THE SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF MUSLIM
COMMUNITIES IN AUSTRALIA, 1981-96.

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CONTENTS

List of Figures .............................................. IX
List of Tables .............................................. XV
Abstract .................................................... XXVII
Statement of Originality .................................. XXIX
Acknowledgments ........................................... XXIX
Glossary ...................................................... XXXII

Chapter 1 Introduction ..................................... 1
1.1 Introduction ............................................. 1
1.2 Aims and objectives ................................... 2
1.3 Selection of the study topic ......................... 4
1.4 Setting of the study ................................... 8
1.4.1 The growth of the Muslim population in Australia ... 13
1.5 The changing context of Australian immigration ....... 16
1.6 Shifts in immigrant settlement policy in Australia ............................. 20
1.7 The impact of religion on demographic processes .......................... 23
1.8 Religion in multiculturalism in Australia ........................................ 27
1.9 Structure of the thesis ...................................................................... 30
1.10 Conclusion ..................................................................................... 32

Chapter 2 Muslim settlement in Australia: The literature .................. 33
2.1 Introduction ..................................................................................... 33
2.2 Approaches to exploring the settlement process ............................. 34
2.3 Assimilation of Islamic groups in Australia ...................................... 40
2.4 The role of religion (Islam) in pluralisation and settlement ............. 44
2.5 Demographic change in the Muslim population ............................... 50
2.6 Acculturation .................................................................................. 54
2.6.1 Cultural adjustment of Islamic groups .......................................... 55
2.6.2 Success of cultural adjustment among Islamic groups .................. 58
2.7 Religiosity and occupation ................................................................. 61
2.8 Conclusion ..................................................................................... 62

Chapter 3 Data and methods ................................................................. 64
3.1 Introduction ..................................................................................... 64
3.2 The Australian Census of Population and Housing ....................... 66
3.3 Movement Data Base ....................................................................... 74
Chapter 4 Islamic communities in Australia:

Historical trends ........................................... 96

4.1 Introduction ............................................. 96

4.2 Historical trends ........................................ 97

4.3 Historical trends of the selected Islamic communities ...... 108
4.3.1 The Afghani community ................................. 103
4.3.2 The Bosnian community ................................ 107
4.3.3 The Egyptian community ................................ 112
4.3.4 The Indonesian community ............................ 114
4.3.5 The Iranian community ................................ 118
4.3.6 The Lebanese community ............................... 120
4.3.7 The Malaysian community ............................. 123
4.3.8 The South African community ......................... 126
4.3.9 The Turkish community ................................ 129
4.4 The impact of migration on growth of the selected
birthplace groups .............................................. 133
4.5 Conclusion .................................................. 137

Chapter 5 Demographic characteristics of Islamic
communities, 1981-96 ............................................. 140
5.1 Introduction ................................................. 140
5.2 Population growth .......................................... 141
5.2.1 Changes in population growth of the selected
birthplace groups ............................................. 148
5.3 The distribution of the Muslim population in Australia .... 158
5.3.1 The spatial distribution of the selected Muslim
birthplace communities in Australia ........................ 167
5.4 The age and sex structure of the Muslim population in Australia 176

5.5 Fertility 188

5.5.1 Immigrant fertility differentials 188

5.5.2 Fertility of the selected birthplace group 199

5.6 The marital status of the Muslim population in Australia 197

5.7 Conclusion 212

Chapter 6 Settlement patterns of the Muslim population in Australia 213

6.1 Introduction 213

6.2 Religion and settlement 216

6.3 The settlement of Muslim immigrants 221

6.4 The settlement patterns of selected Muslim communities 244

6.4.1 Bosnians 244

6.4.2 Iranians 249

6.4.3 Lebanese 252

6.4.4 Turks 256

6.4.5 Afghans, Egyptians, Indonesians, Malaysians and South Africans 260

6.5 The role of Mosques in Muslim settlement 264
6.5.1 The Mosque ...................................................... 265
6.5.1.1 The history of the Mosque .................................. 266
6.5.2 The role of Mosques and religious institutions in 
settlement .................................................................. 270
6.5.3 The role of ethnic communities in settlement .......... 273
6.6 Conclusion ............................................................. 276

