Prejudice Against Muslim Australians: The Role of Values, Gender and Consensus
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Abstract
Data from an Australian community survey (n = 189) examining the predictors of prejudice against Muslim Australians was analysed. Using thematic analysis, we investigated the specific values our participants reported regarding their perceptions of Muslim Australians and Islam. We then investigated the relationship between prejudice against Muslim Australians, the most important value priorities given by our participants, and other prejudice-related variables. After entry into a regression analysis, participants high in prejudice were found to be significantly more likely to have lower educational levels and more right-wing views. They were also significantly more likely to report high levels of national attitudes (i.e., stronger identification with Australian identity), concern about gender equality within the Muslim community, less concern about equality generally, and report that Muslims were not conforming to Australian values. High prejudiced participants also scored higher in the reporting of negative media-related beliefs, were more likely to perceive higher support in the community for their views than was the case, and were more negative towards Muslim men than Muslim women. The implications for anti-prejudice interventions are discussed.
Prejudice and discrimination against Muslim Australians has intensified following the attacks in the United States of America in September 11, 2001 and in Bali in 2002 (Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission [HREOC], 2004). Although research finds that not all Australians are prejudiced (Griffiths & Pedersen, 2009) or discriminatory (HREOC, 2004), the prejudice and discrimination that does occur has led many Muslim Australians to feel excluded from mainstream society (Yasmeen, 2008). Little is known about the social-psychological predictors of prejudice against Muslim Australians; yet identifying these predictors is a necessary preliminary step in developing effective anti-prejudice interventions. Reducing prejudice is important for the sake of Muslim Australians; for example, apart from psychological distress, the targets of prejudice often suffer many negative health issues (Paradies, 2006). It is also important for society as a whole (Paradies, Forrest, Dunn, Pedersen & Webster, 2009).

Our aim was to conduct a multi-method community survey exploring prejudice against Muslim Australians. As an overarching guide as to which variables should be included in our research, we primarily relied on those relevant to anti-prejudice interventions in an Australian context, including values, gender, and other social psychological factors linked with prejudice (see Pedersen, Walker, Paradies, & Guerin, 2011). We then planned to incorporate these empirical findings into a guide for anti-prejudice interventions.

**Background: Prejudice and Values**

A relationship has been found between prejudice and personality variables such as social dominance orientation and right wing authoritarianism (Feather & McKee, 2008; Heaven, Organ, Supavadeeprasit, & Leeson, 2006). Many of the personality facets
involve one’s values (Ekehamer & Akrami, 2007). One major theorist in this field is Schwarz (1992); there are 11 values that Schwartz found particularly important. First, Self-Direction involves independence in thought and action. Second, Stimulation which involves the need for variety and stimulation. Third, Hedonism involves the pleasures associated with organismic needs. Fourth, Achievement involves personal success.

Fifth, Power relates to status differentiation. Sixth, Security involves the safety, stability and harmony of the self, relationships and society. Seventh, Conformity involves people restraining impulses or actions that might hurt other group members or violate group norms. Eighth, Tradition involves shared experience and fate. Ninth, Benevolence involves concern for people close to you on a day-by-day basis. Tenth, Universalism where the individual understands, appreciates, tolerates and protects the welfare of all people as well as nature. Finally, Spirituality which can involve some supernatural force or non-religious perspectives such as humanism. This latter value was not found by Schwarz to be as universal as the other ten values. More recent work has confirmed the validity of Schwarz’ value priorities such as Lindeman and Verkasalo (2005) and Sagiv and Schwarz (1995).

How might one’s personal values relate to prejudice against Muslim Australians? A recent study in Perth, Western Australia, found that participants gave three primary explanations for their attitudes towards Muslim Australians (Griffiths & Pedersen, 2009). The most important reason involved participants’ values; that is, people’s value-laden beliefs which they see as identifying who they really are. The second was participants’ experience with Muslim people. The third was information they obtained indirectly from
friends, family, and the media. This last point is salutory. We would expect prejudiced attitudes to exist where there are negative constructions of Muslims in the media.

**Background: Prejudice and its correlates**

**Negativity, gender, and the media.** Media constructions of Islam and Muslim Australians are largely negative (Dunn, Klocker & Salabay, 2007). Gender stereotypes are also relevant as they are publicly presented in the media. Recently, the media’s focus has shifted somewhat from the “aggressive Muslim male” to the “oppressed Muslim female” (Aly & Walker, 2007). Such negative media-related beliefs are sometimes known as false beliefs or myths and have been significantly correlated with prejudice against other marginalised groups such as asylum seekers (Pedersen, Attwell & Heveli, 2005). However, in the present study we do not use the term “false beliefs” for two reasons. First, there is controversy about labelling them “false beliefs”; it is often difficult to ascertain ‘truth’ or ‘falsity’ and, regardless of their truth or falsity, ideologies can legitimise inequality between groups (Sidanius, Levin, Federico, & Pratto, 2001). Also, given that previous research finds that the Australian media discourse with respect to Muslims is often not just inaccurate but highly inflammatory (Aly, 2007) we have chosen to investigate what we term “negative media-related beliefs”.

