

A Critical Narrative Review of Research about the Experiences of being Muslim in New Zealand

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The paper reviews and integrates findings from our programme of research on acculturation and intercultural relations with, for and about members of New Zealand's Muslim community. Our objectives are to act as a conduit for Muslim voices, sharing findings about their experiences, aspirations and challenges, while increasing overall awareness about diversity-receptiveness in New Zealand. We describe how New Zealand Muslims see themselves in terms of their religious, ethnic and national identities; the challenges they face, including coping with discrimination and cultural change; the resources they access, particularly religion, family and community; and their pathways to positive psychological and social outcomes. We also examine how New Zealanders perceive and receive Muslims in the wider community.

Keywords: Muslim; acculturation; identity; discrimination; adaptation; immigrant; attitudes

The recent tragedy in Christchurch, the brutal slaying of 50 Muslim New Zealanders at prayer, has led not only to a national outpouring of grief, but also to sombre reflection about who we are as a nation and if we should have anticipated this act of terrorism. Emerging public discourses on white supremacy, hate crimes, gun control, Islam and Islamophobia have left a strong impression that as a nation we have been largely unaware of the insidious, divisive forces that are at work in our society. These discourses also suggest that there is limited knowledge about Muslims and Islam in New Zealand. The aim of this paper is to provide an overview of findings, both published and unpublished, from our broader programme of research on Acculturation and Intercultural Relations with, for, and about members of New Zealand's Muslim community. Our objectives are to act as a conduit for Muslim voices, sharing research findings about Muslims' experiences, aspirations and challenges, while increasing overall awareness about diversity-receptiveness in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

The Muslim community in New Zealand is a small, but growing group, having increased by 28% between the 2006 and 2013 census, but still making up only 1.2% of the national population (Statistics New Zealand, 2013). This is a

smaller proportion of the population than is generally found in Europe (e.g., 6.1% in Germany, 6.3% in the United Kingdom, and 8.8% in France), but is similar to the United States (1.1%; Pew Research Center, 2017, 2018). About three-quarters of New Zealand Muslims are overseas-born, and they are highly diverse in terms of ethnicity and national background. The largest group is of Asian origin (26.9%), with around a quarter having African and Middle Eastern backgrounds (23.3%), as well as smaller numbers of both Māori and Europeans, comprising the community. A substantial proportion of New Zealand Muslims come from a refugee background; Afghans, Pakistanis, Syrians, Palestinians, and Myanmar's Rohingyas are among the groups currently being resettled in New Zealand with earlier settlements of refugees from Iran, Iraq, and Somalia (Beaglehole, 2013; Immigration New Zealand, 2019). Overall, New Zealand's Muslim community is young, with those aged 15-29 years making up 29% of the population, and the community is unevenly dispersed throughout New Zealand, with about two-thirds living in Auckland (Statistics New Zealand, 2013).

In the following sections we discuss how New Zealand Muslims view themselves, particularly in terms of their

identities as Muslims and as New Zealanders; the challenges they face, including discrimination and coping with cultural change; the resources they access, particularly religion, family and community; and their pathways to positive psychological and social outcomes. We also discuss how New Zealanders perceive and receive members of the Muslim community. These discussions are based on a compilation of qualitative and quantitative studies, using mixed methods (interviews, focus groups, workshop exercises, identity mapping, surveys), and designed for various purposes and outcomes (e.g., social action, theory testing). A summary of the projects is presented in Table 1. In some instances the survey research is complemented by comparative data from international sources; in particular the research on *Pathways to Positive Development* includes a comparative sample of 142 young British Muslims, and the work on *Identity, Acculturation and Adaptation* is part of a larger national study with Korean, Indian, Chinese, Samoan, Māori and Pākehā youth, which make up the New Zealand data in the 13-nation International Comparative Study of Ethno-cultural Youth (ICSEY; Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006).

Table 1. Overview of Projects

Project	Participants
Interviews and Focus Groups	
1. Pathways to Positive Development	25 young Muslim adults (19-27 years)
Workshops	
2. Young Muslim Leaders: <i>Qaadah Muslimoona Shabaab</i>	36 young Muslims (15-25 years)
3. Young Muslims: Needs and Challenges	94 young Muslims (15-27 years)
4. Building Bridges: <i>Jusoor Tawaasul</i>	24 ethnically diverse, Muslim and non-Muslim students (13-14 years)
Surveys	
5. Identity, Acculturation and Adaptation	180 Muslim youth (13-19 years)
6. Pathways to Positive Development	155 Muslim youth (16-27 years)
7. Acculturative Stress and Muslim Religious Coping	167 Muslim adults (mean age = 31.5 years)
8. Muslim Identity, Visibility and Well-being	153 Muslim women (aged 16-60 years)
9. Acculturation, Adaptation and Intercultural Relations	100 Muslims (16-71 years)
10. Attitudes to Immigrants	2020 New Zealand households
11. Attitudes to Muslims	295 New Zealanders (18- 65+ years)

Striving for Balance: Identity and Integration

Acculturation and Integration

Acculturation theory points to two key issues that individuals and groups face when they settle in a new country; these involve decisions about the extent to which traditional cultural heritage is or should be maintained and the extent to which participation in and adoption of the culture of the wider society is desired or achieved (Berry, 2001, 2005). Whether examined in real or ideal terms, research has shown these two issues are conceptually and empirically distinct (Navas et al., 2005; Ryder, Alden, & Paulhus, 2000; Ward & Kus, 2012). Framing acculturation in terms of these two orthogonal dimensions permits the identification and classification of four acculturation strategies or orientations: separation (cultural maintenance only), assimilation (participation/cultural adoption only), marginalisation (neither cultural maintenance nor participation/cultural adoption) and integration (both cultural maintenance and participation/adoption).

