

UNIVERSITY



Islamophobia

#ACCC2017

Western Sydney
University

20-22 November
2017



QS WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKINGS
2017 by subject

GEOGRAPHY

TOP 200

QS WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKINGS
2017 by subject

SOCIOLOGY

TOP 100

QS WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKINGS
2017 by subject

PSYCHOLOGY

TOP 150





Islamophobia:

An appropriate concept
for understanding the
racialisation of religion



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Experiences of Muslim Australians

- Past research has explored experiences of Australian Muslims, specifically their experiences of racism, in the form of physical attacks, abuse, exclusion and discrimination (Dunn et al. 2015; Blair et al. 2017; Dunn et al. 2007; HREOC 2004; Poynting & Mason, 2007; Poynting & Noble 2004).
- Muslim Australians have much higher rates of experiences of racism than pertains for the Australian average (Dunn et al. 2015; Blair et al. 2017)
- Attitudes of Australians toward the Muslim population:
 - Hassan et al. (2015) argue there are merely pockets of antipathy towards Muslims.
 - Other research shows an overwhelming majority of Australians have negative views of Muslims (Blair et al. 2017; Vergani & Mansouri 2016; Essential Research 2016; 2017).

Facing the sharp end of contemporary racism

Islamophobia is rooted in fear and ignorance.
It refers to “dread or hatred of Islam – and therefore
to fear or dislike of all or most Muslims” (Runnymede
Trust 1997)

Manifestations

Australia is at risk of being “swamped by Muslims who bear a culture and ideology that is incompatible with our own”. - Pauline Hanson, One Nation Party

“I strongly condemn the teachings of Islam... The attacks that have been taking place are not lone wolf attacks or people gone crazy. No, rather this is Islam 101.” – Daniel Nalliah, Rise Up Australia Party

“I’ve often heard Western leaders describe Islam as a ‘religion of peace’. I wish more Muslim leaders would say that more often, and mean it” – Tony Abbott, Liberal Party

“Islam itself is the problem... Islam is a totalitarian, political and religious ideology... It has not moved on since it was founded and there are these extremists that want to see fundamentalist Islamic rule implemented in this country. They are continually trying to change our laws. They’re seeking special accommodations.” - Cory Bernardi, Liberal Senator

“I would say it [terrorism] is a problem within Islam” - Josh Frydenberg, Liberal Party

Islamophobia is rooted in fear and ignorance.
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Why the term ‘works’

Infers a social anxiety.

Infers a construction / contrivance.

Which allows for intentional inculcation.

And constructs it as a condition to which people are exposed.

And constructs it as a condition which can be remedied.

It has political and empirical merit.

Critique of the concept

- Suggestive of an illness or pathology.
- Suggests exceptionalism.
- Generates defensiveness.
- Deflects understanding way from the 'sufferer'.
- Deflects acknowledgment of the role of 'race' / colour.
- Does not distinguish between anti-Islam and anti-religion.
- Conflates anti-Islam sentiment and anti-Muslim sentiment.

(Richardson 2009; Garner and Selod 2015; Sajid 2005; Bleich 2012; Cheng 2015; Halliday 1999).