**National attitudes.** Some evidence suggests that people who strongly identify with their nation are also more prejudiced towards outgroups (Nickerson & Louis, 2008) although there are some caveats (Saroglou, Lamkaddem, Van Pachterbeke, & Buxant, 2009) and variability between locations (Pehrson, Vignoles & Brown, 2009). Regarding Muslims specifically, some researchers note that national identity and prejudice are
linked because politicians often argue that Islam is a threat to the national identity and national culture (Velasco, Gonzalez, Verkuyten, Weesie, & Poppe, 2008).

Although political context clearly matters, intergroup relation theories such as Social Identity Theory (SIT; Tajfel & Turner, 1979) anticipate that the relationship between ones’ social identity (e.g., national identity) and the nature of the intergroup behaviour depends, amongst other factors, on the content of that identity. For example, Reicher, Cassidy, Wolpert, Hopkins, and Levin (2006) argue that positive intergroup relations is thought to best occur when there is a superordinate categorisation available (e.g., national identity) and where the content of ingroup membership promotes intergroup helping behavior. To capture the diverse ways in which national attitudes/identities can be defined and their relationship to intergroup relations, Dekker, Malova and Hoogendoorn (2003) argued that national attitudes are made up of six levels in a cumulative hierarchy. These levels move from a very neutral category: national feeling (e.g., feeling of belonging to one’s own people and country) to nationalism (e.g., feeling a sense of belonging to a particular nation and wanting to keep that nation as pure as possible).

**Perceived consensus.** There is evidence to suggest that people who score high on prejudice are significantly more likely to over-estimate the community’s support for their view (Pedersen, Griffiths & Watt, 2008; Watt & Larkin, 2010); a similar finding has been found with consensus and racial stereotyping (Strube & Rahimi, 2006).

**Socio-demographic variables.** Certain socio-demographic variables have been linked with prejudice. High levels of prejudice are more likely to be found with people with low formal education and with right-wing political views. A weaker effect is often
found with age and gender – older people and males also tend to be more prejudiced (Pedersen & Griffiths, 2010).

Overview of Study

In our study, we focused on what relates to prejudice against Muslim Australians, focusing particularly on values. Because prejudice is often target-group specific (Brown, 2010) and context specific (Paluck & Green, 2009), to conduct effective anti-prejudice interventions, we must be specific with our research findings. We had four aims/hypotheses.

1. We examined whether our participants, when reporting their attitudes towards Muslim Australians and Islam qualitatively, would use values similar to Schwartz (1992) using a theoretical thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

2. Second, using a regression analysis, we were interested in what predicted prejudice against Muslim Australians using the Schwarz values and other prejudice-related variables based on Pedersen, Walker et al. (2011).

3. Third, based on Aly (2007), we predicted that our participants would be more prejudiced against Muslim males than Muslim females.

4. Finally, we predicted that the higher the levels of prejudice, the less accurate participants would be in their perception of community support for their opinion.

We used both quantitative and qualitative analyses; as noted elsewhere, both have their strengths and weaknesses (Cohen, 2007) and by using both analyses, we hoped to produce a more in-depth view of the predictors of prejudice against Muslim Australians.
Method

Sample and Participant Selection

Using Australian Bureau of Statistics (2006) data on socio-economic status (SES), four suburbs in Perth, Western Australia, were randomly chosen in July 2008. One suburb was low SES, one was high SES, and two were middle SES (more Perth residents are middle SES compared with low or high). A questionnaire and accompanying letter were delivered to 1,000 potential participants and two weeks later a reminder letter was delivered. Half of the accompanying letters requested for a female to complete the questionnaire if possible while the other half requested a male. A total of 189 questionnaires were returned resulting in a response rate of 18.9%.

There was a wide range of education levels; however, a large number of participants (approximately 58%) had completed university. The political viewpoint of the sample was normally distributed (36% left-wing, 39% right-wing; 25% centre). The majority of participants were female (60%). The mean age was 50 years ($SD = 15.86$) with a range of 19 – 87 years.

Measures

Values. Participants were presented with the following question: “Participants in the past have told us that an important reason why they feel the way they do about Muslim Australians involves their values. Do your values affect your views on Muslim Australians?” Participants indicated ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to this question and those who answered yes were asked to briefly explain in their own words what their values were. Two coders independently analysed the data. Although the emphasis was on Schwarz’ values, we
were open to including other values not specifically included within his theoretical framework.