Chapter 7 The cultural adjustment of the Muslim population 
in Australia ................................................................. 279
7.1 Introduction .......................................................... 279
7.2 The role of Islam in the adjustment of 
imigrants to life in Australia ...................................... 281
7.2.1 Islam ................................................................ 284
7.2.2 Satisfaction with life in Australia ......................... 286
7.2.2.1 Job satisfaction .................................................. 289
7.2.2.2 Housing ........................................................... 296
7.2.2.3 Standard of living ............................................. 299
7.2.2.4 Friends/relatives/parents ................................. 302
7.2.2.5 Children’s education and their future ............... 305
7.2.2.6 Overall satisfaction with life in Australia .......... 310
7.2.3 Identification with Australia ................................ 317
7.2.3.1 Identification of self with Australian identity ...... 320
7.2.3.2 Social participation ........................................... 322

94
Chapter 8 The economic adjustment of Muslim communities in Australia ........................................... 371

8.1 Introduction .................................................................................................................. 371

8.2 The labour-market experience of Muslim immigrants ............................................. 375

8.3 Unemployment ............................................................................................................. 393

8.4 Labour force status and educational attainment .................................................... 407

8.5 Occupation .................................................................................................................. 411

8.6 Industry of employment ............................................................................................. 513

8.7 Income ......................................................................................................................... 417

8.8 Conclusion .................................................................................................................... 424
Chapter 9 Conclusion ......................................................... 425

9.1 Introduction .......................................................... 425

9.2 Major findings of the study ........................................... 426

9.3 Theoretical implications ............................................. 434

9.4 Policy implications .................................................. 436

9.5 Implications for data collection ..................................... 439

9.6 Future research needs and priorities .............................. 441

9.7 Conclusion .................................................................. 443

Appendices ........................................................................ 444

Appendix 1: Individual questionnaire .................................. 445

Appendix 2: Interview guide used in in-depth interviews
with Islamic religious institution leaders
and other community key persons ................................. 460

Appendix 3: Pictures ......................................................... 463

Appendix 4: Definitions ...................................................... 471

Appendix 5: Estimation technique for
the 1954, 1961 and 1966 censuses ................................. 475

Appendix 6: Census data available for Muslim
population in Australia, 1911-96 ................................. 479

VIII
ABSTRACT

This study contributes to the limited body of knowledge regarding Muslim settlement in Australia by elucidating the processes of contemporary settlement and adjustment of Muslim groups in Australia and assessing the role and significance of religion (Islam) in those processes. It focuses on the cultural, economic, social and demographic adjustments of these groups to Australian society and explores the role of Islam in that adjustment. In doing so it relates the immigration, settlement and adjustment processes to a substantial body of theory, especially that relating to assimilation, acculturation and adjustment.

The thesis is organised into nine chapters. It firstly introduces some significant issues relating to Muslim migration to and settlement in Australia and outlines the aims, objectives and justifications for undertaking the study. The study then discusses the theories and hypotheses which are to be tested and traces the history of settlement of Muslims in Australia. The study then moves on to an examination of the cultural, economic, social and demographic adjustments of Muslim immigrants to Australian society. It establishes the extent to which the demography of Islamic immigrants differs from that of the remainder of the population and traces the implications of those differences. The patterns and processes involved in settlement of the Muslim population in Australia and the extent and nature of their acculturation to Australian society is analysed. In doing this, the linkages between religiosity and economic

XXVII
adjustment of immigrants in Australia has been examined. The entry of Muslim immigrants into the labour market and their adjustment to that market are examined.

The study establishes the impact of religion on the process of the settlement in, and adjustment of, immigrants to Australia and assesses the elements shaping their characteristics. The study establishes that variables such as economic factors, length of residence in the host society, migration experience, cultural background such as education and language skills have been important in the process of the settlement of Muslim immigrants in the Australian host society.