Although acculturation preferences and outcomes vary as a function of socio-political contexts, research has suggested that integration is generally preferred by new settlers (Phinney, Berry, Vedder, & Liebkind, 2006; Ward, Fox, Wilson, Stuart, & Kus, 2010), and our research has indicated that this is the case for both

Muslims and non-Muslims in New Zealand (Ward, 2009; Ward, Liu, Fairbairn-Dunlop, & Henderson, 2010). The essence of integration involves engagement with both heritage and national cultures. The process of being and becoming integrated has been articulated by young Muslims in terms of “balance,” which has been described both as a pathway to positive development and a key indicator of success (Stuart & Ward, 2011a).

Achieving a good balance, being a Muslim and being a member of a non-Muslim society and not compromising on faith, but still being able to be comfortable (p. 259).

Balance is seen as a means of minimising the risks of managing multiple cultural affiliations and competing demands. Efforts are made to “fit into” New Zealand culture, but neither at the expense of compromising the self, nor by shedding one’s values and beliefs.

Being true with myself, who I am and where I am from. Being able to balance out the two different cultures, mine and theirs (p. 260).

Balance is also seen as fostering positive intergroup relations, assisting in building better relationships with non-Muslims as well as cultivating virtues that are aligned to religious beliefs.

Tolerance, learning about the New Zealand culture and way of life,

seeing things from others’ point of view, being honest, understanding and having empathy. Balancing my culture with New Zealand culture (p. 260).

Moreover, the young Muslims who participated in our research appeared highly skilled in broadly achieving balance.

I feel a sense of belonging and connection to both my religion and culture as well as to New Zealand society. I do not see them as conflicting (p. 260).

These expressions of balance were further elaborated in the exercise of identity mapping, a technique developed by Sirin and Fine (2008) in their work with young Muslims in the United States. Using this technique participants illustrate their identities pictorially, prompted by a request to draw all of the elements of the self. Sirin and Fine (2008) uncovered three profiles from identity mapping: integrated (Muslim identity and national identity blended in a non-conflicting way), parallel (both identities depicted as separate) and conflicted (representations of tension, hostility or irreconcilability of identities). As in Sirin and Fine’s (2008) research, we found that the majority of identity maps generated by young adults in our workshop sessions portrayed integration; however, both the process and the

content were represented. Figure 1 depicts one such identity map (Ward, 2013); while Islam is central to the self, as shown in the outstretched hand and the mosque, the map also depicts national identities in the adjacent flags of New Zealand and Pakistan. In addition, both English and Arabic (*shafaq*, compassion) scripts are present. The Sunni path, in conjunction with family (caution lights) and friends (bumps), suggests that acculturation is experienced as a process or journey. Figure 2 illustrates the extent of integration at one point in time (Stuart, Ward, & Adam, 2010). Multiple identities, roles and relationships are brought together in the folds of a woman's *hijab*. A pin, labelled *balance*, represents how her faith is holding multiple identities together while her nose is illustrated by an inverted question mark labelled "balance" and her smile is "thankful or trying to be."

Findings from our survey research converge with those from the qualitative

studies. Overall, we found evidence of strong religious, ethnic and national identities. We also found positive associations between young Muslims' ethnic and national identities (Stuart, 2012; Ward, Adam, & Stuart, 2011; Ward, Liu et al., 2010). Broadly speaking, a positive association between ethnic and national identities in immigrant and minority groups has been seen to be an indicator of a multicultural or diversity-receptive environment where individuals are not forced to choose between heritage and national cultures. This pattern is more often observed in settler societies such as New Zealand and Australia as opposed to the "Old World" societies such as France, Germany and the Netherlands (Phinney et al., 2006).

Although the relationship between religious and national identities has been relatively neglected in the international literature, work by Verkuyten and Yildiz (2007) addressed this issue with Turkish-Dutch in the Netherlands. Their findings

indicated that Turkish and Muslim identities were strongly inter-related and that both were negatively related to Dutch identity. As Muslim identity was also associated with Dutch dis-identification, the researchers argued that Dutch Muslims see their religious and national identities as largely incompatible. In line with Verkuyten and Yildiz (2007), we also found a positive relationship between ethnic and religious identities in New Zealand Muslims; however, in contrast to the Dutch study, Muslim and New Zealand identities were unrelated, undermining the suggestion that these identities are seen as incompatible in the New Zealand context. Indeed, many of the voices we have heard from the Muslim community after the horrific attacks in Christchurch mosques have expressed the sentiment of being "a proud Muslim, and a proud New Zealander."