**Attitudes towards Muslim Australians scale** (ATMA scale). This 16-item scale was taken from Griffiths and Pedersen (2009). High scores indicated greater prejudice. An example item is: “Muslims have a hatred of western values”.

**Negative media-related beliefs scale** (NMRB scale). This was taken from Pedersen, Aly, Hartley and McGarty (2009). High scores indicated higher negative media-related beliefs. An example item is: “The media fills our heads with fear of the Muslims in our community”.

**Gender-related attitude thermometers.** Participants were asked “In general how positive or favourable do you feel about Muslim Australians?” They were then asked to differentiate between male and female Muslims. They could respond from 1º (extremely unfavourable) to 100º (extremely favourable). High scores indicate more warmth.

**Perception of Consensus.** Similar to the format in previous studies (Pedersen et al., 2008) we asked participants about their opinion on Muslim Australians, and then asked them to estimate what percentage of Australians would agree or disagree with their views.

**National Attitudes Scale.** This was measured using 23 items from the national identity scale of Dekker et al. (2003) adapted to the Australian community. High scores indicate higher positive national attitudes. An example item is: “The Australian nationality is the best nationality to have”.
**Socio-demographic variables.** Participants stated their age in years, their sex (1= male; 2= female), their education level (1= did not complete secondary school; 5= higher degree), and political orientation (1= strongly left to 5= strongly right).

**Results**

Almost three-quarters of participants \((n = 138)\) reported that their values affected their views on Muslim Australians \((74.2\%)\).

**Aim 1. Qualitative Data (Values)**

Using all qualitative data, we found that many of the themes mirrored the motivational domains of Schwartz (1992) although at times this involved a more specific sub-category. For example, many participants reported issues of gender equality which we included as a sub-theme within the Universalism domain (Universalism contains Equality as a value). See Table 1 for examples of themes.

[Insert Table 1 about here]

One theme did not fit neatly into Schwartz’s framework: Anti Extremism/Fundamentalism. We separate out Extremism and Fundamentalism. Fundamentalism can be seen as enacting the fundamentals of Islam and Extremism as an activity which should be condemned (Shabir Ally as cited in Hopkins & Kahani-Hopkins, 2009). Given the complexity of responses in this theme, six sub-themes were used: (a) opposition to Muslim extremism (e.g., involving violence); (b) opposition to Muslim extremism but acknowledgement that not all Muslims are extremists; (c) opposition to extremism regardless of religion; (d) opposition to Muslim fundamentalism (strict obedience to religious teachings); (e) opposition to Muslim fundamentalism but
acknowledgement that not all Muslims are fundamentalists; (f) opposition to fundamentalism regardless of religion.

We set an arbitrary cut-off at $n=25$; at least 20% of participants needed to have reported the value theme for it to be included in this analysis. Five umbrella (or global) categories were found. Universalism was the most prevalent umbrella theme, followed by Self-Direction, Conformity, Anti-Extremism/Fundamentalism and Benevolence (see Table 2).

[Insert Table 2 about here]

Three sub-themes were above our cut-off of 20%: Broadmindedness, followed by Gender Equality and Equality Generally. All these sub-themes fell within the Universalism umbrella.

**Inter-Rater Reliability.** We conducted Kappa inter-rater reliability following Landis and Koch (1977). Using their guidelines, as can be seen by Table 2, most themes had an almost perfect match ($n=12$): Universalism, Broadmindedness, Gender Equity, Equality Generally, a World At Peace, Self-Direction, Conformity, Conformity to Australia, Conformity to Islam, Opposition to Fundamentalism/Extremism, Opposition to All Fundamentalism regardless of Religion, Benevolence. Four had a substantial match (Opposition to Muslim Extremism, Opposition to Extremism Regardless of Religion, Opposition to Muslim Fundamentalism, and Opposition to Muslim Fundamentalism; yet not all Muslims fundamentalists). One had a perfect match (Opposition to Muslim Extremism, yet not all Muslims extremists).

**Quantitative Data**
As can be seen by Table 3, scale reliabilities were satisfactory. Scores on the ATMA scale were just below the midpoint; scores on the NMRB were slightly higher as were scores on the national attitudes scale. The male thermometer was slightly below the midpoint, the general thermometer was just above the midpoint, and the female thermometer was higher than both, leaning towards slightly favourable.

