary the student's knowledge in literary critic about cultural studies and literary studies, especially about identity. This research is also want to show the construction of Najwa's identity in facing different culture viewed from culture tradition and social environment in this novel. The method that is used in this research is descriptive qualitative. This method uses verbal and non-numeric data as a base of analysis and as a problem solving that observed (Farkhan, 2007: 2). In other words, qualitative method is used in a research as a reason to explore the phenomenon in a descriptive of a process, the variety of definitions about concept, characteristic of a something (Satori and Komariah, 2013:23). Then, this research uses qualitative methods by collecting the information about identity and culture from various sources, then analyzing the data by describing the process and relation of the identity and culture issues through character, and the final is finding

the result. This research focuses on the life of Najwa that is described as a Jordanian woman in the novel of *Willow Trees Don't Weep*. This research focuses on analyzing the construction of Najwa's identity in which she chooses to strengthen or reaffirm her identity and the research questions are stated below:

1. How is Najwa as the main female character in *Willow Trees Don't Weep* novel described?
2. Based on the description of Najwa's character, how does she construct her identity?

## B. Literature Review

Nowadays, Each human may have experienced the struggles in which conflicting identities of differences in the world such as nationality, ethnicity, social class, community, gender which may give problem to their identity and lead to contradictory fragmented identities. Therefore, someone possibly changes their identity as they live their life since "identity is formed in the "interaction" between self and society" (Hall, 1996:597). In other words, it means that identity is created in relation to another from how the subject is pointed out. This concept of identity is related to the problem of how a person tries to position or be positioned in a society of an environment. It is identified through certain religion, ethnicity, and gender that give people an important sense of belonging.

The concept about identity by Stuart Hall classifies that identity is an incomplete production that is always in process and always constituted. Stuart Hall gives his idea into two kinds of identities. First is the identity as *being* (self- subjectivity) and it offers a sense in terms as one which provides us as "one people" of unity and commonality (Hall, 1990:225). In other words, the identity of being means a pattern of person as individual or community that comes from the same ancestors and make



its members as one even their outside are different. Besides, it also means as a feeling of similarity or the sense of being the same as well as others. They usually have some similarities include the same culture, history, and also characteristics of their physic (1990:223). Then, the second idea is the identity as *becoming* (or as the identification process). As an opposition of the concept of being, it reflects the identity of man or woman from their surroundings. It shares the culture of person and its functions to refer us as one person. This concept of identity can be categorized into some components such as social aspects, physical appearance, personality, nationality, religion and other supporting aspects (1990:393).

This research refers to this concept of identity that “It is a matter of ‘becoming’ as well as ‘being’”. It belongs to the future as much as to the past (1990:225).” In this research, the process of *becoming* occurs continuously because it is not something that already exists, but identity is something which transcending place, time, history and culture. The construction of identity is probably influenced by some aspects since identity also shows how people position themselves in their surrounding and how they position others. Identity is something which is placed or positioned in a culture or even in a language or history in which it can be something that is never fixed, permanent or unalterable opposition (Hall, 1993:138). Moreover, identity is a fluid process that can be constructed or changed based on the past and the present which relates to the “who we are” and “what we have become”. In the process of *becoming*, there is a process of *negotiate* and it leads to the possibility of the subject between change into their new identity or keep on stick with the old one.

Furthermore, the construction of identity is a process that relates to the contexts which this process cannot be separated from articulation. Stuart Hall said that one of the important aspects of articulation is a focus

on practice rather than just an idea. Those are because the articulation is an act of human being (speaking, organizing, advertising, etc). In brief, identity of person can be changed become dynamic and unstable as a distinguish aspect in social formation as Hall argues that identity is a product that never ends, and always in process that formed in a construction of identity (Hall, 1997:16).

