Attended, Unattended and Blocked Means for Social Cohesion
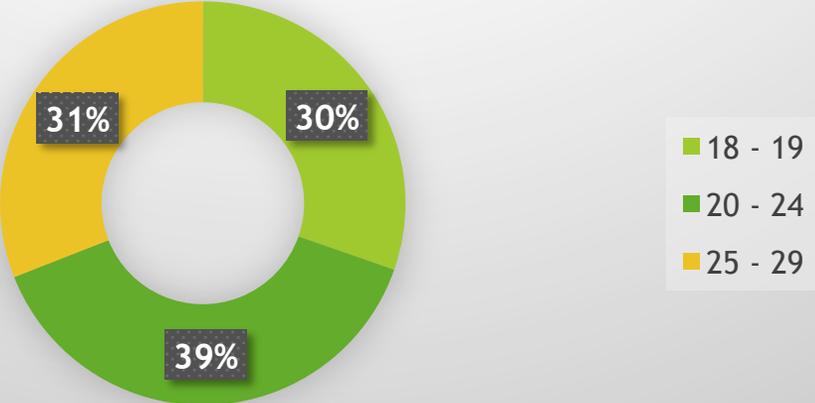
Dr Derya Iner

CSU and ISRA

Content

▶ Using my survey outcomes on Practising young Australian Muslims (N=342), I will

▶ Measure internal and external cohesion

▶ Analyse their relatiions with the mainstream society through their responses to the particular open ended questions (127 open ended answers)

▶ Explore alternative avenues for social cohesion.

➔ (87% Muslims believe in the power of interpersonal relationships for removing the prejudices)

▶ Using Muslim youth's activism in voluntary community work

▶ Extending it to nationwide collaborative projects=> interpersonal relationships
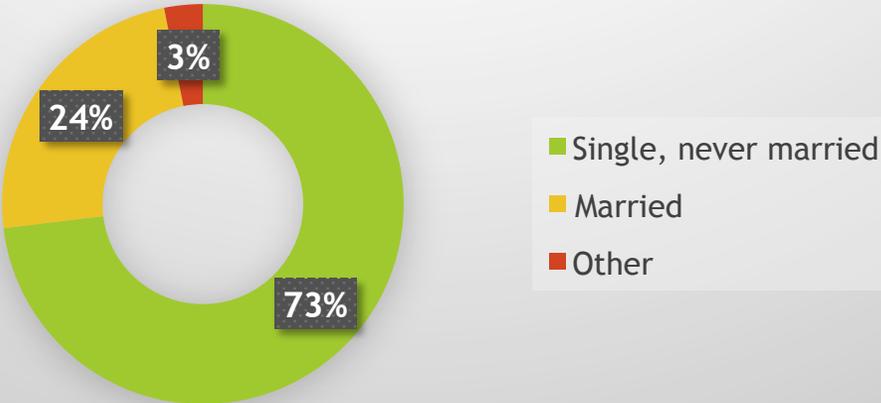
Survey Participants

- Criteria: Born in Australia or Came to Australia before age 10, in age range of (18-29), living in NSW and praying five times a day Muslim the ritual prayers (*salah*)

- Survey Monkey

- Attempted: 539

- Selected: 342

- Distribution: Proportional distribution of of Sex & Ethnicity (stratified sampling in the last phase)

- Result: Proportional distribution according to the 2011 census data demographics

  - Educated

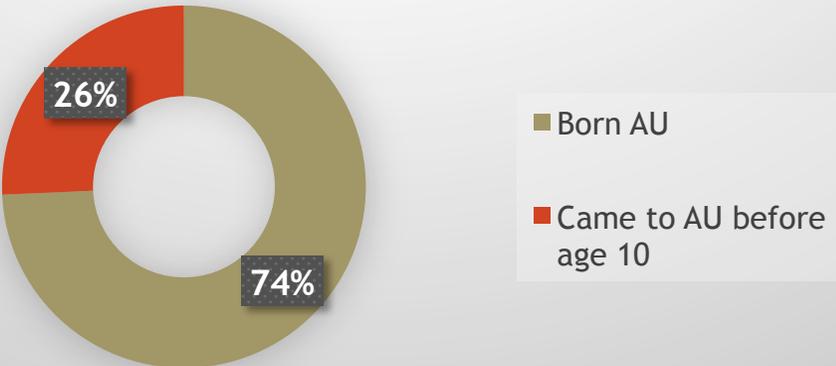 - Increase/shrink in 2nd generation of some ethnicities