[Insert Table 3 about here]

The ATMA scores were allocated to three categories as per Griffiths and Pedersen (2009). Using data from the smaller sub-group (participants who reported that their values affected their views on Muslim Australians) for consistency purposes, scores which were equal to or less than 3.5 were classified as “Accepting” (54%), scores which were greater than 3.5 and less than 4.5 were classified as “neither Accepting or Rejecting” (27%) and scores which were equal to or greater than 4.5 were classified as “Rejecting” (19%). As an aside, the figures were almost identical when using all data (56% accepting; 26% neither accepting or rejecting; 18% rejecting). There was no significant difference between the three groups as to whether they relied on their values (yes, no) $\chi^2(2) = 0.27, p = .882$.

**Correlations between ATMA and the Independent Variables**

Again using data from the smaller sub-group, we examined the correlations between reported values and ATMA scores as we planned to include significant correlations in a multiple regression analysis. Only three value relationships were significant. Participants who scored high in prejudice also reported more concern about gender issues ($r = .27; p = .003$), less concern with equality issues generally ($r = -.32; p <$
and more concern about Muslims conforming to Australian values ($r = .33; p < .001$).

We found that participants who scored high on the ATMA also scored very high on the NMRB ($r = .88; p < .001$). Given that this correlation is higher than the internal consistency of many scales, we did not include the NMRB scale in the regression as planned. The national attitudes scale also significantly correlated with the ATMA ($r = .52; p < .001$). While gender and age were not related to the ATMA, participants who were politically right-wing ($r = .44; p < .001$) and who reported less formal education ($r = -.25; p = .005$) scored higher on the ATMA.

**Aim 2. Prediction of Prejudice**

Using data from the smaller sub-group again, we investigated the relative effect of variables discussed in the introduction as predictors of prejudice by conducting a hierarchical regression analysis. Political preference and education level were entered at step 1 to see which psychological variables were most important when the socio-demographic variables which significantly correlated with prejudice were controlled for. The national attitudes scale, gender equality, equality generally, and conformity to Australia were entered at step 2. At step 1, political preference ($\beta = .40$) and education levels ($\beta = -.25$) were significant accounting for 25.3% of the variance. At step 2, political preference ($\beta = .18$), education ($\beta = -.16$), national attitudes ($\beta = .31$), gender equality ($\beta = .16$), equality generally ($\beta = -.15$) and conformity to Australia ($\beta = .20$) were significant accounting for an additional 19.5% of the variance. Thus, the best predictors of prejudice against Australian Muslims involved right-wing political views, low education levels, higher levels of national attitudes, more concern about gender equality,
less concern with equality generally, and more concern that Australian Muslims were not conforming to Australian values. Overall, 45% of the variance was explained (adjusted $R^2 = 42\%$).

**Aim 3. Gender Differences**

Using all data, paired t-tests found that although there was a significant correlation between the gender thermometers ($r = .647; p < .001$), female Muslims ($M = 66$) were viewed significantly more positively than Muslims generally ($M = 56$) ($t(189) = 43.8, p < .001$). Muslims generally were seen more positively than Muslim men ($M = 46$) ($t(189) = 32.0, p < .001$).

**Aim 4. Accuracy of Perceived Consensus**

Using all data, we found that more prejudiced people were significantly more likely to report that other Australians would agree with their views ($r = .51; p < .001$).

Accuracy of perceived consensus was computed as the difference between the percentage of people at each level of the three respective attitude categories and the respondent’s estimate of the percentage of Australians who would agree with their view (similar to Pedersen, et al., 2008). We used the three categories described previously (accepting; neither accepting or rejecting; rejecting) and took into account the socio-demographic variables which correlated with prejudice when estimating the population mean. We conducted an analysis of covariance which produced adjusted means with the consensus question being the dependent variable and the three prejudice categories being the independent variables.

Taking into account the covariates, the acceptors estimated that 49% of other Australians would agree with their views (7% difference to the real mean), the middle
group estimated that 64% of other Australians would agree with their view (38% difference to the real mean), and the rejectors estimated that 78% of other Australians would agree with their views (60% difference to the real mean). There was no difference with regard to the acceptors: they were relatively accurate in their estimations ($\chi^2(1) = 0.88; p = .400$). However, the middle participants significantly over-estimated the support for their position ($\chi^2(1) = 55.54; p < .001$) as did the rejectors ($\chi^2(1) = 200; p < .001$).

**Discussion**

In terms of the levels of prejudice expressed, most participants were categorised as either ‘accepting’ or ‘neither accepting or rejecting’ which supports past research finding that most Australians are not explicitly prejudiced against Muslim Australians (HREOC, 2004). These Australian figures appear less negative when compared with the growing unfavourable views of Muslims in Europe (Pew Research Centre, 2008). However, almost 20% of our participants were overtly rejecting. Although the openly rejecting participants were in the minority, it is still of great concern given that ours was a relatively educated sample, and education is linked with prejudice, meaning that our findings are likely to be an under-estimation of negativity.

