



# Muslim typologies in Australia: Findings of a national survey

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## Abstract

Numerous researchers in the field of Islamic and Muslim Studies have proposed various typologies to categorize Muslims in relation to their understanding of and identification with Islam. However, to date few studies have conducted the necessary empirical work to determine the numbers of Muslims that identify with the typologies that have been constructed. This article is the first to present findings based on a comprehensive study of Muslims in relation to a spectrum of discursive typologies. The authors conducted a national survey of Islam in Australia among Muslim citizens and permanent residents in 2019. This article examines Muslim Australians across a spectrum of 10 typologies in relation to various demographic factors, questions concerning shariah and political Islam, sources of influence, preferences for interpreting the Qur'an, views on various ethical, social, and theological issues, engagement with non-Muslims, and openness to new knowledge about Islam. Contrary to stereotypical views of Islam and Muslims, the article's findings point to a strong presence for liberal and progressive typologies and interpretations of the Islamic tradition among Muslim Australians.

**Keywords** Islam · Muslim · Typologies · Liberal · Progressive · Political Islam · Survey

## Introduction

Conceptualizing and classifying contemporary diversity in *ways of being a Muslim* in both Muslim majority and minority contexts have been approached, broadly speaking, on the basis of two theoretical and methodological paradigms namely, discursive and sociological (Duderija & Rane, 2019). A discursive-centered approach

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to the question of what is “Islamic” is ultimately traced to the work of Talal Asad (1986, 14–15) and “focuses upon patterns of language, rhetoric and practice that underlie the many ways in which Islam is constituted” (Barzegar, 2011, 524). This approach to topologizing Islamic orientations seeks to “prioritize Islamic discourses over the various sociological categories of Muslim groups as a way to better understand the complex dynamics of Islam” (Ibid., 512). Discursive approaches to classifying Muslims are based on the premise that religious traditions are constantly negotiated, (re-)appropriated, and contested by various actors who consider themselves as belonging to its communities of interpretation (Asad, 1986; Duderija, 2019). Furthermore, discursive-based approaches are also premised on the idea that when conceptualizing identity formulations among Muslims, it is important to integrate Muslim opinions and attitudes with their perceptions of Islam itself and what Islam means to them. Therefore, discursive-based typologies, unlike those premised on purely sociological frameworks and methodologies, take seriously into account issues pertaining to Islamic hermeneutics (in the broadest sense of the term) as important facets of representations of Muslim identity (re-)formulations, including the questions pertaining to what these Muslims consider to be “Islamic” attitudes, practices, and values (Duderija, 2008). One example of this approach to topologizing Muslims is that of Saeed (2007) who employs discursive-related criteria including Muslim attitudes and approaches to Islamic law, theological purity, violence, politics, separation of religion and state, Islamic practice, modernity, and independent reasoning (*ijtihad*) to categorize contemporary Muslims’ approaches to the Islamic interpretive tradition into the following groups: “legalist traditionalists”, “political Islamists”, “secular Muslims”, “cultural nominalists”, “theological puritans”, “militant extremists” and “progressive *ijtihadis*”.

In the existing literature there are also a few studies which classify Muslims on the basis of primarily sociological theoretical frameworks often with the view of understanding (Western) Muslims’ societal orientations toward the broader society (Ameli, 2002; Dassetto, 1996; Klinkhammer, 2000). Very few of these studies, however, provide empirically-based insights into the relative prevalence of various types of being a Muslim as this current study does. For example, Mustafa (2015) empirically detected the presence of various Muslim identities in Britain without, however, providing information about their relative spread. The only two studies that did examine the relative proportions of ways of being a Muslim is that of Achilov and Sedat (2017) and Goli and Rezaei (2011). The former was conducted in a Muslim majority cultural context and the latter in the Muslim minority one. We will present a comparative analysis of their results with that our findings in the Findings and Discussion sections of this article.

The present study combines elements of both discursive and sociological based approaches to typologizing Muslim Australians. The results of this research are based on the findings of the Islam in Australia national survey, completed by 1034 Muslim Australian citizens and permanent residents in late 2019, and follow-up focus groups in early 2020 (Rane et al., 2020). The survey asked respondents 10 questions in relation to “how well they describe you as a Muslim” across 10 typologies that were built on the work of Saeed (2007) discussed above with the view of providing empirical results regarding the relative spread of these categories among

the survey participants. Moreover, the discursive-based typologies identified through the survey were analyzed in relation to i) demographics including age, gender, place of birth and whether respondents were born Muslim or converted to Islam, and ii) questions concerning shariah and political Islam, sources of influence, preferences for interpreting the Qur'an, views on various ethical, social, and theological issues, engagement with non-Muslims, and openness to new knowledge about Islam. The main aim of this article is to present and discuss these findings in the light of the existing literature.

## Methodology

The Islam in Australia survey (Rane et al., 2020) focused specifically on how Muslim Australians understand, interpret and express Islam as part of their lived experiences. It was designed in relation to questions arising from the academic literature concerning Islam in the contemporary world, particularly Muslims in the West. The survey consisted of over 150 questions, including two preliminary eligibility questions, 13 demographic questions, approximately 20 convert-specific questions, and approximately 130 main questions. Depending on responses to certain questions, respondents may have been asked more or fewer questions.<sup>1</sup> The questionnaire used predominantly Likert scales to measure respondents' agreement/disagreement and concern in relation to various statements, as well as several open-ended questions. Most respondents required 30–40 min to complete the survey. The survey was conducted according to the ethical standards required by Griffith University<sup>2</sup> and in close consultation with Muslim Australian religious authorities, community leaders and representatives of various Muslim organizations. Early drafts of the survey instrument were pilot tested with Muslim community representatives in Queensland, refined and shared with Muslim community representatives in other states for comment and feedback.

The survey instrument was finalized and fielded online using Lime Survey. The survey was conducted in English only<sup>3</sup> and disseminated online with the support of Muslim community organizations, groups and individuals around Australia who shared the link to the survey through email and across social media platforms, particularly Facebook. Online surveys are effective and efficient for studying minority communities, especially those that may be difficult to recruit (Johnson et al., 2016) as in the case of Muslim Australians who comprise 2.6 percent of the Australian population according to the 2016 Australian census data. Utilizing the support of Muslim community organizations, groups and individuals to disseminate the survey

<sup>1</sup> For instance, additional questions were asked of converts to Islam as well as respondents who said they believe Islam advocates a particular political system or that their freedom to practice Islam in Australia is threatened were asked to specify.

<sup>2</sup> Ethics Reference Number: 2019/042.

<sup>3</sup> It is worth noting that 8 in 10 Muslims in Australia have a good or very good level of English language proficiency (Hassan, 2015).

resulted in wide distribution and penetration into diverse communities and groupings of Muslims. The survey was open to all Muslim Australian citizens and permanent residents aged 18 years and over. Secondary school-aged respondents were also able to take the survey with the approval of a parent or guardian. In total, 1034 respondents completed the survey. Respondents who attempted the survey but did not complete up to at least the final section, consisting of optional open-ended questions, were discarded and not included in the data analysis. In regard to data analysis, basic frequencies were initially calculated through Lime Survey. Further data analysis, including cross tabulations and other tests, was conducted using Statistics Package for Social Sciences (SPSS, Version 26) (Rane, et al., 2020).

The Islam in Australia survey respondents aligned closely with the 2016 Australian census data. According to the 2016 Australian census data, 53 percent of Muslim Australians are male and 47 percent female. Among the survey respondents, 49 percent were male, 50.8 percent female, and 0.2 percent identified as ‘other’. In relation to place of birth, the 2016 Australian census data finds that 36.4 percent of Muslims Australians are born in Australia and 63.6 percent born overseas. Among the survey respondents, 38.7 percent were born in Australia and 61.3 percent were born overseas (Rane et al., 2020). Age distributions of survey respondents were also similar to the 2016 Australian census data, however, as the survey required participants to be over 18 years of age to complete the survey (and those underage to provide consent of parental or guardian), only 4.6 percent of the survey participants were under 20 years of age compared to 19.4 percent in the 2016 Australian census data (Rane et al., 2020). In relation to educational attainment, it is noteworthy that over two-thirds (68.3%) of the survey respondents had a post-secondary school qualification, including a college certificate (7.4%), apprenticeship (1.7%), university undergraduate degree (27.0%), postgraduate degree (26.9%), or PhD (5.3%). Nineteen percent were in university at the time of the survey in an undergraduate (10.1%), postgraduate (6.0%), or PhD (3.1%) program. Six percent of the respondents were in high school and 5 percent had graduated high school, while 1.9 percent were at TAFE (college) and 0.2 percent had commenced an apprenticeship at the time of the survey. Muslim Australians have a slightly higher level of educational attainment overall compared to the non-Muslim Australian population with Muslims more likely than other Australians to have complete 12 years of schooling or to have attained an undergraduate or postgraduate degree (Hassan, 2015).

