APPENDIX

Aethical Considerations

I have not anonymized Khankan, Mouna, Fetteh, El-Jaichi and Saer El-Jaichi. All other informants have been offered anonymization, which all but Yasmin Abu Bakir, Ellen Chakir, and Nour Tessie Jørgensen accepted. Anonymized informants have been given fictitious first names, whereas Khankan, Mouna, Fetteh, El-Jaichi, and Chakir are referred to by their surnames. However, because Yasmin Abu Bakir’s “surname” (Bakir or Abu Bakir) indicates a male, I use her first name, Yasmin, instead. All the above-mentioned informants have given their consent to not being anonymized.

Potential consequences of participating differ from person to person. Informants who aspire to become religious authorities may risk their reputation within some Muslim communities whereas for others it may be a matter of their family’s standing in the local community. Thus, for most informants it has been a major decision to associate with the mosque publicly, meaning that they made the decision in another context prior to the publication of this study.

Based on my evaluation of the non-anonymous informants’ previous engagements in the public sphere I concluded that all but Yasmin would be able to foresee the consequences of not being anonymized. Therefore, she was the only one with whom I ventured into discussion on non-anonymization and its potential consequences, a conversation in which I clarified that it made no difference to me or the project whether or not she preferred anonymity. Based on this conversation I concluded that she had made an informed decision in ultimately deciding not to be anonymous.

Khankan, Mouna, Fetteh, and El-Jaichi have publicly associated themselves with the Mariam Mosque and are therefore impossible to anonymize. Furthermore, this research project focuses on something that is considered positive in Danish society: the making of a women’s mosque. The research project documents their activism outside of heated and polarized media discussions and demonstrates some of the challenges these discussions pose for Muslim activists. It is in the interest of key members of the Mariam Mosque to gain a deeper understanding of the power asymmetries and dynamics from which they are trying to emancipate themselves, and it is in their interest that the public also gains a better understanding of the repression of the Muslim minority, whether it originates with other Muslims or non-Muslims (Douglas 2014). The project—including the non-anonymization of key informants—has been approved by the Swedish Ethical Review Authority.

Other Islamic authorities that are included in the analysis have not been anonymized when I refer to previous studies or their engagement in public debate. However, I have anonymized all Islamic authorities in non-public contexts, including the analysis...
of Islamic divorce in Chapter 8 and the reception of the Mariam Mosque in Chapter 11. All informants in the project have given informed consent and, while I have kept the content of the second diary and my thought processes secret, I have not engaged in deception. Furthermore, I have been attentive not to establish quasi-therapeutic relationships with young members of the Mariam Mosque (Brinkman and Kvale 2015: 95–96).

A significant part of the book demonstrates how Khankan continually seems to underestimate the leadership that is projected onto her, and how she, along with Mouna, founds the Mariam Mosque in response to both Muslims' and non-Muslims' expectations. The process can at time seem haphazard, but I give a respectful and fair account of this without producing a narrative with a plot. Further, by abstaining—to the greatest degree possible—from attributing a character to my informants, I do not significantly delimit their ability to produce the Mariam Mosque's narrative themselves by systematizing events into a plot and building their character within this narrative. I merely insist on a research epistemology when describing what my informants do.

It should be noted that some male Islamic authorities likewise seem to underestimate the leadership that is projected onto them and their responses to issues such as Islamic divorce seem just as haphazard as the processes described in this study (Liversage and Petersen 2020). In other words, the seeming haphazardness is primarily a product of expectations that social processes will obey certain logics in a structured and orderly manner. In fact, the processes that produced Khankan as an imam and Femimam as the Mariam Mosque are akin to how some male imams are produced, even some of Denmark's most prominent male imams (Petersen 2019b; Petersen and Vinding 2020).

Furthermore, Khankan is not trying to build Islamic authority in the conventional manner through formal Islamic educational training. Instead she has framed herself as an entrepreneur and activist who has sometimes had to take roles outside her comfort zone to move the project along. In other words, as Khankan is not claiming authority based on formal Islamic educational training, this account will not be detrimental to her project. On the contrary, it documents the Islamic production of Khankan and the members of the Mariam Mosque, and marginal groups, such as this one, have an interest in being understood and represented (Brinkman and Kvale 2015: 95–96; Bryman 2016: 126–128). Khankan and the Mariam Mosque as an institution have been surprisingly transparent in their presentation of themselves in the media, which means that I can discuss most of my data without venturing into themes that have not previously been discussed publicly by my informants.

With all this being said, it is important to stress that this is a study that is oriented towards pushing the boundaries of research, not towards achieving some political goal. I am, for example, not engaged in any kind of activism, have continuously distanced myself from my informants’ engagements, and have taken the observer role to the
greatest extent possible, becoming an observant participant rather than a participant observer, so to speak. I therefore realize that my account and analysis may not portray my informants as they would like to see their religious strivings portrayed. However, as a researcher I must insist on this perspective—otherwise studying the Mariam Mosque would be pointless—but I do not claim that this perspective is universally better or more relevant than those of my informants; rather, it is a perspective informed by a scientific epistemology which confines the space within which it holds validity and relevance.