**Aim 1. Value Priorities**

We found five umbrella themes; namely, Universalism, Self-Direction, Conformity, Extremism/Anti-Fundamentalism, and Benevolence. Universalism and Self-Direction were the most prevalent values. Our findings show the relevance of Schwarz’ (1992) categories; four out of five themes were Schwarz-related. This is not surprising; as Heaven et al. notes, “(v)alues are important in setting the framework within which our
social and political attitudes are expressed…” (p. 606). Our study, however, adds to theory showing the importance of Anti Extremism/Fundamentalism. As noted by Brown (2010), prejudice is often historically specific; one example being the rise of Islamophobia since the September 11 bombings. Our data indicate that almost ten years after the September 11 bombings, the repercussions are still evident. Further, our values data contribute to the function of attitudes literature base. As found by Griffiths and Pedersen (2009), participants overwhelmingly reported that their attitudes against Muslim Australians were based on their values. But it was not apparent from that study what those values were. The findings of the present study fill that gap in the literature.

With regard to the most prevalent Universalism umbrella theme, there were three sub-themes. Over half of our participants noted the importance of Broadmindedness or Tolerance. Approximately one-fifth of participants noted the importance of Equality Generally, reporting that they believed that all people should be treated equally. With regard to Gender Equality, comments aligned to this theme were espoused by almost one-third of participants. This gender finding is not surprising; particularly in view of past research espousing the proposed link between Islam and female oppression (Aly & Walker, 2007). Other research also finds some Australians voicing their concerns about Muslim womens’ attire (the hijab) being a sign of male domination. For example, as reported in Dunn (2009), some participants reported sympathy for Muslim women (and little Muslim girls) being supposedly dominated by Muslim men seeing it as a form of oppression (see Yzerbyt & Demoulin, 2010, for a more general discussion on when seemingly positive attitudes towards a group may lead to negativity and/or the reinforcement of present power hierarchies).
The second most prevalent umbrella theme was Self-Direction which is not surprising given that Australia is one of the most individualistic countries in the world (Hofstede, 1980); just under half of the participants made comments along these lines. Dunn (2009) found in his analysis of the hijab the importance of Self-Direction or freedoms as he put it (also see Adsett, 2011, for a discussion on historical, political and cultural influences on attitudes towards the hijab in Canada and France). Dunn found that the three most important reasons behind not being bothered by the hijab were freedom of religion, freedom of expression and democratic freedoms.

Interestingly, neither Universalism or Self-Direction correlated with prejudice; it would seem that our participants’ attitudes were quite fine-tuned; both Universalism and Self-Direction can be interpreted differently depending upon one’s views. In other words, these two values can influence a prejudiced person and a non-prejudiced person in very different ways.

One-third of participants also prioritised Conformity to Australian culture which was the third most prevalent umbrella theme. This is similar to the Schwartz (1992) categorisation – one must conform to Australia’s values for smooth interaction between group members. However, with all cultural groups, there are some individuals who will integrate more than others. It is too much of a sweeping generalisation to assert that “Muslims don’t integrate”. Furthermore, integration is a two-way street involving both the settlers and the host country (Hollands, 2001). Indeed, it has been found that the experience of prejudice and discrimination makes it harder for newly arrived Muslims (and Arabs) to integrate into Australian society (HREOC, 2004).
Just under one-quarter of participants made comments with respect to Muslim Extremism or Muslim Fundamentalism which was the fourth most prevalent umbrella theme. This is not surprising given that ‘moderation’ and ‘extremism’ categories are now common discourses about Muslims (Hopkins & Kahani-Hopkins, 2009). Yet a number of participants acknowledged Muslim heterogeneity in line with previous research (Haddad, 2003; Yasmeen, 2008).

With regard to Benevolence, the fifth most prevalent umbrella theme, almost one-quarter of participants reported views in line with this Schwarz (1992) theme. If Muslim Australians are perceived as Australian citizens, and therefore part of the ingroup, it may be easier to see them as deserving of benevolence. As Schwarz noted, benevolence relates to “concern for the welfare of close others in everyday interaction” (p. 11). However, Muslim Australians may not be seen as close enough by some Australians.

**Aim 2. Quantitative predictors of prejudice**

Before discussing our regression analysis, two issues are worth noting: the socio-demographic variables and media-related negative beliefs that were correlated with prejudice. Two socio-demographic variables were significant even after inclusion of the psychological variables (right wing political views; low levels of education). This finding supports past research (Pedersen & Griffiths, 2010) but, given they are not the focus of the present paper, will not be enlarged upon.

