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Quality of life in Muslim ethnic communities in regional Australia: Exploring the influence of Islamic social values and social integration

This study is an inspection of the challenges Muslims face in regional Australia in terms of their communal wellbeing and quality of life, focusing on the Hunter region including Greater Newcastle, New South Wales. Many Muslim communities face serious challenges in their social, economic, and political integration with mainstream society, resulting in a deterioration in their individual and communal wellbeing and quality of life. Muslims are portrayed generally as a highly homogeneous community with inflexible social values that differ foundationally from so-called Western values.

Studies are thus needed to explore just how diverse Muslim communities are, internally, and what values they share with their broader societies. Such studies can help us to examine what factors truly affect their social integration and thus their quality of life. On the other hand, many important ideas can be developed out of such studies about what Islamic cultures value and how such values can be incorporated in the way we define welfare and wellbeing policies in our multicultural society. Using a mixed-method approach, this project aims to:

1. Explore the key issues and challenges that Muslim communities face in regional Australia in terms of their communal quality of life – focusing on the Hunter region including Greater Newcastle.
2. Examine how the ways in which Muslim communities are integrated into the broader society affect their communal wellbeing, and what mediatory roles their social values play in this.
3. Outline evidence-based recommendations for appropriate policy reforms.