A scientific description of the Mariam Mosque is surely not the recipe for a best-seller, such as Sherin Khankan’s biography *Women are the future of Islam: A memoir of hope* or Skovgaard’s documentary *The Reformist*, which are both structured as narratives with a plot. Although both Khankan’s and Skovgaard’s accounts are true, they differ significantly from each other as they focus on different narratives and, therefore, have different orientations: Khankan presents herself, while Skovgaard presents what she saw and experienced both front and back stage as an observant participant (Goffman 1959/1990). This study is merely different from these two accounts in its epistemology and orientation towards research; it does not contradict earlier accounts, but it says something new by applying a research epistemology.

Finally, I would also like to address the issue of portraying the segment of non-Muslim Islamic authorities who understand themselves to be critical of Islam and therefore as having a legitimate reason to fight what they themselves take to be Islam. It has not been possible to anonymize these as they are public figures—some of them members of parliament—and the location in which they put pressure on Khankan is the public sphere. As Khankan has continuously clashed with non-Muslim Islamic authorities throughout her career, and because they are important in the explanation of how the Mariam Mosque was produced, they also play an important role in the book. However, as they are not the object of research their views are only represented to the extent that they are relevant for the analysis and the legitimation of their discourses is therefore not discussed. This runs the risk of producing them as bad guys in a narrative about the heroine Khankan and her companions in the Mariam Mosque, which is both unethical and inherently uninteresting in terms of research output. A further complication is that, as a researcher—not as a politically engaged debater—I have opposed some of these people’s epistemologies on several occasions in public debate (Petersen 2018b, 2018c, 2019c, 2020c).

To handle this ethical and research issue, I reached out to the three non-Muslim Islamic authorities (Marcus Knuth, Martin Henriksen, and Naser Khader) who are the focus of my analysis in Chapter 11. Khader, accepted my request for an interview,1 and

---

1 Henriksen and Knuth, initially accepted the request for an interview but were unable to find
thus, he chose to trust that I would be honest and fair, for which I am grateful. I sent an early draft of the text to all three, invited them to comment on it, and encouraged them to point out if I had not adequately portrayed their arguments in their full strength. Knuth and Henriksen did not respond, but Khader responded by saying that he found it somewhat ok but remarked that I had excluded some important details and not adequately built up his argument. I therefore allocated more space to Khader’s argument and strengthened it along the lines he suggested.

Thus, I have sent parts of the manuscript to all three informants, which serves the ethical purpose of giving the informants an opportunity to object to my presentation. This approach is inspired by native ethnography in which researchers engage informants in the production of knowledge by having them write texts themselves and/or comment upon the researchers’ production of text about them (Bernard 2011: 409–415), a method that has also been employed by other Lund Islamic studies scholars (Otterbeck 2000a; Stenberg 1996). This is, furthermore, a methodological choice as I wanted my informants to venture into collaboration and thus coproduce themselves in my text. However, as mentioned above, only Khader took me up on this.

The study was published as a PhD dissertation titled *The Making of the Mariam Mosque: Serendipities and Structures in the Production of Female Authority in Denmark* in October 2020 and has been distributed to all informants mentioned in the text. Only Khankan has returned with comments expressing disapproval of two pictures showing the Mariam Mosque while in storage between Friday prayers and some minor comments on the section on the collapse and aftermath of the first Mariam Mosque in Chapter 10. I have therefore removed these pictures and made the minor revisions suggested by Khankan as these are in line with what I find in my field notes.

Finally, I would like to address the issue of merely focusing on politicians and debaters who opposed Khankan without including others who supported her. This choice is an outcome of my analysis. While supporters may have played a role for Khankan personally, they did not play a significant role for the Mariam Mosque as such, and even the strongest of her supporters would sometimes be framed as critics in the media (see for example Olsen and Thorsen 2016). Further, some supporters even became a problem for the mosque when they tried to steer it in a direction in line with their own political standpoints.

During the scandal over public funding for Khankan’s *NGO Exitcirklen*, discussed in Chapter 11, Khankan received widespread support from many politicians and high-profile members of the cultural elite. However, this support was given in relation to the
day for it in the upcoming months. When I responded by extending the time frame neither answered back.

2 Henriksen did respond in the sense that he replied to my email, but he did not engage in the discussion, even if on two occasions he expressed his intention to do so.
NGO, which both Khankan and her supporters tried to separate from the mosque in the public sphere. When Skovgaard’s documentary was aired on national TV during the elections in 2019 and the focus was on the mosque, it proved very difficult—and often impossible—for the producer to engage the same politicians. In short, opposition to the Mariam Mosque has played a major role whereas support has been insignificant, maybe because women-only Friday prayer and similar ideas are seen as too conservative to promote as progressive in Danish politics.