The other concept used in this research is patriarchy. Literally means the “role of father” or “patriarch” that is used to mention that the family is controlled by the man. This concept of patriarchy can be defined as a political-social system that refers to the male as a dominant which is superior especially over females, and endowed with the rights to maintain the dominance, especially in the member of society (Hooks, 2015: <http://imagineborders.org>). In addition, patriarchy tends to use the viewpoint which is dominated by man (male-dominated), determination of man or male-identified and male-centered. In short, it is a concept with a system of social structures and practices, in which men are dominant, oppress and exploit women. Patriarchy is viewed as a concept of ideology that analyzes the way of male domination. It is fostered and perpetuated by culture, religion, and science as well as socialization and psychic development (Wilson, 2015: <http://academia.edu>)

This case appears through the society in Jordan within the family structure. The Jordanian society is a patriarchal one in which men are prescribed power, privilege and control over woman and children. The male is a figure who has the authority and power over a female as a result of his dominance on material and social resources. The distribution of this power in a Jordanian family is hierarchic because male are superior and woman and children is subordinates (Al-Badayneh, 2012: <http://ikcrsjo.org>). There is relation about this patriarchal culture to gender roles in Jordanian society. They have

conservative attitudes towards gender roles within social structure, the behavior of men and woman is strictly defined and formed on the basics of social system (Al-Krenawi and Graham, 1998 in Al-Badayneh, 2012: <http://ikersjo.org>). The other concern about women is that they are expected to fulfill her feminist roles, including her loyalty to her husband and the family, and the preservation of the reputation of the family. In short, to avoid the consequences of behavior, women have to comply with social and cultural rules which are applied there.

### C. Discussion and Results

This research is divided into two discussions; first is how Najwa's character is described; the second is how Najwa constructs her identity in the novel. *Willow Trees Don't Weep* is a novel about a woman who lives in Amman, Jordan, and her new environments in her journey to some Middle East countries including Pakistan, Afghanistan, and England as Western Europe country. In Jordan, she is isolated because of her physical appearance without veil and a single woman as well as when she is in Pakistan. That isolation also occurs as she is doubted by the society as a daughter of a Mujahideen, Omar Rahman and being restrained by the restricted rules such as speaks to others when she is in Afghanistan. In contradiction, she feels something that are significantly different when she is in England, perception of a woman and family are different there and it makes Najwa feels comfortable and accepted in her new environment in England.

It is revealing some significant changes of Najwa through some aspects such as her appearance, purpose, and behavior. The character analysis of Najwa in this novel is specifically about her personality traits and the construction of her identity. Najwa is a Jordanian woman, with family background as Muslim and lives in a country of a Muslim majority, who appears to be a different one. The method that is used

to reveal the character are mostly indirect or implicit since it is to "show" rather than to "tells" about what the character's appearance and personality. Besides, the narrator tells all her random thought which influence the narration from the beginning until the end of the story. Then, it also can describe the identity of Najwa as a sentiment, prejudice, isolated, discrimination and brave person.

### Characterization of Najwa

#### 1. Sentimental

Based on Najwa's personality trait described in the novel, it can be clearly seen that she is sensitive and tend to be sentimental person. The way she interacts with others and the way she responses something show her real characteristic.

"Normally mourners gather for a meal after the funeral, but they all found excuses and vanished.

I have to go to the dentist, the unhinged assistant said.

He's never been to the dentist in his whole miserable life." (Faqir, 2014:5)

This quote shows Najwa's feeling in which it is a little bit too strong at the other's responses. It describes her sentimental in the way she interacts with one of the mourners who has no close relation with Najwa, but she argues about him as if she knows that person well. It shows that her strong feeling that criticize another's business and it relates to her necessity that the mourners should respect her on her mother's funeral by companying her in a gathering even if it is only for meal. However, it is crucial for her when they permit to do their own business same as the unhinged assistant that

has necessity to go to the dentist but Najwa has different opinion and attitude about it and has a tendency of not believing the other's saying. It's all of her sentiment.

The other sentimental characteristic displayed in the novel is happened when Najwa argue in her mind about how she compares that animal is so important than her family's story to be conversed.

“Why were they talking about the weather and cats? Did I offend them by telling them about my family? Perhaps I shared too many details with them. Was that frowned upon in their culture? The conversation about the cat went on and on. Animals were so important in this country.” (Faqir, 2014: 204)

Here, the hint when she feels that it is less interesting in telling her family's detailed story, but her perception about the response in which it is different from what she expected. In opposite, Najwa's feeling about their reaction to the topic of a conversation about her family creates the sensitivity from the way she interprets this situation as a kind to be ignored.

### 3. Restrained from religiosity

The relationship between Najwa's family and the society in the environment where she lives shows how Najwa's family, especially her mother, makes Najwa as a bridle woman since there is no relative and interaction. In addition, the background of this family is a matter since there is no male figure and as a family with lack of religiosity. In short, this restriction also influences Najwa to be different since she never wears and practices any of Islamic rituals.