Regarding Media-Related Negative Beliefs, our findings suggest that our participants’ attitudes to Muslim Australians were almost indistinguishable from media attitudes; hence, this variable was not included in the regression analysis. This finding supports other research that suggests inaccurate and biased media reporting of
Muslim/Arab related issues is commonplace (Yasmeen, 2008). Our participants’ regurgitation of such beliefs can prove problematic. Yasmeen found that while non-Muslims were sceptical about the information they gleaned from the media, the images of what they see as ‘oppression’ (for example, women wearing the hijab; images of violent Muslims) were reported frequently by many of her participants. Participants in other studies acknowledge that Muslim and non-Muslim relationships are “played out through the media” (Mavor, Kanra, Thomas, Blink & O’Brien, 2009, p. 5) and thus it is apparent that the media is highly influential.

Aside from the socio-demographics, there were three variables that significantly predicted prejudice. Two have already been discussed: Equality Generally and Conformity to Australia. One further significant variable is National Attitudes. Our results give weight to previous research that has found a link between negative attitudes towards outgroups and nationalism in the Australian setting (Nickerson & Louis, 2008). As noted by Brown (2010) and Reicher et al (2006), if identity (in our case national identity) is constructed in an essentialist and exclusive way – as often occurs with Islam in Australia – one would predict a strong relationship between prejudice and nationalism and this is what we found. Our study further adds to previous research in that we measured national attitudes (national liking to nationalism) rather than simply nationalism alone. This methodological difference adds strength to the argument that it is important to examine how people feel about their nation when examining prejudice against Muslim Australians.

Dekker et al. (2003) highlight the influence of social norms and socialisation in the development of national attitudes. Other research highlights the flexibility and
contestability of the meaning of national identity (Every & Augoustinos, 2008; Reicher et al, 2006). The prejudice/nationalism relationship will depend on whether the understanding of nationalism excludes the outgroup (Pehrson et al., 2009). The important point here is that it does not have to. Indeed, research conducted in Belgium found that high levels of Belgian national identity were unrelated to anti-hijab attitudes (Saroglou, et al., 2009). As anticipated by intergroup theories such as SIT (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), our research builds on the idea that national attitudes and identities can be called upon and defined in both positive and negative ways, which will influence the nature of intergroup relations.

**Aim 3. Gendered prejudice.**

We found that Muslim men were perceived more negatively than Muslim women which supports the literature in other disciplines regarding the “oppressed” Muslim woman and the “oppressive” Muslim man (Aly, 2007). Apart from the fact that these generalisations, often portrayed through the media, are often inaccurate, they have flow-on effects. Specifically, the particular emphasis on women’s supposed oppression by misogynistic men can lead to Muslim women not feeling comfortable about speaking out about gender issues in their own community (Ho, 2007).

Past research with respect to gender differences are contradictory. Although Muslim, Middle Eastern and Arab are not the same terms, they are often used interchangeably by the Australian public (Fozdar, Wilding, & Hawkins, 2009). Some research found that compared with men, Arab/Muslim women reported experiencing significantly more racism, violence or abuse since 11 September, 2001 (HREOC, 2004; Poynting, Noble, & Ang, 2004). Conversely, Pedersen, Dunn, Forrest and McGarty
(2011; Study One) found that Middle Eastern men were significantly more likely to report racism in three out of nine categories than Middle Eastern women. While our findings are more in line with those of Pedersen et al., more work on the gendered experience of prejudice and racism needs to be conducted.

**Aim 4. Consensus**

Our study gives some support to the consensus literature (Strube & Rahimi, 2006; Watt & Larkin, 2010). Specifically, two previous Australian studies which examined accuracy of consensus and prejudice (Hartley & Pedersen, 2007; Pedersen et al., 2008) found that regardless of prejudice levels, participants overestimated their support although this tendency was greater with high prejudiced participants. However, in our study, our accepting participants were quite accurate. This indicates that although the relationship between high prejudice and high consensus is stable, the relationship between low prejudice and consensus is a little more reliant on context and/or target group.

**Implications**

Regarding the three most prevalent value priorities, many participants reported the importance of Equality Generally. For anti-prejudice strategists, this concept may be useful to address, especially given that prejudiced participants were less likely to espouse this theme. It may be useful to concentrate on cognitive dissonance which has been effective to reducing prejudice (Gawronski, Peters, Brochu, & Strack, 2008). That is, dealing with incongruities such as “I believe I am broadminded” versus “I don’t like Muslims”. Participants also noted the importance of Gender Equality reporting unease at their perception of the treatment of Muslim Australian women. The issue of “female
“oppression” was also apparent in the quantitative data. This leads the way for a fruitful discussion. In particular, it begs the question – are women in Australia treated equally to men? Certainly, some research indicates otherwise (Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, 2006). Although people who hold “the oppressed Muslim woman and the ugly Muslim man stereotype” are unlikely to see themselves as prejudiced (more likely, they would see this as empathy for Muslim women), we have shown that this “empathy” can, in fact, be prejudice related. This would be a good discussion point in any anti-prejudice intervention.

