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Rhonda Itaoui is a current PhD candidate at the University of Western Sydney's Religion and Society Research Centre. With an aim to uncover the effects of racism on ethnic minorities, she is pursuing a PhD project that explores the reflexive links between Islamophobia and Geography on young Muslims in the public spaces of 'Western cities' such as Sydney. Rhonda is interested in pursuing applied social research in a variety of areas including cultural/social geographies, cultural planning and multicultural studies.

Experiences of Islamophobia: Impacts on the Mobility of Young Muslims in Sydney

This paper examines the experiences of Islamophobia - both personal and vicarious. It reports how these experiences affect the mobility of young Muslims in using public spaces in Sydney. Informed by contemporary debates in human geography on the socio-spatial effects of 'new racism', this research adopted a mixed-method approach, analysing 74 web-based questionnaire surveys and 10 follow-up interviews with young Muslims (aged 18-30 years) living in Sydney. Experiences of racism 'regulate' the way young Muslims perceive and access spaces. The personal experiences of Islamophobia result in a (sub) conscious spatial disengagement from spaces—a result of 'normalised racism' that continues to be denied and thus unchallenged by the 'immobile Muslim'. Such effects operate on a collective level, where experiences of racism transfer vicariously to the victim's wider social networks. By drawing on these empirical accounts of 'experienced Islamophobia', the paper discusses the deeper reflexive implications of 'new racism', in the way it produces the spatial exclusion, and motility of subjected minority groups.