“Growing up in a house without religions, as our neighbor called it, I was not used to covering my hair wherever I went. Unveiled, I stood face to face with my fate.” (Faqir, 2014: 132)

In that narration, it emphasizes the character of Najwa that is treated in discrimination. The reason is because Najwa is a Jordanian woman but she never uses veil and she never practices the Islamic rituals or shows her religiosity as a Muslim and extremely have a rarely interaction with the people in this society, this case influences Najwa to be a person who grows up in the house (family) without faith and become a non-believer. Then, it puts Najwa in the situation of no other choice except obeys and follows the rules and custom in this environment since perception about her is bad. Besides, she is explicitly stated about her identity as an unveiled Muslim woman although she is a Muslim but she is not allowed to use veil by her mother's restriction. It also describes her conflict of identity as an unveiled Jordanian woman because she feels that her life is kind of facing her fate as the end of her life that she has no option to be live in a future without covering her hair.

### 4. Courageous

In addition, Najwa also shows her personal traits as a brave woman. It comes as she tries to deal with perception and culture in her environment for her differences by finding her father.

“Clasping the photo, I went to the local internet café, a space out of bounds for chaste woman. Only men went there, to sit in front of the computer screens, cracking roasted watermelon seeds, smoking hubbly bubbly and searching for sites of ill

repute. If I walked in, they would think that I was looking for a chance encounters. Breaking the rules of the community was easy.” (Faqir, 2014: 49)

This text shows about Najwa who has mission to find the information about her father because she only has the old photo and a tiny clue about him. That information is not obvious enough for Najwa, it forces her to go to the local internet café to find the related information about that place which is mentioned by Hani’s family and other clues. Furthermore, it describes a difficult situation for her since there is a specific rule that limits women’s role and appearance in public. Here, she has to deal with the risk since she has mission to find the clues about her father by searching the information that possibly related to her father’s existence.

### **The Identity Construction of Najwa**

This research focuses on the construction of Najwa’s identity in the *Willow Trees Don’t Weep* novel. In accordance to the process of Najwa’s identity construction, Najwa tries to deal with the conflict of her identity through the process to find her father in which also reveals the construction of her identity. As the focus on the construction of Najwa’s identity in which the process of identity is related to the past and the future in which it can be influenced by the custom and culture of certain country. The identity of Najwa is a Jordanian woman with the background of Muslim family and lives in a country of Muslim majority but she does not wear veil and it mostly formed by her mother’s restriction in which it influences her to be an unveiled Muslim women that rarely practices Islamic rituals as Muslim’s habit in Jordan. Then, it shows that Najwa does not represent herself as a Jordanian Muslim woman that puts her in a crisis of identity.

“I knew I was different. I was not allowed to cover my head, wear a long school uniform or trousers, recite the Qur’an, participate in the Ramadhan procession or wear prayer clothes and go to the mosque in the evening with the other children who carried lanterns. I would stand by the Iron Gate, listening to them sing, ‘Welcome Ramadan!’ The house was ‘secular’ and it took me years to understand the meaning of that word. No religious words, deeds, texts, symbols, jewellery or dress in this house!” (Faqir, 2014: 9)

In addition, it becomes problem for Najwa related to the case about veil. In certain Middle East country, the veil is historically used to distinguish a woman of high status and honor (Grace, 2004). This case of veil about the meaning and functions is actually prescribed in the *Qur’an* (the scripture of Islamic religion). Those are the way to represent the identity of Muslim woman and at once to distinguish their religiosity. On the other hand, the problem faced by Najwa is not only from the way she performs herself as a Jordanian woman that is surrounded by religious societies of Muslim majority country that follows the rules and practices of Islamic religion. The absent of her father who abandons her since she was three years old makes her in the difficult position because of the treats by the people in this society about a single woman who has no figures or relatives of men. It becomes such problem for Najwa to live in this society as a single woman especially after her mother’s death since this society reveals the patriarchy culture that men has superiority over woman in the aspect of role and power. It is related to the description of Jordanian society as a patriarchal one by which the figure of men, within the family structure, has the authority and power over



female. It reveals in a Jordanian family as the mutual support and responsibilities in which the figure of father has role to be superior as family honor and has responsibility to teach and protect his wife and daughter.