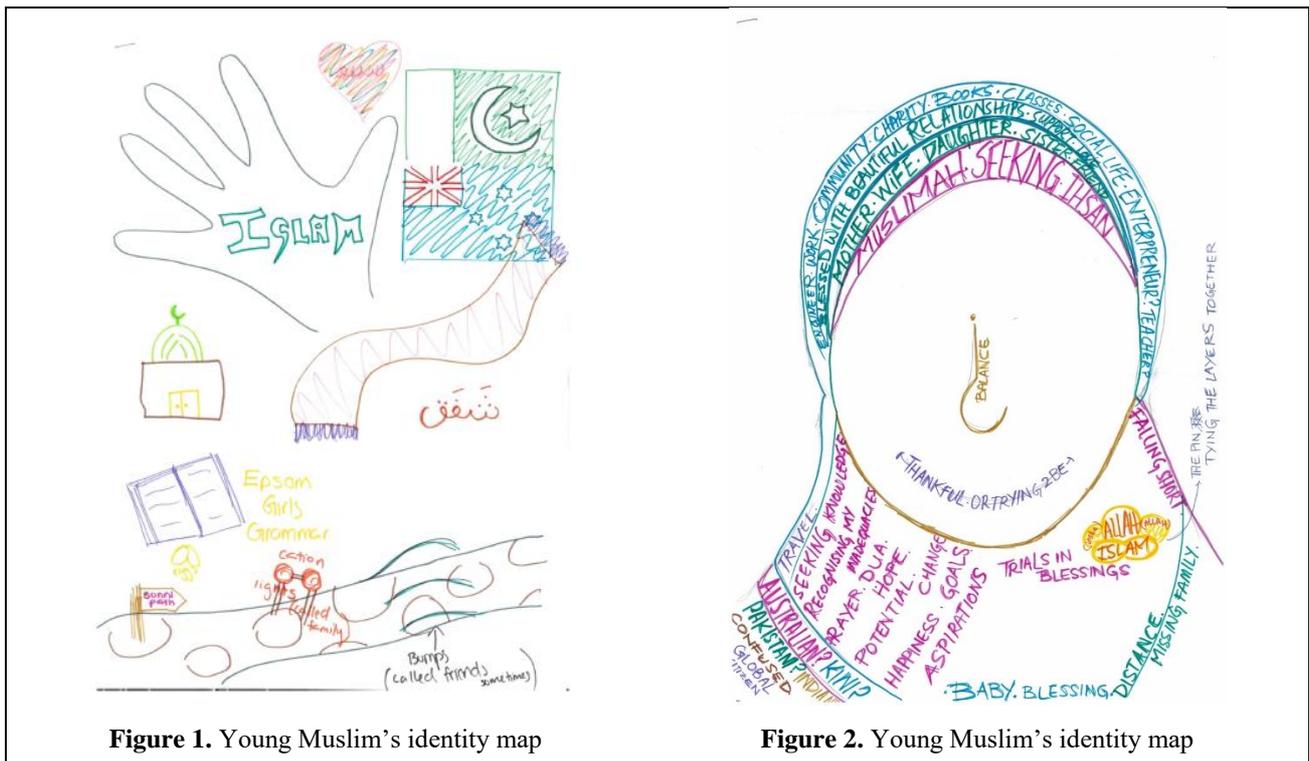


Figure 1. Young Muslim's identity map

Figure 2. Young Muslim's identity map

Identity, Acculturation and Well-being

On one hand, managing multiple cultural identities can be stressful, precipitating identity conflict and crises (Baumeister, Shapiro, & Tice, 1985; Stuart & Ward, 2011b; Ward, Stuart, & Kus, 2011). On the other hand, achieving an integrated cultural identity is associated with positive psychological outcomes, including a higher level of

well-being and a lower level of depression (Lam, Nguyen, & Benet-Martínez, 2011). The links between integration and well-being were examined in greater detail in Nguyen and Benet-Martínez's (2013) meta-analysis, which investigated biculturalism (i.e., two integrated cultural identities) in association with psychological, sociocultural and health outcomes. Their results indicated that the relationship

between integration and positive adaptation was stronger than the relationship between either ethnic or national identity on their own and the adaptive outcomes. Along these lines, our research shows that Muslim youth are largely achieving integration with 85% (N = 180) categorised as integrated on the basis of having both strong Muslim and national identities (Ward, Liu et al., 2010), and they are well adapted with

young Muslims reporting higher levels of life satisfaction, fewer symptoms of psychological distress, better school adjustment and fewer behavioural problems than their Māori and Pākehā peers (Ward, Liu et al., 2010; Ward, Adam et al., 2011).

The high level of resilience and adaptability found among Muslim youth was also reported in the International Study of Ethno-cultural Youth where Muslim immigrants displayed higher levels of psychological well-being and better social functioning than their Christian, Jewish and Buddhist immigrant peers. In the ICSEY project both national and ethnic identities were associated with positive psychological (e.g., life satisfaction) and behavioural (e.g., better school adjustment and fewer behavioural problems) outcomes (Sam, Vedder, Ward, & Horenczyk, 2006). In the extension of this research to New Zealand Muslims we also included a measure of Muslim identity. While we found evidence that Muslim, ethnic and national identities all predicted greater psychological well-being in terms of life satisfaction, only Muslim identity predicted better school adjustment and fewer behavioural problems (Ward, Liu et al., 2010; Ward, Adam et al., 2011). The importance of Muslim identity and religious practices are discussed in more detail in the following sections.