## Findings

The Islam in Australia survey posed 10 statements phrased according to typologies derived from the scholarly literature (Duderija & Rane, 2019; Saeed, 2007). The statements were developed by the authors based on the expanded version of a typology developed by Saeed (2007), the authors’ familiarity with various contemporary Islamic movements and intellectual currents and in consultation with Muslim community representatives. For example, in addition to drawing upon the work of Saeed (2007) the wording of the representative statement descriptor for the category of “progressive” Muslims (or progressive *ijtihadis* using the nomenclature of Saeed

(2007)) “I am a committed Muslim who believes in the rational, cosmopolitan nature of the Islamic tradition based on principles of social justice, gender justice and religious pluralism” is derived from the most comprehensive theoretical works defining progressive Muslims thought along those lines (Duderija, 2011; Duderija, 2017). The representative statement descriptor for the category of “ethical-*maqasidi*” orientation “I am a committed, reform-minded Muslim who emphasizes the spirit and ethical principles of Islam over literal interpretations,” was derived from the major scholarly works that define a reformist *maqasidi* approach in such terms (Auda, 2007; Duderija, 2014a, b). The statement associated with the “liberal” category “I believe Islam aligns with human rights, civil liberties and democracy,” draws upon the work of Kurzman (1998) on liberal Islam. The same applies to the rest of the categories. The authors, however, do recognize that whilst somewhat reductionist these statements are useful for heuristic, conceptual and analytical purposes of the main aims of this study.

Respondents were asked how well each of the statements describes them as a Muslim in relation to a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. It should be noted that respondents were provided with the *statements only*, not the labels, as the researchers took *label avoidance* into consideration in the design of these questions. Label avoidance is when people refrain from associating with particular categories or groups in order to avoid potential stigma (Ciftci et al., 2013). In Muslim communities, stigma can be associated with labels ranging from liberal, progressive and secular to political Islamist and militant. Hence, the following labels were applied to the statements *after* the completion of the survey and were *not seen* by the respondents. Based on the number of respondents who answered “strongly agree” with each statement, the survey found a majority to be *liberal*<sup>4</sup> (64.6%), followed by *progressive*<sup>5</sup> (39.4%), *secular*<sup>6</sup> (28.9%), *traditionalist*<sup>7</sup> (26.2%), *ethical maqasidi*<sup>8</sup> (25.8%), *sufi*<sup>9</sup> (17.2%), *legalist*<sup>10</sup> (14.4%), *political Islamist*<sup>11</sup> (9.5%) *cultural nominalist*<sup>12</sup> (7.9%) and *militant*<sup>13</sup> (3.3%).<sup>14</sup> It should also be noted that these typologies are not mutually exclusive but overlap in various

<sup>4</sup> Statement (liberal): “I believe Islam aligns with human rights, civil liberties and democracy.”

<sup>5</sup> Statement (progressive): “I am a committed Muslim who believes in the rational, cosmopolitan nature of the Islamic tradition based on principles of social justice, gender justice and religious pluralism.”

<sup>6</sup> Statement (secular): “For me Islam is a matter of personal faith rather than a public identity.”

<sup>7</sup> Statement (traditionalist): “I am a devout Muslim who follows a traditional understanding of Islam.”

<sup>8</sup> Statement (ethical *maqasidi*): “I am a committed, reform-minded Muslim who emphasizes the spirit and ethical principles of Islam over literal interpretations.”

<sup>9</sup> Statement (sufi): “I am a devout Muslim who follows a more spiritual path rather than formal legal rules.”

<sup>10</sup> Statement (legalist): “I am a strict Muslim who follows Islam according to the laws of shariah.”

<sup>11</sup> Statement (political Islamist): “I am a committed Muslim who believes politics is part of Islam and advocates for an Islamic state based on shariah laws.”

<sup>12</sup> Statement (cultural nominalist): “I am a cultural Muslim for whom Islam is based on my family background rather than my practice.”

<sup>13</sup> Statement (militant): “I am a committed Muslim who believes an Islamic political order and shariah should be implemented by force if necessary.”

<sup>14</sup> Note: 15 percent of respondents did not strongly agree with any of the typologies.

combinations, including: *liberal* and *progressive*; *secular* and *liberal*; *liberal*, *ethical maqasidi* and *progressive*; *liberal*, *progressive* and *traditionalist*; *ethical maqasidi* and *progressive*; *liberal* and *traditionalist*; *cultural nominalist* and *secular*; *sufi* and *ethical maqasidi*; *traditionalist* and *legalist*; *traditionalist* and *political Islamist*; *legalist* and *political Islamist*; and *political Islamist* and *militant*. We note the overlap, for instance, between the *political Islamists* and *militants*. Of the 34 respondents who strongly agreed with the *militant* typology, 27 (79%) also strongly agreed with the *political Islamist* typology. Of the 98 respondents who strongly agreed with the “political Islamist” typology, 27 (27%) also strongly agreed with the *militant* typology.

As explained in the introduction, there are very few empirically based studies on the relative spread of contemporary ways of being a Muslim. One such study by Achilov and Sedat (2017) was based on cross-national survey data from 13 Muslim-majority countries sourced from the World Values Survey Database.<sup>15</sup> It involved a high number of participants ( $N=53,800$ ) who were categorized as either ‘moderate’ or ‘radical’ religious and politically active Muslims (i.e. moderate and militant Islamists). Controlling for key socio-political conditions, Achilov and Sedat (2017) used a number of delineating indicators to differentiate between these two types of Muslims. The indicators associated with “moderate” religious and politically active Muslims included the acceptance of a multi-party parliamentary system, the premise that “men of religion” should not be able to influence the voting decisions of people and government decisions, that political and legal sovereignty is in the hands of the people and the idea that government and parliament should make laws according to the wishes of the people in some areas and implement Shariah law in others. The “radicals” were associated with the views that emphasized the idea that legitimate governance is only based on Islamic law that does not recognize the validity of parliamentary multi-party politics or elections; that the role of government is to only “implement laws of the Shariah” and that it is preferable that “people with strong religiosity held public office”. We will discuss their findings in relation to ours in the Discussion section of this article. The following section presents key findings concerning gender, place of birth, prayer, conversion to Islam, views on shariah, alignment with political Islam, understanding of jihad, sources of influence, interpreting the Quran, and openness to new knowledge about Islam in relation to the typologies. The Appendix Table 1 contains a table with the data that is presented.

Achilov and Sedat (2017) study showed that three-quarters of their participants fell into the “moderate” and the remaining one-quarter into the “radical” category. They also found that younger participants tended to be more radical. This is, generally, in line with the findings of our study as depicted in Table 1 (see Appendix) which shows that on average militants are three years younger compared to that of political Islamists (37 years old vs. 34 years old). Another comparative study is that of Goli and Rezaei (2011) who found that half of the Danish Muslims included in their study adhered to some form of Islamist political thought, including those they categorized as fundamentalists (27%), radical Islamists (18%), and militants (6%),

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/wvs.jsp>

which relates to the Islam in Australia survey findings in respect to *traditionalists* (26.2%), *legalists* (14.4%), *political Islamists* (9.5%) and *militants* (3.3%).