It explains why Najwa cannot stand on her own self to continue her life because she has no male figure in her family and her grandmother is way too old to accompany her. In this case, Najwa's identity as a woman in Jordan is in crisis because there is stereotype about single woman which are labeled as harlot or same as prostitute. Furthermore, the clueless about her father makes it more complicated for this label and perception for Najwa.

“With an absent father, people might think you're a harlot. So, caught in the middle, it was impossible to find the right outfit and leave the house without being reprimanded. During the taxi journey, my mother seemed asleep and my grandmother kept wiping her tears with the end of her sleeve. The driver ogled me in the mirror; being the daughter of an absent father, they saw me as common land, without a fence or borders. I looked out at the setting sun and wondered who made that web you find yourself caught in. How did I end up here? Was there a way out? Can you soar solo?” (Faqir, 2014: 14-15)

It shows that the patriarchal culture, in Jordan, is powerful for women's position within family. This patriarchy system can be seen by which woman is an inferior for the absence of male figure in a family that puts her as powerless who is underestimated and as a disrespect woman. On the other hand, she also explains herself as a woman who has no status and honor. In addition, this case forces Najwa to adapt with the custom in Jordan by traces her father. Najwa must keep

her pride as a woman with honor and status by looking her father. Besides, this powerful culture of patriarchy makes Najwa has limitation about life's choice. A woman's manner and appearance, in general, depends on the figure of male in a family. In brief, this case emphasizes different things in a life of women in Jordan because they live under the control of culture and men's power which exists there.

“I had no option but to find my father. If my grandmother died, I would live alone in that house, something this city would not tolerate. Only woman of ill repute live on their own without a male guardian. I would be pursued by predators, ostracized, and my door would be marked. If I'd had any choice, I would have let him go, for he was nothing to me, not even a memory.” (Faqir, 2014: 23)

In that quotation, it shows that Najwa's life in her old village has no choice except to find her father. She imagine about her old grandmother that no longer life. Besides, she cannot live in that house alone without male guardian since the society in this environment would not tolerate this case and she has no other family member or relatives except her grandmother. She is explicitly narrate the treatments from the society in the environment where she lives about a single women of ill reputation as single women in the future that she might be pursued by predators if she continue her life alone, and probably be ostracized by the society. Even though, she has no willing about her father for she has no memory about him but it forces her for the reason to avoid lives as a woman with ill reputation because it is something that hardly tolerate in this society.

This case explains as a form of her effort to take her reputation away to be a better

person in her environment. The importance of man over woman forces Najwa, as a woman with an absent father, decides to obey the rule and custom in this society. In short, it explains how Najwa tries to negotiate her unexpected conditions as a single woman in the position of no other choice between live as a single woman with bad reputation or trace her father alone with another risk to break the rules. In some cases, this process also shows that Najwa tries to change herself through negotiate her hesitation about her real self as well as strengthen her identity.

However, there are some cases that she has done to deal as the effort to construct her identity. Najwa tries to negotiate her differences in the way to perform her identity as an unveiled Jordanian woman by changing her daily outfit that is seen much more to the western-clothes. This way is chosen for some purposes that she tries to be accepted in order to reach her mission to find her father. Besides, she tries to be accepted and avoid to be reprimanded as a different one by changing her old identity by applying the custom of Muslim majority countries including her old village in Jordan, and the country she is visited such as Pakistan, and Afghanistan. "Najwa : dma, I have to go to the mosque. Do you think they'll let me in?"

Grandmother : Not in a short-sleeved top, your hair uncovered

Najwa : I took my ther's veil, tied it around my head, draped her loose abaya over my shoulders and ran out.

Grandmother : Najwa! The mosque is under surveillance!" (Faqir, 2014: 37)

From this dialogue, it occurs when Najwa tries to find a clue about the information of her father. It shows the identity of Najwa that different through the way she perform herself. Here, she has mission to find the clue about her father to the *Imam* at the mosque in her old

village but she hesitates that they will not accept her because of her appearance as a woman with a short-sleeved top and unveil. Here, the figure of *Imam* is not only the one who leads on the prayer in a mosque but it refers to a title of various Muslim leaders.