Risks, Resources & Resilience

Beyond managing multiple cultural identities, new settlers confront a variety of challenges as they adjust to their new living arrangements and unfamiliar social context. These may involve learning a new language, dealing with homesickness, facing discrimination and marginalisation, managing family pressures, and establishing new networks for friendship and social support. In many cases challenges such as these present risks that induce acculturative stress (Berry, 2006a; Ward & Szabo, in press), which is associated with decrements in well-being and increased psychological symptoms, including depression, anxiety, and psycho-somatic problems (Berry, 2006a; Jibeen & Khalid, 2010; Miller, Kim, & Benet-Martínez, 2011; Romero & Roberts, 2003; Ward & Szabo, 2019). One of the most common risks that young Muslims face in New Zealand is discrimination (Stuart, 2014). This manifests itself in terms of everyday racism, negative stereotypes based on lack of knowledge

about Islam, and unfavourable media portrayals of Muslims, as well as discrimination in educational and employment contexts (Ward, Lescelius, Naidu, Jack, & Weinberg, 2016). Although discrimination is the most commonly cited risk that young Muslims confront, the overall level of perceived discrimination appears to be moderately low and more often apparent as prejudice towards the group in general rather than towards specific individuals. When this occurs, it is most likely to be at the less violent end of the spectrum, such as being insulted as opposed to being threatened (Ward, Liu et al., 2010). Our research has shown that young Muslims are no more likely to report perceived discrimination than Indian, Chinese, Korean, Samoan and Māori youth. In terms of the prevalence of discrimination, 8% of young Muslims indicated they had been threatened or attacked, compared to 25% who had been teased or insulted. Moreover, 8% said that they did not personally feel accepted by New Zealanders, although 39% agreed that Muslims as a group have been treated unfairly. This appears consistent with Shaver and colleagues' contention that relationships between New Zealand's Muslims and other ethnic communities are generally peaceful and at least until the recent terrorist attack have been largely non-violent (Shaver, Troughton, Sibley, & Bulbulia, 2016).

Beyond discrimination, Stuart (2014) found that cultural differences presented significant risks. The differences were frequently described in terms of interpersonal or social interactions and the challenges of "fitting in" while maintaining Muslim norms and values. Differences were often discussed with regard to alcohol, gambling, *halal* food, and female dress, especially the *hijab*.

And I always feel that I am different. I always feel that I look different, I have an accent. I'm not like everyone else; I don't drink, I don't go clubbing, I don't have a boyfriend-I'm not allowed to (p. 34).

This sentiment overlapped to a large extent with the needs identified by Ward et al. (2016), broadly referred to as issues of Integration and Inclusion. These needs emphasised the importance of cultural and religious maintenance and the desire to participate in the wider society, which are dependent upon increasing acceptance and accommodation of cultural and religious diversity in New Zealand. Challenges of participating in

public life included access to prayer spaces during school or work hours, availability of *halal* food, exposure to alcohol and limited options for modest dress for young women at school.

Young Muslims in Stuart's (2014) study also identified three major resources in dealing with risks: religion, family and the wider intercultural environment. Religion impacted all aspects of life, informed attitudes and behaviours, and influenced the way the young people defined themselves.

I really, truly believe every single thing that is good about me is because I am a Muslim and every single thing that is not so good about me is because of my innate problems as a person, as a human being (p. 31).

Family provided the most significant context for cultural transmission as well as ongoing support for maintenance of values in everyday life.

(Family) is important for understanding who you are, your identity . . . family support and knowledge are the most important to be a successful Muslim here (p. 28).

Diversity and multiculturalism were acknowledged as important aspects of the intercultural environment that are conducive to positive adaptation, fostering openness and acceptance and allowing young Muslims to be their authentic selves. They were also seen as supporting connections among ethnically diverse Muslims.

We feel we are connected with them because of our religion and . . . we all are the same. Even though they have different backgrounds like Indian and Arab, still we're the same (p. 30).

These resources are discussed in greater detail in the following sections.

Religion

There is a robust literature on the positive relationship between religiosity and mental health, including enhanced quality of life (Hackney & Sanders, 2003; Sawatzky, Ratner, & Chiu, 2005). Findings from research with New Zealand Muslims are in accordance with these trends. Both Muslim identity and Muslim practices are associated with greater psychological well-being (Stuart, 2012; Ward, Liu et al., 2010). In addition, religion has been recognised as an important mechanism by which people cope with stress (Ano & Vasconcelles, 2005), and a study with Muslim students in New Zealand found that positive religious coping was linked to lower

levels of stress and a higher quality of life (Gardner, Krägeloh, & Henning, 2014). In a series of studies we have examined the impact of Islam on managing acculturative stress, both in terms of discrimination and cross-cultural differences. Adam and Ward (2016) identified three domains of Muslim religious coping: cognitive (interpreting stressful situations as Allah's will), behavioural (performing religious rituals) and social (seeking help from the Muslim congregation) in a sample of highly religious Muslim adults. Each of these forms of religious coping were frequently used, and each predicted greater life satisfaction, suggesting the importance of faith-based coping strategies in building resilience.