Compared to Achilov and Sedat (2017) and Goli and Rezaei (2011) studies, our findings provide a much more nuanced picture in relation to not only the empirical spread of the wider spectrum of Muslim typologies but also how they intersect with several demographical features of the participants and how those participants who fall into a particular category understand and interpret a number of legal, political, ethical and social concepts from the Islamic interpretive tradition and relate them to issues of pluralism and the normative grounds for Muslim relations with non-Muslims as presented in the Appendix Table 1.

## Gender

The overall sample of survey respondents comprised 50.8 percent females and 49.0 percent males. For five of the ten typologies (*liberal*, *secular*, *progressive*, *ethical maqasidi*, and *sufi*), the ratio of females to males is consistent with the overall sample. However, males were more likely than females to identify with the *cultural nominalist* (males 62.2%; females 37.8%), *traditionalist* (males 57.9%; females 42.1%), *legalist* (males 64.4%; females 35.6%), *political Islamist* (males 71.4%; females 28.6%) and *militant* (males 64.7%; females 35.3%) typologies. Overall, it can be observed that Muslim Australian men were more inclined than their female counterparts to align with legalist, political and militant interpretations of Islam.

In relation to gender, our findings align with those of other studies which show Muslim males identify with politicized and militant interpretations of Islam more so than females (Gambetta & Hertog, 2016; Roose, 2016). As alluded to above, Achilov and Sedat (2017) found that, after controlling for other social variables such as class, education and political activism, women tend to be more closely associated with moderate forms of political Islamism. Their finding in this respect is in tension with that of our study, which shows that the percentage of women among *militants* is 35.3% compared to 28.6% for *political Islamists*. Our study found that the ratio between men and women was wider among *political Islamists* than *militants*, although men still far outnumbered women in both of these categories.

## Place of birth

According to the 2016 Australian census data, 36.4 percent of Muslim Australians are born in Australia, while 63.6 percent were born overseas. This closely aligns with the Islam in Australia survey data (38.7% born in Australia; 61.3% born overseas). In regard to the typologies of Muslim Australians, three of the 10 categories closely align with this ratio, namely *secular* (38.1% born in Australia; 61.9% born overseas), *traditionalist* (38.4% born in Australia; 61.6% born overseas), and *militant* (38.2% born in Australia; 61.8% born overseas). Respondents born in Australia are slightly underrepresented and those born overseas are slightly overrepresented among *legalists* (34.9% born in Australia; 65.1% born overseas) and *liberals* (32.6% born in Australia; 67.4% born overseas), while these differences increase among

*progressive* (29.7% born in Australia; 70.3% born overseas), *ethical maqasidi* (28.1% born in Australia; 71.9% born overseas), *cultural nominalist* (25.6% born in Australia; 74.4% born overseas), *sufi* (25.3% born in Australia; 74.7% born overseas), and *political Islamist* (25.5% born in Australia; 74.5% born overseas) typologies. These findings show mixed results and suggest that being born in Australia is not necessarily a strong predictor for a moderate interpretation of Islam but neither is being born overseas a strong predictor for having more puritanical views. Our findings show, for example, that Muslims born in Australia are less likely to be *progressive* and also less likely to be *political Islamist* than Muslim born overseas who are more likely to be *progressive* or *political Islamist*.

## Prayer

The overall survey findings showed that 77.1 percent of respondents said they pray “daily”. In relation to the typologies, two were found to pray daily somewhat less than the overall average, namely *cultural nominalist* (56.1%) and *secular* (67.2%), while *ethical maqasidi* (76.0%) was only slightly under the overall average. The typologies with the highest proportion of respondents who pray daily were *militant* (97.1%), *legalist* (96.6%), *political Islamist* (91.8%), *traditionalist* (90.8%), *liberal* (83.2%), *progressive* (80.8%), and *sufi* (78.7%). What is significant about these findings is that, regardless of the typology, a majority of Muslim Australians surveyed pray daily, which in the context of a secular society indicates quite a remarkably high level of religious practice.

## Conversion to Islam

Overall, the survey found 84.2 percent of respondents to be born Muslim and 15.8 percent to be converts to Islam. Most of the typologies show a ratio within five percentage points of these figures. However, converts were slightly more underrepresented among *cultural nominalist* (3.7%), followed by *traditionalist* (10.0%) and *liberal* (10.3%) typologies. The very low representation of converts among *cultural nominalists* is not unexpected as converts are most unlikely to have a Muslim family background.

## Shariah

When asked how they define the term *shariah*, 36.4 percent of survey respondents overall answered that it is a “divine/revealed law/legal code”, while a slight majority of 51.1 percent said it is “Islamic jurists’ opinions and interpretations based on the Qur’an and other sources”. Four of the 10 typologies were all within a few percentage points of these figures: *ethical maqasidi* (divine 36.0%; human 56.9%), *progressive* (divine 37.3%; human 54.5%), *liberal* (divine 38.2%; human 51.2%), and *secular* (divine 34.1%; human 49.8%). However, fewer respondents defined shariah as divine and more answered that it is a human interpretation than the overall sample among the *cultural nominalist* (divine 28.0%; human 52.4%) and *sufi* (divine



30.9%; human 60.1%) typologies. The reverse was observed among the other four typologies – *political Islamist* (divine 49.0%; human 45.9%), *traditionalist* (divine 52.4%; human 38.4%), *legalist* (divine 55.7%; human 36.9%) and *militant* (divine 58.8%; human 35.3%) – which all showed a higher proportion of respondents that defined shariah as divine and much lower proportion that defined it as a human interpretation.

For the overall sample, 73.9 percent answered “strongly agree” or “agree” when asked if they were “content with the extent to which Muslims are currently able to practice Islam in Australia”. Six of the 10 typologies scored above 73.9 percent: *ethical maqasidi* (82.0%), *progressive* (80.3%), *secular* (78.6%), *cultural nominalist* (75.6%), *sufi* (76.4%), and *liberal* (75.0%), while the *traditionalist* typology scored only slightly below on 73.1 percent. However, the typologies at the other end of the spectrum were somewhat further below the overall average: *legalist* (70.5%), *political Islamist* (68.4%), and *militant* (64.7%). These findings suggest that, regardless of typology, Muslim Australians generally feel the country is conducive to the practice of their faith. However, this is less strongly felt among *legalists*, *political Islamists* and especially *militants*.

Among the survey respondents overall, only 9.6 percent strongly agreed or agreed with the statement “countries today that implement classical shariah laws are more just and fair than Australia”. Four of the 10 typologies recorded scores very close to the overall average: *progressive* (9.3%), *ethical maqasidi* (9.7%), *liberal* (10.9%) and *secular* (12.0%). Agreement or strong agreement with this statement was found to be more than twice as likely among *traditionalists* (21.0%) and *legalists* (22.8%), almost twice as likely among *cultural nominalists* (19.5%) and also higher than average among the *sufi* (16.3%) typology. Agreement or strong agreement with this statement was even more pronounced among *political Islamists* (31.6%) and *militants* (52.9%). *Militant* was the only typology that recorded a majority of respondents that strongly agreed or agreed with the statement.

## Human and Gender Equality

The survey asked a number of questions concerning human and gender equality, which found that among respondents overall 92.6 percent answered “agree” or “strongly agree” that “people of all religions and no religion should be treated equally” and 84.1 percent “agree” or “strongly agree” that “women should be given the same right and opportunities as men”. In regard to the typologies, five of the 10 recorded higher than the average overall both in the regards to their agreement or strong agreement concerning equality of all people and gender equality: *liberal* (all people 94.2%; gender 86.4%), *secular* (all people 93.7%; gender 88.3%), *progressive* (all people 95.8%; gender 89.0%), *ethical maqasidi* (all people 96.3%; gender 89.5%) and *sufi* (all people 95.5%; gender 87.1%). *Cultural nominalists* were closely aligned with the overall average with 91.5 percent answering agree or strongly agree that people of all religions and no religion should be treated equally and 83.0 percent agreeing or strongly agreeing that women should be given the same right and opportunities as men. *Traditionalists* were also closely aligned with overall average

with 90.8 percent answering agree or strongly agree that people of all religions and no religion should be treated equally. However, among *traditionalists* 76.0 percent agreed or strongly agreed that women should be given the same right and opportunities as men. At the other end of the spectrum, agreement or strong agreement with the principle of equality was less pronounced: *legalist* (all people 86.6%; gender 68.5%); *political Islamist* (all people 82.6%; gender 63.2%); *militant* (all people 64.7%; gender 47.1%).

