

A New History of Muslims in Australia: Social Emotion, Identity Integration, and the Making of a Community in the New Millenia

Mirela Cufurovic

Muslims in Australia have integrated successfully in the economic sphere, and to a significant extent the social sphere, but are currently undergoing the process of identity integration. That is, Muslims in Australia are increasingly developing a strong awareness about their Australianness and Muslimness leading to an integrated identity. In this respect, they feel emotionally connected to both their Muslim identity and their Australian identity as they have strong *feelings of attachment* to both identities. Although a relatively new field, this research draws on the study of emotions. More specifically, it refers to Jonathan Mercer's theory that emotion is linked with identity to trace the extent to which Muslims in Australia feel, or identify as, Australian Muslims. The central focus of the research is this: to what extent do emotions—and by extension, emotional attachment—lead to identity integration? The research hypothesises that, in the 2020s, Australian Muslims have begun the development of a distinct Australian Muslim identity as they have developed emotional attachment to the land and to the people of Australia other than their immediate community.

If the hypothesis is proved true, the research will contribute significantly to the field of Islamic Studies and the study of emotions in identity formation. It will show how integration requires emotional attachment and how minority groups living in the West can develop an identity that is unique to their circumstances. Exploring the role of emotion in the identity integration of Australian Muslims invites the Australian Muslim community to ask themselves 'how do *I* feel as an Australian?', instead of instinctively reacting to the political, social, economic, and cultural environment around them. The research will be conducted through qualitative analysis. A survey will be made available for the Australian and Australian Muslim community to complete regarding the place of Australian Muslims in society. The survey will be followed by focus group discussions with Australian-born Muslims, both male and female, between the ages of 18 to 28, on what it means to be an Australian Muslim, what it means to be successfully integrated, and to what extent emotion plays a role in this process.

Keywords: emotion, identity integration, Australian Muslim, emotional attachment

Mirela Cufurovic is a Research Associate at Charles Sturt University and a history and sociology tutor for the Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme (ITAS) at the University of Sydney and the Indigenous Academic Success Program (IASP) at Charles Sturt University. Mirela is also a Media and Communications Officer for the Australian Association of Islamic and Muslim Studies (AAIMS), and the Assistant Editor for the Australian Journal of Islamic Studies (AJIS). Mirela teaches history at Western Sydney University College and International College. Mirela has completed a Bachelor of Political, Economic and Social Sciences (BPESS) and is a History Honours Class I graduate from the University of Sydney. She recently graduated with a Masters degree (with Distinction) in Islamic Studies with Charles Sturt University, Australia. Mirela is currently a PhD candidate at Charles Sturt University, writing a thesis on the new history of Muslims in Australia. Mirela's area interests are: Australian Muslim history, Balkan history, Oral history, and the History of Emotions.