Racism is known to exert a widespread and negative influence on mental health (Harris, Stanley, & Cormack, 2018), with ethnic and religious discrimination linked to poor psychosocial functioning, including more depression, anxiety, and psychological distress as well as lower levels of self-esteem and life satisfaction (Schmitt, Branscombe, Postmes, & Garcia, 2014). However, Islamic practices can buffer the detrimental effects of discrimination on life satisfaction. Jasperse, Ward and Jose (2012) found not only that wearing *hijab* as an expression of visible Muslim identity predicted greater life satisfaction, but also that religious practices buffered the negative effects of discrimination on well-being among Muslim women. Similarly, Adam and Ward (2016) reported that behavioural forms of Muslim Religious Coping, such as making *dua*, seeking guidance from the Quran, and increasing prayers to Allah, buffered the detrimental effects of acculturative stress on life satisfaction. However, these results were not replicated in Stuart and Ward's (2018a) study with Muslim youth. Although religious practices predicted greater life satisfaction, those who were highly engaged in Islamic practices were more susceptible to the detrimental influences of discrimination stress. It is difficult to tease out the variable effects of Muslim religious practices across these three studies as they were based on highly varied samples (Muslim adults, youth and women), examined Muslim practices as a generic resource versus a specific coping mechanism, framed perceived discrimination in terms of its occurrence versus the distress it generated, and were confined to cross-sectional studies,

which did not permit analyses of the temporal sequence of these relationships. Nonetheless, in general the findings suggest that religion contributes to enhanced resilience and plays a positive role in coping with distress and fostering well-being.

These findings have important implications for supporting vulnerable members of New Zealand's Muslim community. Faith-based therapeutic interventions in counselling and clinical settings are likely to prove useful. Not only should these be culturally sensitive and appropriate, but they also need to reflect an understanding of the importance of religion amongst our local Muslim population. This is likely to be particularly important in response to the events in Christchurch, given that the brutality and specificity of the attack have led many to turn to spiritual understandings and practices to try and make sense of the tragedy and seek comfort.

The international literature advocates an integrated therapeutic approach, incorporating religion, when working with Muslim clients (Abu Raiya & Pargament, 2010) and has suggested that cognitive therapies provide a good fit for a wide range of religious traditions (Hodge, 2006). More specifically, previous attempts to develop Islamically-integrated interventions have focussed on cognitive restructuring techniques that encompass a religious worldview (Hodge & Nadir, 2008). These suggestions may present challenges to New Zealand's secular mental health system, but are worth consideration in light of increasing demands for responsiveness to cultural diversity amongst the clientele.

Family

Families have the capacity to foster well-being and provide a context in which individuals resolve acculturative stress (Oppedal, 2006). Conversely, families can be a major source of conflict, particularly when there is difference in the acculturation strategies of parents and children (Telzer, 2010). For young people, functional and supportive family relationships serve as a foundation for successful engagement in the social world, whereas dysfunctional family relationships potentially leave young people unprepared to meet challenges in other social contexts (Crosnoe & Elder, 2004). Furthermore, because young people tend to relocate with their family units, there are reciprocal influences between the individual's acculturation

experience and the experiences of other family members.

One of the most important protective factors for immigrant youth is a shared set of beliefs, values, and expectations among family members. This is demonstrated by research on intrafamilial congruence, or the perception that there is a similarity in behaviours and beliefs between oneself and the members of the family. High levels of congruence alleviate the stress of migration for children (Stuart & Ward, 2011b; Stuart, Ward, Jose, & Narayanan, 2010; Ying, Lee, & Tsai, 2004), whereas incongruence between parents and children, sometimes referred to as the "acculturation gap," has been associated with depression, anxiety and gang involvement in adolescents, and to depression and anger in parents (Dinh, Weinstein, Tein, & Roosa, 2013; Ying et al., 2004). Research also indicates that family obligations, or the extent to which family members feel a sense of duty to assist one another and to take into account the needs and wishes of the family when making decisions, is associated with positive outcomes for acculturating youth (Fulgini, Tseng, & Lam, 1999).

Extending research on familial acculturation, we examined the roles that family congruence and family obligations play in connection with acculturative stress and positive adaptation in adolescents and young adults in New Zealand's Muslim community (Stuart, Ward, & Robinson, 2016). More specifically, we tested a model whereby family congruence and family obligations exerted both direct and indirect effects on psychological well-being (life satisfaction) and social functioning (behavioural problems) with the indirect effects mediated by acculturative stress. The findings indicated that family congruence exerted a direct effect on young Muslims' social functioning, predicting a lower level of behavioural problems. Likewise, family obligations were associated with positive outcomes, predicting both greater life satisfaction and fewer behavioural problems; however, family obligations also predicted greater acculturative stress, which in turn, predicted lower levels of life satisfaction and more behavioural difficulties.

Overall, these findings are consistent with earlier qualitative studies. Families provide resources that young people need to thrive and flourish. Not only do

cohesive families ensure the transmission of cultural norms and values, they also provide a sense of connection.

Sometimes it feels like I am losing the connected part of me. But I can keep this alive just by being with my family here (Stuart, 2014, p. 28).

Moreover, social support from families and family congruence are linked to a wide range of positive outcomes for youth, including greater life satisfaction, fewer psychological symptoms and fewer behavioural problems (Ward, Liu et al., 2010).

Family obligations encourage behaviours that are in line with cultural and religious norms and values; however, this can be a source of stress for young immigrants who are navigating more than one culture. The challenges of achieving balance can take a psychological toll, particularly when impacted by family obligations.

I'm the oldest and have to set an example for my sisters, which I find really hard, extremely hard. Sometimes I just want to let it go, but I'm like nah, you have to do this for your family (Stuart, 2012, p.28).