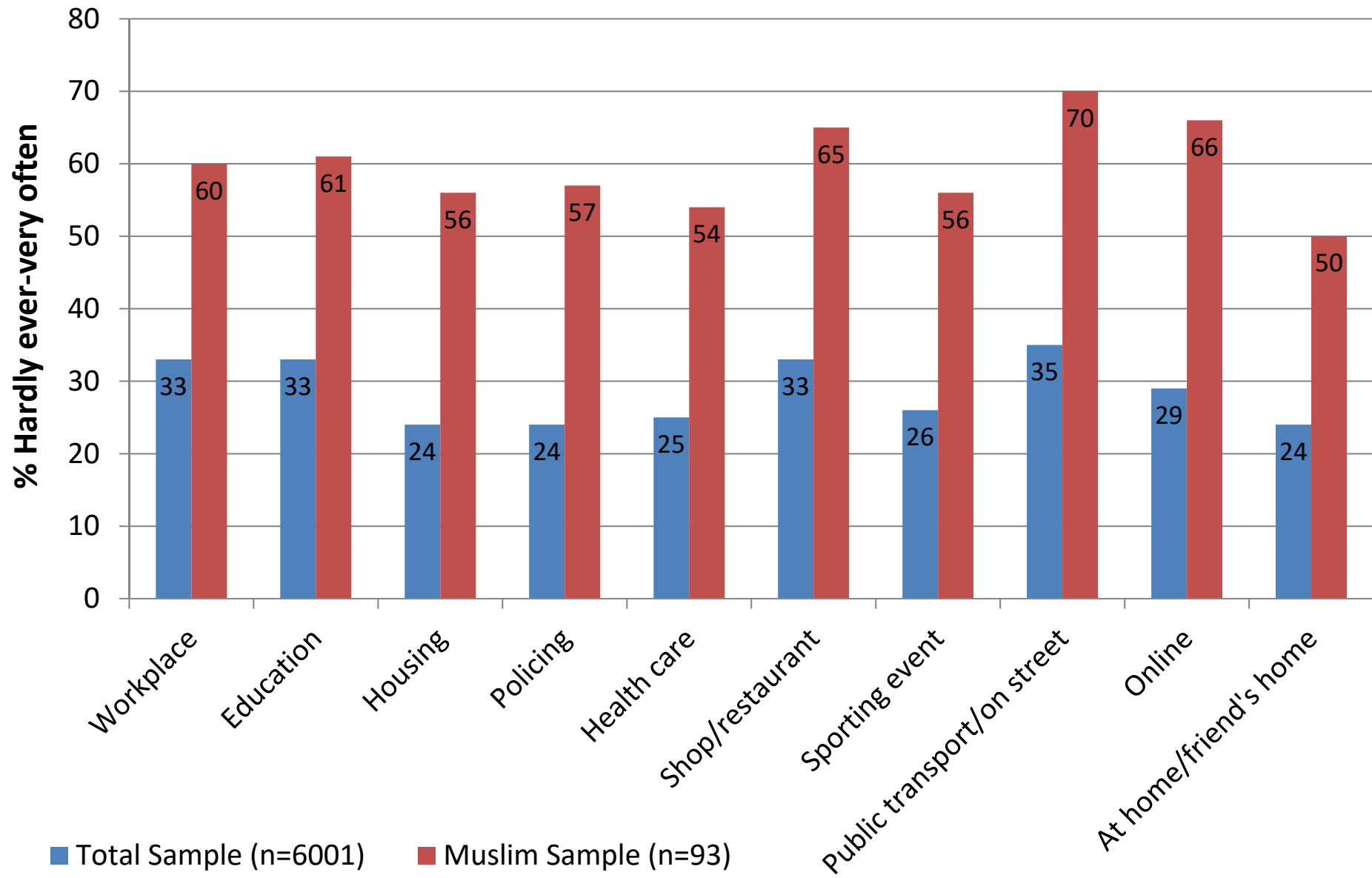
Method: Online survey

- A nationwide survey of 6001 Australians was undertaken in July-August 2015 (n=5407) and November 2016 (n=594).
- Sample is largely representative of the Australian population.
- Participants were asked questions that examine attitudes to cultural diversity, out-groups, Anglo-privilege, assimilation and experiences of racism

Table 1: Characteristics of the online sample, compared to ABS Census

		Online Survey 2015-16 (%)	ABS 2011 Census (%)
Gender	Female	51.7	50.6
	Male	48.4	49.4
Age	18-35	34.3	31.9
	36-65	49.3	51.1
	Over 65	16.5	17.0
Ethnicity indicators	ATSI	2.3	2.5
	Aus. born	72.2	69.8
	English only	81.7	76.8
Labour Force Status	Labour force	61.1	65
	Not in labour force	38.9	35

Figure 1. Experiences of Racism by setting¹



¹Question wording: How often have YOU experienced discrimination because of your cultural or religious background in the following situations?
 Source: 2015 Challenging Racism Project Survey, online survey, July-August 2015 & November 2016

Figure 2. Everyday Experiences of Racism¹



¹Question wording: How often do you feel that because of your cultural or religious background...
Source: 2015 Challenging Racism Project Survey, online survey, July-August 2015 & November 2016

Table 2. Frequency of racist experiences by setting¹

		Total sample	Muslim respondents	Total sample	Muslim respondents	Total sample	Muslim respondents
		Never		Hardly Ever – Sometimes		Often – Very Often	
Institutional Settings	Workplace	67.2	39.8	27.7	45.2	5.1	15.1
	Education	67.2	38.7	26.8	40.9	6.0	20.4
	Housing	76.1	44.1	19.6	36.6	4.4	19.4
	Policing	76.5	43.0	19.6	45.2	3.8	11.8
	Health care	74.7	46.2	21.4	36.6	3.9	17.2
Public and Private Sphere	Shop/restaurant	67.3	35.5	28.3	47.3	4.4	17.2
	Sporting event	73.6	44.1	22.6	39.8	3.8	16.1
	Public transport or on the street	65.2	30.1	29.3	47.3	5.5	22.6
	Online	70.9	34.4	23.6	34.4	5.4	31.2
	At home/friend's home	75.8	50.5	21.0	31.2	3.2	18.3

¹Question wording: How often have YOU experienced discrimination because of your cultural or religious background in the following situations?