It is noteworthy that among *traditionalists*, *legalists*, and especially among *political Islamists* and *militants*, significant minorities did not agree or strongly agree that women should have the same rights and opportunities as men. The percentage that disagreed or strongly disagreed (and excluding those that selected “unsure” and “neither agree nor a disagree”) that women should have the same rights and opportunities as men, were found to be highest among *militants* (35.3%), followed by *political Islamists* (20.4%), *legalists* (12.8%) and *traditionalists* (10.3%). In order to explain such levels of opposition to gender equality among these typologies, one needs to consider that the contemporary interpretations of Islam that continue to be wedded to a premodern Islamic interpretive tradition (e.g. *legalists*, *Islamists* and *traditionalists*) are premised on and consistent with a patriarchal worldview (Bauer, 2015; Chaudhry, 2013; Jalajel, 2017). Moreover, more puritanical expressions of Islam, both of apolitical and militant persuasion, have been forcefully propagated and taken root in some Muslim contexts including in the West (Duderija, 2014c) in the latter half of the twentieth century (Abou El Fadl, 2001; Lauzière, 2016) also reject gender egalitarian ideas as unIslamic (Inge, 2016).

## Political Islam

Overall, almost one-quarter of the survey respondents (24.5%) said “yes” they believe Islam advocates a particular political system, while almost half (49.1%) said “no” and 26.4 percent were “unsure”. The overall averages were closely reflected among *liberals* (Yes 24.1%; No 51.0%; Unsure 24.9%), while belief that Islam advocates a particular political system was found to be less among *progressives* (Yes 23.6%; No 56.1%; Unsure 19.9%) and *ethical maqasidis* (Yes 22.5%; No 56.6%; Unsure 21.0%). The belief that Islam advocates a particular political system was lowest among respondents categorized as *sufi* (Yes 18.5%; No 56.2%; Unsure 25.3%), *secular* (Yes 18.1%; No 54.8%; Unsure 27.1%), and *cultural nominalist* (Yes 15.9%; No 46.3%; Unsure 37.8%). The typologies with the highest proportion of respondents who believe that Islam advocates a particular political system were *political Islamist* (Yes 57.1%; No 26.5%; Unsure 16.3%), *militant* (Yes 55.9%; No 23.5%; Unsure 20.6%), *legalist* (Yes 43.6%; No 35.6%; Unsure 20.8%), and *traditionalist* (Yes 35.1%; No 40.2%; Unsure 24.7%).

Respondents were asked whether they believe establishing a *khilafah*/caliphate is a religious obligation. The caliphate (*khilafah* in Arabic) is a form of political rule that Muslims developed after the death of the Prophet Muhammad characterized by the appointment of a ‘caliph’ as head of state. The caliphate is generally associated with Sunni Islam, while the form of rule known as the *Imamate*, headed

by a descendent of the Prophet's grandson Imam Husayn bin Ali (d. 680), developed within Shiite Islam. In Islamic history, various Muslim empires were described as caliphates, including the *Rashidun* (632–661) or 'rightly guided' successors of Muhammad, Umayyad (661–750; 929–1031 (Spain)), Abbasid (750–1258), and Ottoman (1299–1924), although most Ottoman rulers used the title of *sultan* rather than *caliph*.

Overall, 23.2 percent of the survey respondents said establishing a caliphate is a religious obligation, with 9.3 percent of respondents answering "strongly agree" and 13.9 percent saying they "agree". Within the various typologies, in descending order, agreement that establishing a caliphate is a religious obligation was highest among *militants* (73.5%), *political Islamists* (65.3%) and *legalists* (49.7%), followed by the *traditionalist* (42.5%), *sufi* (28.1%), *cultural nominalist* (25.6%), *liberal* (25.5%), *progressive* (24.3%), *ethical maqasidi* (22.1%), and *secular* typologies (17.7%). It is noteworthy that the belief in establishing a caliphate as a religious obligation is held by a majority among the *militant* and *political Islamist* typologies only, while close to a majority among *legalists* and slightly less *traditionalists* also share this belief. However, among the other six typologies, belief in the caliphate as a religious obligation is held by around one-fifth to one-quarter of respondents.

On the one hand, that a minority of Muslim Australians consider establishing a caliphate to be a religious obligation is understandable as the concept has deep historical relevance and is etched in the memory of the collective Muslim consciousness (Al-Rasheed et al., 2012). Donner (1998: 44) highlights, the Qur'an has almost nothing to say about political leadership and "offers no clear guidance on who should exercise political power among the Believers after Muhammad—or even if anyone should; this simply does not seem to be of interest or concern to the Qur'an". On the other hand, Donner (1998: 42) points out that in the Hadith literature "the Prophet has a considerable amount to say about the caliphate, even though the office of caliph (*Khalifa*) did not arise until after his death". It will be shown below that among the typologies, citing Hadith as "very influential" was highest among *legalists* (92.6%), *militants* (88.2%), *traditionalists* (87.1%), and *political Islamists* (86.7%). Since the latter half of the twentieth century, there have been numerous Islamist and Salafist groups, including Hizb ut-Tahrir, Taliban, Al-Qaeda, and ISIS, that have propagated the idea of a caliphate as a religious obligation (Kennedy, 2016). Even if the overwhelming majority of Muslims do not identify with these groups, they may well be directly or indirectly influenced by their ideas or those of more mainstream Islamism and Salafism that also consider the caliphate to be a religious obligation. It is noteworthy that when respondents were asked about the Islamic tradition, school of thought or group with which they most identify, among those that self-identified as "Salafi", 62.1 percent agreed that establishing a caliphate is a religious obligation. As in the case of gender related issues discussed above, this speaks to the important place the institution of caliphate has played and continues to play in mainstream Sunni thought that still strongly identifies with the past.

## Jihad

The survey asked respondents how they define the term *jihad*, specifically whether their definition includes defensive armed-struggle only or offensive armed-struggle as well. Overall, 68.3 percent of respondents defined jihad as involving defensive armed-struggle only, while 18.8 percent said jihad also includes offence armed-struggle, 8.0 percent selected “don’t know/unsure” and 4.9 percent chose “other”. However, it should be noted that many of the survey responses given by those who selected “other” as well as the focus group participants stated that jihad is an inner, spiritual struggle without the component of armed struggle. Many focus group participants stated that they understood the term “offensive armed struggle” to include defending Muslims overseas who are under attack to repel an aggressor or oppressor, implying a defensive rather than an offensive understanding of jihad. Taking this into consideration, it would seem that less than 18.8 percent of Muslim Australians may actually understand jihad to be offensive and that the proportion who understand it to be defensive only may be higher than the quantitative data suggests. Responses to subsequent questions concerning jihad add weight to this view.

In relation to the typologies, it should be noted that, with the exception of *militants*, all showed a higher proportion of respondents that defined jihad as defensive (D) rather than offensive (O), while in some cases relatively high rates of unsure and other (U/O) were recorded: *ethical maqasidi* (D 76.0%; O 12.0%; U/O 12.0%); *sufi* (D 73.6%; O 12.9%; U/O 13.5%); *progressive* (D 72.7%; O 17.2%; U/O 10.1%); *secular* (D 71.9%; O 10.4%; U/O 17.7%); *liberal* (D 71.0%; O 17.4%; U/O 11.7%); *cultural nominalist* (D 59.8%; O 13.4%; U/O 26.8%); *legalist* (D 58.4%; O 33.6%; U/O 8.1%), *traditionalist* (D 57.6%; O 29.9%; U/O 12.5%); *political Islamist* (D 52.0%; O 38.8%; U/O 9.2%), and *militant* (D 38.2%; O 44.1%; U/O 17.6%).