Ultimately, the goals, aspirations, and experiences of young Muslims must be interpreted in context. Family provides the most proximal and influential context, but the intercultural context and national diversity climate are also important.

The Intercultural Context

Success following resettlement is not only dependent upon the individual's efforts, family support and community contributions; it is also dependent upon the nature of the receiving community. Schwartz et al. (2014) discussed this in terms of *contexts of reception*, which have been conceptualised and operationalised as "an immigrant's perception of welcomeness, opportunity structure, and availability of social supports in the receiving community" (p. 2). Negative contexts have been shown to

be detrimental to new settlers' psychological and social wellbeing, predicting higher levels of depression and more antisocial behaviours among youth (Forster, Grigsby, Soto, Schwartz, & Unger 2015; Schwartz et al., 2014; Ward, Szabo, & Stuart, 2016). An important feature of the context of reception is the degree to which immigrants perceive their environment to be multicultural; that is, characterised by culturally diverse groups in contact with one another, a general appreciation of cultural diversity, and policies and practices that support and accommodate diversity (Stuart & Ward, 2018b).

Stuart (2012) examined the influence of young Muslims' perceptions of a multicultural environment (PME) on psychological well-being in both New Zealand and the United Kingdom. She hypothesised and found that PME predicted positive outcomes, lower levels of depression in New Zealand and both lower levels of depression and higher life satisfaction in the United Kingdom. Controlling for age, gender, generation and refugee background, Stuart (2012) reported that there were significant differences in perceptions of a multicultural environment in the two countries with New Zealand Muslims viewing the national context in more favourable terms. Moreover, British Muslims reported more discrimination stress, depression and behavioural problems than their New Zealand peers.

These results led to further exploration of country-level factors that might impact psychological adaptation and social functioning in young Muslims. To these ends, Stuart (2012) utilised data from the 13-nation International Comparative Study of Ethno-cultural Youth, extracting survey responses from young Muslims and supplementing this with New Zealand data. This resulted in a nine country study that examined country-level indicators: % of Muslims in the population, a national index of diversity (see Berry, Westin, Virta, Rooney, & Sang, 2006) and national-level positive

and negative attitudes toward immigrants as predictors of the individual-level outcomes of perceived discrimination, life satisfaction, psychological symptoms and behavioural problems. Multi-level modelling revealed that neither the percentage of Muslims in the population nor the national diversity indices were significant predictors; however, attitudes toward immigrants affected all of the outcomes. Specifically, positive national-level attitudes toward immigrants predicted less perceived discrimination and greater life satisfaction while negative national-level attitudes toward immigrants predicted more psychological symptoms and behavioural problems. The findings highlight the significance of the context in which Muslims settle, particularly the impact of pervading attitudes on immigrant acculturation and well-being (Stuart & Ward, 2015; Ward & Geeraert, 2016).

The broader international literature shows that multicultural policies also have implications for immigrant well-being and social cohesion. The presence of national multicultural policies is not only associated with more positive intergroup perceptions, including attitudes toward Muslims, but also with greater integration and better social functioning in immigrant youth and more positive indicators of immigrant health and wellbeing (Guimond et al., 2013; Marks, McKenna, & Garcia Coll, 2018; Vedder, van de Vijver, & Liebkind, 2006). For Muslims specifically, multicultural policies are associated with lower levels of discrimination and greater life satisfaction (Jackson & Doerschler, 2016). This leads to the more serious consideration of multicultural policies, diversity-receptiveness and attitudes toward immigrants in general and Muslim immigrants more specifically in New Zealand, which are discussed in the next section.

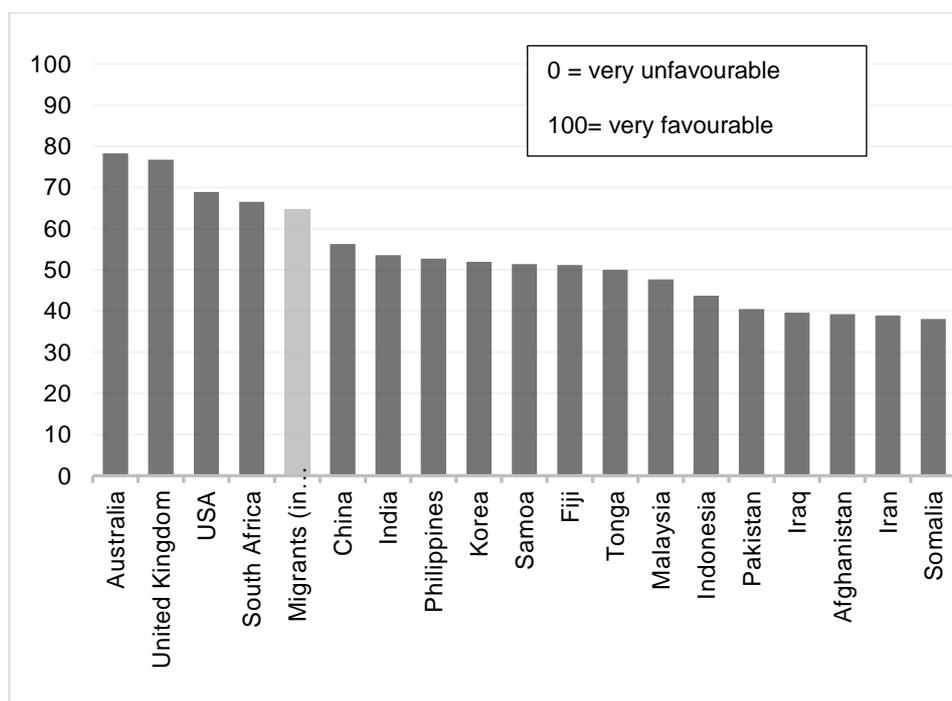


Figure 3. Favourability ratings of migrants (in general) from various source countries.