Then, the text shows the process of negotiation that Najwa does between herself and the environment since the process of negotiation leads the new environment to the subject to be the new one through the system of domination. Based on the concept of negotiation by Stuart Hall, identity is not only about something which come from the truth inside, but it also something that comes from outside. First, the process of negotiation comes from Najwa's mind as she feels to be unaccepted by the people in her environment but then the suggestion by her grandmother leads her to be the new one through the domination of Muslim majority. By describing the statement about her effort to change her physical appearance, she negotiates with herself to leave her pas identity.

On the other hand, the identity of Najwa as a Jordanian woman is still ongoing process as her journey that leads her into the other Middle East country. The process of Najwa to find her father gives her the information about her father that joins the global jihad in Afghanistan. She gets that information by visiting her father's friend, Hani, and search more information in the local internet café, and asks the detail information to the imam in the mosque at Amman, Jordan. Based on the information about her father that joins the global jihad in Afghanistan, she follows its direction and prepares her document that is incomplete because she cannot get that document without male figure that accompany her and give permission for her trip.

However, she forces herself to keep going into this trip and makes a forge

visa through the statements about herself as a single woman and gets her visa to be stamped. After all of her documents complete, she sells the gold of her family because she does not have enough money to save for her grandmother to do the haj and her trip. Here, she needs to go via Peshawar in Pakistan for her direction to Afghanistan because she needs to go to the mosque there and meet Abu- Bakr. Then, it shows Najwa who meets and interacts with new people and follows the custom of Muslim practices when she goes to Pakistan.

“I am looking for Abu-Bakr.” The whisper was amplified in the spaciousness of the mosque. She handed me Qur’an, directed me to a quiet corner away from other worshippers and left. I sat in the cool space reading it for no obvious reason. In the past I only read it when I was at school and revising for the Islamic religion course, which I failed year in, year out. A pleasant breeze, laden with the scent of flowers and essential oils, wafted through the arched window. I rested my shoulders against the wall and read.” (Faqir, 2014: 78-79)

In this narration, it explains the trip of Najwa when she succeeds to go to Pakistan in order to visit the mosque and meet Abu-Bakr. She goes into this long journey without relatives and the forged document and visa. Then, she comes to mosque and asking to the pilgrims that she wants to meet Abu-Bakr but it shows that Najwa is directed to a quiet corner to wait as she is handed a Qur’an from that person. Here, it describes Najwa who reads it for no reason because it is the unusual things for her. She explains that in the past she only read it at school for Islamic Religion course that she always fails for years. Even though, it shows that it is not a new thing for Najwa to participate

and practice the worship of Muslim such as reciting *Qur’an* although she also describes that it is something in which she always fails to practice that rituals.

By this text, Najwa articulates herself with the new environment of Muslim when she is in Pakistan through the rituals of Muslim such as recite the *Qur’an*. Besides, it shows us that this case emphasizes the construction of Najwa’s identity as a Muslim woman that mostly fails to do the rituals or habits in an environment of Muslim majority. Then, it also shows a process of becoming of her identity through the rituals of Islamic procession that she practices as the process to strengthen her identity as a Muslim woman. Furthermore, it does not finish here because this trip directs her to cross to Afghanistan.

“Abu-Bakr-old, bearded, scrawny and wrapped in a shawl – stood hunched against the morning sun. He gave me the permission he had obtained for me to cross to Afghanistan, a letter and hundred Afghanis. He said it would be safer to travel unescorted by public transport. The driver is trustworthy. Whatever happens, don’t say a word! Pretend to be extremely pious and refrain from shaking hands or speaking. Strict Muslims believe that a woman’s voice is *awra* and must be kept hidden. You’ll be fine.” (Faqir, 2014: 101)

In that narration, it explains when Najwa’s mission to find her father directs her into the strict Muslim country, Afghanistan. It shows that there are some certain rules especially for woman that they need permission and preparation before they cross to Afghanistan.<sup>47</sup> Here, it also describes the power and domination of men about the role and domination through the power of Abu-Bakr who gives Najwa permission to cross

to Afghanistan and at once put her as a figure in need of assistant through the way she is accompanied by a trustworthy driver. It explains how Najwa positions herself same as woman in Afghanistan as a figure under the power and control of men as well as women that has no rights to be there alone without assistant. It also explains that woman forbid to say a word and pretend to be pious and avoid the skin ship even speaking. All this thing exists because strict Muslims believe that woman's voice is awra and it must keep hidden in order to give a woman save.