However, it should not be assumed from the above that violence against civilians or non-combatants is considered acceptable among Muslim Australians. When asked whether Islam permits attacking civilians or non-combatants, 89.5 percent of respondents overall said this is “never” (N) permitted in Islam, while 4.0 percent said attacking civilians or non-combatants is “sometimes” (S) permitted, only 0.9 percent said it is “generally” (G) permitted, and 5.7 percent were unsure (U). Among the various typologies, those most opposed to the use of violence against civilians or non-combatants were *progressives* (N 94.1%; S 3.7%; G 0.2%; U 2.0%), *liberal* (N 93.6%; S 2.5%; G 0.1%; U 3.7%), *ethical maqasidi* (N 92.5%; S 3.0%; G 0.7%; U 3.7%), *legalist* (N 91.3%; S 5.4%; G 1.3%; U 2.0%), *traditionalist* (N 90.8%; S 4.4%; G 0.7%; U 4.1%), *political Islamist* (N 89.8%; S 6.1%; G 2.0; U 2.0%), and *secular* (N 89.6%; S 4.0%; G 0.7%; U 5.7%), followed by *sufi* (N 89.3%; S 3.4%; G 1.1%; U 6.2%), *cultural nominalist* (N 79.3%; S 6.1%; G 2.4%; U 12.2%) and *militant* (N 73.5%; S 17.6%; G 8.8%; U 0.0%).

*Cultural nominalists* stand out with 79.3 percent stating that attacking civilians or non-combatants is “never” permitted in Islam (10.2% below the overall score) and 12.2 percent stating “unsure” (the highest of all typologies). However, 73.5 percent of *militants* said attacking civilians or non-combatants is never permitted in Islam, which was the lowest score of all typologies but still a large majority. *Militants* were

also more likely than the other typologies to say Islam *sometimes* (17.6%) or *generally* (8.8%) permits attacking civilians or non-combatants.

As further confirmation of respondents' views concerning attacks against civilians, the survey posed the statement "one who dies attacking innocent civilians is not a martyr" to which 84.4 percent of respondents overall answered "strongly agree". Among the various typologies, while all showed a strong majority that also held this view, it was found to be highest among *ethical maqasidi* (95.5%), *progressive* (90.9%), *secular* (89.0%), *sufi* (88.2%) and *liberal* (87.0%) typologies, but lower among *traditionalist* (81.9%), *political Islamist* (80.6%), *cultural nominalist* (79.3%), *legalist* (75.2%) and *militant* (70.6%) typologies.

## Sources of influence

The survey asked respondents to identify the main sources of influence that have informed their understanding of Islam. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the most influential source for the majority of respondents overall was the Qur'an (82.5%) followed by the Hadith (66.4%). While the Qur'an was recorded as "very influential" among a majority within all typologies, this was reported to be highest among *legalists* (98.0%), *militants* (97.1%), *traditionalists* (95.9%), *political Islamists* (91.8%), *sufi* (90.4%), *liberals* (90.3%), *progressives* (86.7%), and *ethical maqasidi* (86.1%), followed by *seculars* (82.3%) and *cultural nominalists* (70.7%). Among the typologies, citing Hadith as "very influential" was highest among *legalists* (92.6%), *militants* (88.2%), *traditionalists* (87.1%), *political Islamists* (86.7%), *liberals* (74.3%), and *sufis* (68.5%), followed by *progressives* (65.8%), *seculars* (60.5%), *ethical maqasidis* (60.3%) and *cultural nominalists* (53.7%).

Significant numbers of respondents overall also answered that "imams, sheikhs and ulema" (29.9%), "family" (28.4%), "academic scholars" (22.1%) and "mosque/madrassa classes" (21.3%) are "very influential". The "internet" was identified as "very influential" by 16.7 percent of respondents overall. Among the typologies, the citing of "imams, sheikhs and ulema" as "very influential" was highest among *militants* (70.6%), *legalists* (59.1%), *political Islamists* (53.1%) and *traditionalists* (51.7%), which all showed a majority. Minorities among *sufis* (34.3%), *liberals* (32.9%), *progressives* (30.7%), *seculars* (26.8%), *ethical maqasidis* (26.2%) and *cultural nominalists* (24.4%) identified "imams, sheikhs and ulema" as "very influential". A similar order was found in relation to mosque/madrassa classes ("very influential"): *militants* (50.0%), *legalists* (44.3%), *political Islamists* (38.8%) and *traditionalists* (38.4%), *sufis* (30.3%), *cultural nominalists* (29.3%), *liberals* (24.9%), *progressives* (22.4%), *seculars* (21.1%) and *ethical maqasidis* (19.9%). These findings raise an important question about the ideas and information about Islam that Australian *imams, sheikhs and ulema* are disseminating in mosques and madrassa classes in Australia. They suggest an influence of legalist and other approaches that align with political Islam. After the Qur'an and Hadith, for survey respondents that self-identified as "Salafi", the most influential source selected was *imams, sheikhs and ulema* (69.0%). By comparison, this was only 13 percent for those who self-identified as "progressive" and 38.8 percent among respondents that self-identified

as “sufi”. As noted above, among *traditionalists*, *legalists*, and especially among *political Islamists* and *militants*, significant minorities did not agree that women should have the same rights and opportunities as men. While there is insufficient research on *imams*, *sheikhs* and *ulema* in Australia, a recent study has found that a majority of Muslim Australian women interviewed experienced gender inequality and restrictions in relation to access and participation in Australia’s mosques (Ghafoornia, 2020).

Citing family as “very influential” was highest among the *cultural nominalist* (50.0%) typology followed by the *traditionalist* (41.0%), *sufi* (39.9%), *legalist* (39.6%), *militant* (38.2%), *political Islamist* (37.8%), *liberal* (33.2%), *secular* (32.1%), *progressive* (28.5%) and *ethical maqasidi* (28.5%) typologies. Possible explanations for these findings could be that *cultural nominalist* and *traditionalist* typologies relate directly to family, as does *sufi* and perhaps *legalist* to some extent. At the other end of the spectrum, perhaps more independent, critical thinking plays a role among *progressive* and *ethical maqasidi* typologies. That *traditionalists*, *legalists*, *political Islamists* and *militants* were among the top typologies that cited family as very influential is noteworthy. Research on Muslim extremism and militancy in Australia suggests family connections play a key role (Harris-Hogan, 2014).

Curiously, among the typologies, the citing of academic scholars as “very influential” was highest among *legalists* (38.9%), *political Islamists* (34.7%), *militants* (32.4%), *traditionalists* (32.1%), *sufis* (29.2%), *progressives* (28.3%), *ethical maqasidis* (27.3%) and *liberals* (27.4%), followed by the *secular* (20.1%) and *cultural nominalist* (17.1%) typologies.

The internet (websites, forums, YouTube) was cited at being “very influential” at around twice that of respondents overall by the *militant* (32.4%) typology, followed by the *political Islamist* (29.6%), *cultural nominalist* (25.6%), *traditionalist* (25.5%), *legalist* (24.8%), *progressive* (19.7%), *sufi* (19.7%), *liberals* (18.6%), *ethical maqasidi* (17.6%) and *secular* (17.1%) typologies. There is research suggesting the internet plays a role in the development of extremist, politicized and militant views among Muslims (Aly et al., 2016), which may in part explain the higher reporting of internet being “very influential” among *militant* and *political Islamist* typologies.

## Interpreting the Qur’an

Given the high level of reported influence of the Qur’an in relation to Muslim Australian’s understanding of Islam, the survey asked respondents about the extent to which they agree or disagree with a series of statements regarding the reading and interpreting of the Qur’an. Respondents were asked to respond to the statements based on a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Overall, the survey found the largest plurality answering “strongly agree” to the statement “the Qur’an should be read and interpreted contextually in relation to historic and social contexts” (44.5%), followed by “the Qur’an should be read and interpreted in relation to the principles (*maqasid*) of Islam” (37.9%), “some verses of the Qur’an are specific to the Prophet Muhammad’s time and circumstances while others are relevant to all time and place” (32.0%), “all verses of the Qur’an apply

to all time, place and circumstances” (30.5%), and “the Qur’an should be read and interpreted literally” (15.0%).