Demographics

Age range

- 18 - 19
- 20 - 24
- 25 - 29

30%
31%
39%

Marital status

- Single, never married
- Married
- Other

3%
24%
73%

AU Born

- Born AU
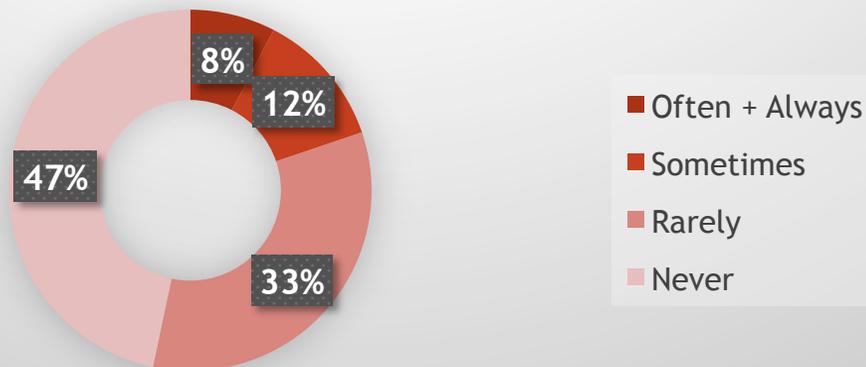- Came to AU before age 10

26%
74%

Demographics

- Social Environment:

- Childhood: 24% Non-Muslims + Mixed with Muslims 33% + Mainly Muslim 43%

- Adulthood: 22% Caucasian   + Mixed with Muslims 25%   + Multiethnic 40%

  + mainly Muslims 13%

- More exposure to Multiculturalism in the adulthood.