Source: 2015 Challenging Racism Project Survey, online survey, July-August 2015 & November 2016

Experiences of Racism: Muslim Australians

- Muslim Australians also experience racism more frequently than other Australians.
- 23% of Muslim Australians stated they experienced racism on public transport or on the street often or very often, compared to only 6% of other Australians.
- 31% of Muslim Australians stated they experienced racism online often or very often, compared to only 5% of other Australians.
- 18-20% of Muslim Australians stated that they experienced 'everyday racisms' often or very often, compared to only 5-6% of other Australians.

Table 3. Frequency of everyday experiences of racism¹

	Total sample	Muslim respondents	Total sample	Muslim respondents	Total sample	Muslim respondents
	Never		Hardly Ever – Sometimes		Often – Very Often	
You are treated less respectfully	59.7	22.6	34.1	57	6.2	20.4
People act as if you are not to be trusted	65.9	25.8	28.9	55.9	5.2	18.3
You are called names or similarly insulted	61.2	33.3	33.3	48.4	5.5	18.3

¹Question wording: How often do you feel that because of your cultural or religious background...
 Source: 2015 Challenging Racism Project Survey, online survey, July-August 2015 & November 2016

Table 4. Levels of concern regarding out-marriage of a relative, to specific groups

Level of concern*	Not at all concerned	Slightly concerned	Somewhat concerned	Very concerned	Extremely concerned	Total (n=6001)
Indian, Pakistani or Sri Lankan backgrounds	61.6	18.4	12.0	4.7	3.4	100
Other Asian backgrounds	70.4	15.4	9.1	3.3	1.8	100
Aboriginal background	63.8	17.2	10.9	4.8	3.2	100
Italian background	81.6	9.5	6.1	1.8	0.9	100
British background	84.1	7.5	5.6	1.9	0.8	100
African background	56.1	19.1	12.4	7.2	5.2	100
Middle Eastern background	48.6	19.8	14.3	9.4	7.9	100
Muslim Faith	36.9	19.7	15.6	10.4	17.2	100
Jewish Faith	59.9	17.7	12.4	5.5	4.4	100
Christian Faith	77.3	10.7	7.6	2.5	1.9	100

*Question wording: In your opinion, how concerned would you feel if one of your closest relatives were to marry a person of...

Source: 2015 Challenging Racism Project Survey, online survey, July-August 2015 + November 2016



Table 5. Levels of concern regarding out-marriage of a relative, to a Muslim, by age, gender, birthplace and language.

		Not at all concerned	Slightly-somewhat concerned	Very-extremely concerned	Total
Gender (p=<.155)	Female	37.8	35.5	26.7	100
	Male	36	35.2	28.7	100
Age (p=<.000)	18-35	43.9	34.5	21.6	100
	36-65	37.3	34.7	28	100
	Over 65	21.6	39.9	39.2	100
Birthplace (p=<.000)	Australian Born	38.6	35.4	26	100
	Overseas born	32.5	35.5	32.1	100
LOTE (p=<.138)	LOTE background	34.7	35.6	29.7	100
	English only	37.5	35.3	27.2	100
Total		37	35.4	27.7	100

*Question wording: In your opinion, how concerned would you feel if one of your closest relatives were to marry a person of...

Source: 2015 Challenging Racism Project Survey, online survey, July-August 2015 + November 2016

Table 6. Levels of concern regarding out-marriage of a relative, to specific groups, by employment and education

		Not at all concerned	Slightly-somewhat concerned	Very-extremely concerned	Total
Level of Education (p<.005)	University degree	37.1	36.8	26.1	100
	Post-school vocational (e.g. TAFE)	35.1	35.5	29.4	100
	Completed Year 12	41.3	32.7	26.9	100
	Did not complete Year 12	35.2	34.7	30.1	100
Employment Status (p<.000)	Employed	38.1	35.5	26.4	100
	Unemployed	47.2	27.2	25.6	100
	Not in labour force	33.8	36.2	29.7	100
Total		37	35.4	27.7	100

*Question wording: In your opinion, how concerned would you feel if one of your closest relatives were to marry a person of...

Source: 2015 Challenging Racism Project Survey, online survey, July-August 2015 + November 2016

Who is more Islamophobic?

- Those who are less educated.
- Those who were not educated in a multicultural schooling era.
- Those who were less likely to have been educated in Australia.

- Good targets for Islamophobia.