Multicultural New Zealand?

Is New Zealand a diversity-receptive environment for immigrants? The answer depends on the context and basis for comparison, but in general New Zealand performs well on indicators of multiculturalism (Sibley & Ward, 2013). The 2010 analysis of the Multiculturalism Policy Index for immigrant minorities in 21 countries ranked New Zealand fourth equal with Finland after Australia, Canada and Sweden (Multiculturalism Policy Index, 2010). New Zealand was more recently ranked a close second to Iceland as the most immigrant-accepting country based on the Migrant Acceptance Index used in a Gallup poll of 138 countries. While this may sound very impressive, it is noteworthy that the index was based on three questions: whether immigrants living in the country, an immigrant neighbour, and an immigrant marrying into your family is a good thing or a bad thing (Esipova, Fleming, & Ray, 2017). International Ipsos (2017) polling showed less favourable results. New Zealand was ranked 18th among 25 countries when it came to agreeing with the statement that there are too many immigrants in the country; 44% of New Zealanders (in a range 15-83% across countries) agreed this was the case. However, it is difficult to develop a nuanced interpretation of these data given the marked variation in the actual number of immigrants across the participating countries. For example, New Zealand's

response adjoins that of Great Britain (45% agreement) while New Zealand has one in four persons overseas-born compared to 14.4% in the United Kingdom (Migration Observatory, 2018).

Data reported by Ward and Masgoret (2008) indicated that 89% of the 2020 participants in their national survey agreed that *It is a good thing for a country to be made up of different races, religions and cultures*, significantly more than found in Australia (85%) and the European Union (36-75%). Relatedly, 80% agreed that *It is important to accept a wide variety of cultures in New Zealand*, and 82% endorsed integration, a cornerstone of multiculturalism, compared to only 21% agreeing with assimilation and 28% with separation. However, not all immigrant groups are perceived in equally positive terms. Favourability ratings of immigrants from seven countries of origin showed that immigrants from white, English-speaking countries (e.g., Australia, Great Britain) were viewed most favourably, Asian and Pacific countries (e.g., China, Samoa) occupied an intermediate position, and those from Somalia were viewed significantly less favourably than all other groups. A subsequent study examined attitudes toward Muslims, sampling approximately 300 New Zealanders from the electoral roll (Stuart & Ward, 2009). Respondents were asked to rate the favourability of their perceptions of immigrants from a variety

of countries on a 0-100 scale with 0 being *very unfavourable* and 100 being *very favourable*. As can be seen in Figure 3, immigrants from predominantly Muslim countries are perceived less favourably than those from other countries, and those from countries associated with refugee resettlement (e.g., Afghanistan, Iran, Somalia) are perceived least favourably. Indeed, there is a marked split in the favourability ratings with immigrants from all and only Muslim majority countries receiving an average evaluation falling on the unfavourable side of the 50.0 midpoint. Moreover, when asked about perceptions of immigrants of different faiths, Christians were viewed most favourably, followed by Jews, Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims, with each group significantly differing from the other. Overall, these findings seem to converge with research by Shaver and colleagues that reported markedly warmer feelings toward "immigrants" compared to Muslims, although tests for significant differences were not included (Shaver et al., 2016; Shaver, Sibley, Osborne, & Bulbulia, 2017).

The survey also examined perceptions of threat in connection with Muslims in New Zealand. Perceptions of realistic threat (i.e., threat and competition over tangible resources) were low; 18% and 19% of respondents, respectively, agreed that immigrants from Muslim countries have a negative effect on the country's economy and take jobs away from New

Zealanders. Perceptions of symbolic threat were markedly higher with 44% agreeing that Muslim values are not compatible with New Zealand values and 52% agreeing Muslims do not share our worldview. While New Zealanders positively value diversity as a general principle, there is a noticeable difference between principles and practices. Maintaining heritage cultures and sustaining cultural diversity require accommodation by majority groups, and New Zealanders appear at best only moderately accommodating. Forty-four per cent of the respondents would not want a mosque in their neighbourhood, and 47% agreed there was no place for *burqas* in New Zealand- even though 64% believed we should recognise Muslim holidays and celebrations. This principle-practice gap is what Yogeewaran and Dasgupta (2014) refer to as abstract versus concrete construals of multiculturalism, noting that abstract construals are less threatening and less likely to fuel prejudice.

Beyond these descriptive analyses, we also tested integrative models of attitudes toward immigrants. In the earlier study of national households, we hypothesised and found support for a model whereby multicultural ideology and contact exerted both direct and indirect (via threat) effects on attitudes toward immigrants. More specifically, in addition to predicting more positive attitudes, multicultural ideology and contact also predicted lower perceived threat, and threat in turn predicted more negative attitudes toward immigrants (Ward & Masgoret, 2008). In the latter study with participants sampled from the electoral roll, we went beyond integrated threat theory (Stephan & Stephan, 2000) and the multiculturalism hypothesis (Berry, 2006b) and introduced Intergroup Emotion theory (Mackie, Devos, & Smith, 2000), proposing and confirming that the effects of threat on attitudes toward Muslims were partially mediated by the negative emotions of anger and fear (Lescelius, Ward, & Stuart, 2019). Overall, the models demonstrate that both situational factors, such as intercultural contact, and individual differences (such as a general acceptance of diversity), contribute to more positive attitudes toward immigrants in general and Muslim immigrants more specifically; however, perceived threat and negative emotions adversely impact these attitudes.