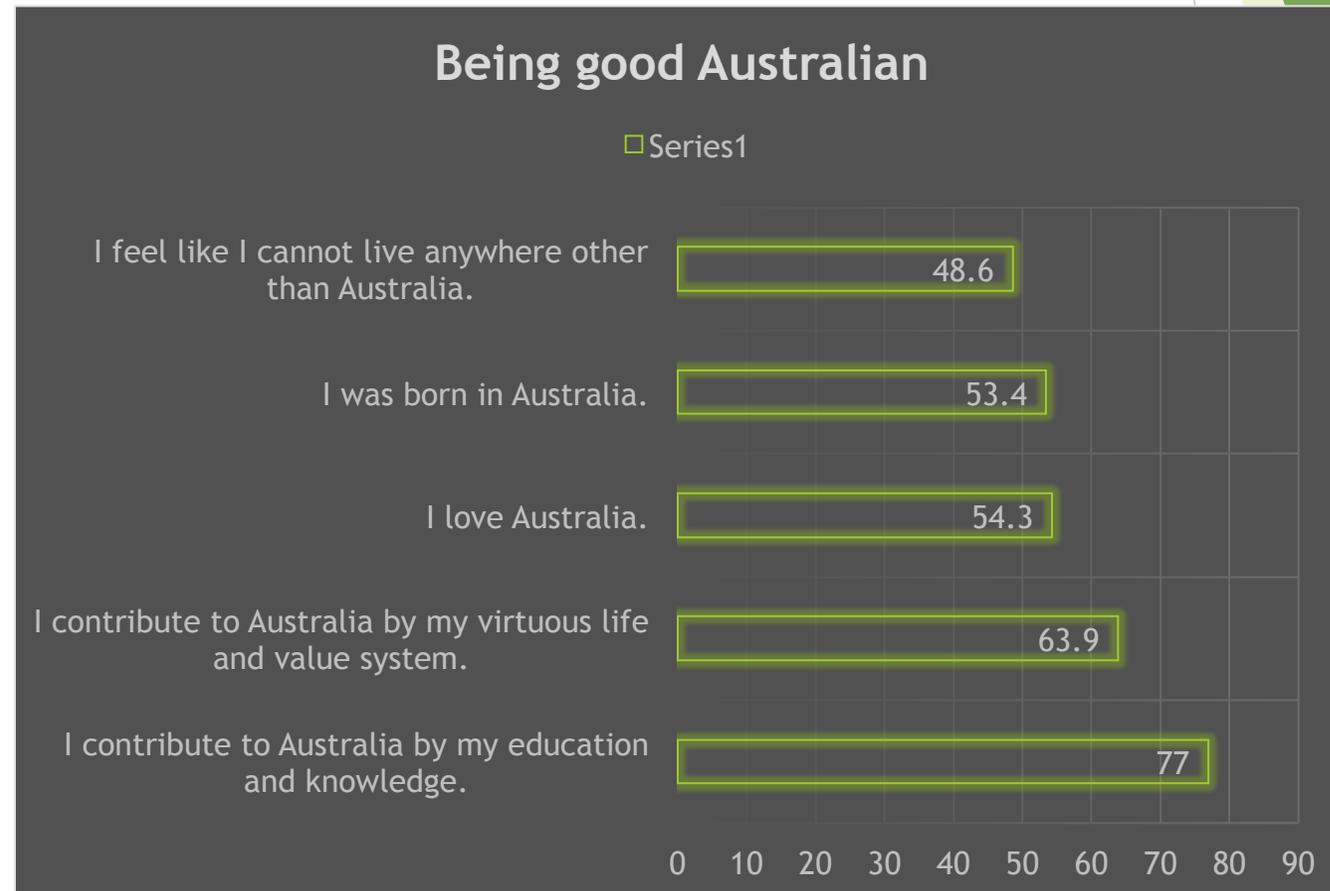**Discriminations in school years**

8%

12%

47%

33%

- Often + Always
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

Internal Cohesion

- **Internal Cohesion:**
- **Identifying oneself with multiple identities**
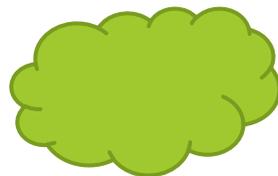   - Ethnic and Australian ID
    - => Reconciled

Cohesion with the broader society: Australia

▶ **Cohesion with the broader society i.e., Australia, Australianness and Australians**

▶ Being good Australian=97.2 ✔

  ▶ Contribution

  ▶ Attachment

  ▶ Facts

  (From 12 multiple options)

Being good Australian

□ Series1

I feel like I cannot live anywhere other than Australia.	48.6
I was born in Australia.	53.4
I love Australia.	54.3
I contribute to Australia by my virtuous life and value system.	63.9
I contribute to Australia by my education and knowledge.	77

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90

Identifying the outgroup i.e. Australians

▶ Positive, negative , discreet multiple choices were provided.

▶ Agree/Disagree/ Neither… nor sale was applied

▶ Although 79% of the respondents were cautions about NOT generalising Australians in a particular way,

▶ Both positive and negative depiction of Australians were mostly rated as "neither agree not disagree" (ranging from 50% to 55%.)

▶ This reluctance was fleshed out via open ended responses (N:127) at the end of the same question: Neither did they overgeneralise Australians nor did they deny Muslims' "other"isation in the mainstream society.

Australia/ Australianness and Australians

▶ Media was found as the measure obstacle, which feeds prejudices against Muslims (addressed 38 times).

▶ **Findings:** Although undoubtedly

   ▶ Identifying themselves with AU ID

   ▶ finding themselves as "good Australian" and "in love with Australia"

   ▶ they are cautious & reluctant while identifying Australians.

   Social relationships are cracked by prejudices. This is a barrier.

Australians are diverse

▶ Different groups of people. For example those more liberal and understanding would be more defensive of Muslims because they recognise media biased, and just in general they care more about humanitarian issues. Then theirs [sic] the large portion who dont really know or really care- problem with this group is, is that there easily influenced by media and can thus be easily misled about facts regarding Muslims. Than you got the hard right- who wont [sic] budge and are generally anti all things different. But i think in general Australians as a people are rational and understanding. For example i played Rugby throughout my school career, i also did General Maths, and the crew for both of those things are the typical jocky future trady Aussie. Many would consider them as not the smartest bunch. And when something happened (such as the recent Woolwich attacks) they were easily influenced by the media, yet they were highly interested in what a Muslim had to say. They were willing to hear the other side and gain a greater understanding. And i found that when you talked to them and presented a simple logical argument with substantial facts they were generally understanding and accepting. The hate is not ingrained within them, and i think thats what separates Australia from many of the other European/western nations and is the reason why we have the potential to be a truly successful flourishing multicultural society.