Regarding Extremism/Fundamentalism, while there was variation in our participants’ attitudes to Muslim Australians and Extremism/Fundamentalism, the topic is something that anti-prejudice strategists may find useful to discuss fully given that many participants reported it as an important value priority. It may also be useful to discuss, as suggested by Hopkins and Kahani-Hopkins (2009), that this dichotomy may negatively affect Muslims’ ability to engage in open debate without being categorised as extremist.

Regarding Conformity, given that our prejudiced participants were significantly more likely to see Conformity as an issue, it is another important issue to discuss in any anti-prejudice intervention. Australians may not see themselves as conformist (Hofstede, 1980); however, our data tell another story. The lack of relationship between prejudice and Benevolence indicates that personality traits such as this are in fact contextual and social; it depends very much who is the seen as part of the ingroup. This is certainly something that can be discussed within an anti-prejudice intervention.

The relationship between the ATMA and NRNB was very strong. One possible avenue could be for anti-prejudice strategists to educate their participants about the
influence of the media, and then suggest that when they read things in the newspaper or
discuss this issue with their friends, they attempt to challenge it. This links with the
section below on consensus and also with bystander anti-prejudice work; that is, taking a
public stand against prejudice or discrimination when not personally involved (Dunn &
Kamp, 2009). Change can occur slowly from the bottom up: ordinary citizens can be a
part of this. Attitude change can occur after a full discussion of these issues; for example,
one study found a significant decrease in NMRBs when topical media issues surrounding
Muslim Australians were addressed in an anti-prejudice intervention (Pedersen et al.,
2009).

The national identity link with prejudice also has practical implications. It has
been suggested that there is considerable value in anti-prejudice interventions not only
attempting to change people’s opinion about outgroups but it is important to change how
people think about themselves (Ray, Mackie, Rydell & Smith, 2009). So, while the link
between prejudice against Muslim Australians and national attitudes found in this study is
concerning, if such attitudes can be defined in different ways, the findings also present us
with an opportunity. To promote positive inter-group relations, anti-prejudice strategists
could draw upon more inclusive constructions of national attitudes especially given the
strong relationship between national attitudes and prejudice.

Finally, the consensus findings have practical implications. Randjelovic (2008)
found that positive attitudes against Muslim Australians increased when participants
heard that others had positive attitudes. Thus, this is an approach which would be useful
for anti-prejudice strategists to take into account. It may also be useful for workshop
leaders in anti-prejudice interventions to suggest to participants that when they hear
inaccurate information, contestable, or racist talk, they address it in an attempt to change social norms (Guerin, 2005).

**Limitations/Strengths**

There are, of course, limitations to our study. We note that our response rate was low and more educated participants responded to the questionnaire. However, our response rate is on par with other community samples in Australia (Watt & Larkin, 2010). Unfortunately, the response rates in Australia have been decreasing in a linear fashion. While Walker (1994) reported a response rate of 51% in his 1990 study, response rates now hover around the 20% mark as occurred in the present study – or even lower. It may well be that researchers have to find different ways to access community samples in Australia.

Yet there are strengths of our study also. In particular, the mixed-methods approach has given the research more depth than if it used just one method or the other. Using the results of both methods, the paper gives anti-prejudice researchers some direction as to what may be useful in carrying out such an intervention. In fact, some recent research using the principles outlined in this paper has found not only an increase in positive attitudes towards Muslim Australians, but a willingness to speak out against everyday prejudice against Muslim Australians (Pedersen, Paradies, Dunn & Hartley, 2010).

Furthermore, while there is a large body of literature on understanding intergroup relations generally (e.g., Yzerbyt & Demoulin, 2010) and prejudice reduction (Crisp & Hewstone 2007; Paluck & Green, 2009), there is a dearth of literature on prejudice against Muslim Australians. Given that anti-prejudice interventions must take into
account both context and the target group (Brown, 2010; Pedersen et al., 2011), it is important to know the specific antecedents of prejudice before tackling it. Another strength of our paper is that, to date, there is no social-psychological literature on the relationship between prejudice against Muslims and values – Schwarz or otherwise. Likewise, the relationship between prejudice against Muslim Australians, consensus and gender has not been previously studied. Given this, the results of the present study will, we hope, be useful for anti-prejudice interventions in the future.

Conclusions

Phillips and Smith (2000) found that Australian values do not seem to be influenced by “the abstract ideals of political discourse” (p. 220); rather it is influenced by popular culture and “real” people, places, and communities. Given their findings, which were also mirrored in the results of the present study, if we attempt to counter prejudiced attitudes, we should do so in a way that is more integral to Australians’ day-to-day lives. To do this, we need to know what values are spontaneously reported by people as we have done in our study.