“Wearing a chador, head wrapped in a hijab made of flight woolen fabric, I sat in the back of a taxi next to a Pakistani soldier, two farmers and an old woman in a burqa. I was uncomfortable under all that fabric and kept pulling it from under me and adjusting it around my shoulders.” (Faqir, 2014: 101-102)

In that quotation, it shows the process of identity formation that is influenced by their surrounding on how Najwa positions herself, and how the societies in this environment positions Najwa. Here, Najwa positions herself same as other afghan woman by changing her physical appearance by using burqa and chador. This text emphasizes different custom of Muslim woman in the Middle East country because the author is explicitly stated about the appearance of Muslim in each country. Here, Muslim woman is described to use something that totally covers their whole body by using chador.

Then, the text shows the process of negotiation that Najwa does between herself and the environment since the process of negotiation leads the new environment to the subject to be the new one through the

system of domination. Based on the concept of negotiation by Stuart Hall, identity is not only about something which come from the truth inside, but it also something that comes from outside. First, the process of negotiation comes from Najwa's mind as she feels to be unaccepted by the people in her environment but then the suggestion by her grandmother leads her to be the new one through the domination of Muslim majority. By describing the statement about her effort to change her physical appearance, she negotiates with herself to leave her past identity.

By describing this case, it proves that Najwa feels as an outsider whose transgression excludes her from the mainstream societies as producing her identity that puts her as marginalized since identity of outsider is produced in relation to the insider that represented by the mainstream societies in her environment. The process of her adventure to find her father as well as her identity cannot influence her faith even she passes the long journey and faces different custom and people of each country but she cannot strengthen her identity become stable for the changing of her appearance same as Muslim woman with veil. In other wise, Najwa shows her decision, after she knows that her father joins a global jihad to England, when she leaves the country that restrains her. On the other hand, she comes to England and finds many differences from what she faces on her previous trip in Middle East Country including Jordan, Pakistan and Afghanistan through the way women performs herself in the name of religion and custom of each country.

“I took off my veil, folded it up and put it in my duffle bag. My mother would have been proud, but would my father, whoever and wherever he was?” (Faqir, 2014: 165)

In that quotation, it shows Najwa



who deals with her mental conflict as a stranger in the circle of Muslim on her way to England, by taking off her veil and gives up on all of her effort to negotiate herself with the custom of a Muslim with its rituals and the strict people in the Muslim majority country include Jordan, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. It also reflects the changing of her identity that is influenced by the custom of Muslim woman in perform herself. She is explicitly stated that her mother's restriction to become an unveiled Muslim woman and not religious still influences her. This strong effects on Najwa is not without reason because her mother is the figure that become the major control on her life as a figure of mother and change the figure of her father to teach and help to form herself, although she has her grandmother who has religiosity but it is not impact anything for Najwa since her grandmother has no power to help Najwa to be a Muslim woman. Besides, this evidence also shows that there is no restrain feeling as the reason for Najwa to keep as a veiled Muslim especially the feeling of Najwa who has lack of enthusiasm about Muslim and strict rules for women that significantly influences her to change her identity.

In this case, Najwa sees many differences as she moves to England about women and their society. Najwa obviously states about different ways of life from the society in England and their environment without strict rules for women even if they show their selves as Muslim. In some previous texts, we can see that the process to find the identity of Najwa influences her to face the custom of Muslim majority country in the Middle East and England as the Muslim minorities country that makes her identity changes as well as she follows the custom of each country. After she moves to her new environment, it is significantly different from what she knows that women is able to be free without strict rules about their appearance and their role as an independent woman without being under the men's control. It shows that women in this

new environment has freedom to live even she has no male figures who companies her and it is not a shameful thing for women to be married because it is not a big deal for women to live as a single women in this country. Furthermore, we can see that Najwa explicitly shows her impression about this case and she thinks about to end her journey up in this country because it is something which different from her old village. She can be free to continue her life here without being reprimanded as a single woman.

Najwa : After the death of my mother, she advised me to sell the family's gold and go look for my father. It would be really bad for my reputation to live alone after she dies. Shameful

Elizabeth : Shameful?

Najwa : No one would get married to a woman who lived on their own.

Elizabeth : That's one third population of England tarred. Najwa : Is it OK for woman to live on their own? Elizabeth : Yes,. Not a problem.