Moving Forward

Prior to the Christchurch tragedy young Muslims in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch offered suggestions on how to move forward in managing the risks associated with racism and discrimination and in meeting the challenges of achieving belonging and inclusion. Their commentaries were highly insightful and reflected a keen sense of social accountability, with many of their recommendations in accordance with intergroup theory and research. The widespread perception of Muslims as terrorists and the stereotyped view of oppressed Muslim women were often cited hardships. Pervasive ignorance, reflected in a lack of basic knowledge of Islamic concepts, such as “*halal*” and “*haram*,” was seen as a marker of social exclusion and as impacting negatively on relations between Muslims and non-Muslims. These misconceptions and misunderstandings brought out a sense of social responsibility in youth to act as Muslim ambassadors and to “represent Islam in the right way.” Accordingly, the community recommended and initiated various outreach activities, including open days at mosques, dialogues between government and the Muslim community, and sharing the celebration of Eid. In short, increasing contact between Muslims and non-Muslims was strongly encouraged (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006, 2008), with members of the Muslim community leading such initiatives (Ward et al., 2016). The merit of these recommendations was borne out in our *Jusoor Tawaasul: Building Bridges* workshop that brought together 24 ethnically diverse Muslims and non-Muslims aged 13-14 years at a Wellington girls’ school. When the students discussed the most important things that they learned at the workshop, unity emerged as a key theme. As one participant noted “*We may look different, but we can all have the same problems and we are the same on the inside.*”

Other recommendations for moving forward were seen to require more widespread and proactive commitment to accommodating diversity in New Zealand. For Muslims to participate in the wider community, socially and economically, in educational, recreational and workplace settings, it is important to ensure access to *halal* food and prayer spaces, as well as alternatives for modest dress for Muslim women. Paraphrasing one of our workshop participants, “*if we can have vegan and gluten free food in restaurants, why can’t*

we have halal options?” Beyond providing opportunities for Muslims to practice their religion freely, it is essential for New Zealanders to critically appraise and ultimately minimise the negative and stereotypic portrayal of Islam and Muslims in the national media (Ward et al., 2016). Although Muslim youth have suggested the use social media to promote positive representations, it is not solely their responsibility to do so. Indeed, Stuart’s (2012) research indicates that there are feelings of helplessness, at least to some degree, and an insidious belief that negative portrayals are “inevitable” in light of socio-political circumstances.

But I can’t do much about it. It’s not like I can go to newspaper and tell them to stop doing that. That’s why I think if you want to correct that I should lead by example. If the media says that Islam is violent then I should not be violent. I think that if we are misunderstood, then we correct them, that is all (Stuart, 2012, p. 38).

Nevertheless, youth are right to be concerned about media portrayals. Research by Rahman and Emadi (2018) found a growing number of narratives linking Islam to “terrorism” and “*jihad*” so much so that by 2016 New Zealand news outlets reported on “Islamic terrorism” almost seven times more often than on Islam more generally. This provides further insights into the research by Shaver et al. (2017), which examined exposure to news among a national sample of over 16,000 New Zealand residents. In support of media-induced Islamophobia, their results indicated that greater news exposure was associated with increased anger and reduced warmth towards Muslims.

Beyond the positive influence of contact and the negative outcomes linked to the portrayal of Muslims in the media, social psychological theory and research tell us that a sense of shared identity reduces perceived threat (Rousseau & Garcia-Retamero, 2007) and induces more positive intergroup emotions (Ray, Mackie, Rydell, & Smith, 2008). This is in line with the guiding theme of the recent memorial service in Christchurch: *Ko tātou, tātou- we are one*. But we need to ask ourselves if this is something that we have achieved or can truly realise. Specifically, how do we move from symbolic representations of togetherness in discourse, which is both easier to accomplish and more likely to occur, to engaging in intercultural contact, reducing negative stereotypes and

enhancing inclusion, which require effort and commitment from everyone. It is now time to put the means of achieving unity into action, to share the responsibility for change and to create an environment where everyone feels safe and all communities work together. We must not seek to simply react to violence when it occurs, but to destroy the seeds of hate before they take root.

After the terrorist attack, the public rallied together finding comfort in the

common belief “this is not us.” Yet, what we thought would never happen did; a group of innocent people who were a part of our community were killed indiscriminately, solely on the basis of their religious beliefs. These people felt safe, but they were not protected. We can no longer ignore prejudice and hate, nor the fact that Islamophobia is a real threat to social cohesion for everyone in a multicultural society. So how do we move forward as a community after the flowers

that were left in solidarity wilt? How do we build upon our emerging awareness for the future, rather than looking back and wondering why things have not changed? Once the shock, anger, and grief have passed, this is the challenge all New Zealanders must face. Hopefully, the voices from our Muslim community offer some signposts as to how we can move forward together.

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