Although beyond the scope of this paper, we acknowledge that anti-prejudice interventions do not have all the answers and that structural change is also needed. As Yzerbyt and Demoulin (2010) note, “bias percolates throughout all layers of society” (p. 1055). One example is the role that government agencies play in addressing systemic racism (Paradies, Forrest, Dunn, Pedersen, & Webster, 2009). Nevertheless, given the research that suggest the central role of values on people’s attitudes (Griffiths & Pedersen, 2009), we hope that by outlining the values which they espouse, we may get a clearer picture of the state of play. Taken together with our quantitative findings, we
further hope that we have made a small step in helping devise the strategies that are necessary if we are to decrease prejudiced attitudes against Muslim Australians.
References


Hopkins, N., & Kahani-Hopkins, V. (2009). Reconceptualizing ‘extremism’ and ‘moderation’: From categories of analysis to categories of practice in the


Table 1. Examples of qualitative themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Universalism</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadmindedness</td>
<td>“Openmindedness, tolerance, trying not to judge &amp; listening to both sides of a story”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Equality</td>
<td>“I believe women should be able treated equally to men which to my knowledge doesn’t happen with Muslims”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equality generally</td>
<td>“I value equality”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A world at peace</td>
<td>“Everyone has the right to live in peace”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-Directedness</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom of speech</td>
<td>“Freedom of speech”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conformity</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conformity to Australia</td>
<td>“It seems to be difficult (and often NO desire) from them to integrate into Australian society”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conformity to Islam</td>
<td>“Views eg sharia, jihad; enforcement of these views upon others”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Extremism/Fundamentalism</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti E/F1</td>
<td>“I do not have to accept a “religion” which sanctions and encourages the slaughter of those who do not have the same belief”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti E/F2</td>
<td>“… Muslims”. That term covers many races and nationalities, as well as numerous sects (such as Sunnis and Shi’ites) and ignores the vast differences between a few extremists (with whose views I strongly disagree) and the great majority (who are ordinary decent people). “</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti E/F3</td>
<td>“I am fearful of extremists of any persuasion/belief”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti E/F4</td>
<td>“Sharia law” is certainly not one of my values”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti E/F5</td>
<td>“Unfortunately, as in all religions, the fundamentalists both Christian and Muslim are the rat bags of society &amp; colour the majority of the populations’ views about them.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti E/F6</td>
<td>“Against fundamentalism”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Benevolence</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian-based values</td>
<td>“Help others if you can”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tradition</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tradition</td>
<td>“fairly traditional/conservative beliefs and values”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Security</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family security</td>
<td>“I believe we all love our families. I want to live in peace”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National security</td>
<td>“Security &amp; well being of my family is my most important concern. National security next.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General security</td>
<td>“I am proud of what Australia represents: freedom, security”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note.  
Anti E/F1: Opposition to Muslim extremism  
Anti E/F2: Opposition to Muslim extremism; not all extremists  
Anti E/F3: Opposition to all extremism  
Anti E/F4: Opposition to Muslim fundamentalism  
Anti E/F5: Opposition to Muslim fundamentalism; not all fundamentalists  
Anti E/F6: Opposition to all fundamentalism
Table 2. Values: Prevalence of Themes (ordered by frequency) and Kappa Reliability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Total %</th>
<th>Kappa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Universalism</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>(\alpha = .82)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadmindedness</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>(\alpha = .87)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender equality</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>(\alpha = .93)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equality generally</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>(\alpha = .88)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A world at peace</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>(\alpha = .96)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-Direction</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conformity</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>(\alpha = .84)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conformity to Australia</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>(\alpha = .93)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conformity to Islam</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>(\alpha = .91)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conformity to Islam</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>(\alpha = .89)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Anti Extremism/Fundamentalism</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim extremism</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>(\alpha = .88)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim extremism; not all Muslims extremists</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>(\alpha = .79)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All extremism</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>(\alpha = 1.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All extremism</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>(\alpha = .79)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim fundamentalism</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>(\alpha = .72)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim fundamentalism; not all Muslims fundamentalists</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>(\alpha = .80)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All fundamentalism</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>(\alpha = .89)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Benevolence</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>(\alpha = .86)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scale</td>
<td>Mean/SD</td>
<td>No of items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATMA</td>
<td>3.23(1.35)</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NMRB</td>
<td>3.81(1.31)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Attitudes</td>
<td>4.84(0.93)</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thermometer</td>
<td>56.11(24.07)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thermometer: F</td>
<td>66.25(20.85)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thermometer: M</td>
<td>46.35(25.74)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>