In regard to a contextual interpretation of the Qur’an, the *liberal*, *secular* and *cultural nominalist* typologies sit within 10 percent of the level of “strong agreement” found among respondents overall. However, the highest recorded responses were from among the *ethical maqasidi* (64.8%), *political Islamist* (60.2%), *progressive* (60.0%), *sufi* (59.6%), *legalist* (56.4%), and *traditionalist* (54.6%) typologies. The typologies that were most likely, relative to the survey respondents overall, to “strongly agree” with the statement “some verses of the Qur’an are specific to the Prophet Muhammad’s time and circumstances while others are relevant to all time and place”, included *militants* (52.9%), *cultural nominalists* (50.0%), *political Islamists* (45.9%), *ethical maqasidis* (44.2%), and *progressives* (42.3%). The typologies that were more likely than the survey respondents overall to “strongly agree” with the statement “all verses of the Qur’an apply to all time, place and circumstances”, included *militants* (67.6%), *political Islamists* (59.2%), *legalists* (51.0%), *traditionalists* (49.4%), *cultural nominalists* (46.3%), and *sufis* (43.8%). The typologies that were more likely than the survey respondents overall to strongly agree with the statement “the Qur’an should be read and interpreted literally”, included *militants* (55.9%), *political Islamists* (41.8%), *cultural nominalists* (37.8%), *sufi* (29.2%), *traditionalists* (29.2%) and *legalists* (28.2%).

### Engaging with non-Muslims

When asked what they think about “engaging with non-Muslims as family, friends, colleagues and in general social interaction”, 92.2 percent of the survey respondents overall said this is “normal and good”, while 5.7 percent said “engaging with non-Muslims should be primarily done for *da’wah* (proselytizing)” and very few respondents answered that engaging with non-Muslims “is discouraged in Islam” (N=9, 0.9%), “forbidden” (N=2, 0.2%), or were “unsure” (N=11, 1.1%). All of the typologies, with the exception of three, showed similarly high levels of respondents that answered “engaging with non-Muslims as family, friends, colleagues and in general social interaction” is “normal and good”. The exceptions were *legalists* (78.5%), *political Islamists* (72.4%) and *militants* (52.9%), although these were still majorities.

Given the extent to which countries such as Saudi Arabia have invested in propagating their particular brand of Islam (Laurence, 2012), which aligns with the *legalist*, *political Islamist* and *militant* typologies and antithetical to the *liberal*, *progressive*, *secular*, *ethical maqasidi* and *sufi* typologies, these results show a limited return on investment. However, it is noteworthy that those least inclined to see engaging with non-Muslims as family, friends, colleagues and in general social interaction as normal and good, were *legalists*, *political Islamists* and *militants*, among which the influence of Salafist/Wahhabist concepts such as *tashabbuh bi-l-kuffar* (imitating the unbelievers) (Masud, 2014) and *al-wala wal bara* (loyalty to Muslims and disavowal of non-Muslims) (Shavit, 2014) is most pronounced. However, such interpretations as indicated above have been detected only among a minority of respondents.

## Openness to new knowledge

Overall, 87.8 percent of the survey respondents were “completely” (50.9%) or “very” (36.9%) open to new knowledge about Islam, while 10.4 percent were “somewhat” open to new knowledge, and less than two percent were “not very” or “not at all” open to new knowledge about Islam. In relation to the typologies, openness to new knowledge about Islam was high among all, with the highest scores found with those classified as *sufi* (92.1%), *legalist* (91.9%), *ethical maqasidi* (91.8%), *political Islamist* (91.8%), *traditionalist* (91.1%), *progressive* (90.7%), *liberal* (90.0%), and *secular* (89.0%), followed by the *cultural nominalist* (86.6%), and *militant* (85.3%) typologies. These findings are encouraging from an education perspective, as they suggest the viability of information and education in response to some of the more problematic ideas about Islam among certain groupings of Muslim Australians.

## Discussion

Based on respondents who strongly agreed with the statements provided, most Muslim Australians believe Islam aligns with human rights, civil liberties and democracy (*liberal* typology), accept the rational, cosmopolitan nature of the Islamic tradition based on principles of social justice, gender justice and religious pluralism (*progressive* typology), see Islam as a matter of personal faith rather than a public identity (*secular* typology), follow a traditional understanding of Islam (*traditionalist* typology), are reform-minded Muslims who emphasizes the spirit and ethical principles of Islam over literal interpretations (*ethical maqasidi* typology), or follow a more spiritual path rather than formal legal rules (*sufi* typology). Smaller minorities strongly agreed with statements that identified them as a strict Muslim who follows Islam according to the laws of shariah (*legalist* typology), one who believes politics is part of Islam and advocates for an Islamic state based on shariah laws (*political Islamist* typology), a cultural Muslim for whom Islam is based on my family background rather than my practice (*cultural nominalist* typology), or one who believes an Islamic political order and shariah should be implemented by force if necessary (*militant* typology).<sup>16</sup>

The findings of this study are significant as they challenge perceptions of Islam and Muslims, perpetuated by media and political discourses that frame the religion and its adherents as a security threat (Rane et al., 2014). The Australian government has spent tens of millions of dollars on countering violent extremism programs that a number of scholars have assessed as being ineffective, counterproductive and contributing to the stigmatizing of Muslim Australians (Dunn et al., 2016; Harris-Hogan et al., 2016). A recent national survey found that 40 percent of Australians have negative attitudes towards Muslims (Marcus, 2020), while other studies report a continuing presence of Islamophobia (Hassan, 2015). We do not suggest that a security threat from among Muslim Australians does not exist. Around 50 Muslim

<sup>16</sup> Another 15 percent of respondents did not strongly agree with any of these typologies.



Australian men have been imprisoned on terrorism-related offences over the past 15 years (Rane, 2019) and in 2014, at the height of ISIS recruitment propaganda, Australia is reported to have had the highest per capita export of foreign fighters (Jenkins, 2014). However, research suggests that violent extremism in relation to Islam could be effectively addressed through education initiatives (Halafoff et al., 2019; Rabasa et al., 2010). This study contends that irrespective of how Muslim Australians self-identify or are categorized in relation to Islam, their openness to new knowledge about Islam gives reason to be optimistic about the potential of education initiatives to address some of the problematic ideas among some Muslim Australians. For the wider Australian society, concerns about Islam and Muslims tend to focus on notions of political Islam, jihad and shariah (Miller, 2017).

The concept of shariah as law developed in the centuries after the death of the Prophet Muhammad by Muslim jurists (Farooq & El-Ghattis, 2018; Kamali, 2006). Awareness of this was seen among a majority of *sufi*, *ethical maqasidi*, *progressive*, *cultural nominalist*, *liberal*, and *secular* typologies. However, contrary to the historic reality and scholarship on this issue, among the *militant*, *legalist*, *traditionalist* and *political Islamist* typologies, the majority considered shariah to be divine and hence seem to display what Tibi (2012) refers to as the shari'itization of Islam. Regardless of typology, Muslim Australians feel that the rights and freedoms they enjoy as citizens of the country are conducive to the practice of their faith, though this is less strongly felt among *legalists*, *political Islamists* and especially *militants*. Moreover, with the notable exceptions of *traditionalists*, *legalists*, *political Islamists* and especially *militants*, among the typologies, there are only very small minorities that regard so-called "Islamic" states as more just and fair than Australia. This seems to cohere with other research that Muslims overall are finding their place, and that of Islam, in the West (Duderija & Rane, 2019). This was seen in responses to questions concerning values often described in countries like Australia as "Australian" or "Western" values. A majority of respondents among all typologies strongly agreed that people of all religions and no religion should be treated equally. However, while a clear majority of respondents agreed that women should be given the same right and opportunities as men, *militant* was the only typology that less than a majority of respondents did not agree. The findings indicate a persistence of misogyny and patriarchy, not among all Muslims, but more prevalent among those classified as *legalist*, *political Islamist* and *militant*. Further research is needed in regards to the role of *imams*, *sheikhs* and *ulema* in perpetuating gender inequality.

