

# Log

In choosing my PIP topic I decided I would focus on a cross cultural current issue that had implications at the national as well as community level. I first decided to enquire into the treatment of Muslims as it would be an interesting and insightful topic, as the current news media is full of problems concerning the Middle East and my own interest into the failed American response to 9/11. I developed a proposal to look at the treatment of Muslims and the Islamic community, analysing from a cross cultural perspective what macro, meso and micro worlds lead to discrimination and prejudice. My hypothesis was that Muslims experience discrimination and prejudice differently dependant on their socio economic environment and I chose two different Sydney areas to compare, the Western Suburbs with a large Muslim population and Northern Beaches with a very small Muslim population.

I initially researched secondary material on the treatment of Muslims in Australia and what causes discrimination. I found that a very broad and diverse range of social research and findings had been conducted on the topic, showing the effect on micro, meso and macro levels. This influenced the structure of my PIP to include perceptions from both Muslim and non-Muslim perspectives as well as the points mentioned above (socio economic, media etc). It also influenced me to analyse continuity and change that has occurred in these areas and how they have affected Muslims in Australia.

For my primary research I chose a questionnaire that I intended to handout to Muslim worshippers at Mosques in both the Northern Beaches and Western Suburbs. The questions I chose were influenced by the secondary research undertaken already. These questions were related to the experience of discrimination as well as demographic and cultural subjects and would provide me with strong quantitative data for analysis. For primary qualitative data I developed an interview question sheet that would be used with a leader from a Mosque in each area. However, worshippers at the Mosques were unwilling to fill out the forms and whilst the Auburn representative was comfortable in discussing discrimination, the Dee Why representative was much more reticent.

Following these difficulties, I then constructed a new questionnaire that would target non-Muslims, focussing more on media, its influence and perceived bias whilst still including references to discrimination of Muslims. This approach was successful, however, I ended up

with less qualitative and quantitative primary research from the Muslim community which resulted in more reliance on secondary research.

I created spreadsheets to assist in the analysis of my primary data and extracted useful data that I used for graphs to support my findings. I continued to review secondary sources throughout the process and found some excellent up to date supporting material that I further synthesised with my primary and secondary data to address my hypothesis.

This process was very rewarding as through it I discovered a great deal about a community I had not really understood. I have improved my cultural awareness and appreciation of diversity and what this brings to our society. The process taught me the importance of planning and a structured approach to a project and helped me when I met challenges with my original ideas and approaches.