Confusion & Mixed Feelings

▶ Australian society is uncomfortable with accepting a new definition of itself. Australian culture is not particularly embracing of its minority elements; the Australian Identity as portrayed by media & politics is narrow, rigid, and exclusive. Therefore, **If you don't look a certain way,** you're an outsider- generally speaking. But we as a nation are new, and new to migration and culture changes. This will change in future. It's particularly in regard to Muslims. There are Australians of Chinese or Indian heritage who are involved in public spheres, media, Tv and in politics and this is not abnormal or questioned. Muslims have not found a true place in society as yet that allows them to contribute in this way. A Muslim on TV (and we can count them on our fingers) is faced with the burden of representing an entire community- it is not so for other individuals who are able to represent themselves alone, as individuals.   I see many policy changes that need to be advocated for, particularly in my professional arena. I feel politics would be a useful arena for this change. However, being a Muslim woman who wears a Hijab, I don't think I could ever dream of being elected to such a post, regardless of any other qualifications I may have.

Correlations?

▶ **Is** there any relationship between

▶ Perception of Australians (+, -) & suburb distribution(Muslim popul),

▶ & age,

▶ & previous and present living setting (mixed/multicultural)

▶ **No correlation (Chi-Square, ANOVA)**

Implications:

▶ Positive: No bad impact that would result in polarisation (results would be difference in EU)

▶ Negative: No dominant positive response either. Media effect is beyond regional, age, par-present mixed-multicultural living experience.

Australian Dream: Multiculturalism

▶ Where is the legacy of Australia ("a country to live") heading on?

▶ When the participants were asked about Muslims' next ten years in Australia only

  ▶ 11% expressed pessimism

  ▶ 61% expressed optimism

  ▶ 28% stayed undecided.

▶ The undecided ones are likely to be won over or lost away based on Australia's near future policies regarding the Muslims and the Muslims' responses to them

Interpersonal interaction areas

▶ Interpersonal interaction areas: Multi-faith; they are doing good job

▶ but Australia is a very lay county and atheism is continually increasing => express of indifference to religions.

▶ Humanitarian and lay circumstances like sporting can be another avenue to implant interpersonal relationships.

▶ Voluntary activism (community oriented motivations/ religious, ethnic)

▶ Yes= 49.7 %

▶ No= 50.3 %)

▶ Regular: 62%   Sometimes: 32%   Rarely: 6%

Unattended Avenues for Collaboration & Cohesion

- National humanitarian, non-ethnic and non-religious campaigns

- Yes=> 37%

- No=> 63 % ➜ ➜ ➜ if you are given the opportunity...

- (Yes: 79% No: 21%)

Why not volunteering

Why would not you volunteer?

Reasons for Reluctance=>Sealing the cracks

▶ Why not volunteering?

▶ Can be broadly categorised under two reasons:

▶ 1. Unawareness of such projects (e.g. lack of friends and contacts in such organisations, no knowledge of such project, where to go, how to start, who to contact, etc).

▶ 2. Unavailability for such projects (e.g. lack of time, skills, transport, etc).

▶ Why would you not volunteer?

▶ Expressed "unavailability" as a reason by putting forth diverse excuses like lack of time, skills, transport, etc.

Conclusion

- 1. Australia is a loved and owned country. 97.2%

- 2. Australian Muslims reconciled multiple identities cohesively (internal cohesion)

- 3. However, in-group & out-group cohesion is underway (Muslims are discreet but reluctant as well (neither...nor)

  - 11% expressed pessimism

  - 61% expressed optimism

  - 28% stayed undecided => can be won over if media, policy and unattended interpersonal /collaborative work are used in favour of social cohesion.

- One avenue for involving the majority lay Australians & Muslims is collaboratively taken social/national projects.