Consistent with respondents overall, within most of the typologies about one-quarter of respondents said that Islam advocates a particular political system and a similar number believe establishing a caliphate is a religious obligation. The exceptions were found among the *militant*, *political Islamist*, *legalist* and *traditionalist* typologies which showed the highest proportions of respondents that expressed a politicized understanding of Islam. It is quite remarkable, however, that significant minorities of between 16 and 26 percent among these four typologies did not think, or were unsure that, Islam advocates a particular political system or establishing the caliphate is a religious obligation. This suggests that Muslims may align with a particular typology without complete conviction or knowledge in relation to the scholarship concerning Islam. This finding may also alternatively suggest that Muslims'

religious identities are not formed entirely in relation to Islam or may not represent a fully informed understanding of Islam's teachings.

The question of jihad has loomed large over discussions about Islam for many decades now (Rane, 2009). As highlighted by Rane et al. (2020), many of the survey respondents considered the term "offensive armed struggle" to include defending Muslims overseas who are under attack to repel an aggressor, which suggests a defensive rather than an offensive understanding of jihad. In relation to the typologies, it should be noted that, with the exception of *militants*, all showed a higher proportion of respondents that defined jihad as defensive rather than offensive, while in some cases relatively high rates of unsure and other were recorded, highlighting the need for further education about this concept. Reassuringly, large majorities among all typologies opposed the use of violence against civilians or non-combatants as not permitted by Islam.

## Conclusion

The main aim of this article was to present empirical findings from a recently completed survey of Islam in Australia pertaining to the relative prevalence of Muslim typologies in the Australian context. The study combines both sociological and discursive based approaches to religious typologies and is first of a kind to provide empirical data on the relative spread of 10 different Muslim typologies. In this respect, the data from the survey points to strong presence of *liberal*, *progressive*, *ethical-maqasidi* typologies and much smaller representation of *political Islamist*, and especially *militant* typologies. Overall, the study finds that the *legalist*, *political Islamist* and *militant* typologies tend to think of shariah as divine rather than man-made, feel less content with their practice of Islam in Australia, are less supportive of gender equality, are more likely believe establishing a caliphate is a religious obligation, are more influenced by Hadith and *imams*, *sheikhs*, and *ulema*, and are more likely to interpret the Quran literally than other Muslims. However, like the vast majority of respondents, a majority among *legalists*, *political Islamists* and *militants* are opposed to the use of violence against civilians, think engaging with non-Muslims is good and normal (although only a slight majority of *militants*), and are open to new knowledge about Islam. These are encouraging findings in relation to the prospect of education to address ideas about Islam that foster anti-Islam/anti-Muslim sentiments among non-Muslims and are not shared by the majority of Muslim Australians.

**Table 1** Typologies in relation to Islam in Australia survey responses

	Liberal	Secular	Cultural Nominalist	Progressive	Ethical <i>Maqasidi</i>	Sufi	Tradition- alist	Legalist	Political Islamist	Militant	Overall
N (%)	668 (64.6%)	299 (28.9%)	82 (7.9%)	407 (39.4%)	267 (25.8%)	178 (17.2%)	271 (26.2%)	149 (14.4%)	98 (9.5%)	34 (3.3%)	1034 (100%)
Gender											
<i>Female</i>	339 (50.7%)	156 (52.2%)	31 (37.8%)	193 (47.4%)	128 (47.9%)	91 (51.1%)	114 (42.1%)	53 (35.6%)	28 (28.6%)	12 (35.3%)	525 (50.8%)
<i>Male</i>	329 (49.3%)	142 (47.5%)	51 (62.2%)	213 (52.3%)	138 (51.7%)	87 (48.9%)	157 (57.9%)	96 (64.4%)	70 (71.4%)	22 (64.7%)	507 (49.0%)
<i>Other</i>	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.3%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.2%)	1 (0.4%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (0.2%)
Place of birth											
<i>Australia</i>	218 (32.6%)	114 (38.1%)	21 (25.6%)	121 (29.7%)	75 (28.1%)	45 (25.3%)	104 (38.4%)	52 (34.9%)	25 (25.5%)	13 (38.2%)	400 (38.7%)
<i>Overseas</i>	450 (67.4%)	185 (61.9%)	61 (74.4%)	286 (70.3%)	192 (71.9%)	133 (74.7%)	167 (61.6%)	97 (65.1%)	73 (74.5%)	21 (61.8%)	634 (61.3%)
Age (average)	39	40	41	40	41	42	37	39	37	34	39
Prayer (daily)	556 (83.2%)	201 (67.2%)	46 (56.1%)	329 (80.8%)	203 (76.0%)	140 (78.7%)	246 (90.8%)	144 (96.6%)	90 (91.8%)	33 (97.1%)	797 (77.1%)
Born Muslim	599 (89.7%)	257 (86.0%)	79 (96.3%)	357 (87.7%)	228 (85.4%)	158 (88.8%)	244 (90.0%)	132 (88.6%)	85 (86.7%)	30 (88.2%)	871 (84.2%)
Convert to Islam	69 (10.3%)	42 (14.0%)	3 (3.7%)	50 (12.3%)	39 (14.6%)	20 (11.2%)	27 (10.0%)	17 (11.4%)	13 (13.3%)	4 (11.8%)	163 (15.8%)
Shariah											
<i>Divine</i>	255 (38.2%)	102 (34.1%)	23 (28.0%)	152 (37.3%)	96 (36.0%)	55 (30.9%)	142 (52.4%)	83 (55.7%)	48 (49.0%)	20 (58.8%)	376 (36.4%)
<i>Human interpretation</i>	342 (51.2%)	149 (49.8%)	43 (52.4%)	222 (54.5%)	152 (56.9%)	107 (60.1%)	104 (38.4%)	55 (36.9%)	45 (45.9%)	12 (35.3%)	528 (51.1%)
<i>Unsure and other</i>	71 (10.6%)	48 (16.1%)	16 (19.5%)	33 (8.1%)	19 (7.1%)	16 (9.0%)	25 (9.2%)	11 (7.4%)	5 (5.1%)	2 (5.9%)	131 (12.7%)

Table 1 (continued)

	Liberal	Secular	Cultural Nominalist	Progressive	Ethical <i>Maqasidi</i>	Sufi	Tradition- alist	Legalist	Political Islamist	Militant	Overall
<i>Content with Islam in Australia (Strongly Agree)</i>	235 (35.2%)	112 (37.5%)	33 (40.2%)	155 (38.1%)	107 (40.1%)	71 (39.9%)	95 (35.1%)	55 (36.9%)	31 (31.6%)	9 (26.5%)	322 (31.1%)
<i>Shariah countries more just and fair than Australia (Strongly Agree)</i>	29 (4.3%)	17 (5.7%)	8 (9.8%)	16 (3.9%)	15 (5.6%)	14 (7.9%)	28 (10.3%)	19 (12.8%)	20 (20.4%)	14 (41.2%)	37 (3.6%)
<i>Women should be given the same right and opportunities as men (Strongly Agree)</i>	450 (67.4%)	213 (71.2%)	50 (61.0%)	293 (72.0%)	199 (74.5%)	124 (69.7%)	148 (54.6%)	77 (51.7%)	50 (51.0%)	12 (35.3%)	641 (62.0%)

Table 1 (continued)

	Liberal	Secular	Cultural Nominalist	Progressive <i>Maqasidi</i>	Ethical	Sufi	Tradition- alist	Legalist	Political Islamist	Militant	Overall
People of all religions and no religion should be treated equally (Strongly Agree)	540 (80.8%)	243 (81.3%)	61 (74.4%)	350 (86.0%)	235 (88.0%)	151 (84.8%)	207 (76.4%)	104 (69.8%)	65 (66.3%)	19 (55.9%)	777 (75.1%)
Political Islam											
Yes	161 (24.1%)	54 (18.1%)	13 (15.9%)	96 (23.6%)	60 (22.5%)	33 (18.5%)	95 (35.1%)	65 (43.6%)	56 (57.1%)	19 (55.9%)	253 (24.5%)
No	341 (51.0%)	164 (54.8%)	38 (46.3%)	230 (56.1%)	151 (56.6%)	100 (56.2%)	109 (40.2%)	53 (35.6%)	26 (26.5%)	8 (23.5%)	508 (49.1%)
Unsure	166 (24.9%)	81 (27.1%)	31 (37.8%)	81 (19.9%)	56 (21.0%)	45 (25.3%)	67 (24.7%)	31 (20.8%)	16 (16.3%)	7 (20.6%)	273 (26.4%)
Caliphate religious obligation (Strongly Agree)	72 (10.8%)	24 (8.0%)	10 (12.2%)	42 (10.3%)	31 (11.6%)	28 (15.7%)	56 (20.7%)	46 (30.9%)	43 (43.9%)	18 (52.9%)	96 (9.3%)
Jihad											
Defensive	474 (71.0%)	215 (71.9%)	49 (59.8%)	296 (72.7%)	203 (76.0%)	131 (73.6%)	156 (57.6%)	87 (58.4%)	51 (52.0%)	13 (38.2%)	706 (68.3%)
Offensive	116 (17.4%)	31 (10.4%)	11 (13.4%)	70 (17.2%)	32 (12.0%)	23 (12.9%)	81 (29.9%)	50 (33.6%)	38 (38.8%)	15 (44.1%)	194 (18.8%)
Unsure and other	78 (11.7%)	53 (17.7%)	22 (26.8%)	41 (10.1%)	32 (12.0%)	24 (13.5%)	34 (12.5%)	12 (8.1%)	9 (9.2%)	6 (17.6%)	134 (13.0%)