Najwa : That's good. I might end up alone here." (Faqir, 2014: 205)

From this text, it shows that women in this new environment has freedom to live even she has no male figures who companies her and it is not a shameful thing for women to be married because it is not a big deal for women to live as a single women in this country. Furthermore, we can see that Najwa explicitly shows her impression about this case and she thinks about to end her journey up in this country because it is something which different from her old village. She can be free to continue her life here without being reprimanded as a single woman.

The flexibility of her identity is not only from the physical characteristic that significantly changes which is in the beginning she is described as a Jordanian woman with unobvious identity since it is

not her real identity. Her feeling that shows comfort and accepted in this society that significantly different also influences her to be a woman who has fearless about her physical appearance and lives as a single woman. Besides, this explains how Najwa's impressions influences her mind about her future as a women in which she does not feel to be restrained again for her status as a women with an absent father. It is different from the environment in Middle East country which crucially considers it as a problem for women's status and life for the absence of male figure.

However, the statement of the word "might" here also shows the inconsistency since it is not her final decision. In short, this explains how Najwa's identity becomes fluid because she describes her comfortable feeling and be accepted in this country and the possibility to be women without be restrained and bad reputation. Moreover, Najwa's mission almost finds the end because it is her last clue about her father existence in England. This evidence explains when the time comes for Najwa to meet her father after all the long journey for her to pass and directly meets him. Besides, it also shows her hesitation about her father that may be a strict Muslim who cannot tolerates and accepts her with uncover hair and her appearance of a low-top cut or tight jeans.

"When the day I had waited for since I was three arrived, I didn't know what to do with myself. My father must be a strict Muslim and wouldn't approve of uncovered hair, make up, a low-cut top or tight jeans. But my mother's ghost skulking in the room would be offended if I changed my secular appearance and hid my arms. My reflection in the mirror – gaunt, pale, with dry lips – stood between my parents' apparitions. I resented them both." (Faqir, 2014: 240)

In the text above, it shows about her journey in which she finally meets her father. In opposite, this evidence reaffirms the changing of Najwa's identity in which she is not only take off her veil on her way to England but also all the commodities that supports her include long wears. It explicitly shows that the identity of Najwa changes through her physical appearance as a Jordanian woman who lives in England with a low-cut top or tight jeans and her hair is uncover. It is different for her changing as a woman with long wears and veil when she leaves Afghanistan on her way to England. In addition, she also explains about her fear when the day to meet her father comes but she hesitates if only her father may be same as strict Muslim. She worries about the possibilities that her father would not approve herself for she is his daughter but unveil.

In opposite, this evidence reaffirms the changing of Najwa's identity in which she is not only take off her veil on her way to England but also all the commodities that supports her include long wears. It explicitly shows that the identity of Najwa changes through her physical appearance as a Jordanian woman who lives in England with a low-cut top or tight jeans and her hair is uncover. It is different for her changing as a woman with long wears and veil when she leaves Afghanistan on her way to England. In addition, she also explains about her fear when the day to meet her father comes but she hesitates if only her father may be same as strict Muslim. She worries about the possibilities that her father would not approve herself for she is his daughter but unveil. In short, the process to construct her identity in traces her father is still unstable and reveals the fluidity of Najwa's identity because most of her changing is influenced by her environment that forces her to obey and to follow it. On the other hand, it gives us emphasizes the end of Najwa's journey to find her father that reflects the changing of her identity. This may become the end

of her journey because she cannot bring her father back with her, but she does not explicitly state about to end her journey and stay in this country.

Based on the analysis above, it can be seen that the identity of Najwa in *Willow Trees Don't Weep* is related to all of the efforts to have some negotiation through the experience of the environment between Middle East country and Western Europe Country. In the past, she is an introvert and isolated but then she tries to be out of those restriction and limitation. Moreover, she also tries to do some negotiation with the new environment as the results to be a better person. The identity of Najwa is represented as a woman with capability to do the adaptation through the different custom of each country.