The Pervasiveness of Islamophobia:

Australian's are largely supportive of cultural diversity, feel secure with ethnic difference and favour an indiscriminatory immigration policy.

Those who are not, are more Islamophobic, see over ...

Table 7.

	Agree	Neither Agree/Disagree	Disagree
Cultural diversity is good¹	80.4	15.3	4.4
Feel secure with ethnic difference²	58.2	32.9	8.8
Support for in discriminatory immigration policy³	53.3	23.3	23.4

¹Question wording: It is a good thing for a society to be made up of different cultures

² Question wording: You feel secure when you are with people of different ethnic backgrounds

³All migrants should be accepted regardless of where they come from

Source: 2015 Challenging Racism Project Survey, online survey, July-August 2015 + November 2016

Table 8. Pervasiveness of Islamophobia

		Level of concern			Total
		Out-marriage of relative to Muslim (%)			
		Not at all	Slightly-somewhat	Very-Extremely	
Support for cultural diversity (p<.000)	Agree	42	35.8	22.3	100
	Neither	18.5	37.9	43.5	100
	Disagree	9.2	19.5	71.4	100
Feel secure with ethnic difference (p<.000)	Agree	44.9	35.7	19.4	100
	Neither	28.9	37.5	33.6	100
	Disagree	14.5	25.8	59.6	100
Support for in discriminatory migration policy (p<.000)	Agree	47.3	34.8	17.9	100
	Neither	31.8	41.7	26.6	100
	Disagree	18.6	30.4	51.0	100
Total		36.9	35.4	27.7	100

Islamophobia in Australia

- Those who are supportive of cultural diversity are less Islamophobic.
- However, one fifth of those Australians who are supportive of cultural diversity, who feel secure with ethnic difference and who are in favour of a non-discriminatory immigration policy, also expressed strong levels of Islamophobia.
- Islamophobia in Australia is associated with:
 - Those who are less educated.
 - Those who were not educated in a multicultural schooling era (older people).
 - Those who were less likely to be educated in Australia (born overseas).

Islamophobia the concept

- Variability
- Social variability (age, birthplace, education).
- Likely effect of critical thinking; multicultural appreciation.
- Fear of difference is part of the issue, but Islamophobia does extend broader than that.

- The extreme right, the far right and mainstream politicians have deployed anti-Islamic and anti-Muslim sentiment for their base political benefit. Contrivance. Intentional.
- The current political environment is increasingly permissive of anti-Islamic expressions.
- A national fear has been constructed, of a Muslim other that is a cultural and civil threat. Which is at odds with empirical research that shows Muslims are ordinary Australians. Construction.
- A social ailment to which ordinary people are exposed, for base political gain.
- The purveyors of Islamophobia as the anti-racist target, rather than the afflicted 'Islamophobes'.

Islamophobia is a concept that has empirical and political merit.



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Islamophobia in Australia

Experiences

- Muslim Australians experience racism at double the rate of other Australians
- Muslim Australians experience racism often or very often at triple the rate of other Australians

Attitudes

- 63% of respondents expressed some degree of intolerance/discomfort with Muslim Australians.
- No significant difference between the attitudes of men and women and LOTE background.
- People are more likely to be Islamophobic if they are older, born overseas, have not completed Year 12, and are not in the labor force.



Experiences of Racism in Australia

Participants were asked a number of questions on their experiences of racism, focusing predominantly on where these incidents occurred and how frequently they occurred.

Participants were asked about their experiences in institutional settings, public and private spheres and also about everyday manifestations of racism (e.g. name-calling and disrespect).

A sizeable proportion of all Australians reported having experienced racism across a number of different settings.

The vast majority of Muslim respondents reported they had experienced racism across these settings.



Islamophobia in Australia: Attitudes toward Muslim-Australians

Participants were asked a number of questions throughout the survey that were used to measure comfort with and attitudes towards various groups of Australians.

Our results show that the participants have high levels of antipathy toward various groups of Australians, with Muslim Australians being identified as the group participants are most likely to be concerned about.

Pervasiveness of Islamophobia

- One fifth of those Australians who are supportive of cultural diversity, who feel secure with ethnic difference and who are in favour of an in discriminatory immigration policy, also expressed strong levels of Islamophobia.
- In comparison, less than 1 in 10 expressed anti-African sentiment and only 6% expressed anti-Southern Asian sentiment.

Table 9.

	Very – Extreme level of concern Out-marriage of relative to... (%)		
	Muslim	African	Southern Asian
Support cultural diversity	22.3	9.2	5.9
Feel secure with ethnic difference	19.4	7.6	5.1
Support in discriminatory migration policy	17.9	8.2	5.4
Total	27.7	12.4	8.1