Table 1 (continued)

	Liberal	Secular	Cultural Nominalist	Progressive	Ethical <i>Maqasidi</i>	Sufi	Tradition- alist	Legalist	Political Islamist	Militant	Overall
Attacking civilians permitted											
<i>Never</i>	625 (93.6%)	246 (89.6%)	65 (79.3%)	383 (94.1%)	247 (92.5%)	159 (89.3%)	246 (90.8%)	136 (91.3%)	88 (89.8%)	25 (73.5%)	925 (89.5%)
<i>Sometimes</i>	17 (2.5%)	12 (4.0%)	5 (6.1%)	15 (3.7%)	8 (3.0%)	6 (3.4%)	12 (4.4%)	8 (5.4%)	6 (6.1%)	6 (17.6%)	41 (4.0%)
<i>Generally</i>	1 (0.1%)	2 (0.7%)	2 (2.4%)	1 (0.2%)	2 (0.7%)	2 (1.1%)	2 (0.7%)	2 (1.3%)	2 (2.0%)	3 (8.8%)	9 (0.9%)
<i>Unsure</i>	25 (3.7%)	17 (5.7%)	10 (12.2%)	8 (2.0%)	10 (3.7%)	11 (6.2%)	11 (4.1%)	3 (2.0%)	2 (2.0%)	0 (0.0%)	59 (5.7%)
One who dies attacking innocent civilians is not a martyr (Strongly Agree)	581 (87.0%)	266 (89.0%)	65 (79.3%)	370 (90.9%)	247 (92.5%)	157 (88.2%)	222 (81.9%)	112 (75.2%)	79 (80.6%)	24 (70.6%)	873 (84.4%)
Sources of Influence (Very Influen- tial)											
<i>Qur'an</i>	603 (90.3%)	246 (82.3%)	58 (70.7%)	353 (86.7%)	230 (86.1%)	161 (90.4%)	260 (95.9%)	146 (98.0%)	90 (91.8%)	33 (97.1%)	853 (82.5%)
<i>Hadith</i>	496 (74.3%)	181 (60.5%)	44 (53.7%)	268 (65.8%)	161 (60.3%)	122 (68.5%)	236 (87.1%)	138 (92.6%)	85 (86.7%)	30 (88.2%)	687 (66.4%)
<i>Family</i>	222 (33.2%)	96 (32.1%)	41 (50.0%)	116 (28.5%)	76 (28.5%)	71 (39.9%)	111 (41.0%)	59 (39.6%)	37 (37.8%)	13 (38.2%)	294 (28.4%)
<i>Imams, Sheikhs, Ulema</i>	220 (32.9%)	80 (26.8%)	20 (24.4%)	125 (30.7%)	70 (26.2%)	61 (34.3%)	140 (51.7%)	88 (59.1%)	52 (53.1%)	24 (70.6%)	309 (29.9%)

Table 1 (continued)

	Liberal	Secular	Cultural Nominalist	Progressive <i>Maqasidi</i>	Ethical	Sufi	Tradition- alist	Legalist	Political Islamist	Militant	Overall
<i>Mosque/ Madrasa classes</i>	166 (24.9%)	63 (21.1%)	24 (29.3%)	91 (22.4%)	53 (19.9%)	54 (30.3%)	104 (38.4%)	66 (44.3%)	38 (38.8%)	17 (50.0%)	220 (21.3%)
<i>Academic Scholars</i>	183 (27.4%)	60 (20.1%)	14 (17.1%)	115 (28.3%)	73 (27.3%)	52 (29.2%)	87 (32.1%)	58 (38.9%)	34 (34.7%)	11 (32.4%)	229 (22.1%)
<i>Internet (websites, forums, YouTube)</i>	124 (18.6%)	51 (17.1%)	21 (25.6%)	80 (19.7%)	47 (17.6%)	35 (19.7%)	69 (25.5%)	37 (24.8%)	29 (29.6%)	11 (32.4%)	173 (16.7%)
<i>Quran Interpretation (Strongly Agree)</i>	344 (51.5%)	148 (49.5%)	41 (50.0%)	244 (60.0%)	173 (64.8%)	106 (59.6%)	148 (54.6%)	84 (56.4%)	59 (60.2%)	17 (50.0%)	460 (44.5%)
<i>Some verses specific to Prophet's time and some universal</i>	244 (36.5%)	115 (38.5%)	41 (50.0%)	172 (42.3%)	118 (44.2%)	72 (40.4%)	113 (41.7%)	59 (39.6%)	45 (45.9%)	18 (52.9%)	331 (32.0%)
<i>All time, all place, all circumstances</i>	248 (37.1%)	104 (34.8%)	38 (46.3%)	144 (35.4%)	93 (34.8%)	78 (43.8%)	134 (49.4%)	76 (51.0%)	58 (59.2%)	23 (67.6%)	315 (30.5%)
<i>Literal</i>	118 (17.7%)	72 (24.1%)	31 (37.8%)	68 (16.7%)	55 (20.6%)	52 (29.2%)	79 (29.2%)	42 (28.2%)	41 (41.8%)	19 (55.9%)	155 (15.0%)

Table 1 (continued)

	Liberal	Secular	Cultural Nominalist	Progressive	Ethical <i>Maqasidi</i>	Sufi	Tradition- alist	Legalist	Political Islamist	Militant	Overall
Engaging with non-Muslims as family and friends is good and normal	620 (92.8%)	282 (94.3%)	73 (89.0%)	388 (95.3%)	251 (94.0%)	159 (89.3%)	230 (84.9%)	117 (78.5%)	71 (72.4%)	18 (52.9%)	953 (92.2%)
Completely or very open to new knowledge about Islam	601 (90.0%)	266 (89.0%)	71 (86.6%)	369 (90.7%)	245 (91.8%)	164 (92.1%)	247 (91.1%)	137 (91.9%)	90 (91.8%)	29 (85.3%)	908 (87.8%)

*Liberal*: "I believe Islam aligns with human rights, civil liberties and democracy."

*Secular*: "For me Islam is a matter of personal faith rather than a public identity."

*Cultural nominalist*: "I am a cultural Muslim for whom Islam is based on my family background rather than my practice."

*Progressive*: "I am a committed Muslim who believes in the rational, cosmopolitan nature of the Islamic tradition based on principles of social justice, gender justice and religious pluralism."

*Ethical maqasidi*: "I am a committed, reform-minded Muslim who emphasizes the spirit and ethical principles of Islam over literal interpretations."

*Sufi*: "I am a devout Muslim who follows a more spiritual path rather than formal legal rules."

*Traditionalist*: "I am a devout Muslim who follows a traditional understanding of Islam."

*Legalist*: "I am a strict Muslim who follows Islam according to the laws of shariah."

*Political Islamist*: "I am a committed Muslim who believes politics is part of Islam and advocates for an Islamic state based on shariah laws."

*Militant*: "I am a committed Muslim who believes an Islamic political order and shariah should be implemented by force if necessary."



## Appendix

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### Declarations

**Conflicts of interest** The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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