#### D. Conclusions

It can be concluded that the identity finding process by which the culture of Muslim and patriarchy has the most influential aspects to the construction of Najwa's identity. The analysis of this research explores the answer of the research question about the construction of Najwa's identity as a Muslim woman in which it shows us the effort to strengthen her identity by becoming a Jordanian Muslim woman through the changing appearance. Besides, her journey to different countries such as Pakistan, Afghanistan, and England also shows the fluid identity as she change and adapt to new environment and culture of each country. Living in a new country with new people and new culture gives a great influence for her. Subsequently self identity construction is definitely inevitable. Najwa herself strives to negotiate and articulate her identity through her appearance and behavior especially in Islamic practices and rituals like wearing veil which is symbolically represent herself as a woman with status and honor as well as strengthen her religiosity as Muslim. The result shows that negotiation and articulation turn out to be the two major things in self

identity construction. Culture, however become a crucial mean to identity. Different culture represents different identity, it keeps changing relay on place where one lives.

#### References

- Abirafeh, Lina. 2009. *Gender and International Aid in Afghanistan: The Politics and Effects on Intervention*. USA: McFarland Company, Inc., Publisher.
- Al-Badayneh, Diab M. (2012). "Violence Against Woman in Jordan". (*The Article of Department of Sociology, Mutah University*), Jordan: Springer Science+Business Media, LLC. Retrieved from <http://ikcrsjo.org/docs/VAW.pdf>
- Davary, Bahar. (2009). "Miss Elsa and The Veil: Honor, Shame, and Identity Negotiations". (*Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, Vol. 25, No. 2) pp.47-66. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2979/fsr.2009.25.2.4>
- DiYanni, Robert. 2004. *Literature: Approaches to Fiction, Poetry, and Drama*. New York: McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc.
- Faqir, Fadia. (2014). *Willow Trees Don't Weep*. London: Heron Books.
- Farkhan, (2007). Muhammad. *Proposal Penelitian Bahasa dan Sastra*. Jakarta: Cella.
- Felemban, Fatima. 2011. *Linguistic Strategies and The Construction of Identity in My Name Is Salma by Fadia Faqir*. Saudi Arabia, Umm Al Qura University, Makkah: 2011
- Gordon, Bachman Jane & Karen Kuehner. 1999. *Fiction: The Elements of the Short Story*. USA: McGraw Hill.

- Grace, Daphne. (2004). *The Woman in the Muslin Mask: Veiling and Identity in Postcolonial Literature*. London: Pluto Press.
- Hall, Stuart. (1993). *Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*. New York: McGuingan.
- Hall, Stuart. (1996). *Modernity: an Introduction to Modern Societies*. London: Blackwell Publisher.
- Hall, Stuart. (1997). *Representation: Cultural Representation and Signifying*
- Hall, Stuart. (1990). *Cultural Identity and Diaspora*. In Jonathan Rutherford (ed.), *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*. London: Lawrence & Wishart.
- Hall, Stuart. 1990. *Cultural Identity and Diaspora*. In Jonathan Rutherford (ed.), *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*. London: Lawrence & Wishart.
- Kuenzli Rudolf E. 1995. *Introduction*. (The Journal of the Midwest Modern Language Association Vol. 28, No. 1), p. 1-3, Accessed from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1315239>
- Mosharafa, Eman. *Culture and Identity in the 9/11 World of Alliances and Rivalries*. New York: University of New York.
- Newman, David M. (2012). *Identities and Inequalities: Exploring the Intersection of Practices*. London: Sage Publications.
- Newman, David M. 2012. *Identities and Inequalities: Exploring the Intersection of Race, Class, Gender, and Sexuality* 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. USA: McGraw-Hill.
- Tim PSW (PusatStudiWanita) UIN SyarifHidayatullah Jakarta.2003. *PengantarKajian Gender*. Jakarta: PSW (PusatStudiWanita) UIN SyarifHidayatullah Jakarta.
- Wilson, Ara. (2000). *Patriarchy: Feminist Theory*. New York: Routledge.
- Woodward, Kathryn. (1997). *Identity and Difference*. London: Sage Publication.

### Website

Black, Elspeth. (2015). "Fadia Faqir: A Voice for Arab Woman". Retrieved from <http://theculturetrip.com/middle-east/jordan/articles/fadia-faqir-a-voice-for-arab-women/>

"Sentiment". KBBI Dictionary. (2015). Retrieved from <http://kbbi.web.id/sentimen>.

Chmidt, Arlene S. "Culture of Jordan". (2015).

<http://www.everyculture.com/Ja-Ma/Jordan.html#ixzz3dc6edm3e>.

Hooks, Bell. (2015). "Understanding Patriarchy". Retrieved from <http://imagineborders.org/pdf/zines/UnderstandingPatriarchy.pdf>.

